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Eastern Kentucky University, The Canterbury Club

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Belles Lettres



1941

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 -----Mary Agnes Finneran
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VOLUME SEVEN

NINETEEN FORTY-ONE

Contents

When I Dare To Think	<i>Ruth Catlett</i>	3
Epitome	<i>Dock Chandler</i>	4
Full Life	<i>James Brock</i>	4
Death Sleep	<i>Harold McConnell</i>	5
Time, a Bandit	<i>Vera Maybury</i>	7
There's Beauty Still	<i>Rhoda Whitehouse</i>	8
Pillar of Society	<i>Paul Brandes</i>	9
Meditation	<i>Helen Bowling</i>	14
Death Took You Yesterday	<i>Betty Jo Weaver</i>	15
Fog	<i>Helen Ashcraft</i>	16
Strings	<i>Orville Byrne</i>	16
Poor Tom's a-Cold	<i>Emma Osborne</i>	16
My Mother	<i>Paul Brandes</i>	18
In the Bus Station	<i>Ann Thomas</i>	19
The Veteran	<i>Barney De Jarnette</i>	20
Life	<i>Helen Ashcraft</i>	22
Recompense	<i>Helen Klein</i>	22
A Maid and Her Mark	<i>Paul Brandes</i>	25
The Graveyard	<i>Robert Witt, Jr.</i>	26
Grandmother	<i>Vera Maybury</i>	26
Alone	<i>Emma Sams</i>	28

FOREWORD

With a feeling of gratitude for the increased interest the public is showing in Belles Lettres, the editors present this year's volume (1941). They hope that it justifies such increased interest. They wish especially to thank the graduate of Eastern who has made possible the award (\$5.00) for the best poem.

WHEN I DARE TO THINK

(Prize Poem)

by Ruth Catlett

If I could watch this maelstrom of war
Sweep by me, and be unafraid
Of the the great cloud that threatens to sweep up
My mind's freedom of its whirl
If I could see the giant shadow of one man
Cover worlds I have loved, and not feel
Hatred like a press of merciless black steel,
Crush seeds of human goodness in my heart . . .
If I could close my ears to shrieks of agony
That echo from that shore to this
And make my nights a length of cold sweat
And bitter tears lost in pillows' depths
If I could believe that these illusions of democracy
Which flutter at me from every wind
Are not illusions. . . If I could hide
Myself in smugness, then I could see again.

Oh, to see again the light of sheerest gladness
On a mother's face, without shrinking back
From the fear that leaps out, when unnoticed,
She turns that face to look at her son.
To see again the sweep of green, unbroken fields
And red poppies with their ebony hearts
Without seeing that stretch of greenness a battleground
And red poppies knee-deep in blood.
To see again the array of books on my shelves,
And smile at the words of a rebel,
Without feeling the lash of a dictator's whip
And seeing a bonfire of books in the public square.
To see again the flush of smooth young faces
And know that a like flame colors my own,
Without hearing the rattle of shot on sturdy bodies
And hating the curse of being young.

Yet as I write . . . to the roar of cannon fire
Belched out over lands so long at peace,
To the scream of sirens and the dull zoom of planes,
One man stalks grimly with a million feet.
Driven by his frozen hatred and ambition,
He blazons his insignia on a people's heart.
The symbols of his might are on every sea
And float from aloft on rebellious towers.
And I know it is no good to flee reality. . . .
These things are reality; no pink idealism
Can color these facts and make them beautiful
It is hard for an ostrich like me.

EPITOME

by Dock Chandler

Life
Is a drop of rain
That falls
From an impenetrable cloud
And rests
For a moment
Upon the ground of Time
Then sinks
Into the unknown
Regions of Eternity.

FULL LIFE

by James Brock

I've seen wild birds flying,
 An old lady in lavender and lace;
I've heard a lost child crying,
 Saw a fleet horse win a race.
I've watched the grass turn greener,
 Watched a steam shovel for awhile;
I've eaten a bun wrapped 'round a weiner,
 Climbed atop a rock defile.
I've walked through narrow, dirty streets,
 Heard soap-box orators rave;
I've heard new-born lambs with their feeble bleats,
 For a month, once, I lived in a cave.
I've seen bull-tongue plows break new sod,
 Read the works of Clemens and Poe;
I've seen the mason carrying the hod,
 Heard wintry gales loudly blow.
I've smelled the essence of new-mown hay,
 Gone coon huntin' in the fall;
I've lolled in the shade on a hot summer's day,
 Heard the bugler's soul-thrilling call.
I've lived my life as I've found it,
 And as older and older I grow;
I wish I had it to live over again,
 But I guess it's my time to go.

DEATH SLEEP

by Harold McConnell

Death is not pleasant for those who know when it is coming. Felix Nadir, lying still and silent on his bed of death, sighed defeatedly to himself. Two months to live. Two months . . . then what?

It was not the prospect of death that tortured Nadir. Dying should be easy. Death should come swiftly. But waiting . . . seeing the hours slip by, watching, knowing.

Nadir became aware there were others in the hospital room. He pretended to sleep.

"What a tragedy," a girl's voice said. "He's so young. He wants to live. What a pity he should die." Nadir, in his half-sleep, detected a note of pity in the nurse's voice. Pity for the helpless.

"Yes," a man's voice agreed, "it is indeed a tragedy. But I'm afraid there's little anyone can do now. Our X-rays have shown that it is only a matter of time before—"

Nadir was no longer listening. With an effort he fought back a sob. Two months to live. Two months of terrible waiting.

Morning came quietly, silently. A few soft rays of scattered sunlight filtered through the window and rested easily on Nadir's pillow. He had not slept for many hours. Tediously the eternity of blackness had crawled by. Only the warm touch of a few gentle rays of light had aroused the man from his stupor.

When the nurse came in, Nadir tried to smile. Why should others be burdened with his misfortune?

The girl looked at him reproachfully.

"You did not sleep," she said lightly. "Rest is what you need. The doctors say . . ."

Nadir fought back an unwelcome utterance that trembled on his lips.

"Yes . . . you are right . . . I shall try to rest now."

Perhaps death would not be so bad. In the warm sunlight, Nadir watched as the girl moved about the room, trying to pretend cheeriness, trying to pretend happiness and hope. He smiled when she placed before him cigarettes, coffee, toast. The smile vanished from his face when he saw another object on the tray. A tiny glass bottle filled with a dozen or more white tablets.

"Here," said the girl, "take two. You need much rest. Tomorrow you will feel better."

When she had gone, Nadir ate the toast and coffee and placed the sleeping tablet under his pillow.

"Tomorrow," he reflected, "I shall feel much better."

When morning came Nadir found himself surrounded by many doctors.

"We have devoted much study to your case," one of them announced. "We find that while it is not wise to arouse false hope, we feel reasonably sure that you have every chance for recovery. Our original diagnosis has proven somewhat in error."

"What do you mean?" asked Nadir. "Are you trying to tell me that—that perhaps I have a chance to live?"

"We can't be sure," another said. "In a few days we will know for certain. Research has revealed the fact that there have been many cases similar to yours; cases that were pronounced incurable, cases that were later proven fallacious. In a few days we may be certain."

When they had gone, Nadir lapsed into a troubled sleep. Unearthly visions came before him and passed into the night. When he awoke, he found himself exhausted and confused. He pressed the button at his bedside in summons for the nurse. When she did not come he pressed it again.

"Nurse, come here! I cannot sleep. Please . . . give me rest."

When finally she came, with more coffee and more cigarettes, he noticed with a smile of satisfaction that on the tray there was also a tiny bottle filled with many white objects.

"You should not upset yourself so," she reprimanded. "It isn't good for you." She handed him two of the white pills.

"Nurse," said Nadir, "you have been very kind to me. I've been behaving very poorly. Please forgive me. I'm afraid I'm not a very good patient."

"Nonsense," came the reply. "You have been very good. You are just tired, that's all. What you need is rest."

Nadir sipped the coffee slowly, and having finished, lit a cigarette. Once more alone, he took pencil and paper that lay on the stand by his bed and began to write slowly. Words came with increasing difficulty. A troubled vision clouded his thought. He was not asleep when the knock sounded at the door. But, as many times before, he pretended unconsciousness. Dimly two troubled voices came from far away.

"Then there's no hope?"

"Absolutely none," a muffled voice replied. "There can be no mistake this time."

"Oh God," the girl breathed. "What must we tell him?"

"That," the man's voice came as from great distance, "is something he must never know."

"But, doctor, we can't delude him! It would be criminal—"

"Criminal to give him a few happy hours? Hope," the man's voice was unsteady, "might save him many days and nights of needless anguish. Then after it is all over—perhaps in six weeks—death will come swiftly and mercifully. He will never know of the deception. We have made a terrible mistake in arousing false hopes. A terrible mistake. The least we can do is to try to make him happy—at least for awhile."

In his room, Nadir fought back the troubled vision that had bothered him many times before, and solemnly he wrote, the terrible premonition gradually fading away. There could be no mistake this time.

* * * * *

"I have decided that waiting is of no avail," the girl in white read slowly. "Perhaps fate has been unkind to me in my hour of death. Yet it is best this way. Perhaps it is the coward's way. Yet I could not bear the tormenting hours that come to those who must wait. I know . . . there is no hope. I think I have known it all along."

"And as a final word, I wish to absolve all from blame but myself. What I have done, I have deliberately chosen to do. Again I say, I could not bear the tedious hours that would come. It is best this way."

"Oh God!" the girl choked. "What a stupid tragedy!"

"Yes," said the doctor, shaking his head sadly. "To think that only last night we gave him no hope. Had he waited but a few hours longer. . . ."

"There's been a horrible mistake," he breathed unsteadily. "There was a mix-up. Nadir's X-rays were lost. Only this morning was the error discovered. He would have lived to be a hundred."

TIME, A BANDIT

by Vera Maybury

O Time,

How I wish that I might raid your treasure store,
Dip eager, searching fingers into your invaluable hoard,
Cram full my limp and empty pockets,
Twine your wreath about by searching brow,
Clasp your countless bracelets on my aching wrists,
Fill to overflowing my trembling arms,
'Til I should be the richest bandit in the world.

There's still so much I'd like to do,
Walk through the library
Slipping books by the dozens from the shelves,
So that I might climb the heights of inspiration,

Catch a gleam of idealism in a word of beauty,
Live a tale of love, of beauty, or of sorrow.
Sail uncharted seas with adventurers bold,
Sate a restless spirit longing for lands far off,
Or lock within an hour the life of centuries past.

And then I'd like to travel,
Oh, just anywhere . . . about the land, around the world
On land or ocean or on mountain height,
By ocean liner, airplane, car and even oft afoot.
I want to tread in reverence the musty corridors of cathedrals, castles, ruins;
I want to touch the sculpture, columns, stairs of a pagan Greece or Rome.
I want to thrill to the depth of my being to the natural wonder of each land.
I want the spirit of a Shakespeare or a Washington to vibrate in my soul.
I want to travel everywhere.

Sometimes I'd live with Nature
To know her solitude, her beauty and her peace,
The whisperings of the breezes wooing leaves with tender caress,
The bold thunderings of a fall, the quiet rippling of a stream,
The home-life of the creatures deep within her breast,
The velvet of a blushing rose, the fragrance of a pine,
All these I want in the intimacy of my being.

On, on, a hundred thousand million more
Are the things I'd like to do,
From seeing flaming pictures in a fire
To walking hand in hand with one I love;
And yet, life's dictum has robbed me of fulfilling my desires.
She's switched her role with me,
For I would be the bandit bold
And she, the victim fair.
Instead, she laughs and holds the shears
To cut my thread of life within the year.
Time's a cruel robber; life is short, and I'm a hopeless dreamer.

THERE'S BEAUTY STILL

by Rhoda Whitehouse

There's beauty in this vast domain around us;
There's joy untold in sight of human eye;
Yet many scorn the joy that nature offers,
Renounce its worth, and daily pass it by.

There's laughter in each tiny little blossom ;
There's music in the wind among the reeds ;
There's soothing peace in rolling foaming water ;
Shall we forget that God Himself made these ?

Forget the troubled world of man's inventions ;
Forget the engine's roar for one brief while :
Look forth into a world that's filled with beauty ;
See nature's handiwork, cheer up and smile.

PILLAR OF SOCIETY

by Paul Dickerson Brandes

For the first time since he had begun lifting money from Uncle Sam's mails, Ed Moreau was in a jam. Oh, he'd been in close shaves two or three times before, like when the inspector, a new fellow fresh from Washington, had quizzed everyone in the whole set-up about the Messer donation to the orphan feast. Silly woman, Martha Messer, Moreau'd thought, to expect \$300 in cash to get through the mails. The stupid fool had deserved to lose it, he'd told himself without a pang from his conscience. He'd been far too smart for the cops, too. He'd taken \$225 the very next week in small lots, right under their very noses. Flat feet. Bah! They couldn't catch him. Not mail clerk, Ed Moreau.

But this was entirely different. What he then held in his hands wasn't the safe, unidentifiable cash. Rather it was his own Aunt Marguerite's check of \$5000 for the Episcopal Church's mortgage fund. The check had been in between two five-dollar bills completely fooling him, as though it had been done pointedly by his aunt. The short note with them said the fives were for the rector himself, for some special something or other, perseverance, I guess it was. Moreau had opened it when spotting the cash. It would have been quite simple just to reseal the envelope and send it on its way. But where was the envelope? He couldn't find it anywhere. On his desk, under it, out the window, on the stacks, he'd searched everywhere. But no envelope. The janitor must have taken it when he swept. It would be in the furnace by now.

Things looked bad. Checks were risky business. With these modern handwriting experts, forgery was only too easily detected. Why, thought Ed frantically, they even had lines of special clerks just to verify signatures on checks. They all knew his aunt's handwriting by now. Races or no races, this was going a little too far. No

forgery for him. The pen was too gloomy a place for flashy Ed Moreau.

But what to do with this check. He might slip an identical envelope from his aunt's secretary. But that would take at least twenty-four hours, what with his aunt living way out at Netherlake the way she did. That was a good ten hours' drive in itself. Knowing his precise, self-centered, mathematical aunt, he felt sure she would expect word from the Episcopal rector that very day. Another envelope with a typed address would arouse suspicion perhaps. Too many people were acquainted with Marguerite Moreau's distaste for modern inventions. There must be another way out. Keeping the check was impossible whether he cashed it or not. His aunt would tear the roof off the whole town if this large sum was lost. She had a great deal of influence in the county. There must be some means. Yes, there was. Of course. Ed Moreau pushed his new felt hat squarely on his thinning hair and strode out of the post office.

* * * * *

The Episcopal Church at Briarton was the biggest, most extravagant one in town, barring none. The debonair matrons of the Ladies Auxiliary had seen to it that their edifice to Christianity surpassed even the fairly new Methodist Church on the corner of Elm and Persimmon. It might also be said that the Episcopal Church at Briarton had the highest, most expensive mortgage in town, barring none. Times were hard now with the post-war depression and all. The President himself didn't seem to be able to help things much. It might even get worse. All the bills were piling up terribly. Prices were so high, too. People were busy trying to pay up extravagances of the early false prosperity. Collections were small. Everyone had just saved the world for democracy—they thought. But what was bothering Reverend Higgins was who was going to save St. Mark's Episcopal Church, the biggest church in town. In desperation the pitiful clergymen had gone to see old Marguerite Moreau again, for about the twentieth time. Yes, it was a broken, pathetically hopeful rector of St. Mark's Church that went out the long drive to Netherlake and summoned the butler with a feeble sound of the shining brass knocker.

The whole town remembered how she had stopped going to church, had cancelled all donations when that mouse ran up her leg at early morning service, it must be five years ago. Up to that time her punctual arrival in handsome carriage and black horses, to match her disposition the gossips used to say, had been pulling up promptly at 8:00

in front of St. Mark's as long as most of the townspeople could remember. She had never been back since that Sunday. Folks used to talk about it occasionally. Mrs. Peters could still give a good imitation of the way Marguerite Moreau screamed and clutched at her skirts on that fateful Sunday. Her imitation of the march from the church was a perfect circus.

Poor Reverend Higgins. His last visit, which had taken so much pious courage and fortitude, had proved no more successful than the many others. All the tearful pleading in the world couldn't break down that old vulture, thought the Reverend maliciously, and then was promptly ashamed for having registered so base a sentiment.

Yes, poor Reverend Higgins! He sat at his desk fumbling a pencil and looking like the canary after it had been swallowed by the cat. A knock at his study door brought forth a half-hearted, "Come in."

The door opened slowly and Ed Moreau appeared in the doorway. "Are you Reverend Higgins?" asked the mail clerk.

"I am, young man, I am," returned the churchman, who had the bad habit of repeating what he had already said. "And what can I do for you?"

"I'm Edwin Moreau, Reverend Higgins, Marguerite Moreau's nephew," Ed explained as they shook hands.

"Oh, the charming Miss Marguerite your aunt?" returned the clergyman in a decidedly warmer tone. "How fortunate you are, my son, how fortunate indeed, to have so lovely an aunt." The Reverend had begun to visualize his fallen hopes rising from the dust. "I just saw her this very morning. She's looking splendid, just splendid!"

"My aunt always looks well," replied Moreau dryly, regret edging his tone. "Do you mind if I sit down?"

"Of course not, of course not," was the minister's reply as he fluttered over his caller. "Now," he continued when they were both seated, "now what is on your mind?"

Moreau paused. This was going to take a lot of tact and some tall talking if he were to pull his neck out of the noose. This old geezer didn't look so formidable, though. Maybe the short way would be better. He turned to the minister. "I understand, just between us, of course, that this church has a heavy mortgage. Is that not true, Reverend Higgins?"

"Yes," said the minister sadly, taking off his black-rimmed spectacles and wiping his eyes suggestively. "That is true. Alas, I have tried so hard to raise the necessary funds. But only blank walls meet my ardent pleadings." This last statement was accompanied by the familiar gesture—slight shrug, upturned hands.

"I understand," returned the mail clerk sympathetically. "My aunt, Miss Moreau, Reverend Higgins, has instructed me to give you a slight remuneration, a small sum of five thousand dollars. I have the check right here. However, there are several—"

By this time the surprised Reverend Higgins had recovered from the momentary shock, had scurried round the desk, and was kissing Ed Moreau on both cheeks.

"My dear Mr. Moreau," the delighted churchman exclaimed, "you don't know how much this means to me. You can't realize how positively overcome I am. Your aunt—she refused me so many times. I had given up all hope. I was in complete despair. But you— Ah, I see. I see it all now. This is all your doing. It is you who persuaded her to fork over—I mean to donate the money. It was your persistent eloquence that made her see the light. Oh, Mr. Moreau. The whole town shall know of our wonderful work. The whole town shall give you the credit due such a kind person as you are."

It goes without saying that Ed was also surprised by this sudden outburst. He had known nothing of the repeated visits of the Episcopal rector. Furthermore, his esteemed aunt, as the rector called her, had no great love for her spendthrift nephew. Evidently she had changed her mind about the church money. If this ever got out, it would be curtains for one Ed Moreau. Damn! His aunt would not hesitate to reveal that she had mailed the check, not sent it by her nephew. He knew she hated the thought of leaving her pinched pennies to him. An inquiry would be inevitable. Things were worse, not better. If he could only—

"My dear Reverend Higgins," he began, "you overestimate my influence over my benevolent aunt. It was all her doing, I assure you."

"It is noble of you to say that, sir," put in the rector, "but I know it is your doing. You can't hide that from me. The congregation must know the part you played. I'll announce it from the pulpit. I'll—"

"Wait a minute, Higgins," broke in Moreau emphatically, forgetting the polite attitude of aristocracy he had followed so far. "Look here. Get this straight." He had the minister by the coat collar and had raised him slightly off the floor. "No blabbing, see. My aunt doesn't wish anyone to know of this money. All she wants would be a polite call from you, confirming that you received her check and offering your thanks. Not a word more." Remembering himself, he relaxed his hold and smiled complacently. "You see, my aunt is a very peculiar woman. She dislikes pub-

licity. It would be much better that way, I assure you."

"Just as you say, sir, just as you say," agreed the ruffled minister as he straightened his coat. But all the while he was thinking how he would let it out secretly the way this splendid fellow had aided St. Mark's Episcopal Church. "If you prefer it that way, I shall follow your wishes. But it would have been such a pleasure," he sighed.

"Oh yes," continued Moreau, sadly reaching down in his trousers for the fateful ten dollars. "My aunt wants you to have this for yourself, for your persistence." He tossed the cash on the desk. "And now I must excuse myself, sir. My work is calling me."

The poor minister was too overcome by the two fives to even follow his auspicious guest to the door. All he could do was to give way to the weak feeling in his knees and sit down.

"One more thing, my dear rector," said Moreau, one hand on the door knob. "Please do not mention in that call my visit here. You understand. She did not like giving in to my demands that you get the money for the mortgage. Any cause for her to remember my part in the matter would make things uncomfortable for me. Good-day, sir."

* * * * *

Luckily for the crooked mail clerk, the Reverend Higgins followed the advice of Ed Moreau satisfactorily, more than satisfactorily. Only on one point did he fail. He arranged it so that all but Marguerite herself knew of the fine work of young Moreau, thereby breaking his promise to keep the secret. For awhile, it had little affect but to frighten the young clerk from taking any more money from the mails. Slowly, however, it gained momentum. People began to note this young man. He wasn't much to look at, it's true. But looks are only skin deep. Such a benevolent young person deserved a better job than mail clerk, the postmaster thought. So Moreau became assistant postmaster. Moreau at first felt like a fish out of water. This sudden acquisition of respect and recognition based on false pretenses put more than one gray hair in his head. But slowly he gained composure and rationalized that if people thought him good, he would have to act the part. Publicly, at least.

So Moreau became respectable. He left the post office for a position of responsibility in the bank. The bank president's wife, a staunch Episcopalian, thought the deserving young man would make a good influence on the other bank employees, and she told her husband just that.

And so Ed Moreau went up and up. Miss Marguerite was finally obliging enough to die and leave her reformed

nephew all her money. If you had been in front of Wilson's Drug Store about 3:15 this afternoon, you could have heard a fat man say to his gangling son. "See, over there by the big black car. That's Edwin Moreau III, president of the First National Bank. A better man never lived. And honest, too. Why I remember when he gave \$5,000 to the Episcopal Church."

MEDITATION

by Helen Bowling

I am the College Student.

I am educated to live

To live with machines, and slums and jobless men.

I have spent four years in intellectual communion

With deans, professors, women and nuts. . . .

When I could have lived, lived with people.

I am happy

Because I know Santayana's philosophy of life . . .

He would laugh at mine!

I can appreciate beautiful poetry

Because I know that iambic pentameter is a meter of verse

With five feet to the line accented on the last syllable.

I can appreciate current events more intelligently

Because I know that Vercingetorix was the leader of the
Gauls when captured by Caesar.

I can live longer

Because I know that meat contains carbohydrates, and eggs
contain proteins.

I am the College Student.

And after four years

I will be able to drive trucks,

To take up tickets in a ten-cent movie,

To dig ditches with Negroes and trash,

To wait tables in dirty restaurants.

I live life in the fullest!

Men work and fight and dig and sweat

While I

I take exams and sit in class and think. . .

Think of the past wars and unknowns and French and
halogens

And soak in intellectual discourse

Until I wish that the gray matter could ooze out my eyes
and ears and nose and throat

And leave me still

A moron . . .

A College Student.

DEATH TOOK YOU YESTERDAY

by Betty Jo Weaver

The hour is hushed.
Plaintive strains of sympathy
Into the stillness peal
To multiply my feel
Of woe.

I go
And stand beside
The satin-lined and polished bed
We bought . . . to lay your head
Upon, in death.
You, too, are standing near . . .
I feel quite sure . . . quite sure.

Do you admire the clothes
We hunted for . . . and chose
As nearly like you wanted
As we could?

And I would
That you could speak to me
And tell me if the sprays you see
Have the lovely blooms and scent
You'd always meant
To have.

And though the organ's melody
The taut heart strings in me
Has touched,
And caused to echo there
Still sadder notes,
I'm sure, because it plays
The very hymns and lays
You said you'd like,
You've clutched
Close to your soul each tone
You've heard; for they have shown
How deep my adoration. . . .
And how sincere
My every word and action
When you were here.

* * * * *

Steal through
This awful nothingness
As does

The music . . . odor . . . loneliness
And let your soul
My heart condole. . . .

Because the porcelain face
Within the satin case
I stand beside,
Has not been you
Since you have died.

FOG

by Helen Ashcraft

The fog
Is so thick
My eyes cannot penetrate it.
The blankness of its being
Is reflected there
And shows no sign
Of its existence.
It is just as one
On the point of death
Stands on the brink
And stares into space,
But can see nothing.

STRINGS

by Orville Byrne

We said "Goodbye" and now our past is dead.
If in the night some memory should come,
I'd brush the thing aside as I would still
The drowsy whirr of some mosquito's hum.
Your beauty that was once my only shrine . . .
Your voice, a music for my languid soul . . .
Made up my life. You were my greater part.
Strange, now you've gone I find I still am whole.

The thought of you does not disturb me now
I have grown used to that. It's this I mind:
I can't forget you while I can't forget
Your thousand little ways of being kind.

POOR TOM'S A-COLD

by Emma Osborne

Tom was a nuisance, everyone admitted, but a harmless, well-meaning nuisance. There was something about him that appealed to one's instinct to protect the weak and help-

less. He accepted eagerly any kindness shown him, expressing his appreciation by showing an annoying willingness to accept further favors.

Tom had a home, such as it was. About half of his time was spent in the woodshed where he was whipped and kept like an unhappy child, for he had a habit of running away, causing anxiety to his sister and her husband, who "saw their duty and done it" by Tom.

The husband once said he would cure Tom's straying and, wrapping a white sheet around himself one night, waited by the side of the road to frighten the run-away. Tom came trudging down the road, late, on his way home. The ghost confronted him, picked him up bodily, and carried him down the road. Tom lay docilely in his captor's arms, laughed his foolish laugh, and said, "I know what you are . . . you're a bugger." The disgusted ghost dropped Tom abruptly and told him in very unghostlike language to get on home.

The next day Tom was on his way early to avoid the woodshed. He presented a pathetic picture . . . the lone figure of a man shuffling down the dusty road with shoulders drooping, eyes peering vacantly from under the brim of an old cap, and tattered overalls tucked into high-topped boots. He was happy, woodshed forgotten, for he was on his way to visit the "schoolmarm" and his friends, the children. He was fond of visiting the one-room rural school. Underneath the jibes and teasing of the children he sensed their sincere liking and understanding of him. He realized that he should not have gone to the school, but he went as often as the patience of the teacher allowed. He would sit quietly for hours, leaning forward so intently that he would finally get so near the edge of his chair that it would overturn with a crash. The children would laugh and confusion would reign for a while. Tom would smile ingratiatingly at the teacher and say, "Miss Em, I didn't mean to do nawthin'."

Tom liked the teacher, and it was far from his intention to hurt her or break the class routine. Often he would walk up to someone in the community as Miss Em passed by and say, "Hain't she purty?" He took her offerings of black haws or berries gathered in the hills, and "Miss Em" would give him a sandwich or an apple at lunch time. Also, his pockets would usually yield a cold biscuit given him by a busy housewife to get him out of her kitchen. There would be the inevitable onion, too, cached with the biscuit. He kept these possessions, garnered here and there, gloating over them as a miser over his riches. He recognized the pleasure of anticipation, appreciating that "'Tis

better to journey hopefully than to arrive at one's destination."

Yes, Tom realized that he should not have disturbed the routine of the classroom, but it was lonely sitting on the steps at home or by the woodpile. Everyone seemed to have a world of his own except Tom. He was on the edge of everything but never quite a part of anything. It had always been that way. He sought escape into the reality of the schoolroom where he was on a plane with his companions, a part of everything, sharing the knowledge offered by the teacher, thinking big thoughts . . . far away from the uneasiness he felt in the strange outer world where he was unnoticed.

MY MOTHER

by Paul Brandes

I should like to have known my mother
When her soul was young and gay,
When her deep heart was not troubled
By the cares that forged dismay.
When her golden hair was burning
And her steps were ever yearning
For life with its pleasures turning
Darkness into day.

I should like to have heard her laughter
As she approached her father's door.
I should like to have seen her smiling
O'er her fan on the ballroom floor
When her crystal eyes were dreaming
And her neck and shoulders gleaming
Above her gown all streaming
Over the polished floor.

I should like to have watched her slippers
As they stroked the winding stair
To the beat of wedding music
That heralded martial prayers.
When my father put the ring on
And her mind told her heart to sing on
That the future would always bring on
Happiness to share.

I think I could understand her
When she bows her head to pray
That her children may not totter
Along the path that before her lay.

IN THE BUS STATION

by Ann Thomas

To me, one of the most interesting and changeable places in this old world is the waiting room of a bus station. Of course, the waiting rooms of other modes of transportation may be as entertaining; but since I prefer bus travel, naturally I find this waiting room more unusual. There, one can see all kinds of people going to all kinds of places; and to watch these people is far more inviting than to read a pulp magazine, which seems to be the thing most people do.

Buses load and unload, the loud speaker dings continually in the ears, children cry, people talk . . . all is confusion. Then, suddenly the buses are gone, and everyone settles back into the wooden benches to compose weary bones for a short period of peace. The noise begins again, then peace arrives, and so the day goes on indefinitely.

Humanity in its many forms surges through swinging doors . . . short, tall, dirty, clean, rich, poor, fat, thin, happy, sad. All are going somewhere or seeing someone off. Each is concerned with his own personal thoughts, baggage, and hour of leaving. Some sit quietly; others squirm restlessly. These latter are chiefly very cross and very dirty children who utterly wear out their patient, discouraged mothers; and completely baffle their once-proud fathers who also have to care for the luggage.

Once not so very long ago, I had the dubious pleasure of whiling away an hour in one of these enchanting places. It was a rather hot day and the station was not particularly comfortable. As I settled myself to watch the minutes tick slowly by, I noticed those who were sitting nearby. A dismal-looking young woman, with a sleeping infant in her arms, and a boy of about six playing at her feet, sat on the end of the bench. Next to me, sat a man working his tireless jaws chewing a mouthful of gum and devouring a Wild West magazine. A very small man, with someone I presumed to be his large-bosomed wife, was nervously counting a number of varying sized bags and lunchboxes.

As everything seemed to be moving peacefully, I decided to buy a magazine. I walked to the counter where I faced a bewildering array of unheard-of magazines. In the midst of this mixture I saw the name of a well-known picture magazine and purchased it. Returning to my original seat, I began to look listlessly at the magazine, and soon found that my neighbor, the chewer, was more interested in it than I. He smacked his gum so incessantly in my ear that I was finally reduced to the nervous state of handing him my magazine and moving to the end of the bench.

By this time the sleeping child had awakened and was crying feverishly. This gained the attention of the other child, who had been engaged in untying shoestrings. He watched the younger for a minute or two and then, discovering me, he turned and stared. "Give me a penny," he commanded belligerently.

I smiled sweetly and asked, "Why do you want a penny, sonny?"

"To put in the penny machine and get some chocolate, and don't call me sonny. My dad says that I am a man."

Suddenly seeing that my shoes were still tied, he stooped and pulled the laces quickly. "Say, are you going to give me a penny?" he yelled in a shrill voice.

"Not until you tie my shoes," I replied sternly, in my best schoolma'm fashion.

"I'm not going to do it," he screamed, attracting the attention of his mother and everyone within a radius of twenty feet, for this was a period of quiet.

His mother remonstrated, but, being an easily embarrassed person, I hastened to produce a penny which he grabbed quickly. "I'm awfully sorry," apologized his mother, but she looked delighted, and I realized that she thought she had found a nursemaid for her ill-tempered child.

Quickly tying my shoes and picking up my bag, I strode purposefully for a door, resolving to wait for my bus outside. I had had enough of children for sometime.

Still, a bus waiting room is extremely amusing. The people are most interesting, except when they are fretful children or gum-crackers. When one finds himself in the vicinity of these people, it is terrifying and embarrassing, and it is best to move to another corner immediately and be thankful that the children do not belong to him. However, if one is traveling with children, he is probably resigned to his fate from the very first.

THE VETERAN

by Barney De Jarnette

(A Student at Model High School)

Sure, go on Kid,
And join the fun:
There's plenty more;
You're only one.
You're twenty, hmmm
I was that once,
A bloody dunce.
I saw it come

And saw it go
And come again;
Go to it Bo—
I 'member when
You'll see it all, the flags and cheers,
The dance-hall girls, with Whitehall beers
but:
Once you see the trenches' leer
Of ghostly dead and after hear
The whine of bombs and learn the fear
Of Man and God and Death!

Then:
Will you jeer
At broken bones,
At dying groans,
At pleading tones
For Man and God and Breath?
O! what the hell! Go to it, Kid,
And learn firsthand as others did.

Yeah,
Learn the game of politics;
How they sent you to take the licks,
The same damn ones that caused the fix
And let you pay the price
Of sergeant's kicks
Of hand grenades
Of raw first aid
And bread half made
And beds with rats and lice.

Perhaps, some day you'll kill a guy
And watch the agony as I
and,
Just as I, lie awake at night;
You'll suffer, too, and start with fright
And kill again, and kill and fight
And kill and kill and kill!

or
See the light
And fill a flask
To kill the task
Of knowing, ask,
"Why does he lie so still?"

Go to it, Kid, and join the fun.
There's thousands more; you're only one!
But:
Don't come back

With soldiers' lack
Of all but want and war;
 No:
Quick be killed;
While wonder filled
Be wonder stilled,
Before your heart is sore,
 Lest:
One sad day
You'll sigh and say
Like me today,
 "What was I fighting for?"

LIFE

by Helen Ashcraft

"Life can be hard in subtle ways,"
So says the younger generation.
But only those who have
Lived and learned,
Who have trod its path
With writhing feet,
Are qualified to speak
On that first line.
They know that life is hard
To some and sweet
To others who take it.
It is not merely luck or
Fate, they know, for
"Life is what you make it!"

RECOMPENSE

(Prize Story)

by Helen Klein

Matthew Anderson was a hit-and-run driver! When the realization of this fact came to him, he was speeding madly down Carlyle Avenue, his hands gripping the wheel in agonized frenzy, his thoughts a jumbled mass of accusations. Terror flooded his body, until he was numb and lifeless. He was mad, insane with fear!

Somewhere back on Elm Street he had run over a little child. He could remember the nauseating flash that had come over him when the car struck something soft and small. His fingers gripped the wheel tighter as he thought of it. No warning at all, nothing! He hardly saw the child. Just a glimpse, and then it happened. He almost cried out in his agony. The next thing he knew, he was

telling himself to go away from there as quickly as he could. No one had seen him. The street was deserted. He knew the child was dead. He had looked back just once and had seen a tiny bundle lying motionless in the street. He had to get away, away, away. . . .

Now he was still speeding away. Beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. He had that awful feeling of a hunted animal trying to escape the inevitable. Nothing about him seemed real. It was as if he stood alone, while a thousand fingers pointed at him; a thousand voices screamed, "Murderer!" "Coward!" Oh, God, not that! All his life he had held only bitter contempt for a person who would do such a thing. And now now when it happened to him he couldn't face it either. He had to get away from that awful place. Anyhow, it was too late to go back now. That would be admitting everything. This way no one knew—no one but himself.

With this thought came a measure of comfort. He alone knew he was guilty, and he alone would suffer. The child was dead, and nothing he could say or do would bring it back. He found himself desperately trying to rationalize his actions. If he could only get something to hold to, it would be much easier for him.

He was calmer now. He brought the car to a stop and stared blankly ahead. His lips tightened in determination as he made an effort to control himself. He sat there for sometime, while the day deepened into night, and with darkness came comfort and solace. He was relaxed now, though still a bit shaky. He wondered if he would be able to sleep at night, or if he'd be tormented by visions of little children broken and twisted. He ran his fingers through his hair in desperation. He must be calm. Of course, he'd have dreams at first, but eventually it would wear off. He'd forget it, maybe not entirely, but to the extent that his mind would never be affected. Or would it? Of course not! How foolish. He even managed a little laugh to reassure himself. After all, he was a man! Surely, he could stand a little suffering. No one but himself need ever know, and when his punishment came, he could take it without flinching. That was fair enough, wasn't it? It was, he decided.

Having reached his decision, he sat up, smoothed his hair, and put on his hat. He'd better go home now; it was getting rather late. His wife would be worried. He wondered if he ought to tell Alice about what had happened. He knew she would be sympathetic, but maybe she wouldn't agree with him. Alice had always had a queer sense of justice, even about little things. No, he'd better

not say anything about it to her. This would be his problem, and he'd solve it alone.

He swung the car around and started back toward town. The bright, gay lights reassured him, and somehow, gave him a small amount of courage. What had happened to him, he felt, was just part of life, part of living. Something like this happened to everyone at one time or another. After all, what had happened wasn't so bad. He had killed a child true. Someday, somehow, he would pay for it. He, Matthew Anderson, would be punished. He knew that, but just then his thoughts weren't concerned with punishment to come. He had a long life here on earth to enjoy before that happened. He'd make the best of things, and after that who cared? What difference did it make?

He drove down the broad street, looking at the people. Everything was the same. Nobody was different. He was the only one who had changed. He stopped at a drug store. He'd take Alice a little present, something she liked. Then she wouldn't notice if he acted a little strangely. He'd make some excuse about being tired and go straight to bed. In the morning everything would be all right. He felt proud of himself. He had done the most sensible thing, made the best decision.

He climbed back into the car and headed for home. He wished the night were over, or that Alice weren't home. If he could only be alone, it wouldn't be so bad. He knew it would be hard trying to act natural, but he had to do it. He clutched the small present in his hand, thankful for having thought of it.

At last he drove up in front of his house. He looked in, wondering if Alice had waited dinner for him. It appeared not, for the house was almost dark. Maybe Alice was gone. No, there she was. He could see her sitting in the shadows at the far side of the living room. Now came the test. He had to play the part well.

"Alice," he called, "I'm home."

He put his coat and hat in the closet and went to join his wife in the living room. Then he noticed how strange she looked.

"Alice, what's the matter?" he asked.

Could she have heard? Had someone seen him after all?

"It's Jerry," she said in a queer, choked voice.

A picture of his chubby four-year-old son flashed through his mind.

"What's wrong with Jerry?" he asked.

"He was killed this afternoon on Elm street by a hit-and-run driver."

A MAID AND HER MARK

by Paul Brandes

It was a cold and wintry evening.
In the days of sixty-four,
When the wind was using the pine trees
As a pitch pipe for its score,
And the moon was shielding her body
With a cover of billowing mists,
That McDaniel shot his sweetheart
As she gave her lover a kiss.

It is a story of two men and a woman
That you've heard oft times before;
Of how both men loved her dearly
While she cared not one whit more
For them than for sixteen others
Who had graced her life in the past.
Yes, she was the kind of a woman
That the spinsters' club terms "fast."

Her eyes were as gray as the morning
Before the sun comes up;
Her body as soft as the snow-fall
And as warm as the red wine cup;
Her hair was as black as the bat's path
As he glides on his sweeping flight;
And her heart as hard as King Richard
As cold as the snow that night.

She had thrown McDaniel over
'Been about three weeks and a day
And was returning from the village
In her new love's twinkling sleigh.
Her blood was warm with dancing;
Her lashes, flaked with white.
She didn't mind if he kissed her
As long as he **did it right**.
She hadn't a thought for McDaniel
Who stood waiting on the porch,
With his pistol flashing meanly
And his eyes resembling a torch.
He waited until she'd left him
And was mounting the flight of stairs.
He took one look; then he shot her,
And dashed away to his mare.

She made not a cry when she saw him;
She uttered no sound when she fell;

She lay as an unframed picture
Whose story the women will tell.
Her glamour was gone for a moment;
The blood discolored her hair.
She died as she'd lived . . . in excitement,
With never a conscience or care.

It was a cold and wintry evening
In the days of sixty-four,
When the mixture of moaning and moonlight
Put a ghost at every door,
When the moon had taken to racing
With a band of misty cloud
That McDaniel shot his sweetheart
And laid her in her shroud.

THE GRAVEYARD

by Robert Witt, Jr.

“Grandpa, what is that?”
“Why, sonny, that’s a graveyard,
A place for worn souls to rest;
A home for wearied hearts and tired feet.”
(Where flesh bloats, blackens, and then
Falls from the bones, giving up through
The earth its odorous stench of decaying
Flesh . . . flesh crawling with maggot scavengers.
After the flesh is gone the bleached bones
Begin to crumble in nature’s quest for dust.
The graveyard is just like the earth,
Crawling with decaying humanity,
Whose skeletons of ambitions
Have long been reduced to a decaying stage.
By the parasitical human maggot
That ever drains the life-blood
From ambitious souls.
The brain rumbles, the heart beats weakly,
The limbs palsy, and soon all is over.)

GRANDMOTHER

by Vera J. Maybury

I have always known her; she has lived just down-
stairs all my life. She is a dainty, petite English lady
just two inches short of being five feet tall, but what a
world of experience is held in this diminutive being. Her
seventy-nine years have been crammed full of living from
her earliest happy days as a gay English lass of the coun-

Twenty-six

try near London to her years of coming to America to found a home and rear a family.

Your first glimpse of her would reveal an old-fashioned lady who looked as if she had stepped from a page of Godey's "Lady's Book." Her ankle-length dress, high-topped shoes hidden beneath sweeping skirts, and her Queen Mary hat are reminiscent of bygone days. Once, just once, Grandmother indulged in fashion to buy a stylish hat . . . one that tilted becomingly over her right eye. Occasionally, when she feels especially "chipper" as she calls it, the once new hat is tilted very conservatively over her eye, and off she goes. Grandmother religiously wears three gold band rings, her only other ornament being a many-stranded pearl necklace, a family heirloom. Whenever she is attired in readiness to go calling on some of her lifelong friends, she calls me in for a brief appraisal of her appearance. After I have smoothed her collar or captured a stray lock of hair, she is content to leave. She still values the opinion of one younger than she.

Of course, if you peeked in on her at home, you would see a crisp white apron fronting her immaculate, starched house dress. Doubtless, you'd find a sewing basket in her lap or a pair of knitting needles flying away in her busy hands to form an intricate pattern for a shawl for Aunt Sarah or a sweater for Brother Jim. You might find her bustling about the kitchen baking Grandfather's favorite apple pie. If you happened in about four o'clock in the afternoon, you'd find yourself beneath a cup of fragrant tea and dainty cookies before you realized it. Grandmother still retains her inherent English love for afternoon tea. As she has grown older and I have grown up, I have tried to lessen her household tasks, but she is so keenly sensitive to being helped that she more or less ignores my advances, no matter how tactfully I approach her. Independence is one of her outstanding traits.

You need only glance at her to find character traced deeply in every line of her beautiful, wrinkled face. Etched there is a pattern of a wife's anxiety and a mother's loving care. Dominating her visage are two twinkling brown eyes, mirroring a lifetime of happiness coupled with hard toil, sorrow, and an abiding love and faith in God and man. In moments of reflection, one might catch the gleam of reminiscence of a childhood and youth passed in the English countryside; yet Grandmother stoutly denies any longing to return to the "old country" with an "I wouldn't trade the United States for the world; America's my home." The years have yet to extinguish the valiant light in her eyes.

A mouth set in the determination of self-dependence betrays its over-firmness by the lines about it, symbolic of the smiling response which brightens every situation of which she is a part. One can easily imagine her lips being parted to whisper a soft lullaby or kiss a troubled brow or pacify a bewildered neighbor or friend. Just above her rich, full lips, a girlish little nose adds a touch of piquancy to a profile that is at once happy and sad.

From her intelligent forehead sweeps an abundance of silky white hair caught in a loose knot not quite in the center of her head. Just enough stray hairs have frolicked out of place to lend a halo-like radiance to an already radiant personality.

Her strong, lined hands tell of endless hours devoted to busy household tasks. About them is a certain lingering tenderness speaking of the years passed in rearing four stalwart boys and a girl whose death at an early age has left a never-healing scar of sorrow on Grandmother's life. It's easy to visualize her caring for the sick and soothing aching brows, as only hands like hers can do. Sewing and knitting have left their imprint in tiny callouses and pin pricks on her hands; they only enhance the beauty of service which her hands show. These hands are swift and sure in their work; age has not endowed them with hesitancy.

Her very step bespeaks of a self-reliance and indomitable will. Her hasty, spry step, her purposeful tread and her steady, erect posture unbowed by the weight of years are a challenge in themselves. Just to look at Grandmother walking gives a feeling of elation.

Throughout the years, Grandmother's been a constant inspiration to me. She quietly lives the life which others profess to live. I have yet to find a truer, more faithful friend than she has been. Somehow, I'm glad I've always known her.

ALONE

by Emma Sams

I am so alone
There's nothing here but me . . .
In this vast horizon.
Nothing but me . . . and one lone tree,
So alone, and so high.
Upward its branches shoot
Seeking a companion in the sky.
As I sit gazing upward from its root
Its loneliness makes my own much more acute.