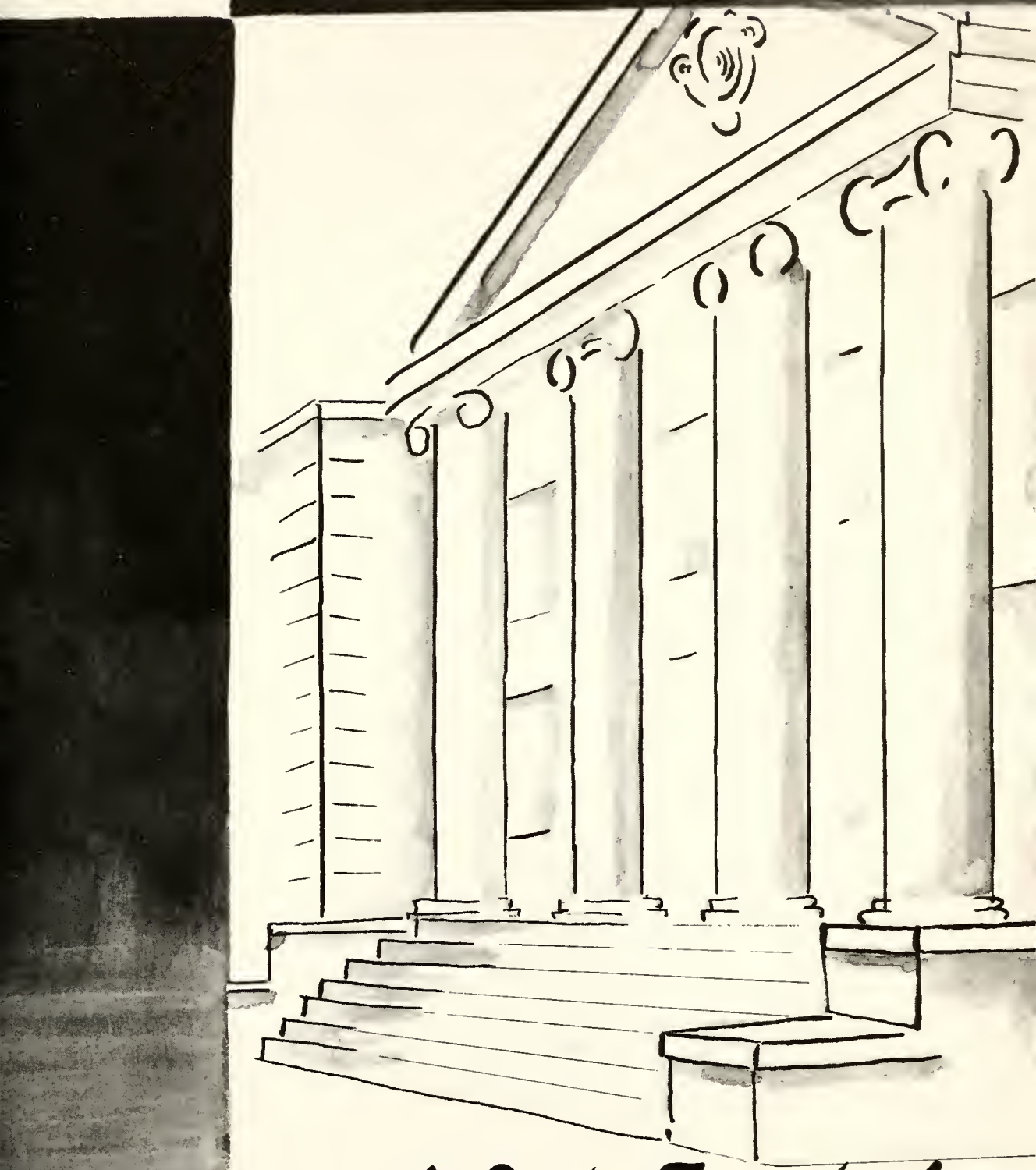
5-1-1964

Belles Lettres, 1964

Eastern Kentucky University, The Canterbury Club

Belles Lettres



1963-64

Belles Lettres

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

Volume Thirty 1963-64 Number One

TABLE OF CONTENTS

IN JUST

Susan Thompson

in Just—
winter when the world is snow—

luscious the little newly
    made snowman
rests frozen and wintery white
    and Freddieandbill come
running from snow forts and
snow ball fights and it's
winter
when the world is icy-wonderful
the lame
lovable snowman
rests frozen and wintery white
and Maryandsue come skipping
from sled riding and angel making and
its
    Winter
        and
            the
        cold, expressionless
snowman rests
frozen
and wintery

HEAT

Joyce Hiller

Heat, dry, parching heat,
Stifling, choking heat;
Sweat, clammy, sticky sweat;
Tossing, turning, - misery,
My tortured mind cried out,
"Roommate, turn off the heat!"

MOTHER

Joe Lakes

Homer was alone again tonight. He had been reading all day, stopping only once, and then only to devour his usual cheese and lettuce sandwich chased down with a coke. Now he walked rapidly, bent slightly forward at the waist, his arms swinging mechanically at his sides. As he approached the red neon sign, his face and hair reddened, then whitened alternately, and you could almost see "café" gleaming in the red specks in his blue eyes.

The street lights flashed on and Homer knew it was 7:30. They were always turned on at exactly 7:30 this time of the year.

As he opened the café door, he stopped. He felt his way along the wall for a few minutes until his eyes became accustomed to the darkness. A few steps and he bent his head as he walked. He wouldn't have needed to, however, for the coat hooks extending from the wall were a good five inches over his head.

He heard the clinking of ice-cubes against glass to his left, and as he looked that way he saw the bartender pouring into a small glass a clear white liquid that shhh-d as if someone were demanding silence.

As Homer edged his way to the row of booths on his right, he tripped.

"Excuse me," he sputtered out hurriedly as he looked in their direction. He didn't see anything for a moment until he looked down a little. There he saw the tiny dim lights of the café, reflected in a pair of brightly shined shoes, belonging to a man in a grey flannel suit, who was half-lying, half-sitting in the booth, a briefcase on the table.

"I should have known better. That man," he spat out, "is never awake at this time of the day."

Homer went down two more booths, leaned his hands on the table, and scooted onto the narrow bench. He picked up the ash tray and raked some stray ashes off the table into it. Then he replaced it on the middle of the table.

The bartender had finished mixing the drink, and as Homer watched him cross the floor, he hurried his gaze to beat the man to his destination—a well-built blonde-headed woman.

The woman brought a match up to her cigarette and sucked her cheeks in. Then she threw her head back with her eyes closed, took a deep breath, and released it as her head drifted back to

its original position. She didn't enjoy the sensation long, however, because the flame of the match she was still holding had by this time reached her fingers.

"Aoww!" she yelled, as she threw down the match and brought her finger quickly to her tongue.

"Hope it isn't burnt badly," thought Homer.

Homer rubbed his forefinger and thumb together slowly.

'Oh, Homer, honey, did you burn your little fingers?', Frieda Deutsch said. 'Poor little thing. You shouldn't have played with those matches. Here, let mommy kiss your fingers and make them well.'

That's the way Mother was, kind and gentle. That was a long time ago, a long, long time ago . . .

"Hmm? Oh, I'm sorry, bartender, I'll have a whiskey sour."

"O.K., Mr. Deutsch, sir." The bartender grinned as he walked away.

Huh! 'Sir!' Bartenders shmartenders, they're all alike. They all laugh at me; me, who have enough money to buy and sell the whole lot of them. Call me a momma's boy. I've heard them. They don't understand. A man has to take care of his mother. Mother was all I had after Father died, and I was all she had. She loved me, I know she did, and—I loved her. The last twenty years of her life were good ones for us both. We used to sit up night after night, sometimes all night. I would read to her; she would read to me, night after night . . .

Homer looked up at the commotion on the other side of his table. The blonde had come over and now sat across from him. She smiled broadly, faint wrinkles appearing at the corners of her mouth and eyes.

"Hi-ya." She blinked her eyes rapidly two or three times.

"Hello."

"Did I hear the bartender call you Mr. Deutsch?"

"Yes."

"*The* Mr. *Homer Deutsch?*"

"Yes, I suppose I am *the* Mr. Homer Deutsch."

"Well, I'm Lizzy Carter and I . . . Well, you don't know me, but my father used to work at Deutsch Incorporated Textile Mill before your father died. He still works there, course your mother sold the firm, cleared over a million dollars, my dad said. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"You seem awfully low in spirits, Mr. Deutsch—Homer. Is there anything I can do? What's wrong?"

"I was just thinking about when I was younger, and my mother."

"Law, Mr. . . . uh . . . Homer, that was nine years ago . . ."

Yes, she's right, it has been nine years. It was the spring after that exceptionally long winter. If she had followed the advice she gave me . . . 'Homer, how many times do I have to tell you to keep out of that weather?'

'Aw, Mom, I just stepped out the door to throw those crusts out for the birds. I am forty-one years old and perfectly capable of watching out for myself.'

' 'Well, I know, dear, but I still think of you as my little Homer. Now come here and help mommy finish these dishes like a good boy. . . .!'

"Pneumonia, wasn't it? Homer? Homer!"

"Huh? Oh, what did you say, uh . . . what is your name again?"

"Lizzy Carter, but you can call me Liz. I said, your mother died of pneumonia, didn't she?"

"Yes, pneumonia."

The bartender came with the drink, set it down, and started to leave.

"Bring me another," Liz said.

Homer tilted his glass up and sipped his drink. Over the rim of his glass he saw Liz watching him intently. She caught his eye and winked at him. Her fluttering eyelashes stood out black against the white snow of her face. Her almost-white, blond hair took on a darker color at the base like the trunk of a snow-covered tree. The dark red gash-of-a-mouth revealed white, even teeth, too even to be real.

Mother liked pretty teeth . . . 'Did you brush your teeth, Homer? Wash behind your ears? This is your first day of school and we want you to look nice. After school you rush on home and mommy will be waiting.'

This made Father angry.

'Vad you vant, Frieda, a liddle fraulein? Led the boy play if he vants.'

Liddle fraulein, "liddle fraulein . . ."

Liz turned her ear around toward Homer.

"Did you say something?"

"No, I was just thinking."

"A penny for your thoughts, dearie," she said, reaching over and patting his hand.

"I was just thinking about people—how brute-like they are. No, not brute-like—human-like, stepping on everything and everybody to get their almighty dollar. Money is the least important thing in life."

"Yeh, Homer, you can say that; you've got plenty. But what about the ones who can't afford to buy diamonds and earrings and stuff?"

"Yes, I have plenty of money, but I live on less than the average person here in town, and am happier. Take that man in the first booth up there, for instance. He is only happy if he is making money, and then it is only a superficial happiness. At night when he has *time* to think, he doesn't have the *courage* to. He can't face himself, because he can't see his own face. Instead, he sees the faces of all the people he has stepped on, cheated that day. So he stupifies himself with alcohol every night. He doesn't enjoy the better things in life."

"What do you do with your time, Homer? You don't work."

"Books."

"You mean you write books," she giggled, her own drinks taking effect.

"No," he said sharply, a furrow forming between his brows, eyes narrowing. "But I do the next best thing—I read them."

"Is that all you do?"

"That is 'all', as you choose to put it, that I have done for the past thirty years."

"Come on now, there ain't that many books in the world," she said, laughing.

The furrow deepened. "There are that many books in my library."

Liz took a long drink, then laughed.

Let her laugh. After all, isn't she one of them? That laugh! Mother laughed, too. She laughed when I tried to play baseball, laughed when I fell off the pony Father gave me, laughed at me in front of my friends. She's dead now, she has to stop laughing. Stop it. Stop it!

"Stop it!" growled Homer through clenched teeth, gripping his glass and shattering it against the table.

Then after a brief pause, "I'm sorry," Liz said, smiling. "Take me to your house, Homer, show me your library."

They got up slowly and walked over to the bar.

Liz opened her purse and fumbled through it.

"Oh, I've forgotten my billfold," she said, while digging intently.

"Don't worry, I'll get it," said Homer, laying the money on the bar.

"I just can't imagine where I laid my billfold," said Liz, still searching through her purse.

Liz fingered her purse expectantly as they walked out the door.

* * * * * *

Homer's library was a large room with walnut-paneled shelves, stuffed with books, row upon row, from Homer to Hemingway. The oriental carpet on the floor was worn, but so clean that one felt like taking his shoes off upon entering. A large, bulky table squatted in the middle of the room, upon which stood a Gone-With-the-Wind lamp illuminating two rows of books in the middle of the table. The books were held erect by foot-high, cast-iron horse heads.

The room contained the stench of a vault full of books and papers that had been sealed since time immemorial. Mixed with this smell was the odor of pipe tobacco, embedded in the carpet, hanging from the shelves, eating at the books.

"Beautiful," Liz exclaimed.

They walked across the floor and sat down at the table.

"Look at them," said Homer, "hundreds and hundreds of them. This is my world. Here, I am master. Here, look at this—the philosophers—Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius; the novelists—Tolstoi, Goethe, Fielding; the poets—Milton, Tennyson, Shakespeare."

He picked up Shakespeare, thumbed through the pages and read:

> " 'When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state . . .' "

"That's beautiful, Homer. Read me more."

His fingers slid over the row of books.

"P, P, Poe.

> '. . . It was hard by the dim lake of Auber
> In the misty mid region of Weir—
> It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
> In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.' "

"Not that, Homer, that's too morbid."

He put the book down, roamed the row once more.

"Ah, here is Longfellow."
He flipped the pages rapidly.

" 'Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.' "

"Let me see that book, Homer."
He handed it to her. She thumbed through it to the place Homer had been.

"Just think, Homer, I can come here at nights, and we can read these poems to each other. You're right about people, they don't enjoy the better things of life."

She started reading, not noticing the short shadow moving around behind her.

" 'Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.' "

She started, and turning around, "Just think, Homer . . ."
The heavy book-end came down.

LIGHT OF TRUTH

DOROTHY H. SMITH

Light of Truth shining through Illusion's lace
Catches the face of Courage unaware,
Laying bare its image for the world to know.
No show of boldness nor of hesitance,
Nor blank submission doing penance in the mart;
But in one visage all defined
The first infinitives of lonely Heart and Mind:
To love, to have, to give—to know all these
And yet to live beyond today,
And toward the stark countenance of Death return
A look of pain, exquisite, yearning,
Essential as the fallen rain.

NOWADAYS

CHARLOTTE ANN WATTERS

"I'd ruther not move to that place." John Wimberly, elbows on knees and head on hands, was sitting on a decayed log. "They need me. Why, last week I found a bird with a broken wing. It mighta starved if I hadn't taken care of it. Beautiful little robin, too."

"I don't understand it!" David Halcomb ran his manicured fingers through his thick, dark hair. "Time and again I've pointed out the advantages of moving to you. The state provides a clean, decent home, and you are too stubborn to take advantage of it."

The gaunt, white-haired man reached into his ragged pocket and pulled out a worn knife. He exposed a sharp blade and began to whittle on a cedar stick. A thin, pink curl preceded the blade and dropped to the ground to contrast with a layer of discolored shavings.

"Don't you ever tire of this wilderness? Don't you ever wish you had some companions or a clean place to sleep?" Halcomb thrust his hands into the pockets of his blue suit. "I bet this is some place in the winter! That road is so bad now that I have to have my car washed every time I come out here." A second cedar curl fell beside the first. The social worker tapped an old board of the shack with his highly polished shoe. Bits of decayed wood crumbled. "This place isn't even safe!"

John glanced at the shack and then at the young man. He lowered his head. His lips became a firm, straight line. He studied the raised veins of his hands as the stained fingers pressed the blade against the cedar. The sunken places underneath the second and third knuckles seemed to be eyes. A large purple vein seemed to form a crooked mouth.

"It's such a nice place! The Jennings couple were thrilled at the chance to go to the Home for the Aged. Mr. Dabney moved in the day we opened. But you—you refuse to discuss it." Glancing at his watch, Holcomb continued, "Reconsider it. I'll be back to see you tomorrow. I suggest that you make plans to move away from this . . . this shack."

Halcomb looked at the seemingly impassive old man, squared his shoulders, and strode up the path. The weeds brushed his suit. A briar caught a fast-moving leg. He leaned down and unfastened it, without looking back at the old man.

Watching Halcomb disappear, John stepped to the edge of the clearing and took a handful of sunflower seeds from his bulging pocket. He tossed them to a fluttering bird.

"I've lived by myself for twenty years. I can't move in with a bunch of people now. I weren't educated. I don't know how to act. I'm stayin' here!" Determination was in his voice, but a puzzled, pained expression did not leave his pale blue eyes.

John bent down to examine the board that the young man had tapped with his foot. His trembling hands placed a small chunk of decayed wood back in its place. "This place is my home. I want to stay here till I die." He removed the galvanized tub from the rear of the cabin and placed it over the decaying board.

John stepped on the concrete block that served as a doorstep and entered the narrow doorway. The faint perfume of honeysuckle was replaced by a damp, musty odor. The stooped figure stood in the dim rays of sunlight admitted by a solitary, smoked window. John leaned down to brush the dust from a wooden chair. Then he reached on the shelf above the chair to get a silver can stamped with the black letters "U. S. Government Surplus". John blew a cobweb off the can. He reached for a kettle and turned to place the kettle on the tiny iron cookstove.

When he finished eating the canned pork and gravy, he sat down on the edge of his feather mattress. "Why won't he let me alone? I know how I want to live. He's a educated, society man—the type that married the girl I loved."

The thin, bent man sitting on the bed like a statue was gradually bathed with the red glow of the setting sun. The wrinkled face of a man who has lost youth's flesh was barely visible. John picked up a Bible and opened it. His eyes did not move from line to line, and he did not turn the pages. He could not read. But as a child, he had often seen his mother hold this same Bible and gain strength to face the new day. The pleading expression in his eyes seemed to say "Help me".

The sun hid behind the horizon. Darkness began to replace the pale red glow on John Wimberly's face and hands. He gazed out of the door at the quick, bright flashes of the fireflies. "Fireflies remind me of the nights we spent on that farm waitin' for Pa to come home. Mama sang to us sometimes. Never got along very well after she died." The faint "croak . . . , croak . . . , croak" of a frog echoed through the night air. "If that lady teacher hadn't said I was so dumb, I mighta got me a education. I dreamed of

goin' through the grades. Left home not long after I quit school. Back then I'd about try anything. Didn't care where I went. Strong enough to go loggin' at sixteen! Weren't no fireflies in that loggin' camp. Guess the men scared 'em away with their talk. Back then a man could move around. Be his own boss." John gazed at the faces on the back of his hands. Life seemed static until a flash of yellow-green light flickered above the bed. "Barney used to say the bullets whizzin' past our trench at night was like the fireflies. Guess he never knew a German firefly would get him. And I didn't even know how to help him. Barney thought a man should be his own boss. Ain't no men like that nowadays. Everybody thinks the rest oughta be like they are. Well, I reckon I'll stay here and be my own boss if they'll leave me alone."

* * * * * *

Dew still covered the ground as John Wimberly trudged up the hill from the river. The line on his cane pole was empty. "Fish ain't runnin'." He was breathing rapidly from the climb. As he approached his home, he saw the lithe figure of David Halcomb striding down the path.

"Mite early for him to be comin'." The old man propped the cane pole against the shack and sat down on the concrete block doorstep.

Halcomb did not speak as he approached. He took his handkerchief from his pocket to wipe the dew from his shoes.

"I reckon you want somethin'." John did not look at Halcomb.

"I came to see if you are ready to go to the Home, Mr. Wimberly." Halcomb's voice was unusually soft.

"I'm stayin' here. This is my home." John continued to stare at the ground. Both men remained silent for a moment.

"Why do you insist on staying here? You don't have any of the comforts of living. At the Home you would have good food, a nice, comfortable bed, and even a bathroom. You would soon be playing checkers with the other gentlemen."

"I'm not used to that stuff. I'm happy here. I don't know how to live the way you think people oughta live."

"How long have you lived out here by yourself? Why did you come?" Halcomb sat down on the log and looked thoughtfully at the old man.

John lifted his head to face Halcomb. "I've been livin' by myself for about twenty years. Been here most of that time." A rough, calloused hand traced squares on the ground as the old man spoke.

"I tried. I couldn't get a job that lasted. People didn't want a man that weren't educated. Oh, I did odd jobs. I even tried to farm. But it weren't no use. I didn't have no money, no sense. The only thing I could do was leave and come here. This way I don't have to listen to people callin' me 'bum', 'stupid'; hear them say 'get outa here' or 'we don't need help'."

"You will find that the people at the Home are very nice, Mr. Wimberly."

John made no response. He began to smooth the dirt that he had loosened as he doodled.

"Why didn't you go live with some member of your family? You do have a family, don't you?"

John hesitated. "I left home when I was just a kid. I didn't hear from them anymore. After Mama . . . we weren't very close."

Halcomb stood up and stepped to John Wimberly's side. The first hint of understanding filled his too pleasant voice as he said, "You are too old to live here by yourself."

Wimberly slowly got up and started to enter the doorway. "Mr. Halcomb, I know you don't know how a man can like to live like this, but I do. I've lived in this house a long time. These animals need me; I need them. I might as well stay here till I die."

David Halcomb lowered his head and ran his fingers through his hair. "I had . . ." The young man faltered. "This place has been condemned. You can't live here. They are going to tear it down tomorrow morning." Halcomb did not look at the old man.

John did not move. His face mirrored no emotion. It was like the face of a statue. His eyes were focused on space. Then the stooped shoulders slowly became limp. The tightly clenched lips relaxed and dropped at the corners as he lifted his heavy feet to enter the shack.

"This is my home." His voice was only a shocked whisper. "He's just like the rest of 'em. I'll have to go someplace else and start again, I reckon." John sat down on the bed and put his head in his hands. Slowly the hands fell to the old man's lap. He stared at his hands. The veins quivered as if to speak. Then he sat up very straight and glanced around the room. "It's no good. There would be another like him no matter where I went. If I was younger . . . I'm too old to move on and on and on." The old man sighed faintly, picked up the Bible that lay on the bed, and slowly trudged out of the shack to face his opponent.

THE MERMAIDS

Mary Jane Madden

Come here, little one, come to me
Let me tell you of the sea,
Tell you of its depthless blue
And of mermaids numbering two.

One was green, the other blue,
Who they were, no one knew;
But they at meals of hate would reign
While telling of the men they'd slain.

It was a night just like this
And ships the rocks could barely miss.
But one mermaid played an ace,
And your father's ship left no trace.

Down, down it went in the depthless blue
Pulled along by the mermaids two.
And since that night upon the sea,
Son, there's been just you and me.

SEA AND SKY

Julie Rachford White

You might have been the tumbling sky,
And I, responding, pulsing sea,
Together blending in a sigh,
Forever melting, swirling free.

But heaven ne'er can fall to sea,
Nor ocean reach its surface o'er.
The sky seeks only to be free;
The sea is bounded by its shore.

Forever in each other's view
We move, with walls of space between,
And you are only placid blue,
And I but cool, transparent green.

FOG

MARY JANE MADDEN

The cold stinging of the fog makes me want to turn and try to outrun it as it begins to roll in off the river. Thick cotton envelops the car as I try to see the colors change on the stop light ahead. As I wait, the memories of past years crowd into my mind. I remember the night we had our homecoming football game at the high-school ball park, and what the malicious fog did to me.

I was with Bill, that Yale freshman I had longed to date. It was a perfect night for a ball game when we arrived at the park. Everyone was so happy! Bill and I could practically smell victory in the air. But then the fog rolled in. It grabbed the curl out of my carefully groomed hair. It gripped my lungs so that I could hardly breathe and forced me to sit bent-over like an old crone. It also dampened Bill's spirit . . . Yes, we lost the game that night.

LINES TO ROBERT FROST

RUTH COMBS SPURLOCK

For many a year I lived with faith
That the tall birch tree would bend
And set you down where the path through the woods
Could never come to an end.
I read your lines to many a youth
Who sat caught in your spell
Many a "ball" I saw made square;
And many a "wall" torn down so well.
Then Fate snatched you away from us
As we knew he surely would,
Though you were climbing carefully up
And kicking as only a poet could.
With each sure kick there dropped a leaf
That fell on hallowed sod,
And beneath the tree
For the world to see
Lie golden leaves, blessed by God.

FREE

JOE LAKES

Cast:
Lettie White—colored maid for the Aspenwald family
Mr. John Aspenwald, Jr.—head of the family
Mrs. Mary Aspenwald—Mr. Aspenwald's wife
Jenny Aspenwald—Their ten-year-old daughter
Mr. Ralph Clark
Mrs. Betty Clark—friends of the Aspenwalds
Tom—colored Communist

Scene I

Washington, D. C. The living room of the Aspenwald family. In the center of the stage is a fireplace, with two trophies of miniature small boats on the mantel. A large, luxuriant easy chair is on the right side of the fireplace. A smoking stand with several pipes is sitting next to it. To the left of the fireplace is a couch. To the left of the couch is a door leading into the dining room. A telephone is to the far right of the stage. The rest of the room is furnished in early-colonial type furniture. Off stage to the left is the kitchen, and off stage to the right is the hallway leading to the outside.

Enter John Aspenwald, carrying a briefcase and wearing a hat.

John. Mary, Jenny, I'm home. (Takes off his hat.)

(Lettie enters from the left, takes the briefcase and hat from Mr. Aspenwald. She walks on through to the hallway from which Mr. Aspenwald just came. Mrs. Aspenwald and Jenny come in through the dining room door.)

John. Hello, honey. (Scoops Jenny up in his arms.)

Mary. Hello, dear. (She kisses him on the cheek.) How did it go today?

John. Oh, boy, I'm beat. (He walks over to the easy chair and sits down. Mrs. Aspenwald sits on the couch. Lettie comes in carrying his house-slippers.)

Mary. Not too beat, I hope. Remember, the Clarks are coming over tonight for dinner and a movie.

Jenny. I'm going out to play, Mum. I'll be back in time for dinner. (She exits right.)

Mary. O. K., Jenny. (Lettie kneels down, unties John's shoes, and slips on his slippers.)

John. The Jackson deal fell through. I figured it would. (He lights his pipe.)

(Lettie goes over to the left and starts picking up Jenny's toys.)

Mary. Oh, that's too bad. What happened?

John. Well, you know how they are. They're just too . . . uuh . . . (He looks at Lettie, who turns and goes into the kitchen. He leans toward Mary.) Too damn dumb! You know what they're doing now? They're picketing the White House!

Mary. Shh. (She nods her head toward the kitchen.) She'll hear you. (Speaking louder.) How is dinner coming, Lettie?

Lettie. (From the kitchen.) Just fine ma'm, just fine.

John. (Speaking low, but angrily.) I don't care if she does hear me.

(Lettie enters again and straightens a picture.)

John. What do you think about it, Lettie?

Lettie. What's that, Mr. Aspenwald?

John. About the picketing going on at the White House. You've been with our family all your life. I know you wouldn't do a foolish thing like that. Why, what would you be picketing for? You've got a good job here. Counting your room and board, you probably get as much as some white people . . . uh, not that you shouldn't, of course. I don't mean that.

Lettie. No, sir.

John. Why, I even heard one man say that he heard they might revolt. Ha, ha, isn't that a good one? (He slaps his knee. Mary joins in by smiling.)

Lettie. Yes, sir. (Smiles faintly and starts to leave hurriedly.)

John. Lettie! I'm talking to you.

(Lettie stops and turns around toward John.)

Lettie. Sir?

John. It's ridiculous. (He smiles.) Why make such a big fuss just because you can't eat at the same places we do? Why, colored people have all the rights we do, but they're kind of different. I mean, well . . . not different . . . Oh, let's just skip it. There's really no problem anyway. Tomorrow it'll be just another incident. (He waves her away with a gesture of his hand. She goes back into the kitchen.)

Mary. John, you shouldn't have said all that. What if she quits?

John. She won't quit. What on earth would she do? She's been working here all her life and she doesn't have any education to do anything else. She's doing what she was made for and that's all. (He picks up a newspaper and starts reading it.)

(Lettie enters and dusts. Jenny enters from the right and passes through, skipping toward the kitchen and off stage. The telephone rings at the same time Jenny speaks.)

Jenny. Lettie?

Mary. You see what Jenny wants, Lettie. I'll answer the phone. (She walks toward the telephone.)

(By this time, Jenny is on stage, and as Lettie approaches, Jenny says:)

Jenny. When ya going to make some more of those good cookies, Lettie? (She hugs Lettie around the waist. Tears come into Lettie's eyes.)

Mary. It's for you, Lettie. (So that Mary can't see, Lettie quickly wipes the tears out of her eyes and turns toward Mary.)

Lettie. Tell 'em I can't talk to 'em now, please ma'm. Tell 'em that I'm busy right now.

Mary. (Talking into telephone.) She's busy right now. Good-bye.

Scene II

The setting is the dining room in the Aspenwald home. There is the usual dining room furniture. The Clarks have just arrived and they, along with the Aspenwalds, are just finishing dinner. Lettie is in the kitchen.

Ralph. (Patting his stomach.) Oh, me. I shouldn't have eaten so much.

Betty. No, you shouldn't have. (They all laugh.) It certainly was a good dinner.

Ralph. Yes, you don't seem to have trouble with your help. Our next-door neighbor's cook quit him flat. Said she had her rights and that slavery was over. (He laughs.)

Betty. Now, Ralph, that's none of our business. And besides, they did treat her pretty badly sometimes.

Ralph. Oh well, for pete's sake. It's the same thing they're all trying to do. They don't want equal rights; they want to take over the country.

John. Seriously, that is exactly what I heard at the office today. (They all have looks of doubt on their faces.)

Mary. Well, that is a little farfetched.

Betty. Yes, maybe so, but I don't believe I would blame them much.

John. Oh, all this picketing and sit-ins these people are doing are done by a minority group. I'm sure the large majority of them don't feel like that.

Ralph. I'll bet they do. I tell you they are all the same.

Betty. (Gives Ralph a stern look.) Ralph!

Ralph. O.K., O.K. (Holds his hands up in an act of submission.)

(Lettie enters carrying ice-cream for dessert. She puts it down and goes back into the kitchen. They all eat their dessert and get up.)

John. Well, we'd better hurry if we want to make that movie.

(They all walk off stage to the right except John, who stays to help Jenny down.)

Jenny. Daddy, what's wrong with Lettie?

John. (Looking nervously toward the kitchen offstage to the left.) What do you mean, dear?

Jenny. Well, she's a Negro, so what's wrong with her? Why can't she eat with us?

John. Well, honey, people just don't do things like that. Negroes are just different. They are . . . well, different.

Jenny. Why?

John. Well, they just aren't as good as we are.

Jenny. Is that why she eats hamburger and we eat steak?

John. Well, sort of.

(They start to leave just as Lettie comes into the room. She reaches over to pat Jenny on the head.)

Lettie. You have a good time, darlin'.

(Jenny draws away.)

Jenny. Don't do that.

Lettie. Why—Jenny, what's wrong?

Jenny. You're different.

John. Jenny! You come right along young lady. (They exit right and Lettie stands there dazed.)

Lettie. Different . . . different.

Scene III

The living room of the Aspenwalds. Lettie is sitting on the couch. The door bell rings and she answers it. She lets in a colored man.

Lettie. Come in, Tom, and sit down. The Aspenwalds are gone for the evening.

(They both sit down on the couch.)

Tom. I tried to call you this afternoon, but you were busy.

Lettie. I know, Tom. There for a moment I almost said no. I almost said no, Lettie, you aren't going to do this terrible thing. I was busy then, but I won't be busy any more. I won't be busy no more. Is it still going to happen at midnight tonight?

Tom. Yes, midnight.

Lettie. Do you think we're doing the right thing, Tom?

Tom. Yes, Lettie, it's the only way.

Lettie. I just don't know whether to trust anyone any more. There are going to be a lot of people killed, maybe even us.

Tom. I don't think so. Our task will be a small one. It won't be too hard to take over the local ordnance with all the men we have. We all have small tasks but with our people spread over the whole country, we can do a lot for our cause.

(They stand up.)

Lettie. Oh, Tom, I'm scared. (She starts sobbing and lays her head on Tom's shoulder.)

Tom. It's all right, Lettie. They've promised us we'll be free. In two hours we will launch our attack coordinated with the Russian and Chinese invasions. (He clenches his fist and thrusts it into the air.) We'll be free, Lettie. We'll be FREE!

SONNET

KATHLEEN SMITH

How strange that life, so brief, can last so long,
That days can linger as the nights rush by,
That plans we make in joy end with a cry,
And gay young rhymes turn into poignant songs;
How strange we do not feel the pointed prongs
That catch and hold us as we start to die;
Nor care that there is any need to sigh
For dreams that crumble with the crash of gongs;
Complexity and contradiction sway us,
And we are not prepared to meet the two;
Perplexity and non-perception flay us,
And we cannot distinguish what is true;
Yet we continue, each thing in its season,
Without the knowing Why, without the reason.

JUDGMENT

JAY ROBERTS

V. And there were many who came before God,
with the stains of blood upon them.
When questioned concerning them each replied,
"For my faith", "For my fatherland",
"For valour".
And there were many at a loss,
to comprehend the tears that welled,
so majestically,
down the cheeks of the almighty
and eternal God.

GOD'S GREEN COUNTRY

KENNETH EVERSOLE

Slowly, the late afternoon sun slid across the U-shaped valley. Already one side of the two hills lay in cool shadow. On the east slope, the November sun still played faintly among the tangle of half-charred, half-dead trees and huge boulders. A brisk, stinging breeze carried a promise of the first snow.

Elisa Allen climbed the footpath from the hog pen which bordered the little creek flowing out of the hollow and around the floor of the valley. She carried a rusty, empty slop pail. Clouds of black hair stuck out at the top and on either side of her scant wool scarf forming three comical pompadours around her strong, brown face. She came across the brown lawn between the open-air corn crib and the stubble of last summer's corn patch.

When she turned in at the tar-roofed house, she dropped the slop bucket, without bending over, on the plank porch, shoved open the door and went inside.

"Home already?" she greeted her husband laconically.

"Yep. That box-car didn't come in, and we run out of phosphate. Boss said we as well go home a hour earlier." Joe sat with his fingers laced around a cup of coffee at the kitchen table.

"That darned sow takes all the slop from Rick's white pig. I had to knock her back two or three times, or she wouldn't have let his pig get a bite." Elisa took off her mud-spattered coat, loosened her wool scarf and shook her hair back in place. She put her hand gently over her red nose and squeezed it perplexedly.

"Did you pick up milk and eggs as you come by the store?" she spoke from behind her hand.

"Honey, I got milk, but Charlie was plumb out of eggs. They hard to git this time of year, I reckon."

"Everything's hard to git around here," Elisa muttered under her breath as she went to the cabinet and took out a mixing bowl.

"I sort of got a surprise for you, Lisa." Joe spread his large, cracked hands on the table, looking up at her through his thick brows.

"What?"

"Well—it's them new lamp shades and the rug and curtains you been wanting. I got 'em today with the truck patch money we saved."

"You what!" Elisa banged her mixing bowl hard against the table.

"Why, Lisa, baby, I thought you wanted me to git them fixin's."

"Well, you big lunkhead! You went and spent that money after what I told you what Miss Pearl said about Rick?" Elisa whirled angrily, measured out the right amount of meal and flour, and began mixing her corn pone furiously.

She spoke no more to Joe, who sat staring at the black lines in his cracked hands. The silence grew thick between them. The very air seemed infested with it as they both heard the mechanical tick-tock of the grandfather clock from the living room.

Elisa blissfully recalled the scene in Miss Pearl's office during the previous week. How proud, how tender she had felt about what Miss Pearl had visualized her Rick might do.

"Now mind you, Mrs. Allen, I did not bring you here for flattery," Miss Pearl began in her pedantic tone. "I brought you here," she continued, "to tell you that your son, without doubt, has talent. He plays the trumpet well. With the proper training, and with discipline—discipline, you know, is extremely important—he could be very good."

Elisa remembered how warm she had felt inside as the conversation went on and on about her "talented" son. That's what Miss Pearl had called him—talented. It was the best thing that had happened to her since she had divorced Rick's father, married Joe, and come to live in "God's country", as Joe had called it.

"Hell, if this here is God's country!" Elisa slammed the oven

"Hell, if this here is God's country!" Elisa slammed the oven door shut.

Joe stopped twiddling his big thumbs and looked up startled. "What did you say, Lisa?"

"I said this ain't God's country, that's what I said. This ain't God's green land; and furthermore, it hain't never gonna be no sech. I'm deadly sorry I ever brought my Rick to this God-forsaken country."

Aw, honey, don't let's git on that again." Joe was almost whining. Whining from such a big man seemed peculiarly odd, almost comic.

"Well, I'll git on it again if I want to. I told you I never wanted to leave Cincinnati. But, no, nothing would do you except to git back here in these damned hills again. Well, I ain't staying here, Joe Allen! Come September, I aim to sell Rick's white pig, draw out the truck patch money, and clear outta this hole."

Elisa stopped shouting. She heard the dying whine of a motor toward the front of the house. She listened for the squeak of the STOP sign. A short interval elapsed. The school bus motor grumbled; the sign banged flat against the side of the bus, and after the grating of gears, it rumbled out of hearing.

Silence pervaded until Rick's stamping feet were heard on the front porch.

"Mom? Dad?" Rick's tenor voice sang out as he came into the hall from the front porch.

"Out here, dear." Elisa had altered from her ranting to her special-little-boy tone of voice.

Rick came bouncing into the kitchen, threw his books on the table, and exclaimed dramatically, "Guess what?"

Joe looked on similingly while Elisa, drying her hands on her apron, came around the table and kissed the slender youth's forehead. "I don't know, Rickie, what is it?"

"I got myself a job! I'm gonna play at the Fuzzy Duck Casino tonight. I talked with Mr. Harrison, and it's all been arranged. I git five bucks a night and all tips that anyone cares to donate."

"Have you gone plumb daffy?" Elisa's expression was incredulous. "You can't work at that place!"

"Well, why not, Mom?"

"Plenty reasons why not. Why, first of all, that's one of them roadside rough-houses out on the pike. And number two, I won't have you wasting yore time playing for a gang of drunks and streetwalkers and untelling who."

"Lisa, why don't you at least—"

"You stay out of this, Joe Allen. I'll handle *my* son's life, not you. Now listen, mother just won't allow you to play at that place. Why, you're just barely eighteen. You can't hang around a place sech as that 'cause the law won't permit it.

A pink blush of anger started at Rick's neck, crept up over his face to his hairline. "I tell you, I'm going, Mom. I'm not a baby anymore, and I don't intend to be treated like one." He crossed to the kitchen door.

"Don't you leave, Rick! Where you going?"

"I'm going over to Paul's and we're driving over to the Casino." Rick's voice was cut off as he slammed the door.

Elisa crumpled the dishrag she was holding. She plopped down on a kitchen chair, put her head in her hands, and her shoulders shook with sobbing. Joe stood over her, his mouth open, and his hands outstretched as if appealing to her without being able to express himself.

* * * *

Elisa awakened to muffled silence. She knew, by a sixth sense—call it a woman's intuition or whatever—that it had snowed during the night. She leaned over from her bed, peeked behind the brown shade, to see outside. Black flashes blinded her as the sunlight, reflected off brilliant white, struck her full in the face. Her head fell back onto her pillow. It was just as she had known it would be.

The branches of the burned-over trees on the east slope were gloved in the first snow—the wet snow of early November. It's another illusion, Elisa thought, as she slipped noiselessly from beneath the covers that she threw back on the motionless form of her husband.

Elisa knew, only too well, the promise of the first snow. You looked out on a world of beaming whiteness mingled with the more subtle colors of winter. Oh! How beautiful the rugged terrain was under snow.

Then, later in the day, the sun would melt the beauty away, leaving behind the slush and mud. Or, if the snow remained, coal soot blew out of the chimney and sprinkled the white with smudges of black.

Out in the kitchen she could hear the sow squealing for the morning feeding already. She seemed to be making an extra loud row this morning.

Elsia went to the sink, splashed water on her face, and felt above her head for the towel. Waving her hand around in the air, she

finally located it and pressed it against her cheeks and eyelids. She could feel the puffs under her eyes; she had sat up until three in the morning waiting for Rick to return. When he came, finally, he was staggering a bit, and she had not been able to talk to him as she had planned. After she had got him to his room and settled in bed, she had gone to her room feeling crushed.

She lay in the dark, wondering what had gone wrong. Rick had never been like this. The neighbors had always called him "mama's boy" and such. She had never, even when he was small, had any trouble controlling him. And now, suddenly he had changed overnight. Gray light had filtered into the room before she finally drifted into troubled sleep.

Putting on her torn rubber boots, Elisa went out the back door into the cool, white snow. She bent over beside the door and knocked the snow off the handle of the slop pail. As she went across the lawn she looked back to see the impression of her first tracks as she dragged and shuffled her feet across the snow. She left behind a streak of brown earth.

Elisa took two large scoops from the feed barrel, and picked out three choice ears of corn for the sow. She intended to give the pig the mash if she could coax the sow away with the corn.

Going down the hill, she slipped slightly on the bank but recovered before falling. The old sow, her black coat shaggy for winter, waited for her at the pole fence. Elisa looked over the already tracked lot for the white pig. It was lying by the fence at the other end of the lot, its white hair barely distinguishable from the surrounding snow. Elisa called, "Piggy, piggy . . . pig, pig, pig." Still it did not move.

"Guess I'll have to punch you out of bed this morning." Elisa tossed the corn to the sow and went around the lot. Not until she reached the corner of the lot did she notice how still the pig lay, its head turned toward the sky, its mouth half open. Elisa reached the back of the lot, leaned over and poked the pig on its side.

It was ice cold.

She jerked her hand back as an odd sensation flipped through her stomach. "It's dead," she heard herself say aloud, without realizing she had spoken. She stood there, unbelieving, for a long moment. Another hope dead, she thought at last. You feed them, you nourish them, give yourself to them, only to be disappointed in the end. They left you—one way or another—for your pains.

Elisa stood with her hands on the fence looking down at the

still body on the white snow. Its white hair contrasted sharply with the weather-beaten poles it lay against. She stood there she did not realize how long. Finally, she sighed heavily, looked up towards the woods above the other side of the creek. Already the white snow was melting, dripping away from the branches of the half-blackened trees.

MAKE THE WORLD GO AWAY

ROGER CASTLE

Death—
  Come softly and quickly
Upon your firm, cushioned feet,
And lift me from this world
Of disease, hatred, and
Utter chaos.

Master of the Great Beyond—
  Now I am holding out my
Tired and withered arms to
Meet you.
I neither am afraid of you,
Nor dread you.
Death, you are my Friend.

Ruler of the Silent World—
  Push the earth from beneath
My feet, so I shall never have
To gaze upon its pale and cruel
Face again.
The world is a pit—dirty
And uncarpeted.
It lies still and dormant
In the mist of withered dreams.
Life is an empty and dismal
Cave that echoes only darkness
And black despair.

Death—
  Make the world go away.

IT WAS SPRING

Joan Bryant

It was spring.
Our laughter sounded to the farthest
corners of our little world.
The days were endless and our young,
young hearts told us that the
season would forever last.

But spring and summer slipped by someway,
While we were laughing, and then it was
autumn.
Smiling still, we wondered how time
passed so quickly.

But wait . . . Now there is snow on the ground.
It is funny that, looking back,
We can only remember that once
It was spring.

THREE SONNETS OUT OF SEQUENCE

Charles W. Semonis

I

Exquisite dust, in you the evidence
Of God's pure genius is wrought; the truth
In beauty rendered bare. An excellence
Made visible, your flawless, vital youth
Impels my verve and resurrects desire,—
Refined and radiant, in which the ice
Of logic far transcends rude passion's fire.
This spindrift hymn is my strange sacrifice
To your rare substance,—nude and blemishless:
A vibrant synthesis of flowing grace.
Insatiate, my ravaged consciousness,
Rejecting images, adores your face:
In you are coalesced the sphinx and dove
Constraining me to bend with anguished love.

II

A thread within the fabric of your face
Is hostile to the cord which binds your poise:
It is a delicate, exquisite trace
Of youthful sensuality which toys
With order just beneath your girded calm—
That elegant equilibrant which quells
The weathers of your secret self; the balm
Which heals your spirit's wounds. Your face impels,
And I, though discomposed, must find a clue
To help me comprehend the rhyme of eyes
And lips, intrinsic to the sum of you—
Yet alien to the brow which glorifies
Your countenance. In truth, I seek to know
The essence of your smile which lures me so.

III

Tonight, dear heart, let me remember you
And hold the memory against the day
Approaching with the dawn. Let thoughts pursue
Formation, pattern, and design—and may
My heart, recalling, be no less than kind
To you, who, once, were more than kind to me.
The past has come uncoiled and fills my mind
With half-forgotten words; the mystery
Of your unequal smile possesses, stirs,
And fascinates my fancy once again—
And, so, the truth in beauty re-occurs:
A lyric-flaming testament to sin
Of discontent. Yet, even this is good
And brings more peace than dreaming ever could.

OBSERVATION IN A DRY SEASON

CHARLES W. SEMONIS

In a dry season
The stone angels seize him with their stares;
Held sluggish hostage by his rude desire,
He orbits perilously
Between repelling poles of ice and fire.

The canicular eyes,
Expressionless and cold, perceive his greed;
The ears, obscured within the folds of dark,
Detect vile thunder grinding in his blood—
Unleashing ecstasy in one uncoiled flood—
And pounding on the cage of flesh
Which holds his vexed, intemperate unity intact.

Not logic's servant, no, nor passion's slave,
He treads the tight-rope of the fragile norm—
A frightful equilibrium—
Tempted by a whim, which reason cannot reach,
To transform best intent to sin and calm to storm.

In a dry season
God hulks, wreathed in iron austerity,
And views man's agony of choice
With chill indifference;
The vast, implied I AM assures slight recompense,
Indeed, to quell the throes of weak mortality's
Unquiet heart.
Life's old, sad meaning is depleted, lost,
And Truth is spilled like water in the dust.

Still the urge: Summer's baneful twins,
Sirius and Procyon, crave a sacrament
Commensurate with the threat of circumstance;
Still the knowledge: Winter's snow will not bleach out
The baleful stain of one who turns his love to lust.
What sacrifices, then, for Right
Which withers in the harsh, white fever-glare of day?

So: The poles of ice and fire draw nearer never,
But Honor's chaste, grey dove
And Passion's vultures stride the air together—
Unholy irony that rends
The billowing, inconstant veil of Hell
In the sullen, sere, and sinister weather
Of a dry season.

ADVICE

JAY ROBERTS

An old man,
displeased by my demeanor,
charged me saying,
"Pride goes before a fall!"
To this I replied,
"Tis true old man,
and I have fallen many times,
and shall fall many more."
He passed on righteously,
not knowing truth's great simplicity.
For he knew not that what made me fall,
also made me rise,
and that for the time,
however brief,
that my will might support me,
I could see bright twinklings on the horizon's edge,
that he would never see.

DAWSON

GAYLE TOY

Grandpa had never missed a Montgomery County Fair, at least not during the years that I had stayed with him since Daddy left to go into the army. He knew how much I loved animals; and now that I was finally in school, he thought that I was old enough to go. I had heard tales of a two-headed calf and of a hen that had really laid a square egg. Although we started at eight that morning, we didn't arrive at the fair until almost noon, as Grandpa's '41 Chevy smoked and caught fire twice during the usual two-hour trip.

As we walked down between the pens, Grandpa made me stop to see a prize winning steer. I asked him why he called it a steer because it looked like a cow or a bull to me. He mumbled something inaudibly under his breath about it being neither, and I skipped on ahead.

"You fellers haul that hog in hyere, and be kerful with 'er. That thar pig's gonna win me the blue ribbon."

A mammoth of a man stood about a fence-rail's length away

from me, yelling at the top of his voice. He came ambling up to me in tired, faded overalls.

"Howdy, Girlie."

Those jeans had wrinkles almost as deep as the ones imbedded in his forehead. A hat, greased in front by the sweating flank of some long forgotten cow, lingered just above his left eye. As he stood there, I looked down at what had once been an $18 pair of mail-order boots. He took a step toward me, and I could distinctly hear a slight squeaking noise, caused by many walks through the creek or possibly four or five layers of cow manure that were clotted in the cracks on the toes of his shoes.

"Say, are you Jake Edwards' grand youngin'? He seemed inquisitive.

"Uh, huh."

"It looks like I'm gonna be workin' for your grandpa. Guess I'll live in the tenant house."

"Will you bring your hogs?"

"Reckon so. I'm the best hog man in these parts. Sure couldn't leave 'em behind."

"I've got a pet calf named Blackie that I raised on a baby bottle. His mother went dry; and Grandpa gave him to me. I've got a dog, too, but Grandpa don't want me playing with him much. He says you can't make a pet out of a watchdog. I guess I got him fooled. By the way, when are you going to move out to our place?"

"Oh, as soon as I get this hyere fair wrapped up."

In two weeks, Dawson moved into the tenant house, and during the weeks that followed became a good buddy of mine. The summer afternoons would find us sitting on the creek bank watching two ill-fated worms dangle from the end of as many crooked poles. We never caught much except "Craw Dads," but it was not the fishing or the catching that mattered. It was the simmering buzz of a lone dragon fly as he skimmed across the top of the water; the warmth of mud between my toes and the companionship of Dawson.

There were two things that happened, however, that tragically shattered the spell of that summer. Late in August, when the blackberries were hanging puffy and ready to be picked, I started down the cow path with my pail. The dull thump of cowboy boots on the loose dirt behind me made me turn around. It was Dawson.

"Girlie, you can't go berry pickin' today. That whole thicket

over thar is full of sick rabbits. Your grandpa's worried about it. He's afraid that they'll give it to the stock."

"Well, I won't get sick. Grandpa says that if you eat an apple a day, that the doctor will never have to come to see you." I was very proud of my medical knowledge.

"How would you like for Blackie to get sick? You wouldn't take to that too much, would you?"

"No, guess not. Think I'll go back to the house."

The incident passed by almost entirely unnoticed by me until three or four days later when I went out to the lower pasture to feed Blackie. Fitting my feet into the squares of wire fence, I leaned over and called him. He walked slowly and deliberately up to about five feet from me and stopped.

"Come here, boy. Come here." I held a handful of table salt.

Blackie took one step backward, lowered his head and began to shake it from side to side. He then began to paw at little tufts of grass that grew around his feet.

"What's wrong, Blackie? Here's your salt." I extended my arm as far as I could over the fence. "Don't you want it?"

A large hand was laid heavily on my shoulder. I turned around, and Dawson stood there with a pained smile on his face.

"Blackie's sick. It's better that you jist don't bother 'em now."

"Maybe he's just mad at me. But I sure haven't done anything to him." I continued to wave my arm through the fence. "Nice boy. Nice boy."

Blackie continued to back off acting rather strangely. I looked at Dawson.

"What's the matter with his mouth? He's slobbering. Maybe he's cutting teeth. Huh, Dawson?"

Dawson made no reply but used his big hand to steer me toward the house.

"Now you stay in the house, Girlie. Me and your grandpa's got some talkin' to do." Dawson's face was drawn and leathery looking.

I had been sitting alone on the stoop for an hour or so, when I heard a rifle shot. Excitement raced through me, and I ran toward the barn. The crooked trunk of the peach tree and the half-open door of the hen house sped past me, in a watery blur. The barn grew steadily in dimension, and I stopped abruptly just outside. My breath was coming in short, rapid gasps. I tried hard to swallow, as my mouth had a dry, sticky taste. Finding that next to impossible, I

decided at first to go in, but then decided to crouch behind the tool shed instead. I tried to slow my breathing as it was breaking the uncanny stillness. I heard absolutely nothing. Slowly, a figure, head bent from his neck, came from the open door. It was Grandpa. His feet were dragging the ground, and cradled in his right arm was a rifle.

"Grandpa, what's wrong? Why'd you shoot the gun? It was so loud I heard it all the way up at the house. I'll bet you scared Blackie somethin' awful."

He looked down at me, stared for a moment, and reaching down, crushed me to his middle. The wide silver buckle pressed into my forehead. He released his hold and strode away.

"Where are you goin, Grandpa?" I got no answer.

"Youngin'." Dawson stood, legs apart, firmly anchored in the center of the doorway. "I don't know what Jake er yer grandpa's told ya', but I jist want ya' to know that I'm really sorry and that I think Blackie was the best steer that I ever seen. And I been to fairs and stock shows all over these parts."

"Whatcha tellin' me that for, Dawson? I knew that already. You told me that a long time ago."

"Yep, he was somethin' that any kid would take cause to be proud of."

I frowned and peered into the eyes of a man that were usually clear blue and unflinching. They had lines around them now, and they couldn't look into mine. Dawson lowered them and kicked a worn piece of flint into a dry pile of manure-ridden hay. He made a growling sound as if he were clearing his throat.

"Ikie, Blackie is dead."

My eyes still held their fixed gaze, but they could no longer see any distinct shape. Dawson was a red and green smear; the barn was a white and grey smear; Blackie, lying on the cold damp floor of the barn, a smear too.

"Did Grandpa shoot him?" My voice climbed to a higher pitch until it was almost a whine.

Refusing to answer, Dawson picked me up, sat down on the tool chest, and let me lie up close to his heavy flannel shirt.

"Hush up yer cryin', now. That ain't gonna help a bit. You are gettin' to be a young lady now. And I ain't never seen a real young lady cry, so you can't neither. I told you a couple days ago that Blackie could get sick. I guess them rabbits got into the lots around

the barn. Even when people get sick, they have to have shots from one of them city doctors."

"Did you give Blackie a shot, too?"

"Well, sorta—We—yer grandpa didn't have any of them shots, so he jist used his rifle. It's about the same thing."

"It is not." My lower lip began to tremble. "Blackie's gone, and I won't have anybody to play with except Andy."

Dawson drew me a little closer to him, and as he did, I stretched my neck as far back as I could because I wanted to look at him. I liked to watch the wrinkles and creases in his forehead and around his mouth. His eyes looked beyond me and beyond the farm. He blinked and squinted, as if trying to get a better focus on something very far away.

"Ikie, you are just a little 'un, but I knowed that you was really a strong little lady. And well, kinda older fer your age than them girls what goes to school with you. I know it ain't been easy fer ya' today, honey, but if all of us didn't have things like this to happen as we growed up, then I guess we jist couldn't ever been growed up. 'Cause when you git to be a woman or a man you might lose more than a prize steer . . . and, youngin', you'll cry more than you did today." He stopped suddenly, and a grin spread across his face. "But the best thing fer us to do right now is to borrow yer grandpa's truck and take a ride into town. Maybe I'll buy you a surprise."

Dawson took me into town that day, and my surprise was the biggest soda in Adam's Drug Store "fer the smallest young lady in the county." I drank the soda extremely slowly because I'd been thinking about that lady thing Dawson had been telling me about, and I just couldn't get used to the idea. As far as I was concerned, Dawson became, from that moment on, my idol. He bought me a horse, which I named Sable, and we rode together on the farm. Grandpa would get mad at Dawson for not doing his work. He said that I'd have to leave Dawson alone sometimes because he was having to do all the chores himself. He had little or nothing to say to Dawson, and as the winter wore on he became worse. In the spring, he was no better. In fact, he told me to quit spending so much of my time with Dawson. The summer months were worse. Grandpa wouldn't let Dawson take me to horse shows or anything.

It was one of those sultry August afternoons that I shuffled into the refreshing coolness of the barn. Walking to the right of a wall of cow manure that had been shoveled up to fertilize the "resting

field," and stepping over a bale of hay, I flopped down to the hard-packed dirt floor. I rolled over on my back, and as I felt the dampness penetrate through my shirt, I began to relax. Looking straight up into the rafters, I could see minute ribbons of dust particles swimming in the sunlight. Some were gliding to a halt on some rusted horse's bit, or a smooth-worn tobacco stick. "Why doesn't Grandpa want me talkin' to Dawson anymore?" I said to myself. A fly lighted on the end of my nose and began to rub his front legs together. He eyed me with much arrogance and continued to remain in that same position. I tried to watch him but my eyes crossed, so I stuck out my lower lip, exhaled sharply, and watched the fly light on the remnants of yesterday's grain mixture in the cow trough. Something moving caught my eye.

"Come on in, Andy." The timeworn German shepherd of the family sauntered into the barn. His drab old eyes lifted slowly and stared into mine.

"Andy, have you seen Dawson today?" He made no recognizable response but plodded over to me, extended a long crimson tongue, and gave me a benevolent lick. I put my arm around his neck, and he stiffly lay down beside me. I rolled over on my stomach, picked up a wisp of hay, and began to chew intently upon it. I remained there, thinking, until I was snapped back into reality by the sound of muffled voices coming from the next stall. I lay there and listened. The voices rose to a high feverish pitch and just as suddenly, subsided. I reached for an old two-by-four, pulled myself up and pressed my body to the wall.

"Now, hear me out, Dawson. If you're not off this farm by tomorrow, I'm gonna call John Stewart to come out and put you in jail." It was Grandpa. I mashed myself even closer to the rough boards. "I've only put up with you this long because of the child. She seems to take to you. And you're good company for her."

"Jake Edwards, you turn me in, and you'll live to regret it." It was the deeper voice of Dawson. "You shore as hell don't pay enough for a damned jackass to live on. And if you was in my place, youds done the same thing. That old still ain't hurtin' nobody. It's well hid. I made sure of that. Hardly any of yer church friends know about it either. So I don't see why yer feathers is up. It's good fer a little extry money, that's all." There was a long silence. "And don't you be telling little Ikie 'bout this and tryin' to turn her agin me, 'cause she won't believe you. Besides, she's too young to know whut's whut, anyhow."

Grandpa spoke with a quiet sense of a man old in years but firm in his beliefs. "She's been taught that somethin's wrong that's against the law. And what you did was definitely against the law."

I heard nothing else until I heard the stall door bang and bounce shut; bang and bounce shut. I ran on tiptoes to the front of the barn, and crooking my head to one side, peeped through a wide crack between the boards. Dawson had walked out and had taken his familiar stance; feet wide apart and his hands curved around the small of his hips. He held his head high, and his neck had an exaggerated stiffness. He exhaled deeply and began to turn ever so slowly. His eyes made one wide circle, but his feet never moved from that spot. He raised his hand, long-fingered and tanned, to a position just above his eyes and let it rest there. The hot glare of the sun hit him full-face now. He stood so for a moment and then started for his little house.

I remained completely immobile for a half hour or so until I saw him step off the porch. A fake leather suitcase hung loosely from the end of one arm. A blue-jean jacket, which was now an off-grey, was set back on his shoulders, exposing red flannel underwear. He took a step and quickly stooped to the ground. With one hand resting on his knee, he lowered the other into the dust of the barnyard. It lingered outstretched for a moment, closed slowly, and as he stood, rammed deeply into his right pocket. He pulled it out a moment later and gave it a few slaps on his thigh. It left hand prints on his jeans. Hand prints from the dust of the barnyard. He looked down at them, but let them be and started walking very stiffly toward the highway.

I ran wildly, bumping into an old saddle, farm machinery, and a rusted bicycle, until I came to the wide door that led to the glaring heat of the outside. Crashing into it, I heard the loud slap, as it collided with the freshly white-washed planks. I stood as if naked in the white heat. I had the sensation of being burned and scorched, but I could not escape it. I wanted something to cover me and protect me from it. My eyes darted uncontrollably from one object to another. I saw my grandpa leaning against the corn shed. His body was shimmering and moving in a wave-like motion from top to bottom. I took a step forward, but retreated jerkily and whirled to face the barn. The door was still open. Where could I...? Who...?

"Anaannndy." It was more of a wail than a call. The old dog came loping out of the black gaping hole, wagging his tail, and devotedly jumped to put his paws on my shoulders. I slumped to

the ground, and burying my face in the long hair of his chest, I broke into convulsive sobs. Small childish fingers dug into the thick matted fur and clung with feverish intensity. Wet, black curls stuck to my face, and a long, rough tongue plastered them back.

I don't know how long I lay there, but my next hint of reality came as two sure arms supported me against the firm rhythmic beating of my grandpa's heart. The air smelled of cherry tobacco and fresh preserves. He laid me delicately amid the feathered cushions of the couch. A faint smile crossed his face.

"You get some sleep, Ikie. I'm going to the fair in the morning and thought that...Well, I thought that you might want to come along."

My head felt full and heavy, and my eyes felt puffed and sore.

"I don't know, Grandpa. I . . . don't. . . ."

The blinds were pulled, and the lights turned out. All was quiet except for the soft regular breathing of a not-so-young little lady.

A SET OF VALUES

CHARLES W. BAILEY

The liquor bottle sailed over the rear of the newly waxed maroon convertible and smashed into thousands of small pieces of glass that scattered from shoulder to shoulder of the narrow two-lane highway. The corners of his mouth arched upward to form a faintly distinguishable smile of satisfaction.

He listened to the whistling sound created by the convertible as it cut through the still June night air. The yellow enameled moon seemed to grow larger and then fade away, only to enlarge again, as it glared over the hill into his reddened eyes. The light made the hood on the large streamlined car shine, and the boy's chest expanded with pride.

Reaching down to turn the radio on, he felt the steering wheel jerk and vibrate, and he heard the sound of gravel being pressed down and crushed by the right tires that had dropped off the pavement. Quickly, he jerked upright again and at the same time twisted the smooth steering wheel to the left. His twist took the convertible almost to the opposite shoulder, but another less forceful twist to the right brought it almost back to his side of the road again.

Hearing the radio's faint voice, he reached down to increase the volume, only to bring in more loudly a news program; quickly, he pushed a chrome button that tuned in some lively "rock and roll".

The steering wheel jerked and vibrated again to let him know that he had again left the road. He repeated the twisting process, but with a little more difficulty. "Damned narrow cowpath." He could hear his words slurring in his mouth.

The radio blared out a popular song which he had heard about an hour ago at the Tipple Country Club dance. "What a drag! It's getting so a man can't even sit back and drink anymore without gettin' bored. More like a teaparty than a dance."

Rounding the next curve, he could see two blurred images slowly trudging along the left shoulder of the road. They had metallic helmets on their heads and were swinging what looked like oblong-shaped lunchboxes in their right hands. He could feel the left side of his mouth curl up into a sneer, and he eased the steering wheel to the left. His left foot tapped the dimmer, throwing the headlights on bright. The two men snapped their heads around and froze, but only for a second. Their feet then seemed to have steel springs on them, and the men tumbled over the embankment to avoid the oncoming car. About five yards from the spot where the two men had been standing, the driver jerked the steering wheel back to the right, and at the same time shoved down on the chrome-plated horn. Throwing his head back, he shouted, "You damned coal-digging moles. Next time I'll run over you."

He roared in laughter and stomped the accelerator. Through the mirror, he could see the fuzzy shapes of the two miners climbing back onto the highway. They shook their fists and he turned around in his seat to yell something else, but before the first word could leave his mouth, he felt the front wheels leave the highway. Snapping back around he saw that the highway had vanished. As the tires hit the rough embankment's slope, over which the car had just floated, he was jarred from his seat. Desperately he groped for something to hold onto, but he could find only emptiness, and then it was too late. He felt himself suspended in space; the car went on down the embankment. He could see the fast-moving rough earth coming up to meet him, and then he felt the jar as it reached him. His whole side was on fire, but then the blackness closed around him and all was quiet.

As he awoke the light was everywhere, and he could smell the familiar odors which can be found only in a hospital. Everything was white, and the whiteness made him feel clean. He tried to move his right leg, but it resisted with a sharp piercing pain that didn't stop again until he was completely still. Out of the corner of his

eyes he could see a white figure moving toward him, and the movement stopped beside his bed.

A slender young nurse looked down at him, and the corners of her mouth rose upward showing two small dimples. "Feeling better?"

"Better, hell! I ain't never felt so lousy. How'd I get here?"

"Two men brought you in about two this morning. Said you wrecked about a mile from town." The smile was now gone from her face and was replaced by a serious gaze.

"This the Tipple Hospital?"

"That's right. Third floor, room 318."

"How bad did I bang myself up?"

"Oh, I think you'll live, thanks to those two miners." The dimpled smile returned to her face.

He felt his heartbeat increase. "Miners? What miners?"

"There were two of 'em. Said they saw you go off the road and found you thrown out on the embankment. What'd you do? Go to sleep?"

"Huh? Yeah . . . yeah, that's how it happened."

He watched the nurse walk in smooth strides to the foot of the bed. Taking a clipboard from the footrail, she glanced up and looked at him again. "Police were here a little while ago."

"City?"

"No. State."

"What'd they want?"

"Information. Name, address, age, other stuff."

"Where'd you get it?"

"Your wallet. It's in the top drawer of the nightstand with your other stuff. Oh, by the way, your father was here about an hour ago. He left as soon as he found out you were okay. Said he had a board meeting at the bank."

He scanned the ceiling with his eyes as if to look for a dirty spot that could not be found. "Yeah, I guess he had to go. A board meeting wouldn't be the same without dear ole Dad there, now would it?"

"Huh?"

"Nothing. Just making conversation."

He heard footsteps coming down the corridor, and the nurse moved softly to the door and glanced around the corner. He heard muffled voices, and after a few minutes two middle-aged state troopers entered the room. Both of them had their grey, round-

brimmed hats in their hands. The captain placed his well-polished black shoe on the chair beside the bed and crossed his arms on top of his knee. The sergeant had a pad and pencil in his hands, and he reminded the patient of a snoopy reporter.

The captain looked down at the bed. "Are you Josh Walker?"

"Yeah."

"Want to tell us what happened this morning?"

Josh breathed a sigh of relief as they walked out the door. He had lied to them about falling asleep, and he was pleased with himself about how easy it had been. The nurse came back in, and Josh sent her for a pack of cigarettes. She returned and left again.

He opened the pack of cigarettes and threw the wrappings on the floor. Reaching over to get the tin ashtray from the nightstand, he saw his watch behind the metal water pitcher. He picked it up and noticed that the crystal was cracked, but it was still running. It was twelve-fifteen. "Damn, I'm starved!"

Ten minutes later a two-shelved white porcelain table was wheeled into the room. He finished eating the flavor-starved food, and placed his smooth linen napkin on the empty plate. Settling back against the pillow, he lit another cigarette and drew the smoke deep into his lungs. He watched the smoke dance across the rays of sunlight entering through the wooden-framed window across the room. He was so occupied with his pastime that he did not hear the two men who entered the room.

"You the one that racked this mornin'?"

The voice startled him, and he jerked his head toward the door. Two men were standing there staring down at him, and immediately he felt uncomfortable. Their dungarees were faded, and their printed shirts were far from being new. The taller man was unshaven, and the other one had a scar running from his left eyebrow up to the part on the right side of his hairline. Both were young, perhaps in their middle twenties.

"Yeah, I ran off the road last night." He tried to remain calm, but he could feel his right hand involuntarily patting the sheet-covered mattress.

"We came up to brang you these."

Both men reached their rough calloused hands into their back pockets at the same time. Two long white envelopes were pitched onto the white sheet. Josh picked one up and opened it. Inside was a check made out to Homer Ross, and it was signed by Josh's

father, Thomas B. Walker. The other envelope contained a check for the same amount made out to Edward Hines.

The shorter man with the scar stepped forward. "Me 'n Ed don't want no part of this."

Josh stared at the two miners as if to see through them. "Neither of you want five hundred dollars?"

The taller man lifted his muscular left arm to his unshaven face and rubbed his chin, creating a scraping sound. "Well now, hi't ain't so much that we ain't wantin' five hunerd dollars. H'it's jest that what Homer 'n me did . . . well, we didn't do it fer money, 'n we h'ain't taking no money fer it."

Josh stared at one of the checks in his right hand. "About last night before the wreck . . ."

"We didn't come up here fer that."

"Yeah, we brung what we wanted to, now let's go, Ed. Damn'd hospital's makin' me half sick."

Josh tried to keep the conversation going. "Wait a minute. You fellows did me a big favor last night."

The tall man turned around. "We shore didn't consider personalities, now did we?" His voice was bitter.

"Now wait a minute. I was going to apologize if you'd of let me a while ago." Josh pointed his finger in the direction of the two miners, but let it drop when he had finished.

"Bud, yer 'I'm sorries' was brung to our houses this mornin' 'n rite now they's both rite thar on yer bed."

Josh was almost pleading now. "Aw come on. At least one of you keep the check Hell, be different."

Ed's face radiated with a faint glow of red, and his voice was unsteady. "You looka here, rich boy. Me 'n Homer h'aint got much 'n never will, but thar's one thang we do got, 'n that's pride. Boy, we's poor folk, but I'll guarantee you one damn thang, we thank ourselves to be worth a mite more'n a thousand dollars, 'n in my thinkin' that puts us one stap up on even you."

"Let's go, Ed. You done said all thar is ta say." Homer grabbed Ed at the elbow and gently tugged him toward the door.

This time they left for good, and Josh could hear their worn leather boot heels clicking on the marble steps as the two men descended. He hadn't realized it, but he had been sitting up in the bed when they had left the room. He eased himself back down on the mattress by his elbows as softly as he could. He rested in that position for a few brief moments while he thought about what had

happened. Suddenly, he jerked his eyebrows up and glanced down at the sheet. He reached out and picked up the two checks which were beside him. Reaching over to the night stand, he pulled out the small top drawer and reached in to bring out a smooth, black leather wallet. He carefully folded both checks and placed them behind his other money. He put the wallet back in the nightstand and closed the drawer; then he reached down and wadded the two envelopes into one large ball and tossed the ball into the waste can beside the bed. Grabbing a cigarette from the pack on the night-stand, he whispered to himself, "Now ole Dad will never know."

JESUS MADE 'EM THAT WAY

JIM STEVENSON

The small, chubby-faced boy looked down at the little girl who was sitting in the dust.

"What'cha doin'?" he asked in his husky, childish voice.

"Watchin' the bugs."

"Where?"

"Here on the ground."

"What's the matter with 'em?"

"Nothin'. Why?"

"Why're ya watchin' 'em for, then?"

" 'Cause I want to."

"I'm gonna watch too."

"I don't care if'n you do or if'n you don't."

"Well, I'm gonna whether you care if I do or don't or not."

He sat down in the dirt beside the little blonde-headed girl.

"What're they doin'?"

"Buildin' their house, stupid."

"That shore is a funny lookin' house."

"Oh, you're so stupid. They don't have houses like people do."

The boy rubbed his dirty hand over his cheek clumsily and moved closer to the point of interest.

"Them shore is small bugs."

"Of course. Jesus made them that way."

"Why'd he make 'em so little?"

"Stupid. 'Cause if he made 'em bigger, they'd be so big they'd eat people up."

The little boy's eyes widened two-fold. "Golly."

Suddenly the little girl violently smashed her hand into the mass of ants, scattering the insects in a cloud of dust.

"Stupid ol' bugs!"

The little boy looked up, half angry and half startled.

"Hey! Why'd you go an' do that!"

The little girl jumped up and ran off down the alley-way. "They were stupid."

The little boy jumped up and ran after the girl as she disappeared through the gate of a back yard. She slammed the gate behind her with a taunting laugh.

The boy came to a stop at the gate and looked at the girl through the wire mesh. "Why'd you go an' do that!"

"Those ants were stupid."

"Why'd ya smash 'em for?"

" 'Cause I wanted to."

"I wanted ta see 'em build their houses!"

"They didn't know how, so I smashed them away!"

"Do ya know where any more of 'em are?"

"Bugs?"

"Uh-huh."

"Yes, I do. But, I'm not gonna tell you!" She stuck out her thin pink tongue and closed her eyes.

The boy returned her action with the same, adding a touch of his own by blowing air out and spraying the little girl's face.

"Don't do that!" she screamed.

"Where's some more bugs!"

"I ain't tellin'! Go find your own stupid bugs!"

"I don't know how!"

"Look for 'em. And every one of 'em you find will be stupid!"

The little boy turned around, his lower lip sticking out, shuffling away from the gate and the little girl through the gravel.

He stopped and looked down. There in the gravel of the alley was a half-finished cherry lollipop. He picked it up and smudged off the fine particles of dust, grinding it deeper into the candy.

He stood up and turned around, holding the lollipop into the air.

"See what I got?"

"What!"

"A red lollipop, and you can't have any!"

The little girl opened the gate and stepped out to the edge of the alley.

"Where'd you get it?"

"I ain't tellin' 'cause it 'smine!"

"You better! Where'd you get it at?"

The little boy snapped the lollipop quickly into his mouth. He turned and started to walk down the alley.

"You come here! That's mine!" She ran up behind the little boy, and with her small fist, pounded into the back of his head.

He burst immediately into tears, letting the lollipop drop from his mouth into the dirt, showing a red cavern from behind his teeth to his tonsils.

The little girl stood before him, giving quick glances towards the house.

"Hey! Shut up! I didn't do anything!"

He took a deep breath and let out a high-pitched squall.

"Hey, stop that!" She desperately put her hand up to this mouth. He jerked away, screaming louder.

"I didn't hit you! I didn't do anything! Hey, shut up! I'LL HIT YOU AGAIN!"

Suddenly the little boy stopped and took a deeper breath, cutting the air with an ear-splitting scream.

The little girl slapped her hands over her mouth, her eyes shooting back and forth from the screaming boy to the house. She broke into a sudden run for her back yard.

Seeing the girl's hasty departure, the little boy stopped as suddenly as he had started and, forgetting the lollipop, ran up behind her as she struggled with the gate latch.

Again the air filled with a violent bellowing.

She turned and raised her fist to strike a second blow.

He stopped immediately, his mouth still open and eyes wide with anticipation. She held her pose and breath.

"Are you gonna stop?"

He stuck out his lower lip at her. "Tell me where some more bugs are."

"Can't you find some yourself?"

"You said that those bugs were stupid."

"They are."

"I don't want stupid bugs!"

"I don't know where any smart bugs are."

She turned and started to work the latch again.

"Yes you do! You know where smart bugs are and you won't tell me and if you won't tell me where they are . . ."

She turned around just as he reared back and took a deep breath for a second major attack.

"Shut up! I'll tell you where smart bugs are!"

"Where?"

She looked around her in all directions. "You must promise that you won't ever tell."

"I promise."

She turned and worked the latch free and walked into her yard, the small boy following her, his hands in his pockets.

She walked around the garage to the other side and dropped to her hands and knees, crawling under the thick shrubs and vines. The small boy followed her without question through the damp dirt.

She stopped near the base of a small tree and he crawled up beside her.

"See?" she pointed through the cool, green darkness.

"Them's the smart bugs?"

"Uh-huh."

"Why're they smart?"

" 'Cause Jesus made 'em that way, stupid."

"Hey, those bugs are bigger and a different color than the other ones."

"I bet these are the only smart bugs in the world."

"In the whole world?"

"Uh-huh. And right here in my back yard."

"What're they doin'?"

"Stupid. They're buildin'."

"Don't look like the other ones, though."

"I know."

"Looks like a people builded house."

"They're smart bugs. They make things like people do."

The little boy's eyes roamed beyond the small tree trunk into the deep gloom of the shrubs.

"Wow! Look at that!"

"Shut up, stupid. This is a secret."

"Look at them houses!"

"I know! Shut up!"

"And buildin's like downtown!"

"I'll hit you if you don't shut up!"

The boy's eyes scanned the ground area under the shrubs. "Wow."

"Okay. Now you've seen my secret. Let's get out."

They crawled out from under the greenery into the sunlight.

"Don't you ever tell anybody!"

"I won't."

"It's a secret!"

"Uh-huh. A secret. I ain't tellin'."

The boy walked out the back gate. The little girl crawled back under the bushes as the boy disappeared over the hill.

Throughout the afternoon, into the evening, the little girl quietly watched the ants in their miniature construction.

Suddenly, through the bushes, in popped the head of the little boy.

"What do you want!"

"Wanna see the secret."

"Why?" She stood up. "You saw it!"

"I wanna see it again."

"You can't!"

"It's my secret too!"

"It's my back yard!"

She gave the boy a forceful push which sent him down upon his rear.

He jumped up quickly and pushed her down into the dirt beside the peculiar ant manifestation.

"My secret!" she shouted.

"Mine too!"

"Is not!"

She turned and went violently kicking at the small structures, sending sticks and dirt into the air, laden with ants. She pushed by him and burst into tears as she ran to the back door of the house and disappeared inside, sticking her head outside, shouting, "STUPID!"

The young boy crouched down on his knees under the green gloom in the declining light of evening and watched the thousands of confused and angry ants clash about in the small mass of strewn rubble.

"You bugs are smart. Hey, bugs!"

He crawled beyond the small tree trunk into the mass, fingering the small bits of rubble which lay about in a still faintly symmetrical pattern.

The quiet evening air was broken abruptly by a short, terrified scream of pain.

As the sun dropped below the horizon, the figure of a small boy walked down the back alley, over the hill, brushing dirt and small pinpoints of blood from his hands and knees, weeping softly to himself and mumbling.

"Dumb bugs. Stupid bugs."

THE LAST DAY

ROBERT LEWIS

As the sun arose that fateful morn,
  It greeted a terrible sight—
A mushroom cloud a-blooming
  With a plane in floating flight.

Death was in the air that day
  And hate filled the hearts of man,
And a man-made monster let loose by fate
  Runs wild as far as it can.

Before the sun had reached its height,
  The world was covered with dust
And the rose like the laurel of glory
  Had withered away like rust.

Planes filled the sky with the anger
  Of hornets raised from the nest.
Men killed each other for nothing
  (Only to prove they were best).

No place to go to;
  Yet everyplace they were from,
These men of crumbled nations,
  Who fought to be number one.

The green was gone forever;
  The sea had turned to gray;
The wood was charred and tattered;
  Mankind had had its day.