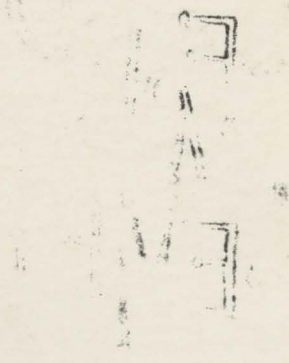


ALFRED
REVIEW

7



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Alfred Review

spring 1954

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EDITORIAL

The popular concept of the artist is, for the most part, misleading. He is not the velvet-suited man with a sunflower in his button hole, nor does he write crossed-legged on the floor — lighted by a flickering neon sign while nourishing himself on poppy products and white wine. True, there are Bohemians, but there are also Lionel Trillings and John Middleton Murrays who work for their end product and lead normal lives as well.

The neurotic writing which is so prevalent at this time is perhaps a product created by the rise of psychology as a science. Just as John Lyly wrote in his flowery euphuisms because he was chiefly concerned with irrelevancies, it is natural that today's writer should be under the influences of his time. All literature is sifted through many critical hands, and that which does not stand up will be classified along with Grub Street writings.

Tradition, which is so much a part of any art, is a legacy for the writer, and the human initiative associated with intellectual revolution is the heritage that the artist has to work with. It is up to him to select from the past, the present, and with his own ingenuity, to note the direction of the future in order to produce an important work.

It is necessary to remember that in literature, as in music, there are blasphemies. Edgar Guest appeals to certain people in the same way that James Joyce appeals to others. Just as the Jefferson Memorial, for instance, is necessary for a specific purpose, by the same token the Mickey Spillane clan is important in its own way. It is up to the individual to distinguish what will fulfill his personal needs.

The molding of words into thoughts and feelings are experiences for the reader and the writer, but each in his own way. The reader is entitled to any meaning he can derive, because of his individual experiences, from the works he reads. The writer is entitled to record his experiences, reflect his views, release his emotions; but only so long as he can communicate to others. If he can't do this, then he should save his work for his own use, for the merely obscure does not communicate unless it contains beauty either in thought or language. If an obscure work does not communicate anything at all except to the writer, then it serves no purpose other than the writer's own, whatever that may be.

The function of the artist in society is an important one. That is why we feel that the communication of creative imagination, and the recognition of others' opinions, all constitute the freedom which is so important in our time.

The Editors

Stabat Mater

No smoking please, we must preserve the guilt
From tarnishing. Alone Our Lady stands
Before an empty sacrifice. Without the rood—
Destroyed four centuries age by profane hands—
She strains in sorrow toward her unseen God
In everlasting grief, which hears no more
“Magnificat.” A fragment for the curious eye
She stands, not for the holy poor,
But blinded men who glance, and saunter by.

Well may she sorrow. Never heretics
Destroyed so much or so maimed the human soul.
Indeed, gone is the crucifix—
Gone also are the men who once were whole.
Would we could sorrow for the Son she sees
In faith, and need no proof to know.
Would we were innocent of the heresies
Which make God's Mother but a curious show.
So careful of the guilt....No smoking please.

Bruce MacDonald

Tale of a Flautist

He played a flute one dreamy day
To pipe a saddened mood away,
And as he piped, a crowd drew near
To listen to his tune of cheer.

"Play now," they cried, "a martial air,
And help us win our empire's goal."
The anthem of our land, so fair;
Play songs of war which stir our souls

His fingers, idly across the flute
(As though to speakers he were mute)
Called forth a bird trill, simple, sweet,
That challenged nature to compete.

He turned then to the crowd which milled
And spoke in voice, compassion filled,
"I cannot play this foolish choice,
Your hymn of hate and sacrifice."

"My flute is made in simple fashion
To cry of peasants' lyric passion:
Involved and complex notes of war
Are not what flutes were designed for."

He tried to play a country dance,
A folk song, singing of romance,
But the crowd, now mad with rage and hate,
Drove him from the city gate.

Now in a woodland, all aglow
With spring sun, welcome after snow,
He plays his simple songs for youth
And wanders, seeking peace and truth.

A simple flautist, thankless quest
Against the world's unequal test,
For he who keeps with truth a tryst
Must soon be crucified — like Christ !

John Connors

OLD MAN

"Old man, old man! Wake up old man, silly old man! You'll catch flies in your mouth sleeping like that in the sun! Old man, old man!"

"Oh, be quiet an' let him sleep. He's my grandfather..."

"So what? So what if he's your grandfather? He still looks silly sleeping there in the sun with his mouth open. All he ever does is sleep, anyway. Old man, old man!"

"Shut up, I said. Don' wake him up or my aunt'll wop you or throw somethin' at you. Ol' men is supposed to sleep. If you was as old as my grandfather you'd be purty tired too, and you'd wanna sit and sleep all day. So don't wake him up."

"You got somethin' better for us to do?"

"Yeh, let's play somethin'...like war....I got a pistol in a holster an' my brother's got a knife I could swipe..."

"Aw, I got a better idea. It's almost three o'clock an' the high school kids get out now, and we could go down to the corner an' yell things at the girls. The big guys do it all the time...Jeez, you should see the way them girls act so silly and sceerd, and some of 'em yell back, and some of 'em don't even look at you an' pretend not to hear. I heard them guys yell some purty good things, boy..."

"Come on then, I'll race you!"

Evvie pulled herself out of the chair where she had been sitting with her eyes closed, and lurched unhappily over to the window. She leaned out and shouted in a thick voice, "You dopey kids down there, shuddup or I'll git the cops after you! Can't you see the ol' man's trying to sleep? Shuddup now," and she shook a fat fist at them menacingly, even though they had already raced down the block and out of sight. All that answered her threat was the cheerless echo of their shouts and laughter that loitered for a moment in the street and in the alleyways between the shabby tenement houses, and then dissolved in the afternoon heat.

"Brats, every one of 'em!" She slammed the window down and went back to the chair, fanning herself with a newspaper. The heat was awful. It seeped in through the cracks in the floorboards and under the door. If you opened the window to get a bit of fresh air, the heat that poured in from the street outside made everything intolerably hotter. The only solution was to stay indoors with the shades pulled down and try to sleep. Siesta time, they call it in Mexico, she thought to herself. It might not be so bad if she wasn't trapped like this in the city, with a broken and peevish old man to nurse and two nephews she couldn't discipline. But worse of all was the added woe of two hundred pounds of flesh that weighted her bones.

She sank down into the chair and rocked back and forth for a moment, opening and closing her eyes. Her throat felt dry and strange, and for a split second she thought she saw a bottle of gin on the sideboard. The thought of it made her smile, but then the image disappeared and she felt angry and alone..., and her throat was still dry.

"Goddam heat...noisy kids." She leaned her head back, and her small child-like red mouth moved noiselessly. A long time ago she had gotten away from all this, run away in fact....become a lady of genteel manners. She even had a husband (those were the days when she was thin and good-looking and a lot of men wanted her). They had lived in style for a long time, and even when Ned had left her she could still keep up appearances. She never

had to ask for charity (there were always ways to get things in those days, when she was thin and good-looking and a lot of men wanted her). And now she had given it all up to keep house for her father, her brother Noah, and his two wild kids. Her situation was almost too much to bear. "How much longer can it last?" she asked herself, looking in the direction of the little porch where the old man was dozing in the sun, "How much longer?" She smiled, picturing herself at a bar back in St. Louis, drinking gin with a man who looked like Ned... and he was admiring her figure.

Noah stepped out of the tavern and stood for a moment accustoming his eyes to the white heat of the afternoon. The bar had been cool and dark and he had drunk his beer slowly, letting it console him... remembering Hillman's face when he had learned that Noah was quitting.

"Now look here, Noah," he had said, "how do you suppose that leaves me, having my foreman walk out on a job? What's the idea?"

"I've got to get away, start over again," Noah had answered desperately. "I've got troubles at home. My father, my sister. I'm going to take my boys and just go off someplace new."

Hillman shrugged. "Fine. Where will you go? Have you any money? And what happens to your father and sister?"

"Something'll work out."

Noah had taken the three days' wages coming to him and left the office. Now, later in the same afternoon, he stood outside the tavern, still afraid to go home.

He threw his jacket over his shoulder and started down the street, keeping close to the buildings and walking under the store awnings. He passed a fruit and vegetable stand and stopped to look for a long time at the tomatoes and the cucumbers and the watermelons, their beauty dazzling his eye and holding him rooted to the spot. The proprietor wandered over to him. "You wanna buy somethin', mister?" "No... no, never mind," he said, moving away. A big oil truck rolled past him through the narrow street, churning up clouds of dust and gas fumes. Suddenly Noah found himself wishing that it would rain, rain hard and long and very cold, so that the streets would be washed clean of the soot and settled dust, of the wasted dreams that lingered about the sad-eyed windows and clung to the people. Rain. He would take off his shoes and walk barefoot like a child once more, as in his youth when they ran shivering and squealing beneath the fountaining fire hydrants.

Suddenly he knew what he must do. The image of the vegetables persisted in his mind... beautiful red tomatoes. Yes, he would go back and buy three tomatoes, and he would take them home to his sons. He would give each one a big shiny tomato and keep one for himself, and they would put salt on them and eat them whole, just holding them in their hands. He and his boys would walk down the street together eating their tomatoes, and his sons would be proud of him.

When Evvie heard the footsteps coming up the stairs, she got up from her chair, and as quickly as her body would allow, hurried to the mirror over the sideboard. With two deft jabs she pulled up the loose strands of hair that were clinging damply to the nape of her neck, straightened her dress, and smiled sweetly at her image. "Perhaps just a little cold water on the face," she thought, "about the eyes, to refresh." But the footsteps reached the landing, and halted.

Noah shut the door behind him and threw his jacket over the nearest chair. "Whew, but it's hot outside!" He saw his sister out of the corner of his eye standing by the sideboard like some great deformed shadow. Noah went to the window and pulled the shade up.

"Leave the shade down, it keeps the heat out of the room," he heard her say.

"You been outside at all today?" he asked.

"No."

"And the boys?"

They're off playing somewhere." She yanked the windowshade down.

"You home early today. Somethin' wrong?"

"Where's the ol' man?" Noah asked idly.

"Sleeping out on the porch. I ast you a question. Is there something wrong?"

"Sleeping out on the porch? That's a killer 'sun out there, and you let him sleep out on the porch!"

Honestly, Noah, you gotta do something about them boys. Unmannerly little animals. You shoulda seen 'em this afternoon...."

"For God's sakes, did you hear me? A killer sun!"

"He said he wanted to take a nap on the porch, so what am I supposed to do?"

"Christ, woman! He'll get sunstroke ou there! Don't you hear me?"

"I heard you," said Evvie, and her voice was tipped with anger. "What do you think I'm made of? I'm sick an' tired of fighting him, one minute about taking his medicine, another minute about this...and then that. So if he wants to sit out in the sun, let him!"

Noah strode past Evvie toward the porch door. She grabbed the sleeve of his shirt. "Noah, dear, don't worry, leave him be. The doctor said the sun was good for him. Puts vitamins in the blood. Besides, you know how he hates being waked up." Noah's resistance ebbed, and she pushed him gently into a chair. "Now don't you worry. He'll be all right."

Evvie's voice caressed his tired mind. All his strength seemed to be leaving him with his perspiration. Evvie disappeared into the kitchen, and he heard her moving dishes and pans in the sink. "I'm making pot roast for supper," she said. "It oughta last to lunch on Saturday, if them boys of yours don't gobble it up in one sitting." Noah held the bag of tomatoes tightly in his hand, felt their taut skins beneath the brown paper, and thought of his sons. Yes, things were going to be different from now on. He hugged the tomatoes closer.

"...and confound it if people aren't beginning to talk," came the voice of Evvie from the kitchen. "Why, only yesterday in the supermarket I heard that nerry Missus Bryson say ... Well, it don't matter just what she said, the point is yesterday was the last straw. I'm getting a good bit bothered what with one thing and another. You know yourself, Noah, how hard it is to handle the old man nowadays. He's always being rude and peculiar with company and putting funny notions in the boys' heads...and...well, other things, too. So if it ain't his heart's gonna go, it'll be his mind."

Noah stood up and walked to the kitchen door.

"...and it's gotten so that a number of people think he ought to be put away."

"And do you think so, too?"

Evvie was startled. "Why, Noah, dear. I'm just telling you what people are saying. And you have to admit..."

"Do you think so, too, Evvie?" he asked again. She picked up a dish towel and began to dry her hands. "Well, it's a matter of being honest with ourselves and realizing that he's getting old and helpless, and his thinkin's fuzzy, and he don't recognize things or people anymore, and..."

"And you want to have him put away!" shouted Noah "Why don't you admit that you're ashamed of your own father, and too damn lazy to care if he lives or dies! Why don't you admit that?"

She put the dish towel down very carefully on the sink and moved close to Noah until she was directly in front of him, and then she thrust her fat ashen face with its weary eyes and pouting mouth up close to his and said with only

a slight tremor in her voice, "And don't tell me, brother dear, there haven't been times when you wished the old man was dead, too!"

Noah sat down heavily in the kitchen chair. "No," he denied faintly. Then louder. "No! I never wished it. He's my father. How could I wish him dead, he who...who gave me life?"

"Life can be a lot of things. Beautiful things. Ugly things," said Evvie, standing tragic in her obesity. "When it stops being beautiful and good, then's the time to end it. The old man's got no more good life left in him. But instead of putting him off somewhere or wishing his pain over quick...no, you say he's gotta live out his last days making life no good to us either."

"You make me sick," said Noah, turning from her. "Who's to say that one man's life is good and beautiful and another's ugly and bad? A dying man hold onto every breath to the last...not giving it up easy. No matter how bad it is, you don't toss it off like a toy you've got tired of!" He looked at her and thought, "Well, I've got my sons at least."

"What's that in the paper bag?" asked Evvie coolly.

"Nothing you'd be interested in," Noah answered, full of grief. She snatched the bag from his hands and opened it. "Tomatoes!" and she shrieked with laughter. "Since when are you buying the groceries? And three tomatoes! Why three?"

"You wouldn't understand," he said, and reached for the bag. It tore and the tomatoes spilled out over the floor. Noah got down on his hands and knees to pick them up. "They're for me and the boys," he said softly. "I'm gonna be real father to them from now on. Give them a good life. We're gonna celebrate."

"Celebrate what?" asked Evvie standing over him.

"Celebrate my good luck." He straightened up. "Didn't you hear about my good luck, Evvie? I just quit my job. Don't ask me why, but I want to start over again...someplace new...with my boys. All I got is my boys, and the shirt on my back, and three days' pay in my pocket. And I just spent fifteen cents for them tomatoes. Dopey tomatoes you're thinking, but they mean something to me. They mean everything that's good and beautiful; everything I never had, everything you never was. They mean that old man out there sleeping in the sun. Yeah, they mean him...y'understand?"

"Tell me, Noah," and her voice was flat and chilling, "tell me what you'll do with the old man. Well? Who's gonna take care of the old man, Noah,...feed him, buy his medicine, read his newspaper to him in the evening? Who's gonna make him feel wanted? He's your father, remember? I don't mean a thin' to him...but YOU, you're his light, you're his life...so beautiful and good. What're you gonna do with him, Noah? You can't cross the river to greener pastures with a millstone around your neck. He could hang on like this for years."

He hated her now. "For a year..." he echoed. She had trapped him. There was no answer. Oh, but there was an answer, and his spine shrank with the knowledge of it.

"ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!" he cried. "So I wished he was dead...there! But he'd be better off dead than rotting lonely here, waiting for it in this god-awful place, or in some old folks' home where no one cares I could cry every time I look at him. No more strength or manhood left in him...or pride. Like a shadow. He's already dead here, and the rest of us are the living dead, too...But if he dies, we live, my boys and I. Yeah, and I guess you, too! You see? Ain't it simple?"

He felt like a child. Now he not only hated Evvie, he hated himself.

"Yeah, you gotta kill the thing you love before you can..." He stopped and burst into tears. "Forget it, forget I ever said anything. Set the table for dinner, Evvie, and we'll all have sliced tomatoes with our pot roast!"

"Old man, old man!" Wake up, old man, silly old man. You'll catch flies in your mouth sleeping like that in the sun. Old man, hey" The sound of the voices came up the street like a wind blowing, blowing old papers in front of it and sweeping the dust from the sidewalks. "Old man, old man..." Noah lifted his head from the kitchen table and listened.

"It's them kids again," sighed Evvie. "They ain't had enough of bothering him yet. I'll get rid of them," and she started toward the window. But Noah grabbed her arm.

"No, wait."

OLD MAN, OLD MAN! SILLY OLD MAN, WAKE UP!" The voices circled the fire escape, which was their porch, like a boisterous parade of little alley cats and yellow mongrels, laughing and hopping up and down, chanting to the old man on the porch in the rush-bottom rocker with his head thrown back and his spectacles in his lap. The singing rose and fell like ocean waves, like a wind blowing; there was almost the smell of rain in the air.

"Well, ain't you gonna stop them? They'll wake him up!" Evvie whined.

"Just listen, it's like music!" Noah got up and ran to the window and let the shade fly up. The boys saw him and ran off yelling in all directions. Only his younger son remained. The boy looked up at his father in the window.

"I told them to stop, but they wouldn't listen," he explained.

"It's all right," Noah murmured.

He walked out on the porch and stood looking at the back of his father's head. The old man hadn't moved. He didn't even have to look into the old man's face to know the truth. And Noah's guilt and sorrow were washed away in a larger feeling of release.

"Did we wake him up?" asked the boy plaintively.

"No, you didn't wake him," answered Noah. Then he spun joyfully around and faced his son over the railing. "Tell you what, buster. Go find your brother and Ill give you both a surprise....tomatoes...."

Linda Napolin



Sonnet

O We have loved the lacy gossamer
Of tendernesses tainted with desire.
Of phantom dreams so Damon debonaire
That flirted with the daggers of a fire.
We went on binges basking in the wombs
Of worlds that wept with bitter solitude.
And in our search we happened on the tombs
That held the haunted swellings of a mood.
We painted all our Springs in marigold
And when the fall came through we were not bound
To shuffle through a pastry-growing mold
Or search for voices selling us the sound
Of words we knew and thought but never told
About the sacred sweetness of the cold.

*Judith Greenberg

Legacy of a Dying Lover

Do not pine nor think of death
For we two are one
And so are bulb and petal
Bloom and stalk
And from decay of first
Shall last come life
As bell shaped spikes of blue blue red
Did come from Apollos dead

D. Taeler

In Respect of A Basic Law of Nature

When the Child Insisted on Catching the Bee
I shall let him, for wishes;
I shall have no regrets
When he comes to me with tears in his eyes.
The young are born to cry, so who am I
To tumble a stone in a field,
Exposing worms and blackened earth too soon?
Let him find out for himself,
When nature cruelly swells his finger.
No, I shall not say a thing;
I will, rather, sit all day in my chair
Listening to all, and tonight,
Listen even more attentively to crickets,
But never interrupt. For what is there to say?
What should be said? Is anything worth saying,
After all? No. I shall be quiet and listen,
And hope the wind will not be strong enough
To blow us all away. I shall be quiet and hope.
I shall sit all day and have peace with the world,
Leaving the bee and boy to their own protection.

Victor J. Silverstre

Thoughts While Looking at a Box of Fossils in Geology Lab

Fossil, fossil, dried and stark,
Laughing grimly in the dark,
From out what ancient epoch lost,
Wryly grinning were you tossed?
What prehistoric heel or jaw
Silenced their carnivorous maw?

The proud and vain Coelacanth swam
epicontinental seas,
And dined on friendly fishes with
the greatest moral ease.

Pompous he was, and arrogant,
He ruled the waves with iron fin
Until some whale, quite innocent,
Administered some discipline
by eating him.

And now, oh vain Coelacanth,
Three million years from your demise,
We have your teeth in little jars
That you would never recognize....
Along with twigs quite petrified
And dried-out bones beside.
Where are you now, you fishy terror?
Why chomp in vain and curse and holler,
Chomping your celestial supper?
We're the ones who've got your uppers!

Oh, grasshopper poised in eternal leap
In your coffin of amber eternally sleep.
Who stopt the hop,
Who stifled the squeak,
So that you now exist an archaic
freak?

Ignore prying eyes and poking digits,
Your soul is immortal, your torso's
frigid.

Disdainfully smile at the students who
stare,
You're a million years old,
And what's more, you don't care.

Docile fossil lying still,
Thinking smugly what you will,
Dreaming on the windowsill
Of your ancient revels....
Knew you laughter?
Did you Love?
Did you yearn to touch the sky?
Soak the sunshine?
Feel the sadness of a day on earth
gone by?

Docile fossil lying still,
Thinking smugly what you will,
What scientific hand or eye
Could trace thy obscure ancestry,
Ossified, mummified, petrified, and
 putrified,
There you sit by my side,
Breathing not a word.
I can rave, I can jabber,
All the answers I'll provide
But lost forever, lost forever,
Lost in time's dark sepulchre
Is the key to satisfy,
Is the wedge your lips to pry,
To find the secrets that you hid
You, whose stony tongues are tied.

Linda Napolin

FISHING BOATS

She had come into the shaded, empty living room to get her husband's folder of student compositions and take it with her for secret perusal out into the sunny back yard. As she had picked it up she had seen a sheet of cream-colored vellum sticking out of the top of the folder and, surprised, she had sat down in the easy chair beside his desk to examine the lacy, feminine script. She was amazed as she read, not at the content of the letter, but at her own reaction; "I'm much too sure," she thought, because she was amused.

"Dear Michael," the letter said, "My latest deserves a more sepulchral background than the usual. If you can get away by four, I'll show you the ideal spot for poetry." It was signed "M. E."

Laura Bennett watched her own hands, square-shaped, almost masculine hands slip the letter back into the folder marked "Creative Writing, Eng. 33" and place it casually on the desk. She remembered fifteen years before when Mike had one day idly held her hands in his and then, looking at them intently, as though they were cut off from her and a separate work of art, had called them "writer's hands." "That's what you get," she spoke aloud; "You peek and pry long enough, and someday you find something," she thought, "and if it were anyone but Mike . . . someone else would think the worst, but you know." She got up heavily and walked to one of the large front windows; "M. E. . . . that's Mary Ellen," she thought as she raised the shade to let in the sun of a brilliant spring afternoon. "What was that thing she wrote about green mist? . . . Mike said, 'Emily Dickinson!' as though it were a compliment. . . . She's probably got lady's hands. . . . I used to write about fishing boats, I remember . . . suited me." She turned away from the warm glare of the window and walked slowly to the center of the room; deliberately she faced the mirror which hung over the mantel, and the revelation in the bright light. "Poor Mike," she thought as she examined the woman in the mirror — the slender neck, the slender shoulders, the heavy breasts; "Why not write the book? . . . stop hounding after someone else's talent. . . . do something yourself. . . ." She placed her hands gently on her round hard stomach and turned sideways, appraisingly; "Women aren't writers. . . . look at me." She smiled as she left the mirror and ordered room for the warmth and drowsiness of the back yard; "If you'd only take a year off and write that book. . . . how many times have I said that?" she thought as she walked out into the pungent spring and settled herself in the deck chair unfolded on the grass. She felt the sun and the shadows playing on her closed eyelids and she thought with amusement, "I should be worried, after fifteen years. . . . but I'm too sure. . . ."

She was lying in their bed, in Michael's arms, and he was whispering love to her; "Your hands, my dear adorable. . . ." he said; "Writer's hands. Laura, you've got writer's hands." "You do love me, Michael, don't you still?" she asked; "I can't write anymore, but you do love me?" She felt him pull her against him, but her stomach began to grow and grow and pushed him away from her. "Michael! Michael!" she called, and he said, far away in the distance, "You wanted it, Laura, it's yours." She began to cry and the telephone rang, shrill and penetrating, close to her head; she reached over the night table and picked up the receiver. Alice Corbett said, "I hate to tell you this, Laura, but everyone knows that Mike is running around with one of his students, and I think it's time you knew. Now, of course, I know it doesn't mean

a thing but with you pregnant and all, it just looks bad. I don't mean to meddle, you know that, but...." "No!" she cried as she dropped the phone; "It's my fault, darling. I read it; but please come back...." "I love you, Laura," Michael said, and she turned to him and kissed his hands.

Laura woke up suddenly. The sun had faded, and she was cold in her thin summer dress. "Rain, again," she sighed as she rose awkwardly and started for the house. She stood on the back steps and glanced at the dull sky; "They'll get wet," she thought, smiling, "that ought to be sepulchral enough!" She went into the shelter of her kitchen and turned on the light; the placid neatness surrounded her. "Horrible dream ... subconscious, what?" she thought; "But he's glad about the baby, now....he knows I'll never write....with all the time in the world I'll never write....I'm sure he's glad....always thinking of me, anyway...." She stood a moment longer by the door, her hand holding tightly to the knob; "But you would rather I'd produce something more original....you still think I can....Oh, Michael, I'm so ordinary, please stop waiting for me!...." She shook her head and went quickly to the rack where her apron hung; "Salmon, hollandaise, salad...." she thought as she tied the apron around her. She opened the red and white cupboard, where dishes and pans were arranged in neat rows; she stood, frowning, in front of the opened door. "This takes talent enough....all I want." She reached for a yellow mixing bowl and went to the refrigerator for the salmon.

She had finished making the hollandaise, cutting the lettuce and cucumbers for the salad, and measuring the coffee into the chromium-polished electric percolator. She had set the table in the small alcove that was their dining room, and put candles—as though it were a special occasion—and her good Haviland china, on the table. Then she had left the ticking of the kitchen clock and the warm smell of coffee and gone upstairs; she changed her cotton house dress for the one of pale blue wool with a white pique collar, brushed her short brown hair, already difficult to reach, and, as an afterthought, seeing it unused on her dresser, dabbed the musky Lanvin perfume on her wrists, remembering the Christmas Michael had given it to her and her own trite, disappointing, "Oh, Mike, you shouldn't have!" Starting back down the stairs she had suddenly become aware of the scent of the perfume which seemed to envelope her, and she held tightly to the banister, waiting for the prickling at the back of her throat to go away. "You're not the type," she said out loud and, shaking off the momentary nausea, had gone on down to the kitchen to wait for Michael.

Laura sat in the little rocking-chair in the corner of the kitchen and felt her body lapse quickly into a state of half-sleep as it did so easily of late; "I suppose I could have been a writer," she thought dreamily, "but not a better writer than a wife....what good are fishing boats on paper?....It's the writer behind the writer and one's as good as the other....when Mike writes the book, I'll know ... not that he couldn't without me, but ... The trouble is that it's all girls, and so small; everyone knows what everyone else is doing ... not that it means anything, but you run into gossip and jealousy, and someday you want to be head of the department....And, after all, green mist isn't much better than fishing boats....but I do remember what a desperate thing it was, how important to be a great writer, and love was supposed to come definitely second, and only when...." The sound of a car in the driveway startled her, and she sat upright, expectant; the garage doors slid noisily shut, and footsteps clicked swiftly on the flagstone paving and up the back steps. "Oh, Mike!" Laura said happily.

Michael Bennett closed the kitchen door and stood shaking rain from his proper tweed jacket; "You look cozy!" he said, smiling at her dreamy eyes and the soft color of the dress. Laura glanced away from the relaxed smile in his

eyes to the dark wet spots on his shoulders; "You got wet," she said inanely. "So I did," he agreed; he shrugged off his jacket and walked through the dining room into the large, front living room, his heels tapping neatly on the polished wood floors. "What are we fancy for? celebrating?" he called back to Laura. "It's such a simple meal," Laura said, "I thought I ought to dress it up a little." Michael came to the door of the kitchen and stood lazily against it, rolling up his sleeves; "Want a drink?" he asked. Laura watched the slowly revealed, hairy arms, then raised her eyes to his smooth, lean face; "No, I don't think so," she said; "there's sauterne in the refrigerator." She rose slowly and crossed to him; raising herself on her toes, she kissed him lightly on his chin. "What fascinating deeds did you accomplish today, my love?" she asked. "Well..." he crossed his arms and gazed at the ceiling, "I introduced my decidedly unwilling freshmen to the intricacies of the allegory, and...I informed twelve unbelievers that inspiration is only one-tenth of writing, and...hmm...I shocked my English illiterates into reading Jonathan Swift by announcing a forthcoming quiz...I guess that's all. Not very fascinating, I'm afraid." He took the salmon and wine from her and put them on the table, then waited by her chair; she brought in the salad and let him push her up to the table. "You treat me as though I were an invalid," she said; "I like it." "You gain much more, and I won't be able to budge you; take care, my little elephant!" he smiled, pouring the pale yellow wine into the slender glasse; "Cheers, Mrs. Egghead!" "Cheers, darling," Laura said.

She ate slowly, looking often at Michael's bent head and the attentive distance in his eyes; she wondered briefly if he were thinking of the girl, Mary Ellen, and decided that he was thinking, not of her but of her poetry or, perhaps, his own writing. "I'll wait till after dinner, till we have coffee," she decided, "and then I'll just say that I heard it from Alice Corbett...I'd better tell him I read the letter...No, he'll think I read that stuff to remember my own writing, that I regret it, and he'll blame himself again...what a peculiar two we are...he bound and determined that nothing will stand in my way, and I just as certain nothing should stand in his..." She pushed her plate away from her and Michael raised his head; "Coffee?" he asked. His voice was cool and impersonal; she looked into his eyes and they too were cool. She nodded; "There's fruit in the refrigerator," she said. He brought the fruit in to her and poured their coffee, then sat down and began, slowly and meditatively, to fill his pipe, watching, absorbed in that simple action. "So gentle..." she thought, "so brilliant..." "Michael," she said, and felt the pulse in her wrists begin to beat quickly and a tingling start down at the base of her spine, unbidden and surprising. "Mike," she said again.

He looked at her calmly; "Yes, Laura?" "Mike," the hot blood poured swiftly through her body, "I think you're showing too much attention to Mary Ellen; people have begun to talk about it," and subsided. "I'm not surprised," he said slowly, his eyes still cool and unimpressed. "You know how small and gossipy this place is," Laura said apologetically. "Yes," he answered. "And in a girls' school you know how jealousy works, how detrimental it can be to you." She was angry now, she wanted his resistance. "You know, too, don't you darling?" he was warm again. "Yes!" she said sharply; "When you married me every other girl in your classes hated me. Worse than that, they fired you...much worse! Michael, I think you're being very silly." He looked at his pipe, the faint lines around his mouth tightening. "She has a great deal of talent," he said softly; "She needs some encouragement. Laura, we've been married fifteen years; people can talk, they always do, but what can they say?"

"They can say that I'm pregnant, that after fifteen years a baby must have been a mistake, that you're tired of your wife," she said unhappily; "Oh, Michael, I know it's silly, but..."

"Well, the baby was a mistake, but I still love you—even after fifteen years!" he smiled at her and his eyes lighted. "The baby... wasn't a mistake for me; I wanted it," she said, glad, even when she saw the surprise in his eyes, that she had finally told him. Reserved again, cool, Michael looked at her; "Maternity becomes you," he said gently. "I'm glad," Laura said, and she felt her gladness keenly as she scanned his firm, scholarly face; "I'm glad because now you will know that I have done what I can do, and you will write your book. Oh, Michael, don't you see? All the times you said no children, nothing that will take all your time, you must have time to write, and you thought you had such a brilliant wife... but it's you who are the writer, and I held you back. Now you'll know that I am ordinary and happy being ordinary, and you can go ahead." She sagged back against the chair, relieved, relaxed, waiting for him to realize all that she had said.

"You're so ambitious, Laura," he said quietly. "If you had written, you would have gotten to the top." He blew the fragrant pipe smoke out into the air and watched it curl up toward the light; he inhaled again, thoughtfully, and his eyes were clouded. "Mary Ellen reminds me vividly of you, as you were when I first knew you; maybe that's one reason for my liking to talk to her," he smiled vaguely. "She is ambitious, too, for her writing. She could be a good writer, I suppose, or a great wife... behind the right man. The difference is between good and great, isn't it Laura?" He looked at her sharply. "Yes, darling," Laura said. "Oh, Michael," she thought, "you understand so clearly... if only I'd told you this before... if only I hadn't held you back..." "This book of yours," Michael began. "Your book, darling," Laura corrected, smiling at him, happy because he had begun to talk about it himself. "Ah..." he sighed, "the book I'm going to write... the book I never mentioned, never even thought of." He stood up quickly, leaned over the table to her, spoke firmly and slowly as though she might not understand, "You've talked about the book I'm going to write for years, but I never talked about it. Think, Laura, did I ever say 'I'm going to write a book?' You did, and I never said 'no' because I thought... I don't know, maybe I liked hearing about it, thinking I could... but it's your book, Laura, all your idea." He sat down again, and his eyes as he watched her were grey and distant.

Laura felt the blood begin to beat in her again, the pound in her wrists and throat, the emptiness behind her breasts; "Don't be discouraged, Michael, don't give up," she begged, hating the sound of her voice. "You have so much to say, darling, please don't give up!" She reached across the table and took his hand, holding it firmly. "Poor Laura," he said gently; "I have nothing to say, Laura, believe me. I can't write, never could... why they let me teach that class I don't know... if I ever get to be head of the department I'll be lucky... Laura, I have no talent, nothing outstanding... I wouldn't know what to say if I could write. Poor Laura... a great wife and a... mediocre husband..." He shook off her hand and pushed his chair out from behind him. "You're the strong one," he said gratingly. "You'll recover, you've got something to recover from!" He grabbed his jacket from the chair and started for the kitchen. "Michael?" said Laura. "I'll be back," he said, "I've got an appointment." Laura leaned forward and laid her head on the table. She remembered the sound of waves beating against the shore and the smell of drying fish.

Her father had taught her to sail when she was four years old, and she had loved the sea ever since. Even when she had grown up and gone away to a girls' school, changed the salty dungarees for cashmere and soft wool, she

had remembered the sun and fury of the coast and longed for it, trying to write with the delicate tears of Millay because that was the vogue and she wanted to write above anything else. She had been betrayed by her own stubby sailor's hands, and her poetry had come out rugged and tough and rhythmic like the sea. Michael had said when he had first read her poems, "These are good!" He had been surprised, and she was glad she had given up Millay. He read what she brought him, criticized and inspired her, and she said to him over and over, "I am a writer; I'll never stop. Someday everyone will come to me!" and felt her rightness and strength coursing through her. But her love had been too strong, and she had wanted to marry Michael even more than she had wanted to write, and anyway she had been sure that she could do both. He had not been sure. He had said, "You can't marry me, Laura; you'll never be happy." But she had laughed at him and loved him fiercely.

"Where did it change?..." Laura thought, but she knew. "You never went back, you forgot... it was too hard... two things don't come first... you chose... Michael, Michael, I love you!" She got up slowly, pushing against the table with her hands, feeling the heavy pull of her stomach as she rose, tired with the weight of it. She looked down at her stomach and felt the hate begin to pound in an even pulse. She looked at her hands and hated their strength. "I hate you! I hate you!" she cried, and she began to beat against her stomach with her fists.

Sallie Martinsen



I Have Pondered Long

I have pondered long
And I am confused,
And yet do I see two graveyards.

One sits gloriously,
The end of a long, uphill road.
Within its steel gates
Lie the criminals of our time,
Dead and silent, forever silenced.
Upon their cold tombstones
Epitaphs boldly are written :

Here lies Hate ;
He was soon outsmarted,
Was laughed out of town
And died broken-hearted.

Here lies Fear ;
He lived a long life,
Misery he contributed
And plenty of strife.

Here lies Greed ;
His methods outmoded,
He ate so much
His head exploded.

And then I see the other graveyard.
It is ugly and hideous here,
Dark clouds eternally overhead.
The road there short and easy,
Here reside the Living Dead of our time.
The inscriptions are written
Upon their tombstones :

Here lie I, Love ;
I tried in vain ;
They wanted death
And thought me insane.

Here lie I, Paradise ;
Such fools have I met,
They could have had me
But were not ready yet.

Here lie I, The Human Race ;
I led a life of evilness,,
And now that I'm dead,
I regret and beg forgiveness.

Marcy Goldstein

STILLBIRTH

From the warm night's growth she sank into the empty pit,
And from dark corners arose a gentle cry.
The leaves no longer fell as music
 But harsh, crashed to the ground.

Time's great comfort stills the longing
Dulls the throbbing,
And in quiet pain fills the womb with thin eternity.

Gwen Shupe

The Moon Is Made of Green Cheese

If you'll take a chance and come to me
Like an Icarian flier
I'll mock your folly flippantly
But then I'd be a liar.

If you'll bring me China's wall
And delicate Queen Ann's lace
I'll refuse it all
To put you in your place.

But since I sit alone
And imagine you a schemer
I know why I am prone
To make myself a dreamer.

Judith Greenberg

THE BIRD

Through the misty drops of early rain
I saw him
helpless, alone
becoming one with road and rain.

He fit my hand
like a smooth round stone
and I felt the unruffled feathers grasping
for the warmth of un-life.

My eye rested on the soft brown
and wondered at the pure white breast.
White
So pure with death.

Both my life-hands around his still, small body
could not bring back the warmth and movement.

We quietly built a grave and without watching
threw the black dirt over him.

O blasphemy of earth to bring forth life
and inexorably demand its return.

Gwen Shupe

THEY ARE KILLING THE CATS TODAY

They are killing the cats today;
I shall not walk in that direction.
I was there when they were born
In that dazed deflowered dawn,
To a world that negated their existence.
Its stony fingers clutched about their throats.
They crept helplessly blind,
Clawing existence at the mother's breasts.

Victor J. Silvestre



The Play In Production: THE GENTLE PEOPLE

The problem of analysis and synthesis is of vital importance to the play director. The terms analysis and synthesis are commonly treated as two different methods but are actually two necessary parts of the same method; each is the relative and correlation of the other. In the Alfred University production of Irwin Shaw's "The Gentle People," this method, together with the synergetic action implicit in it, was employed by the director and those involved in staging the play.

After the play had been selected, the directors were faced with a formidable, and somewhat awe-inspiring, naked script. Problems of casting, like problems in semantics, can easily lead one into the realm of mistakes. A poor reader at tryouts is by no means indicative of a poor actor in later rehearsals. By the same token, a candidate for a part may delineate the character with precision at early readings, but when cast he may fail to exhibit growth during the long rehearsal period.

While casting was in process, the director and technical director met with the designers. The importance of ensemble is not solely relegated to the actors; uniformity in the understanding of the theme of a play is also imperative to an integrated performance.

The set, lighting, and costume designers analysed the ideology presented in "The Gentle People," discussed it with the directors and proceeded with plans to transfer the quality of the idea to the physical properties of the production. The creative process in the gradual maturation of the play had begun.

That widely held conception — perhaps nurtured by Broadway neophytes — that rantings and ravings, tears and tearing of hair, all taking place on a bare stage under a single, bare lightbulb, is part of the fallacious folklore of the theatre. In reality the rehearsal period is a time of thought, a time of careful listening as well as speaking.

Four days before the performance of the play the actors were aware of a sudden quickening. Order suddenly appeared out of what had seemed chaos. Clouded lines became clear, and the intimate relationship of the characters emerged: the play became structural, meaningful "theatre."

The "magic" of the apparent transformation was, however, of the stuff that is in most magic — illusion. The growth of the play was realized only through concerted effort graduated over a period of four weeks. The fact that the theatrical jewel had not sparkled before did not indicate a faulty stone; the facets merely needed polishing to reveal the quality of the parts.

Prior to this, the costume mistress was conferring with the designer, buying materials, dyeing cottons, grooming fidgety actors and spitting pins into dresses with the accuracy of a riveter; the lighting director with his entourage of electricians were involved in observing the movement on stage, setting up the intercommunication phones from auditorium to lighting loft. And there were

lines to be repaired, Lido spots to be focused — all of the minutiae necessary to the maintenance of integrity in a theatrical production. The construction head applied the tape rule to a twelve foot length of 1" x 3" white pine, and with the whisper of a pencil line followed by the quick saw rasp, the piece of lumber assumed identity with the play. The properties man solidified the pantomimic space with fishing rods, cigarettes and oars. The tactile sense of good and familiar things caused the hand of the actor to flex with security. Posters were plastered on trees and people came to know of the play. Tickets (both paid and complimentary) were printed.

Dress rehearsal introduced makeup and costumes — those appurtenances needed to complement the character in his environment of set, light and sound. The stage manager and assistant director assumed leadership of the actors and crews. Now the directors faded into the oblivious darkness of the hall and waited for the performance. The theatre was working.

Prof. R. M. Brown

Drama Department

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Departure

The boy had never before been aware of his aloneness. Now, shut away from his parents' grief, he realized the shattering sense of isolation. He would later understand that all life is solitary, that each lives in a world apart. Someday he would comfort himself wryly that loneliness is the great universal; but for the moment he could only suffer dumbly, crushed by the poignant realization.

His mother sat at the dining room table, her hair dulled by the dust of the afternoon sunlight, and wept. It hurt the boy to see her sitting old and frail and inconsolable. And although he did not share her grief, he too felt the tears come to the corners of his eyes, and he clenched his fists and thought defiantly to keep from joining her.

His brother had gone away and all that seemed left was the silent old house, with his mother sobbing in one corner of the dining room and his father sitting helpless in the parlor, still dressed in his ill-fitting blue suit.

His father was even more at a loss than he. For the grief was his as well as his wife's. And he sat alone, doubly isolated, because he could not express it in tears nor could he comfort his wife.

The older man sat in the shadow of a far corner, oblivious to the unlight and sounds of the afternoon, and it angered the boy that he was helpless and inarticulate, even as he was angered by the sobbing of his mother. It was anger born of inability to deal with the scene of which he was a witness and of that fierce determination of the young to be adult and insensible.

He hated the sorrow of the house and tried to think about the glory of the afternoon and the exhilaration of the summer's day outside, where the weeping of his mother could not be heard and where nature was too busy to mourn over the departure of one person from a lone house on a hill.

He turned quietly and went upstairs. In his room he changed into his dungarees and the shirt that he wore on Sunday afternoons and felt better in the familiar clothing. He hung his suit on the closet bar and was relieved to have shed the outward evidence of his brother's departure, the symbol of the strangeness downstairs, and to be free to join the afternoon outside. He tiptoed downstairs and felt the unfamiliar atmosphere rise to him. Holding his breath, he went through the kitchen to the freedom of the out doors.

The boy felt at once guilty and relieved, and the warm rush of joy at the beauty of the afternoon drowned his foreboding and life was again in focus. Cleansed in the afternoon sunshine he ran toward the granary, leaping into the air, breathless with the exertion, gasping for breath and exulting in his youth and the smell of warm sunshine on dry grass.

He felt a keen affinity for nature. Often he had escaped to its understanding. It had the strength of personality for him. The slicing of water through the wild flags that grew in the creek and the consuming hush of the woods were the sounds of friends. Many times he had gone to the woods in such a mood as this and returned at darkness to the chores of the farm, tired and relaxed, with renewed endurance.

It was not a conscious thing for him. He only knew that he returned from an afternoon of climbing, exploring activity refreshed. As he felt after thrashing

around in the blue chill of the pond and lying bare in the sunlight, exhausted and warmed by the wind that dried him.

Today it was different. He felt disconcerted. It was a strange uneasiness which was heightened by his own awareness of it and by his knowledge that it could be traced to the absence of his brother. It irritated him that he should feel any emotion at all over the development. His brother meant nothing to him, he had consciously tried to kill him from his mind. He had been of a world apart and their only communication had been through the interpreter of common life and not through common language.

It was not that he hated his brother. He felt nothing toward him, now only hating the fact that he missed the occupancy of the family niche, and that he hated his mother's crying and his father sitting alone in the living room, pressing wrinkles into his blue suit.

He told himself that he only missed the silent antagonism, the familiar division of the world in which he lived, between his brother's and his own life, but it was more than that. It made him restless, and the afternoon's beauty, which he was suddenly unable to savor, irritated him, and the yard seemed as confining as the house.

He would escape the yard, and the absent presence of his brother even as he had escaped the sorrow of the house.. He headed for the granary, out of long weeks of habit, to look for his walking stick.

He was always antagonized whenever he approached the building. Every object and location on the farm was clothed in significance for him. He imbued everything with personality. It was part of his secret mysticism. Always he had hated the granary, probably because of the door, which had a row of woodchuck tails nailed to it. Whenever he rolled the heavy door open they rattled dryly against the wood. They were trophies of his father's hunts.

He resented the granary also because his father made him keep his walking stick inside. It was of sumac and he had cut and skinned it himself. His father would never allow sumac to lie around the yard or lean against the back shed. "That damned tree weed" his father called it. So whenever the boy wanted it he had to push back the door with its dried stubs of fur and take it from its hiding place.

The boy always took the stick with him when he walked, using it to knock at the heads of grass and beat on logs. It was a companion, even as nature was his companion and the three of them had spent many afternoons together. Sunday afternoons mostly, when his father would go to sleep on the davenport and his mother would rock and doze in her room, reading the Bible. His brother had spent the afternoons at the neighbors, playing ball or shooting squirrels.

His walking stick lay on the middle beam above his father's workbench. The boy climbed onto the table and reached it down. His father, and especially his brother, had laughed at the attention he gave to it. His brother had said that he should have gotten something strong, like walnut or oak sapling. That was like his brother. He didn't know the pleasure of stripping the thin furry bark from the wood, nor the smell of the white-grained surface, evaporating in the sunlight.

His brother had said that oak would have been stronger and would last longer than sumac, but the boy had only smiled, having long since insulated himself from his brother's remarks, and gone off swinging the stick at the heads of

Queen Anne's lace, which grew along the driveway, leaving the two of them grinning at what a whimsical kid he was, completely without practical value.

Today there would be nobody shooting in the meadow, so he decided to strike out east across the field to the pine woods. He had never gone there much because his brother was often there shooting, and as they silently divided the world between them, he had gone east. Now there would be nobody in the pines.

He turned with a fresh decision that wiped out the weakness of the earlier afternoon. He would go to the pines, and the positiveness of his direction evaporated the guilt and uneasiness.

Then he saw the gun, hanging by its strap in the doorway, and it was all dramatized for him again. His brother was gone. He wouldn't be using the gun anymore — not that gun. It was hanging alone on this afternoon when it should be poised and polished in the hands of the older boy.

On an impulse he put down his stick and lifted the thing off its hook. It was unfamiliarly heavy in his hands. He turned it awkwardly, examining the parts. His brother manipulated it with mastery. Once he had tried to show the boy how to shoot at a target and they had spent the day in the pines, blasting away at an old can cover. It had been one of those rare occasions when the two had really been brothers. He had honestly tried to please the older boy, who, in turn, had attempted to be understanding and helpful. But he was so much better and finally had taken the weapon and shot it himself, contenting the boy with a commentary on how he handled the thing.

His brother had not handed it back, but instead, had expected the younger one to sit and watch him fire at the target which by this time was twisted and warped, with a great hole in the middle where his brother had made repeated bull's eyes.

The boy had stayed around with feigned interest, but when he had seen that he would get no more instruction he had made some excuse, picked up his stick and gone off resentful that he had been taken in by the older boy, that he had relaxed his antagonism to cooperate. His pride had hurt and he had told himself that it was better to have nothing to do with the older boy. After that he had never mentioned it.

But now the gun was his. It was his right and he clutched the stock of the thing possessively. He turned and started out into the yard. Then, remembering bullets, he went back to the shelf above the bench and picked a handful out of the box. It was late afternoon and the shadow of the milkhouse was creeping up the door of the barn.

His father would be out soon, so the boy hurried down to the meadow, keeping the granary between himself and the back steps of the house. He was through the fence and out of sight into the woods before he heard his father calling the cows.

It was too late to get any squirrels. Here in the woods it was already dusk. He would have to content himself with target practice. He stopped at the edge of the clearing, where the pines began, and clumsily inserted a bullet, then another and another. His heart beat against his chest and he felt slightly drunken with the new experience. He held the gun firmly, forcing it to his will. Forgotten was the sumac stick.

Carefully he set the lock on the trigger and started off. The possession of the gun, carefully pointed at the ground so there would be no accident (his brother had taught him that), made him want to shout in exultation. Gone was the mood of the afternoon. He was cleansed in this new freedom, and he might go to the pines or the meadow as he wished. It was he who had the gun and it was he whom the afternoon welcomed. The boy headed for the fence again, caressing the stock and barrel, learning the feel of the gun, familiarizing himself with its balance and outline.

It was definitely too late to shoot squirrel, he told himself with new-found authority. Squirrels are best shot at three or four o'clock. He had heard his brother say so. It was a good time of day for target practice or for woodchucks.

A wave of new feeling suddenly engulfed him and he broke and ran for the meadow. He would shoot woodchuck. Not even his brother had been able to do that. It was woodchuck time and he would shoot one. The ecstasy of his presumption made him break into sweat. Nearing the edge of the field, he stopped as he ran. He was down wind, he knew, but he stopped and wet his finger, holding it high in the wind with exaggerated care, to make sure. Then he settled down behind a fallen tree, cradling the gun in the crotch of a branch. He must shoot moving the weapon. He must be very careful. His heart pounded from the exertion and his breath came in excited gasps. His brother had never shot a woodchuck.

It was the right time of day. The sun was low and the light which streamed across the meadow silhouetted the hummocks where the chucks had dug their holes. The air was clear and he could see, far off to the right, his father bringing up the cows, although he was too distant to hear the noises of the animals. It was the time of day that he liked best. At this time of day he often had sat alone with his walking stick on the hill overlooking the village and watched the shadows slide down into the valley. He had returned home feeling strangely superior, following the path around the hill, which was still in sunlight while the valley below was already in darkness.

But the feeling he had now was infinitely better. There was a strength about it that he had never felt with the stick. He resented his weakness of the morning, he resented too the weakness of all the previous days, although he would not yet admit it to himself. He had never had the gun before. It gave him new power and he forgot that once he had recoiled at the death of animals.

He remembered with embarrassment the time his father had killed the new batch of kittens and he had cried all night. It made him red, even alone, to remember that he had gone out into the pasture and found their bodies the next day, and had given them a burial by the thorn tree beside the creek. He had said the Lord's Prayer over them, he remembered, and felt hot at the memory. There had been too many cats, like his father had said.

After holding the gun in his hands, he could see how easily his father had done it, how he had felt. When there are too many cats around the milk dish, you have to get rid of some. He had not understood. He was amazed and unembarrassed at the new feeling the gun gave him. Like a moth breaking from a cocoon, he struggled to readjust his experience.

When he held the gun it altered the old relationship with nature. It made the woods subservient, somehow. The trees were to hide him against the new-mown meadow. Once he had even resented the men mowing the hay, resented the way it altered nature's organization, making the swish of the tall grass give way to the stubble which hurt one's feet, and turning the green timothy into stale dusty hay in the barn loft. He hadn't realized how it made woodchucks show up

against the horizon. Never before understood that the tall grass hid their burrowings and made it harder to get rid of them. It was a lot easier this way. He would have to shoot a lot of them before the fall cutting of clover grew too high.

He would have to shoot one pretty quick if it was going to happen at all today. The thought worried him. Maybe he wouldn't succeed in getting one. Maybe he wasn't going to shoot his woodchuck. He shifted uneasily against the tree trunk and a little of the gnawing uncertainty of the morning returned to him.

In agony, he sat and watched the shadows of the trees push out into the field and fill the hollow of the dead furrow. Soon they would hide the burrows of the chucks from sight and it would be too late. It was another week until Sunday, and he knew he couldn't wait that long. The boy rasped against the butt of the log and strained to see. He would compel them to come out by the very intensity of his desire.

And then against the horizon he saw the chuck. It rose on its haunches, paws in the air, and jerked nervously from side to side, testing the wind. It was a big one. The boy restrained himself from firing. The first shot had to be good. He pressed closer to the tree and noiselessly took the safety off the trigger. One pressure would set off the bullet. He waited. Perhaps the chuck would come closer.

Satisfied that there was no danger, the animal began to move away from the hole. It was looking for the fresh green sprouts of clover that were growing up between the stubble. It moved in short jerks of motion, pausing to test the wind but becoming more and more at ease and looking up less frequently. It was coming toward the boy.

He could see it was a big one. The pe't was full and bushy. He must be careful to hit it in the body. He watched it approach not even bothering to check the danger any more, bobbing amiably from clump to clump of alfalfa.

The boy's heart slowed down. He was surprised at his coolness, his calculation. He aimed coldly, without emotion, and put the sights on the animal's breast. He must hit dead center. If it wasn't killed outright it might have strength enough to drag itself back to the burrow and he couldn't afford to lose his first woodchuck. Then he pulled the trigger.

The chuck spun in a half circle and was thrown to the ground. Dirt flew in back of it, where the bullet had passed through and torn into the earth. It flopped crazily in the grass, noiselessly, grotesquely. And then it lay still, twitching in the stubble.

With a shout of exultation, the boy leaped over the log and through the fence. The thirty yards to the animal were endless, and he ran with the joy of the kill beating at his temples. He had shot the woodchuck. He had really shot it. With the first bullet.

He waved the gun as he ran, as if it were his walking stick. As if it were his white-wooded sumac with the bitter smell. Relief was displaced by the triumph. He had not missed, he had shot his woodchuck.

It lay silent now in the grass. The dandelion plants and clover were flecked with the blood, the sod was scarred from its struggle. The boy turned the animal over with his foot and didn't resent the blood he got on his shoe. It was a badge — it certified victory. Kneeling down, he examined the woodchuck. It was fat in preparation for the winter hibernation, and its body was already sodden with death. The incisors were long with age. It was a very old and wily creature, and he had outsmarted it. It was not young like the deer his brother had gotten with only two small points. It was full grown and a veteran.

He was clumsy as he cut off the tail with the knife he carried for skinning sumac, and dragged the body back to the mouth of the burrow and stuffed it in

the hole. He wedged a large rock in after it so the dogs wouldn't carry the carcass away. It would be a long time before any woodchucks would live in there again.

Then, picking up the gun, he emptied the chamber and headed for home, pointing the gun toward the ground for safety's sake, as his brother had taught him. He carried the tail by the long hair on its end and let the remaining blood drain onto the ground.

It had been a strange day. A coming of age somehow. He felt older and different, more self-assured. The shadows of the wood stretched ahead of him. It had been a good afternoon, much better than he had expected. His loneliness had abated. And now it was late. It was the time of the day that he loved. That timeless, depthless period when everything stands immersed in beauty and the birds give voice to the sounds of evening. It was dark over in the woods, dark in the pine clearing, and the meadow would soon be dark, too.

He hurried a little, for he had yet to put the gun away, and he had to get a hammer and staple with which to nail the woodchuck tail to the granary door.

Bruce MacDonald



DECEMBER CALF

Two legs and one and two and three.
Fresh-licked, fresh-chilled,
Old life and new, steaming into the night.
The world is dry with stubble,
Stiff with frost, flecked with lantern light.

The cats stare down indifferently
And crouch inside themselves against the cold.
They do not know the chill of birth in winter.
They are old.

Struggle and reel, three legs and four and three,
A straining from weaving and blinking at me,
Fresh-licked, fresh-chilled,
New born.

Bruce MacDonald

NIGHTMARE ANSWERED

*I hate my cold and narrow bed,
it always makes me feel so dead,
so dead.*

There is but one small spot in the middle of my bed
that is warm,
The fringes of it are as frigid as Siberia.
I can stretch out my toe and test their hostility.
So, I curl in my little pool of self-warmth and shiver
through a night of visions.
Will they never leave me, these sly suggestive shadows
of my daylight hours?
Must they follow me even into bed?
into my head?

The awful inescapable urgency of sleep
how I love it
how I loathe it.
It is time held helpless . . . time lost and mewing helpless,
painful precious time,
creeping seconds, minutes, hours, years . . .
and on I slumber peacefully.

*Get out of bed . . .
Rouse yourself.
Light a candle . . . on the table is the bottle,
take it back to bed with you.
Lean back and remember warmly all the swift
and manufactured happiness that, genie-like
sprang from the uncorked bottle.*

To cry, to sing, to kiss, to plumb the dark and secret mysteries
of wine . . .
this is the dream attained, this is . . . ah-h! but still the visions
come, portending ill,
the dreams pursue me still!

*The bottle is bottomless,
Drop it!
Stop being silly on your pillow
with a grin and a jigger of
self pity!
Take a walk, yes that will do.
Walk off your restlessness.
The air, the biting air will chew
off musty doubt that curtains soft
the inner bed-chamber of your mind,
and smothers you with indolence.*

My face staring strangely back at me . . .
human.

On and on, tracing fugitive patterns
in the snow.

this air is better

The crystal vase of night domes black
over me.

But I am no iceberg.

My cheeks are cool but my temples burn.
There is life in me, and much more.

Speak.
From troubled waking nightmare
speak!
one word . . . please
What do you seek with eyes so fierce?
What frightens you so?

Life

is so quick.

You must have felt it, too

Ideas, faces, minutes, crowding by.

Dumbly I sit, in protest, while above me

smile the dim and ancient stars who, foolish,

think they guide our destinies. Never!

Shall I ever for one minute in the minute given me
for breath

know the perfect beauty,

hold in my hand the rich brown stuff of life,

speak the word that circumscribes all meaning?

Death is not beautiful,

Death is not welcome here.

I won't die until I've found it . . .

ah-h! but when I've found it, truly,

I won't ever want to die!

Tell me what you want, please,

In God's name, what do you want?

I want a bed that is not cold,

an idea, beautiful and bold,

I want someone to hold

yes, someone to hold.

Linda Napolin



THE FOOL

They say that Love is sweet and fair;
That hearts turn light as pungent air.
These are but dreams and fallacy:
Take it from me.
Take it from me.

Love is a turbid, twisting blade
That rends the heart, as earth the spade.
It leaves a man in misery:
Take it from me.
Take it from me.

Robert Wertz



POEM

the human body is opened and peered into
the soul is weighed and thrust aside
science, logic, reason, clear cold steel,
presides like Procrustes of old over today's world.
feeling, emotion — the truth of eternity, is boxed
tight with the nails of the age of empiricism.
the fear of small minds sits on their being,
on their union with nature
and the beauty of the world is boxed
tight with the nails of the age of empiricism.

Leonard Gross



THE PINK LADY

Lily almost squealed with delight when she saw the neon sign flickering: Rendezvous — R-e-n-d-e-z-v-o-u-s. The pattern continued until all Lily could see was one big blur of blinking red, and then she couldn't see it anymore because she and Paul were inside where it was warm and dark. The place meant so much to her that she felt almost as if she were revisiting an old home that held nooks and hideouts of childhood dreams and experiences. Lily looked up at him and smiled. She enjoyed looking up at him. It made her feel little and protected. He didn't see her smile because he was giving his coat to the hat-check girl.

Because of the crowd they couldn't sit where she wanted to, and the headwaiter led them to the only table available. This was the first imperfection, and it constituted almost blasphemy for Lily. She pouted inwardly and thought, "If Paul only had asserted himself or given the waiter some money, we could've sat in that corner — I wouldn't mind it if we splurged tonight."

He thought, Damnit — so who needs all this, anyway?

A smiling man in a tuxedo placed an ashtray and two small doilies on the table. All around them were small tables and chattering people dressed up for a rendezvous. She singled out separate voices from the throaty murmur of the crowd. This voice at her elbow owned an oil well and the voice that responded owned him and the oil well. At the next table there were newlyweds—at least she thought they were newlyweds. The ex-bride smiled at the ex-groom as she excused herself to go to the ladies' room. (That rhymes - Lilly thought.) And then out of nowhere the page-boy blond with the neck line almost down to her belly button appeared and kissed the ex-groom, who said that he was my how glad to see her again. On'y all the while his eyes were shifting from his drink to the ladies' room for fear that his wife would appear. "How very shocking!" Lily thought.

But in a moment she had forgotten. She was straining her neck to see who was sitting at "her table." She liked to call it "her table" because Paul had proposed to her there. A small woman with a soft blue sweater was sitting across from a nice-looking man and they both seemed happy. Maybe that table will be lucky for them, too, she thought.

A voice broke into her thoughts through the din, and the waiter was saying, "What will you have, you lovely peoples?"

Paul answered, "One rye and water and one pink lady."

How sweet of him to remember, she thought. Aloud, she said, "How did you remember what I ordered that night?"

"Because you were wearing pink and you were such a lady," he answered.

He thought: As if she'd ever drink anything stronger! God, how I hated that dress — and pink, of all colors! But she always liked baby things. It must've been the rye that did it.

"Remember how many drinks you had that night?" She managed to push out an almost-real laugh.

"Yeah." To himself he said, "Do I remember! Will I ever forget? That's the thing."

"You were quite high that night, but you're nice when you're high. You could hardly say 'I do.' I wonder if they ever forgave us for waking them up?" She giggled at the thought of the scene they had caused: he banging on the

door and shouting with his rye-voice to wake up and she hiding in the shadows that she hoped would conceal her embarrassment and her shyness — and her excitement.

"I'm sure they forgave us for waking them up." (But I don't quite know if I'll ever forgive them for waking up.)

"I wish we could've gotten that table back again. When you asked me to marry you, Paul, I thought, he must be drunk."

He thought, Must have been! Goddamn it, I was!

"What made you ask me then? I mean, just then? Now I'm not embarrassed to tell you that I had hinted so much — and when I least expected it, you popped the question."

"I told you I wanted to surprise you. God, must we go through that again? — I've told you one hundred times if I've told you once." She tried to smile but she hurt; she tried to wash the lump away with the pink lady but she never much liked he taste of the stuff, anyway. She only drank so that he wouldn't call her a prig.

He saw her face and murmured, "I'm sorry. Let's not start up tonight."

The newly married woman came back from the ladies' room and her husband stood up to let her in. She sat down and smiled. Then she noticed the blond across the room and frowned for a moment as if trying to place her. Enlightened, she picked up her small hand — the one that sparkled — and waved. "Vivian!" she called, "Vivian!" Her husband swallowed and sipped and swallowed again while his wife was trying to tell him where she had known the girl, but she was so busy looking from one to the other that, in her excitement, she made nothing clear. Vivian worked her way through the tables, and when she arrived she exclaimed, "What are you doing here?" while the ex-bride was saying the same things, along with "It's been years...." And then explanations were made: the two girls had known each other in high school. The ex-bride introduced her husband and said the word proudly in doing so. He stood up and shook hands with Vivian. They acted as if they had never seen each other before.

Lily was appalled. She turned abruptly to Paul, as if the affront had been made to her personally. "Did you see that?"

"What?"

"That lady standing in front of that nice couple over there."

"No, I'm afraid I didn't."

"Well, he pretended that he never knew that woman, when I bet she really knew him well — probably knew him in the Biblical sense, if you know what I mean."

Just like her, he thought. Too much of a lady to even say they slept together.

"Do you love me, Paul?"

"Do you think I've been living with you these past ten years because I'm afraid that if I left, your father would throw me out of the business? Don't keep on asking me, Lily."

"I like to be reminded once in awhile, you know."

The waiter interrupted them by removing the glasses. "Just in time," thought Paul.

"The same," he said.

"It's exciting to be here again. Don't you think so? I guess I'm just an

old sentimentalist from way back. Why don't you ask the band to play "Always" for us?"

"Later."

"Isn't it funny how songs can remind you of certain things? They're immortal, too. Remember when you gave me that book when we were first married? You inscribed it: 'The printed word, like my love, is immortal.' Do you remember, Paul?" He shook his head in affirmation. "See, you are a senti-

"Yeah, I guess so."

"I love you — I haven't changed one bit since we got married. Happy Anniversary, darling."

"Same to you. Drink up and let's get out of here."

"But we only just got here."

"I've got to get that case ready for tomorrow. You know your father will be upset if it's not prepared."

"Oh, all right. Let me just powder my nose." She got up and kissed him on the forehead. He winced.

When she reached the ladies' room she discovered that in her excitement she had forgotten her purse. She emerged and started walking back to her table. Paul was talking to the blond.

Lily turned around and walked back to the ladies' room. Her throat started clogging up and she pushed her way through a crowd of women — she managed to smile at them — found herself alone behind a door, and wept. A little sob almost escaped to the women, and she hoped they didn't know that she was crying. She blew her nose into a piece of toilet paper and then she walked to a mirror. She saw that she still couldn't conceal the fact that she had cried. She thought, pink eyes for an old pink lady. Then she said out loud, "Damnit, who needs all this, anyway!"

As she walked towards the door she heard the band playing "Always." And by the time she reached the table she was smiling again.

Judith Greenberg



LYRIC

Gaze upon my face but once, and when you gaze,
mark well....

For moonlight full upon my face
Casts up a deadly spell.
And mortals who are drawn to me,
One solitary question mull:
How a thing so versed in savagery
Can still be quite so beautiful.

Linda Napolin
From "The River"

THE DAY I GREW UP

Usually the stuffiness of the car and the drone of the engine lull me to sleep, but this morning the magic of a new thrill kept me peeking through the frost-covered glass, searching for the sun, whose arrival would mark the opening of the deer season. Now that I was sixteen, Dad had consented to let me go deer hunting with him.

I didn't consider my Dad a good hunter — I could never remember his bringing home a deer, or any other game, for that matter. Still, he was my Dad, and I wanted to go with him. The year before I had been hurt because, although Smitty's Dad had taken him hunting, Dad wouldn't take me. He had explained that the law required a hunter to be sixteen, but I didn't care about the laws; if Smitty could go hunting, I wanted to go, too! That was all but forgotten now; I was going hunting at last!

We turned from the highway, and proceeded on a narrow dirt road. After a few minutes of bumps and hairpin curves, Dad pulled over to the side of the road and stopped the engine.

We each had a cup of coffee while we were waiting for the sun to come up. I had never had coffee before, and I was greatly disappointed; it had always smelled so good, but it tasted rather bitter.

The new snow was unspoiled except for the trail we made as we walked unhurriedly over the hills that Dad had known as a youth. Each time we reached a new hilltop, Dad would point out things of interest.

"There's Old Man Cain's place. I'll never forget the Halloween that Walt and I swiped his cutter and put it up on the schoolhouse roof. He never knew who did it."

Long before noon, I learned where the swimming hole was and where the biggest brook trout were caught. I learned that my father had been young once, too.

Dad motioned for me to stop, for walking toward us was a large buck! I had never been so close to a deer before. He walked as a king might walk — erect, with his head held high, and stopping every few feet as if he were inspecting his palace garden.

As I started to raise my rifle, Dad placed his hand on it. He wouldn't let me shoot! The next few moments seemed endless. Then the deer was gone, and my pulse returned to normal. Dad was first to break the silence.

"When we get home, will you cut down the big maple tree so we can burn it in the fireplace?" I was still silent. The big maple tree! Why, it was almost a member of the family. During the summer, we enjoyed its shade; during the winter, it would reach out and tap against the window to remind us that it was still there. Why cut it down when it would be so easy to buy firewood?

Dad put his hand on my shoulder and continued as if he had known my thoughts. "Of course you wouldn't, but there are some people who would cut down trees if it were considered a sport."

Neither of us said much after that. I still go hunting, but I don't even bother to take a rifle now. I do most of my hunting in the summer, but when the first snow falls and the last brown leaves are still clinging to the oaks, I wander through the hills, remembering the day I grew up.

Harold W. Longwell

SONNET

The sky is very hard to comprehend
But then it's just a cup turned upside down;
But no, for then it's bounded by an end
That limits its blue liquid, where we drown.
I think I'd better look at it and say,
"I think the sky is well above my sight."
For thinking this, perhaps there is a way,
And sky is not an all-destructive might.
Sky and world is but a mood I feel,
And beauty is as ugliness my will
And only to a mood can they be real.
The heart will carefully select its fill
When images of being come to mind.
Only in the seeing are we blind.

Victor J. Silvestre

FOOD

"Good God, Michael, did you hear that?"

"I saw it. Come on around here; I'm behind the hut."

"Was it a plane?"

"I'm afraid so."

"It's incredible."

"It's this damned storm!"

"There's most likely no one alive inside. Must we go?"

"I'll go. You stay in the hut; this rain is fierce."

"No, I'm going with you."

"Well — there isn't time to argue. I wish you wouldn't, but if you must, watch your step."

"You think we have to?"

"We still haven't escaped from our duties to humanity."

"But if it's true, as we believe, that the world thinks us dead, then have they the right to impose on us?"

"Uhm."

"Don't rush so; I can't follow that fast. My clothes are sticking to me and my shoes. . ."

"Yes, I know; that's why you're going back."

He swung about, determined to see that she returned to the hut. But as his eyes followed her dogged movement forward, he relented, and a few seconds later, he was holding down a clump of thorny branches for her. As she passed, then waited for him to lead the way, his lips stretched into a smile.

She is courageous, he thought, being suddenly thrust into an uncivilized part of the world isn't easy for a woman. For him, of course, it had presented a new challenging adventure: but for a woman, doing without a change of clothing must be insufferable. So he smiled at her and she smiled childishly back.

She followed directly in his footsteps. Staring at his broad back, she wondered at his strength and vitality, which, with all the burdening work of the past fifteen years, hadn't left him. Would he ever cease to evoke her admiration? She thought not. Every challenge — the last one, just two weeks ago — had proved him magnificently able.

This last one seemed to her the most astounding of all. One moment their plane, caught in the storm, was being forced down. The next, she was lying on the ground protected from the storm by a huge overhanging rock. Michael was explaining how she had lurched forward when the plane dove into the river, thus knocking herself out, and how he had pulled her from the plane and swam with her to shore. So now, he was explaining, they were alone in an uninhabited part of Northern Australia — completely alone since no one else had escaped from the plane. But she had nothing to worry about, he promised. Somehow he would manage to construct shelter and provide food. All this he said as he knelt beside her; and the confident tone of his voice and the reassuring clear eyes had eased her fears and she had left everything to him. As he had gone about building a hut and surveying the area for food, she had realized that he was enjoying this adventure, and although

she was horrified at their predicament, she was determined to enjoy it with him. If the rain would stop, she thought, maybe she would enjoy it. After all, she finally had Michael to herself.

But here her thoughts were cut short, for not far ahead was the sight she had come to see. The twisted body of a plane thrust perpendicularly into the air, its nose smashed into the ground.

Michael rushed ahead, climbing up the side of the mountain against which the plane leaned. He heard her call to him to be careful, and he replied with a gesture which intimated absolute safety. Then he reached the door of the plane and by putting his whole weight against it, pushed it open.

Inside lay the bodies of two men. They had been thrown forward with violence and doubtlessly died instantly.

A quite irrelevant detail caught his eye. Under the pilot's seat a copy of "Life" lay open, and on the exposed page he recognized his own likeness.

Easing himself down into the wreckage, he seized the magazine, then turned about and began the climb back to the door. As he approached, some slight settling of the plane brought the door shut with a crash. Pounding fiercely against it, he at last forced it open and thrust his head and shoulders through. And at that second the wreckage shuddered and heaved over on its back. Michael was caught between the door and the side of the plane. Instead of facing the mountain, he was now suspended in mid-air away from it. Simultaneously he heard Nellie scream, and he knew that she had been caught by the suddenly shifting wreckage.

"Nellie!" he shouted, "Are you. . .are you. . ."

When he heard her faint voice at last, he nearly cried with relief.

"I'm alive," she whispered, "but I think all my bones are broken. At least they feel that way." Then her breathing deepened into a whimper. "Oh Michael, have we finally lost?" she wept.

"I. . .I don't know, my dear; maybe I'll think of something."

Nellie continued to whimper. Then he grew aware of the magazine still clutched in his hand.

"Shall I tell you about 'Life,' my dear?" he asked hopefully.

"Life?"

"The magazine, you know. I found a copy inside. It's got a story about us." Her whimpering ceased. "Oh, Michael!" she breathed.

"'Stillmans Believed Dead!'" he read. "'Well, what do you know. We made headlines. I'll be damned! A three page picture story of our work in Asia. Nel, were we really that great?'"

"Did you ever doubt it?"

"Well, we did our share."

"Darling, you did more than your share, and you know it."

"Here's the picture Dad took when we first left the U.S.," he cried happily. "The caption reads, 'Nellie and Michael as newlyweds fly to Indonesia for first assignment. Nellie forfeits her college diploma to be with Mike.' Shall I go on?"

"Oh yes, Mike!"

"'A Success Story,' it says. 'A Success Story. Their aim was to provide food; their means, improved technology and, basic to all, education.'"

Mike read on of their "heroic fight to feed the world." Their idea was simplicity itself, the writer explained. They would take to farming them-

selves in some backward spot of the world. But they would use the most advanced tools, and so, by example, teach the peoples around them efficient western methods.

Actually, the writer added, the Stillman's hadn't farmed for very long. Michael was impatient at the slowness of the peasant to follow, and although Nellie never complained, she hated the plain and boring life of the farm. But others had taken over the idea. And it was never to be forgotten that Nellie had sacrificed her home, family, and friends in order to follow her husband in his fight for food. She had been his guiding light, the light which had led him to greatness.

"My God," Mike interrupted, "you'd think, by the way they wrote about you, that I had nothing to do but let myself be pushed."

He did not finish the article, which ended by saying, "Unfortunately, although they worked so valiantly to provide for the hungry, only in very isolated areas could any appreciable difference be seen." Instead he skipped to the page which showed himself at a variety of universities receiving honorary degrees, and, finally, the Nobel prize.

On the last page he found pictures of their funeral. Diplomats from all over Asia, sympathetic do-gooders, and American greats were shown and listed below from left to right. "It was fitting that they should die in a river," Mike read, "for in what country could they be buried? They were truly international in their attitude and aid."

Mike smiled. It was humorous to read about one's own funeral, and these ideas, he admitted, were not unpleasant. . .

He had no idea from where they had come. He only knew that suddenly there was a score of natives swarming about the wreckage and screaming wildly. He fought to keep some control of his thoughts. This was the eventuality he had feared. These men with the long, stringy brown hair which almost completely covered their broad faces, with their large features and dark skin — these were the aborigines he had secretly dreaded ever since their plane had crashed in this remote corner of the earth.

Nellie screamed. "Mike! Mike!" Her voice sank into a prolonged moan and he knew that she had fainted.

Mike was glad that she was unconscious, for what he now saw . . .

Two men had come very close, their faces eager. Strings of bones swung from their arms and necks, and were bound up in their hair. One of them reached toward him. He felt the hand pass over his arms, his shoulders, his chest, kneading the muscles delicately and tentatively. There was laughter and excited conversation. Then the two withdrew, smiling in satisfaction.

A moment later, a single native approached — a man in whose eyes glared the look that had become so familiar to him, the wide-eyed, starry gaze of the hungry. Suddenly Michael thrust between himself and that face the magazine which he still found in his hand. The caption of the page sprang to his eyes. "Plane forced down as Stillmans seek again to foil starvation. . . ."

Harriet Fischer

REQUIEM FOR AN OLD FARMER

Old Man, whose knotted fingers foolish bump
Against the cover of your box, folded in
Mock piece; Eternal rest is yours, on satin.
Fourscore of earth and denim is enough.
Your gnarled nails are pared and square;
Your box is bronze, not pine; you will not go
 "Through hell a'snappin'," as you told us so.

The rains of spring began today, wilting the canvas grass
Above your grave, where water stands.
"Tomorrow we will plant," your neighbors say;
"We'll do our duty by the dead today."
Homely, they talk of death and seed and birth;
Ashes to ashes.....earth to earth.

Bruce MacDonald

Rain Falls Drop By Drop

How terribly insane, completely inane
That tangible he
Should seek to be
Within a non-existent theme

How long before the mind
Will cease to live in time
For how can a thought that's dead
Hide the tawdry thread
That weaves the cloak between what's real
And that which we cannot feel

The bridge is not a thought at all
But simply man living tall
Real
Soaring on gossamer steel
And here he walks, does not run
And rain falls drop by drop

D. Taeler

I Stand Transfixed

I stand transfixed
On the banks of an unconquered river,
Impossible to cross;
Yet there are people on the other side.
They view me with contempt,
And rejoice in their glory.
There is no bridge across this river.
It remains forever impassable.
The chosen few pluck sweets from the trees on the other side.
But what of us?
Is it our fault
That there is a vault
Between talent and genius?

M. Millman

Schoolboy Love

I've just come back from seeing my love
And I want to return right now
True
This place is greens and gold
But away from flame
And grace lit face
Too fast my limbs grow old

On occasion I meet a friend
And we sense without pretense
But
There is no leave
I must grieve the distance
That parts me from subsistence

I've just come back from seeing my love
And I shall return at once
On waves of hope and warm rapport
On petals of pure desire
I'll fly
Quick
To my hearts red red fire.

D. Taeler

Unrequited Love

Schoolboy Love

I've lost your book from which my love
And I want to know what you think of it
This place is green and old
But away from home
And when I think of you
The last my mind can hold

On occasion I meet a friend
And we talk of things that we have seen
There is no love
I must give up the dream
The world is full of things that are not true

I've lost your book from which my love
And I want to know what you think of it
The waves of hope and want repeat
The words of your desire
I'll try
To my heart and soul

D. Taylor

THE MEANING OF A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Prof. Daniel Sass, Department of Geology:

The term "liberal arts" implies many things to different people; its meaning and its purpose may be as varied as the reasons given for attending a university. I am not concerned at this time with the purpose or attitude of the teacher: few people, thank God, enter the profession without some sincere feeling of dedication. Of greater immediate concern to me is the attitude of the individual student, regardless of his immediate educational objective.

Liberal Arts courses can open the door to new experiences and afford opportunities for the re-examination of preconceived values. The student should and does have the right to doubt or question. This privilege carries with it a responsibility — the implications of which extend beyond the sphere of academic life. The right to dissent is justified only if preceded by intelligent research and a thorough understanding of the problem whatever it may be. This understanding can only be achieved through a reasonable amount of concentrated effort, a price some feel reluctant to pay but without which "liberal arts" has no meaning.

There is, admittedly, a necessity to specialize since we live in an age which requires specialization; but knowledge of a particular kind without a realization of its place in the multi-faceted scheme of human endeavor is only partially complete. It is important that the student at least appreciate much of the subject matter "outside" of his field of major concentration. The liberal arts curriculum can offer this opportunity.

THE MEANING OF A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Prof. Melvin Bernstein, Department of English:

What, you ask, is my philosophy of a liberal arts college?

In times of assured life and unchallenged liberty, the obvious program of a liberal arts college would be to count over and over again the achievements of happiness pursued and overtaken. But these are not such times. Rather, do we live in a time of insured life and compromised liberties, and the very pursuit of happiness is under investigation by dyspeptic intellectuals and flatulent bureaucrats. Because this so, it is a necessary gesture to speak out for the dream content of the liberal arts program.

The purpose of a liberal arts program is to furnish the data of the past, present, and future of man's capacity to dream a world of his desire into existence.

Life is not to be worshipped for the cobweb, the beehive, the beaver dam, the ant-hill of our animal-like industry. All these things are but the instruments of deathtrap feeding through, distribution system — in short, the economics of life. The technologist, the scientist, and the materialist are the husbandmen of this refined and complicated economics. But life is more than economics. And the liberal arts college can — if it actively desires to — remind us of this.

The purpose of a liberal arts college is to indoctrinate generation after generation of book-loving students (John Milton once defined a book) with the dream of the decency and dignity of men of good will. By the way, and on the way, the liberal arts college will stir fine dialogue, define symbols we use, mime the pleasures of sense and imagination, and provide the self-realization and communication for the ardent student and dedicated teacher. It will offer both of them the racked-up pleasures for the choice of the pointed cue of their aim and skill. But always the philosophy — the love of wisdom — of the plan of a liberal arts curriculum will be the dream of decency and dignity for all men everywhere. Anything less is the material apple of Eden's discord.

And one thing more: if this is not so and be not so, then the liberal arts college is but the training school for things as they are and have been — the obituary of a dream undreamt.

Prof. David Leach, Department of History:

A liberal arts education that is worthy of the name must encourage the self-realization of the student in a manner that will enable him to maximize his individual potential for a full and socially constructive life. The achievement of this goal depends upon the total education environment, including its social as well as its academic aspects. This environment will best serve the purpose if it is designed to develop in the student those qualities of mind and spirit that are conducive to moral and intellectual integrity — a passion for truth, a sense of justice and social responsibility, a capacity for balanced and judicious judgements, an appreciation of personal ability tempered by a healthy sense of humility.

Academically, the liberal arts education that I have in mind is concerned with quality of instruction and intellectual content. Quality of instruction involves us in two matters of cardinal importance. First it should be so designed as to awaken the student to the excitement of learning while training him in the rare art of intricate thinking, the ultimate ends of which are self-motivation and the capacity for independent, creative endeavor.

The development of these attributes should be accomplished through a discipline that provides not mere subject matter and methodology, but satisfaction to the student in terms of general education. Subject matter and methodology have their respected places in the liberal arts curriculum, but the need for general education deserves even more emphasis in the undergraduate program. Beyond achieving a relatively high proficiency in a special field of interest, the liberal arts student should enter into the dynamic creative achievements that have shaped the world in which he lives and the fundamental values without which all achievement becomes meaningless. To be an educated person, he must cultivate in himself an awareness of the fundamental values of life that have sustained his cultural heritage.

In order to achieve the kind of education that concerns us here, the student must aim at something more profound than a mere acquaintance with great issues past and present; he must struggle to acquire a perspective in dealing with human problems, a perspective that is requisite to an intelligent approach to the political, social, and economic problems of the world.

In conclusion, I feel that a liberal arts education ought to provide the individual with the intellectual foundation necessary to the pursuit of some constructive enterprise in which he can earn a livelihood and at the same time serve the best interests of the community. This end of education is, of course, always important. But the ideal product of a liberal arts education is the mature student who has an appreciation for the life of serious scholarship. He is a person who is sensitive to the values that result in decent social life and who has learned the fulfillment, the quietude, the solace, and the holy excitement of a lonely contemplation. He is a person who is conversant with the great issues of life but has not renounced aesthetic pleasure. He is a full human being who recognizes his own and others' limitations, but who has not forsaken the idealism of youth and the optimism of faith in his striving toward a realization of the good life.

Prof. Ernest Finch, Department of English:

In one of his famous short stories, Ernest Hemingway brings two professional killers into an ordinary American town. They have come there to Kill Ole Andreson, a man whom they have never known. "'Just to oblige a friend,'" they explain. When Nick, a boy of the town, learns of their plan, he goes to warn Ole of it. He finds Ole, already aware of the danger, trying to summon up enough courage to go meet impersonal slaughter. As Nick is about to leave the house, he encounters the landlady. "'Good night, Mrs. Hirsch,'" he says. And the landlady hastens to explain, "'I'm not Mrs. Hirsch. . . . She owns the place. I just look after it for her. I'm Mrs. Bell.'" As though it were somehow important that Mrs. Bell were Mrs. Bell and not Mrs. Hirsch!

There are multiple forces in our century which, like Hemingway's killers, would reduce human identity to insignificance. That is why I believe the functions of liberal education must be stated in terms of the individual himself. The end product of liberal education is an individual — a man or woman who has achieved the configuration of abilities and skills which is uniquely his and which will make life most satisfying to him in the society of his fellows, who respects his own identity and the identities of other men. He has examined himself: he has examined the environment out of which he has grown. He has studied other men and the environments out of which they have grown. He has compared and adjusted. He has developed the imagination to see where a given line of conduct will lead him, what it will mean to his identity and to his relationship with other men. He will see that in their uniqueness, "all men are at last of a size."

At Alfred, it seems to me, we have some chance of realizing this liberal view of man. Its traditions, its location, its size are auspicious. Here we can work together as whole personalities, as people with bodies, feelings, intelligence, convictions, prejudices, deficiencies — all of which can be taken into consideration in our dealings with each other. It is not the life of an intensely competitive society which looks upon a man as a pair of skilled hands, or a block of stock in the way of profit, or as brain-hatching gold Minervas. It deals in wholes, not in parts, and sees in the whole the something more than a sum of the parts which is, perhaps, the great concept of the western world.

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