

ALFRED

REVIEW

ALFRED REVIEW ALFRED UNIVERSITY 1956

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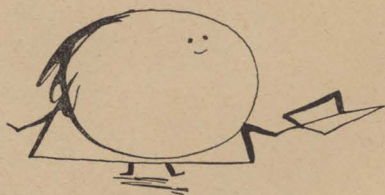
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FAIR PRICE

The sign pinned to the long yellow windowshade was lettered in crayon RAP NEXT DOOR. Marge rapped, and as she waited for an answer shifted her weight impatiently from one high heel to another. "Oh, hurry up!" she demanded, and stamped her foot. She sensed the contrast between the gray-boarded building and her own colorful immaculate person and, feeling like a visiting celebrity, began to plan in her head a number of impressive replies and gestures. They would think she was from New York, and be eager to make a sale. Well, perhaps she wouldn't haggle like a common merchant but she would certainly hold out for the best price. Like a gladiator waiting combat, Marge groomed herself—splendid in acquisitiveness. She wriggled her toes and felt with irritation the gravelly dust from the street that had infiltrated her new shoes. There were certainly drawbacks—the discomfort of a strange place, the time lost in pursuit, and of course poor Stanley, probably home by now and brooding over his dinner. Yes, it *was* hot, and the heat mixed with dust seemed to eddy up from the narrow country road and cloud the air. Marge rapped again, louder.

The door was drawn back an inch and a small white face appeared. "Yes, yes—the missus'll be around in a minute. She's looking to a customer in the back." He blinked at Marge.

"But can't you let me in to look around?"

"Yes, the missus'll open up in a minute. She's in back now..." His voice trailed off as he closed the door and left Marge standing on the porch steps. Venetian blinds, the lacquer chipping off them, were hung behind the store windows, and shielding her eyes with one hand Marge put her face up to the plate glass and tried to peer through the slats. She thought of going back to her convertible parked at the curb and driving off. It would serve them right. But she reconsidered. "Can't tell. Sometimes these dumpy out-of-the-way shops have bargains."

The shop door opened a crack and it was the old man again. His eyes blinked in apology, and as he spoke his false teeth made gummy clicks that signalled the end of each sentence. "Missus' still busy so I came 'round to open up for you!" He scraped backwards into the store and Marge followed. A tinny bell attached to the lever apparatus of the door rang as it closed behind her. Instantly, the smell of age and dust, of some unspeakable acid putrefaction filled her nostrils and she gripped the wooden railing, afraid of passing out. No escape. The sloping walls of the shop, their plaster peeling off in strips like old skin were lined with shelves, and the shelves filled with knick-knacks, bric-a-brac, odds and ends of furniture, contents of warehouses, attics, writing desks, pocketbooks. The neglected profusion of junk spilled over onto

the floor. Nothing was labeled, priced, displayed. Only a few "choice" pieces had been put into a glass cake cannister near the window.

"Lookin' for something special?"

"Uh, yes. Well, let me see what you have," said Marge, choking.

"That's up to the missus," he replied. "But look around meanwhile. Don't be shy." Marge put her hand on the gate to go through into the "sanctum sanctorum" but he stopped her, pushed the gate closed firmly, and spoke from across the wooden railing. "We keep this closed to customers 'cause it's so, well—crowded on this side." He picked up a fractured demi-tasse cup and held it out to her in warning. "Once someone came in when we didn't have the gate on and just made off with one of these cups—part of a set, see? Not that they're especially valuable, but swiped it all the same. So we took precautions. You understand." He shuffled to the window and with one finger fondly tilted the sign that said ANTIQUES...SELL OUT...EVERYTHING MUST GO. The sign was yellow with age.

"I think, perhaps, if you have a salad bowl..." mused Marge.

"What's that?"

"A salad bowl. Oh, your wife will know what I mean." Two graceful candlestick holders, propped up in the glass cannister, caught Marge's eye. Her spine stiffened and she clutched her purse. "How much are those?"

"Eh?" The old man grinned and his teeth clicked. "My wife knows the business, see? She'll quote you a price."

Just then, the blanket nailed across the back doorway quivered, as though someone had been standing behind it, and with a superb sense of timing the old woman came pushing her way out from the back part of the store. She seemed part of the debris that was the shop, soiled with time. From beneath a filthy blue dress hung shreds of woolen underwear. Cotton stockings swathed her legs like wrinkled bandages and disappeared into anciently stylish shoes. She presented herself to Marge proudly, swaying a little as she walked, her head drawn back like a turtle first suspicious of the sun, peering down her nose with nearly sightless insolent eyes.

"As you see," she introduced herself in a querulous voice, "I haven't combed my hair or washed my face for two days." She ran one hand through her hair in demonstration. Sticking out from under a kerchief in wild strands, it was stiff with dirt and grease. "We've been moving, and I'm ex-hausted!" Her head never turned except with her entire body, and her hands, their broken nails black with grime, moved majestically before her from left to right in a gesture of brushing away cobwebs, feeling tentatively, possessively, everything in their path. "So *do* be patient since I simply haven't had time to straighten up out here

...it's such a job, you see!" Her conversation was so leisurely that everything she said seemed about to smother in a yawn, and she had a way of breathing out h's that lent her dialect a hint of New England and past refinement. "It may take a whole week to put things in order. Yes...order."

"The lady says she's interested in a salad bowl. Have you a salad bowl, Mother?"

"What?"

"A salad bowl!"

"Well..." she turned her body slowly, ponderously, and came full circle to face Marge again across the railing, her voice as bland as her white-fringed eyes. "See for yourself. We have lots. Indeed."

"A salad bowl—to buy. I want to *buy*," said Marge, thinking the woman was deaf.

"Now this came from the Eiler estate, if you're familiar with local history here," said the old woman, putting her hands on a copper flowerpot, the finish having oxidized in spots to a nacreous green. "Is this what you mean?" The two women exchanged suspicious looks. Marge marvelled at her senility, or was it craftiness? "Very nice," she said "but I want a bowl for serving salads."

"Old Mr. Eiler was an artist, you know—did covers for the Saturday Evening Post. He was a collector, of course. He was a gentleman. When he died, the heirs (his children, that is) said we could come and cart away the contents of the house. Rooms and rooms..."

"We've got cats, too," said the old man brightly. "D'you like cats? Some beauties." Marge sighed. She pushed away the copper flowerpot and felt the slimy dust beneath her fingertips. "Can't you let me past this confounded fence to look around on the other side?" Beads of sweat were breaking out from beneath her pancake makeup and she was sure that dust was settling on her eyelids. "I'll bring in the cats so you better stay where you are," called the old man, snapping his suspenders in pleasure. "It'll be crowded enough." He returned a moment later with a large jaundiced cat draped around his neck, its back bristling, and another long-haired Persian in his arms, its gray hair lousy, its face mean. "Lookit these babies, will you?" he urged. The Persian leaped from his arms onto the railing and flicked its tail past Marge's face as it prowled into her handbag.

"Ugh!" Marge drew back from the railing and the old man gently picked up the cat. "Now, now. Spirited little babies, eh?" The cat raked his sleeve with its claw.

"Those candlestick holders..." said Marge desperately. "Let me see them close up."

"What a naughty pretty baby you are, you are!" cooed the old woman to the gray cat. The yellow cat jumped from the old man's

shoulder to an umbrella stand, knocking it over. A cloud of dust exploded into the air. "Catch him up, Father, before he gets lost in the merchandise!" she called anxiously.

"How much will you take for the candlestick holders?" Marge inquired.

"Enough of the babies. The lady's not an animal-lover, I can see that," breathed the old woman with a foul sneer. "Take the babies back into the house where they belong," she ordered. Then she looked sideways at Marge and made a disdainful little snort through her nose. "Did I hear you say candlestick holders?" With revulsion, Marge noted that five white hairs, like whiskers, stuck out from her upper lip.

"Yes. There—in the glass case."

"The old woman slid her hand underneath the lid and drew one out. She turned it over several times looking for a trade mark but the base was empty except for a rivet. Marge snatched it from her and appraised it greedily. "Cloisonnee!" she almost shouted. "Easy to remove the cheap varnish and paint, but underneath—genuine cloisonnee. Just as I thought!" They were watching. She must not betray herself.

"They're certainly not much to look at," she said, putting the piece away from her with a depreciating sweep of the hand. "But I might fix them up and find a place . . ."

"Oh no you don't!" cried the old woman. "I haven't had a chance to price anything. Give me time. Why these past two days have been just . . ."

"Yes I know, *busy*," said Marge indulgently. "Just tell me any old price—it's not important, and I'll take them off your hands."

"No indeed. For all I know this may be rare, something rare and here I'd be giving it to you for pennies! No indeed."

"I want to buy," insisted Marge. "I want to buy and you want to sell. No reason why we can't come to terms." She opened her purse and fingered the stout billfold. The old couple stared at the money, then at Marge. "Give her a price, Mother," he whispered.

"We-ell . . ." the old woman reached for the second candlestick holder and considered them together for a moment. Then, with a sudden decisive gesture put them behind her back. "That's the secret of this business—trash and treasures. Never know what piece of trash might be hiding a treasure. Like a game, and some get cheated. Now look at me, I ask you. I'll be eighty-six this week . . ." The old man put his head down on the counter, right in the dust which refracted the rays of sunlight coming in between the venetian blinds. "I'll be eighty-six and my husband eight-two. Just last week, mind you, crippled as we are, we went to that antique show in New York City and saw the prices dealers there were getting. Hmph! None of *them* were getting cheated, because they knew value. They knew antiques. But, my dear

lady, I just haven't had time to look over the stock here. Father's getting in a man to appraise things in a few days, and then we can do business."

"I'll give you five dollars for the pair," said Marge with starting caution, putting the bill on the counter. The old man raised his head. "Take it, Mother," he said, and a sob caught in his throat. He inclined his head toward Marge and said mournfully, "We don't need all this. What do we need it for anyway? We're on our way out. I'm not calling in any man to appraise. . . ." The old woman cut him off shortly.

"If you like picture frames, now, we have this oval mahogany." She held it out for Marge to see. "Picture's pretty isn't it? A bit faded but see the shepherds and the lake? I think it must be French but what period I couldn't tell you. An old one, I'm sure. This frame is worth a lot of money for people who know frames."

"Hm. How much are you asking?"

"See how it's jointed? You don't find that nowadays."

"How much?"

"The old woman's face became contorted. Finally she spat out, "Forty dollars!"

"Rubbish!" said Marge. "No one would give you forty cents for it. A price like that just drives people away. No one will buy. Be reasonable!" The old woman smiled foolishly. "Well, I wouldn't give this up to just anyone. You have to be selective. Someone who knows about frames."

"Nevertheless, those candlesticks. . ."

"We have a captain's chest," said the old man eagerly. He kicked at a battered piece of log under the umbrella stand. "Been all over the world."

"Really?" Marge smiled. She rather liked the old man but something about him made her sad, and being sad she was uncomfortable. "A captain's chest. You don't say! My husband's quite interested in navigation and ships. . ."

"Not for sale," said the old woman.

Marge turned away furiously. "Sell out, everything must go," she mimicked. She could see the old man's face, pained. Oh it was too incredible that she, who had never lost an argument, who had never left a store emptyhanded, should be so mocked! "Well, if you don't have a salad bowl, I suppose. . ."

"Go on, Mother. Go in back and see if we have a salad bowl," he pleaded. "We have plenty. Rooms-full!" Marge's eyes widened. He pushed his wife toward the door and she went out muttering. The old man came back and sidled up to Marge. "My wife's been at this for years. Why you can't imagine—we lived in the Philippines, yessir, and this was during the Spanish-American War, oh, but you're too young to recall that. Anyway, just about the same time, this Boxer Rebellion happened over in China. You heard of it?" Marge nodded dumbly.

FAIR PRICE

She could see herself transfixed in the watery sphere of his eye, confined and drowning. The old man bent forward and emptied his confidences into her ear while the false teeth clicked. "Yesiree, they looted all them Chinese temples, and somehow my wife got hold of a basket of jewels and idols and stuff (there was a black market in Manila). Oh-my, worth I can't tell you how much! And when this rich millionaire, musta been Astor himself, wants to buy the lot from Vera (that's my wife) she wouldn't sell it to him!" His breath expired on the last exclamation, half from exertion, half from wonder. "Nope. Vera says she wouldn't a-sold it for a million dollars. That's Vera for you." He laughed a moment, silently, then added, "And somehow she got hold of a pair of elephant tusks that belonged to, of all people, President Taft himself! There was scratches and cracks in 'em, but Vera fixed and polished them up like new..." A great shudder ran through Marge as though she had been impaled on an elephant tusk. I must be going crazy, she thought. "...and people was always pestering her about them horns. Museums and private societies. But Vera wouldn't think of selling. Boy oh boy, I bet Taft wishes he still had them horns!"

The old lady had come back. She approached Marge and held out two chipped pots for inspection. "Shards, I believe" she drawled. "You can see on the frieze of this one if you look closely, antelopes," she turned the pot slowly so Marge could follow, "and oxen, and a slender-bellied cat like a cheetah—popular motifs with the ancients if you know anything about Egypt or Greece. Of course, we picked this up on a dump heap in Astoria but you can never tell. I have a feeling about these things." She blew gently across the mouth of the pot as if to dislodge a secret, and a fine clay dust crumbling beneath the chipped glaze rose in a cloud before Marge's face.

"No salad bowl?" Marge asked in a scarcely audible voice.

"Hmm?"

"Never mind. And the candlestick holders. Will you consider..."

"Now let me tell you something, dearie." The old woman stood erect, her eyes narrowed in challenge. "I'm eighty-nine years old this Friday, and for a whole week I haven't been able to comb my hair because of the work. You have to give me time to set things in order and see just what I have. You can never tell about antiques." With a distracted movement Marge brushed the hair from her eyes, now large and fearful. The old woman's voice crescendoed. "And well, those candlestick holders—I already told you I wouldn't part with those for the world..."

Marge fled outside to her convertible. She did not even remember picking up her purse. For clinging to her hands, her clothes, and in her hair she could smell the store, like a loathsome greedy presence behind her.

Linda Napolin

WHITE COLUMBINE

Flickering through the dusk
Moon white
Five little phantom doves
Alight!

Then as the dark dissolves
The light
Five little dovelike ghosts
Take flight!

Elsie Binns

SISTER SNOW

Trudging barefoot through the snow
(Crooked stick for fiddle bow)
Brother Francis used to sing
Praising God for everything.

Brother Francis in the snow
Plunged his naked body, so
Brother Body should beware
Who should be the master there.

Brother Francis out of snow
Made a family to show
Wife nor child was at his side,—
Lady Poverty his bride.

Trudging barefoot, blithe and gay,
Brother Francis went his way,
(Crooked stick for fiddle bow)
Praising God for Sister Snow.

Elsie Binns

A GOTHIC TALE

Until early December, 1955, the adjective "Gothic" held just three meanings for me. Having been exposed to medieval history and appreciation of art, I had learned via Norwood and Binns that (a) it referred to the characteristics of those supermen who once overran Rome, or (b) designed architecture, pointed-arch style. Actually, after graduation, I thought very rarely of those definitions. Instead, almost always, the word was used in its everyday, Alfredian sense, as the name of a charming white building on the campus, picturesque and serene in its setting of pines.

It was only after there had been definite acknowledgement that this time-honored structure was doomed; only after a struggle to avert its total destruction had begun, that I became acquainted (and how thoroughly) with a fourth explanation of the term "Gothic", as given in the dictionary: "stressing irregularity and details, usually of a grotesque or horrible nature: a *Gothic novel*."

In the light of this statement, it seems accurate to say that the story of preservation of part of The Gothic has been Gothic, indeed.

Like a person, a displaced building, if it is to survive, must have somewhere to go. Such a nook, fortunately, I was able to provide; to get the refugee there was the problem. My acquaintanceship throughout the building-moving profession is not large; in December 1955 it consisted of one individual. (By now I know two!) He lived twenty-five miles away. This being the age of speed, it took only four telephone calls and a mere fifteen days to get him to Alfred to discuss a proposal.

On the one morning I never dreamed of his arrival (December 26th, a legal holiday last year), he came, and found me in disarray, the house littered with the inevitable day-after-Christmas debris.

Result of the interview: (1) Yes, certainly, it was possible and practical for the chapel of The Gothic to be detached and removed. Since my corner was too small to accommodate the whole of the original building, the reluctant decision had been made to rescue only a part. (2) No, he himself could not do the work. Leaving for Florida.

He did give me the name of a person who shall hereafter be known, in this narrative, as The Mover. (Capitalization, a mark of respect, is both intended and deserved). This man's home was a distance of only seventeen miles, but there was no phone. I wrote a note. There was no reply.

So, on a snowy Saturday, one of the friends of The Gothic (and here I should emphasize, once and for all, that "their name is Legion") took our respective two lives in her hands and drove over slippery roads

to Mr. Mover's abode. He was polite but not enthusiastic, and I could see why. The subject of conversation was the moving of a 105-year-old building, to be done in a few weeks, and a swirling January storm raged all the time that we talked.

Still, he promised to "come and see" when weather permitted. It did not permit for a week. Again, the visit occurred when least expected, when the day was blustery and the bookshop busiest. With never an interval between customers, and in order not to be overheard, our confidential matters had to be discussed outside, on the lawn.

In spite of such an inhospitable welcome, Mr. Mover examined, computed, consented, and quoted a reasonable price. That night there was general rejoicing among the previously mentioned "friends of The G." Our greatest worry had been probable cost; since that could be met, the rest would be easy, we thought. How naive!

The University owned the prize which we coveted, so an interview with the President was the next step. Oh, there were preliminaries . . . deciding which people should wait upon him, what time could be found convenient for all, and the like. They took a weekend out of my life.

Did I say "the next step"? To obtain an hour with the President was like climbing a stairway without end. (1) He was out of town. (2) The afternoon of his return was already full. (3) Saturday and Sunday intervened. (4) Monday afternoon he was leaving again, and a Monday-morning audience would be too hurried, we feared. (5) Absent Tuesday, all day. (6) Time of return Wednesday morning not known. (7) Wednesday afternoon? Success! Two o'clock.

In the meantime, a public announcement had been made that, by March first, ground would be broken for the newcomer; if so, it meant that annihilation of the oldster was imminent. Each morning, as soon as my eyes were unglued from sleep, I gave a hasty, apprehensive look down the street. There would be a sigh of relief when I came by at night. Still there.

By now it was January eighteenth.

The President was astonished but favorable. As we expected, he would have to talk over the matter with others, but refusal was not anticipated. Flushed with success, the committee (which included a minister) followed the old Alfred custom of adjourning to the Collegiate, where drinks for all (coffee and chocolate, that is) were bought by one of the members in celebration of an historic event. Again, a bit premature.

It was when trustees and alwyers, contractors and inspectors, insurance agents and state employees, Workmen's Compensation clerks and representatives of public utilities, papers and letters and permits began

A GOTHIC TALE

to enter the picture, that the fun really began. Especially the papers! Those which came through with reasonable speed, because they were drawn up nearby, by lawyers in Andover or Wellsville, took protracted concentration—on my part at least—even to read. Like all legal documents, they bristled with “witnesseth” and “whereas” and “thereto”, with “party of the second part” and “assigns” (a noun, not a verb!), with “and/or” and “severally acknowledged” and “inures”. Insurance certificates, on the other hand, were less complex in their language; the trouble with them was the length of time which elapsed before they even appeared! To secure a single thin sheet, containing a total of thirty typewritten words inserted on a form already printed, required a trip to Elmira on the part of The Mover, then one to Rochester; finally, after delay of a week (the clerk had promised him it would be mailed the same day!), a telephone call to the Rochester office by me. “Just working on it now,” said the employee brightly, when I tried to imbue her with some sense of urgency. Not a nail could be drawn out or a board lifted off until this paper was resting on the President’s desk.

As for the impressive and expensive insurance with the high-sounding title of “Public Liability and Property Damage Coverage”, I shall not even attempt to tell about *that*. The episode would be too lengthy, painful, and perhaps not correct, for by then my mind was so inundated that it could hardly distinguish a hand from a seal.

However, at long last, on February second, two months from the time when the idea was born, a formidable contract was signed, giving the party of the first, second, or third part (I am not sure which, but, at any rate, myself) the right to “begin to commence” to proceed with the “demolition and/or removal” of the now denuded Gothic, “said demolition and/or removal” to be finished in thirty days.

The year’s shortest month, up in these hills, is often the wickedest, but February 1956 was ominously quiet. There was plenty of snow, to be sure, and it was below zero at times; but nevertheless Mr. Mover and men were able steadily to take down, pry up, tear off, and haul away. The careful workmanship of a more painstaking era was obliterated; the beams two feet wide disappeared. Often, as the timbers were severed, one could still smell the pine, though more than a century had passed since those trees had been hewn. “The old Gothic is going down,” said the passerby sadly, and the only solace was a hopeful reply (labeled “wishful thinking” by some): “Yes, but not all of it.”

By the first days of March there stood the chapel, alone. Scarred on its separated side, looking unduly thin, tall and a trifle askew when away from the ground, up on its rollers, it still stood. It was started on its way and brought down to the street; it did not collapse. The prophecies of the pessimists had not been fulfilled.

Then, as a final test by the fates, the weather did its worst. The rains descended, the snows melted, and the floods came. Highways

were closed. For a while not even the Mover himself could get into town, and as for machinery—the thought was fantastic.

Hardly had the terrain recovered when a new onslaught began—a foot of snow. Literally, mathematically, and in one operation, so to speak. Few need reminding of that havoc.

Therefore, for most of a March whose precipitation was five inches and ninety-nine hundredths (the wettest in forty-three years, with a snowfall of thirty-two inches—and a tenth!), the chapel sat by the Brick. Its front feet protruded over the curb, and a pine branch dangled coquettishly from one of the eaves. In April, as I write, it is still there.

Not until March 23rd was the building able to ride triumphantly up the hill, to round the corner (passing over boards laid atop of the hydrant!) and descend into the Sayles Street location. Students and residents watched and admired; cameras clicked and the carillon played. There was a tense moment when a bump was encountered and a support under one of the corners gave way. The Gothic quivered; it almost toppled, but it did not fall. A symbol, perhaps.

A question may occur to the reader. Why did an old wooden building seem worth the anxiety, frustration, money and, most of all, time? Its various champions would have different answers, of course, and I do not presume to speak with authority for them all.

To me, for instance, The Gothic represented a unique, earlier Alfred, with qualities of pleasantness, simplicity, individuality, integrity. It was an outward and visible sign of intangibles which, some of us hope, will always endure.

Hazel Humphreys



CHANT

Cut, crease of sea,
Green-folded furrow;
Jut, plodding prow
...and let time smooth your wake.

Surge, plank of pine,
Roll, pitching quarter.
Dirge, yonder buoy,
...and let time stand your wake;

Time, for time's sake.

Stanley Harris

EVENING WALK

Resolve myself anew: I'll settle down.
(Pond'ring now, as slowly I move toward town.)
Resolve I'll love my wife, my child; be serious.
(The boys at the bar'll whisper, "Delirious!"
And snicker, spill malt. But the boys won't know
The pride that I'll feel, nor the inner glow
That comes when a man has won the good fight,
Has upheld his honor, fought for his right.)
Yes sir! I'll tell'em, and will I be proud!
And then when they snicker, I'll laugh out loud;
For they'll be the circus and I'll be the throng;
And theirs are the dirges and mine the song.
...And then as in passing, as part of a game,
An oak leaf of red falls, laughing my name.

Stanley Harris

INTERLUDE

The "Late Late Show" drifts from the
TV set

And I am half sleeping
half awake.

Visions of a summer world I laughed
and grew in
Amble through my riddled senses.

High Jersey hills, dirt roads,
A stucco Shangri-la,
A waterfall . . .

Minnows dart among the shadows
of the rocks,

Black and amber shining quick
past grasping fingers.

An olive frog frightened slides
beneath the sod.

Crows' cries ring the sweet air,
and a Belgian hare

Hops from the cluster of clovergreen stems
and freezes
till he blends with the reddish road.

Cars never trouble this light
sunbaked dust
that stretches the peaceful road away.

The gangster gasps his last
As the "Syncopated Clock" beats out a dirge.

From the street comes the nasal beep
of a horn.

As I click off the image, I am assured
L & M's are milder.

Barbara Ruth Strauss

A PARABLE

Mr. Rauber absent-mindedly soaked his greying handkerchief in the glass of cold beer. He placed the cloth on the back of his head, letting the liquid flow down his neck, between his shoulder blades and deep into the recesses of his sweaty undershirt. This act of pure self-gratification resulted in a lengthy wheeze that trickled through the hot dead air and fell, once more, on his own ears with curious satisfaction.

It was immorally hot for May, a fact which Mr. Rauber rejoiced in. He sweated with the pleasure of a man in a Turkish bath, washing himself from time to time both inwardly and outwardly with cold beer and observing from behind the screens on his side porch his 75 x 100 foot lot.

His eyes lit with joy on the long irregular growth of vines at the far side of his lawn. "My strawberry patch," he said mentally. "It's a patch, dat's a patch." He affirmed his own statement with such conviction that he felt the saliva come to his mouth. Then with his eye he picked the berries one by one and put them in his mouth till his tongue curled against his gums in expectation. In his wildest fancies he would be a ten year old boy with a large wooden bucket. He would go into the patch in the morning when the earth was still wet and pick berries till the bucket was full and smeared with red. His mother would hull and wash the berries and sprinkle them with brown sugar, and he would eat them from a blue china dish, with milk still warm from the cow.

With the patch he marked his year—expectation in the winter, revel in the spring, dormancy in the summer, lamentation in the fall. Its roots were as thick in his nature as they were in the soil, until the identity of man and plant subtly eroded each other into oneness.

Mr. Rauber was on the point of being overcome with self-satisfaction when his eyes strayed above his lot line. In the preceding year men had come into the seedy vacant lot and torn away the decaying remains of the apple orchard that stood there. They ripped into eel grass and burdock, 'dozed into rotting layers of grass and humus and lay bare the dun-colored clay underneath. There, with assuring fidelity, they placed a home like a thousand other homes, ranch-type, picture-windowed, faced with real simulated field stone and possessing of a wrought iron mail-box that stated "1440, H. L. Murd."

At this moment he could see Mrs. H. L. Murd stalking the lot line, turning for brief moments of animated conversation with her husband, Mr. H. L. Murd, who was single-mindedly spraying dog repellent on the tiny evergreens in the front yard. From time to time

she would stand her ground, and with the weight of the veiled prophetic, she would point toward the tangle of vines.

Mr. Rauber caught the unpleasant words "lot line" and later the unhappy term "deed," and finally the disastrous word "survey." After dinner he sat in the growing cool of the evening and listened to Mrs. Murd's voice coming from the kitchen window steady, toneless and unyielding, broken only by the occasional counterpoint of Mr. Murd, who would make sounds like a small boy who is told he can't have a dog. That night the light burned late in the Murd bedroom and fell across Mr. Rauber's sleepless form until the streetlights alone broke the brick wall of darkness and the night had pasted everything shut along the street.

The next afternoon, as he eased his beer truck between the woodpile and the abandoned outhouse, he saw a pimply youth tying a long white line between two stakes. It was only after a moment that he noticed the strawberry patch was behind the line. "What cha' doin'?" he wheezed to the boy. "Surveyor's helper," idled the line tier. "What cha' layin' that for?" Mr. Rauber asked, pointing a cracked fingernail at the line. "New lot line," said the boy, sighting the line on his hands and knees. "Doin' it for the Murd's. Helluva mistake here, 15-20 feet. Puts this here whole strawberry patch on their land." "It does!" said Mr. Rauber, and the hatred began to rise in him. "It does," said Mr. Rauber, and the hatred fell like pieces of dust in a quiet room. "It does," said Mr. Rauber, and turning, he went into the house. That night he did not sit on the side porch.

For a while his wife pestered him to have a talk with Mr. Murd about the new lot line, but his unyielding silence wore her down, and by midsummer she had accepted the change as permanent. Meanwhile the white line had been replaced by a real simulated fieldstone wall, and the strawberry patch had fallen to the superior technology of Mr. Murd's gasoline cultivator.

In front of the wall (with a vast amount of engineering on the part of Mrs. Murd) the Murds planted a rose garden "Nothin' in there less'en five dollars," confided Mrs. Murd to her neighbors on the other side. The rose garden became her sole passion, for which she required Mr. Murd to draw vast amounts of chicken manure and peat-moss, and constantly dig new beds in the dirty yellow clay.

As the summer faded, however, so did Mrs. Murd; and as the last of the rose petals fell in the autumn she was not seen again in the year. In December she had a stroke, and this fact whispered through the elms on the street, until it reached Mrs. Rauber's ears. Mr. Rauber heard it at dinner. "Ya know, Herman, Mrs. Murd hadda stroke. Her whole left side's gone, can't talk nither. Imagin' that, and she's out there yellin' jist a coupla months ago. 'Member how mother was when

A PARABLE

she . . ." But his wife's words faded from his thoughts as his mind filled with its own laughter.

Early in the spring Mr. Rauber went to the old city dump in back of his house. Already the eel grass waved about his waist, and the burdock grew like plantains under the willows and on huge piles of rotting leaves. He came back at dusk and turning his truck lights on the Murd's stonewall, he worked into the night planting the things he had dug out of the dump.

By the first week it became clear that the plants were wild grapes, by the second week they began to creep instinctively over the wall and into the neat beds of roses, and by the third week the first green tendrils shot around the plants and drew the green branches into the bosom of leaves under which they lay choked and black.

When spring was becoming full-blown enough to be called summer, Mrs. Murd had herself dragged to the window. There, Mr. Rauber saw her white-faced, staring into the garden, searching the grape vines with her eyes, watching the quiet battle below her. Green tendrils shot out, curling against branches, nuzzling leaves, grasping them with baby's hands. In the richness of time they turned rope-like brown, defying a man to break their grasp. Hungrily the leaves sent the rains sliding from their shiny surfaces, trickling them to the ground, where their own roots drank deeply of the water. Leisurely they spread themselves wide in the sunlight, like green flapjacks, until all that tried to grow beneath grew white, curled brown, and turned a dead featureless black, like the earth below.

Each day, as the vines conquered more of the roses, Mr. Rauber saw Mrs. Murd's fishbelly face sink nearer and nearer the window ledge, as her body seemed to wither below her neck. By midsummer the vines themselves caused comment from his wife. "Never seen vines like that, Herman, so big, like they was feedin' on something dead in there. So big, maybe a squirrel got in there and died. Maybe that's why they're so big. Don'tcha think? Maybe that's why."

Mr. Rauber smiled a careful smile at his wife's words and the vines grew larger.

From time to time Mr. Murd would come into the yard, look at the rose garden, shake his head and mutter between his gold teeth. But he was much too busy with the shrinking Mrs. Murd to weed, and even the grass grew high between the simulated real flagstones on the patio. By the late summer the vines had reclaimed the rose garden and they hung heavy weighted with their own green fruit.

On the day Mrs. Murd died, Mr. Rauber picked the hugh clusters of grapes that hung from his vines. He had asked Mr. Murd if he might pick the grapes that lay on his land, and the distracted little

Henry Kass

man had said he didn't care, and that he was selling the house and moving away soon anyway, and that he could do what he pleased with the land. So Mr. Rauber had collected the purple grapes in scrubbed ash cans from his cellar; and as the hearse pulled from the Murd's driveway he thought of how much better grapes were than strawberries. He would take them now to the old wop that squatted on the dumps. He could make them into "guinea red" and they would sit together in the long winter, drinking and feeling the warmth of summer in their bellies.

Henry Kass

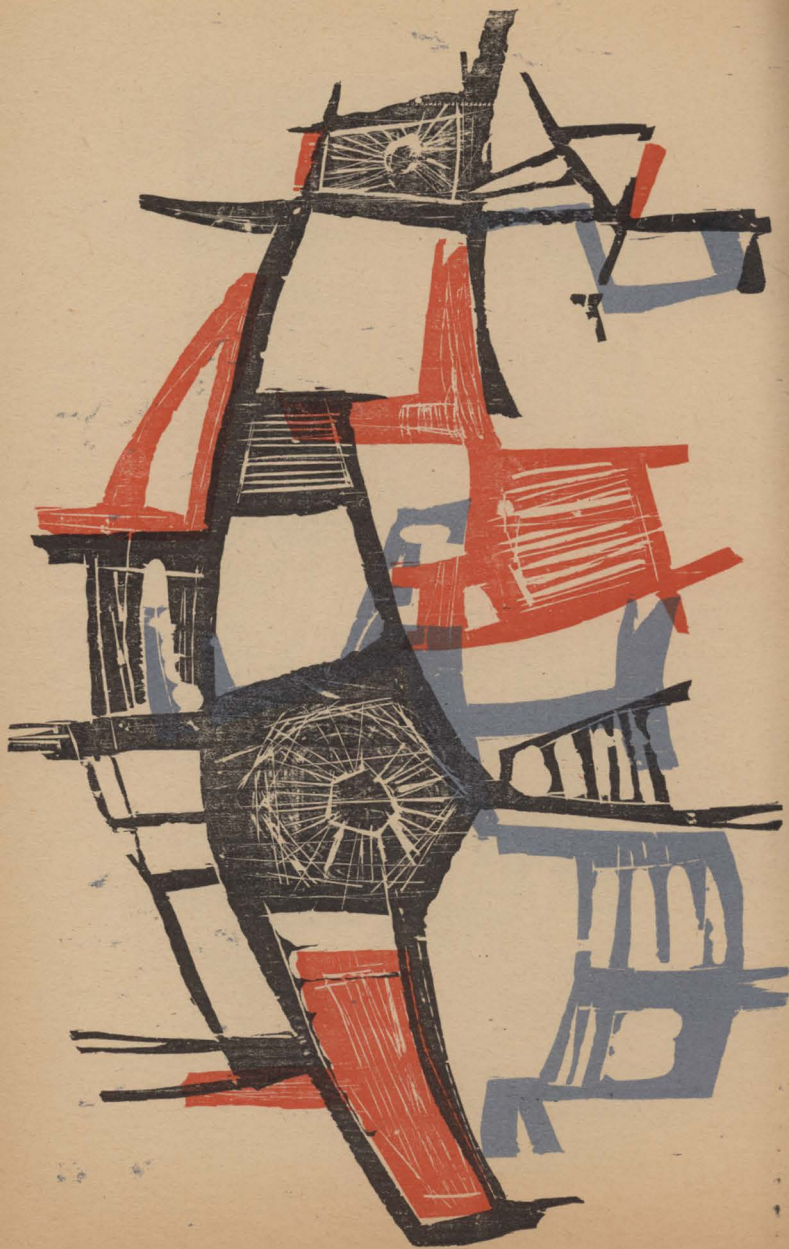
TO ENTER THE KINGDOM

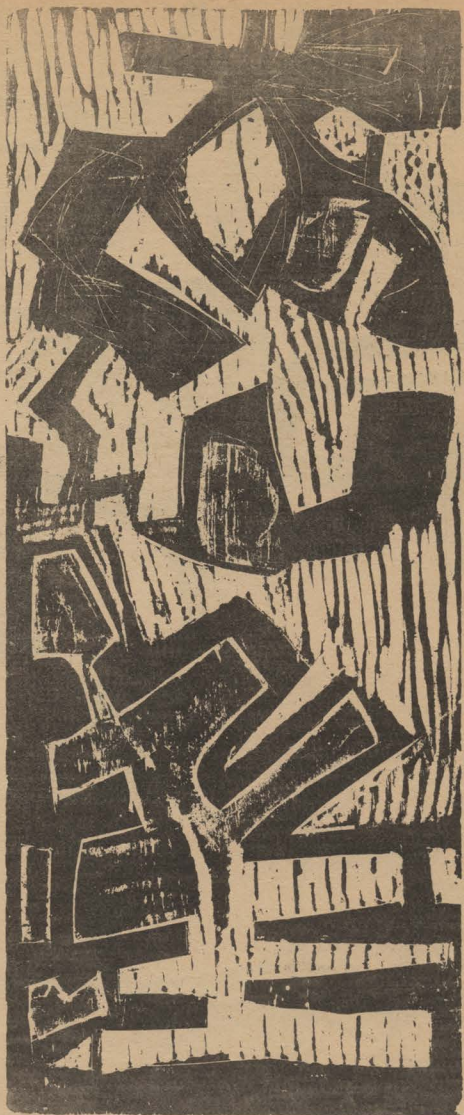
I am the unborn
Son of the House.
I watch while you pray
I am to be born
In the sign of the Fish
And arrive the Third Day.

I hear the beat
Of my mother's heart
I feel her sigh,
I know the touch
Of my father's hand
He waits for my cry.

The sound of the spheres
Is strong in my ears
And the heave of breath
In the earth. Now the tie
With eternity is torn,
I must die to be born.

Fay March





PICASSO and the SPANISH TRADITION

As one walks through El Prado in Madrid and sees a crucified Christ with large globules of blood dripping on the crippled body, sees the expression of pain on the face of Jesus, then walks on to see the sensuousness of the Maja in various stages of dress and undress, one can feel and understand the emotional paradox of Spain.

Spain is a land of mystery, of complexity and passion, a blending of many peoples. Southern passion and northern formalism have left their mark on Spanish generations. The spontaneity and intuitive constant of the Africans of the North and the intellectuality of Spain's northern neighbors have resulted in the glorifying of basic needs and desires and the subordination of these desires to conform to a medieval Christian morality. Yet necromancy, superstition and pride still veil the peninsula. The Spaniard has glorified and celebrated his emotional inheritance through his various artistic expressions — music, dance and the visual arts.

It occurs to me that a combination of emotion of a particular nature, and a quality of unrest and revolution, anxiety, stemming from his native environment of Spain, may explain the paradox of Picasso's abstract approach and innovation in painting, which emerges from a strict academic background. In these halls of El Prado are collected reflections of historical significance of the Spanish personality. In Zurbaran's audacious revelation of "St. Luke Painting the Crucified Christ" — certainly a strangely conceived compilation of subject matter — or the ugly, mysterious figures crouching around a fire, Goya's "Witches' Sabbath," or the proud figures of "The Family of Charles IV" of Goya; then the complete contradictions of Velasques, his portraits of queens, kings, and children: herein is reflected the basic emotions of the Spanish people.

One walks through this museum and sees students copying, painstakingly, these works of art. The mood created by El Greco's "View of Toledo", of the distortions of the "Pentecost", or of the "Resurrection", all evidence of the Spanish temperament. Consider, then, this background and place the man Picasso, at the age of nineteen, in Paris, France. The emotions of the Spanish may be deeper, more complicated, of a greater variety, but never, never so obviously displayed as by the French.

Place Picasso in the Bateau Lavoir, a boarding house in Montmartre, surrounded by inventive minds, all revolting against the "universal" criteria of decency. This rooming house was a "petri" dish of pure, basic emotion, allowed to grow with much food from the minds of its occupants. The result of this new acclimatization allowed all the force of Spanish emotional psychology to explode. Any ugliness Picasso had

seen in Spain, and verily wherever he went, became beautiful in his hands. The beauty he created caused him to state, on occasion, that painting is a lie. Picasso recalled in this atmosphere *La Saltambique*, those sorrowful creatures who roam the country as lost souls with their colorful yet depressive outfits; Picasso's sensitivity allowed him to assimilate, digest, and finally recreate these creatures as a lasting edifice to their deprivation. He draws in pencil a "Mother and Child", with a tenderness unsurpassed, although equalled by Morales and others. The greatness of Ingres becomes rejuvenated and warm with life. Picasso is disgusted and pained by Guernica, that small Spanish town destroyed by bombs. This is again against humanity, and he must react to it. "Guernica" becomes a huge mural—somber tones of gray, black, white are used. The horror of a mother screaming with her dead child in her arms; a figure burns alive in a house; a passion of insanity grips a woman as Picasso exposes the "Horrors de la Guerre." This, then, is the reality Picasso seeks and is tormented by, through his Spanish inheritance of a gruesome reality. Here is humanity in its loathesome, incurable state. It is not difficult to parallel Goya's "Witches' Sabbath," Zurbaran's "St. Luke Painting the Crucified Christ", St. Peter Nolasco's "Vision of St. Peter and the Apostle," "The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew" to "Guernica," the nefarious monument of Picasso.

Besides enforcing the hypersensitive realism of Spanish personality, this environment excited his anxiety. What prevents us from calling Picasso an eclectic—in the literal, narrow sense—is his constant innovations, his being provoked by anxiety and genius. The whole atmosphere of Spain has brought this impressionable man of wisdom to search for a more elemental method of speaking. The problems of combining human feelings with a "purer" nature, together with respect and cognizance of medium, Picasso feels strongly. And with such strength that he spends a great part of his life resolving this, first with a new approach to naturalism (Neo-Classic, Blue and Pink periods) which on occasion borders on over-sentimentality; through various stages of this naturalism to perhaps his greatest contribution to twentieth-century art, the philosophy of Cubism, from there to various stages of analysis to other provocative periods.

Provoked by the past, certainly, but always going beyond what had been done, taking his cue, so to speak, from other great artists, Cezanne becomes Picasso's assistant, not Picasso an apostle of Cezanne. This enormous, intrinsically Spanish perversion for the "real," the basic, the essence of life, combined with an anxious, fierce, passionate psychological set, enables Picasso to combine reality with illusion.

To be more explicit, the intensity of emotion is the real, while the method used by Picasso (especially in the various cubistic approaches), for example in the "Harlequin and his Family" (1908), becomes the illusion. In the above-mentioned work, the cubist approach is clear

enough, an intellectualization of planes manipulated in space, pleasing but unimaginative color, for the purpose of intensifying the basically alalytical approach, while the size of the small Harlequin and discernible, larger figures, representing the family, tower over the smaller figure. The position, rather than the location of the plane representing the hand of the figure on the left, creates an intense feeling of the child being closed in, perhaps protected, by the larger figures representing the family. The great manifestation of the "Weeping Woman," again treated in a cubistic way, regards with great sensitivity.

Truly, Picasso has worked in all media. He has scratched designs into the wall of his villa in Valleries; he has painted mural-like paintings of war; he has done small, greatly moving expressions of women, men, and children, as well as graphics of superior quality. (Here more than anywhere else is Picasso indebted to Ingres.) All through this museum of productivity, at his own museum in Antibes, in travelling shows of his works throughout Europe and America and the rest of the world, always is preserved the medium with the same delicacy as he preserves a fleeting impression of emotion. In Picasso's case art is communication, a communication of a personal feeling toward life.. Nothing is ugly to Picasso, his hand and his mind refine to beauty. So sensitive are Picasso's reactions that he must find more than one way to express the reaction. He has said: "Whenever I had something to say I have said it in the manner in which I have felt it ought to be said. Different motives inevitable require defferent methods of expression." One can easily see how in a recent work, "First Steps," an approach through distortion creates a child's excitements and pleasure, and the mother's anxiety and yet pleasureable approval. Through this architecture he consummates a union between subjective emotionality and objective consideration of his medium. Picassa has osmosed the walls of El Prado, the Louvre, and selected in his mind what was essential in these paintings— the beauty of the psychology of man.

Picasso's suggestions have allowed De Kooning, Gorky, Pollak, and the whole school of the non-objective expressionists to function. Where the Renaissance was shocked by this discovery of a complicated organism called man, Picasso has reasoned rationally, not as an niconoclast but as one who knows the necessary method of expression through art.

Bertram Katz

THE SELLING POINT

The wrench slid off the fender onto the grass. Chuck straightened up to see where it had gone and hit his head on the raised hood. The hand he put on the bump left a smear of grease on his blond crewcut. He located the wrench and went back to work whistling through his teeth. It was getting dark now and it became harder and harder for him to see what he was doing. With a sigh Chuck put the hood down and looked at his watch. Eight-thirty. He remembered that he'd had a date for seven with Nora, or was it Sue. Oh well. He shrugged and sat down on the running board. He really shouldn't have stayed so long. It would mean another scene with his mother and grandmother because he hadn't come home for supper. That cylinder wasn't just right yet. When that was done she ought to do a good 115.

He got up and slid down the bank to the creek to wash his hands. She was a good car. A Ford, '51. Plain black and sleek. He didn't go in for this flashy kid stuff. She was a convertible and about as low as he could make her. She could take a curve and you wouldn't even think you'd left the flat road. He climbed back up the bank and wiped the mud from his moccasins on the grass. Tomorrow was Wednesday and he could come out early since they quit work at noon. It was nice out here by the creek and there weren't too many trees to make you feel hemmed in. A guy could breathe out here. He looked up over the car and saw the lights from the cars on the far hill blinking around the trees. Suddenly a burst of sound hit him. He hadn't noticed it before but the birds and the crickets were really making some racket.

He got in the car and sat for a moment relishing the feeling of being a part of the car, not just the driver. He turned the key and a muffled rumble rose under the hood. He strained his ears for the smallest squeak or knock but hearing none switched on the lights and turned the car around. He drove slowly up the hill to the road, conscious of the slow silent power beneath him. At the top of the hill he wheeled the car on to the high way and pushed the accelerator to the floor. The car leaped forward leaving a spray of dirt and gravel fanned out across the road.

Five minutes later he turned the car into his driveway and switched off the key. He stretched and felt the pull in his back. "Those damn packing cases," he thought. "What I'd give to get away from that lousy store." A shrill voice came from the direction of the house. "And from that too," he added as he slammed the car door.

"Well, Charles, it's about time you got home. We work and slave here all day and you haven't the decency to even show up for supper."

"Good evening, Grandmother." Chuck made an elaborate bow, then opened the screen door and let it slam, but it only drowned a few of her words.

". . . like your father. I suppose you were out monkeying with that worthless car."

Chuck opened the refrigerator door and took out a bottle of milk. "Well, were you?"

The refrigerator door didn't make enough of a slam to help any. He took a loaf of bread and the jar of peanut butter from the cupboard.

"You're always out there loafing when you could be here doing a little work. You're just like your father was. Never do anything if you can get out of it."

He pulled open the silver drawer and looked at the butcher knife. Nah, she'd just bleed all over the floor and Mom would have to clean it up. He took out the bread knife and pushed the drawer shut. "Where's Mom?" he asked.

"I'm right here," she said from the doorway. "Nora called and said to tell you she'd wait if you wanted to come over later."

So it was Nora he'd had the date with. Well, he was too tired tonight. He'd call her next week or the week after. His grandmother was talking again. "If I were her I wouldn't waste my time on a worthless good-for-nothing like him. He's just like his father."

"Mother, please. I'd like to talk to Chuck alone." She sank into the chair opposite him.

"Don't worry, I have better things to do than stay here and watch you baby him when he should be slapped good."

He wished she would. He'd like an excuse to break her neck for her. He looked at her for the first time that evening and watched her cross the kitchen to his mother. She pushed the hair back on her forehead as if she were still a little girl. "I'm afraid you have a fever, dear. You should be in bed. It's no wonder you're sick. You get rid of one worthless good-for-nothing man and then have to go through the same thing all over again." He suppressed the urge to throw the milk bottle at her. His mother was in the way.

"Please, Mother. Go in the other room."

He leaned his chair back and put one foot on the stool beside him. "Why bother sending her out? She'll just listen at the door."

His mother leaned on the table with one hand over her eyes.

". . . . you get rid of one man and then have to go through the same thing all over again." Chuck pulled down his grandmother's words from where they hung in the air. ". . . . go through the same thing all over again." He set his chair on the floor and leaned on the table.

THE SELLING POINT

His mother lifted her head. The words rushed out. "It's not good for any of us. You just can't seem to get along with her. And after all you're young and can easily get a job somewhere else. You're not home most of the time anyway." The rest caught in her throat.

Chuck stared at his mother. It was so quiet in the room he could hear the pulse beating in his head. Then he was walking across the kitchen and pushing open the door to the hall. His mother was sobbing behind him. He walked down the hall past the living room where his grandmother was watching television. He opened the door and closed it softly behind him as he stepped out on the porch. The night air was cool. He turned to look at his car. The chrome was gleaming in the lights from the house.. He could almost feel the way it rode around a curve, the way it responded to his every touch. He walked slowly down the steps and turned toward the corner. His footsteps sounded heavy and hollow on the sidewalk.

It took him a long time to walk to the corner. Everytime he looked up from the sidewalk he saw his mother standing before him with the tears rolling down her face. He was beside a car now. A beautiful blue DeSoto parked alongside the curb. "It must be a salesman's car," he thought as he noticed the large boxes in the back seat. He longed to lift up the hood and look the motor over. He thought of his car at home and wondered if it could out-do this one. At home. . . . He turned away quickly. He had been standing in front of a bar. The door swished shut behind him with a hiss that sounded like air brakes.

He stood just inside not knowing what to do. There was one man at the bar. Chuck figured he belonged to the car outside. The chic sportsjacket, bow tie, and blond hair seemed to match it. The bartender who had been polishing glasses looked up. "Want something, son?"

Chuck walked over to the bar and slid onto a stool. "Yeh."

"Well, what'll it be?" the bartender asked.

"I'll . . . I'll have the same as he has," Chuck said pointing to the man, who was sitting two stools away from him. Up close Chuck noticed his thin mustache and the graying temples.

The man stared at him, then smiled and said, "Hello, kid."

The bartender set the drink in front of him. "That'll be forty cents."

Chuck slid his hand in his pocket but he knew it was empty. A fifty cent piece slid across the bar. Chuck looked up at the man. "Thanks," he said.

"My name's Dan, what's yours?"

Chuck told him.

Ellen Lipsey

"Saw you looking at my car. You got a car?"

There was silence for a moment, then Chuck said, "No."

"That's tough. Kid your age should have one. I've had one since I was fifteen. Always had to tear them apart to see how they ran."

The drink sat where the bartender had placed it. Chuck was staring at his hands. They still showed the grease.

"You live around here?" the man asked.

Chuck swallowed hard. "No, no I don't." He looked up. "I was just passing through."

"So am I. I'm going on to Hartford tonight. Say, could I give you a ride, or aren't you going my way?"

"Yeh, I guess I am." Chuck said.

The bartender turned the television on. It blared out, but Chuck couldn't hear it. He was listening to the crickets, the birds, and his mother's sobs.

Ellen Lipsey

TEN POEMS

ELEGY FOR MY FATHER

It happened
When the leaves had turned
To farewell colors
And the trees
Were bent against the wind,
That reckless wind
That swept him from me
Like a leaf.

So-like a leaf he held,
With failing hand, until
He somehow slipped away from me
Into The Night That Has No End.

The trees
Shall see another summer;
And I, another;
But mine: a leafless summer.

AFTERWARDS

We put away our mourning ties
And new black pockets
Though, within them yet
There lies
The newness still of Death
And half-called funeral cries
So bravely stilled
Before their rise.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE SNOW?

Have you forgotten
How, in the night,
A light snow can cover the ground,
The whole countryside for miles around,
In back of the barn
And our favorite tree by the creek,
White with crispy lace
As clean as a fresh-scrubbed face
Seen in the bright sunlight?
And how the snow somehow
Miraculously falls on everything?
Even the smallest stones
With bare heads above the busy water
Are fitted tightly at night
With finely knitted sleeping caps,
And laps of tracks,
Frozen in the mud,
Are filled from rim to rim with it,
And, as far as you can see,
From hill to hill,
Everything celebrates
In the stiffly starched best
Of a Sunday vest,
As off to church they go!
And I want to know,
Have you forgotten about the snow?

I SOAR! WITH THE EAGLE SOAR!

I soar!
With the Eagle soar!
To a high green mountain where
My faith
Like a fountain in the air
Springs forth
With the roar of the sea-surf
By the shore!

I fly!
With the White Dove fly
From the past,
To the quiet lease at last
Of a still-born peace,
Where fears, like echoes, die
On the edge
Of a morning sky.

THE COMMUTER

I saw myself among the dead
Where empty faces
Talked in words
From hollow sockets said
Or read the outcome of the races
Or the market drop
And in the littleness of their bigness, then,
They lost themselves again
To the bigness of their littleness
And marching off the mourning train
They haunt tree shadows left
On many-treeless streets.

IN EVERY WORK OF ART I FIND

For me,
In every work of art,
In a timeless world apart from now or thenness, lies
The essence of a life
Suspended in its breathing . . .
Like time that neither to the night
Nor day belongs.
I find it everywhere . . .
In masterpieces living out secluded lives
In mausoleums with an entrance fee.
I find it even in the shards
Of broken Grecian urns that lie upon their backs
And grope around like helpless words
In search of Unity. And in
The cool solidity of stone
On every sculptured face is traced
The evidence of Man,
And poised immovable unmoistened lips
Sing mutely of his soul,
Imprisoned,
Free!
Alive.

GREEN THUMB

I live alone,
My wife is dead
(She's buried in the flower bed.)
I dug up ivy
And planted Myrtle,
And now the garden
Is very fertile.

SALEM

The witch I got for Christmas
Wasn't even done,
But I finished roasting her
And made it lots of fun.

MAY NIGHT

A stained-glass fragrance
Fills the night and chlorophyls the air
While the rain falls like cathedral dust
And sisters of the cloister night
Ring loudly silent bells.

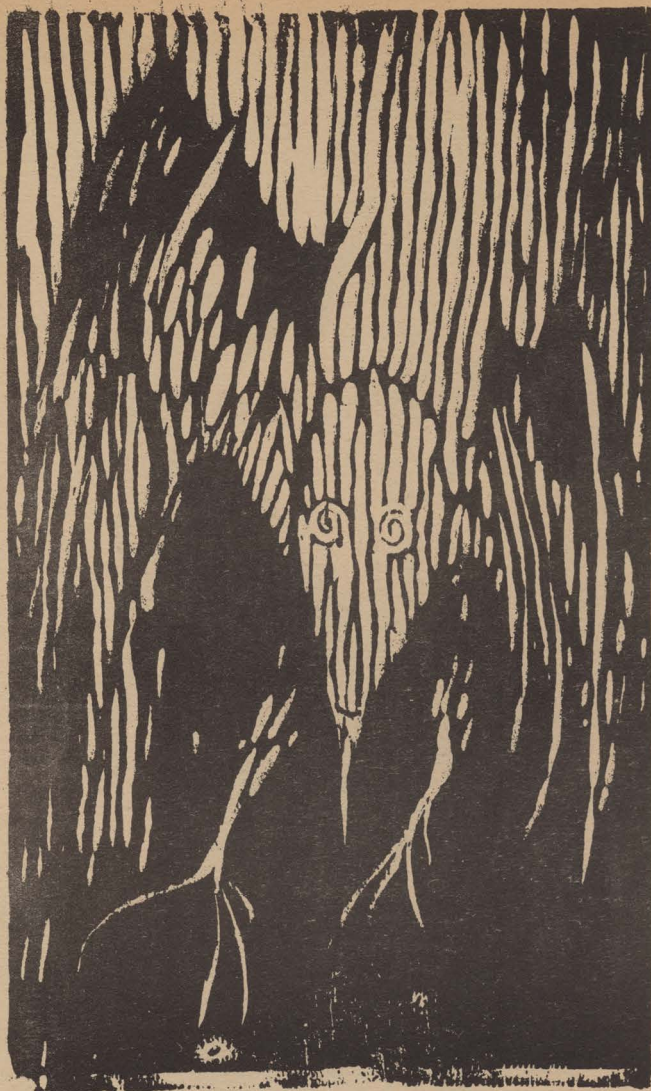
THE DANCE OF A MOURNING CHILD

Tear-Soft, Petal Face
That harkens to the quickened pace
Of anxious feet
That scarcely ruff the dust,
Do you mourn the early end of summer
Or the stuffings of some doll
So well-remembered
In your plight,
Or some forgotten feather found,
Bereft of bird that left
In flight?
Perhaps some kindred soul
That walks forever in the Night
Where Echoes are?
Or did some favorite star
Forget to shine its light
For you?

Petalface
Or Pansy Face With Tears,
Do you know what sorrow sets
The rhythm of your dance,
What fears,
The deepness of your trance,
Or do you only dance,
Dance, dance?











THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

Some men know that man was created in the image of God. Because some men know this and keep telling others of us that this is a fact, these others of us either believe them, or call them fools, or we want to believe them.

Those of us who believe this begin acting like creatures in the image of God; those of us who say that the idea is nonsense go on acting as usual; and those of us who want to believe remain in a condition of indecision and doubt.

Those who act like creatures created in the image of God are impressive and attractive persons. They move through the routine required by the circumstances of life with a sure step, a generous spirit, and a concern that others might come to the liberating awareness that men are created in the image of God.

Those who are sure that the idea is foolishness run about telling their friends that there is a silly notion in circulation purporting that man is created in the image of God, and these people have a good time laughing and making fun of the foolishness of the deluded ones.

Those who would like to believe the saying that man was created in the image of God are, of all, the most miserable; they are deprived the joy of the believers and the merriment of the scoffers; they must remain in a state of perplexity in which they are unable either to enjoy the simple pleasures of life or to allow themselves a natural sadness in its miseries.

Some men know that man was not created. Because some men know this and keep telling others of us that this is a fact, these others of us either believe them, or call them fools, or we want to believe them.

Those of us who believe this begin acting like creatures who were not created; those of us who say that the idea is nonsense go on acting as usual; and those of us who want to believe remain in a condition of indecision and doubt.

Those who act like creatures who were not created are impressive and attractive persons. They move through the routine required by the circumstances of life with a sure step, a generous spirit, and a concern that others might come to the liberating awareness that men are not created.

Those who are sure that the idea is foolishness run about telling their friends that there is a silly notion in circulation purporting that man was not created, and these people have a good time laughing and making fun of the foolishness of the deluded ones.

Those who would like to believe the saying that man was not created are, of all, the most miserable; they are deprived the joy of the believers and the merriment of scoffers; they must remain in a state of

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perplexity in which they are unable either to enjoy the simple pleasures of life or to allow themselves a natural sadness in its miseries.

These are contrasting anthropological concepts. Though opposed, they do, in fact, develop identical responses. In so far as the responses are identical, we are required to conclude that (1) men who are confident in their knowledge of what man is manifest the characteristics of confidence, which characteristics are identical no matter how varied the notions are in which the confidences might be placed; (2) those who believe that nothing can be believed are neither genuinely happy nor genuinely unhappy; and (3) those who want a sure definition but cannot come to a commitment, are perplexed and remain annoyed in their indecision.

It follows from this that what a man's life actually is is determined in a fundamental way by what he believes to be the truth about man. In other words, systems of anthropology are determinative in the life of human beings. We have seen how two contrasting concepts can produce the responses of trust, cynicism, and doubt. But these responses are always dependent, contingent, and temporary as we shall try to show.

II

So far we have said only that definitions in anthropology are actually important factors in the shaping of human life. The effect of these ideas is construed to be similar to other causal factors in life such as climate, geographical location, time and place, or what are frequently designated as the "accidental" factors determining the nature of human experience. We have not intended to imply that trust is either better than cynicism or doubt, or that either of the latter is better or worse than either of the others. We have simply tried to state a cause-effect relationship between man and the ideas he happens to hold.

But however cautious the intention, trust, cynicism, and doubt are value-words. They cannot even be listed without eliciting a judgment of good, better, best. Values, as such, always invite the structuring of an hierarchy of relations; this is the inevitable response we make to values as we apprehend them.

Moreover, when we are conscious of any values, either singly or in an hierarchical structure, we are compelled to identify our self with the values in assent to or in denial of what we construe them to mean. We cannot escape this and at the same time remain human. Our "humanity" is, then, closely and inevitably tied to values.

III

We are all, as human beings, self-conscious persons. As self-conscious persons, involved, as we have said, with values, we are disturbed by a tension which perpetually prevails between what we are and what we ought to be. To examine this tension is to discover two important propositions: (1) that man does not *know* he was created in the image

of God, nor does he *know* that he was not created. If he could know either of these two ideas as fact or any other anthropological definition as fact, his "is" would be potentially identical with his "ought" and the tension would tend toward resolution. But this tension never does relax in any ultimate sense; thus man cannot *know* what he is in any ultimate sense.

We have to conclude that there is no absolute knowledge in any anthropological sense except the statement that man cannot know what he is. But he continues to search for this absolute. At various stages of his struggle he behaves as if he comprehended the nature and meaning of his life. (2) As man lives in this state of tension between "is" and "ought" he is confident that what-ought-to-be is somewhere adequately known. He believes that the "ought" is not merely a construct of his own conjuring, but is *real* in an absolute sense. There are plotted goals which he manages to reach but they are always temporary. There remains the yet-to-be-achieved.

We are faced here with a proposition containing an inner contradiction: How can we know that we cannot know? The only answer seems to be an empirical one: we do, as a matter of fact, act in terms of what we posit as certainty and yet, at the same time, we are aware of the tension which is always with us; what we are, the way we act, is always less than what we ought to be and do. We *know* that "now we see in a mirror dimly."

IV

If we can accept as valid the two propositions that (1) man cannot know with certainty the truth about himself as man; and (2) that man always assumes that the "facts" and the "meaning of his destiny" are somewhere known, we have a reasonable explanation of the propensity of man to fall victim to the impositions of absolute authority.

History is replete with examples of this kind of victimization and it continues as a major cause of tragedy in the modern world, aided, ironically, by the refined instruments of communication and other arts in propagandizing. Forms of modern tyranny are no longer provincial.

The dynamic of tyranny in promulgating a false ideology succeeds to the degree that it drives from victim-peoples the self-conscious tension between "is" and "ought." In the place of this tension is substituted a manufactured tension which is abstract, impersonal, and illusively general. Such tyranny absolutizes an "ought" which is declared within reach, requiring nothing more than a pledge of allegiance, promising fulfillment totally adequate to all human need. But paradoxically the "liberating" effect of such an "ought" becomes a form of enslavement. It does this by diluting the source of human freedom; it denies man the continuing right to become.

V

By this analysis we arrive at the strange conclusion that our freedom as human beings varies directly as our awareness of the gulf be-

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tween what we are and what we ought to be, and because we tend always to want the gulf narrowed, we stand ready victims of absolutes which promise such a narrowing. Our actual experience is a clutter of varied loyalties in which we gamble for fulfillment, finding, finally that no absolute is ultimately absolute; they are all man-made satellites, not of earth, to be sure, but not of heaven either.

Herein abides the sanity of the Bible. There is here no promise of a narrowing gulf; no man in history arrives in pursuit of an ultimate ought (Deut. 34:1-4):

From the steepes of Moab Moses went up to Mount Nebo, the headland of Pisgah, east of Jericho; there the Eternal showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, all the territory of Judah as far as the Mediteranean, the south country, and the basin or plain of Jericho (the town of palm-trees) as far as Zoar. "This," the Eternal told him, "is the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that I would give it to their descendants; I have allowed you to look upon it, but you shall not cross to it."

Myron K. Sibley

CODA

Julie dropped a quarter in the dish on the dressing table and almost ran from the ladies' room. "Calm down," she told herself, "just calm down." She stopped for a moment to study the slim reflection in the mirrored hall. She didn't have to look at her hand to know that the fingers were shaking. "Damn it," she thought, "you're grown up now, Julie. Stop it, he's just another boy. No, he's not; he's Ed, and that makes all the difference." Then, glancing quickly at the tall, almost lanky figure in the mirror and smoothing the fair, soft, indefinite colored hair that never seemed to stay in place, she entered the lobby. She walked through it and showing the usher a ticket was led down the aisle to a seat in the first row. Clutching her program, she looked around the room. Yes, they were all there, his friends, crewcuts gleaming and the girls—Smith and Vassar. She hated their carefully baggy tweed suits and the drabness of their cashmeres. She smiled at the dark girl two rows behind her, in response to a high pitched hello. What WAS her name? She rifled through her crumpled program and finally found it—Concerto No. 2 in F Major, Violin Soloist, Edwin Hoff. The name seemed to blaze out of the page at her. "Of course," she thought, "I knew he'd play that, the second Brandenburg. Oh God, let him play well, please let him play well."

The musicians filed on stage; she craned her neck. Where was he? Didn't he come? Did he miss the train; no, of course not, he'd said he was driving down. She remembered the phone-call, brief as usual, the soft, slurred voice saying, "Look, hon, why don't you come down and hear me? We can have a drink together afterwards, go somewhere quiet . . . So long, Julie, be a good girl." So long, Julie, be a good girl. So long, Julie, the words ran streaming through her head. That's what he had been saying ever since the night she had first met him on an uncomfortable first date; uncomfortable because he had been so damned smug, so assured. He'd made her feel like an ass, especially when she had said (trying to look deep and introspective), "I write", and he had been amused and answered, "Oh really and WHAT do you write?" And the end of the evening when he said, "Look, little girl, I'll call you tomorrow, all right?" Sure it was all right; it was a lot more than just all right. Sure he called, she smiled, remembering a month spent without smiling, while she waited and wondered and analysed and then the call and another night and another month; no, this time it was only three weeks and a letter, about Yale and work and his music and how busy he was and how much he missed her, just thrown in at the end; that's the way it always was. "Played the Brahms last night, went to a wild party and had a crazy fiasco with some little gal from Wellesley, miss you, Julie." They had begun to play and the woven polyphony of the music mingled with her shifting

CODA

strands of thought. "Where is he?" she thought. Eternities later the piece had ended; the concerto was next.

There he was, sauntering on stage with the other soloists. So close she could almost reach out and touch him. Funny, how much she wanted to. The conductor raised his baton and after a pause, Ed raised his bow. To Julie, the others were mere music stands; she saw only Ed and listened only to the weaving melodies rising from his instrument, as he stroked them out with his strong yet flexible fingers. He was as good as she knew he would be; at ease, fluid, she knew enough about music to see that. Yet, she sensed a lack. That was it, a warmth. But then it was over, and she reminded herself to clap. She looked back; his friends were applauding and babbling wildly between bursts. He returned to bow with the others and lowered his head more in mockery, Julie thought, than in appreciation. The hall began to clear for intermission. She saw groups of chatting people hailing each other as they headed for backstage; she wondered if she should join them. "No," she thought, "I won't, I can't. He'll be surrounded; there'll be people and I'll just stand there and feel like falling through the floor. There'll be time later; we'll have a chance to talk then, not just stand around."

She started, reacting to a not especially gentle jab on the shoulder. "Well, hi there, Julie," proclaimed a pair of tortoise shell glasses. "Remember me? Bob, Bob Gilbert. We met the weekend you were up at school, remember?"

She managed a feeble yes and he, seemingly satisfied, continued. "The maestro's doing pretty well tonight, did a neat job on the Bach. I've heard him do better, of course. Hoff always gets on the ball after a couple, but the old bastard put his foot down, not that that would stop old Hoff. Kinda sorry I'm not playing this one. I'm oboe you know, but that lousy Rubenstein's been buttering up for that solo and I sure as Hell wasn't going to"

Julie stopped listening after that, keeping a look of intense concentration on her face and nodding and smiling when it seemed appropriate. He left after a painful five minutes but not without threatening to see her later. The second half of the concert sped by. Ed was way over on the other side now, playing with the seconds, almost out of sight, but still her eyes were glued on him.

When it was over, she filed along with the rest of them to the narrow, smoky room. The artist's room, she knew he called it. She stood for a moment, her stillness silhouetted against the high, too animated, voices. Then she saw him, talking and gesturing to someone. She picked her way through the room and was intercepted by a tweed and cashmere girl who dashed in front of her and planted a big sloppy kiss on one side of his face. "Hoff darling" the girl simpered "you were just delicious, so Szigetti-ish." She babbled on. Julie noticed

that she called him Hoff; everyone seemed to, that is, everyone but her. What was there about that name? It was really Hoffer, but few people knew that, for when asked, he would say it quickly hoping that they got only Hoff, which struck him as much more Anglo-Saxon and a lot easier in any case.

"Come on, Julie, let's get out of this snake pit." He had his hand on her shoulder and she felt it somewhere around her knees. Yes, let's, she agreed. They pushed their way through the room, but not until his back had been sufficiently slapped and a fat man had moistened both cheeks with wet kisses. "That's old Schlussman," he told her, "damn good man, used to conduct the Vienna."

They were outside now and the clean air reached her, ruffling her hair, but cooling and soothing on her face. "Well," he said, trying not to look too satisfied, "the ordeal is over. What did you think of it?" She said the expected, not daring to tell him she had been too busy watching him to listen. "Look," he said, breaking in, "there's a party over at Pammy's. You know Pammy, don't you?" Yes, of course, Pammy of the "just delicious" and the moist red kiss. "Yes, I think I know her. Ed, would you mind if we just walked for a while first?" "Of course not, anything you want. Jul, thanks for coming, I was afraid you wouldn't." He bent down slightly to push a strand of the ever wispy hair from her face. "I didn't know whether you wanted me to. You didn't wrte."

"My God, Julie, you know how damn busy I am and how lousy my letter are. Look, I thought about you. I always do. You know how much I miss you." He had snapped back on the defensive and she walked beside him in silence. She could have kicked herself for bringing it up. Why the hell didn't she learn. He broke the silence. "Come on now, sweetie, don't be glum. Hey, look, we're headed in the right direction, why not walk over to Pammy's. It's about ten blocks from here, right on the drive. She said there'd be about 100 people up, so let's get there before the booze runs out." He was off again.

"So there I stood, three in the morning on stilts, playing the Beethoven with nothing on but a white sheet, middle of New Haven. Boy, did they crack up"

Panny's place was on the top floor, not quite a penthouse, but almost. The door was open and a stream of high pitched laughter shattered through the Hindemith and Dixieland of two competing record players. They walked in.

"Great performance, old man, rushed the presto though. My God were they sloppy. Say, I haven't met your date. The name's Bill (or Jim or Tom). Where'd you say you were from? Small school,

isn't it. Can't say I've heard much about it. Oh really?"—Yes, isn't it a riot. She's being analysed. Good Lord, can SHE use it, but with her money who gives a damn?"

"Not too wild, what a crazy fiasco"

"Weingartner? You're crazy. Scherchen's the one" Julie drifted among the people. Ed had gone to put the coats away and was probably cornered by one of his admirers. Feeling lost, she sat down in a corner, hoping he'd find her. He didn't. A half hour passed. The music was almost deafening, but the tight knot of couples on the textured sofas didn't seem to notice. She wasn't alone much after that. Boys drifted over, talked for a while, told all the usual stories about Hoff. Why did they have to keep talking about him? What was he? Some kind of God? No, it was just the things he did. Things they dreamt of doing, but never quite dared to. Like the time he answered the German theory prof in an exact replica of his own thick accent. She had heard the story so often, she could almost tell it with them. She had one drink and then a second. She felt dizzy, more from the heat, she told herself, than from the whiskey. She was relaxed now. Relaxed enough to leave the little circle after "New Haven . . . on stilts . . . boy, did we crack up," and go to find him. She pushed her way to the foyer, only to bump into Bob Gilbert. "Well, hi there, honey," he smirked. His glasses were off and he squinted at her. "Did you see Ed around?" She hoped she sounded casual. "Hoff? Sure, Pammy's entertaining him. Poor kid'd had the hots for years. Don't worry," he said, touching her shoulder reassuringly, "he won't even give her a tumble." She winced. "Now look, don't worry. Geeze, with your looks you don't have a thing to worry about. Hey, let's sit down and have a little talk. Hoff's occupied. Where'd you say you went to school?" "Look," she said, "where is he? I've got to find him. I want to go home." He was suddenly sober; it must have been the look in her eyes. "Sure, Julie, I'll find him. Just wait here a minute." She saw him enter one of the dark, quiet rooms off the hall. She stood there, feeling tired and sick. A minute later, Ed appeared. "Where the hell were you?" he said. "Bird-dogging, I bet. My God, I've been looking for you for the last hour. Where were you hiding?" She stared at him. He always did that. What could she say? "Where's Pammy?" It came out lamely. "Pammy? Oh, she's been pouring her plastered little heart out. All over me, no less. Had to listen; she's like a sister to me. No, more like a kid brother. Say, did I tell you" . . . He pretended not to see the look on her face. "Bumped into Joe Grul-nich, we went to school together. Haven't seen him in years. Seems he's been over in Europe. Told me the funniest bit; he was running around in Paris with some little French gal and"

"Ed," she said, "I want to go home." "Sure, hon, just be a good girl and have another drink and then we'll beat it and head for someplace quiet, all right?" So they had another drink and another drink

and Ed told a story and did his Liberace routine and another drink and then it was two o'clock. The couples on the sofas hadn't even shifted positions. Julie was numb; the sick feeling that had started with the first blast of music almost drowned her in nausea. "Ed," she said finally; he was perched on the arm of her chair, talking intensely to one of the many nameless boys she had met. "Ed," she repeated, "it's two and I promised . . ." "Oh, God, your parents. Come on, we'd better go." They found her coat somewhere at the bottom of a pile and her purse beneath one of the couples who greeted their inquiry with "go 'way, we're busy."

The elevator didn't come, so they walked down. She was dizzy; she clung to the banister, afraid of falling. When they stepped outside, the coolness came surging in at her. She shivered a little. "Cold, hon?" he said, wrapping his arms around her. He kissed her and she could smell the mingled alcohol and shaving lotion of him. "Not any more," she said. He glanced at his watch. "I guess it's too late to do anything; we'll just drive home. Have fun?" She managed to mumble yes. "Did I tell you, you looked lovely tonight. That's quite a dress." "I wasn't sure you noticed." How trite that was; she should have said something original, or just smiled. "I usually do. As a matter of fact the first time I saw you, you were wearing black. You wear too much of it. I've always liked bright colors. Get a red dress; you'd look fabulous in red." They walked the long silent blocks back to the car. So much easier than words, she thought. He opened the door and flicked in the radio. Ravel flooded the front seat.

"Fifty cents it's Cassadaseus," he said. She wouldn't bet; she knew he'd be right.

It was Mozart by the time they reached her shuttered, darkened house. He looked down at his watch; a quarter to three. "My God, where'd the night go to? No, don't go in yet. I want to talk to you. No, not really, I'd much rather kiss you." He did, once, twice, and then she stopped counting. "Ed," she whispered. "What?" "Oh, I don't know, just Ed." She wouldn't say it. She'd tried once and the words had come fumbling out till she felt like a babbling idiot and he'd just sat there and looked amused. She hoped he'd forgotten that. He'd never mentioned it again, but then, he wouldn't. She moved away. "Tired, hon?" He reached over to unclench the tightly coiled fists she had made. "Who're you fighting with?" "You, Ed. All the time and I can't keep on much longer." "You mean the party tonight? Look, Julie, I thought I explained. I said I was sorry. What more do you want?" He was annoyed. "It was just that I bumped into Joe. . . ." "Joe . . . or Jim, or Tom or Pammy. Ed, it's always something." She flicked the radio off. "Don't," he said, "it's the violin concerto and I love that thing." He turned it back on. She sat still staring into the dull, dirty glare of the street light. "Don't sulk, Julie,

I hate it." "I'm not sulking, Ed. It's just . . . Oh, I don't know. What can I say?" "Don't say anything, just come over here." She didn't; she sat as if frozen, staring at the light. He was looking at her, waiting for her to continue. He wants to see me make an ass out of myself, she thought. He'll see it. I always do. "Always do what?" She must have said the words out loud. "Make an ass out of myself, while you smile and enjoy it. I sit here and try and give . . ." She faltered for a minute . . . and you look amused and put me in your pocket and forget it." "What the Hell are you talking about?" "Me, Ed, me and everything." "Oh, come off it, Julie." The smile was gone now. She went on, maybe this time. "You don't let anything get to you or hurt you. You're too busy grabbing. So there you sit, behind your nice, safe, airtight walls. I'm surprised you can even breathe. You know, Ed," she was bitterly sarcastic, "it might take you almost a week to forget me." "Probably less. But I don't want to, Julie. What do you want from me? What do you want me to say . . . That I love you? All right, I love you. Shall I add madly and passionately?" The sarcasm was so thick she could almost taste it. "All right, Ed, start forgetting." She opened the car door. "Don't," he said. "Look, Jul, I've said I'm sorry about tonight. As to the rest, take it or leave it. It's just me." "No," she said, "that's what I can't stand. It's not you; it's never you. It's Szigetti and Liberace and Jimmy Durante and a big hunk of Don Juan . . . Oh, I don't know. I don't want that. I want you, Ed." "You've got me." "Have I? No, I've got someone who kisses me and says he'll call tomorrow and then waits a few months . . . Oh, I don't know."

"I warned you when we went into this. I'm not the type for flowers and candy and long chats with your parents. You knew that, Julie." "But I don't want that. I want you." She knew she was repeating herself and began to feel like an idiot.

"Ed, I feel as if I were halfway up a stone wall with my fingers in a crack, trying to pull myself up to you. You were safe on top, but you weren't reaching down to help me. You just sat there and every once in a while you'd nudge me with your foot. Do you see what I'm getting at?" "You're dramatizing again, Julie, grow up. Let's be adult about this. What do you want from me?" "I don't know, Ed. I just know I . . . Oh, never mind. Let's drop the subject." "Agreed," he said. "I'm getting sick of this."

This is what always happens, she thought. I bring it up and before I know it, he's on the defensive and I end up feeling like an ass, so I drop it again and . . . There was a catawba tree in her yard. HERE WE GO AROUND THE CATAWBA TREE . . . she looked at him. He was watching her with the same baffled look he always wore after one of these scenes. A look that said, "Now look, what's this all about?" No. she wasn't getting through to him. She couldn't stand it, not another month, waiting till he wrote or called, always waiting. "No more."

She said it out loud. "No more what?" "Ed, I tried to get to you. You got to me all right and all you did was hurt. It was hard for me. I'm a very private person and..." She fought down the choke rising in her throat. "I wanted to tell you..." She couldn't stand it. She slammed out of the car. "So long, Ed. Be a good boy." She paused for a second, expecting him to follow her or at least say something. He didn't. She walked to the door and began fumbling for her key. She didn't dare look back. She knew he'd still be there, waiting and watching. But not coming. No, he wouldn't come; he'd take the line of least resistance and wait. Wait a few days and then forget. Maybe he'd call. Maybe this time... The door opened, coinciding with the roar of the motor as the car moved down the street. He was gone, and she knew he wouldn't come back. She was right. He didn't.

Carole Silver

VALUES

They wake in their soft beds,
Then grope for coffee, strong and black—
while the dew is on the grass outside,
and birds thrill the morning air.

They sit behind huge desks, and hear
The clamor of the typists and the telephones—
and the sun is busy smiling at the patter
of the children playing hopscotch on the walk.

They go to business parties—
Smoke-filled, glass-ringed parties—
and far below two lovers row
into the twilight on the lake.

They try to sleep, but only think
Of all the things they want to do, but can't—
and, kept out by shades and shutters, tightly drawn,
the moon chuckles gently to the stars.

Bettejane Knight

BEFORE IT PASSED

When I wore skinny braids
I loved
Lying on my stomach
To watch magic deer
Stalk from the morning woods;
Drink from their shallow pool.

When I smelled like earth and wet grass
I loved
A fresh-peeled stick,
Mouse's fur and birds' eggs,
Cold-eyed green frogs
And a beetle's wings.

When I saw pictures in the clouds
I loved
The warm sides of my pony
Brushing my ankles,
Bare feet on sun-hot rocks
And cool moist sand.

When I laughed with my eyes
I loved
New-cut wood
And a glistening calf
At birth.

Now I paint my lips
And I love
Candlelight, and letters;
Chiffon, and songs;
A man's warm hand
On my cheek.

Now I know each thing
Which makes me smile inside,
But am awed
That I never knew
My young joy
Before it passed.

Ann E. Holmes

ONE MAN'S HAMLET

Hamlet No. 1 (Grammar School): "Hamlet! Who's Hamlet? I dunno."

Hamlet No. 2 (Junior High School): "Hamlet! Oh, Hamlet. To be or not to be...a horse, a horse, my kingdom...Shakespeare...Romeo and Juliet...John Barrymore...alas, poor Yorick...Stinks!"

Hamlet No. 3 (High School): "Can't stand that stuff. I don't have to like that if I don't want to. God, she really likes that junk! I just don't see why I should have to decipher something if I want to read it. Sure, I'll take a part in the class reading of *Hamlet*. I'll be one of those three witches. Shakespeare's tempo of three beats to the line...Boy, what a crock! I want to read a book, not solve a jigsaw puzzle. No, I didn't pass the damn test. That part wasn't in the classic comic. I hate to read plays."

Hamlet No. 4 (At Cindy's house): "George, we had the most interesting discussion in class today about *Hamlet*." "Well, I don't care much for Shakespeare." "Did you ever really read *Hamlet*?" "No, but I read parts. I don't know what that guy is talking about." "You don't read the right books; you should read the classics." "Yes, I do. I read lots of good books: the *Life of Rodin*; *Dumbell and Others*; *Opus 21*; *Michelangelo*; *Baseball for Everyone*; a lot of Hemingway and Steinbeck; *Arrowsmith*; *Canterbury Tales* (remember I borrowed it from you?), *Brave New World*; 1984; I read lots of very good books." "But you should read more of the classics; it's good to read the moderns but don't neglect the classics. Why don't you try *Hamlet* now?" "I don't care for Shakespeare." "Just try it this once." "All right." "How did you like it?" "Aw, I only read up to the part where he saw the ghost and learned that his father was killed. It was all right, nothin' special. I don't care for Shakespeare."

Hamlet No. 5 (Movie): "Great movie, wasn't it? That Sir Laurence is some actor. You know, I was surprised because I understood it pretty well. What an ending! All those corpses! Problem? What problem? I didn't see any problem. Yes, I really enjoyed that very much. Maybe I'll read the play sometime. No. I won't. I hate plays."

Hamlet No. 6 (Young Peoples' Discussion Group at Church): "The problem is why Hamlet delayed his obvious duty towards his late father." "That's no problem, he just wanted real proof." "The ghost was proof enough." "He did try; didn't he kill the figure behind the curtain without hesitation?" "Hamlet, the mad prince of Denmark." "Wad-daya talkin' about? He wasn't mad, only faking." "Hamlet had an Oedipus complex." "A what?" "He had a suppressed desire to be

his mother's lover." "Oh!" "We all have such a desire, but it usually resolves itself." "Only Hamlet's didn't, huh?" "That's right." "Well, if he had an Oedipus, don't you... what are you laughing at?" "It's Oedipus, not Oedipus. You don't pronounce the O." "Well, anyway, don't you think that maybe Shakespeare had one too?" "That is possible." "Maybe that's why it's a puzzle; he could have had one and not know it but it showed up in his writing." "Now that's an interesting problem." "I enjoyed that discussion. Actually, who cares about the problem? Why can't people just accept it as a work of art? Very interesting, I'll have to think about that sometime."

Hamlet No. 7 (Reading assignment, Civilization course): "What a terrific play! That Hamlet's great. Such wit! That scene where he tells the king where to find Polonius' body is brilliant. And the characters? Perfectly understandable... except Hamlet. I think I understand him and yet if someone were to ask me what he was like I'd say very intelligent, noble, witty, friendly, daring, fun-loving, impetuous. Except where his step-father is concerned. I wonder why. I guess everybody does. You know, this is the first time I ever read *Hamlet*. Very powerful... very thought provoking... very sensitive... very..."

Hamlet No. 8 (Lecture, Civilization course): "Goethe, Bradley, Jones, Coleridge, Freud, Hamlet was too intelligent, Hamlet was too moral, Hamlet was cruel, Hamlet was too noble, Hamlet had an Oedipus complex, Polonius had a daughter complex, Ophelia had a brother complex, Laertes had a queen complex, Gertrude had a Rosencrantz complex... Everybody is laughing. Maybe these psychologists do go overboard, but then again there is always a reason for everything we do. These explanations deserve to be considered. Waddaya talking about, 'filthiest thing you ever heard?'" "Do you know what you're talking about? Why don't you read about this Oedipus thing and then see what you think? You musn't discount it just because you don't understand it right away. Don't say bunk because it's something new. This is a great play. This is a good explanation of that play. Don't mark it off without giving it a fair chance."

Hamlet No. 9 (Meditation): "*Hamlet?* Love it. I used to think that it was silly to tear apart something like a play. But now I think, for some reason still unknown to me, that if the question of Hamlet could be resolved it would solve a lot of man's personal problems." Conclusion: Maybe it shouldn't be solved. Maybe its chief value lies in the fact that its mystery provokes men into self-questioning, causes men to look closely at their own problems and actions and, maybe most

ONE MAN'S HAMLET

important of all, helps us to understand the seemingly unprovoked and often cruel actions that others commit. That's the final conclusion."

"You know what I really think? I don't think the mystery will ever be solved. It can't be. A certain explanation may be satisfactory to one man but not to another. *Hamlet* means many different things to many different men. A man will consider a certain explanation because it fulfills certain needs of his. Some men will insist on a feasible explanation, others won't really want one. I don't think that I want one. I'm having too much fun examining the offered opinions of many great thinkers and gleaning some truth from each of them. Absolutely final conclusion. Until the next one."

Hamlet No. 10 "I don't know yet. But I do know that there will be another, and another, and then another. . . ."

George Kokis

A BEGINNING FOR BUTCH

Butch emerged from the torrent of the faucet and began to rub his dark head with a towel. "Ow—gosh darn," he muttered as his elbow connected with the washbowl. He lifted himself up on his toes in order to see his whole face in the bathroom mirror. Brown eyes stared back at him critically. His almost grown out brush cut straggled from all sides of his head. He stood there, looking into the mirror, wondering if all boys' ears stuck out from their heads at forty degree angles. He decided that the ears weren't so extraordinary but the freckles that marched in uneven columns across his pug nose would have to go. He leaned closer under the light to inspect the cut on his lower lip. A couple of days ago, he'd been doing some nailing for Dad—only he got too close to the hammer. The swelling was almost gone now. He stretched his lip tight against his teeth, sighing with relief. Why, it didn't even hurt much anymore.

He began the impossible feat of combing his hair. Back to front, back to front. Tiny beads of water splattered on the mirror. Now to find a place to part it. He drew the comb slowly down the left side of his head in a questionably straight line and was amazed to discover a new cowlick. He was used to the one that sat squarely on the top of his head. But what was this joker poking out over his right ear?

"Butch." It was his mom.

"Yeah?"

"Have you fed the dog yet?" she called from the kitchen.

He was in a hurry, a big hurry. Now he had to stop dressing, go to the kitchen, open the dog food can and go out on the back porch. This night of all nights Prince, their big three year old collie, was in one of his affectionate moods, jumping on him, licking his face.

"Down, Prince!" Butch tried to push him off with his elbows. "Gosh, darn it! Down! I've got my good pants on!" Now he'd have to take time to brush those long hairs off his pants.

Back to his room he went and brushed and brushed his pants. A new problem presented itself. Should he wear his coat that matched his pants or a sport jacket— or maybe just a sweater?

He decided on the sport jacket and went down to get an okay from his mother. "Does this look all right?" he asked.

Her hands slowed on the dish she was drying. "Hmm, isn't it a little dressy for a movie?"

"I know, Mom, but to take a girl?" He almost choked on the word "girl."

"Butch, I've tried to tell you you're too nervous about it. Just

A BEGINNING FOR BUTCH

pretend you're going with a boy. You wouldn't dress up like that to go with Smiley, would you?"

He took her word for it and put on his blue sweater.

He was late, and when he was finally all dressed to go, nobody would stop what they were doing long enough to take him to her house.

"That's making it too important," said Mom. "You wouldn't mind being late if you were going with a boy."

Bill, his seventeen year old brother, put down his science fiction magazine long enough to say, "Nobody took me." Then to his mother, "Say, what's that little shrimp doing with a date anyway?" Then to Butch, "What are you doin' wearin' your good pants just to take some dame to a show? Boy! are you going to be sorry you ever started this monkey business!"

"That's enough, Bill," Dad's voice came from behind the evening paper.

Picking up his magazine, Bill mumbled, "Just the same, I think he's nuts. Hump, wearin' his good pants!"

"Relax, Butch, be nonchalant," said Mom.

There wasn't anything to do but walk or run. He started toward the door. Just as he was going out Mom grabbed him, gave him a big kiss and tucked something in his pocket. Gosh darn! Did she get lipstick on him? Nope, she didn't have any on.

"There's an extra dollar in your back pocket. I want it back if you don't need it. Don't blow it on popcorn and candy trying to act big. Remember you're just a little boy. Behave yourself now."

He could almost feel himself shrinking when she said that. Now his clothes seemed to hang on him like an empty sack. He slammed the front door behind him and ran down the front walk. Patter, patter, patter. Behind him came Prince. He had to go back and put Prince in the house.

"Gosh darn," he said to his family, "Someone around here might have helped me." His own voice sounded tight and high pitched, as it did when he was going to cry. He needed to run, that's what, run real fast. That ought to make him feel better.

When he got within two doors of her house he slowed down. His feet felt like lead weights. He could scarcely pick them up and put them down again. What should he say? How should he act? If it were Smiley he was stopping for he'd merely whistle or go around the back and holler. He'd been in such a hurry he hadn't even thought about what he was going to say. Should he ring the doorbell or knock? What if her mother came to the door? He tiptoed up the front steps. And then, just as he raised his hand to knock, the door opened.

"Hi," Sally said, motioning for him to come in.

His hands were moist. He stuffed them in his pockets and walked in. He took his hands out of his pockets, mumbled, "Hi," and reached for his tie. He put his hands behind him and then let them fall. "Are you ready?" he asked, staring hard at the floor.

"Soon's I get my coat. Mom!" she called, "Butch's here."

Mrs. James came out from the living room carrying a section of the newspaper. "My, you look nice, Butch. Do you want me to drive you, or are you taking the bus? You two seem a little young to be going out at night."

His sweater felt loose around the shoulders and he was sure his sleeves were dangling somewhere around his knees. "I've got extra money. If you'd be worried I could call a cab,"

"Calling cabs at your age?" She looked at him for a moment. "I guess the bus will be all right. Go straight to the movie and don't stop to eat afterwards. Just come right home. I'll be worried till Sally gets home."

Gosh darn, he thought; after all, he was thirteen. "Yes, ma'm," he said demurely, backing out the door.

"Remember, if anything goes wrong call me."

Down the steps they went. "What do you suppose she thinks is going to happen?"

"Oh, she always thinks something's going to happen." Her voice sounded very close. He jammed his hand into his pockets and started to whistle. But that sore lip would not permit any sound to escape.

He was relieved when they came to the bus stop on Forest Avenue. Swishing and gasping, the bus pulled up to the curb. Sally hopped on without a backward glance, leaving Butch fumbling for change to put in the coin box.

The driver threw the bus into gear and started off with a jolt that almost threw Butch back out the door. "Watch out there, Buster!" the driver exclaimed as he reached out an arm to catch him.

Gosh darn, Buster! Butch's neck felt hot. But he took it slow down the aisle. He almost wished he didn't have to sit down by her. Oh, well, it wasn't as bad as it could be. She was sitting way over in the seat with her face turned, looking out the window. He crossed his arms, left his feet in the aisle, and looked the other way. He uncrossed his arms, putting his hands on his knees. They felt funny there. He tried to stuff them in his pockets. They didn't fit. Thank goodness, the bus was so noisy that even if he'd tried to say something she probably couldn't have heard him. Rigid she sat, as if frozen into that position. She didn't move until they got to First and Cayuga. And neither did he.

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She scampered into the lobby to examine the posters while he bought the tickets. Yet she was right there walking in front of him when he gave the tickets to the doorman.

Only once did she look at him and that was when the usher asked them where they'd like to sit.

"Right here," Butch pointed to the row where they stood. It was next to the last row. He stood back, waiting for her to go in first.

He leaned forward examining his shoelaces and pretending not to see her struggling out of her coat. Then she leaned her elbow on the arm away from him, keeping her face turned toward the screen.

He stretched out his legs. They sure felt tired. He tried to concentrate on the movie to catch the story of it. But try as he would, the screen was no more than a bunch of people doing foolish things.

He thought of the silliest thing. When he was real little and first started going to the movies, he used to sit in the very first row. After a few years of movie experience, he used to sit in the middle row so that when he stood up to get popcorn, he could see where all his friends were. And now he sat in the next to the last row, hoping no one would see him.

"Want some popcorn?" he asked.

"I don't care," was the reply. She kept her eyes fixed on the screen.

He worked his way out over the feet and came back with two butterstained bags.

"Here!" he shoved one to her, holding it so her fingers wouldn't touch his.

Then the show was over, and they were standing outside. The air was chilly. She was doing little dancing steps to keep warm. They waited and waited for the bus. He, glumly, with his hands in his pockets. She, shivering, with her hands tucked up in her coat sleeves.

At last he said, "We musta missed the bus. Do you want me to call a cab?"

"We could walk," she suggested.

What did he do now, take her arm? In the movies the fellow took the girl's arm. But his brother walked at least two feet away from the girl, pretending she wasn't with him and chewing hard on his gum. Butch wished he had some gum. He knew Sally was waiting for him to decide. As he stood there wondering what to do a car pulled up to the curb.

"It's mother," cried Sally. "Hi," she said scrambling into the front seat. She looked as though she expected him to get in beside her.

He opened the back door and got in. His hands were wet and cold. Wouldn't you know this would happen to him? He felt silly as all heck, having to be picked up by her mother.

"Whatever took you so long?" asked Mrs. James. "Did you see it twice?"

Butch wished the seat would swallow him. Mrs. James slammed on the brakes. Butch tensed himself, waiting for the crash.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Sally.

"Oh, my goodness. You know what I've done? I was so worried I came out of the house and left the door key right on the radio. We're locked out!"

Butch felt the blame was all his. If he hadn't asked Sally to go to the movies they wouldn't be in this mess. There ought to be something he could do.

"I could climb in a window for you," Butch offered weakly.

"But all the windows are probably locked," wailed Mrs. James.

"What about the back window that has to be fixed?" asked Sally.

"Butch couldn't reach that one. It's too high."

They were in front of the James' house now. "Well, we could at least look and see," said Butch.

They led him around the back of the house to a window. Butch spotted a covered garbage can a little way off. He dragged the can over and proceeded to climb on. The can teetered and then as if deciding to support him, became still. The bottom sill of the window was just a little below the level of his shoulders. As he stretched to lift the window, the can began to sway again. Mrs. James grabbed hold of it, steadying it. With the foundation a little firmer, he was able to inch the window open and climb inside. Within a few minutes he let them in the front door.

"That was wonderful, Butch!" cried Mrs. James. "If it hadn't been for you we'd have had to go to all kinds of trouble."

"Oh, it wasn't anything. But I've got to be going now."

Sally, studying the porch rail, said, "I had a nice time. Thank you." She was smiling happily at him now.

"Thanks, I did too. Well, I'll be seeing you." He wheeled sharply and marched down the steps.

"Can I drive you home, Butch?" Mrs. James called after him.

"No, thanks," he called back, waving. His voice seemed deep as he shouted back, "It's not very far! I'll walk."

LOVE IN THE BOTANICAL GARDENS

You came to me, your hands
dripped flowers. . .
and the sunlight sifted through
the trees.
No profane lap in which
to hide
your gifts of amaranth
and holly. . .
this bower bridal blooms.

Sunlight penetrates
the glade.
Now pluck the flowers
unafraid,
no longer sickened with the violet
of longing.
Maiden wreath of daisies
down
a crown of thorns.

Like censer bells
poppies
celebrate our nuptial.
Incline your head
walk barefoot here,
the earth is charmed.
The flowers throng
and fall away
and throng again.

Holy sunlit ground.
Garlanded with rarest
buds
this is Eden found.
Let our love be wild
and sweet
as this solitary rose
dropped, love,
at your feet.

Linda Napolin

I AM SITTING ON THE SIXTY-FIFTH FLOOR

I am sitting on the sixty-fifth floor, drinking Orang-O and belching. I am sitting on the sixty-fifth floor smoking Lord Blittenbattenhursts and coughing. I am sitting on the sixty-fifth floor, and I am a very sick man indeed, a very sick man.

It is getting light now in here, very light. In fact, it is so light that I can see where my secretary has hidden my bottle of Bourbon. So I am mixing the Orang-O with the Bourbon, and I am crying in my cocktail, so to speak. Then like my analyst tells me to, I am writing the whole thing down from beginning to end, for posterity or for the funnies. I am not caring very much which one at the moment.

It was six months ago and I am sitting here on the sixty-fifth floor, trying to find a gimmick that will make you think Lord Bittenbattenhursts will cure cancer, and thinking how gimmicks are the reason why a poor boy from Murmansk, Russia, is sitting on the sixty-fifth floor thinking of anything, when and it is a big WHEN— the VOICE came confidential, like a pharmacist talking about physic: "You're tried," it said. "You're not unlaixing', boy," it went on. "Why, boy, I bet a cookie you're not a positive thinker, are you? Tch, tch, tch."

By this time I am looking at the voice over the top of my briefcase. He is a little man who looks like he needs fruit salts and sleeps in twin beds with his wife. His face is like putty stuck together with straight lines of adhesive tape, and his rimless glasses seem to grow around his shiny little eyes.

I am figuring he is not a pleasant man, but not unpleasant enough to bother me. So I am about to close my eyes and hope that he will go away when I noticed he is wearing a bedsheet over his double-breasted. It was a very dirty bedsheet, and on it, pinned with a safety pin, is a big red "S" made of colored paper like you buy in the five-and-dime.

"Positive, boy, you're not positive! Unlax and the kingdom of heaven is yours," he is saying. By now his face is very close to mine, so that I can smell his halitosis over his Dentine. "Your tongue muscles, boy, the KEY to positive thinking— the TONGUE! and bein' positive, of course. Relax that tongue!— TENSE— Just lean back. Now say this little phrase, boy, it's 92% effective in all cases:

God's in his heaven;
I'll be in bed by eleven,
I'm HEALTHY, WEALTHY
and
NON-NEUROTIC!

I AM SITTING ON THE SIXTY-FIFTH FLOOR

There, isn't that better? Now we'll do that together, ten times. And I bet a cookie you're a new man— and *ree-lax!*"

So I am damned if for the next fifteen minutes we are not leaning back saying, "God's in his Heaven," and tongue unloading. And it is thus that Farfel Finger comes to me.

What Farfel Finger is doing with me at all I will tell you now. In fact, he is telling me himself in the very next breath: "I am with you now, boy, because the Armageddon is upon us." By now he is so close I can see his bridgework, and so far I have not said a word, but not wanting to spoil a beautiful thing, I keep my mouth shut. "I was positively thinkin' one night and it came to me like that: 'Farfel,' it said, 'before the next Rotary International the world will end.' It was a call, boy! A call! That's why I'm bringin' THIS here to you, an *advertisin'* man where it will do the most good." And he drops a check on my desk.

Now I am figuring it is a little something he has pilfered from the last Presbyterian strawberry festival, when I am noticing the seven "O's" after the 4, which in my books is forty million dollars!

After I have stopped coughing from the Lord Bittenbattenhurst, which I am swallowing when I see the check, there is again a silence, until Finger looks out the window real moody and belches. "Cheese," he says, almost to himself, "Mushmoor's Delight Cheese, cream—cottage—store—Edam—Cheese. Cheese wrote that check, boy, Olivia Cheese—I mean Mushmoor." His eyes grew small behind the glasses. "Don't think I didn't scratch dirt fer that." He looked hard at the check on the blotter. "And that isn't all I scratched, either. We used to go into her room and positively think she'd send the maid out and I'd scratch her back. Ever scratch the back of a woman eighty years old? I have."

"I was scratchin' her back when she signed that check—\$40,000,000. I got right up and left, didn't even bother to button up the back of her dress. She had apoplexy the next day. Guess a woman that age likes to have her back scratched. It's all she's got left, so to speak."

And then he looked out the window through the Chrysler Building and far beyond, and he says, "Advertisin' will save 'em, every man, woman and child, even Catholics — 100%. Give 'em a soul sheet like mine, membership card, monthly magazine and we'll give 'em Security, boy. We'll *unlax* the entire nation—not a tired tongue in a carload. We'll *unlax* the world. It's a vision, boy! And in six months we'll have judgement day. Inter-high choir singin', maybe a few words from Norman Peale, fireworks—and then we'll *unlax* the universe. See what I mean, boy? All with a little advertisin'."

"But why me?" I say in a small voice like my father is teaching me in the old country when I am caught picking pockets: "Why come

to me? Why not Cunningham and Walsh or B B D & O, or anybody? Why me?"

"Poetry, boy," he said and looked spiritual, "pure poetry. Gabriel—Kropotkin *Gabriel*. You're the only advertisin' man in New York named that; so, Gabriel, blow your horn and send me the bill."

And so this is how I became the advance man for Judgement Day.

Of course, I am contacting a very private eye, who is picking the fleas out of Finger's shaggy dog story, so to speak. First, he is finding out Finger is a small-minded man with big ideas from Winnetea; second, that he has been seen wheeling the late Mrs. Mushmoor in and out of the best places, and third, that the check under my paperweight, like my aged Grandfather's advice, is good when taken. A fact about which I am pleasantly surprized.

It is then I am thinking to myself: "The Judgement Day, what a topic! It is better than chlorophyll, and look how far that went." And so when I noticed Finger has left me a dirty bedsheet with a letter "S" on it, I admit I am thinking only a minute of my sanity, before I, Gabriel Kropotkin, am putting it on, lifting up my inter-office 'phone and blowing.

II

As always, it starts with the wheels. They grind slow at first, here on the sixty-fifth floor, and when they are lubricated with enough cigarette butts and stale coffee, they push little men out into Manhattan, little men to whisper in big mens' ears, to mix martinis, to say nice things, to write nicer things, to coax, to drink, to eat, to belch, 'til the wheels go so fast you can't see them. And when you look again at the men, the little black dots moving on Madison Avenue, you hear them hawking your word like off a push-cart, your signs light up over the city— and you have an advertising campaign.

At any rate we are deciding to feed the thing to the public slow, like arsenic, which is like trying to wake up a very fat man with a feather. You must know the right place to tickle or nothing happens. In this case the right place turns out to be the Steve Gloomis Show, a TV sleeper that is going on so late that some people have either taken their benzedrine or are watching the late-late movie.

So we are figuring anybody neurotic enough to stay up and listen to Gloomis is neurotic enough to fall for Finger, tongue unlatin' and all. And we are planting him, soul sheet and Stetson, in the second row of the audience. Here we figure he will show up like a religious medal in the kitty at a crap game.

We are figuring right, because just as soon as Gloomis gets down into the audience to do interviews, he spots Finger and closes in on him. Gloomis starts brilliantly, "It's a little late for Halloween, friend" (the audience roars). "It's a little late for anything," Finger answers

I AM SITTING ON THE SIXTY-FIFTH FLOOR

in the voice of doom (the audience stops roaring). And even on a ten-inch screen you can see Gloomis is regretting what he has done. "Well, isn't that nice? And you're from—" "It isn't important where I'm from, son," says Finger, and he lays his hand real fatherly on Gloomis' shoulder. "It's what I can do for you— yes, for every one of you, that's important." By this time he has crowded Gloomis off camera and he is looking straight out of your T-V, his hard little eyes biting into you: "You see, my fellow Americans, the Lord will come to judge this nation within the next six months" (he takes off his bifocals for effect). This is the promised Armageddon (he looks deep into the camera lense). In plain American, friends— the Judgement Day!"

Immediately four girl scouts from Jackson Heights who are sitting in the third row go into hysteria, while a lady in Ocean Park has a stroke in her game room. And, though an usher quickly drags Finger off camera while Gloomis shoves a door prize into his hand, the damage is done—Finger is made. 3,000 calls by one o'clock, 10,000 by five in the morning, and by ten every wire service in America has the story: SWAMI PREDICTS WORLD'S END OVER GLOOMIS GAMBOL!

Once they are tossing you in this gold fish bowl, it does not take long for the public to see you swimming around. At least it didn't for Farfel Finger. On *I've Got A Secret* his secret was that the world would end by August. On *Meet The Girls* he assured the girls they were going to hell if they used mascara. On *TV Masquerade Party* he came disguised as God. Inside of two weeks Hearst is asking him to write a column, and he is getting his sheets tailored from Brooks Brothers. But as I am finding out, Farfel Finger is no piker, he is wanting bigger things: "Swayin', boy! Ever see 'em sway at a camp meetin'? You have 'em in the palm, right in the palm! You make 'em see! See Heaven and Hell turning in on 'em. They weep on your shoelaces, grab at your cuffs, and when they slobber like that, you got 'em, it's the sign. Then you rub 'em soft on the head, give 'em ten easy rules, unlash their tongues and you got 'em for life. Yessir-ree! Fer life, boy!"

"You don't even have to put the screws on 'em, that's the beauty of it. The world's done that— the Russians and the subway, General Motors and the C. I. O., wars and martinis, Carter's Little Liver Pills and Arthur Godfrey—Oh, they're shook out there, boy! They're waiting for me, Farfel Finger. They'll be swayin' soon—all across the country—one big camp meetin'. Then I got this nation, this world—right in the palm!" And so he did.

III

They open slow. First they are following the railroad tracks and the waterfronts, never getting far from the bright lights and the crummy hotels, and the new people just off the boats, and the old

people just off the trains from nowhere. They are in old store-fronts and moldy offices a couple of flights up, in vacant lots and over bars. They are always being the same thing — a desk, a few chairs, a ten cent store flag and the sign. It's a big sign in red, white and blue, that says: SOUL CENTER. Sometimes it's in neon, but most of the time it's just painted on cardboard.

Outside, where they can grab you easy, are some SOUL SALESMEN. They are characters, some of them pretty respectable, who are got up like Finger in sheets. They are grabbin' you and talking to you real earnest. They have even got some pretty good lines like, "Friend, Rest Here, While Finger Finds Your Happy Hunting Ground," or "With Judgement Day Right Around The Corner, Neighbor, It's Time For A Soul Change," or "Take Five At The Most, Don't Roast, Insure The Soul With The Man Upstairs." Like I am saying, they are real door-openers, which is pretty natural since we are paying Dale Carnegie, Norman Vincent Peale and Liberace \$50,000 apiece to think them up.

Well, these boys are no slouches, and once you are upstairs you are lost. It's like getting booked at a police station—it's fast, and you don't get to talk much. Pretty soon you've got a big pin on that says POSITIVE THINKER, a card that says you are a member, and a dirty sheet like Farfel's. Then they take a ten dollar donation (which they say is tax-free), give you a book of POSITIVE THOUGHTS, and then they say you are "*Jake with the Man upstairs*" and are *Saved*. By this time you are out on the street again, and you grab a taxi home before another soul salesman gets you, or somebody sees you in the bedsheet.

The man from I.B.M. who is working out the system tells Finger it will save two million units a day by November. Finger is having it save four million, and doubling his gross. Like I am saying, Finger is no piker.

Pretty soon the Judgement Day is getting big. Liquor sales fall off, but soap goes up. Lord Bittenbattenhurst folds, but there is pretty soon a black market in hymnals, and someone even makes a Classic Comic out of the Book of Revelations — real big. In March, Finger gets 4,000 proposals of marriage. In April, a girl from Hasbrook Heights throws herself in front of his taxi. In May, his face is on *Newsweek*, and in June, the *New York Times* admits he exists. By July, they are calling him an "American Phenomenon," and there are so many people wearing bedsheets on Fifth Avenue that it looks like a convention of the Klu Klux Klan—real big.

IV

It is not like the Mambo, or Canasta, this Judgement Day. Finger is finding something deep underneath those sheets he puts on people. Something they don't know is there. Finger finds fear. And so in

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New York, a streetwalker shaves off her hair and goes into a trance in the lobby of the Astor. In Winona, four young boys are badly burned playing Hell and Damnation, and in Oslosh, a baker hangs himself on the cross. By August it is like the sun is falling from the sky. The fear is moving slightly behind the taxi going up and down Park Avenue. It is riding a tractor in a cornfield outside Keokus, and it follows a green and maroon Cadillac racing up the San Bernardine Valley. It is a fisherman's net that has caught up the whole country. And Finger is the fisherman.

But Farfel is changing, too. He is starin' out my window by the hour, and when we take some stills of him meditating in the Catskills, he is actually meditating three hours after the photograpers have gone. Other things are bothering me about Finger. The way he is sticking thumbtacks into his palms and smiling. The way he is standing with his back to the sun, so that the light shines around his head. The way he wears razor blades stuck in his hatband, so they leave little cuts in his forehead. "My crown of thorns," he calls them. And the look on his face sometimes when he sees himself in the mirror, like a man worshiping at an ikon. In the back of my head I know it, but I am too afraid to say it out loud. Finger is believing his own publicity.

It is hard on such short notice, but we rent Radio City Music Hall. Finger has decided that for a kick-off we must do something big. The Conover models and chorus boys for angels are easy, but Fred Waring is out of town, and the Yale Glee Club is on vacation, so we use as heavenly hosts the voices of Walter Schuman. Even though we have to rent half the Metropolitan Chorus to make them big enough to fill the stage. At first I want to use the Rockettes, but Finger says he can't find anything in the Book of Revelations where we can work them in. So we hang them, dressed in pink sequin nighties, from the ceiling, holding gold trumpets, like I saw once on a Christmas card. And I must admit even that way they are very decorative. At the last minute some network producer who is graduating from Yale claims we got too many chorus girls for good taste, even on Judgement Day. So we fly Charles Laughton from Hollywood by jet plane so he can read the Bible while the Rockettes are hanging in mid-air tooting on their trumpets every once in awhile. This, we figure, should even things up some. And it does.

V

They wait now, the people, in the soft summer rain. Little boys rent umbrellas to women, whose hair hangs down in strings, and men whose summer suits stick to their arms and legs. They wait in front of Radio City and Times Square, where we've put a big T-V screen. In little groups they watch the screens in appliance store windows and in the back of bars. Standing here in the soft rain on a summer day, it is hard to think it could end, our world.

At noon the stock market collapses. At one o'clock the UN gives up with a final prayer. At three in the afternoon the president, three chiefs of staff, and a senator, tell the nation to be calm. At three-thirty, four men and a woman from Little Bend blast off in a rocket ship they have made from old Ford parts. When Finger is speaking, the whole world knows what he is going to say. They are only waiting for his words: "He will descend at 12:15 next Tuesday, neighbors. He will descend on Far Rockaway with the Heavenly Host. Parking will be provided for those who wish to attend. Please do not litter the picnic ground. We'd like to keep it real clean for the Lord."

VI

What does one do on Judgement Day? Does he take the 7:30, read the paper and have orange juice at the corner drug store, then go to work, or does he watch the sunrise, write a poem, cry a lot and drink a little? What does he do? It is a problem when it is too late to do anything.

Take, for instance, me. My kids come in at 8:00 with the dog, and they are pretty soon all over the bed, and the dog is licking my face. My oldest boy (he's nine) says, "No school today, Pa. It's Judgment Day. Miss McGlenley told us to go home and pray." Says my girl (she's seven), "Why we gotta pray, Pa?" "Can I play stick ball first?" asked my boy. "You gotta have breakfast first before anything," says my wife. "And let your Pa sleep, he works hard at the office." "Is it like Sunday, Pa?" they asked me. "Just like Sunday," I say. "But it was Sunday two days ago," says my boy (he's always figuring angles). "Well, it's like Sunday again," I say. "Why?" asks the girl. "Because— because of Mr. Finger, and 40 million dollars and a lot of cheese, that's because," I say. And I dive under the bedspread and don't come out 'til 8:30.

In the morning we eat a slow breakfast, and afterwards I play stick ball with the kid. At 11:00 my wife has the picnic lunch packed and we leave for Far Rockaway.

On the way I am stopping at the office to get a couple of soul sheets for the kids. The streets are empty and your voice rings around you when you talk. In the building it is dark. No one has bothered to put on the lights. There is no elevator man, but I get the elevator to the 63rd floor before it jams, and I walk the last two flights. The office is quiet. Someone has put dust covers on the typewriters, and even my secretary's desk is clean for once. Everything is right and in order. It is like they were putting the world into a closet.

And then I am seeing the light through my office door, on and off, flickering like a fire. Through the door comes a long shadow that runs across the desks and machines, that crawls up the wall and fills the room. And without looking I know it is Finger Farfel.

I AM SITTING ON THE SIXTY-FIFTH FLOOR

My office isn't pleasant to see. The simulated books have been ripped from the simulated bookcase. A pile of Soul Center money is burning in the wastepaper basket. Behind the million dollar smoke screen is Finger, dressed like the priest of the Lost Temple I am seeing in the last Tarzan movie. He has got on a nighty like they give you in the hospitals, only it is white velvet, with a few gold sequins sprinkled here and there. His hair he has shaved except for a fringe around the edges, and he needs a shave. He has got on a pair of elevated sun sandals that give him about three inches, and his eyes glow round in his head. "It has been revealed," he says, and lays his hand on my head like I was a cocker-spaniel.

"POWER!" he says. "It's running through me like I was full of electric sparks!" He looks at the wastebasket and spits. "Don't need this no more," he says, and throws a wad of twenties on where my life insurance policy is burning. "Don't need this!" he screams, and throws a bottle of scotch at my home-bar. "Don't need nothin'!" and he spreads his arms wide and his bifocals go spinning across the floor under my secretary's desk. "I got power," he purrs in my ear. "It came last night, boy— the glow, the halo. It's real, it don't go away no more. It lights up back of my head and ears and makes 'em glow red. Just like a Christmas tree angel, the ones with little lights screwed on the back. Only I got no light. It's a HALO!—It's POWER! Me, Farfel Finger, from Winnetea, is goin' to SAVE THE WORLD!"

Now I know Finger not only believes his own publicity but is living it. I am going to grab him before he becomes violent, but he quick makes an adagio leap to my executive-type picture window, and while I am trying to put out the blaze, which is spreading from my wastebasket to the rug, he has kicked the window into the street. He is standing bloody but unbowed on the ledge outside my office. "Finger, take the elevator!" I am screaming, but he only turns his head, and in a sad cold voice, he says, "No, Gabriel, I'm flyin'— flyin' out over the Empire State Building, bankin' high at the Battery, climbin' into the sun over the East River. And I will descend on Far Rockaway when I said I would. I will descend and be GOD!"

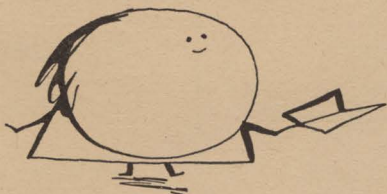
Then he did a strange thing. He spread his arms wide and jumped. For a moment I thought he would make it. His big white robes curled out from him like wings, and he seemed to stay in the air like he was pasted to the sky. Then he fell down, down, down, like a piece of white paper thrown during a parade.

And so I am sitting here on the sixty-fifth floor. My Orang-O is gone, and my Lord Bittenbattenhursts are butts, and I don't even cough no more. Like I said, it is getting light in here, or maybe it is me that is seeing things without the Neon signs and the singing commercials. And for the first time I am wondering what will happen

Henry Kass

when the hot dogs run out at Far Rockaway and the sun goes down on the Atlantic. I am wondering how you give a rain-check on Judgment Day, and it's beyond wondering what we have done, and it's beyond my mind what we have said, Farfel and I. I only think now that in the end Finger was serious. He was trying to save us and himself. But Finger is a little white piece of paper in the street, and the children at Far Rockaway are sick on cotton candy. I wonder if anything can save us now.

Henry Kass



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