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Belles Lettres

*Eastern Kentucky
State College*

RICHMOND, KENTUCKY

1958-1959

Belles Lettres

An annual anthology of student writing sponsored and published by the
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Dedicated to all those who have made contributions to the contents and publication of this volume.

THE FACE IN THE WINDOW

VIRGINIA RUPARD

It was spring and all was green;
Leaves budding, jonquils blooming,
And I sat alone in a child's swing
Under a spreading maple tree.
My gaze passed from rolling lawn
To pasture and apple orchard,
Lingering with each image,
Etching each familiar object in my memory
To be treasured later when all but that memory
Would be dust and ashes.
Glancing up once more,
I saw a face framed in a dark window,
A pale, smiling face, gazing at me.

Now it is autumn and all is changed.
The merry jonquils are long forgotten;
The once-budding leaves
Have ripened, turned brown, and fallen.
The child's swing is broken;
The smiling face has long since
Gone from the window;
And still the lonely figure gazes.

Life seems a vacuum now,
A busy marking of time.
Slowly, with measured tread,
The moments, hours, and days,
Like plodding camels, march forward.
Surely nothing pleases,
Nothing displeases;
Unaware of either pleasure or pain
I stand, waiting,
Hoping for the day when we shall meet.
And when memories are dulled by constant retracing,
A gentle spirit, in the blackest midnight,
Draws the veil of grief from my troubled eyes,
And I behold once more
The face in the window.

GATE 15

ROY CROSTHWAITE

We didn't want a scene in the railway station; we just didn't do things that way. So, when the time came, we said our good-byes at home, the way sensible, intelligent people say them. Neither Mom nor Dad cried. We were all very casual. It was as if I were going out for a few hours, and that was the way I wanted it.

It was beginning to rain as my taxi turned onto the parkway leading to the terminal—a kind of misty, April rain—and I thought of how much the silly ones would make of that. The clock over the entrance was lighted; I had thirty minutes until train time. Inside, in cathedral silence, I walked across the floor under the high-vaulted dome and then to the concourse where gates led to the tracks below.

Gate 15—that was it. My train was leaving at 12:30 a.m. It was to arrive in San Francisco Wednesday afternoon. Only a few sleepy people were waiting—that was why I chose to leave on the 12:30 train. There were no other soldiers and that was good, too—no teary farewells. I sat down to wait, but my luck didn't hold out.

When I had been sitting there ten minutes, they came up to the gate—a middle-aged man, two young girls, and a skinny boy in a uniform. Rain glistened in their hair and on their shoulders. They had probably come on the bus and walked down the parkway to the terminal. They must have been a family group.

The father wore a rather out-of-date suit. The girls were in their Sunday best, but their clothes, too, looked out of style. This was something special—sending “our” boy off to war. I could picture the scene that I was certain would follow. I wondered where the mother was. Surely they wouldn't leave her behind. She was the best part of the show usually.

However, it was almost time to leave; I shouldn't have to be a spectator to it very long. The family remained standing. They talked in hushed and simple tones; a few phrases drifted to me “. . . Irene? . . . Yes, her baby is due in May. . . .”

“Write me about it.”

“It's too bad we didn't have time to go see Gram.”

“Tell her to write when you see her.”

The girls seemed to be carrying the conversation, and the boy filled in the gaps with questions and that silly refrain, “Write me. Write to me.”

The conductor and the gatemen unhooked the chains and clanged

the steel gates open. They were efficient and business-like, completely indifferent to the little tableau that was being played out. I couldn't resist watching—this was the time to get sloppy. I got up and joined the small line of people in front of the gate. I was standing close enough to hear every word. The father was speaking; he had said nothing until now.

“Are you sure you have enough money?”

“Sure, Dad, we'll be in San Francisco only a day or—” He stopped as if he'd made a mistake. One of the girls broke the silence.

“So short a time?”

“But I've told you there's nothing to worry about. I may be stationed in Japan or Formosa or . . . or the Philippines. My orders don't say that I'm going to Korea, for sure.”

The conductor began taking tickets; time was running out. The boy was trying to heft his heavy duffel bag onto his shoulder. The father looked as if he were going to help him, but he stopped and let the boy lift it up by himself.

There was just one person standing in front of me now. I couldn't watch them any more, but I was certain I would hear them sobbing. The only thing I heard was the boy, behind me now, who called out once more, “Write to me.” I gave my ticket to the conductor and started down the rampway. What was wrong with them? I guessed they just didn't care at all. They were probably leaving now, laughing together. I looked back.

They were still standing there in a half-circle, crying together, silently and with great dignity. The boy was walking opposite me, bending slightly under the weight of the duffel bag. He didn't look back; he didn't have to.

The rampway sloped down to the rainy night where the train waited for us. I was sick with shame and envy. I couldn't bear to look at him again.

COLORS

SHARON McCONNELL

I see things differently—
Pink winds in the skies,
Purple apples cling to trees,
No tears in his eyes.

THE STORM

KATHERINE PILLAR

The wind is blowing through the trees,
And makes a moaning sound.
The rain comes pouring from the sky
And splashing to the ground.

The thunder rolls, and then you see
The lightening flash so bright,
And by this light across the skies,
You clearly see at night.

And then the storm has gone away.
What do you hear at last?
Naught, but the stillness of the night
That means the storm is past.

POSSESSION

ROY CROSTHWAITE

I implore Thee never send
Another day like this.
In Thy time without an end
Never lend the air the bliss
That now its rushing atoms give—
Not for a man who is to live.

Never draw the hills afar
In this blue at heaven's rim,
Nor let a daisy bend a star
To make these constellations dim.
Let the sun burn low and cold
'Ere other days be drowned in gold.

Yet I know that by Thy art
These whispering atoms might have blown
To stir some ancient poet's heart
Who willed the wind what now I own.
He haunts the air, whose song is dumb;
So shall I sing for those to come.

NIGHT DELIVERY

FRANK PEARCE

Todd Baker stood on the loading dock, watching sheet lightning dance around the summer night sky. He took slow deliberate drags from a cigarette. The smoke drifted away into the infinity of the night. "She's all loaded and ready to go," said one of the Negroes who had been loading the truck. Todd mashed out the cigarette on the concrete and took the pink sales invoice from the clipboard behind him.

"Tell the boss I'll park the truck behind the warehouse and take the keys with me when I get back." He stuck the invoice in his cap and climbed into the truck. The motor growled like a dog which was being put out of the house on a cold winter night. Todd put the truck in gear, swung onto the street, and eased back in the seat. There was little traffic on the road.

His mind began to wander: Barbara was mad when she hung up. Her mother had given her a steak, and she had already started cooking it when I called. I tried to explain. She doesn't like to be alone at night either. I told her to go over to her mother's house, but she wouldn't. She can be so damn stubborn at times. Maybe I should get a factory job, work eight hours and go home. Barbara would like that. She knew when she married me that I would have to be on the road a lot.

Todd looked at his watch. Nine-thirty. It'll be another hour before I get there. The air blowing into the cab was muggy. Todd could feel beads of sweat trickling down from his armpits over his ribs. His shirt was soaked too. He fished a cigarette from his pocket; it was wet too. "Too damn hot," he thought.

Up the road a red stop-light stood out like a sentry in the night, warning him to keep his mind on the road. Todd pressed the brake pedal to slow the truck. He noticed the pedal went down farther than usual before the truck came to a halt. "I'd better check the brakes while they unload," he thought.

The truck rolled on through the humid night. Telephone poles and towns alike seemed to fly by. At last, he saw the lights of the delivery warehouse ahead. He swung the truck into the lot, backed it up to the dock, and got out. Two sleepy-eyed Negroes emerged from what Todd presumed to be the warehouse office. "Is the manager inside?" he inquired.

"Yeah," replied one of them.

Todd climbed the steps and went into the office. A stubby, unshaven man in a sweat-drenched undershirt sat behind the desk drinking beer. "You'll have to sign this invoice," Todd told him. He took the pink slip, looked it over, and initialed it without saying a word. "Is there some place open where I can get a bite to eat?" Todd asked.

"Bluebird Cafe, three blocks down on the left, stays open all night. You can't miss it."

"Thanks," Todd turned to leave.

The man stopped him. "Care to have a beer with me while you wait? It's hot as hell tonight."

"No, thanks. I've got to drive back tonight. I guess I had better get something to eat instead."

"You can't miss it. Big blue neon sign blinks on and off all the time."

Todd closed the door and walked in the direction the man had told him. He noticed that the lightning had begun to fork like an angry serpent shooting its tongue toward the earth. "Bluebird Cafe," he thought, "greasy hamburgers, greasy spoon, greasy waiter." He went in and sat on a stool near the counter.

"What for ya', mister?" the man behind the counter quizzed.

"Couple of hamburgers and coffee."

"Two burgers an'a cup of Java," the waiter yelled toward the kitchen of the Bluebird Cafe.

Todd ate slowly. The hamburgers were greasy. He knew the two Negroes would take a long time unloading the truck. He played a couple of selections on the juke-box, not really paying any attention to the words or the music. Rain had begun to fall. A clock on some important building chimed eleven.

Todd waited for a slack in the rain and walked back to the warehouse. It was locked and the men were gone. Rain had blown into the seat of the truck's cab. "Damn Niggers." He cursed the Negroes for not thinking to roll the windows up. After wiping the seat with a rag, he lit a cigarette and started home.

The rain, beating on the top of the cab, made Todd drowsy. He yawned. "This is a helleva job," he thought. "You never know when you will be home. You drive all night and get a few measly bucks for it. I should get another job. Barbara would like that. I would be home at night. Old-man Jackson would probably have a cat with a barbed wire tail if I quit, but I think I will anyway. To hell with old-man Jackson. I have to worry about Todd Baker."

Todd was speeding now because he was in a hurry to get home.

As he broke over a big hill, he tapped the brakes, but the pedal went all the way to the floorboard. Todd was wide awake now. My God, the brakes are gone. I'll never make it through the bridge at the bottom of the hill. Blindly, he pumped the brake pedal. . . .

A passing motorist found the wreck a few minutes later. The rain had stopped; the air was cooler. Todd Baker was no longer a truck driver. Todd Baker was no longer.

AEONS

SHARON McCONNELL

Come, come and stay a while
This love that came so late.
Touch my hair and kiss my hand
While we two sit and wait,
For death must come so early,
And love has come so late.

MARRIAGE

SHARON McCONNELL

marriage comes upon people gradually
and is not really real
until one morning they awaken
and can't remember that
it ever was different
and he takes out the garbage
and she makes the coffee
allowing two cups for him
and breathlessly
their daughter in law
comes in the back door
without knocking
to get the lace tablecloth
for her daughter's
wedding reception
at the church
that afternoon

TO INDECISION

JERRY SANDS

Could I but love this girlish figure fair
Which through my waking, crazy dreams doth twirl,
Then 'deed I would adore with all my heart
This liling lass, this saucy lass, this girl!

The pensive, mocking laughter of her eyes
Declares full loud the secret in her smiles,
Which silent, speak but indiscriminate
In paradoxes linked to lovely wiles.

But when my love, announced with harp and drum,
Returns as faint and whisp'ring in my ear
As far off notes by tiny swallows sung,
Then help, and soothe my eye, and wipe my tear.

Should I be taunted, tempt by lips which turn
The hearts of all impervious to my pain,
Or should I share with even one the bliss,
'Tis shared with none, when kissed, I plead my claim?

Oh liling lass, oh saucy sass, oh love
For whom I weep, and dream for whom I sleep,
Come sear or soothe, come lilt or love this heart,
This mind, this soul which longs your heart to keep!

WHERE FIND?

RALPH MILLS

The crimson skies of early morn,
Though to some they may have beauty,
Are bloody sights to weary souls
Who gaze at them with sleepless eyes
After the night with incubus
In eerie lands where sadness dwells.

What Fate has played this joke and laughs
At tortured souls in hells of life
And blesses them with a special gift—
A soul that quivers in the night
And is one with melancholy
And roams abroad when the rains fall,
Is set asea with solemn thoughts
At the sight of a dying star?

Who gives this soul one happy hour
Of that well-earned forgetfulness
That follows tortured hours with sleep
And who, in sleep, pricks unhealed sores
With unsterile fingers of dreams
That torture us to reveille
And thoughts of things long since interred
'Neath the refuse of misused life?

O Sordid Fate, what can I do?
Is there no peace for this poor soul
On this side of the certain grave?
Am I doomed to live all my days
On the cold and ebony sands
Of forlorn, melancholy isles?
Where dwells Psyche in search of souls
And where grows the tree of life?

PLANE TO RENO

JANET KING

A pale-blue convertible crept down the road behind the maroon sports car with a dented right fender. Traffic was unusually heavy today. This piddling pace irritated—infuriated—the young man driving the convertible. His sun-tanned face was splotched with anger as he intently watched the road ahead. A young woman sat beside him, quiet, cool, and beautiful—and slightly impatient. From time to time she glanced nervously at her watch. The plane left in thirty-five minutes. The plane to Reno and to. . . There was no need even to think about it, no need to torture herself any further. It was over—through—finished: Her marriage, her life with this bronze, complex individual sitting beside her—but her love for him

would never be over. It seemed strange that he had offered to drive her to the airport, but he had insisted and she had not wanted to start another argument. She did not want the memory of their last morning together to be marred by anger.

Charles Kimbrough sat silent, staring at the car in front of his. He wanted to pound on the accelerator, to beat on the horn—but it would be of no use. No use. No use to tell himself that Diane still loved him—that he loved her. But he did; he *did* love her. Not as desperately as he had the day he married her, but certainly as much. He admitted that his feelings toward her had changed a little, but he was no longer a boy and he felt that his love for her had matured even as he had.

Enough of that. Concentrate on the matter at hand—getting to the airport.

He did not want to look at her—he did not have to. He knew that the wind was blowing her short blond hair out of place. She refused to wear a scarf. “I hate scarves,” she had told him, vehemently, on that blissful fourth day of their honeymoon when they had gone out on the lake by themselves. “Scarves make me feel ugly and prudish.” The wind had been blowing her hair then and he had stood there, watching the blond curls bouncing out of place. “You don’t ever need to feel ugly,” he had told her and had kissed her lightly on the bridge of her nose. She had been Dee, and he had been Chuck, her “golden boy,” and they had been deliriously happy. Those days were gone now, the happy times and the nicknames. The two of them had gradually drifted apart. True, his job had kept him away from home a great deal, but they really didn’t need each other as much as they once had. They were merely a man and a woman, driving to the airport to catch a plane—and they were late!

He snapped on the radio. He needed something to break the stillness in the car.

The plane would leave in twenty-two minutes. “I’ll never make it,” he thought. He had not considered the possibility of heavy traffic this morning. There never was much on Fridays. Oh, good Heavens! This was Labor Day weekend! He had forgotten all about it. Of course, that explained the number of surging cars pressing their ways down the super highway. He wondered if any other man was driving his wife to a divorce.

“Things will be different now,” he had told her this very morning. “My new job—I’ll be home more often. I won’t be on the road any more. We can have wonderful times together—go up to Hub-

leins' new night club, maybe—make a real night of it. With this three-thousand-dollar raise we can afford another car—one for you, just all your own. Or maybe you'd rather move to another apartment or another neighborhood, one with more class? Sure, that's what we'll do. Will that make you happy? Will that make you like the girl I married? Sure it will. . . .”

“Oh, my darling,” she had thought. “Things will never be different as long as you feel the same . . . always driving yourself to make the most sales, always trying to earn more money than anyone else. You've been kidding yourself all along that success is what you want and all the time you don't know what it's doing to you. You don't know how it's changing you. Hubleins' indeed!”

But she had only answered quietly: “It's too late, now, to change things. It's no use, Charles, to talk about it any more. Some day you'll realize that there are more important things in life than money.”

Ten minutes before the plane would leave. He had turned off onto a side road hoping to beat the traffic and he suddenly realized the mistake he had made. Diane had insisted on making this plane. There was no reason to prolong things any longer. If she missed this flight, there would only be more agonizing hours for her to wait—agonizing hours for both of them. Eight minutes—the airport must be only three or four miles farther. The traffic cleared miraculously, and he thought for the first time that he might actually make it to the plane in time. He was vaguely aware that the radio was still playing. “Autumn Leaves”—appropriate for this time of year. “I'll miss you most of all, my darling, when autumn leaves start to fall.” I'll miss you most of all—The airport loomed ahead. He was going to make it on time after all! The radio played on. “Because”—beautiful piece. Judy Somebody had sung it at their wedding. “Because God made thee mine I'll cherish you”—How much the words had meant to him then. He remembered with a sudden pang how his heart had throbbed when he saw her start down the aisle toward him. “I'll cherish you”—I'll cherish you. Suddenly, as if it were a picture, he saw his marriage spread bare before him. He saw how he had failed, how he had let his thirst and hunger for wealth and success build a glass curtain between them, how he had taken her love for granted and had given her so little in return, even though he had felt it within him. He realized what she had meant that morning when she had told him there were more important things than money. “I'll cherish you.” If only she still loved him—

He glided to a stop in front of the terminal. "Dee," he whispered. She turned to face him for the first time. Her eyes were wide and luminous, her mascara slightly streaked. "Dee," he mumbled. "Oh, Chuck," she cried. "Chuck, I don't want to go!"

The little girl standing outside the airport tugged at her mother's skirt and pointed to the couple in the blue convertible. "Looky, Mama." Her mother smiled as she led her child away. "Someday you'll know, my dear, that it's perfectly normal for two people in love to embrace in public!"

DESTINATION: MOUNTAIN TOP

ROBERT L. JONES

Standing on the mountain top with the cool breeze caressing my body with feminine gentleness, the soft, green grass making a carpet finer than velvet beneath my feet, I knew that this was the only place for Mary.

Taking off my coat, I folded it and laid it on the ground to serve as a pillow. Relaxing in my bed of grass, I closed my eyes and thought of the past.

Mary and I were married in 1884, in Oakwood, Virginia. After spending a couple of days in Tennessee on our honeymoon, we returned to the little valley of Oakwood, and I began my career as a farmer.

The valley was a friendly place, and the only objection we had to it was that it was so hot during the summer months. I can remember several times when I would come in from the fields with my clothes wet with sweat and find Mary cooking over the hot stove. She would look out the window toward the mountains. "Look up there on the mountain top, Dear," she said. "I bet the air is as cool as a bubbling brook and the grass as soft as velvet."

We were always planning to take our lunch on some Sunday afternoon and to hike to our mountain top. The Sundays that we planned to go on our outing were always plagued with some interference. I remember one Sunday we were dressed and were prepared to go, but Mary's cousin came unexpectedly from Tennessee. The following Sunday we were leaving our house when Mary slipped on the steps and broke her leg. Our dreams for the outing were ended because the doctor said that her leg would always be too weak to make the climb.

Mary looked pathetically at me from her bed and said, "Now, I will never know what it's like on *top of our mountain.*"

Forty-two years have passed since then, and many wonderful inventions—from the car to the radio—have been the result of continuous research by scientists and engineers. However, nothing that science can produce nor a plant manufacture will ever have the beauty of this majestic mountain top. . . .

"Oh, I must have dozed off," I said aloud. Rubbing my eyes, I looked at the sky and saw that the sun was slowly fading away, and that the sky was turning from a beautiful, pale blue to a deep, dark blue. I got up and put on my old wrinkled coat.

Walking about five feet, I looked down at the freshly-dug soil and whispered, "Yes, Dear, the air is as cool as a bubbling brook, and the grass as soft as velvet."

After rearranging the flowers on Mary's grave, I started down the slowly-winding path from *our mountain top.*

DEATH INTO LIFE

GLENN FIELDS

The dark afternoon shadows of life fall
over the far-reaching horizon.

My days are drawing nigh an end.

In my soul is felt the drifting spark
that I cling to.

I grow weak and my eyes begin to
close, as if they were curtains,
pulled by an invisible hand.

Come, Death, I do not fear thee; in my
heart is peace and joy.

I think not of death as forever lying
in a dismal grave but as a great
expedition to eternal life in
heavenly bliss.

Death, I am ready; but do not
brag; thou shall not claim
me long.

I shall overcome thee and rob
thee of thy unreconciled claim
to me.

Grave, you will house my dust, but
I shall deceive you like the one
that long ago emerged victorious
over you.

The sting of death shall not touch
me and the grave shall never
shout out with the Victor's cry.

Vile creatures, I come,
but only for an ephemeral time.

My mansion has been built and
I go to occupy it at the foot
of Him that prepared it.

The Horn sounds loud and clear:
He calls me home.

Goodbye, Death—I go.

WAITING

JEANETTE RYAN

In a cottage over the meadow
lives a lady small and old.
As she sews beside the fireplace,
the wind whistles sharp and cold.

Once she was so bright and happy
as she worked from day to day,
But a lot of things can happen
when the children go away.

Now and then she stops to listen
as the wind blows at the door.
Oh, if only all those memories
would not haunt her evermore.

As the firelight flickers dimly
and her eyes fill up with tears,
She must realize she is forgotten
all these long and lonely years.

So if you have a dear mother
who is waiting alone and cold,
Won't you go and give her comfort?
Someday soon you'll grow old.

LIFE CAN BE SWEET

LESLIE BARGO

Sometimes we take for granted
the blessings of this earth.
And never stop to realize
how little we are worth.

We think that we are powerful
and the world is at our feet,
And nothing could ever come our way
that we could not defeat.

But no one is powerful by himself;
No one can stand alone.
These are not just words, my friend;
It has already been shown.

There is a God who watches us.
Beside Him, we are weak,
And when we realize this fact,
Life can be pure and sweet.

COME WITH ME

MARY OSBORNE

Come with me—
Oh, come and see;
There are blossoms
On the redbud tree

And though the earth
Is brown and bare
A million tulips
Are sleeping there.

So come with me—
Come and see;
'Tis spring again,
There's lots to see!

LIFE

MIKE MCGRATH

i am the boy
who can enjoy
life.

i am the man
who can't understand
life.

i am the one
who will not shun
life.

but

i am the guy
who must some day die.

i guess
that's
life.

IF

TURLEY TUDOR

If I could live this life again,
The life I've thrown away,
I wonder if I'd do the same,
Or if there'd be some changes made.

This life's too short to make mistakes,
And you can't go back and fix them,
So what is done let be the past,
Go on—an on—when life looks grim.

I'm getting old and grey and withered now,
An my days are fading and short you see,
I'm only dreaming as old men do,
I hope there's a place upstairs for me.

REVENGE

ROY ROBERSON

The campus lay before him in all its beauty. The massive structures were built at the top of rolling hills of green grass and surrounded by a beautiful maze of blue sky. The sight caused Jim Hecht's heart to pound like a steam hammer. He had heard of the beauty of Wesley College, but he never dreamed it would impress such an unemotional person as he. In every direction the Parthenian structures stood and each glance filled him a little more with the realization of his own significance.

Jim's reason for picking Wesley College was not a usual one, and as he stood there on the first day of his freshman year, he forced himself to remember his one goal and one aim in attending this school. Jim had a good friend, Phil Rodgers by name, who was a constant source of worry to him. It seems that all through high school Phil always managed to be the better of the two. In sports, in classes, and with the girls, Phil was always one jump ahead of Jim. Phil was quarterback of the high-school football team and ran all the touchdowns, while Jim played the unheralded position of guard and received no glory. Phil received perfect grades, while Jim remained in the average group of the class. Phil dated the school queens, while Jim was forced to pick from what was left. Phil, Phil, Phil, the name created in Jim an automatic response of aggravation.

He turned to survey the campus one last time before he returned to his room. He made a silent pledge to himself and the college. A pledge that had but one theme behind it—get the best of Phil Rodgers!

"Going to the big get-acquainted dance tonight, Jim?" Phil inquired as Jim entered the room.

"I suppose so. It should be a rather nice affair. Have you got a date lined up yet, Phil?"

"Nope, I think I'll just go stag; there should be plenty of girls to go around."

"They'll go around, all right," thought Jim, "all around you." Even though he knew that the only way he could beat Phil and satisfy himself was through fair competition, Jim had been beaten so much that he hated to compete with him. "I'll never give up," he mumbled as he headed for the shower to prepare for the dance, "I'll never give up."

If there had been any high-school immaturity left in Jim Hecht, it was quickly removed after an hour at his first college dance. The

people acted so mature and grown up that Jim almost felt as if he were pretending when he attempted to act as they were. He was having a good time, however, in his new role of college student and he felt a tinge of excitement as the dance previewed the advantages that college life would bring him.

Near the middle of the evening, Jim decided to take a stroll in the lovely garden just outside the hall where the dance was being held. The moon was full, and the flowers seemed like real images dancing and playing about in the wind.

"Beautiful, isn't it," a feminine voice came from behind a nearby tree.

"Wh-What? Oh, yes, it certainly is," Jim stammered in a startled voice.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you, but I noticed that you were enjoying the view as much as I. My name is Susie Sands. What's yours?"

"Jim Hecht. I'm glad to know you, Susie."

Susie moved into the moonlight, and Jim was granted a complete view of her. She was short and distinguished-looking, and the shadows cast mysterious images about her as she moved toward him. Jim felt the sudden urge to reach out and grab her, but he instantly scolded himself silently.

As they walked and talked, Jim slowly became infatuated with this lovely creature, and he was shocked from his dream-world when all of a sudden, from nowhere, Phil appeared.

"Well—all right, if you'll excuse me, Jim."

"Of course, go right ahead," Jim realized he sounded a bit artificial.

Phil took Susie's hand, and they walked off together down the path. Jim watched Phil's muscular frame escort the small girl through the silent rows of flowers.

"They look nice together," he thought. "Too darn nice." He poked his hands in his pockets and slumped down on a nearby bench. The flowers about him moved in the cool breeze. It seemed as if they were dancing in a circle, all holding hands, just like Susie and Phil.

* * * *

The sun sneaked up over the window sill and surprised Jim with its bright rays. For the first time in his life he was eager to get up. It was his first day of classes, and he was anxious to see what was in store for him.

“Get out of bed, lazy bones,” a familiar voice called from across the room. “We’ve got a lot to do today.”

“What in the world are you doing out of bed so early, Phil? I usually have to get you out.”

“I’ve got a date for breakfast, son,” Phil replied in a positive tone. “What did you think of Susie anyway? Quite a doll, isn’t she?”

“She certainly is,” Jim proclaimed, “I think she’s beautiful.”

“Hey, there, boy, get that twinkle out of your eye, she only goes for men like me.” Phil’s voice was too stern for his statement to have been just a joke.

“Go ahead, rub it in,” Jim thought, “but I’ll get you yet.”

Jim had a hard time eating breakfast. His eyes kept wandering across the room to where Susie and Phil were sitting. “If they just weren’t having such a good time,” he muttered. “Look at them laughing. If I were sitting there with her, she’d probably get up and walk away. How does he do it anyway?”

Even Susie was forgotten as Jim met his first professor of the day. Eight o’clock was the time assigned for the start of the first-period class, and at exactly eight o’clock the English professor entered the room. There was a slight smile on his friendly face as he walked to the desk in the front of the room. His walk was soft, and he leaned slightly forward as he moved. The papers he had been carrying under his arm were dropped on the desk, and he turned to face the class.

“Good morning,” he said, adjusting his glasses. “Well, what shall we do on your first day in college?” He had moved to the side of the desk, and with one hand on the edge of the table, the other in his pocket, he continued. “If you have no suggestions, let me offer one. Let’s talk about writing.” His friendly voice and good speech were enough to tell Jim that if all his professors were like this one, he would enjoy his work.

The weeks passed, and Jim’s feeling of dejection about Phil and Susie increased each time he saw them together. He was attempting to conquer this feeling by trying to succeed in his classes, improve in athletics, and just forget it in any way he could.

It was a beautiful day for a swim. The sky was blue and the water was warm. Jim was glad his friends had talked him into joining the swimming team. He enjoyed the competition, and these daily work-outs were helping him forget Susie and Phil. He swam to the edge of the pool and was preparing to climb out when the smiling face met his.

“Hi!” Susie said. “How’s the water?”

“Oh, hello,” he said in surprise, pulling himself out of the pool. “It’s just perfect.” He wanted to continue, but he was at a loss for words.

“You swim well, I’ve been watching you,” she came to his rescue.

“Thanks, but I’ve been doing it for a long time, as I remember; I should do it well.”

“I’ve been hoping I would see you ever since that night at the dance,” Susie said, “but every time I do see you it looks like you are avoiding me.”

“Oh, I don’t mean to avoid you, but when I do see you, Phil’s always there, and I don’t want to intrude.”

“But Phil and I—,” she stopped short.

“Talking about me again, honey?” Phil quizzed as he strolled over to the pair. “I keep telling her, Jim, that she shouldn’t brag about me so much, or I’ll begin to believe it.”

“I’m not bragging about you, Phil Rodgers, and you know it,” Susie’s voice was angry.

“Aw—come here, honey, and show Jim how crazy you are about me.” Phil made a grab for her.

It all happened so fast that Jim had no time to move. As Phil clutched Susie’s wrist, she twisted from his grasp and shoved him hard. It was a beautiful backward dive, right into the water.

“Help! I can’t swim. Jim, help me!”

Jim didn’t stop to think, he dived into the deep water and grabbed Phil under the chin. His strong, quick strokes soon had them both to the side of the pool in safety, and Susie offered her assistance in pulling Phil from the water.

“I’ve never been so humiliated in all my life,” Phil said as he made a foolish attempt to wipe off his clothes. “I’ll get you for this, Susie Sands, you wait and see.” He stormed off down the side of the pool and disappeared behind the clubhouse.

Jim broke the silence, “It looks like you’ve lost your boyfriend, Susie.”

“My boyfriend?” Susie yelled. “Listen to me, Jim Hecht,” she shook her finger in his face, “I’ve been trying to get rid of that pest for a month, and if you weren’t so blind you could see that.”

“YOU MEAN—,” he didn’t get a chance to finish.

“Yes, I mean I can’t stand him. The only reason I hung around him in the first place was to get to know you.”

It was suddenly very quiet around the pool. Jim looked at Susie,

and Susie looked at Jim. Suddenly the silence was broken by the laughter echoing across the pool.

As they walked off toward the clubhouse, hand in hand, Jim felt a little ashamed of himself for ever having thought about getting the best of someone like Phil. His slight chuckle made Susie ask, "What's wrong?"

"I just thought of something," Jim said. "Phil can't swim."

SAND DREAMS

TOMMY KELLEY

The child played at kings
And robbers and things,
At soldiers and engineers,
As he scooped up sand;
Then laughed when the hand
Of the sea reached up
Through the pier,
Lev'ling the castles
And parapets
And leaving behind only seaweed,
Like nets,
Dripping salty tears.

TIME

JERRY TAYLOR

Time
Sits alone—
Waiting.

Time
Stands alone—
Watching.

Time
Walks alone—
Into eternity.

THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

VIRGINIA RUPARD

I was driving through a little mountain village one day in late November. The trees were bare, and the gray sky gave a melancholy appearance to the surroundings. A sharp wind was blowing and it promised snow.

The little village seemed deserted. Only the wisps of smoke from the chimneys gave any sign of life. The houses were scattered along each side of a little dirt lane. Most of them were unpainted and showed the marks of years of storms and hardship. The yards were ill-kept and the entire area looked none too prosperous. The barns and other out-buildings were all aged and falling down.

At first this village seemed to be just like all the other villages I had passed through that morning. The rocky, mountain soil provided a meager existence for the handful of farmers in these mountain villages. Yet there was something different about this one. It seemed that time had been rolled back at least a century. Everything seemed quaint and oddly interesting.

One thing that added old-fashioned simplicity to the scene was a little one-room school. It was built on a little bank overlooking the dirt lane. One might not have guessed it was a school had it not been for the sign over the door, "Green Branch School." It was a little one-room structure built of hewed logs. Years of weather-beating had made this quaint building the same nondescript color as the other houses in the village. Only the sign over the door was freshly painted with large black letters on a long white plank.

As I opened the car door and stepped out, I could hear singing coming from the direction of the school. It was Sunday, and evidently people were having church services in the school. I decided to join them.

There was no driveway into the school-yard, only an old path that led from the dirt road right up to the old doorstep. This doorstep was merely a rough rock about a foot square laid under the doorway. As I opened the door and stepped inside, the singing had stopped and there was a slight fluttering sound as the congregation turned through their Bibles for the scripture reading the preacher had called out. No one paid the slightest attention to me as I slipped quietly into a back seat. The young preacher, dressed in khaki shirt and over-alls began to read in a deep monotonous voice: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably

to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

As the voice droned on, my eyes began to wander over the large homely room. Not many people had come to church that morning. Only about twenty places were occupied. Most of the worshipers were older people, wearing clean work clothes and that peaceful expression which comes from the simplicity of life and hard work.

The preacher was tall and thin and looked to be in his early thirties. I found out later that he was also the village schoolmaster. He stood behind a large table which served as teacher's desk during school days. Behind him was a huge fireplace built of rough stone. Two logs, each about four feet long, were burning brightly and sending sparks flashing up the chimney and occasionally shooting out into the room. The large stone hearth was scarred and blackened. One could well imagine the games, scuffling and merriment around the big fireplace at recess on rainy days.

The floor was rough and unpainted, as were also the walls and ceiling. The seats were made of hand-hewed puncheons. The first two rows of seats were unoccupied. On closer examination I saw that the front seats had no backs. These were for the small children. They were designed from logs split open with holes drilled in the round side of the logs. The legs were round pegs placed in the drilled holes. These rude benches were so high that small children's feet could not possibly touch the floor. I could envision a row of little legs swinging back and forth, during the dull hours, like so many clock pendulums.

Over the fireplace there hung a large chart about three feet square. It seemed to be in the form of a book, with pages that could be turned. Each page evidently contained a day's lesson in reading. The chart was placed so that two pages were showing with two days' lessons. On one page was a picture of a large green frog sitting on a log. While reading the lesson under the picture, I could almost hear the young children's piping chant—

This is a frog. It is on a log.
Hop, Frog! It hops!

Each word was pointed out by a long hickory stick which may have done double duty as a rod for mischievous boys. Today this ominous looking instrument rested on two nails driven into the rough wall above the chart.

Old oil lamps with blackened chimneys were the only source of

light except the windows. These lamps were fastened to the walls on each side of the room.

My mind wandered on and on over the rude but peaceful room. Suddenly I became aware that all heads were bowed except mine and that the young preacher was pronouncing the benediction. I sheepishly realized that I had looked around and dreamed through the entire sermon. Like many a young and energetic boy or girl, sitting perhaps on this very chair I occupied, I had gazed and day-dreamed while the voice of a young teacher spoke of the great truths of life.

But, unlike the young school boy, I had not wished to be away. It was as if I were reliving my grade-school days. All too soon I heard the young preacher say "Amen!" with a note of triumph in his voice, and the service was over. Tomorrow the room would be filled with chattering boys and girls, children who shared in a great tradition, the one-room school.

GOD KNOWS

TURLEY TUDOR

Whence came all?

In the beginning, God created the Heaven's and the earth.
He made light and darkness.
Then God made all living creatures.
He made man in his own image.
He provided food for all these creatures.
He said, "Be Fruitful and Multiply,
And Replenish the Earth,"
And so this came to pass.

Whither goeth all?

Nation shall rise against nation,
And there will be wars and rumors of wars;
But the end is not yet.
Man builds up earthly treasures,
Only to leave them and return to dust.
Is that all?

Man's soul will go to Heaven,
A place of paradise,
Or to Hell,
A place of flaming fire;
There—he will stay, for ever—and ever.
Nothing was said of the other creatures.

Now, the time is nigh for the great warning;
No man knoweth the day, nor the hour.
Then—the warning will be given;
A great voice from Heaven will be heard,
There will be darkness,
The Heaven's will shake,
The trumpet will sound,
And the earth will be destroyed.
This—will be the end.

What is the purpose of it all?

It is not for man to know.
Life—is like a fog,
 That comes and goes;
 It comes slowly—bringing nothing;
 It hangs for a while—then fades away,
 Leaving as it came—
 Taking nothing.

DEATH IS A COMFORTABLE GARMENT

JERRY TAYLOR

Death is a comfortable garment.
 Once you put it on,
The tightness that you felt in life
 Is quite dissolved and gone.

No binding seems to cut you
 In this loose and flowing drape;
It envelops and surrounds you
 In its warm, loose-fitting cape.

Yet as you look upon the garment
Upon its far-off rack
You dread the coming moment
When you cannot put it back.

But the instant that you put it on
No longer do you feel
That fearful, tearful dread you felt
When time and life were real.

Death is a comfortable garment
That fits each one so well.
It should. 'Twas made "to measure"
In Heaven—or in Hell.

A SCREAM FOR HELP

TURLEY TUDOR

A sudden crash and screams broke the silence one beautiful spring morning on Highway 60, in Flat Rock, Kentucky. Mrs. Clark, a middle-aged woman ran to the door and saw it was her daughter, Jean, who had been to the store in the pick-up truck. She ran out into the yard calling for help and fell on the way down to the driveway. People were gathering around now and more cars were stopping. Some said get a doctor, others said call a wrecker. But in all the excitement nobody did anything.

A small truck came out the gravel road to turn onto the highway but came to a sudden stop as the girl screamed. A negro man jumped out of the truck and ran like a savage to the wrecked truck, which was lying on one side on a bank. The door and top were caved in and the girl was trapped, unable to move. The truck was smoking and had caught fire. The negro ran through the crowd and up the incline and turned the truck onto its wheels by himself. He jerked the door open, got in and humped up in the seat and pushed the top of the truck up off the girl as though it were cardboard. He grabbed the girl in his arms and carried her to the house. She was more scared than anything. As he was going back down through the yard, Mr. Clark, a tall, lean man, drove up in his car. Mr. Clark jumped out of his car and started down toward the wreck when he saw the negro man leaving the yard. His first remark was, "What's that damn nigger doing on my place?" After it

was all over, nobody knew who he was. They were so excited nobody asked. They just stared at Mr. Clark.

After about a week the newspaper heard the story and started looking for this superman. They found their man in a blacksmith shop about five miles from Flat Rock, at a little place called Junction City. He was a middle-aged man named Sam Jackson, who had lived there all his life. His father had been a blacksmith there for years. He was a quiet sort of man and liked by everybody. Sam weighed about two hundred and twenty-five pounds and was strong as an ox. He could push a hundred-pound keg of nails over his head with one hand like it was a five-pound bag of sugar.

Sam had been to shoe some show horses out Clark's way and was just driving by when he heard a scream. The reporter asked Sam what came over him when he heard the girl scream. Sam said he really didn't remember what happened. A day or two later the paper came out with Sam's picture and a story about the accident. It also stated that Sam had lost his wife and two daughters only a year before when their car plunged into the river near their house. When Sam heard the screams, he ran out of the house just in time to see the car disappearing through a hole in the ice-covered river.

THE ROMANTIC TRIANGLE

ROBERT L. JONES

Although I had loved him for the last twenty years, I was losing him to another woman.

I can remember when we would walk to church together, and he would tell me that I was the prettiest girl there. I can remember when we would drive out to the country, take our lunch and observe the wonders of nature in our own simple way.

I know now that I was taking too much for granted. I never let myself think of the possibility that someday he might love another woman. When the future brought this woman into his life, I was extremely jealous of her. I tried everything possible to keep my John from seeing her. Somedays I would even pretend that I was ill, and that the only remedy was for him to stay by my side.

Lonely? Did you ever really feel lonely? I knew that if he left me for this other woman, I would be completely alone. This thought penetrated deeper and deeper into my mind. I could think of nothing else.

From lying awake at night and from eating very little, I soon be-

gan to lose weight. The inevitable black circles that appeared under my eyes made me look years older.

Why was she doing this to me? She couldn't love him any more than I. I began to see her as a grasping woman who would stop at nothing until she destroyed both John and me. Yet what could I do to prevent his loving her? Whenever I would say anything to John about her, he would always change the subject or laugh it off.

One morning while washing out a pair of my stockings, I made up my mind that I would go to see her and ask her to let John alone. I would even try to buy her off if it proved to be necessary.

Arriving at her apartment around noon, I rang the door bell. Then I waited to face my opponent. After opening the door, she was stunned for a second and then, politely but nervously, asked me to come in. "Won't you sit down?" I nodded and sat down.

"It's lovely out today, isn't it?"

With cat-like agility, I quickly rose and replied, "I didn't come here to discuss the weather."

When she had first opened the door, she had looked very pleasant and possessed a mild, shy gleam in her eyes, but after this remark of mine, the mildness turned to fierceness and the shy, pleasant appearance faded away. She stared coldly at me and said, "Well, just what did you want to talk to me about?"

"You know darn well why I came here. I want you to let John alone."

Turning around and facing the window, she said, "I'm sorry for you, but I love John, and we intend to get married."

On hearing that statement, I ran out of the apartment and down the steps. When I reached my car, I burst into tears.

Ten years have passed since then, but strange as it may seem, I have witnessed a happy decade. She and John got married, and I realized that "I wasn't losing a son but gaining a daughter."

DECEIT

BONNIE JEAN WESLEY

I smiled as though I owned all happiness,
Yet sadness deep within I did possess.
Concealed inside my heart no friend would know
There burned a hurt I hid with outward glow;
Pretending that I held the Jovial Key,
I bluffed my friends and sometimes even me!

Thirty

LOVE IS LIFE

T. W. CLEM

Without love, there is nothing.
Love is everywhere, always beckoning
To those who are alive and those who are numb.
It is the dewdrop on a rose, or the smell of
Freshly laundered clothes.
It is tiny violets pushing towards the sky
From a shady place.
Or a happy smile on a small child's face.

Love is silent in an understanding glance;
And in the free soaring of a bird.
Love is noisy in the first cry of a newly-born,
And deafening in the flash and fury of a storm.
Sometimes it is slow, as a seed growing to a tree;
Sometimes it is rapid, as the symphonic flight of a bee.
It is angry, as the scolding words of a parent,
And it is gentle, as the lapping waves at ebbtide.

Love is the glimmer of moonlight
On a million jewels in a snow-covered yard.
It is the gentle song of the treetops to a blind man;
It is the sinking of the sun in a crimson sky.
It is the lull before a storm.
Love is the glorious rising of a summer sun
Calling me to get up and live.
Love is life.

YESTERDAY'S LOVE

BONNIE JEAN WESLEY

'Twas yesterday I had a dream so fair,
No trace of imperfection lingered there.
My life was but a fairy tale, 'tis true—
What less could one expect while loving you?
Today I shall no longer search the past.
My cherished life would not and could not last.
Now yesterday is only memory,
But love is like the wind, the time, the sea.

A RURAL ELECTRIC LINE

JESS WILSON

I like to see it span the land
And leap from hill to hill
A symphony of motion
Yet always standing still.

Swiftly down the road it glides
Then leaps to yon high hill,
Across the pasture lot and woods
Then down beside the mill.

Inert and lifeless is each part,
Each anchored to its place,
Yet reaching everywhere at once
As if it runs a race.

A ROVER

RALPH MILLS

When the black of night departed
Leaves the gray sky still well guarded
By early morning's foggy mist

When the rose goes unregarded
With it's petals still unparted
Waiting for Apollo's first kiss

When the cricket's song is over
And the dew drops from the clover
And the sparrow enters the med,

Homeward trods the winesoaked rover
With his head still hanging over
Stumbling home to a lonely bed.

He did not ask for his sorrow
Nor from God his life to borrow
But he accepts now that he's here.

And yet with each new-found morrow
He again will drown his sorrow
And drink to life with golden beer.

THE SHORTEST NOVEL EVER WRITTEN

TOMMY LOGSDON

Chapter I.

Her sparkling eyes sneaked an occasional quick peek in his direction between sips of her coke.

“Hi,” he said finally.

“Hi,” she answered.

Chapter II.

In the darkness of the first balcony her tiny hand searched out his awkward one.

“How soft and precious,” he blushed.

And she joined him.

Chapter III.

His trembling fingers prized open the lid of the box.

“You’re wonderful,” she gasped.

“Do you like it,” he questioned, knowing the answer all along.

Chapter IV.

For a long time she picked immaginary lint off his jacket.

“My father says we’re too young,” she said finally.

“And you think he’s right?” he asked, seeing the heart-shattering answer in her eyes.

Chapter V.

Her high heels clicked out an exciting melody on the sidewalk.

“Hi,” she waved.

“Your high heels sure click out an exciting melody on the sidewalk,” he told her.

Chapter VI.

As he opened the car door she paused for a moment.

“You know,” she said, “My father was right. We were too young.”

“Yes, but that was back in chapter four,” he said after a moment.

“Yes, I guess you’re right,” she admitted, sending a chill up his neck and as he kissed her she shared that chill and eventually she shared his name and his life and his children.

MORAL: If a strange girl speaks to you in a drugstore,—RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!!

DOLLY CHINA'S FUNERAL

SHIRLEY ANNE MURPHY

I was five years old when I found Dolly China. Icky Bicky and I had been making chocolate cakes out of the damp dirt in the field next to my house, when my shovel struck something hard. I dug and dug and finally brought up Dolly China. Icky Bicky helped some too, but he was so small that he couldn't do very much, but at least he tried.

Dolly China was about four inches long, the smallest doll I had ever seen. Icky Bicky was jealous because she was taller than he, and he kept saying she was big and dirty, and I should throw her away.

I didn't pay any attention to him. Sometimes I wished I hadn't thought him up in the first place! He was always doing bad things that I got blamed for; and he didn't like my ten-year old sister Kathryn or my mother and daddy because they didn't believe in him and were always almost stepping on him. I kept trying to explain to him that they were so old they couldn't understand him, but he kept right on not liking them. He was stubborn like that.

I took Dolly China in the house and washed her, and she turned out to be very white. She had only one leg, poor thing, and no hair at all, but she had pretty little arms and a nice round head.

"Where did you get that funny old china doll?" It was my sister Kathryn speaking. I hadn't meant for Kathryn to see her, but she had.

"She's not funny, and she's not a china!" I said indignantly. "She doesn't have slanty eyes!"

"Silly, china is what she's made out of. I'll bet Mother won't let you keep her."

But mother said that since I had washed her, it was all right, so I named her "Dolly China" and kept her with me all the time. I even slept with her. Kathryn didn't like this very well because Dolly would sometimes slip away from me during the night and end up under Kathryn's back or head. I suppose Icky Bicky put her there. I hadn't seen him often since I had found Dolly China, but he was still playing his tricks.

One day Kathryn and I were playing "hospital." Kathryn always got to be the Doctor, since she was older, but I didn't mind being Nurse because I got to wear the white apron. Dolly China had the mumps, and Kathryn was trying to make her well. She listened to her chest and then looked at me sadly.

“Dolly China has no heart-beat,” she said solemnly. “I pronounce her dead, and she must be cremated as soon as possible.”

I listened to Dolly China’s chest and sure enough, she was dead. “What’s cremated?” I said warily.

“That means we must burn her and keep her ashes in a jar on the mantel.”

I didn’t like the way that sounded, and besides, we didn’t have a mantel, but Kathryn was almost in the fifth grade, and she knew what was best.

We wrapped Dolly China in Kleenex, put her in a soap-powder box and waited for mother to go into the house after she had lit the fire in the trash incinerator.

When mother had gone inside, we placed the box on the fire and stood around talking about what a good doll Dolly China had been, and how sad it was that she had died with the mumps.

A week later Icky Bicky and I were playing with the stuff in the incinerator. Icky Bicky said we could do this as long as mother was out of sight. It was so much fun to hunt for the pieces of tin foil that didn’t burn and to play with bits of blackened newspaper that would fall apart when we picked them up. Then I found Dolly China again. I was ashamed of her because she hadn’t gone to Heaven as Kathryn had said she would, but I took her out of the incinerator anyway. She was black all over, and she was missing an arm as well as a leg. Icky Bicky got mad again and left. He said he would come back when I got rid of her.

This time no amount of washing would get her clean, and mother wouldn’t let me take her to bed with me. Mother said I must leave her on the dresser over night, but after the lights were out I put her on the pillow beside me.

The next morning Dolly China was gone. She wasn’t on my pillow, or under Kathryn’s back, or on the dresser, or anywhere! Mother said it was best that she had disappeared because she was probably unsanitary anyway.

I decided that “unsanitary” must be something even worse than the mumps, but I wasn’t glad Dolly China was gone. I knew what had happened. Icky Bicky had taken her away. Why had I even thought him up in the first place!

TO SPEAK

ANNA JO TAULBEE

The buzzer rang in Jean's dorm room. She laid aside her book and made her way to the lobby to see who wanted her. The girl at the main desk told her there was a telephone call for her. She picked up the receiver and spoke.

From the other end of the wire, a boy's familiar voice answered, "Jean?"

"Yes, this is Jean."

"This is Ben."

"What has happened now?" she asked in an aspirated voice.

"How do you know something has happened? Can't I call you just to talk to you?"

"Yes, I suppose so, but I still think something has happened."

"Oh, all right. I had an accident in the lab."

"How much will it cost you?" she almost snapped in a very sarcastic tone.

"Oh, it isn't that bad. I turned the gas to a burner on before I struck the match. It puffed in my face and I got my hair scorched in the bargain."

"I bet you look pretty," Jean commented.

"I suppose I do," he answered. "I haven't looked. Will you be busy for a few minutes? I'd like to talk to you."

"I don't suppose I'm too busy. I'll wait here for you," she said in a tired voice. She hung up the phone, walked to a sofa near the door, sat down and waited. She began to recall the many times in the last two years this very thing had happened: He would call her and she would wait for him to reach the dorm. They had met when they were sophomores in a small eastern college. Now they were seniors expecting to graduate in a few days. In all the time they had known each other, he had never asked her for a date. She dated other boys quite regularly; but Ben only wanted her to listen to him. She was always ready to hear of his happiness, sorrow, ambitions, and love. She offered her own views on his problems quite often—always helping him with them because she felt his problems were hers. Now here she sat again waiting for him to come with another problem.

She watched him come through the door. She imagined she saw his face light up when he saw her. She knew hers had become glowing when he appeared in the doorway.

He came over and sat down. She asked him how the accident

happened. He told her the details and she made appropriate comments on how good it was that he had not been severely injured. She wanted to ask if it hurt, but she thought she would be showing too much concern if she did. He never once volunteered to tell her whether it hurt or not. Soon he began talking about his home and his plans for the future.

While she sat listening to him tell of his job as a junior engineer with a large South American Engineering corporation, she wondered why he was telling her all about his life. She was indeed very much interested, but she still wondered. She had known for a long time that he was the first man she had ever really and truly wanted to marry. She idly wondered if she would ever meet and marry another man she loved as much as Ben.

She wondered why he had never asked her out. She had asked many of her girl friends if they could answer her problem. They could not, or would not, help her. She wanted to look at him and scream that she loved him, but she sat silently, knowing that he must never know how she felt.

Ben was not concentrating on the chemical apparatus he was working with. Why had Joe asked him to help with those experiments, anyway? Why had he agreed to help when he had planned to do something else. He had decided early in the day that he would try to spend some time with Jean after supper. He wanted to ask her for a date, but she always seemed distant when the subject of dating came up. She talked more like a sister or a mother when she was with him than like a girl who would date him, anyway. He kept asking to talk with her because he wanted to learn more about her; to listen to her talk, but she always succeeded in getting him to talk about himself. He liked to tell her about his plans and hopes for the future, but always while he was talking, he wanted to tell her how she fitted into his future—how she was his future. Then the accident happened.

All day he had looked forward to being with her after supper. Maybe he had become angry when Joe had asked his help with some lab experiments after supper. He said nothing to Joe about having other plans—Joe wouldn't have understood, anyway. They had only been working about an hour when the accident occurred. Maybe he had been thinking too hard of Jean and not enough of the lab experiment. Joe refused to let Ben continue working after the accident, and Ben rushed to the telephone to call Jean. When she answered the phone, he felt the same thrill he felt every time he saw her or heard her speak. Yes, he could come over. He thought

he had set a new record for covering the one-quarter of a mile from the Science Building to the girl's dorm, but he still did not get there quick enough to satisfy his desire to see Jean again. She sat waiting for him in the same manner she had sat dozens of times—waiting for him to come. He knew his face lit up when he saw her, but he tried to cover his joy when she looked up and saw him.

He began talking easily enough—it was always easy to talk to Jean. Soon he was telling her of his new job. He hardly knew what he was saying; all he knew was that he wanted to tell her he loved her, but she sat there just listening, and, he felt, not too interested. She seemed to have her mind elsewhere. He began to wonder who the boy could be and felt a stab of jealousy because he would never be that boy. Of course, she was dreaming of a boy; why shouldn't she dream of another boy when she was bored with his talk. He announced quite suddenly, "Well, Jean, I have kept you from your lessons long enough. I'm so glad you let me come over. It's always so nice to have someone who will listen to me."

"I'm afraid I haven't been a good listener tonight, Ben. I'm sorry."

"That's okay. I never noticed you weren't listening," he lied. After a pause he added, "What are you going to do after graduation?"

"I have a job waiting for me in my home town. I wanted to go out of state for a year or two, but decided I should stay at home and help there," she answered.

"I suppose you will marry one of the boys back home, too," he said slowly.

Jean sighed. "No, Ben, at least not for a good many years. I suppose you will marry some nice girl and take her to South America with you on engineering tours."

"I doubt it. I think I'll enjoy myself more if I go alone. Then, too, it isn't an easy life for a woman."

"I suppose you will meet a lot of girls to keep you company," Jean said, hesitantly.

"I doubt if any of them will care to listen to me the way you have, Jean," Ben said with a longing in his voice.

"Will you be glad to get out of school?" she asked to change the subject.

"I don't know. When I get out of school, I'll have to start working for my own bread and butter. I'll have to start working problems that don't have a set of answers for them, too. I guess I'll miss the old Alma Mater. I've had a pretty good four years here."

“I guess I’ll miss it, too.” Jean responded. “There will be fewer things going on at home than we have here. Not so many nice dances and good clubs. I’ll probably be too busy with my job to attend many of them, anyway.”

Ben shoved his hands in his pockets and stared at his feet. He did so want to ask Jean for a date, but, instead, he said, “Jean, I’m going to miss you when I get out of school. You are the only person who has taken time out of a busy schedule to listen to me, and I’m going to miss you. Best of luck at your job,” he finished.

He looked up at her and saw the tears in her eyes, but thought she was crying because school would soon be out. “I’d better go now and let you get back to your books. I have some studying I have to do tonight, too. Goodbye, Jean.” He turned quickly and left. He walked rapidly to his dorm, carrying his broken heart and downcast soul with him. He almost stumbled into his room, and, ignoring his roommate, flung himself across his bed and cried for the first time since he was a small boy—cried long and hard.

Jean could not even say “Goodbye” to Ben. She watched him turn away from her and felt the tears flow. She whirled around and ran to her room, thankful that her roommate was out, and flung herself across the bed and cried as if her heart would break.

THE JET PLANE

ELMER R. BANKS

O, silvery, streaking stylus,
Playing in ethereal climes,
Drawing soft white lines
On a clear blue sky
Delightful to man’s eye;

O, roaring, destructive monster,
Guarding all civilizations
From enemy annihilation,
Yet bearing in your womb
Complete, irrevocable doom.

Are you the symbol of man’s incredible genius
Because he could make you,
Or of his weakness, because he was forced to?

FRIGHTENED

BARBARA D. WHITE

The weather was warm and beautiful with the smell of sweet flowers floating through the air. The bus driver had gone three or four hundred yards beyond my lane, but I didn't mind. It was very warm, and it wasn't late, so my aunt and uncle wouldn't be worried. They wouldn't start worrying until around eleven o'clock, and it was only ten-thirty. It was about a twenty-minute walk down the lane to the house, and my suitcase wasn't very heavy anyway. So I walked up the aisle of the bus happy and satisfied.

The bus driver lifted my suitcase down from the shelf for me and said, "I'm sorry I took you beyond your lane. If you wish I can back up."

"No, that's all right," I answered. "I don't mind the walk and there is a car behind you. Thank you anyway though, and I'll see you next week."

"O. K. and have a nice weekend," was the bus driver's answer as I stepped down off the bus.

I realized that my feet were pretty tired from standing on them all day as I stepped along in the gravel beside the bus. The bus began pulling off, and I walked on past it down by the side of the slow-moving car. I noticed that the car was a new, blue and white Ford convertible, and I was complimenting it in my mind when I came up even with the window on the left side.

Just as I stepped by the window, the dome light flashed on inside; and at the same moment that I saw the three men in the car, a hand reached out and grabbed my jacket sleeve.

I glanced at the man's bulldog jaws as I quickly jerked to get away. The suede of my jacket was too slick for the man to keep hold, and I freed myself just as I heard him say:

"Ya' wanta' ride, baby?"

My first impulse was to throw some smart remark back to him, but instead I started running. The big, new car screeched off down the road. I kept running, glancing back all the time until I saw the car pull off into a driveway down the road and start to turn around. I crossed the road running in my high heels as fast as I could and darted into the yard of a big house. The house sat back off the road; and by the time I had reached the porch and dropped behind a shrub, the car, moving slowly, was on the road in front of me. The windows were down, and I could hear them talking and laughing.

One said, "She is bound ta' be aroun' here somewhere. She ain't had time to get away."

Another answered, "We'll let 'er hide, we can outwait 'er."

The car moved slowly on down the road as I eased out from behind the bush, crept upon the front porch of the house, and knocked at the door. No one answered, and I knocked again watching the car turn around in my lane. I was getting panicky; and just as I started to beat on the door and scream to the top of my voice, I noticed a note on the door.

All I read was, "Mary, we'll be home around 12:00."

In my mind I wondered, "What am I going to do? Here comes that car again. I have got to get home or they will get me." I ducked down behind the porch railing as the car went slowly by again.

As soon as it got past the house, I jumped off the porch, grabbed my suitcase, and started running towards the lane. I stayed off the road all the way through the yard and garden; and by that time the car had again found its driveway.

I leaped out on the road and ran as fast as I could for the lane. I had to make it before their lights hit me again. I just rounded the fence post onto the lane when the lights glared up the road once more.

I kept running and thinking, "I have to get somewhere to hide before they get up here."

The little old wooden bridge loomed up ahead of me as their car came closer.

"This is my only chance," I thought, "because I know they saw me as I ran into the lane."

I jumped and skidded, fell, and rolled down the bank; then crawled under the bridge.

My foot was hurting terribly bad, and my legs were aching where the suitcase had beaten them. I crawled under the bridge with water up to my knees as I saw their headlights start down the lane.

The car came on slowly until it reached the bridge; then it stopped.

"Oh, my God, they have found me," whirled around in my mind.

I heard Bulldog say, "She can't be far away; I know I saw 'er run down into the lane. She probably lives out here."

I heard an answer, "She's probably up there in those trees. Let's cruise by."

A third voice said, "O. K., let's go."

The car started moving and crossed the bridge. I could barely keep myself from screaming aloud with fear. I had to get up the

road before they came back. I started the climb up the bank when their headlights once more hit the bridge.

"They must have turned," I thought. "O God, don't let them see me."

I lay down flat on the bank until the car crossed the bridge; then I scrambled up the bank to the road.

"I have to make those trees. I have to," was all that I could think of.

As my left foot hit the road, it hit hard, and down I went suitcase and all. I felt down to my foot to discover that I had completely broken the heel off my shoe. I pulled my shoes off, grabbed them and ran again. I hadn't noticed the car or where it went, but I could see headlights turning on the lane. The trees were just ahead, so I ran all the harder and fell in among the brush dragging the suitcase after me.

I could hardly get my breath as I lay on the grass trying to keep from sobbing aloud. The car passed again slowly.

I kept thinking, "Home is only ten minutes away—will I ever make it?"

I laid my suitcase and shoes up in the brush and pulled my coat off and laid it over the suitcase.

"Here comes that car again. No, that wasn't it—maybe it's gone. No, here it comes." All my thoughts were centered on the car and the three monsters inside it.

It passed again. When it had gotten by, I darted out of the bushes and ran for all I was worth to the neighbor's house just a few hundred yards up the road. With each step, the gravel cut deeper into my feet.

I knew the neighbors wouldn't be home, because they always went out on Friday night; but if I could make it there, I could hide while the car went by. Then I could make it home. I found the yard and ran for the back of the house as headlights came back up the road. I crouched behind the house and watched the car come slowly up the road. Just as it got to the driveway that I was crouched by, it pulled in.

I jumped back and thought, "That's their car, and they saw me again. Will I ever make it?"

My breath was so short I felt that my chest would burst any minute, but I couldn't stop now; I was too close.

I saw a cigarette lighter flare up in the car and heard Bulldog say, "Nobody home here. Maybe she made it to the next house. Let's drive by."

“O. K.,” came from the driver as the car backed out.

“How will I get to the house if they go by there?” I asked myself.

I watched the car drive slowly by my house and go on. Then I ran with all the energy left in me to the road and towards home.

I could still see their tail lights going, so I started screaming to the top of my voice, “Uncle James, Uncle James, Uncle James!”

I was screaming and getting closer and thinking, “Why don’t they come out and see what is wrong with me? I know they can hear me.”

“Uncle James, Uncle James,” I screamed again between gasps of breath.

Finally there was the fence post, the gate, the yard, and the porch. I leaped across the porch. The door opened instantly, and I fell into my uncle’s arms.

At first I could not talk, being so short of breath. Finally, after a while, between gasps I told them what had happened. Naturally they had not heard me holler, because I wasn’t really making any noise. After they had found out what had happened, my aunt made me lie down and rest.

My foot was really hurting, and I wondered why.

“Aunt Lou, something is wrong with my foot. It has an awful pain in it.”

She stooped over to have a look and said, “You have sprained your ankle, and it looks pretty bad. And your legs are all bruised up too.”

“I know,” I answered; “The suitcase did that. I don’t know why I carried it as far as I did. I guess I was just so scared that I didn’t think about it until I could no longer keep hold of it.”

“Well, as soon as your uncle gets back with your things, I’ll have him tape that ankle up. Then tomorrow we will run into town to the doctor,” answered my Aunt Lou.

Just then a loud knock came on the back door, and I completely froze.

Then I heard Mr. Barnes, our neighbor who lived on down the road yell, “James, James, come and bring your tractor! There has been an awful wreck down the road.”

My aunt ran to the door, and said, “He isn’t here, but he’ll be right back. What’s the matter Kenneth?” I heard her say as I lay on the bed listening.

Just then my uncle pulled into the driveway and got out of the truck.

Mr. Barnes ran across the yard, and I leaned over on the bed to the window.

"James, there's been a terrible wreck down the road. We'll need your tractor," yelled Mr. Barnes.

Getting out of the truck, my uncle asked, "Who, Ken, anyone we know?"

"No," answered Mr. Barnes, "a new, blue Ford convertible ran off the bridge down there. You know, the one that the flood washed out in the spring."

"Yeh. O. K., I'll be right with you."

I lay down on the bed and cried.

TODAY I SAW GOD

ANNA JO TAULBEE

Today I saw God.

I had to look for Him but I saw Him.

I saw Him in the redbird,

in the lowly squirrel,

in the stray dog.

Here was God.

I found Him in every fallen leaf,

Whose varied colors reflected His loving care.

I found Him in the crisp autumn afternoon,

in the cloud sprinkled sky,

in the sun splashed park.

Here was God.

Today I felt God near,

Not in the hurrying people on the street,

But I felt Him as the solitary nun passed,

as the townsfolk raked their yards,

as I helped the Negro child.

Here was God.

Today I touched God.

I had to reach out, but I touched Him.

I touched Him in the autumn breeze,

in the frost-bitten chysanthemums,

in the dying grass.

Here was God.