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Eastern Kentucky University, The Canterbury Club

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Belles Lettres

*Eastern Kentucky
State College*

1951

Belles Lettres

An annual anthology of student writing sponsored and published by the
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VOLUME SEVENTEEN

NINETEEN FIFTY-ONE

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FOREWORD

We, the Editors of BELLES LETTRES, are privileged to present this annual edition, hoping that we have maintained the high literary criteria of the sixteen volumes before us.

THE ARTISTIC TOUCH

Robert C. Points

In big, black letters a menacing OFF LIMITS was printed on a weather-beaten sign at the edge of the beach.

But Joe didn't believe in signs. Why should he? War is a great equalizer. He had learned to hate regulations; his youthful dreams had turned to arrogance. The sign was a challenge.

No, Joe didn't analyze his actions, not any more. After all, this was war; one must rationalize. Now, everything stood out in sharp and clear relief. The only morality was self-preservation. It was hot, and the foaming waves were coolly inviting—that's all Joe was interested in. Joe was a realist; he told me so; he was proud of it.

"Dammit," Joe exclaimed, "why do they always put the best places off limits?"

"They probably haven't cleared this beach of mines yet," Tony, Joe's buddy, replied.

"Aw, nuts," Joe said. "This beach is too small for landing troops. The Chinks aren't stupid enough to waste mines on a little place like this. Besides, I'm hot, and no damn sign is going to keep me from taking a swim."

"Okay, okay, you're probably right," Tony said half-heartedly. "It's beautiful, isn't it, Joe?" Tony continued in a low, grave voice.

"What's beautiful?" Joe asked.

"The scenery."

"Oh, yeah, yeah. Let's take a swim."

But Tony didn't hear him. He was thinking of home. The sheer cliff colored with brownish-red streaks as if it had rusted from the constant spray of salt water, the foaming breakers roaring over broken rocks and dragging the earth back with them, and the tiny island in the distance where the sea rose up like a fat man's belly were strangely similar to the view from his tiny cottage overlooking the Pacific.

He remembered that when he was a child he had wanted to be an artist so that he could paint those lovely colors of the sea, the sky, and the cliff. He had studied hard—perhaps, too hard. A San Francisco gallery had hung a few of his impressionistic paintings and the critics said he was "promising." But that was before the war.

And he remembered the blurred, shadowy patterns formed on the shining surface of the sea as he walked with his wife and child along his own beach. But that was before the war, too.

"I'd like to paint this, Joe," Tony said.

"Why?" Joe asked. "Why don't you just take a photograph of it. My camera is in the jeep."

"You don't understand. An artist records what the mind feels, not what the eye sees. This place is quiet, peaceful, and almost alien to the world to which it belongs, to a world torn apart. I think I could show that in my painting. I have a thing or two to show this old world about art when I get out of the army."

"If you get out, you mean," Joe interrupted. "I almost got it the first day we hit." He raised his left arm, indicating a vivid red scar where a bullet had chipped a rib.

"Don't talk like that, Joe. You've got to believe in something. After all, we're fighting for what's right. I want to get this finished so I can go back to my family and live in peace."

"Sure, sure," Joe chided, "that sounds good, but if your number comes up . . . well, that's all she wrote, brother."

But Tony wasn't one to stay pessimistic long. He jumped up and ran toward the water and shouted, "Come on, let's just attack that water, now."

"Hey, wait for . . ." Joe's call was cut short as a sudden roar knocked him flat, and sand showered down upon him. He leaped up and ran toward Tony. Before long he found Tony's dog tags. Joe picked them up and walked slowly back to the jeep.

The tires screeched as he headed toward the nearest bar.

FRIENDSHIP

Harvey Woosley

Among the most perplexing problems I have encountered is friendship. People are a queer lot. Few of their actions have any reason backing them. They attend church on the Sabbath. Then they connive to swindle their fellow man on the other six days. They are willing to die for freedom. Yet, the moment that freedom is achieved, they begin looking for strong shoulders or making strong laws. For fifty weeks per year the poor creatures toil and sweat, always dreaming of that precious two-week vacation. Rest is sorely needed; but they don't rest. Those two weeks are spent in golfing, hunting, skiing, or in one of a thousand other ways designed to keep rest homes in business. But let's get back to the subject. Another of the characteristics peculiar to humans is the way they choose their friends.

Should a Gallup poll representative call upon Nicholo Schendeski, he would find that Nicholo Schendeski believes he likes Lenenti Snodnodlo for several reasons. Snodnodlo, according to Schendeski, is an almost perfect man. He is good to his family; he doesn't drink; he has a generous nature; he loses to Schendeski at poker; he is intelligent; and he keeps his cabinet well-filled. Schendeski maintains that his friend Snodnodlo has only one little fault. Snodnodlo has a laugh which shouldn't happen to a dog. That guffaw would drive a man to the madhouse. But Schendeski doesn't realize that if it weren't for that laugh—if it is Snodnodlo's only fault—they would not have become friends. They could not possibly have become friends had that guffaw not helped the matter along.

You have heard a person say, "I don't know why, but I just don't like him." The first few times this remark was addressed to me, I attempted to find a clue to the situation. Sure that the culprit discussed must have some dark blot upon his character (and not realizing how foolish I was being), I would begin probing for signs of evil. In a few weeks I would be utterly confounded when the critic and culprit were being seen about town. I have known such friendships to last for years. A man must live and learn. In the time that has elapsed since that period of my ignorance, I have learned why this "I don't know why, but I just don't like him" remark is made. According to some unwritten law, no man can be perfect. Before we can become friends of another, we must first find in what way he is imperfect. Until we find his blemish, he stands in our minds as a freak of nature. We can't trust the man until we know his weakness. Later, he may gain our undying devotion. But, first, society demands that he make some of the errors common to the species.

This complicated piece of machinery which constitutes a man possesses another queer marking. A little snobbery must be practiced while the friendship is being formed; and a few snobs must be exchanged to keep it cemented. Making the cement too thick will cause it to crack. The type of snobbery used must vary to fit the occasion and the class of society. In high circles one must watch one's self. Mrs. Society Dame remarks to a foe that the party of the second part wears an utterly charming gown—meaning, of course, that she wouldn't be seen at a dog fight in that outlandish garment. A rustic, on the other hand, should find little difficulty, and a much easier choice of words, in expressing the belief that his horse is much better than his neighbor's. Friends are at the same time adversaries, and adversaries turn to their advantage every sign of weakness. Perhaps this explains why a perfect being could never achieve social success. Those who never practice snobbery are viewed with suspicion by the practical snob. The snobber realizes that the non-snobber must be his superior. Since friendship feeds upon equality, the non-snobber is lost in this world of normals. I spent several years learning this fact; for several years I was almost friendless.

Let us examine the snob more closely. To begin with, a snob is one who has nothing to be snobbish about. For our convenience, we shall recognize him as "snob". Snob is a common person. He is not completely ignorant; neither can brilliance be used to describe him. Snob has an average education, an average car, and an average appearance. When first met, he may not

resemble the snobs you have known. Snob lives in an average section of town, has membership in an average club, and associates with an average class of people. Neighbors gossip about him; but they smile when meeting, and call to schedule a game of bridge. Snob gossips about his neighbors, monopolizes conversation, criticizes, and generally makes a nuisance of himself. It seems impossible for this description to belong all to one man. A phenomenon of this kind would not be possible if human nature were not made up of little quirks and paradoxes.

Various of the elements we have been discussing contribute toward snob's social success. Everyone fears public opinion. Everyone fears snobbery as a part of public opinion. Public opinion serves not only as a force upon which our government depends, but also as the stuff governing the direction of society. Of course, Mr. Snob has a place in the picture. His ideas are a part of public opinion. According to this line of reasoning, we may find that our government, society, and civilization rely on Mr. Snob. Since none of us are likely to concede that the member under scrutiny fills an essential place in society or the general scheme of things, we shall advance to another topic. We shall continue examining the same organism, but from another angle.

Some time ago I stated that a man without faults is a man without friends. Perhaps Snob became a snob in order to make friends. Snobs are made from environmental conditions; they are not born. Snobbery marks both as a last recourse in making friends and as a good weapon for self-protection.

Bores provide excellent material for contemplation. There are at least three classes of bores: lightly boring, extremely boring, and unbearably boring; and the unbearable class came into being with gossip. With so many interesting people, places and perplexing problems in the world, how can anyone waste time arguing, talking shop, or gossiping? Still, arguing far surpasses shop-talk or gossip as a pastime. Too, shop-talk rates a higher category than gossip.

"The best things in life are free" has become an accepted maxim. But, like many maxims, it should be opened for review. Friendship should definitely be classified as one of the best things in life. The conclusion to the implied argument is that true friendship is free. Whatever the history of "true" as an adjective, it should never have happened. Who has the authority to say whether a friend is a "friend" or a "true friend"? We use ambiguous terms of the "true" type only when we wish to confuse the issue. I have yet to hear anyone pronounce a dog a "true" dog. Friendship does have a price. It has cost me multiple woes, an uncanny number of miscellaneous articles, several months of priceless time, and a considerable amount of change. A blacked eye, a bloody nose and an ugly gash along the forehead were the result of too much friendship. In the last week, it has cost me a wrench, several gallons of gasoline, a cup of sugar, and five dollars. However, since friendship is priceless, I don't remember incidental costs of this nature.

Love can exist between persons of extremes. Paupers fall in love with millionaires; peasants fall in love with queens. Equality is not a requirement. Friends, on the other hand, must be on equal terms. Don't misunderstand. Equal terms do not apply to those matters of finance or society entirely. Nevertheless, each must feel that the other has an equal number of faults. A man doesn't dissolve an association because of the other's faults, regardless of their number. The friendship ends when he feels that he composes the lower half of an unequal situation.

The inroad of science has contributed more toward the unhappiness of mankind than any other trend throughout the era of civilization. Before science reared her ugly head, men dreamed of love, fought in the cause of freedom, and died for friendship. Too many of the age-old ideals have vanished in the face of reason. Modern double-think rationalization cannot relieve the tension. To engage in double-think rationalization would call for a perfect man. Our only salvation lies in the acceptance of these ideals as they were interpreted in ages past.

MY SON, MY SON

Shirley Spires

Ruth watched her son with a faint smile of annoyance as he tipped the ashes from his cigarette into the cuff of his rolled-up blue jeans. As he looked up she gestured inquiringly toward the three ashtrays within his reach. She knew that it was merely pretense, this air of nonchalance he had been assuming all day. He was not hiding his restlessness too successfully.

Marge, home from college for the Christmas vacation, wandered in from the hall.

"I called the florists, Dickie, and you're to pick up Janie's flowers this afternoon at five."

The answer came in a grunt from the depths of the divan and was a reasonable facsimile of okay.

His first real dance, thought Ruth, and maybe—she closed her mind to the thought. He was eighteen, and not so very long ago he had come home bearing colorful pamphlets entitled—"Young Man—Join the Navy", "Your Future in the U.S. Navy", and even one comic book with Little Abner advising all young men to join the Navy. Her heart had turned over when she saw them, and the cold empty feeling had never completely gone. She wondered if all mothers felt that way about their sons. I can't bear it, she thought.

Marge put a record on the phonograph. "Come on, Dickie, you'd better brush up on your dancing.

Dickie scowled. "I'm only going to dance twice. The first dance and the last one." But he got up to move rhythmically across the floor with her.

"It's only etiquette to dance with Janie at least three times," said Marge, "and you should dance with your sisters. Me, of course, and Barbara is going too, you know."

"I realize our family will be well represented," he retorted in what he hoped were scathing tones.

It was nearly 5:30 before Barbara's car pulled in front of the house. "Where's Dickie?" she inquired as she entered. Ruth replied vaguely that he was around somewhere. Barbara put a little blue box in the refrigerator.

"I picked up his flowers for him after I got off work. And I got him this." It was a tux shirt, which she handed to Ruth for examination.

"Very nice. It seems an awful lot to put out for one dance—a tuxedo, a shirt and everything, but still—"

Barbara nodded in mute agreement and there was a knowing silence between mother and daughter.

Dickie was not leaving for the dance until ten, although the music was starting at 9:30. Evidently the suavity of being fashionably late appealed to him on this perfect evening. However, Ruth noted that he was ready by 9:15, and he spent the rest of the time wandering aimlessly around the house, and, for a wonder, carefully preserving the immaculate appearance of his suit. By the time John, with whom he was double dating, arrived, Dickie was not able to conceal his nervousness.

John looked decidedly uncomfortable. "Can you fix my tie, Mrs. Maffet? I've fought with it for an hour." Ruth smiled and moved to help him. It was nearly 10:15 before they were finally on their way.

The clock was striking 3:30 when Ruth heard Dickie's whistle on the porch. As she turned on her bedlamp, he stuck his head in the door. "Are the girls in yet?"

"Yes, you're the last."

"Good. First time I ever got to be the last one."

"Did you have a good time, dear?" Ruth asked sleepily.

"Yep. Danced with Marge but Barbara left too soon."

"Well, lock the door before you go up."

After he had gone, Ruth found she couldn't sleep, so she went upstairs to get a sedative. She opened the door of Dickie's room.

She saw his clothes lying in their usual disorder about the room. He was

such a good boy, she thought, not like so many of the wild ones who drank. He was still a baby in so many ways.

The light from the hall was shining on his face and she could see his features relaxed in deep, untroubled slumber. The biblical phrase fledted through her mind, "But when I became a man, I put away childish things" . . .

She saw him as a little boy, screaming when she left the room. "Wait, Mommy! I want us to walk along together!" They had always been so close, she and her son.

She saw the colorful pamphlets, bright against the carpet, and the words, "Young Man, Join the Navy!"

And her eyes burned.

GROWING PAINS

Dolores Walker

I was always happy when I came home from school and mother would allow me to visit Mrs. Warburton. Her house was just a run down our back flat stairs across the gravel driveway that separated us from the friendly Jacksons, through the vacant lot where the tall sunflowers turned at my will into smiling ladies-in-waiting or fierce renegade Indians crouched stealthily to capture a scalp from an unsuspecting victim.

When I had crossed the burning desert I was escorted into the big, dark green pantry and amply rewarded with a snow white powdered donut. They were excellent donuts, and if they were a little bit stale I never noticed. Mrs. Warburton was an excellent housekeeper, and after I had licked my fingers clean, we went through the spotless kitchen and under an ornately-carved arch to my favorite room, the parlor. The shades were usually drawn and the room had a peculiar cool dampness that I have never been able to relate to any other place. In one corner was a huge mohair chair sitting like a prim, rigid old woman on spindly legs. She had a stiffly starched lace doily for a collar and I never ventured to use her lap. In a far corner from the old woman was a similar love seat which for a long time had been sadly neglected.

Squatting in the midst of the grey and black rivers that intervened along the marble-topped black walnut table was a grotesque lamp which, except for its huge ugliness, might have been Aladdin's Lamp.

When I entered the room my eyes sought first—fearful they might not be there, though in reality I knew they were staunchly secured from their respective positions on the wall—two pictures. One was a lion in lazy repose, the other an equally tame looking tiger. It didn't take much for them to change either into roaring, raging beasts of the jungle or sincere, loyal companions who astonished people as they accompanied me on my adventurous journeyings. Mrs. Warburton stimulated my imagination with wonderful stories of a brave boy named Daniel in a lion's den or tales of a courageous lad stowed away on a pirate ship or of fairy princesses rescued from cruel, wicked witches. A long time ago she had had a little boy who had grown away from my two friends on the wall and the books that filled the walnut table shelves, and she knew many stories to feed my hungry imagination.

I always left her house clutching some flowers or a little mint for mother's iced tea. When mother, swollen and quiet, went to the hospital, Mrs. Warburton fixed my dinner and took care of me until daddy came home and said I had a little sister. I was happy to have a sister, and I couldn't wait till little sister would be able to visit Mrs. Warburton with me.

Exciting new things happen every day in a child's life to compensate for our moving across the city and eventually out of the state away from Mrs. Warburton and everything I had learned to expect from the dark green pantry and cool, damp living room. Little sister never learned about her.

Years later when we returned to visit relatives we never went to see Mrs. Warburton. I was a big girl now and I had to realize that she too was included in the "it just isn't being done" category that came with growing up. I could very easily see why it just wasn't being done! Understanding adults and other growing children had helped me see the light.

My friend Mrs. Warburton was too dark.

SONNET

Shirley Spires

And so, my dear, 'tis useless to assume
We could preserve from our ill-fated past
A portion of the love once in full bloom;
'Tis foolish to pretend that it would last.
How angered we the gods, so they, in turn,
Embarred us in such hopeless circumstance?
Why needed it be else but our concern
If we, aware and willing, stood the chance?
We should not risk it, lest again we fail
And thus increase our mutual misery.
The fates are wicked, anxious to impale
Our fruitless love with barbarous irony.
But then again—why should we fear to choose?
How can we fail with nothing more to lose?

ULTIMATUM

Shirley Spires

Only till this cigarette is finished
And the embers burn my hand
Will I think of you.
Slow-burning fire again will be diminished—
Only this time I will stand
Chief fireman—not you.
I wish you could be here so you could say
How it feels to be but ashes in a tray.

A SOPHISM

John Park

The room had a weird underwater look. It was filled with blue-gray smoke from many cigarettes which softened the forms of people and furniture. Elaine dragged comfortably on hers while watching Louis, feeling the sleepy tingling inside of her, then lazily letting the smoke flow into the room. Louis was snoring gently in the chair beside her, head leaning back, legs stretched loosely in front of him. Even though she had just met Louis, she knew she liked him; the dull conversation, the foolish way his mouth hung open while he slept. She glanced at the initials he had written in the dust, wondering what his last name was, but not really caring. His finger still had flecks of gray on it. Louis would take her home after his evening of quiet intimacy over cloudy cocktails and cigarettes. A thought of the escort she had come with occurred to her, but she put it aside, too content to trouble with it. Too bad Louis had fallen asleep. She nudged him gently and he woke up peering at her, his face softening into recognition.

He got them drinks and they settled down into dull conversation which neither listened to. She watched his calm eyes move, slowly taking in the room. A small, yellow glint appeared and disappeared in them as he lit his cigarette and blew out the match. She couldn't take her eyes from the faint red of the burning end and the glowing ash, waiting for it to fall. He noticed the initials on the table and blew them softly away, watching the dust scurry across the smooth top and lose itself in the smoke. She could see him wondering who she was. She hoped he wouldn't ask her, for that would destroy their strange intimacy. He must have seen that too, for he didn't ask. He said they would go, and they swam through the thick smoke to the door.

Outside, the night was wet and foggy; a soft mist was clinging to everything. The moon was a patch of gray. She waited in soft content for him to bring his car around, but he was gone.

THE SCAR

Alma Jean Hedden

Marcia lay motionless in the bed, listening to the noises drifting up the stairs from the kitchen. That would be her mother, of course, fixing Penny's breakfast before she left for work.

Hatred welled in Marcia and seemed to smother her, and she pictured her family just as she knew they would be.

Hazel Harrison had been left with two small daughters to support when her husband had died ten years ago. Marcia was blond, blue-eyed, and remarkably beautiful. Penny was somewhat like a shadow of her sister with brown hair, brown eyes, but nice looking in her own way. Hazel loved her children to the point of worship. She unconsciously dominated their home and spent her days working for them. She tried to be both a father and a mother to both her children.

Hazel didn't seem to notice the lack of affection between the two girls that had begun when Penny had accidentally burned Marcia on the cheek with a hot poker. Neither did she notice the inferiority complex that Marcia developed because of the scar on her cheek.

Penny finished dressing and ran lightly down the stairs. Her thoughts turned first to her mother, who she hoped had breakfast ready, and then to Marcia. She wouldn't be up yet—Marcia never was. She was so distant and seemed to repel every advance Penny had ever made toward a better understanding between them. Then she walked into the kitchen.

"I'll take over, Mother. You get ready for work," Penny called gaily.

"No, I'll finish," said Hazel. "You sit down and eat your breakfast."

Penny sat down at the table and for a long time sat, saying nothing, looking into space. Once or twice her mother glanced in her direction.

"Mother," Penny said at last, "is something wrong with me or Marcia? I can't seem to get close to her."

"Don't worry, Penny. You know as well as I that Marcia has always been hard to understand. She's only nineteen. She'll grow out of it. Oh, it's time to leave. I'll see you at six, Penny."

"Wait," said Penny. "I'll walk part of the way with you."

Marcia heard the door slam and jumped from the bed. For weeks the plan had been forming in her mind, and now she had it figured out completely. So Penny just couldn't understand her. Well, after today she wouldn't have to try.

A long hard chill shook her body and she reached for a cigarette. She blew small smoke rings as she tried to remember where she had put the knife somebody had given her as a war souvenir. She got up and pawed through her clothes and bureau drawers. Then she remembered the handkerchief box.

The knife was there, hidden in the soft folds of the handkerchiefs. She lifted the knife and walked over to the mirror. With the tip of the long, thin blade she traced the scar on her cheek.

Suddenly she gave a hysterical laugh and staggered over to the bed. She could see the shocked look that would come over Penny's face when she realized what was going to happen.

Marcia looked over the room she had just finished cleaning. She had been working hard for the past two hours. The evening meal was ready. She looked at her watch and saw that she would have time to look through a magazine before Penny and her mother came home.

In a half hour Penny and Hazel burst in the door.

"Let's eat," said Penny. "I'm hungry as a bear."

They went into the kitchen and sat down at the table.

"Now, that was what I call a fine meal," Penny said when she had finished. Looking over at Marcia, she smiled. "You really fed us tonight. Some kind of celebration?"

"Well, in a way," replied Marcia. Suddenly she began to laugh and before anyone could stop her, fled from the room.

"As I said this morning," complained Penny, "you simply can't understand Marcia. Look how she left the room when I asked her a simple question. I tell you, something's wrong with her, Mother."

"Don't worry, Penny," said Hazel. "Your personalities are just different, that's all. You're like me and Marcia is more like her father; forget it. She'll be all right."

"Mother," Penny asked thoughtfully, "did you notice how red the scar was on Marcia's cheek? It must be bothering her again. I hope not, because she always seems to go into a shell when it does. Oh well, what are you going to do tonight?"

"I thought you could do the dishes for Marcia, and I might go to a movie. Okay?"

"Okay with me," replied Penny.

"All right. I'll leave now and be home by ten." Mrs. Harrison walked to the foot of the stairs and called to Marcia that she was leaving. There was no response so she turned to go.

"Well, finally!" thought Marcia. She ground out her cigarette and paced the floor. She knew that Penny would be up to see what was the matter with her. Curiosity always was Penny's second name. She'd have to find out what little Marcia was doing.

"Now what was that old saying?" Marcia wondered. "Curiosity killed the cat. How appropriate. Why, that's hilarious." The wild hysterical laughter racked her body once more.

The sound of someone's knocking on her door brought Marcia to her senses. She glanced at the mirror and saw that the scar was an ugly purple in her white face. Her blue eyes were black and glassy. She walked slowly to the door.

"Now I must remember not to kill her. I'll just cut her enough to scar her. Like she did to me."

She turned and took the knife from the table. Slowly she walked to the door and stood waiting.

"Marcia, open up. It's Penny. Are you all right?"

Marcia opened the door and Penny came into the room. Marcia slammed the door and, before Penny knew what was happening, Marcia had knocked her to the floor. Marcia grabbed Penny's neck with the wild strength of hatred. She raised the knife so Penny could see it.

"Hello, Penny," Marcia cried. "I've been waiting for you."

A look of fear came into Penny's eyes. "You're going to kill me," she said.

"Oh no, Penny. I'm not going to kill you. That would be too easy. I'm just going to cut you a little. Scar you as you did me. That wasn't any accident either. You were jealous. We'll see how you like having an ugly scar on your face!"

A scream rose in Penny's throat. She felt the cold sweat of fear and forced her eyes to look away from the knife.

"You're mad," she said.

Marcia laughed and started to lower the knife. A blinding streak of pain went through Penny. Then she lay limp on the floor.

In a dazed silence Penny rose to her feet. There was an ugly gash from her ear to her chin. The blood covered the left side of her face. She staggered to her feet several times before she was able to make the bed.

"What's happening to me?" thought Marcia. "I feel so funny."

Marcia walked to the mirror. "Penny said I was mad." Marcia began to laugh. She had never heard anything so funny in her life.

"You're mad! You're mad!" Penny kept repeating as she came from under the anesthetic. She was in a small white room and her mother was standing over her. Then she realized where she was and jerked herself up in the bed.

"Where's Marcia?" she shouted. A doctor came into the room. He explained to Penny that she was all right. There would be no scar, because they had used plastic surgery.

Later Penny learned that Marcia was in a rest home. The doctors thought they might be able to help her.

Penny turned her head to the wall. "Poor Marcia," she thought. "No one really tried to understand her or help her." Guilt spread over her, and she turned her face to the wall again as the tears came into her eyes.

NOTHING BUT THE SEA

H. Edward Richardson

Did tyranny once goad the dreams of your fathers
In the savage rushing sea?
Did death spread its broad canopy
Over their gallant plodding?
Did they seek more for their own than dignity,
Leaving furrows bathed incarnadine
With what might have been kept to a lesser end?

Now, spanning the blood-rows are the wide clear ways
And the golden plant in the fertile ground and the days
When our world has been gold and blue,
Then, the time too
Without any gold, without any blue,
The time of the threatening sound,
When the canopy
Came unnaturally.

Some have forgotten and cried, and you are one of those.

Here, your heritage you keep and caress,
While it dissolves to nothingness.
And the savage sea will come rushing in
To drown you in ignominy.

Your broken father will break the clod
And weep for you as you float like a faggot
In the savage rushing sea:

“Son, Man is base and cruel till learned.
We left you the hope to keep.
Did the great wild arms of freedom embrace you
in this land?”

TO P.B.M.

J. Dallas Miller

I'll give unto you, love, this new found rest
Wherein your heart will warm my own, and bide
In tender love—relaxed within my breast.
And while my restless fingers lie inside
Your own still palm, then you will surely rend
The veil between our minds, and so, in token
My soul I give and take yours, dear. I'll bend
You close till darkness by the dawn is broken.
Then will He come and blend us into one;
Then will I find the clearness in my soul
As a new day, fresh under the warm sun,
Lifting my life into a greener whole.
Now pause a moment, will you? While I pray,
Thanking the Lord for such a perfect day.

A ROOM OF HER OWN

Shirley Spires

The clock in the downstairs hall struck, sounding each chime with an air of finality. Two a.m., Dora asserted to herself, and closed the book she had been reading. Now I shall go to sleep without further ado, she told herself sternly. There was no reason to dread the dark. The doors and windows were securely fastened, and behind other not too distant doors her

family slept serenely. And yet she would lie awake, night after night, in fear and apprehension of some nameless horror that dwelt in the seclusion of the dark.

With a supreme effort she pulled the chain of her bedlamp—thus surrendering the room to darkness. It had never been like this in the little house, loose boarded and secluded from neighborly assistance. She had slept with her sister in a small room of assorted furniture and a nondescript color scheme. In those days her greatest desire was that she would some day have a room of her own. She planned the arrangement and color scheme in her mind and knew that if her dream was realized, she would always experience a great feeling of elation whenever she entered that haven which she would call her own.

Moving to a larger house was the result of a better-paid position, much planning, and a not too pressing loan, but to Dora it was a miracle, an answer to a prayer. Little had she dreamed that she would suffer the agonies of wakeful fear that seemingly had no cause or cure.

Was it a sound or slight movement, as if to suggest a light footfall on the stairs that caused her to grow rigid with painful familiarity. Frantically, clumsily, she pulled the chain of the bedlamp. Warm, mellow light assured her that once again she had been the victim of pure cold fear. There was nothing. She opened the door to the hall. Again she found complete emptiness.

I will not turn on the lamp again, she silently determined. I will not. I will—there it was again! She felt the nearness of another physical presence, and the next second she was convinced she heard its breathing. Her heart was pounding and her hands were clammy. Another agonizing second and she was groping desperately for the chain—her assurance—her saviour.

It was a mystery to everyone why Dora Appleton died in the night with stark fear written on her pale little face. Mrs. Creighton and Hannah, her housekeeper, discussed the tragedy in properly respectful tones as they moved quietly around the death-room.

"I just felt I should do something, Hannah. Poor Mrs. Appleton is just beside herself with grief. That's why I told her we'd straighten up this room for her." She examined the closet and the bookshelves. "Such a pity, Hannah—a sweet, shy girl like that."

Hannah pulled the chain of the bedlamp. "Do you want I should fix this lamp, Mrs. Creighton? Bulb's burnt out."

THE WAITING

Pat Lackey

In solitude I sit and wait
For night to cover me.
The coolness of the dark slips over me
As I sit by the window and watch.

For what am I watching?
Not the darkness nor the light.
I wait in tenseness for a sound
That will say, "You are not alone."
But it lies—that voice.
For I am alone—strangely and terribly alone.

No one is so lonely as I
Since I have lost the light and
Found this terrible, cold darkness.
If death would come—then
I should know light—
The light of Heaven!
And I would never more be blind.

IF LIFE BE THUS

Ray Webb

If life be thus
And lust is all;
What profit you and I?
If day be done
And lust has won;
Then one should die.
If life be thus
And God is all;
We profit you and I,
When life is done
And God has won;
Then one doesn't die.

OVERSHADOWING AMBITION

Dolores Walker

Tonight when the rain ceased—
the clouds parted,
leaving wonderful, soft white fields
to explore!

We marveled—
content with the bright beauty offered
by the moon
patterned through the trees.

Tomorrow the fresh newness
would be lost to a sedulous world
like a watercolor
Whose magic reality has been subject to a
feverishly overworked brush.

EMBARKATION

H. Edward Richardson

The sun had four hours ago gone its long way down one warm night of early summer in the central-southern town of Philosophy Hill. Upon the college campus the chimes forced out nine sonorous rings. The early night was hot. Up and down Main Street the people moved slowly. At the edges of town the honeysuckle and mock-orange exuded their sweetness into the faintest breeze which wafted the rich fragrances over the outlying streets and to the nostrils of lazy walkers, men in shirts with rolled-up sleeves, and women in crisp print dresses heavily starched. All of this was normal, all except the oppressiveness; there was some dim significance in the heaviness of the atmosphere. The walkers and the people on the front porches and the loafers on the corners and about the courthouse felt it; yet the night was not extremely hot. A few in Philosophy Hill knew, as the ponderous night wrung out the drops of nine o'clock from the towel-white tower high on the campus ridge, that this stifling weight was the momentary hover of Death over a small southern town.

Separated from Main Street by a sidewalk, a plate-glass window, and several tables and chairs, four young men of Philosophy Hill drank coffee and listened to a nickelodeon. Even the music seemed to escape from the speaker, pierce the air, not flow upon it, and the conversation among the four came as slow as the music, and as their movements.

"La-de-da-da-da-da-da, de-da-de-da-de-da-da." One of them hummed a rough interpretation of the **Third man Theme**. This was Ansel McKinney who had lived in Philosophy Hill all of his life, but then all four had for that

matter. McKinney was the oldest, complacent about all things, and he had neither the heart nor the desire to finish college which he could have done seven years earlier. The other three were still in college. Jonas Hatfield was a law student at the state university, and his one distinguishing physical characteristic was his corpulent frame which had earned him the nickname of "Tank." His voice had a certain raucous quality which gave it the annoying property of carrying great distances. To Tank, however, his voice was his greatest asset, for he had envisioned himself as a political power in the county, and his somewhat work-shy labors were toward that end. Tank's favorite and rather banal saying was: "I'm a man with no prejudices, that is none except against niggers, Catholics, Jews, and foreigners!" Many times this expression brought a laugh and enabled Tank to realize the position he desired so fervently, that of being the center of attraction. The other two men were really boys, both of them about twenty years old. Engle Hisle was bookish, cynical, small, and anemic. He wore black-rim glasses and his hair was straight and unkept; for the years he had been alive, a disease of the lungs had forced him from the normal activities of boys his own age into a dim world of seclusion, a book-world, and he formed his ideas not from living, but from reading. It was natural for Engle Hisle to be different, perhaps sensitive, but somehow those who knew him could not justify his bitter sarcasm, which flew out spasmodically at anyone who might be within the range of his vindictiveness. So Hisle, with his perverted brilliance, with all of the vast knowledge he had stored in his brain while others his age were living genuinely, was not exactly desired company; people who knew him best, his only friends, felt mixed emotions upon his arrival, happy to see him still alive, yet dreading his inevitable bitterness.

Arnold Creighton, the last of the four, was a brown-haired boy of medium build who smoked a pipe and listened more than he talked.

"Anybody seen Don Wylie tonight?" Ansel McKinney asked, ceasing his humming.

"That prestidigitator?" Hisle remarked.

"The last time he was seen, according to the latest report of the manure spreader," said Creighton, "he was pulling shot glasses of 'Old Fitz' out of his handkerchief."

"Prestidigitation means juggling," Hatfield interrupted.

"Or digging bodies up out of the cemetery," McKinney said to Creighton.

"I say it means juggling," Hatfield shouted.

"What does he want with bodies?" Creighton asked McKinney.

Hisle said: "Helps his act, Arnold, the guillotine act."

"Gives authentic odor of chopped-off heads. . . also authentic heads," McKinney added. Hatfield was just preparing to erupt when McKinney turned to him and said that prestidigitation covered all forms of legerdemain.

"Damn," Hatfield said, "I thought it meant juggling."

"Here comes Wylie," McKinney said. The door of the restaurant opened and a tall, dark youth in a whipcord suit walked toward the table. He was evidently nervous, sidling quickly to their table. He had been smoking, and he dropped his cigarette and stepped on it. "I just saw Souther Shannon die."

For a brief time there was silence over the group. Creighton asked, "Where?"

"The Funeral Home, of all the god-awful places," Wylie replied. He flipped a cigarette into the corner of his mouth. "His pulse beat was 160 per minute."

"God," Hatfield said, and then, oddly, laughed.

"He drank himself to death," Wylie stated tragically.

"What brand?" Hisle asked.

"It wasn't very pretty, Hisle," Wylie snapped. His dark eyes began to fill with anger, began to glint like dark flint in pale light, as Wylie lit his cigarette. Suddenly he spun on his heels and walked rapidly to the door. Over his shoulder he said: "They all thought he was dead when they brought him in! Thought he was dead! And the poor sonofabitch began gasping on the slab and I thought his heart was going to beat out of his chest." Just

before he slammed the door, he shouted, "Hisle, I'll try to save you his bottle."

"Drink only bonded," Hisle said, but the door had shut and Wylie didn't hear the remark.

"What's eating him?" Hatfield said.

"Shock," McKinney answered, "just disturbed at seeing a human being die."

"I can't understand the loss. Who lost in Philosophy Hill by Souther Shannon's death?" Hatfield asked. Then he laughed. "The old racker almost shot his boy last week. Been crazy as hell lately."

"Society has lost an adept racker of pool balls," Hisle stated. Then he wondered aloud: "Do you suppose Wylie will save me the bottle if it's bourbon?"

Mable Clancy waddled by the table. She had been wiping off the table behind them. She leaned over in their midst and said: "Well, I guess his wife is free now."

Only Hatfield laughed aloud.

"Who could have liked, much less live with the old drunk cripple?" Mable asked. Then she reached up above the table and snapped off one of the lights. "Closing time," she said.

The four arose very slowly, walked to the counter.

"Odd man for 'em," Creighton said.

They flipped a coin, and after three flips Creighton laid a quarter on the counter. Mable, by that time, had gone behind the counter. She gave Creighton a nickel in change.

Outside the rain had begun to fall lightly. "Where to now?" Hatfield asked.

"Got some wine in the car," McKinney said. He thrust his hands into his trouser pockets and began walking across the street. The others followed. Creighton and Hisle were talking. "What did Mable mean about Souther's wife being free now?" Creighton asked.

"Some rumor about him being cuckold, I guess."

"I know, but . . ."

McKinney broke in, "I think it happened in the accident five years ago. You know right afterwards he started drinking heavily."

"You mean the accident made him . . ."

"Yeah," McKinney said, "impotent as an octogenarian."

"Then it was suicide in a way," Creighton stated.

Hatfield had been swaying wide of the group. He had spoken to some walkers and then had swung back and heard Arnold Creighton say something about suicide, and he had sensed that they were speaking of Souther Shannon, for a week before Souther had publicly announced in the pool room that he was going to take poison or blow his brains out. "Hell," Hatfield shouted, "what'dye mean, suicide? Suicide!" He laughed loud and long, his laughter echoing up and down Main Street. "Why, he didn't have the guts. He just drank himself to death."

Across the street the last of the lights went out in the restaurant. The four passed on over a hill that crossed Main Street. They paused at the car while McKinney unlocked it, and then they all got in.

"Whom can we toast?" McKinney asked, taking the wine bottle from the glove compartment.

"The Republican party," Hatfield said triumphantly.

"I'm a Communist and can't drink to that," Hisle said.

Creighton lit a cigarette, inhaled the smoke deeply and the smoke escaped between his words, "Well, we could toast Souther, gentlemen."

McKinney raised the bottle and said: "Here's to the pool balls who will be lonely." Hisle twisted in his seat and remarked, "Wonder if that Wylie will bring me that bourbon?" Creighton and McKinney chuckled lightly and Hatfield said: "To hell with the drunkard." But they all drank in turns.

Up on Main Street, by the corner where the four had passed, a young woman was standing, holding a baby in her arms. The baby was sobbing in little gasps which would increase in volume as the mother rocked it in her arms. "Shush . . . shush . . . shushsh. Cupcake, Daddy will be by soon. He'll

be here soon." She brushed the light drops of rain from the baby's blanket with a crumpled handkerchief. "Shush," she was whispering, and then she jumped back from the corner quickly. A new Studebaker had leapt up the hill to Main Street, swerving close to the curb. It did not even slow, but sped up and darted across Main Street toward the high ridge of the college. Beneath the wheel a boy and girl were closed within themselves. As the automobile disappeared into the black street in the valley below, and began the slow climbing of the long slope to the college, the woman moved slowly back to the curb. Wearily she said: "No, Cupcake. That wasn't Daddy."

WISH FOR LIFE

Grace VanOver

I wish my tongue could speak the way I feel
When I see daisies blooming on a hill
Or watch a wheat field move in gentle sway,
And meadow larks wing out to greet the day.

Oh, if my pen could move in magic worth
And capture Beauty as she blesses earth
With loveliness beyond my mortal thought!
(Ah, Beauty that is not sold or bought!)

I would my pen were made of lilies fair,
The sky my parchment—set with diamonds there.
Even then I couldn't tell the way I feel
When I hear larks, see daisies on a hill.

GETTING RICH

Ernest Kincaid

Early one summer morning I was awakened by the loud calls of my father. He was shouting at the top of his voice trying to awaken the three sleeping boys upstairs. Finally I answered him, but when I looked out the window I noticed it was still quite early. My two brothers were awake too but they showed no signs of getting out of bed. I turned over, pulled the blanket, which was almost on the floor, over me, and decided to sleep awhile longer.

"You boys," boomed my father, "Get up or I'll come up there with a bucket of water."

Not wishing to get soaked, and knowing that if we remained in bed any longer, we would certainly have water dashed on us, we all hit the floor.

"Wonder why Pa gets up so early," my younger brother asked as he staggered sleepily around the room looking for his clothes.

"Must be aiming to chop some corn, down on the river," my other brother remarked. "Looks like we would get a day off ever once in a while."

We dressed and went downstairs. Breakfast was on the table, and to our great surprise, we noticed that Pa was all dressed up. We all made a dive for the wash pan, and while we were washing Bill whispered hopefully, "Pa must be a-goin' to town. If we'll be right quiet and keep him talking about something, maybe he'll forget t' tell us what t' do."

Every time Pa went to town he left a whole string of work for us to do while he was gone. We knew better than to not do the work well, because he always inspected it the minute he came home. If it wasn't done to suit him, we always had to do it over, and be watched by Pa as we did it. Every weed had to be cut, every potato or bean bug had to be killed, every hill of corn had to be thinned or we would suffer the unpleasant consequences.

We knew the garden was getting weedy and that Ma had been trying to get Pa to take a day off from the corn field and work in the garden. If only the subject of the weedy garden was not mentioned at the breakfast table. It was too wet to plow corn, and Pa wouldn't send us to the river to chop corn

and the steeps, because he knew we would stay in the river all day instead of chopping corn. He didn't trust us in the tobacco patch because we had a very bad habit of breaking or cutting the tender plants. The garden was the only place we could work, and if he should forget to tell us about it, we would have the day off.

He must have had some very important business in town that day because he forgot to tell us any work to do.

That was the day my brother and I were going to get independently rich. There was a war on and prices were sky high. Even may-apple root was four cents a pound, and we knew where there was a virgin patch of it. Ma tried to get us to work in the garden, but we talked her out of it. We told her a fellow offered to sell us a .22 rifle for a dollar and we were going to buy it with may-apple money. Feeling proud because her sons had at last decided to "root" for themselves, or just glad to get us and the lousy dog away from the house, she told us to go dig our fortune.

We went to the corn crib, got several burlap sacks, a bushel basket, and some gooseneck hoes, and headed for the woods. Gricks, our little black, fuzzy poodle dog, was tickled to death. He would run ahead of us for awhile, then he would run back and grab hold of our pant legs and almost jerk us down. He was good at things like that—had more sense than some folks I know—but I'll be darned if he would run a rabbit or a squirrel. He would catch polecats, though—I don't know why, but he just would. Ma wouldn't let him in the house if he had caught a polecat. She said he smelled too bad, but she let us come in and we smelled just as bad as the dog.

It was still rather early when we entered the woods. We could hear the dew dropping on the green leaves of the trees. Across the hollow a squirrel let us know by his squawking that he was not one bit afraid of us. Gricks started to chase it awhile, but seeing the deep canyon he would have to cross, and also knowing he could not catch it even if he tried, he just let it squawk and trotted on down the trail.

As we neared our may-apple patch, we saw some very unpleasant signs. Someone had been there ahead of us. What was once a fine patch of may-apple was now only a naked spot in the woods with an occasional pile of dead may-apple stalks scattered about. We were disappointed, but we were madder than we were disappointed. Now we couldn't buy the rifle. Ma didn't have the money to buy it for us, and we couldn't ask Pa because if he knew he wouldn't let us buy the gun.

We threw our sacks, hoes, and basket on the ground and sat down on a big rock. The dog walked about for awhile as if looking over the situation then he too sat down. He would look at the dug up may-apple patch, then snap at a bee or an oversized yellow-jacket—then he would get up and move around some more. After while he walked over to us, his tail between his legs, his head lowered, and his glittering brown eyes looking at the three boys sitting side by side, their bare feet dangling from the big rock, and he seemed to say: "Well, boys, looks like we didn't get rich after all. Dang that bee!"

OUR HIRED "GIRL"

Betty Stewart

When Mary, the girl who was working for us, got married, my mother asked her to help us find another hired girl.

Mary was from a remote section of Floyd County where people around home went to hire girls to work for them. It was usually easy to find a girl, for the girls were eager to get away from home. The girls were good workers; therefore, at the time we lost Mary too many people had found out their worth, and we found it hard to get a good one.

After talking to her relatives and friends Mary came to Mother with disappointing news. She had not been able to find a girl who would be suitable to work for us, but she had a suggestion. It seemed that she had a young brother who was anxious to get away from Mud Creek, their home. She told Mother that Beverly had always helped around the house and was a good

worker. Being desperate by the time, Mother said that she would try him for two weeks.

On the afternoon Beverly came, my sister, my brother, and I waited at the window peeping from behind the curtain at the young man walking up the front steps. He was a stocky boy with pale, blue eyes and straight, black hair which he had slicked down close to his head with hair oil. In one hand he carried a brown paper bag which contained his clothes, and in the other a chicken. When we saw what he was carrying we giggled a little too loudly. Beverly heard us and looked toward the window where we were standing. This scared us, so we ran back to the chairs where Mother had seated us before she went to greet Beverly.

As Mother walked into the room with Beverly, we were sitting quietly in our chairs with polite expressions on our faces. As Mother told him our names, he grasped in the brown paper bag and brought forth a smaller brown paper bag which contained candy he had made before leaving his home. He gave this bag of candy to my sister and told her to divide it. Mother took him to his room, and we went outside to play.

The next time we saw Beverly was a few hours later in the kitchen. He was sitting in a chair with a pan of potatoes held between his knees and another pan containing water—held between his feet on the floor. He was peeling the potatoes, putting the peeled ones in the pan of water, and singing an old Baptist hymn to himself. He would say one line of the hymn and then sing it.

When he had finished peeling the potatoes, he took the pan from between his knees and the one from the floor to a work table. He left there and picked up an apron which he wore until he had finished all his work for the evening.

Our hired "girl" always wore an apron over clean but faded work shirts and pants as he went about the house slowly and precisely doing his work. He kept his sleeves rolled above his elbows, for he had his hands in and out of water several times each day. He swept every room in the house, mopped all the rooms every day. Every other day he mopped the rooms upstairs as well.

Mother was so well satisfied with Beverly that he stayed two years instead of two weeks. He took over much of the work that Mother had always done when we had hired girls working for us. He did all the laundry, ironing, washing dishes, sweeping, dusting, mopping, and most of the cooking. When canning season came, he did most of the canning also.

The first year he was with us he taught my Mother how to pickle beans and corn. He made toys for my sister, my brother, and me. For my brother he made a bow and some arrows, a wooden gun that shot mason jar rubber rings, and a pair of stilts. He made buckeye dolls and clothes for them for my sister and me.

When winter came and Beverly could not go home on his day off, he stayed there at home and did the work as usual. He found time to play with us after he had done his work each day. He taught us games and played them with us to keep us inside on the days when it was too bad for us to go outside. When the snow was deep enough, he made snow cream for us and helped us make snow men. He pulled us on our sleigh on level ground and fixed a slick slide for us on the hill.

During this same winter, Beverly asked Mother if she had any scraps of material. She had, so she gave them to him. He took them to his room and a few weeks later he brought Mother a quilt top he had made with his hands from the scraps of material she had given him. Before the winter was over he had made another one using a different pattern.

The first time Beverly went home when spring came, he took the two quilt tops with him and brought them back quilted. He gave these to Mother along with two goose down pillows he had made for her from the feathers of the geese his mother raised.

Beverly's second year with us was a repetition of the first one. It was during this year that his parents moved from Mud Creek to where we lived.

In August Beverly went home for a week to cook for a "meeting" his parents were having for a child of theirs who had been dead several years.

This "meeting" was for the purpose of preaching the child's funeral again. Friends and relatives of theirs came from all over Floyd, Perry, and Knott counties. When everyone had visited and gossiped for a while, preparations were made for the preaching. The child's picture was placed before the congregation just before the preaching started. One man would preach until he was tired, and then another would take his place. Before each one started his sermon, he led the congregation in a song. He would say a line and the congregation would sing it, and continue in this manner until the song was sung. Each song had the same tune.

While the preaching and singing were going on, Beverly was in his mother's kitchen preparing food for the people who had come to the "meeting."

We began realizing how much Beverly meant to us during the week he was at his home. When the "meeting" was over and Beverly came back to us, we were overjoyed to see him.

Beverly went out of our lives again soon after that, and that time forever. His father was injured in the coal mines, so Beverly had to go home and take his father's place as the earner of the family. My father gave him a job in the coal mine as a coal loader.

Today Beverly still loads coal. He is unmarried and lives with his parents. His mother is old now, and Beverly does the work at home after he comes in from his job of loading coal. One evening each week Beverly can be seen hanging out the week's laundry.

THE OLD COUNTRY CHURCH

Jonas Hollon

Nestled in the hills and valleys of Eastern Kentucky are hundreds of small country communities made up of a church, a school, a postoffice, a general store, and several dwelling houses. A narrow road—usually unpaved—winds its way up and down hills, across level valleys, and along the banks of rushing mountain streams. In such communities live a strange variety of people. These people fear no one except God. They live and work together, sharing their joys and sorrows, yet ready to fight one another at the slightest provocation. Their arguments are frequently settled without resorting to the courts. They are willing to cheat their neighbor or to deal fairly with him if either occasion proves necessary.

In these communities there is always a person who has a reputation for trading. Sometimes he cheats, sometimes he doesn't, but if anyone has anything to trade he is Johnny on the spot. His cows never get older than six years, his horses seldom over four, even though the poor brutes are sometimes twenty—they trade better if the owner can keep them young.

If these people are always willing to cheat their neighbor, they are also ready to help when disaster strikes. If a home burns, everybody gives all he can spare to the homeless neighbor. If someone is sick, friends are not lacking.

These people work, fuss, play, trade, and cheat during the week, but on Sunday they all gather at the community church—sometimes it is a church, other times it may be a school house—to worship God together. They forget their worries and cares of the week part and all unite with bowed heads and uplifted voices in a prayer for the special blessing of God.

It was the fourth Sunday in August that I found myself in one of these communities. As I drove along the dusty road, a feeling of peace and happiness came over me. Nowhere could I remember ever feeling more at home or more welcome than I felt that day. The fields of waving corn, the patches of greenish-yellow tobacco, and the rustic homes surrounded by majestic, shivering, silver-leaved maples, all played a part in making me feel the way I did.

I soon came to the church house. It was not a fancy structure. It was merely a white, boxed building sitting atop a small knoll. The windows and doors were plain, and there was no bell nor steeple; yet this building was

greatly admired by those people. They had all had a part in its construction, some giving money, others giving their labor.

There were several cars parked along the road near the church. Horses were tied to many of the small saplings just outside the churchyard. People were coming in all directions to the church.

I got out of my car, walked across the foot-bridge built across the creek, heard the hollow thomp-thomp of my feet striking the wooden planks of the bridge, and walked into the churchyard. The men were all outside, some sitting on the stumps of trees, others squatting or standing. These men were chatting, whittling, chewing that last chew of tobacco before the service, trading knives, or arguing. Some children ran across the yard, chasing each other and screaming gleefully. Several little girls sat on the steps watching their brothers play, wanting to play with them, but remembering mother's warning to act as little ladies and to be sure not to get their dresses dirty. Underneath the floor several dogs slept peacefully, but at one side two dogs had never met before. Each dog was probably thinking it could whip tarnation out of the other, and they were about to try it, when a well aimed tuft of grass thrown by one of the men separated them.

Inside the church the women were getting the pitch of a hymn. This was a sign for the men to come inside and help sing. One by one, hat in hand, they filed silently through the door. The children, too, went inside to take a seat beside their mothers. I had just lighted a cigarette and wanted to smoke it before I went inside, so the dogs and I were the only ones outside.

I waited until they had sung the first song and then I mounted the steps. Before I could enter, a good sister was called upon to lead the congregation on prayer. Remembering my church manners, I remained outside while the sister prayed.

All heads were bowed, the soft voice of the person praying rose and fell musically. Every now and then I could hear a hearty "Amen" from some devout member. One man was praying his own prayer while the sister was praying, but I was sure God could hear both. A little girl started toward the door, but the watchful mother, head still bowed, grabbed her by the dress tail and fetched her back. One of the dogs, probably a God-fearing dog, walked up and down the aisle, looking at everybody, taking it all in. He reminded me of a Puritan back in the early days of our history who walked up and down the aisle to see if all heads were bowed.

Presently the prayer was ended. The song leader asked for a hymn selection. Someone suggested page 89, and the choir sang "Meet Me There." These people not only sang with their voices but with their hearts as well. I have never heard such beautiful singing. Each person sang his part and all voices blended beautifully into one. The song leader kept time with his cane, thromping it rhythmically against the floor. Each person patted his foot to the music. Even the devout dog, now sitting in the middle of the aisle, scratched his fleas to the time of the music.

Several more songs were sung, then the preacher opened his Bible and began his sermon. He preached with such power and emotion that it made a lump in my throat. He was telling the truth and I knew it; he was warning the congregation of that fateful day when they would be called before God. Where would they be? What would they do? Maybe that was why there was a lump in my throat—I didn't know where I would be or what I would do. I hadn't given it a serious thought before. As he preached, his voice now pleading, now condemning, his eyes dimmed with tears, and his fists thomping down upon his Bible for emphasis, I recalled a little rhyme which fit in so well with the occasion. It was "If you want to be a preacher, don't ever go to school, you won't be a preacher but an educated fool." He preached by his own understanding of the Word and not by what somebody believed. If a person did not like what he said, that person could simply "take it and smoke it in his cob-pipe."

After a while the preacher brought his sermon to a close. An invitation song was sung by the choir. While the invitation was yet in progress an old fashioned hand-shaking was started. Some women got filled with the Spirit or something and started shouting, while we sang and shook hands. I shook hands with the preacher. His hands were not soft and smooth but rough and

calloused. He did not preach for a living; he worked the same as his neighbors. He had a strong grip and I thought he was going to crunch my hand before turning loose to grasp the next person's waiting hand. I shook hands with every person in the church, I reckon, and before it was over my poor hand was almost worn out.

After the hand shaking the choir sang the final song. It was "The Old Country Church." As I left there that day, that song was still ringing in my mind. It fit so perfectly. I left thinking that surely I would return once again to be "with my friends of the old country church."

TO E.J.B.*

Patricia Boone Miller

You walk too much in the wind.
The wind's too free . . . a fool.
Holds up rest, the tranquility of hearth fires,
the balm of conscious silence, common thoughts
with insinuating laughter,
and plagues them to death.
Wind bears a fiend in the subconscious womb;
a dream-Iago, who sucks up the milk of gentle kindness
and turns the mind to struggle on itself.

Come away. your face is white with pain.
Come . . . close the window against the moor and gale.
Tie an apron over your wild, young heart.
Turn your eyes away from the sky into the wall,
for the heather is blowing,
and on the mountain side the pines are sighing,
and your soul is the evening star.

No! You'll not weep. "No coward soul!"
Only a few have the power of choosing.
It is better, let's say, to die undivided,
heart and flash integrated,
than be half-eaten up by the mind.
Further, this is true—
the wind plays a traitor and would have betrayed even **you!**

*Emily Jane Bronte

MY BOY

J. Dallas Miller

He was quite a little boy, not yet two, with eyes, round and silver-blue, like his mother's—and a mound of curls, silk and golden—like no one else's. His body was as supple and sturdy as that of a peasant; a warm body filled and overflowing with a fervor and earnestness for life that was both wonderful and exhausting to behold. In the mornings when I went in to get him up, he would be storming against the sides of his bed like a small jungle cat first caged. Seeing in me an exit from his world, he would center his attention upon my arrival with a countenance full of anxiety, trust, and bliss. Once freed from his captivity and on my lap, he would resume his previous struggling for release, looking for the first opportunity to scramble down and thereby escape the confining procedure of being dressed in shoes and clothes. His one desire—his single purpose—was exploration, and that as quickly as possible. With less than five minutes between him and the bed, with shoes only half buckled and hair still ruffled, he would break through my arms, bound to the doorway; then he would pause a moment, mouth open, body expectant, his eyes searching for last night's discarded teddy bear. Once it was spied, he would dart forward, sometimes to fall flat over too eager feet.

OUTNUMBERED

Dolores Walker

"Richard! Richard!" and then in sheer exasperation "RICHARD!"—Peggy shrieked. Whether it was due to her efforts or the possibility that the effect the numerous slices of peanut butter and jelly he had consumed but two short hours ago were now worn off, the young man in question presently appeared. His abundance of freckles was evident in spite of his cheeks whipped red from running in the cool afternoon air. Her hand moved instinctively over her smooth and shining blonde hair when she viewed his tangled mass of flaming red curls. His still babyish mouth grinned amiably and he galloped into the house before her, unconscious of her dignified disgust at having to seek him.

"Gee whiz, mom, I had so much fun—I wish I had a dog to play with me. Gosh, I'm hungry! Oh boy, lemon pie!"

"Wash for dinner, son," she said, and sighed to think of the towel that would take the heavy dry after his light wash.

"Mother, you know I had to look all over . . ." the rest of her protest was lost to Richard as he bounded up the stairs. He never walked, and whatever gait he chose, his movements could be likened to those of a rotary egg beater. The knees of his pants were not usually worn but rather torn out.

"Gee Whiz" was his only comment when mother sent him up the stairs to wash a second time. He returned and took his place between the two girls. Peggy pecked canary-like at her food. This could have been due to her new diet, which was the rage with the gang, or the chocolate marshmallow special she'd splurged on in the drugstore. Richard's appetite was birdlike also, but more like that of a vulture. Dark-headed Kathy, a mature seventeen, sat on his left. She had a new heart-throb this week but nothing curved her healthy appetite either. The three children presented quite a contrast and Dad called them the Rainbow Division, though mother reflected realistically, they might better be known as the Fighting 69th. That reminded her and she said to Dad, "Frank, you'll have to speak to Richard about fighting . . . Mrs. Nelson called me again today." There were two Nelson boys and their strategy was to grab Richard by his arms and pull him down. Once he was on the ground the rest was easy. When Dad finally became aware of what was going on, he promised Richard a whipping every time the Nelson boys gave him one. Then one day he'd come out on the porch just in time to see Richard running from the boys. When he looked up he gave Dad an inquisitive half smile and spinning around surprised the Nelsons with a good punch apiece. Since then Richard the Lion-Hearted and the Nelsons played together with the usual occasional exchange of punches. But Mrs. Nelson was always calling Mother. Yes, Dad was pacifying Mother, he would speak to Richard later.

"I have a date tonight, Mother," announced Kathy.

"I like Jim better than Bob. He has a car and he gave me a baseball cap too," offered Richard. It was his first contribution to the dinner table conversation and would have been better left unsaid.

"I do wish you'd stop him from saying those things to Bob, mother. He'll have an old maid for a sister! Besides, he always drags out his baseball junk, too."

Mother looked at the culprit who smiled over his second piece of lemon pie. "Well, dear," Mother comforted, "he's proud of his glove because he earned the money cutting grass. As for those remarks, why the boys know he's only a child." Father said nothing—he knew mother liked Jim better too.

After dinner, Mother went next door for a fitting and Dad settled down with the paper before venturing out for his Friday-night poker party. It was Peggy and Richard's time to do the dishes. It was the one thing they hated. Daddy said the girls of course should be expected to help in the house but he held the opinion shared by his son—dishes were an undignified occupation not at all becoming a man. There were three women in the house, though, and consequently Richard dried dishes! He had acquired the habit, along with the dish drying, of going upstairs to wash his hands and forgetting to

come down. Peggy, perplexed with him because she wanted to get through and call Sally, started after him. Suddenly she heard a scream. When she reached the bedroom, Richard was lying on the floor, playing contentedly with his cars. The scream had ensued on his instigating a wreck. He continued playing, unconscious of her presence.

Peggy was going to scold him for neglecting his job, but she smiled to herself and turned quietly to go back downstairs. On her way to the kitchen to finish the dishes, she stopped a moment to query, "Daddy, why don't we get a dog?"

IN THE MAKING

Victor Venetozzi

They are at it again tonight. I guess it will be another one of those separations. She'll come back, she always does after she's had enough of a loose time. The old man will probably go out and get soused again tonight.

You can see the house from here. Wrong end of town, porch sagging, broken windows and not a bit of smoke coming from the chimney. The coal ran out today, hope the relief agency sends a load out tomorrow or we will freeze to death. What a dump this neighborhood is. Dirty, crummy street. The clean-up crews don't even bother coming through here. What's the use, it would be just as filthy five minutes after they left. They use the street instead of garbage cans on this side of town.

Sure is cold tonight, wish this coat wasn't so thin. It belonged to my brother before he grew out of it. There isn't any use in asking for a new one. What would they use for money, there wasn't enough to eat tonight? There goes Maggie out again. She's probably going to look for some kind-hearted guy to buy her a square meal. Can't blame her much; her family is worse off than mine.

What to do, where to go? It's the same old story; no money for a movie, not even a nickel for a bar of candy. Could go to the dance at the Youth Center? Who would dance with me with these baggy pants and ripped shirt? Wonder what it feels like to have a real haircut instead of these home-jobs the old man gives me? May as well go over to the poolroom; there may be an interesting game going on. Even if there isn't, it's at least warm in there.

These shoes are mighty thin. It was nice of Joe to give them to me even if they are practically worn through. Oh well, I guess it's better than walking barefoot.

There's the shack Jake is living in. The relief doctor told him he needed an operation and good food. What with—his looks? That guy has never once broken the law. He's a peace-loving, God-fearing man and what's it got him? A miserable shack, not enough to eat, and his only friends as bad off as he is. Sure, they can say they're sorry but it won't put food in his belly and neither will it do away with his need for an operation. He won't live much longer but he's better off dead. Honesty? He's honest. That guy wouldn't even cash the last check the relief agency sent him because it was a buck more than he usually gets. Seven lousy bucks to get along on for two weeks. He wants to go to work, but who would hire a guy that can only stand on his feet three hours a day?

I'd better cross the street, here comes that big flat-foot again. Had enough of that leather handle on the end of his billy-club. One of these days—boy! one of these days my chance will come to even things up. Filthy son-of-a-no-good he calls me. What would a prison sentence be compared to the pleasure of sending him to a hospital for six months? A guy just can't get along with that bully no matter how hard he tries. One of these days—

Church—it's been a long time since I went to church. Reverend Denny is a good guy, too. He really tries to be friendly and means it. Come to church, Nick; trust in God, Nick; things will be better pretty soon, Nick. He sort of gets under my skin with his preaching to me. Go to church—sure. With these lousy clothes, not a cent for the collection plate, sitting there while everybody looks at you as if you were a freak? Trust in God—sure, trust in God. I used to say my prayers every night. Let me grow up to be a

good boy, I would pray. Let my mother quit running around and get along better with my father. Let my father quit drinking and help him to find a steady job. Trust in God? How can you trust in God when your belly is screaming for food and the cramps have you doubled over with pain? Sure, things will be better—how can they get any worse than they are right now?

Boy! look at that mansion. That's where Lucky Dan lives. The horses and the numbers racket really pay off. No broken windows in that house. He has company again. Those big-time politicians know where to go when they want real food and good whiskey. Can't blame Dan; he feeds them once in awhile and then slips them something so that they keep the law off his toes. He can afford to buy protection with the haul he's making. Twenty rooms and a three-car garage—loaded with the best that money can buy. What a beautiful life he's leading. No worn-out shoes for that boy. He's a right guy, too. Many a buck he's handed me for a square meal. There's the kind of a guy to have for a father. So he's making his against the law. The law—what a laugh!

Good old poolroom. Wonder what I would do if I didn't have this place to come to? John is okay, he'll let you loaf in here as long as you like. Keeps them off the streets he says. He could keep this place cleaner though; it smells like a rat hole. So what? At least the place is warm. There's Andy over there. He must have rolled another drunk; those are new clothes he's wearing. Lucky, that guy, he never gets caught. Never worked a day in his life but he's never broke.

It's getting late. May as well head for home—if it can be called home. I don't remember how long it's been since the sheets were changed on that bed. The lumps in that mattress just keep getting worse. Since there hasn't been any heat in the house all day, maybe the bed-bugs have frozen to death and I'll be able to get some sleep.

I hope the old man doesn't come home in one of his moods. Why that jerk gets such a kick out of beating me I'll never understand. My day will come. My day will come, and if I can stay alive I'll grow up and before I leave for good, I'm going to make him eat that strap.

Lucky's pals must have left, the house is all dark. It sure looks cozy from here. Yep, there goes the maid. Tomorrow he will be back pulling in the chips. More power to you, Dan. Maybe when I am old enough you will have a place for me in your outfit.

The Rev. is saying his evening prayers. Go to it, old boy, and if you say a prayer for me, make it a thick steak. That's what I want more than anything else right now.

Sleep well, Jake. I don't believe in miracles, but if there is any such thing, I hope one happens to you.

What a dump! If the roof on this joint doesn't get fixed pretty soon, the little bit of plaster that is left will fall down. These steps could stand some fixing—better as they are, though; maybe the old man will trip and break his neck.

Hello, Maggie, have a hard night?