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## Belles Lettres, 1947

Eastern Kentucky University, The Canterbury Club

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# Belles Lettres



1947

# Belles Lettres

An annual anthology of student writing sponsored and published by the  
Canterbury Club of Eastern Kentucky State Teachers College  
at Richmond, Kentucky

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VOLUME THIRTEEN

NINETEEN FORTY-SEVEN

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## FOREWORD

We, the editors of the 1947 issue of *Belles Lettres*, present this the thirteenth volume, with the hope that it will afford pleasure to the readers and inspire them to creative writing.

## PLEA TO THE ATOM

George Cecil

Potent, precious, petite particle,  
Pulverising, parachuting power,  
Penetrate perverted philosophies,  
Play prelude to posterity!

---

## NOX

Juanita England

Tiny, pink, pillow-clouds rested  
On downy quilts of satin-blue sky.  
While in the sleeping East  
Angel feet make darkened tracks—  
Bespeaking showers to come,  
Heaven's airy floor to grace.

And thus I saw the night approaching,  
The recompense for days of downheaded toil,  
As nature's supreme creation—man—  
Raises eyes of longing heavenward,  
And searches out the golden ray of hope,  
Therewith the morrow better to endure.

---

## RADIO SOAP OPERAS

Norma Richards

What the world needs is not a "good five-cent cigar" but a sane, half-intellectual radio schedule. No wonder today's mothers are leaving home—it's that morning "Soap Opera" that does it.

Take, for example, my experience of last summer when windows were thrown high and city dwellers led not only their own lives but also their neighbors'.

All was quiet, the earth was sparkling in the morning brightness. Suddenly was heard a cheerful, happy voice breaking the silence with, "Do you wake up each morning? You do? How horrible! Try Dr. Snozzlepuss' No-Dozum, No Winkum Somnambulist Capsules and sleep the sleep of the dead. The chances are you'll never again waken. Buy the economy size of 12,000,000 at your corner drug store."

By the end of this "eye-opener" the whole neighborhood was out of bed, husbands sent off to work, and children settled for their morning's activities.

But wait—the best is yet to come. Early morning radio music is that which suits only the most cultured of tastes. One of the most symphonic groups is the group called the "Rattlesnake Mountain Melody Boys," featuring Aunt Surrey Piffle and Little Joe. The entire neighborhood is carried off into a semi-conscious state of nostalgia as the program comes to a yodeling end.

Now, 'tis time for drama. The first heart-warming, soul stirring opera is "Grandma's Other Stepson." This is a story of how a "sweet little woman" is robbed of a map that will lead to a buried treasure. As a result she must spend the rest of her life as a ward of the state.

Another story, even more heart-breaking, is the woeful tale of a young mountain girl who married a sly, handsome, young underworld character. The screams and violent sobs which tear at the tubes of the radio could lead only to a psychosis.

There is always a recipe program. Today's recipe is "Grandma's Delectable Loaf" or "Get Out the Bicarbonate, Mother, Grandma's at It Again." The concoction includes the stuffing of a weiner skin with carrots, onions, garlic, bread crumbs, and pineapple juice. Chill thoroughly (the loaf, not yourself) and serve only at the first sign of starvation.

After many more hours of the wonderful invention, called radio, there finally comes the hush that results from a broken tube. Settling back to calm your nerves, you at last have that peace and calm for which you have been longing.

---

## WOULD IF I COULD

George Cecil

On the Dean's honor roll  
I ain't—  
I would  
If I could  
But I cain't  
Get on the Dean's honor roll.

## REFLECTIONS THROUGH SNOWFLAKES

Burna Dean Talbott

To have loved and lost surely could not be better than never to have loved at all. Anyone who had never lost would not have suffered the sharp emptiness of losing and the aftermath of loneliness which is crushing when that certain one is gone. When he is gone, gone are all the thrills of seeing new places and sights together; gone is the sparkling laughter of enjoying things with someone; gone is the pleasure of pondering over new interests and discoveries, and sympathizing and sorrowing over mutual griefs. Gone is everything except the dull constant pain of being alone and uncertain.

Marie's footfall crushed on the snow mat as she strolled aimlessly along the walk reflecting on the past. The downsweep of the snow against her hair and self seemed like the memories that were sweeping over her, drowning out the rest of the world and her own being, except that part which had been. Today was Bill's birthday. Perhaps the fact that this day was an occasion in his life had recalled to her mind this morning with deep depression what had once existed. One year ago on this special November day, when the world was full of sunshine and happiness, they had celebrated his birthday anniversary with light hearts, and how gay we were then, remembered Marie.

How different I am now, how changed. There is a sadness in my heart that will never be erased, and a maturity of emotion that lends years. Even my physical appearance has been altered. Proof enough is that friends have frequently remarked about a certain tired strain about the eyes and mouth.

Nothing is of interest now, neither clothes, nor parties, nor family events. All the things that once were paramount are oblivious to me. What matters is that Bill is not here with me, and that for the past month every day has been anxiety without him. The last hope of getting him back is gone. A month of waiting for a call is much too long to burn the flame of hope. Today I'll put it out, and realize that tomorrow, like today, will appear with its long hours and that my heart and mind will feel the same, unless—unless my mind can become the ruler of my emotions and future.

Some of the world's greatest accomplishments have been attained by those who sustained deep emotional wounds, only to heal them by power of mind and come back to reality through concentration on a new powerful interest. My goal will be such a determination.

There is some one, some place, or something that will become my means of forgetting. A happy life is not over for me. There is still time. So many years lie ahead for me. Seventeen really isn't very old.

---

## SPRING

Chappie Fossett

The rippling brook  
Which on the rocks did play  
Exchanged its song  
With breezes of the day.

The ghastly night  
Dared not its face to show.  
Upon the flowers  
Lit with springtime's glow.

The chirping birds  
At last have taken wing  
To drive out winter  
And receive the spring.

The nimble feet  
Of children in their play  
Resound the joy  
That Spring has come this way.

---

## UNFULFILLMENT

Ruby Monday

The gong sounds but no burning  
spirit is summoned forth,  
No thrilling heart leaps up at the  
mentioning of a name,  
The calmness, serenity, dense as  
fog, encircles like a wreath,  
And descends drawing closer the curtain  
upon a heart that wants in vain.

The warm surge of a golden daydream  
that ever fades at dusk,  
Has vanished into the unknown  
veil of misty perfume or sultry smoke.  
No longer the spring awakens the  
nearly budded flowerlet from its sleep;  
The darkening winter comes, covering deeper  
every strain of happiness that  
Unfulfilled desires have not crushed.



## AN INDIVIDUALIST

Betty Cooksey

Several people have described odd characters and have tried to explain the reason or reasons for such peculiarities. I know of a strange person, and I would like to hear someone's explanation of her queer actions.

I can't really describe Drusie because she is seldom seen. I'll do the next best thing and describe her living conditions. Drusie lives in a secluded little house that is tucked between two hills. It is not near a road; only a narrow path bordered by a tangled mass of briars and bushes and intermingled flowers leads to her home. Every kind of old-fashioned flower that you might name grows in the spacious old "paled-in" yard. The house has two small rooms and a "shedded-on" kitchen. It looks rather like many remote country houses—a gray, stained, weather-beaten frame that shows no signs of ever having been painted.

She has always lived in the same little house. I don't know how old she is, but you can get an idea from these facts. My information concerning her dates back fifty years. She was the oldest of several children. All except three of these have since married and died. Drusie lived with one of her unmarried brothers. After his death, the other brother, saying Drusie must not live alone, moved in with her. This brother, the youngest of the family, now draws an old-age pension.

People say that the little old woman in gray once had long, beautiful hair. No one could say much about that now because she always wears a dark bonnet that covers all her head except her face. Jerry, her brother, has said that Drusie must have at least ten yards of material to make a dress; she always wears grey percale gathered very full at the waist, falling around her shoes, having long full sleeves, and a high collar.

This oldest resident in the community is very reserved. In fact if you wanted to find out more about her, you would have to ask Jerry or one of the few other persons by whom she permits herself to be seen. If a stranger approaches the house, Drusie hides. If she should happen to be near the barn or in a field when she sees you coming, she runs into the barn or even behind a shock of fodder; otherwise she goes into the house. If she had some occasion to become acquainted with you, if you will sit down on the porch (by yourself, certainly not if you bring other people with you), she may, after a few minutes, come out of hiding and

talk with you in a much more reasonable way than you would expect.

Among other oddities of conduct, she keeps twine strings thickly laced and woven across the lower part of her windows to ward-off the witches. Some people say she does this because she had stomach trouble which she thought the witches caused.

As to her cooking, she prepares things that we today would not think about eating, for example dried pumpkin and pumpkin butter. In short, Drusie's living conditions have remained the same as those under which her mother lived. For years she has continued to do things just as her mother taught her to do them.

With all her odd ways Drusie might be said to have come out near the top in the contest for survival of the fittest. On second thought, maybe these queer methods are the key to the mystery of her ego.

---

## BACKYARD OF A TENEMENT

Howard M. Rowlette

Eggs  
Nakedly vacant,  
Cracked dishes,  
Orange rinds,  
Coffee grounds swollen;  
Coiled, spiral  
Potato peels—  
Dry tentacles.

Water  
Stagnatedly scummed,  
Blurred ink  
On hand written envelopes,  
With rags—  
Vomits  
From receptacles.

Mud  
Sloshed boys  
Flail at a mangy dog  
As it shies past an island  
Of horses' dung;  
A consumptive  
Spits phlegm  
Amid a magazine's salad.

## THEME NEUROSIS

Herbert W. Condor

Why should I work myself into a dither because I can't write a theme? What difference does it make? What does the professor think I am, a junior Tolstoy? Besides, I don't like being commanded to write when I'm not in the mood. I'm temperamental and dislike people with a commanding voice.

There goes that voice again, "Write a theme on feminine pulchritude." Gad, what a voice!

Write a theme  
Ho hum

Feminine pulchritude! Ah, there's a lovely hunk of it sitting beside me. I look at my watch—

Tick tock  
8:30 o'clock

Not much time for writing a theme but here goes. Suddenly my mind is distracted by a shapely pair of feminine legs that belong to the girl sitting beside me. Looks like John Powers material to me. Maybe I should ask her for a date tonight. Wait a minute! What's that on her left third finger? No, she can't be. More disappointments. Again, I look at my Elgin

Tick tock  
8:35 o'clock

How can I possibly get this theme written by nine o'clock? I can't even think. Suddenly, a melodic pattern of poetical phrases strikes brain cell number one (only one). He's stinkin' from thinkin'—use Lifebuoy. Maybe I don't know myself. I haven't showered this morning, nor have I shaved. I'll wise-up and shower the second period—Lifebuoy and all.

A chiming of eight melodic notes is heard:

Are you think - ing  
Are you think - ing

No doubt about it—8:45 A. M., fifteen minutes to go and no theme. Maybe I can get an idea from Janie's paper. She's a brain. "Psst, Janie, let me see your paper. I need an idea to give me the *go* on this theme." A voice bellows forth, "Each student will do his own work!" I look sheepishly at the professor, who is staring icily at me. The horrible thought of having been caught cheating seizes me. I feel as if the wrath of God is on me. My blood chills, my

hands shake—not only my hands, but I’m shaking all over. I’m doomed to be a failure.

The Bulova on Betty’s wrist attracts my attention and relieves some of the nervous strain.

8:50 o’clock

Give a Bulova, and you give the finest  
(doesn’t rime, does it?)

Oh, college education, where art thou? I’m not stupid, but I’m not smart either. What am I?

Time marches on ———

Maybe the whistle will save me. No, it can only flunk me. I’m fighting desperately against (or for) time. Please, anybody, give me an idea for an introduction for this written masterpiece!

My head suddenly throbs; my mouth is cotton dry. I need a drink—a drink of water, that is. Maybe it was those three beers that threw me last night. Ah, I could certainly use one now. Maybe it would straighten me up. No, I’m lost, hopelessly lost.

8:55 o’clock

Five to go

Why does the prof keep staring at me? I’m not looking at the “brain’s” paper now. Only a cold, heartless person could stare like that. Doesn’t he know the agony I’m suffering. Please, sir, look at someone else, or pull your hat over your eyes! The latter idea is much better. Your double-breasted eyebrows always did annoy me.

Maybe the professor won’t ask for our paper today. Maybe he will give us another period in which to complete them. There I go, more wishful thinking. No teacher is human. They’re all mechanical creatures. What an effete profession!

Deliver me to Looveyville, Ky. Dean expells

8:59 o’clock

One minute till nine

Ideas, where are you? (Not you, Chloe; sit down.) There are voices, not ideas, in my brain today.

I’m not neurotic; I’m nuts, but aren’t we all?

TOOT! TOOT!

9 O’CLOCK

# LIFE AND HELL

William C. Kearney

Life, a mystery, a dream,  
A cloud of hate—wielded by nations;  
Lightning, thunder—all man-made;  
Death, destruction—where will it end?

No time to think—

No time to plan—

Live only for the day when life unfurls its flag of truce  
And releases all its mysteries, its golden dreams.

All nations will then yield to the power of love—

A thing, now, so far beyond.

---

Fear, fear, an uncontrollable fear,  
A fear of man, of man-made monsters;  
A fear of life, a fear of death.

Courage!

What is courage? Where is courage?

Courage lurks under the cloak of fear.

The noise of battle, the sound of guns,  
The cry of wounded, the sight of blood,

No time to think—

No time to plan—

Live, live, kill, kill—it is not the sound of men;  
It's the sound of hell.

A hell on earth, indescribable;

Where Man is thrown against Man

And graves open wide their greedy mouths,

To receive the cruel, the kind,

The brave, the courageous, the coward.

Then the nights of silence, evil nights,  
When man has time to think, to hope, to plan, to fear, to  
pray.

Danger lurks on every side,

Thoughts are in his mind—

Home, solitude, security,

Peace, peace, peace,

A chance at life—

Life, that beautiful dream.

Then a burst, another burst of hell,  
The screams, the cries, the walking dead,  
The noise, the battle.

Then, like a message from heaven—  
    IT'S OVER !! It's over—  
The sound of drums, marching feet,  
Music, cheering crowds,  
The tears of joy.

“Yes, my son, it's over—  
You may return home, return to your dreams, your hopes—  
Cast away the memories of this hell on earth—  
Live again, live forever,  
Under the wings of Peace.  
Forget, forget,  
Forget what you've seen, heard and felt.”  
No, no don't forget, don't ever forget—you can't forget.  
Keep alive the memory of those who lie now in foreign  
    fields.  
Keep alive the memory of all you've seen, of all you've heard,  
    Of all you've thought, and all you've felt.  
Instill, in your children, and your children's children,  
    The hell of hells, so they may live and be free.

Courage lurks under the cloak of fear;  
Yes, fear of what you've seen,  
Of what you know.  
Always remember, so you may have courage  
    To uphold the peace to follow.

---

My dreams are of tomorrow—  
    Of a world at peace;  
Of streets crowded with people,  
Each with his own separate dreams.  
Individual lives, happiness—  
With the cares and burdens of war  
    Lifted from their shoulders;  
Peaceful people, loving people;  
    People who enjoy living.  
Tomorrow, my dreams will come true—  
    My dreams of peaceful life.

---

## DRAGON-FLY

Howard M. Rowlette

Somber dullness, wings, tiffany thin,  
Stretched taut on ebon web-like frames.  
Grey-green to taupe of opalescence.  
Streaks, dips, pauses, and is gone.

## A MODERN SONG

Billy Brashear

Songs of this modern age have many effects. They offer various members of our population chances to make money, chances to spend money. They offer romance, humor, conversation, subjects for themes, and they even have ramifications in the diplomatic world. No different from other popular songs in these effects is "Open the Door, Richard." We will discuss all the facets of its effect on our country and people which come to mind.

This song is very aptly titled, for by committing the title to memory, one can learn almost the entire song. This song differs very little from other modern ballads. It uses simple words to tell a simple story. An average US citizen comes home in the early morning hours and discovers that through some error his roommate, Richard, has taken the only key to their apartment inside and locked the door. The rest of the story is devoted to his efforts to awaken Richard and get to bed. As stated before, the story is not at all unusual, but the music and lyric writers have so captured the pathos and worry of the little man in the US that the song has appealed universally to our nation. As this song has the merits of most of the Hit Parade ditties of the day it is very well adapted to a discussion of this type. It cannot be stressed too much how all pervading is the knowledge of this song. Ignorant indeed is the man who has not heard of Poor Richard and his Closed Door Policy.

The economic results of the song are widespread. The authors will make many thousands of dollars from its sale and playing rights on the radio. The orchestra with the favorite recording will find itself famous and much in demand in addition to the royalties it will reap from the records. Probably carpenters have shown high profits from doors broken by wits imitating Richard's roommate. Strikes have been called because Richard was banned from radio stations, resulting in loss of time and money. From these and other pyramiding results, such as the lumber industry furnishing lumber to the carpenters for doors, the eventual cost of getting the door open for Richard's roommate will doubtless run into the millions.

Romance, too, has been and will be given a boost by Richard. Coy maidens will no longer have to sing, "Who's that knocking at my door?" but will be able to shout, "Open the door, Blank," filling in the blank with the name of their choosing. This will enable them to give direct hints to the man of their choice. Lovers keeping a rendezvous will know what has happened if the door is locked and the

key is gone. The romance facet of the song's effect may live down through the centuries until its origin is lost in some myth such as: Richard and Elvira were lovers. One day while knocking on the door of Richard's home Elvira noticed blood seeping under the door. She tried the door; the door was locked. Beating on the door, she gave the haunting, beseeching cry of "Open the door, Richard." Richard could not hear her, though, for despairing of ever getting their family's permission to marry, he had committed suicide by sticking his head in the electric mixer. Always since then, "Open the door, Richard" has been the call of one lover to another.

Humorous and conversational effects of Richard go hand in hand. First our hero crept into conversation as a matter of news interest. People wanted to know if Richard had opened the door and the greeting of the day was, "Has Richard opened up yet?" Then as it became evident that Richard was not going to open up, the more cynical began to make puns and detracting aspersions about Richard. Some even went so far as to say that Richard was actually standing at the door but refused to open it because he was a publicity hound. In this way humor crept into the existence of Richard. After the delicacy surrounding Richard had been removed, some of the more modern and daring of the radio comedians began to build situations on their shows which would enable them to say something clever such as, "My door is always open to you, Richard." Thus a composition which had at first struck to the heart of every American became even more lethal. Pending is publication of a joke book. The title, supposed to be funny in itself, is "The Open Door to Richard's Humor." As the reviews promise, this will probably kill you.

In this atomic age Richard can even have scientific significance. Constantly circulating rumors have it that there is danger of a chain reaction by Richard. The authors are threatening to write a sequel to be called "Come On In, The Key Is in the Lock." If they succeed with this, the series might become perpetuating, and Richard would become an institution not unlike the crossword puzzles or Terry and the Pirates. Each newspaper of worth would have its daily episode of Richard.

Richard has also been active in the field of foreign affairs. *Izvestia* is still writing articles criticizing "Lift the Curtain, Joseph," a parody which appeared in one of the political columns. Also the commiserations and advice which have poured in to Richard's roommate from all over the world have done much toward the spreading of good will among the people of the world. The International Safe-



crackers Union has offered to open the door and agreed to give him on-the-job training as a safecracker.

So Richard wanders on and on, and who can say where he will stop? The only foreseeable obstacle to his progress is a door.

---

## HAPPINESS

Juanita England

The great, the small  
One thing only are seeking,  
As in their bustling day  
From "this" to "that" they flit.

Tomorrow, or surely the day after,  
My goal I shall reach.  
So say they of little thought,  
Always seeking, without knowing what!

It isn't power, or wealth,  
Love and bounty also may elude  
That which men pursue in darkness,  
Faltering, calling for IT.

Foolish, blind, pitiable are they  
Who dumbly labor uselessly on and on,  
Never knowing that trampled in the dust  
Beneath unheeding feet lies IT.

---

## SPRING MORNING MEDLEY

George Cecil

Small birds react cheerfully to vivid  
dawning,  
While alarm clocks provoke lethargic  
sleepyheads to yawning.

## DREAM TIME

Chappie Fossett

After the noise of the day is past,  
After each task is through,  
When the calm of the night appears at last  
My thoughts always turn to you.

Sometimes, during the rush of the day,  
I steal a dream or two,  
But when the moon seeks its starlit way,  
That's when I dream of you.

I need the still calm peace of night  
To live, once more, anew,  
The darkness that was turned to light  
With just a smile from you.

The moonlight streaks across the floor,  
The walls reflect the blue,  
And I am dreaming dreams once more—  
Dreams of only you.

---

## I WILL REMEMBER, SPRING!

Howard M. Rowlette

When winter comes  
With swirling robes of snow  
And powders all the land,  
I will forget, each golden,  
Autumn thing;  
As next is Spring . . .!  
The golden-reds no more  
Are on the hills.  
There's naught behind  
Of Autumn's bright array.  
It's then, that I'll remember  
Daffodils, more sparkling  
Than the glint of golden hills.  
And . . . as the summer fades  
Away, the green grass parched,  
It's then I will remember, May,  
To dream of tulips  
And the narcissus' gentle glow.  
For I will remember, Spring.

## LA CORTA

Richard C. Cullen

After much bartering with the tribe of natives at the village, we finally managed to obtain two small flat-bottom boats, and as we rowed along through the dark, stagnant water my mind drifted back over the day's happenings.

It was strange, yes, strange indeed. I mean about the way the natives' faces seemed to twist into a mask of fear when we mentioned La Corta. I didn't know very much about the superstitions that for years had circulated around these jungle forests, but the stories or tales did seem to have a profound effect upon these simple inhabitants. More likely, they were witch doctors' tales, invented to keep a firm hold on the natives. Nevertheless, the story seemed to grip their minds.

We row on and on. The vegetation seems to be getting thicker on the sides of the banks now. This water is ghastly looking. The red mud of the banks and river bottom has mixed with the water and as a result it seems to be almost the color of dried blood. Vines are hanging down, and trail into the stream, from the thick, almost impenetrable forests that surround us. Vaporious mists that seem to float over the surface of the water part as our small craft moves on.

"La Corta." The name even sounds intriguing. To think that Hernando Cortez had built the old castle over five hundred years ago. Legend has it that he planned to build a great empire here. The castle itself had been finished, true enough, but then something happened. Cortez returned from the mainland to find all the members of his great construction party murdered, their bodies mutilated—No. I can't even bring my well-ordered, logical mind to think about it. More tales, more superstitions. But it does seem as though the gods had put a curse upon the place, for the explorer abandoned the project, never to return. Now, centuries after, the natives still fear the place as they fear the devil himself.

Our boat continues its movement upstream. The sun is directly overhead now, and as it breaks through the patches of foliage, spears of light come down from above and cast reflections in the water. We should reach the place shortly. According to our charts it should lie about two more miles up stream. Our geological equipment and several cameras take up most of the room in the boat, and my legs become cramped from lack of space to move around.

But I can't keep the tale out of my mind. I laugh to myself. Just imagine what my colleagues would say if they

knew the thoughts running through my mind. I attempt to dismiss them, for we are nearing the castle now. The forest is beginning to thin out. I hope we can pick up our rock samples and be back to the village by nightfall. For some unknown reason, the idea of spending the night at the castle has little appeal.

Even now the peaked spires of the structure can be seen. We round the last group of trees to the right, and there it is — La Corta — with all its aged majesty. The massive stones themselves seem to represent never-ending time. The green forests end abruptly about a hundred yards from each side of the castle, and it stands there alone in the clearing.

We beach our small craft and make a temporary camp quickly, as it is beginning to cloud up. These tropical storms can come up almost without one's noticing them.

After picking out our needed equipment, we advance toward a small garden that lies along the edge of one of the main walls. In the center of the garden stands a statue of Apollo, a superb work of art done in white marble. I can't help thinking of all the hundreds of years the statue has stood in that position and will be standing for years to come until erosion and other forces of nature melt it down into nothingness.

We pass through a tunnel-like archway that leads into the castle itself. Moisture drips slowly, drop after countless drop, from the sides of the tunnel. The dampness of the place and the darkening skies seem to cast a spell of ominous tidings over all of us. Again the feeling comes to me: "Go back, go back before it's too late"; but I put it from my mind.

The castle is divided into several great halls. Vines crawl up the sides of the walls like some creeping animal. They cling to almost every exposed part of stone. After examining the uppermost sections of the structure and taking several photographs, we return to the main floor whence we had come. The main floor resembles the other in the fact that it has the same large halls and rooms constructed in approximately the same way. We pick our way slowly, examining the rooms as we go and being careful not to stumble or become entangled in the maze of sticky vines.

The dungeons must lie down below, through the rustic-looking catacombs that descend from the main room of the first floor. It is suggested that we follow them down. But something tells us not to, for we hesitate. I can see the other two members of my party becoming nervous also.

It is becoming quite late, and since we have obtained photographs of the castle and its surroundings and also some needed geological specimens, we decide to return to the boat and be gone from this place as soon as possible. None of us relishes the idea of spending the night here.

Suddenly the heavens seem to split apart and torrents of rain begin to pour down. Lightning and thunder wail and scream at us as if to say, "Intruders! You have desecrated the silence of this place! You should have gone long ago but now you must stay!"

We make our way into the main hall, deciding it will be the driest place in which to spend the night. It is really beginning to get dark now. The rain beats against the top and sides of the castle, sending sheets of water down the huge walls.

We have luckily brought along extra rations for an emergency such as this, so we busy ourselves with building a small fire over which to cook our food. After eating and fixing temporary beds in the center of the great hall, we discuss what we shall do the following day.

It is now becoming quite late, and, being weary, we all lie down. The rain has stopped and a misty steam begins to rise from the ground as it does in the tropics after a rain. The moon comes out and an evil light settles over us from great openings in the walls. I feel a reluctance to go to sleep in surroundings such as these, but finally I doze off.

Suddenly I am aroused by a blood-curdling, half-mad scream that causes me to sit bolt upright. My God! What is it? I look over to my companions, and they are gone! I peer over in the direction of the entrance to the dungeons, and then I see it—a great hulk, beast or unholy devil, I know not, but there it stands. I am so paralyzed with fear that I cannot move. There is a struggle, the monster is grappling with something. Suddenly, with a great heave, a lifeless shape is flung toward me. It is a human body although it cannot be recognized as such, as I look upon it. God, no, no! The head is is—

I gaze once more toward the entrance of the dungeon. The shape is still there. It seems to glow from some luminous light within its body. Those eyes seem like points of fire! And the great, long, gangling hair—No! I cannot bear to look more. My only thought, as life begins to come back to me, is to flee. If God will only spare me!

I dash madly from the hall. My legs are torn from the underbrush that seems to take hold of me as I try to

run. I half crawl out into the garden surrounding the castle wall and fall heavily into a muddy pool. I must hide here, for my tortured body refuses to move farther. The night air becomes thick with the oppressive smell of decayed vegetation. It seems that each breath of air brings with it new and unknown horrors. The night with all its shadows lurks in every mire and stagnant abyss. I must be going mad. Surely this horrible nightmare could not be happening to me.

I must have lain in this half-sunken pool for hours—days, it seems. Will the morning never come?

The "Thing," I am sure, is only waiting the opportunity to snuff out my life as it had done the others'. I could hear their pitiful screams now—screams of sheer agony and horror at the sight of the monster.

My mind is slowly beginning to come back upon its normal plane. This senseless beast, if it is a beast, is nothing but a bulk of bone and sinew. It had no God-given brain. I shall outsmart it. Cold perspiration again covers my body. Half paralyzed with fear, I try to pull myself up to drier ground. Should I dare raise my head? The rim of the pool in which I lie is only a few inches above me. If the "Thing" should catch even a glimpse of me, my end would come even quicker than that of the rest, for I am indeed the last victim.

I hear a noise over there to the left. If I must die, I beg that it be quick. I can not bear to have that thing—Wait! Was I imagining again? Certainly there is no sound now, only darkness. My hands take hold of firmer ground. Inch by inch I pull myself up. I can see the outline of the statue of Apollo in the garden. I even remember how we had admired it only a few hours before. If we had only decided to return to the village regardless of rain. Better to be drowned in a flooded stream than this. But now all hope is gone, gone! I sob to myself. I feel that I am losing consciousness, but I fight to regain my senses.

A few feet from the statue near the doomed entrance to this garden, I see a shape standing. This is it, then. I am not to be spared. This is my end. The "Monster" advances toward me on all fours. Its long, almost human-like hair, clotted with blood, hangs down over its eyes. It seems half to smirk, half to scream and whine as it approaches. The mouth is slowly opening. Its red-forked tongue shoots out at intervals, like some demonlike serpent. I try to run.

No! No! Take it away. I am screaming, screaming. I can feel the inhuman claws tearing into my flesh. As

my head is tilted forward from the weight of the beast clinging to my back, I can see my blood seeping stickily over my chest. Now the long tangled hair of the monster is closing down over my face, shutting off my breath, shutting out my life. This is the end then, the end!

My body is all atingle—especially my scalp—as I await the blow. A feeling of surprise follows the delay, however, and gradually my ears distinguish a slight noise near me. I reach out my hand and touch one of my snoring companions.

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## SEA OF DARKNESS

Allan B. Pennington

This evening the guns are silent, like tired watchdogs reclining beneath shade trees. A lull smothers the ship as activities are muted from bow to stern; meanwhile the black shadow plows its way through a sea of fluorescent animalcule, a Milky Way of brine. On the flight deck the planes are secured to chrome cleats; the ready-plane squatting on the tracks of a catapult, a killer whale of the air, in preparation for tomorrow's patrol. In other sections of the carrier crewmen on duty noiselessly labor at tasks that inject life into a hulk of steel, tending boilers, checking planes, awaiting the morning. A ceaseless pace that ends only when the sailor is in ports of sleep.

The vessel overtakes midnight—relieve the watch—gloomy words that send drowsy seamen stumbling through darkened passageways, bumping into bulkheads, and clambering up steel ladders to gun mount and engine room; ten minutes of bustle preceding the somber hours of the "mid-watch." A gunner yawns while training his weapon into the empty sky. From the loneliness of the windswept mast a lookout sighs for a cigarette, as his eyes scan the horizon in search of the feathery path of a submarine. The night is devoid of life; only spectral shadows steer the craft, shades guided by luminary dials that glow in the shack-like bridge. From its gaff the nervous ensign flutters in the trade winds. The living quarters are lost in the dreams of weary men, the silence of slumber punctuated by rasping snores and the aching mutters of home through a lonely sailor's fitful dreams; only the blue rays of a battle lamp flicker in a corner of the compartment. Darkness is on the sea.