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Eastern Kentucky University, The Canterbury Club

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Belles Lettres



1940

Belles Lettres

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

at Richmond, Kentucky

Editor -----Dorothy White
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VOLUME SIX

NINETEEN FORTY

Contents

Of Time and Crosses of Wood..	<i>Johnny Center</i>	3
Look!	<i>Robert Witt, Jr.</i>	3
Autumn Prayer	<i>Jayne Jones</i>	4
For Judas Iscariot	<i>Philip Hodge</i>	4
Dark Shadow	<i>Harold McConnell</i>	5
Love	<i>Leona Dishon Douglas</i>	8
To Ruby	<i>Johnny Center</i>	8
Dusk	<i>Leona Dishon Douglas</i>	8
Bum in the Park	<i>Clyde Lewis</i>	9
Ah, Worms!	<i>Johnny Center</i>	10
Billie and Janie Mason	<i>Ada Moore</i>	11
Forethought	<i>Ruth Catlett</i>	14
Epitaph for Youth	<i>Clyde Lewis</i>	15
Let Me	<i>Jayne Jones</i>	16
White Snow	<i>Claude Rawlins</i>	16
Thoughts	<i>Ruth Catlett</i>	17
Recall	<i>Philip Hodge</i>	17
Red Dream	<i>Glyn W. Davis</i>	18
A Thought	<i>Paul Brandes</i>	18
Spring on the Way	<i>Clarke Gray</i>	19
Re-Dress	<i>Robert Witt, Jr.</i>	23
To the Tower	<i>Rhoda Belle Whitehouse</i>	23
Wind in Steel	<i>Glyn W. Davis</i>	24
If I should Die	<i>Dock B. Chandler</i>	24
Summer Storm at Evening	<i>Barnette DeJarnette</i>	25
On Sharing the Bed	<i>George SeEVERS</i>	26

FOREWORD

Each year the Canterbury Club of Eastern State Teachers College sponsors a magazine, BELLES LETTRES, devoted to student writing. Having endeavored to uphold the high standards of preceding volumes of BELLES LETTRES, we, the editors, present Volume Six, sincerely hoping that its readers will receive it favorably

OF TIME AND CROSSES OF WOOD

by Johnny Center

Time will come slowly and go
Slowly into the blurring mirage of eternity,
Leaving its everfilling footsteps in the shallow sands
And shadows upon the stripped wall of
nothingness.

It will come as the eager lover with his flowers
fresh from morning gardens,
And leave them sprawled on the wrinkled
bed of his spent lover—

Leave the withered remains of high promises
And the perfume of musty word to linger in
the stale halls.

No matter; time will come and it will go
And leave things.

But I think these will always stand,
These praying crucified crosses of wood on this
battlefield,

Stark and nude against the tiring sun
and the weeping skies.

Sad tributes to logic, weak prayers for the dreamers,
And vacant praises for the valiant bones
beneath, marking white the clay.

I think that they will be forever standing.
Stark and nude against the sun and skies,
These praying, crucified crosses of wood!

LOOK!

by Robert Witt, Jr.

Look at the desolate waste of the forest;
See the blue desert of the sky,
Splattered here and there by moving cloud mirages.
Look not for a mirage as a goal,
But look farther to the tall pines,
To a lush oasis where cool, clear water
Flows over the stepping stones of time
To cool your hot, dusty feet as you climb
The narrow, crooked path that leads
To happiness, success, and life.

AUTUMN PRAYER

by Jane Jones

A dim, quiet place, peace prevailing,
A great organ softly, beautifully singing,
Sunlight upon a burnished, golden head.
Through the half-open door the grandeur,
The rioting, flaming, thrilling colors,
The glory, beauty, wonder that is fall.

O Lord, please teach me more of beauty.
Make me bigger and better in every way.
Open my eyes that I may see more clearly,
My soul that I may heed great Nature's voice.
Teach me anew, lest I should careless grow,
When petty hates and jealousies distract—
Forget to search always for beauty and truth,
Twin keys to the door of life.

FOR JUDAS ISCARIOT

Philip Hodge

Poor Judas Iscariot, God's pawn,
Your spirit moans the highroad;
On grassy path and by-road;
With silent footsteps, dawn to dawn.

Your soul, loosed from its body's bonds,
Goes forever searching, questing,
Stirred, repentant and unresting,
Past flashing brooks and still, deep ponds.

For centuries your feet have trod,
Always on this endless quest;
Bleeding and blistered, sore, distressed;
Feeling thorns in the softest sod.

O Judas, we do remember
The sound of the silver clinking,
The dumb dread and your soul shrinking;
The pain that seared like a red ember.

We remember your anguished leaving,
Remember well when some deride;
Remember that three were crucified;
That for only two was there grieving.

DARK SHADOW

by Harold McConnell

Tony Balasco, stepping into the hallway, trembling, stood for a minute, listening.

What was that! Tony started nervously, found himself shaking from head to foot in a cold panic of fear. He unconsciously brushed the familiar doorknob that opened into the room from which he had just gone out. There it was again—the noise downstairs!

The hall was dreadfully dark. Disembodied spirits flew past in a fit of passion; shadowy, shapeless things scurried across the floor and disappeared into the corner. A dark form moved in the shadows by the steps.

The man in the hall took a step forward. His heart pounded wildly beneath his chest; a strange, prickling sensation seemed to be clawing at the back of his neck. One step, two steps . . . nearer . . .

A shaking hand found its way onto the stair railing; the shadows moved indiscernably, then wafted away, vanishing. Tony started down the stairs.

He knew what the doctors thought. Fools! They whispered in quiet tones behind his back; one of them openly declared that Tony was suffering from psychic delusions, *paranoia* he had called it. But Tony knew better.

They hadn't seen those little shadows that moved furtively about; those voices that spoke in silent whispers. They hadn't seen the mock, inhuman images that appeared and disappeared at lengthy discourse in the dark hallway. They hadn't heard *His* voice.

Tony's foot touched the bottom step now. Nearer in the darkness he was drawing to it. Closer. . . closer. *There it was again!*

A sharp, pealing cry, ending in a low, thrashing moan echoed throughout the house, followed by a dull, scraping sound nearby. Tony was suddenly seized by a violent fit of epilepsy. Cold sweat moistened his palms. The railing quivered unsteadily at his touch. His face grew hot and ashen in that moment; whimperingly, he turned away and in sheer panic began to ascend the stairs. . . It was no use; they would never let him rest. Only one thing to do. There was a gun in the drawer upstairs.

Before his foot had touched the bottom step, a voice spoke, very close to his ear.

"Wait!" it whispered commandingly. A long shadow seemed to be the bearer of the Voice; Tony lashed out and violently struck at it, then turned and fled up the steps.

When he reached the door, the Voice was with him again. Something cold touched him on the shoulder.

"You fool!" the Voice hissed, "what are you going to do?"

"Kill myself," Tony chattered, "Get rid of you!"

The Voice laughed a hollow, mocking laugh. "Get rid of me? Ha! I will be your bosom companion *if* you do it!"

"Wha—what do you mean?" the other stammered frightenedly.

"If you kill yourself," the Voice continued, "I will be with you always. I will be your companion in death." Tony stifled a long, whimpering sob. "You speak to me—you have a voice—why can't I see you?"

"I am not a material being," the Voice replied, "I am but a figment of your imagination, yet I exist because I am real to you."

"Then Dr. Stevens was right," Tony moaned. "I *am* hopelessly insane."

"Dr. Stevens was right," the Voice replied affirmatively.

Tony stood leaning against the hall door for a moment, trying to think. The gun was just beyond that door. One clean shot would end all this misery; one clean shot and there would be no more shadowy, unreal beings. Again he fancied he could perceive a rustling movement in the shadows; the scraping sound came once more from downstairs. Very quickly he made the decision. He closed the door behind him, crossed in the darkness to a small table and reached into the drawer. His fingers closed welcomingly around a cold, metal shape.

A shot rang out. Tony hesitatingly laid the gun down, opened the door and re-entered the hallway. A long black shape arose from the staircase.

"Who—who's there?" Tony quavered.

"It is I—your friend," the Voice answered, "I've decided to help you."

"Help me?"

"Yes. I shall conquer your fear."

"I—I can't believe it," Tony returned, "You're not real. How can you help me?"

"Simple," the Voice went on, "but first I must show you something. Follow me—downstairs."

The long, shadowy form moved silently down the hallway, down the stairs with Tony close behind. As the shadow moved, Tony could hear the scraping sound. For a moment he was puzzled. *Mere abstract presences can make no sound.* For an instant he was tempted to ask the Voice about it. How can a Voice make the sound of moving feet?

The two were at the bottom of the stairs now. In spite of the unquestionable darkness, the shadow was more discernable; soft, padding footsteps accompanied Tony's own slow-moving feet.

"Voice," he began, then broke off. But *how* could a voice walk? It was all very puzzling.

Tony found himself going into the kitchen; the shadows before him were less dense. Dark shapes that were dark only for an instant became dim. Tony's labored breathing

subsided to a slight degree in spite of the horrifying ordeal he was enduring. How could a voice be disassociated from a living form? What could such a creature want with him? Dr. Stevens was surely right. He was imagining it.

"Wait!" Tony stopped short and acted on inspiration. "If you're unreal, I can put you out of existence merely by will power. If you're real, I can put you out of existence with THIS!" His groping hand had quickly contacted what it sought; with all his strength he hurled the terrible thing in his hand—a meat cleaver—at the dark, shadowy form that moved unsteadily a few feet ahead of him. A sharp cry of pain and anguish ended in a drawn-out, sob-choked gurgle. Tony heard a body hit the floor.

The next day the papers carried this article:

TWO FOUND SLAIN IN LONELY COUNTRYHOUSE

Victim of psychic depression found shot in bedroom; attending physician, Dr. Harry Stevens, found stabbed to death in kitchen. The coroner's verdict revealed that Tony Belasco, the slain man, died of self-inflicted gunshot wounds at approximately 2:10 A. M. The death of psychiatrist Stevens, which has not yet been fully determined, was said to have occurred at 2:15 A. M.

LOVE

by Leona Dishon Douglas

Love,
You are a Japanese lantern
Lighting my garden of memories.
Shine on
Without a shadow
While my thoughts do a
Minuet
Beneath your fragile glow.

TO RUBY

by Johnny B. Center

The things I love I love—the morning skies
That flaunt their lips of red, the springtime rain
That falls upon the budding flowers, the glad refrain
Of falling waters, and the distant cries
Of homing geese that wing their way by night
Across the sleeping earth. The things I love
I love and publish to the skies above!
I cannot chain inside such sweet delight,
Nor can I sentence to a silent tomb
This new-born thing, plucked from Love's fertile
womb,
To languish in secrecy, to die unsung.
The things I love I love! And with this tongue
I write upon the universal air
I love you, dear—perhaps to my despair!

DUSK

by Leona Dishon Douglas

I lean against the garden gate
Sniffing the odor of freshly turned sod.
A killdeer sweeps by, crying in
an unwritten language.
A toad rustles the tender plantain
leaves at my feet.
Somewhere in the distance
A whip-poor-will begins the evening
vesper.
While
Slowly
Night reaches out cold fingers
And draws a blanket of dusk
Over tired, drowsy day.

BUM IN THE PARK

by Clyde Lewis

Here on this bench in the park,
With newspapers over his chest,
Lies a bleary-eyed, beard-begrimed bum,
Dead drunk on bad nigger gin,
Whose heart is chained to the rods
And beats with wheels against rails.
Just a whiskey-soaked hunk of dead flesh
With cold, narrow brain, and no soul,
Who'd slit a child's throat for a fin
And forget it all with a drink.
Don't waste your sympathy, mister,
I've seen too many; I know.

I hate to find bums in the park.
They say that we cops are tough, but
I'd rather step on a bug
Or pick up a snake, than to touch one.
They flinch and cringe from the nightstick
And get up, shrinking and silent,
Hunching their sharp, scrawny shoulders,
Looking back over their collars,
As if to remember to haunt us,
And they fade away into the night
With cowardly sneers on their faces.
It makes a guy shiver; I know.

Sometimes you think, "Here's a man."
You look at the veins on his forehead,
You notice he coughs as he awakens,
But then you look into his eyes,
And you see there a strange, brooding puzzle,
A wild, shifting meekness and cunning
That is tempered with sorrow and passion,
And an inhuman dumbness and longing
In a ferment of hunger and hate.
Then you wonder, "Can this be a man?
This pitiful brute—this—this thing!"
And suddenly then, it's all over;
You can't see the man for the bum.

Like this one here who's asleep,
Who'll flinch and cringe from the nightstick,
And get up shrinking and silent,
Hunching his sharp, scrawny shoulders,
As if to remember to haunt me.
I'll look at him once as he rises
And hate all the bums in creation.
Hate them for sneaking and sneering

And making me prod them from benches.
And he'll slink off, hating all cops,
Fading away into the night,
Rotting driftwood and sand,
And gray dust tossed on the wind.

Don't waste your sympathy, mister,
Save all you've got for us cops.
They're just whiskey-soaked hulks of dead flesh
With cold, narrow brains and no souls,
Who'd crush a man's skull like an eggshell.
I've seen too many; I know.
We have to hunt bums in the park
While most men are warm and at home.
We have to say, "Okay, Bo, beat it!"
And push them out into the night,
On, always on, in the darkness,
Lost in the wildness of winds
That have scattered them over the earth.

Like right now, here in the park,
This rotting driftwood and sand,
This gray dust, tossed on the wind.

AH, WORMS

by Johnny B. Center

O foolish race, so you do curse my name,
And hang me well and long in effigy,
And dedicate your epitaphs to me,
In infamy, to write my lowly fame!
But, man, be not so elegant and proud;
I finish all the work that you have started,
While you lie down in failure, broken-hearted,
To cloak your failures with a greenish shroud
Of grass, and dream of yet another chance
To build your castles higher in the air
Out of the faulty fabrics of a prayer!
Mankind, in me there is no sweet romance!
'Tis true! But though a starved tragedian,
Would I could eat of better things than man!

BILLY AND JANIE MASON

by Ada M. Moore

It was late spring. A cheerful fire of dry chestnut was crackling on the hearth because of a cold rain that had been falling all day. Uncle Billy was seated comfortably in his favorite spot and his favorite chair—the old home-made rocker. He apparently got along just as well without his pillows, as they were pushed up in a knot at the back, and some of them had slipped through the chair to the floor. He was convalescing from a fall in the big cow barn a few weeks earlier. His inactiveness since his fall was getting on his nerves as well as the nerves of the rest of the family. He stretched out his long legs to the fire and soon was dozing. He chuckled and muttered in his sleep, "Don't that sound perty? Makes me want to just pull my hair and yell!"

"You've been pullin' too much already, looks to me like. It's gittin' mighty thin up there on top," said his wife, Janie, as she came into the big room wiping her hands on her gingham apron. "Been fox huntin' agin in yer sleep, ain't you? I wish you could git able to git out with old Brownie and Lead agin. They're gittin' so fat and lazy I can't keep them out from under my feet, and they won't even fetch the cows in anymore," she continued, almost out of breath.

"Janie, I'm afraid my fox huntin' is about all over," said Uncle Billy. "I can't git over these old hills since I got stove up, and I can't hear my old hounds like I used to nohow. Me and them both have 'bout done our do, Janie, dear," returned Uncle Billy sadly.

"You talk nonsense, Billy Mason. You're good fer another ten or twenty years at least. You'll outlive me yet. My rheumatism has 'bout got me down," said Janie.

"You certainly must feel older than you look, Janie," was all Uncle Billy said.

Uncle Billy was much older than Janie, and had been married before he and Janie were married thirty-six years ago. He had been a handsome man in those days. He had dark hair and piercing blue eyes which seemed to see everything. He was still a handsome, old gentleman, even though his back was now bent from his recent fall, and a little pink spot was showing through his snowy white hair on top. His eyes were still as blue as the skies and often had a mischievous twinkle in them yet. He was more in love with Janie now than ever. For had she not been a mother to his six children as well as eight of their own? Was not her presence the greatest solace of his old days? He could hardly bear for Janie to be away for a whole day; even for

a short visit with her own sick mother. No one could fix his pillows like Janie. No one could fix his eggs to suit him as well as Janie. No one could read the Bible to him and comfort him like Janie.

Janie, though tall and slender at the time of her marriage to Uncle Billy, was now rather bulky. She had long since lost her trim waist line, but neither of them seemed to notice it. Her once waving black hair now had a salt and pepper effect, and her gray-blue eyes were the kindest you ever looked into. She had been a splendid stepmother to Uncle Billy's six motherless children, who still adored her and loved her as a mother. Had they not often run to her skirts for protection from Uncle Billy's wrath? Had she not sacrificed and toiled for them as if they were her very own? Had she not raised them as she had her own children? One would never guess she was not their real mother. She could hardly scold a kitten that had stuck its nose in her big, foamy bucket of milk; yet she sometimes grew very angry at Uncle Billy when his big fox hound tore through the screen of the kitchen window and ate up the big platters of potato cakes and bacon keeping warm on the side of the big Home Comfort range, or ate up the pot of hot mush she had cooked for her favorite cow.

"I tell you, Billy Mason," she would reprove him, "you feed out enough to these hounds to keep up a whole family!"

"Now, Janie, don't I keep plenty fer you and the children, and don't I always help the widders and the orphans? Feed old Brownie a little more and he won't go tearing in at the winder," replied Uncle Billy.

Janie had nothing more to say in return to this mild reply. Too vivid in her mind were the days when Uncle Billy was younger and more fond of his hounds and the chase. Then it was that he brought his favorite hound into the house on cold winter nights, over Janie's protest, to sleep on the big deer skin by the fire. Janie recalled how, on one occasion, she got up and found her new velvet hat with the blue feather torn into bits and scattered over the floor and the wire frame fastened securely over old Brownie's head as if to keep him out of further mischief. Another time he tore up one of her big bolsters, and the feathers flew into the air every time she swept for a week.

As "new grounds" appeared in the place of the big timber, the foxes became fewer, and Uncle Billy let up on the care of his hounds. The ones he had now would not dare to come into the house. He had acquired several hundred acres of rough, hilly land by this time. It was rich in coal and timber; and though they never drilled, Uncle Billy thought there was oil. Now his finances permitted him to go North with a friend every fall to kill a deer. He always brought back the antlers or a tanned hide. Janie used the

hide for a rug until the hair wore off, and then Uncle Billy took it to mend harnesses or make shoe strings for his high tops. "There's nothing that beats a good buck skin shoe string softened with taller," Uncle Billy would say.

As Uncle Billy and Janie sat by the fire on this cool spring evening, Janie's mind kept wandering back over her life with Uncle Billy. There were some things, to be sure, she was glad she would never have to go through with again. They had gone through thick and thin; they had seen sorrows and joys. She looked at Uncle Billy, who had always been an active man but now scarcely able to get about, and a wave of emotion and pity swept over her. She suddenly realized how hard it must be for a man who had been as active as Uncle Billy to find it hard to do the simplest jobs. She was almost ready to burst into tears, but she knew that would never do. Uncle Billy had been almost despondent here lately, and being a woman of good common sense, she knew she must help him keep up his courage. She believed a pleasant frame of mind was necessary for his regaining his health again. So she cast about for something that might take them out of this dilemma into which they had fallen.

"Do you remember the time," began Janie, "when you caught that wildcat with your own hands and carried it home in a coffee sack?" Uncle Billy evidently did remember. A gleam came into his eyes as it always did when any of his hunting experiences were mentioned.

"I should say I do!" replied Uncle Billy with enthusiasm. "I was certainly strong in those days. I can still see that big fellow trying to get at me with tooth and toe nail, but I held him with my bare hands and never got a scratch!" he said with pride.

Janie, encouraged by the results of the subject, decided to carry it still further. "And do you remember the time you set up all night waitin' fer day light to come so you could catch two coons you had treed?"

"How well I remember!" answered Uncle Billy, his eyes twinkling. "I worked for four hours cuttin' that big hickory tree down."

"You was always bringin' something home alive. I'll never fergit the time they got out of the cage and we thought they had got away. Remember where we found 'em?"

"In our bed tucked way down under the cover. I felt real bad the time I give 'em that chew tobaccer. They shore made good meat, didn't they? I wish I had some now just like it."

Uncle Billy and Janie continued this sort of conversation for some time. Much to Janie's satisfaction Uncle

Billy had laughed more and was in better spirits than he had been since his fall.

"My goodness," exclaimed Janie, "I smell that hog's jaw and turnip greens I'm cooking fer your supper burning," and she hurried into the kitchen.

"I feel perty good," said Uncle Billy. "I believe I'll go out and see about that new calf."

FORETHOUGHT

by Ruth Catlett

I am sitting here telling myself that it will not last forever—
Four hours cannot be forever.

But my heart is an unfeeling rock on which these brightly
false words

Falling, leave no form nor trace.

I am trying to believe that I am looking lovely tonight.

The girls have told me that I do.

And yet, somehow, my eyes do not sparkle and my lips do
not smile

At this empty flattery.

And I say over and over that I have faced situations

That required much less of me.

But my hands are cold and damp and clammy—like a wet
dish towel

That hangs lifeless on the wall.

For I know that this bravado and artificial show of spirits
Is a shell wherein I hide.

Even I know, though I cannot afford to admit it that tonight

Four hours will be forever.

I stare at myself and know that the tall girl in the long,
white dress

Needs a sweater and a skirt.

And I know that no other situation in all my short life

Has required so much of me.

And my eyes are big with forethought and my heart is like
cold, gray slate

For tonight is my first ball.

EPITAPH FOR YOUTH

by Clyde Lewis

This be our epitaph:
"We are the dead
Whose hearts beat even faster
As they bled."
And this beside:
"We lived
And loved life most,
And then we died."

That spring our blood was a quick, throbbing flood;
Our thoughts were the thoughts of youth.
We dreamed young dreams, keeping our eyes,
Constantly, hopefully, turned toward the skies,
And love was our faith and our truth.

Often we heard time singing
An old familiar tune
In a fading train whistle,
In an iron gate swinging,
In a stray dog's dirge to the moon.
We heard the age-old murmur
From time's mysterious throat:
"I am a melody, lingering on,
But Youth is my one sweet note."

But in autumn our blood
Was a slow, seeping flood
That stained death's victory in red.
We looked on pain
And our comrades' eyes,
Staring open and fixed on the cold, gray skies,
And the only things real were the dead.

Again we heard time singing
A war song, cold and terse,
In the top sergeant's whistle,
In a death shell winging,
In a dead man's dying curse.
And we heard the age-old murmur
From lips that were wet with our blood:
"I am a plant that never can die,
But Youth is a languishing bud."

This be our epitaph;
Remember it well,
And repeat it again
For a youth facing hell
And the dull, nameless pain
Of our sleep.

"We are the dead
Whose hearts beat even faster
As they bled."
And this beside:
"We lived
And loved life most,
And then we died."

LET ME

by Jayne Jones

I am so tired of stories about the wars—
Revolted with pictures of human wreckage
In all their horrible nakedness.
Let me see the changeless beauty of the sunset,
The new moon riding in the sky
On a silvery sea of diaphanous clouds,
The promise of each new dawn.
Let me lose myself in beauty and forget,
Just for a blessed little while,
The Chinese baby, crying beside
A bomb-shattered mother, amidst ruins.

WHITE SNOW

by Claude Rawlins

See! Snow falls on our town,
Cov'ring each yard and street,
In one vast, dazzling sheet
Of whitest, softest down.

I love to see snow fall,
For when the ground lies bare,
Myriad sins are there,
But white snow hides them all.

Since white worlds look demure,
Please cover up my sight,
So I'll see only white,
I'll see a world that's pure.

THOUGHTS

by Ruth Catlett

We shall have nothing, you know.
Not even the look of cretonne-covered chairs
Under white light.
No morning HERALD to sit on our doorstep
In the gray dawn,
Nor the pride of bright silver and thin china
On soft damask.

And you will miss your sleepy chair in the heavy twilight
hours,
And you will think my gossip lacks the flavor of the
HERALD,
You will grow to hate the smug thickness of the fat coffee
cups.

But as long as I hear the hard snow break
Under your quick step,
As long as I see your shabby black coat
In the smoky hall,
As long as your voice is splintered with love
When you speak,
I shall be glad for nothing.

RECALL

by Philip Hodge

Beat . . .
Beat . . .
Beat, beat, beat . . .
Ruffle, you drums from Concord; from Bunker Hill, ruffle.
Call all those bleeding feet from Valley Forge into line
again.
Let hosts at New Orleans throw new ramparts up!
Bring soldiers crowding in rhythm from Bull Run; from
Harper's Ferry call old soldiers as recruits again.
Let those broad-brimmed fighters of San Juan come crowd-
ing
Remember the Maine; remember lives gone, and souls moan-
ing the dark.
Call back those doughboys from the Marne; the Aisne call
back!
And those who fell at Teruel, in Spain, 'neath olive branches,
clutching at nothing.
Let those hundreds, thousands, millions voice this one-
word hymn.
Cry PEACE!
Pray Walt Whitman hear the drums again;
Pray Walt Whitman's spirit rise and praise this thing;
Pray his spirit guide each poet-pen.

RED DREAM

by Glyn W. Davis

At night when I drop my head
in sleep,
I hear the shells and see the gas,
Swirling, choking—
around my feet. .
I hear groans, curses, prayers,
of dying men,
Shattered. . . broken. . .
I am afraid.

If I die I see no longer the sun, the grass,
or feel the rain in my face. .
Music would be lost on a rotting corpse, or
A man whos ears drip red. . .
Flowers' sweet fragrance would blow unheeded,
By one whose head is gone. . .
Moon's soft light would hold no charm,
For one with flame-seared eyeballs. . .
Warm breezes would course in quiet, green woods
Unfelt
By one blown to bits by shrapnel. . .
By one dying on twenty inches of bayonet. . .
By one coughing up his lungs in a base hospital. . .
By one holding himself together with his hands. . .
By one wandering, mindless, in the fields. . .
All of these things have I dreamed. . .
One of these things could happen to me.
Which?
Bayonet?
Shell?
Gas?
Shock?
WHICH? ? ? ? ?

A THOUGHT

by Paul Brandes

I know there's frost upon the stars;
I saw it there tonight.
The twinkling beams came through the ice
And scattered drops of light.

SPRING ON THE WAY

by Clarke Gray

He was lying towards the window when I opened the door, but right away he turned and looked at me. The first thing that I noticed was his eyes. They were as big and soft and dark as they had always been, but now they seemed to be sort of smouldering like a fire almost gone out in the ashes.

"Hello, Al," I said. "How's everything going, boy?"

"Everything's fine," he said. "Pretty good, Rog. I was just looking out of the window."

I went to the window and tried to raise the shade a little more. It wasn't any good; the building across the alley shut out almost all of the light. Just the same I kept fooling with the thing because I didn't want to look at him lying there, a big, pitiful, hulk of a man, staring at me like a sick little kid.

After a little bit he said, "That's fine now, Rog. That's a lot better."

I came and sat beside the bed and tried to think what to say. It was hell. I couldn't think of a thing. What are you supposed to say to a man who's dying of T. B.?

"Have you heard about Harry?" he asked.

I looked up. "No," I said. "What about Harry?"

"Harry's going back home," Al said.

"Going home?"

"Harry's going to England for a while to get a job taking care of a big estate in....."

"That's great," I said. "That's all right."

"When he gets some money," said Al, "he's going to come back here and get us."

I didn't say anything, and I didn't look at him either. I couldn't even make myself look at the bed.

"Then mom and I'll go home too," said Al.

Right away he began to rave about England. You know, how green the hedges are in the country, how the sun looks over the moors, how the birds sing, and a lot of stuff like that.

Pretty soon he was telling me about a trip he had made to Cornwall, how the trees all blossomed, and how the blossoms were all falling down with the breeze. He had a lot of plans, too. He was going home again, and he was going to sit on a wall by the ocean as he had when he was a kid, and watch the ocean, and read a book and breathe the air from the sea. It sounded good the way he told it. I could almost picture the whole thing, except that I couldn't forget the dirty, dark little room, and the little white bed

that was too short for him, and the smells that were coming up from the alley.

All the while I kept thinking, "If he could only get out of here. Even if he died in a week. If he could only get away. God! Even if he died while they were carrying him."

He had stopped talking and was looking at me with his mouth twisted under his big English nose, and those eyes still burning, wildly now, as if he were excited about something.

"God-damn-it anyway," he shouted. "Don't just sit there like a mummy!"

"You quit that kind of talk," I said. "Your mother will hear you. You don't want to have your mother hear you yelling like that."

"You act as if I were dead already," he said.

"Listen," I told him. "You're a long way from dead. You'll be nailing up my coffin."

"I don't know," he said. "Sometimes I wonder, Rog."

"Why, you big lug," I said, and I tried to laugh. It wasn't such a bad laugh because he grinned a little like he used to when we worked together in the mill. "Listen, you, that's one hell of a way to be doing. You got to get well."

"I would if I were only at home," said Al.

"You are at home."

"This isn't home," he said. "These damned dark, dirty ditches they call streets and all this noise. All these whistles and milk wagons and people going nowhere."

"What's wrong with it?" I asked him.

"It's not home."

"How about London?"

He pulled at the bed cover. I noticed that his hand was thinner and yellower, with little spider-like veins.

"London is different from here," said Al.

"Anyway," I said, "when your brother gets all fixed up, you can go and do that. I mean, you can live in England. That'll fix you up in a jiffy."

He shrugged. "I don't think I'll last."

"Sure you will," I told him.

"Do you think so?"

I looked at the floor. I picked up a straw that his mother had left when she swept.

"Sure," I said again.

"Rog."

"What?"

"The doctor said I needed a different climate."

"Yeah?"

"How can I get a different climate?"

"Doctors don't know a lot," I said.

"Why don't the mill send me to Arizona?" asked Al.

"I thought you wanted to go to England?"

"I was just dreaming," he said. "I dream all the time. I'll never see England.

"For Christ's sake, quit talking like that," I yelled. I was getting nervous.

The more I thought about the mill and the dust he had eaten, the madder I got. But that didn't help any, with him lying there on his back.

"You're getting like a big baby," I told him.

That seemed to quiet him. There was a time when he would have felt ashamed, but now he sort of seemed to shrink into himself.

After awhile he said, "The church has been real good to me. They sent me this hospital bed and a geranium."

That damned iron bed. Shining and white to lay his rotting carcass on. A cold little white coffin to rest him when he died.

"That was sure white of the church," I said.

He laughed. "You never did like the church, did you, Rog?"

"The church is all right," I said. "I've not got anything against the church."

"If we only had some money," Al said.

"Listen," I told him, "forget it."

"I can't."

"Just forget it," I said again.

"I'm going to die, Rog. Here like a dog in this filthy room. Every day I cough up more and more of that stinking stuff."

"Wait' till you hear from Harry."

The door opened and his mother came padding in with her old house slippers on.

"Aren't you glad Rog could come?" she asked him.

He smiled. "Mom, Rog thinks maybe the mill will help us some."

She turned to me and I swallowed.

"Al," she said. "The doctor told me I should give you a little wine right after lunch."

"Just think, mom, if we had money from the mill we could go to Arizona like the doctor said."

She was straightening the little table beside his bed. Now she turned in surprise.

"How much will we get?"

"I don't know, but Rog says. . . ."

"Maybe it's back pay," she interrupted.

He fidgeted. "No, mom, you see Rog thinks. . . ."

"Listen," I said. "You can't be sure. . . ."

"No," said Al, "we can't be sure, but maybe they'll come across. Ain't that right, Rog?"

"Yeah," I said.

"Well, don't you worry," she said. "If there's any back pay, Rog will see that you get it. I've got to go see about the potatoes."

"It's not back pay," Al said, "It's. . . ."

She had already closed the door.

"She can't understand anything," Al said. He shook his head. "I get tired arguing with her."

"Do you eat those potatoes?" I asked him.

He nodded.

I put my hands in my pockets. Then I went to the window and rattled the change in my pockets. I was getting plenty sick somewhere down inside of me. I was going to get out of this.

"Listen, Al," I said. "I've got to go."

"Okay," he said. "Thanks for dropping in."

"You'll be okay," I said. "Do what they tell you and I'll be around again."

"Tell the boys hello," he said.

"I'll tell them all right."

"When the geranium starts to bloom it'll be a little brighter," said Al. "It'll bloom before long."

"In the spring," I told him.

"Just think," he said. "In the spring there'll be the flowers, and birds, and everything just like home."

"Sure."

His lips tightened. He tried to smile. Then he looked out of the window at the brick window across the alley.

"I'll be seeing you, Al," I managed to say. Then I stepped out the door. For a moment I just stood there in the hall. His mother came out of the kitchen pushing damp hair back from her eyes.

"The doctor told me this morning that he was going. . . ." She stopped and sniffled. "He's a good boy, Roger."

She began to cry. Women crying always make me feel like hell. I went down the steps and out into the street. When I passed the park, Callahan, the cop, bummed me for a match.

"Nice weather for January, ain't it?" he asked me.

"Say," I said, "when will those flowers bloom over there?"

"Don't let this weather fool you," said Callahan. "It'll be a long time yet. April, maybe. And a damned good thing too. I have a time keeping the guys and their girls moving along here when these bushes get full and there's flowers growing all over the place."

RE-DRESS

by Robert Witt, Jr.

Stop, my mind, before you go farther;
Look at thyself in the true mirror of the past;
Straighten your tie, brush your clothes;
Look like a well-reared child of destiny
Instead of the seedy sot that you really are.

TO THE TOWER

by Rhoda Belle Whitehouse

This scene is frozen in a sharp hiatus
Nothing again may ever happen here.
Always this balanced tower will await us,
The sun unsinking, the horizon sheer.

Always these rolling lawns of Alma Mater
Will lie unchanged around thy mighty feet,
Always these tapered maple leaves will quiver,
O'er beds of velvet roses fresh and sweet.

Forever you shall stand here stony-hearted,
Watch students as they daily come and go;
The two who first thy lofty heights ascended,
The world will never know or care to know.

WIND IN STEEL

by Glyn W. Davis

Dark shadows leap from the willows into
the cool water,
and a bird calls,
softly.....

Looking down on the river is to see a
path of green rippled steel,
shining in the dusk..
A frog croaks
Boomingly.....

At twilight from the south comes a soft
wind..
It moans softly through the columns
and the girders,
of the bridge
Sobbing.....

With the wind the shadows strive to tear
themselves from the willows
in vain..
They are a part of the night
as
The river is a part of the bridge
as
Fear is of night and
Dark.....

IF I SHOULD DIE

by Dock B. Chandler

Would you, if I should die today,
Have thoughts of me while on your way,
To join me down beneath the clay?

When I am lost to earth's sweet light,
Will you be saddened by the sight
Of snow upon my grave at night?

And when the moon wanes overhead,
Will you lie sleepless in your bed,
Because you know that I am dead?

SUMMER STORM AT EVENING

by Barnette DeJarnette

(Student at Madison High School)

The sky is overcast and the air's a heavy broth,
And there's something in my heart that's compelling me
to go

Scan the heavens and the earth and the union of them both;
A voice deep within me urges me so.

The sky now grumbles softly and the air is still and waiting
For the pools of moistened crystals to come tumbling from
their shrouds,

And the stars are quickly chastened for their lazy contem-
plating

And hide their frightened faces in the clouds.

Then a booming and a flashing! There's hell within the
heavens!

Innate Martian forces glory just to hear the cannon roar!
Meanwhile hordes of tipsy torches dance like crooked num-
ber sevens.

O, 'tis nearest to the winging just to see them as they soar!

Next there comes a timid tapping as the bolder of the
raindrops

Venture softly from their overburdened home,
Plummet downward, ever downward and their coursing
never stops

Till they hide their broken bodies in the loam.

Ah! There comes a sudden sally and there's naught that's
left restraining

Faster, faster race the chargers to the earth,
And with their freshness cleanse the spaces, freshen nature
with their staining

Of the green by making greener in rebirth.

With a heavy, steady thudding and an intermittent tapping
Silver streamers cling and flutter from the earthen em'rald
gown,

And they wind about my footprints never seeking, ever
lapping,

Forming graceful little rivers as they wander all around.

Then it stops! With no prolonging, for the air itself is
breathless;

Clouds receding watch the moon and stars return.

Wonder scene, may memory hold you in a grasp as ever
deathless

As the stars that shine above shall ever burn.

ON SHARING THE BED

by George W. Seevers

I have often wondered at the fact that through the centuries of writing and still longer time during which people have been voicing various "kicks" and complaints, no one has set down the discomforts of bed sharing for future generations to marvel at. I am tired of waiting, and deeming myself capable—most of my life (at least the nights) has been spent in the same bed with my younger or older brother—I shall attempt to depict some of the horrors, the trials, and the dangers of sleeping with another human being.

I suppose the kick is the most formidable and common offensive used by the other person in double beds in which I have slept. Its execution in its simplest form consists merely of utilizing the unfortunate companion as a football. If the kicker is heavy enough and skillful enough, and if the kicked person is small enough and unsuspecting enough, the latter will probably land in a heap on the far side of the bed. I can truthfully testify to this, having "heaped" many times myself, once from a four footer in which I was sleeping (?) with my older brother. However, besides the simple kick there are several effective modifications, one being the use of the knee in the back of the companion.

In regard to the kick, let it be supposed that this weapon is entirely unethical. There are two special occasions on which its use is considered perfectly legitimate: in moving the adversary from one's own side of the bed, and in retaliation. A modification consisting of the use of the fists may be substituted if one would rather, or after one has sprained an ankle or broken a toe. It must be kept in mind that tactics, both offensive and defensive, must vary according to the degree of consciousness of the individuals involved. In cases of extreme obstinacy butting with the head or biting are excellent methods, as proved by years of scientific experimentation.

As I have already intimated, a great deal of trouble may be occasioned by the other person's utilization of one's side as well as his own, especially if he has forgotten to get rid of his chewing gum before retiring. Some advantage may be gained from this, however, for the person who

"hits the hay" last. On many a cold winter night that, otherwise would have required ten minutes or so for warming up the bed, I have merely had to remove my younger brother from my side which he had already made comfortable for me.

Not all the discomforts of bed sharing come from actual hand-to-hand (or foot-to-foot) combat, however. Disagreements as to retiring time or the height to which the window shall be raised on winter nights are common. Differences in judgments as to the amount of cover to be used and lack of co-operation in the making up of the bed occur frequently. My younger brother insists on putting the sheets and blankets on sideways, and he absolutely refuses to tuck them at the foot. My pedal extremities have spent many a chill winter nights protruding unprotected because of his lack of insight or foresight, or whatever it is that he doesn't have. As far as pillows are concerned, it is "first come, first served," unless in the course of a fight one of us can manage to acquire the one which best suits him.

Not all the disorders regarding bed spreads come with making up the bed—not by a long shot. Anyone who has had the experience of waking in the wee hours of the morning to find nothing over him but his pajamas will verify this fact. A glance at the other side of the bed will reveal a few sprigs of hair sticking out of a great double layer of sheets, blankets, counterpanes, and quilts. It is zero weather, and the unfortunate sufferer is so sleepy and tired that it is agony to arise and re-arrange things. However, there is some compensation in a complete reversal of conditions if it can be carried out without waking the offender.

Other similar squabbles arise when an adversary pushes or throws the covers entirely off the bed, or when he grips them with his fists, jerking one's own side off a little bit more with every move. Such a bedfellow is the one who keeps his companion awake by his continual twisting, turning, sitting up, and talking. I can almost murder my younger brother when he wakes me to ask if that noise is from a burglar at the window, or if that was a ghost that just went under the door.

I don't ordinarily fight, though, when the "kid brother" walks or talks in his sleep. I suppose the latter is the

result of bad dreams; at any rate, it comes in handy when you want someone to dry the dishes for you, to threaten to reveal sections of those night-time monologues. It's a circus to watch a sleepwalker. I can remember when the "kid" nearly went to bed in the bathtub one night. I often take advantage of him by telling him the house is on fire and watching him as he almost breaks his little neck to keep from getting caught in the flames. Is he "burned up" when he finds out the truth!

I have listed a good many of the aspects of sleeping with someone. All of them may be overcome to some degree, or they may be borne without undue suffering. However, there are two things which are insufferable. If the fellow snores or has halitosis, there is nothing to do but kick him out for good!