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Foreword

Writing, as a form of communication, implies the necessity of both Writer and Reader. It is not enough that the author should merely express himself on paper; he has not completed that expression until he has been read. And that expression, if it does communicate, requires some consideration of the intended receiver.

Our students have something to say, and the talent with which to say it. They need the opportunity to voice themselves, and they need you to hear them. Accordingly, in selecting material for this magazine, we have tried to give recognition to writers of merit, to encourage those who show promise, and to present, at the same time, interesting reading matter.

We do not look upon this issue as a single booklet but as the beginning of a magazine which, we hope, will become an integral part of our campus life. The responsibility for its continuance and success lies as much with you who receive the magazine, as with him who writes it. The type of medium, the degree of skill which the latter develops, will depend upon what is demanded of him—and that demand is in you, the Reader.

—THE EDITOR.
DEDICATED TO
MISS ISOBEL GRISCOM

who, through her “Creative Workshop” and her personal stimulation and encouragement of student writers—past and present—has given an impetus to the development of creative writing on this campus.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

BETTY LEE ALBERT: A Senior, co-editor of the Echo, has shown ability both in the field of poetry and literary criticism; plans to combine her literary talents with her knowledge of French and German by doing graduate work in European literature at a French university.

MARCIA BASENACH: Miss Basenach, who plans to major in journalism, bases her short story on an incident which occurred in her mother's home town, twenty years ago.

LUNDEY E. BEATEY: A Freshman; former student at West Point; served eighteen months in the Army Air Forces; at present, is preparing to be a mechanical engineer.

EDWIN BRINKLEY: Veteran of four years' service with the Army Air Force—in England, France and Germany—during which time he worked on an army newspaper, and was a contributor to "Stars and Stripes" and the "Yank."

DONALD F. CASEY: After two years in the Navy, Casey—a graduate of Notre Dame—entered U. C. as a Freshman last fall; he is now majoring in Chemistry.

MAI BELL CONLEY: Interested in journalism, Miss Conley edited the G. P. S. annual during her senior year there, and as a Freshman at U. C., is a member of the University Echo staff.

ROY C. CRAVEN, JR.: During the war, spent seventeen months in India as an Air Force Photographer; a Fine Arts major, Craven had one of his paintings shown this year at a student exhibit at the University of Chicago.

RAY B. CROWE: A former Master Sargeant in the Transportation Command, Crowe served three years overseas in the Persian Gulf Command; now majoring in English, he hopes to find a place in the writing field.

ERIKA FULCHER: A violinist in the Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra, Miss Fulcher selected a desolate house in the Sequatchee Valley as the theme for her mood sketch.

HAROLD HOGUE: Served as electrician on a destroyer escort in the Pacific; now a Freshman at U. C., and taking pre-engineering, plans to complete his training at the University of Tennessee.

ROBERT F. HOPPER: Upon his graduation from City High, Hopper served two years in the U. S. Navy. He is now a Freshman, and plans to enter the accounting field when he graduates from college.

GRADY M. LONG: Mr. Long's varied background includes a bit of rural teaching, a position with Provident Life Insurance Co., service with the U. S. Army in England, Belgium, and France; is now back at U. C. completing work for his A. B.—with an eye to an M. A. and then, travel in Europe; his poems have appeared in Poetry World, North Carolina Poetry Review, Charleston Evening Post and other magazines; his poetic abilities are also evident in his short stories, such as the one appearing in this issue.

NANCY MORELAND: Miss Moreland, a U. C. Sophomore, is a sociology major; her future plans are indefinite as yet, but she likes to write, and is now serving as a member of the Echo staff.
WHO DARES?

By Phil Krug

The Dead Soldier's Spirit looks on
The gray stone shaft and on its
Lifeless Mass, reads finely-chiseled
Words—"In Memory Of . . . ."
Of What—of cold dead bodies as
Bleak and Cheerless as the Rock?
Yes, in memory of Death, not Life.
No Bloom of Resurrection here,
But only War's Eternal Blight.
REMEMBER ALL YOUR LIFE — THESE DEAD
WERE ONCE ALIVE AND LOVED . . . . is
This the Fate your shackles bind—
To be as useless as the stone
While Naked Hundreds cry, Look After Me,
Oh Love Me, You Who've Died!
And the Dead Soldier's Spirit quickens
And stretches out the Hand of Love
. . . . OH GOD! IT DOES NOT REACH . . . .
. . . . the granite chains have
Once again enslaved the hand of help.
Who dares to say with pomp and stone,
IN MEMORY OF

RUFUS MORGAN: Served overseas in the Photographic Sqd.; is now taking a pre-med course; is a naturalist in his spare time.
GRAY PHILLIPS: Former music student at Yale; now at U. C. as an Art major; plans to attend a Paris university for graduate work in the fall; his poem was written on Okinawa, where he served as an ensign in the U. S. Navy.
BARNEY L. ROTH, JR.: Saw combat action with the Infantry on Guam, Leyte, Philippines, Kerama Rhetto, and Okinawa; served with occupation troops in Gokkaido, and later, Tokyo, Japan; present ambition is to join F. B. I. force.
WILLIAM STEPHENS, JR.: Served with the Marine Corps in the South Pacific; a family man with a wife and seven months old baby, Stephens divides his time between studies at U. C. and work in a law office, and a recording studio of his own, which he runs on the side.
RUSSELL H. WARD: Freshman; spent two years in the Navy, serving as aviation storekeeper; plans to go to Northwestern to study radio journalism.
LOYD WILSON: Wilson, a Marine Corps veteran, of overseas service, is a U. C. Freshman; plans to enter the University of Tennessee in June to attend the engineering school.
The rain tore down upon Jenny with relentless fury. It poured warm and sticky down her neck, wetting her skin as well as her clothes. It dripped from her hair, which hung now in saturated strands, and into her leather riding boots, which sloshed as she walked. Because the heavy sky, so ghostly illuminated by lightning, seemed ready to open completely—to enclose and crush her—Jenny ran faster. As she ran along the path from the barn to the house, the lilac bushes slashed at her face and left a sickening odor of wet perfume in her nostrils.

Once on the back porch, Jenny began to peel off her wet corduroy jacket, which clung to her like a part of her skin itself. Then she leaned with exhaustion against the back door. She heard her brown filly whinny from the barn and snort impatiently. “She’s frightened,” Jenny thought. “I shouldn’t have taken her out in weather like this.” Quickly Jenny closed her eyes to shut out the rain which streamed from the roof a dirty yellow, and settled on the ground in brown, ugly pools.

This feeling of terror was unusual for Jenny and she laughed nervously at herself. She realized then that her body was trembling, too. Was it because she was chilled by the cold rain? Could it be fear of the storm? Jenny knew that it wasn’t. This was a feeling of dismay for what she had done that afternoon—a feeling only emphasized by the storm. The ride had at least succeeded in clearing her brain. Now maybe she could think!

Jenny realized now why she suddenly lost all control of herself that afternoon, why she let anger and emotion completely overpower reason, and why she whipped her own son until he looked at her with disbeliefing, hurt eyes and ran from the house as if she were a monster. She knew why now, but she couldn’t explain it to a little six-year-old boy.

As Jenny was riding toward home that afternoon, she saw Danny playing with several of his schoolmates in a vacant lot. It was a brisk, sparkling afternoon and, as usual, her ride in the country had exhilarated and refreshed her. She didn’t really notice Danny and his playmates very much, and she was almost upon them ready to call out to Danny when she saw the little colored boy cringing in a corner of the lot, his eyes wide with fright. Jenny was startled. Stopping her horse, she stared at the group in surprise. Danny didn’t see her because he was busy shouting and laughing with the others. At first she couldn’t understand what they were doing, but when she realized that her son was throwing rocks and yelling, “Nigger, nigger!” with the rest, Jenny was swept into a whirlwind of fury. Dismounting she ran to the little colored boy, so alone and bewildered. She felt his hands cling trembling to her. It seemed that he was holding on in desperation to a fragment of friendliness which would protect him from the surrounding hostility. She saw his huge eyes fill with frightened tears. He was young and he didn’t understand why the group of boys tormented him. Beyond him Jenny saw Danny and his friends standing in perplexed silence. Some still held rocks in their grimy fists.
“I hope you realize what little hoodlums you are!” she shouted at them. “That isn’t the right thing to say,” she thought.

“We were just playing,” Danny sidled toward his mother.

“Playing!” Jenny looked menacingly at the small group. “Go home! All of you, go home!” She knew that she was on the verge of crying and it made her angrier.

The boys turned and fled down the street. Jenny thought Danny was running faster than any of them.

Jenny led the tearful child into the drugstore for a soda and tried to soothe him, but she realized that there was no way in which she could help this little boy. This was only the beginning of a long lifetime of hurts for him, continuous thrusts that would press the wound deeper and deeper.

On the way home Jenny tried to reason with herself. She would explain to Danny what he had done. He was probably at home now, crying alone in his room—sorry for the pain he had inflicted that afternoon. She was trying to think of what she would say to him, as she dismounted and walked thoughtfully to the porch. Jenny opened the front door and stared in amazement at Danny. He was sitting in the living room eating an apple and looking at a comic book.

“Why, he doesn’t even remember what happened this afternoon,” Jenny thought. Suddenly she felt that he was an enemy. There he sat not realizing how he had hurt a person, how he had inflicted a wound that would never heal. She almost hated him in that moment. And it wasn’t right, because he was her son. Jenny felt with a sudden urgent force that she must do something to make Danny realize the brutal act he had committed and make him remember and never do it again.

Without uttering a word, Jenny crossed to the sofa, jerked Danny from it and shook him with all her strength. She shook him so hard she feared he would crumble into a heap if she should let him go. Jenny realized in the recesses of her mind, somewhere, that she wasn’t doing right—that Danny would hate her. But she kept on shaking his little body and listening to his crying with a strange satisfaction. Then she stopped exhausted, because she had been crying as hard as Danny; she stood a moment and watched his eyes as they looked at her through a wet curtain of puzzled hurting. She saw him turn suddenly and run from the room, shouting something about going to Aunt Leah’s. It had begun to rain, and, always the practical mother, Jenny almost called after him to get his rubbers—but how could she speak to him again after what she had done? Jenny was churning inside. She couldn’t understand why she had suddenly attacked her son with such fury.

The rhythmic rain beat more slowly upon the back steps. It seemed to be tapping in a filmy, faraway part of Jenny’s head. She pressed her fingers hard upon her hot temples. She knew now that her action was mixed up with something that had happened long before—something she had remembered and that she would never succeed in pushing from her mind.

Suddenly breaking through the fading rain, the sun made a red glow over Meadow Ridge Hill in the distance, like a dying fire-crown over the dark tree tops. Hypnotically it drew Jenny’s memory to another time long ago when that same hill had been fire-crowned. Jenny
closed her eyes. She moved back through time, lost in memory. The fragrant lilacs along the path smelled the same as then, the rough boards of the house felt the same against her hands as then—when she had lived here with her father. Was it ten years ago, yesterday? It seemed today.

Her life then had been an idyllic one of days filled with the leisure possessed only by youth, and the crisp autumn morning that now stood sharply silhouetted against all the others was a particularly lazy and happy one! Seventeen-year-old Jenny Cramer lay flat on her back beneath the maple by the porch. She had been examining the intricate design of leaves against the dark shadow of Meadow Ridge Hill, outlined in the distance by the sunlight. Red and yellow, they rustled and glittered in the sun like swaying, fluttering dancers tantalizing the pursuing breeze. Through the corner of her eye she could see down the back path to the white picket fence. She turned over to get a better view of the gate.

Jim Simpson was standing there with Ella, the Cramer’s cook. The velvety brown of Ella and Jim seemed to blend into the autumn morning. Ella’s wide eyes were turned up to Jim. They were soft liquid eyes and her feelings always registered like waving flags in them. There was love in them now—possessive, yet tender. Jim laughed suddenly—a carefree, assured laugh, revealing straight teeth, brilliantly white against his dusky skin. He pressed Ella’s hand upon the gate, and, turning, he walked briskly toward town.

Ella stood a moment looking at the back of Jim’s suit as it was caught and swirled into the colorful pattern of fall. She was happy, almost too happy to bear. But she was also afraid. Since Jim had returned to Brentwood, he had an assured swagger in his walk and a defiant look in his eye. It seemed that he hated the white folk of this lazy southern town even more than before he left. She knew that the memory of injuries he had suffered, from a group of white school boys especially, remained seared within him. Ella was worried because Jim was young, hot-tempered, and resentful. She shrugged her shoulders, though, and persuaded herself that everything would be all right. She and Jim would be married in two weeks and away from Brentwood forever.

Under the maple by the porch Jenny lay with her hands cupped under her chin and watched Ella wave a final good-bye and turn reluctantly toward the house. Again she said to herself what she had often thought before, “Ella is such a beautiful girl—why couldn’t she have been white.”

Ella had always fascinated Jenny. Even when they were children Jenny had admired her graceful beauty. There had been an understanding friendship between them, as understanding as a friendship can be between a white and a colored girl. Aunt Mobe, Ella’s mother, had become the Cramer’s housekeeper after the death of Jenny’s mother sixteen years before. Dr. Cramer and Jenny had depended upon her soothing voice in the kitchen humming melancholy spirituals and her swaying body shuffling around the house in ragged shoes. Dr. Cramer had kept Ella on as cook after her mother had died.

Jenny and Ella had grown up together and Jenny realized with a sick, sinking feeling that she would miss Ella even though she had always
known that Ella and Jim would marry some day. When young, Jim had been Dr. Cramer's stable boy. Jenny could remember him and Ella always together, and had often felt that they were banded together—that there was an impassable barrier separating them from her even though she knew that they were her friends. She still recalled one incident which happened when they were children together. It had bewildered and hurt her at the time, but later she had understood all too well. She, Ella, and Jim had been making mud pies behind the barn out of the sight of Aunt Mobe. Jenny had just finished an unusually beautiful creation—a chocolate cake with pink flower-petal frosting—when Aunt Mobe called them from the house for lunch. Ella's dark eyes had suddenly risen from the ground and, knowing her mother all too well, she had said, "What are we gonna do, Jenny? She'll switch us plenty if she sees us dirty like this."

Jenny laughed and said, "Don't worry about yourself, Ella, the mud won't show on you."

Jenny had thought this very funny and expected an appreciation of her humor from the other two. She was startled when she saw the look in Ella's and Jim's eyes. Jim clenched his fists and said, "Ella, come on." Jenny stood in silence watching Jim and Ella disappear around the corner of the barn. She was unable to understand why they had left her, but she realized that she could never recall her words from the memories of Ella and Jim.

Jenny saw Ella turn reluctantly from the gate and start up the path toward the house. She turned to glance once again in the direction of Jim. Then, seeing Jenny, she smiled and ran lithely up the path. Jenny rose from the ground and started lazily toward the porch to meet Ella.

"I'm going to miss those apple pies when you're gone," she said, thinking of the many, many other things she would miss much more.

"No, you won't, Miss Jenny." Ella turned back from the screen door. "Lots o' folks make apple pies better than mine." The last words were buried inside the kitchen as Ella let the door swing behind her.

Jenny bound swiftly upon the porch and through the door after Ella. Her blue eyes were shining and her black hair was a flying, unkempt mass. She put her hands upon Ella's shoulders, "There may be more apple pies, but there aren't any more Ellas," she said.

"I was talking to Debbie, Jim's sister, the other day," Ella said. "She'd be glad to work for you and Dr. Cramer after I'm gone, Miss Jenny." Ella began filling a dishpan with water.

"Oh, that would be fine, Ella. I hate to even think about your leaving. Dad does, too. I guess it was inevitable, though. The way Jim looks at you, Ella—really it's something—and the way you look at him—boy!" Jenny pranced around the kitchen, her hands clasped in mock ecstasy.

"You're making fun of me, Miss Jenny." Ella assumed a hurt air.

"No, I'm not, Ella," Jenny suddenly sobered. "You will be happy, won't you?"

"Yes, Miss Jenny. It's the best thing that's ever happened to me—or Jim either, and he's gonna be so much happier when we get away
from Brentwood. The doctor's the only one here who's ever treated Jim right."

"I know," Jenny said, and she remembered the night before he had left Brentwood—when he was still working for Dr. Cramer. He had come into the kitchen that night, blood spurting from a gash over his eye. Dr. Cramer had fixed him up and tried to get him to tell what had happened. Jim had said something about the Benson boys, but he wouldn't tell what they had done. He didn't have to tell Dr. Cramer and Jenny, though. They knew Jim too well—and the Benson boys, too. Jim had told Dr. Cramer that he was going to have to leave Brentwood that night because, if he ever saw those boys again, he might do something that he would be sorry for the rest of his life. That had been several years ago. Nobody knew what Jim had done during that time, and the first anyone had heard from him was a week ago when he had come back for Ella. But Jim had never forgotten the two Bensons and the heartache and torture they had made of his young life. The tormenting cries of "Nigger, nigger, dirty nigger" would forever echo in his mind keeping revengeful hate alive and burning—ready to burst forth into action.

Jenny watched Ella roll out the biscuits on the cabinet with a sure, skilled hand. She was humming a soft tune to herself accenting it with clicks of the biscuit cutter as it cut through white, moist dough to the board.

"I wonder if she knows how Jim feels," Jenny thought.

She knew deep inside that Ella was fully aware of the resentment searing in the very core of Jim. She remembered just as vividly as Jenny the many times Jim had come running into the Cramer's back yard through the alley, his wide eyes flaming with fright and his tattered overalls quivering on his slight frame. The only place that held safety for Jim from the taunting Bensons had been the Cramer's yard. They might throw rocks and tin cans at him all the way from town but they were always stopped by the Cramer's fence. Jenny could still remember their dirty faces looking through the gate and their spiteful voices calling, "You slimy, black coward! You just dare come out! We'll kill you—you kinky-headed, dirty scum," to a Jim safe but quivering inside.

The afternoon passed quickly for Jenny and Ella and they hadn't noticed the approaching dusk until they were startled by an urgent pounding on the back door.

"I'll get it, Ella," Jenny said. "Whoever it is sure is in a hurry." She jumped up and opened the door.

"'Lo, Jenny," Mr. Arnold puffed loudly as if he had been running. "Would you like a cup of coffee, Mr. Arnold?"

Jenny went toward the cupboard to get a cup.

"No, thanks, Jenny, I just—" The tone of Mr. Arnold's voice made Jenny turn suddenly from the cupboard. Ella stood motionless at the sink.

"What's wrong," Jenny's voice was growing shrill. "Is Father—?"

"No, no," Mr. Arnold tried to smile. "As a matter of fact, I came here to get your Pa because he was calling for him and—"
“Who was calling for him?” For some reason perspiration was beading on Jenny’s forehead.

“That young colored boy who used to work for you—remember—Jim Simpson.” It came just like that out of Mr. Arnold’s red, ugly face. Jenny couldn’t look at Ella, but she heard her lay a dish in the sink.

“What do you mean?” Jenny whispered nervously.

“Well, I don’t know whether I should tell you or not, Miss Jenny, you being a woman and all.”

“Mr. Arnold, tell me—!” Jenny was beginning to shout.

“Okay, okay,” he said. “But I don’t think your Pa’d want me to.”

He looked at her a moment. Jenny was silent. But she had a menacing air that commanded him to go on. He wondered why she should be so violently interested. Then he looked at Ella. Her back was turned away toward him and Jenny. She was leaning on the kitchen sink looking at the gathering darkness outside. She was bent over as if a weight were suddenly pressing upon her.

“Well, it’s just this, Jenny. This nigger, Jim Simpson, killed the Benson boys this afternoon. He shot ’em right in the back in front of the drug store.”

“No!” Jenny’s eyes widened and she glanced at Ella. The colored girl still stood motionless except for her hand which began clutching slowly at nothing.

“You mean—you mean he just walked up and shot them?” Jenny was angry with this hateful man.

“Yes, in cold blood. Everybody always said he was a mean nigger—that is, all ‘cept your Pa.”

“Well, where is he?” Why didn’t Ella move or say something?

“You should of seen it!” Mr. Arnold was determined to give full details. “That is—ah, I guess you shouldn’t of at that since you’re a lady. After shooting ’em, he ran behind the drugstore and through the alley. I can say it was good enough for those two to be shot. There’re no worse varmints in this town, I guess.”

“What happened to Jim?” Jenny’s voice was almost a whisper, but her eyes were direct and hard upon this squat little man.

“Yes, he’s a mean nigger all right and deserves just exactly what he’s going to get. The whole countryside is after him.”

“Where is he?” Jenny repeated, snapping her teeth together.

“Oh, he’s in that deserted shack on the creek. That black nigger ain’t got a chance!” Mr. Arnold rubbed his stubby hand across his fat jaw.

“Did you say he called for Dad?” Why didn’t Ella move?

“Yes, he said he’d give up if Doc Cramer would come in for him. He thought that Doc would show him some mercy, I guess, but that nigger’s gonna get just what he deserves.”

“What do you mean?”

“We’re gonna burn that black devil tonight.”

“No!” Jenny saw Ella twitch slightly as if from an electric shock.

“You can’t do that. Oh, if Dad were only here! You’ve got to give him a chance. Turn him over to the sheriff at least. Wait, I’ll try to find my father.” Jenny started toward the door. It would be a relief to get out of the kitchen—to do something! Her hand stiffened on the door knob as hope suddenly drained from her body. She remembered that Dr.
Cramer had taken old Mrs. Moore into the city. She was in a serious condition, he had said, and he would probably have to stay with her all night.

She turned slowly from the door and faced Mr. Arnold again.

"Listen, Miss Jenny, that mob down by the creek can't be stopped by anything now. You ain't never seen a mob like that. It's vicious, I tell you. That nigger'll burn tonight and nobody can stop it." Mr. Arnold went towards the door. "Well, thanks for offering me some coffee, but guess I better get back. We ain't had so much excitement in this town in a coon's age."

Mr. Arnold was suddenly gone, and Jenny was left alone with Ella. "Ella—I—" Jenny couldn't think of anything to say.

Ella suddenly turned from the sink and ran past Jenny to her little room next to the kitchen.

The kitchen was unbearably empty and Jenny felt a lost, desolate feeling when she heard Ella's door close softly, but with finality, behind her.

The rising urge to do something swelled within her. She ran from the darkened kitchen to the cool, October air of the back porch. In panic she decided to go next door and get Mr. Johnson to do something—to try to get in touch with Dr. Cramer—or round up somebody to stop the lynching—or—Jenny didn't know what, just that something had to be done. As she pushed through the hedge between the two houses, she heard the maddened shouts of the mob rising steadily like a powerful storm enclosing all in its uncontrolled violence. She turned and looked in the direction of the commotion. In the distance she saw torches blazing in the air.

"They're coming up Main Street already," she thought. "I'm too late!" Every fiber of Jenny's body weakened and her hand clutched at the hedge for support.

The crazed mob surged up Main Street right by her house, dragging the defiant Negro.

"He's not guilty! He's not guilty!" Jenny ran impulsively through the yard, out of the gate, and into the road.

"Stop, stop!" She tried to stop some of the mob, but they ignored her and shook her hand impatiently from their sleeves. She realized helplessly that her words were flung confusedly into the crowd, that they perished like crumbs tossed into the wind.

"You fools—stop!" Jenny screamed hysterically. Her throat was drawn taut with panic.

"Jim—Jim," she sobbed helplessly. Jenny felt the mob pushing and throbbing against her. Their vicious cries vibrated painfully against her ears. The heartless cries of their voices and the sweaty smell of their excited bodies sickened her. She staggered weakly as the crowd became dim in her eyes and their shouts only echoes in her ears.

"Miss Jenny! What are you doing out here? Come on, you'd better get back into the house." A man took Jenny by the arm and led her back into the yard. "This ain't no place for you. Now, you'd better go inside."

"Jim! They're taking him to Meadow Ridge Hill—to burn him!" she said confusedly. Then she became conscious of the man supporting her with his hand.
The film cleared before Jenny's eyes and she recognized Mr. Jack-
son, who had a farm near town. In the darkness his outline was big and
hulking before her. He seemed to waver against the flaming background
of the mob disappearing down Main Street.

"Mr. Jackson," she turned her frightened eyes up to his face and
stared unbelievingly at him, "you—you aren't with them are you?"

"I sure am, Miss Jenny—I'm gonna see that justice is done to that
nigger!"

Jenny shook his hand scornfully from her arm. "Well, go on, then!"
she shouted. "Go on with them—or you'll be left out!" She sobbed dis-
dainfully.

She opened the door and, entering, she slammed it quickly behind
her.

"Justice," she choked bitterly to herself leaning weakly against the
door. She remembered the wretched Jim being dragged viciously against
in the
dust.

"I think he saw me," Jenny thought to herself. "He saw me trying
to help—but he knew I could do nothing."

Jenny could hear only a faint echo of the mob—but even that was
unbearable. She pulled all the shades trying to lock out the distant cries
and the flickering light of waving torches. Then, exhausted, she sat upon
the bottom step of the stairs. Her mind was heavy and blank lying in a
shroud of blackness. She didn't know how long she sat there—her head in
her hands—trying to understand what had happened. Finally, the con-
sciousness of a sound aroused her. She raised her eyes slowly from her
hands and blinking stared about her.

The hall was lighted brightly, but crowding around, choking this
one spot of yellowness, was the dark outside. From this darkness in the
little room by the kitchen, Jenny could hear muffled sobs. She wondered
if Ella had heard the mob. But, then, of course she had. A ball of pity
twisted painfully inside Jenny. She knew that tonight Ella was shedding
tears more lonely and bitter than any she would ever know. And no one
could help her.

Suddenly Jenny felt that she must move—get away from Ella's broken
sobs which reached her through magnified echoes in the hall. Jumping
up quickly, she ran upstairs to her room. Not bothering to turn on the
light, she sat on her bed and stared fixedly out the bedroom window.

The black silhouette of Meadow Ridge Hill in the distance was out-
lined in the moonlight. The shouts of the mob had died and the scarlet
flame on the crest of the hill where Jim had received the final wrath from
the town, reflected through her window and faded into a purplish-gray
mist, swallowed by the night. The tight ball was still twisting in Jenny's
stomach and, as she turned her face away from Meadow Ridge Hill, her
cheek felt wet and hot upon her hand.

"There was nothing I could do," she kept thinking to herself.

Later, standing before her bedroom window in her nightgown, her
bare feet absorbing the coolness of the floor, Jenny strained her eyes
toward the hill in the distance, but the glow over its crest had completely
died now and the only lights were the stars like diamonds forming a
crown over its rim.
Jenny slipped quickly into bed. The dark hand of sleep clutched her brain and smothered it into forgetfulness. Far off there seemed to be a crowd of children, and to one side here stood a lonely figure. The children ran after him—"Nigger, nigger—dirty nigger," they shouted—

"There was nothing you could do," scurried between the walls of time.

Jenny pressed her finger hard upon her hot temples. The sun had disappeared behind Meadow Ridge Hill and a slight breeze seemed to be whipping blinking pools of stars into the sky.

"I've got to hurry," she thought. "I've got to get Danny and tell him something."

**POINTS IN DARKNESS**

*By Roy Craven*

There, out in the darkness
Moving, shifting, turning, flashing
Points of light; light in darkness.
Turning, shifting, flashing out
Of the darkness they came
Biting their way into the eye,
Into the brain.

They were not my lights—
But they were someone's,
Someone's lights in darkness.

Still they are there—twisting,
Turning points of brightness;
Like thoughts. Like thoughts in
The brain—like sharp hopes in
The brain. Like sharp points of
Light in the darkness of the brain.

Still they are there, new ones,
Old ones—still they are there,
They are there, they are there.
Those lonely points of light are there.
They are there.

What if it were all darkness?
THE MACHINE AGE

By Rufus S. Morgan

Last night me and my wife Eleanor went to the movies, and we seen one of these March Of Time things like they put on now and then to sort of take up time between shows. The show itself wasn't much account, but this March Of Time thing kinda made me stop and think. It was all about machinery. It was full of battle ships, General Sherman tanks, jeeps, new fangled radios and all, and at the very end this man who's doing the talking says something like this: "This is the Twentieth Century!" he says real proud. "This is the Machine Age! This is America!"

Well, sir, it sort of seemed to me he said a mouthful when he said that, but I don't see why the man was so proud. If you ask me, this dern world's too full of machinery. You can't hardly move for machinery. There's enough machinery runnin' around to half drive a man crazy. There's machinery to do this, machinery to do that—but mostly, far as I can see, it just runs around. I ain't got much use for machinery lately.

About a month ago, just for a little while, I was machine conscious just like everybody else, but I'm not anymore. I got cured of machines real quick and I ain't had no use for 'em since. I better make it clear right here that I wasn't always against the Machine Age. Use to be I never thought about the Machine Age one way or the other, but that was before I got machine conscious. What made me machine conscious was Jessie Pittmore's Shave And A Hair Cut, Two Bit machine. Jessie, he made this machine, and I got jealous of it—only at the time it happened I didn't know I was jealous. I thought I figured Jessie was going nutty, but that wasn't it at all. The way it happened was this way.

I was walkin' down past this friend's house, comin' home from the bus stop, when I hear a funny-soundin' noise comin' from in back of this friend's place. There'd be a whirrin', like a hive full of bees, then a bunch of pops, then some more whirrin'. What made me stop was the pops, because they sounded like as if somebody was beatin' out Shave And A Hair-cut, Two Bits on a piece of wood. Poppity-pop-pop, pop-pop, then a whir then the same old poppin' all over again. Well, I said to myself, wonder what old Jessie's doin', and I went back to see what was goin' on.

This friend of mine, Jessie Pittmore by name, was all bent over a big contraption in the garage, and it was this contraption that was makin' the poppin' and whirrin'. I can't say 'till yet what this contraption looked like. It had fifteen or twenty little wheels runnin' around like mad, and a little belt ran up to the rafters, to another wheel. It was this wheel in the rafters that was beatin' out Shave And A Hair-cut, Two Bits. Just beatin' it out, and smokin' and takin' on.

"Dog-gone, Jessie," I hollered, "What you think you're doin'?"

"Hello there, Harp," Jessie yelled back, "How you like her?"

"Why Jessie," I hollered, "It works fine, but what the sam hill is it, fer gosh sakes?"

"Machine!" Jessie yelled, "It's a machine!"

"I can see it's a machine," I told him, "But what is it for?" I says.

"What does it do?"
Jessie, he cupped his ear, and he commenced to smile like some old cat which is drug in a gopher to show off. "Listen," he tells me. "Hear that?"

"Hear it?" I asks. "I can't hear anything else!"

"Yeah, but listen . . . hear that shave and a hair-cut, two bits?"

"You mean," I asks Jessie, "That that's what this here thing does—it don't do nothin' but beat out 'shave and a hair-cut, two bits'?"

"Sure!" Jessie hollers, real proud, "That's what she does, alright. Perty neat, ain't she?"

Well, that sort of took the wind out of my sails. "Sure, Jessie, sure," I told him quick like. "She's real perty—ain't never seen nothin' like it before." And I got out of there fast. In the first place I figured my friend Jessie has gone off his noggin', and in the second place, I didn't know but what that dern contraption would blow up any minute. "I tell you," I yelled, just to sorta humor Jessie along until I was safe outside, "She sure is perty!"

I just shook my head and went on, thinkin' how sad it was to lose a friend that way. That night I told Eleanor about it, and nothin' would do but for her to go up the street to see for herself. She came back in ten minutes.

"It's still goin'," she said, as if she was gossipin' somethin' scandulous, "But now its sayin' Open The Dern Door, Richard, plain as day."

I worried about it half the night, unable to sleep, and thinkin' sure old Jessie had gone plumb batty. Eleanor must have worried some, too. Once, when she saw I was awake, she said she'd go over to see Lizzy—that's Jessie's wife—first thing in the mornin' to comfort the poor soul.

"No you won't," I told her right smart like. "It ain't any of your business. If Jessie wants to go nutty, why they ain't no law against it."

Next day was Saturday, and I messed around the yard all mornin'. I couldn't get Jessie off my mind. Once or twice I started to go up and see if maybe I could straighten him out some way, but I went on spadin' up dirt and tried to forget him. All the time I was diggin' I kept seein' those wheels whirrin' around, and that one little wheel in the rafters beatin' out Shave and A Hair-cut, Two Bits.

Finally I had to quit diggin'. I dug up one of Eleanor's best rose bushes by mistake—dug a hole three feet deep and pulled it up roots and all before I knew what I was doin'. Dern you, Jessie, I said out loud, look what your dern machine done to Eleanor's rose bush. I put what was left of it back in the ground, and went back indoors. I took six aspirin, and layed down to rest. I felt awful.

Eleanor made me eat soup for dinner, and she dosed me up with some foul tastin' stuff out of a green bottle. This stuff and the soup didn't set so well on top of one another and perty soon I had to run for the bath room. Soon as I could make it I made a dash for the basement and locked the door. I was fed up complete with Eleanor and her doctorin'. She pounded on the door and hollered, but I didn't pay no mind; I just let her holler and take on. I ain't ever treated Eleanor this way before, and I'm sad about it, but I can't help myself. Like I said, I didn't know it, but it was this Machine Age putting the finger on me. Jessie's machine was gettin' in my blood.

I looked around the basement, and there was this work bench which used to belong to my brother Pete, who went west to work in the ship
yards and ain't come back. Pete us'ta always fool around with ma-
achinery—he was machine conscious, you might say—and this work bench
of his was all covered with odds and ends. Just out of curiosity, sort of,
I commenced to rummage around, and I find this electric motor. I looked
at it, and I seen "Hoover" on top. It had a wire attached to it, and on the
end of the wire was a plug. I wonder, I said to myself, if that motor will
run? There was a plug on the work bench, so I hook the motor to it—it
wasn't no trouble to do it, that's the only reason I hooked it up. The
motor, it didn't run. Well, I said to myself, that motor looks o.k., but
it won't run. I wonder what's the matter with it? I look at the motor
good, and I see a little wire that's loose. I put the wire back where it
belongs, and then I hook the motor up again. It sparked and sputtered,
and then it commenced to run, as smooth as you please.

I sorta swell up with pride. I forget about feelin' so bad and all,
because I'd made that motor run. I listen to it hummin' away, and it
sounds perty. I started to figure on what I could do with that motor.

Well, sir, I find a cog wheel on the bench, kinda like the ones you
see on the inside of automobiles when the top's off. I looks at this cog
wheel, which I figure Pete must have took home with him from the
shop where he works. I look at this cog wheel good. I finally stopped
the little motor, and I put this cog wheel on the shaft good and tight. I
plugged in the motor again, and this cog wheel went whirrin' around so
fast you couldn't see the cogs on it. By George, I thought, I've got a
good lookin' machine started there, but it needs more cog wheels. I
commence to look for cog wheels, and sure enough, I find dozens of
'em under the bench, all sizes. That brother, Pete, of mine, it ain't no
wonder he went to California. Well, sir, I started mountin' cog wheels
on the bench with nails, a little one, then a big one, until maybe I had
thirty of 'em ready to go. I put three out by themselves, and I hooked
these up to run on old washin' machine belts I found. This took me a
long time—two or three hours, maybe, and when I got everything hooked
up I found a barrel and set down. I was plumb content, just settin' there
gazing at my machine. She stretched from one end of the bench to
the other, and she looked as perty as if I'd bought her instead of made
her myself. I was proud of that machine.

All the time I'd been workin' I kept hearin' Eleanor upstairs, wantin'
to know what in th' name of heaven I was doin' with all that hammering
and takin' on, and I'd better come upstairs or I'd catch my death of
pneumonia. Now I heard her hollerin' that supper was ready. She sound-
ed like maybe she'd got over that Florence Nightin'gale business, so I
thinks to myself maybe she'd like to see my machine when it commences
to run. I run up and unlock the door, and I finally coach Eleanor down
to the basement.

"Look, Eleanor," I beamed, "Look at that machine yonder."

Eleanor, she looks, and she don't say nothin'. She's so flabber-
gasted she can't speak.

"I made it," I told her, and I explained how it worked. I says, "See,
I says, "This engine here turns this cog wheel, and it turns this cog wheel
here—this little one here, and then before you know it the whole works
is turnin' . . . Look at them three yonder," I pointed proudly, "They
work on conveyor belts."
Eleanor finally found her tongue. She says, "Yeah," she says, "But what is it? What does it do?"

"Why," I reply, "There ain't no end to what I can do with this machine. I can hook it up and run the . . . I can fasten it to the . . . I can . . . Well Eleanor," I said, "You just set down on the barrel over there and I'll start this machine up. You ain't seen nothin' until you see this machine runnin'."

I got Eleanor to sit on the barrel after five minutes or so. I ain't never seen no woman as stubborn as she is. She kept sayin' the beans was burnin' on the stove upstairs, or supper was gettin' cold. "You just set right there," I told her. "It won't take a minute to start this machine up." I found one of my brother Pete's oil cans and I oiled all the cog wheels.

"Don't want her to git hot," I told Eleanor.

Finally I had that machine ready to go. "Now," I said to Eleanor, "We'll turn her on—you just watch this, now."

I reached over and plugged her up, and that little old motor commenced to sorta whine. Sparks flew out of one end. Eleanor, she kind of shrunk up on the barrel. "You jest sit," I told her, not leastwise worried. She's just gittin' warmed up."

Sure enough, in just a minute or two that old motor quit whinin' and started to turn. The big cog wheel on the end, it commenced to turn, too, slow like. Then the motor took a good holt and that cogwheel speeded up. First thing I knew the whole shibang's goin', all thirty of them cog wheels spinnin' around like mad. All of em' goin' at once made so much noise the house rattled.

"Look at her!" I holler at Eleanor, "Ain't thet wonderful?"

About that time there's a horrible soundin' crack and one of them cog wheels goes sailin' over the top of Eleanor's head. It makes a hole as big as my head right through a furnace pipe. Eleanor falls off the barrel, screamin', and the barrel falls over, too.

"Look out, Eleanor!" I yell, "You're liable to git hurt, fallin' thet way!"

But I ain't got time to pick Eleanor up like I ought to. Cog wheels commence to fly in all directions, like cannon balls.

"Shut thet thing off!" screams Eleanor. "Shut it off!"

I can't shut it off. I can't get close enough to shut it off. It's goin' like a demon, spittin' fire and throwin' cog wheels all over the place. Everytime I start to creep up on that machine it lets lose a cog wheel in my direction like it had eyes. Them cog wheels just about tear up that basement.

Jest then a sheet of flame about ten feet long jumps out of that motor and she starts to smoke. Next thing I know there's so much smoke you can't see. I get on the floor and feel around for Eleanor. I keep hearin' cog wheels whiz by like bullets in the movies. "Eleanor," I choke, once I find her, "The dern house is gonna burn up."

It sure did look like it was for a minute. Through all that smoke we could see that little motor throwin' flames and coughin' up smoke. I ain't ever been so scared in my life. Me and Eleanor begin to crawl to where we thought the steps was, but we didn't get there. There was a big explosion, like dynamite. The lights go out, and fruit jars fall off the shelves a clatterin' and smashin'. Then everything gets real quiet. There ain't a sound in that whole basement except me tremblin'. It
seems almost like I can hear the smoke stirrin' around it's so quiet.

"Listen," I whisper, "That machine is stopped runnin'."

Eleanor don't say nothin', she's coughin' too much. She crawls around 'till she finds the steps, and while I'm settin' there on the floor I hear her creep up the steps and go in the kitchen. I can tell Eleanor's real mad.

I feel around in the dark until I find the fuse box. I put in pennies until the lights come on. That basement sure was a mess. The furnace was punched full of holes. The work bench was busted in the middle, and tools was all over the floor. Fruit jars was busted all over the place, and Eleanor's peach preserves sorta dripped off the shelves. There wasn't nothin' left of that little old motor. It was plumb blowed to pieces.

Well, sir, I just left things like they was and went up and eat supper. Eleanor, she didn't say a word. The next day bein' Sunday I sorta clean up the basement, and Eleanor still ain't said a word. Monday mornin' I leave for work, and she don't even get up. I have to cook my own breakfast. Things is really bad around my house.

That night I get on the bus, all worried about Eleanor and me bustin' up, and I see Jessie Pittmore settin' by hisself back in the back seat. I know now Jessie ain't crazy, so I go back and set down by him.

"Harp," says Jessie, "You look all down in the mouth.

"Jessie," I said, "I got plenty of trouble. Eleanor, she's mad at me—ain't spoke since yesterday."

"Well," says Jessie, "That's the way with wimmin', and I wouldn't worry too much. Lizzy gits that way now and then, jest clams up and don't say a word."

"Yeah," I tell Jessie, "But Eleanor ain't never been this way before."

"Aw," says Jessie, "She ain't no different from the rest of 'em, Harp. She's jest like Lizzy and the rest of 'em—why there ain't no difference in any of 'em, Harp."

That makes me kind of mad. "You're all wrong," I tell him. Eleanor is different from any of 'em. It ain't natural fer her to act this way."

"She's jest like Lizzy," says Jessie, like he knows. "She ain't no different."

"Eleanor," I said gettin' madder, "Ain't no more like Lizzy than a bird's like no toad-frog."

"You insiduatin'," asks Jessie, kind of nasty like, "Thet Lizzy looks like a toad-frog?"

Well, sir, one thing led to another until Jessie and me ain't on speakin' terms. We git off the bus and he walks down one side of the street and I walk down the other, and we ain't spoke since, once. Eleanor and me finally made up, but Eleanor ain't never forgive me for bustin' her preserves with that machine. She don't say nothin' direct, but she don't let me forget. That's way I turned plumb against this machine age we're livin' in.

I got it all figured out. That one machine I made caused more trouble than anything I ever seen. It jest about tore up my house, it made Eleanor get plumb mad at me, and it made me and Jessie Pittmore stop talkin' when we meet anymore. Now when you figure how many machines there is in the here world, arunnin' this way and that way, why it don't look like this Machine Age is what it's cracked up to be.
NONSENSE VERSES

(A la Lewis Carroll)

By Genevieve Wiggins

I thought I saw a kangaroo
That studied books of law.
I looked again and saw it was
A lobster's mighty claw.
"If that is coming in," said I
"I think I shall withdraw."

I thought I saw a ladies club
In love with the aesthetic.
I looked again and saw it was
Some crabs who waxed poetic.
"I think I'd laugh at that," said I,
"Were it not so pathetic."

I thought I saw a clergyman
So pious and devout,
I looked again and saw it was
A pig with purple snout.
Mused I, "This may be fair within,
"But it's hideous without!"

I thought I saw a dinosaur
Feasting on Limburg cheese.
I looked again and saw it was
Old Aristophanes.
"Since I don't know any Greek," said I,
"Will you excuse me please?"

I thought I saw a college prof
With lectures neatly bound.
I looked again and saw it was
A spot of desert ground.
"There is a moral there," I said,
"If it could just be found."
eventually, I partly reconciled myself with the idea that it had to be someone, and for some unexplicable reason, I was chosen. If I were able to do something about it, I would have worried more. But it was done and irrevocable.

The time has passed. I cannot say whether it has passed quickly or slowly, for when there is no future, the measurement of time ceases. I only know that I have been fed, bathed, moved around, and taken care of by an unknown person. I often wonder where I am, and why I have been kept alive. Why don't they let me die? If only I could communicate with them! I would beg them to kill me. But they have made no attempt to communicate with me. They could signal to me by long and short taps on my chest, for I have a little knowledge of code. Or they could even write the letters on my chest; I could perceive them by touch. But I suppose that they have not thought of it, or else they may think that my brain has gone, too.

I don’t know how long I have been in this condition. I don’t even know where I am.

I wonder if I am at the home of my parents? I hope not. I hope that I was declared dead, that I have become just a memory to them. How much easier to accept death than—this—

I know the people around me must wonder “What goes on in the brain of that living hunk of flesh?” referring to me. I wish that I could tell them.

I would tell them that I have probed every nook and cranny of the recesses of my brain, till my memory has become razor sharp, I remember the smallest incidents from the time that I was a tiny child till April the third, 1945.

How much longer must I wait to die? There must be some end to this torture! Only in death will I find peace and an answer to all my questions. I feel that the end is near, one way or the other. If I do not die, I will go crazy. Please make death come soon, dear God. It’s been such a long, long while.

TIME OF RECKONING

By Barney L. Roth, Jr.

Is killing ever justified? I wonder. A few years ago I killed with a cold, calculating view. Not once but many times. I had no fears, no qualms. I was like an animal looking for prey, ready to pounce upon the victim for the kill. In my case I calmly lay in ambush waiting for another human being; a man like myself who differed only in speech, perhaps ideas and ideals, to walk into the line of my rifle sights. Then a squeeze of the trigger, a report, and a satisfied smirk on my hardened face as the victim feels the impact of the bullet hitting his body, spins half around then pitches forward on his face. Death with a surprised ex-
pression. Grim, you say? That's not the worst of it. I crept forward stealthily while my fellow Platoon mates gave me protection, lest I be also an unsuspecting victim of "lead poisoning." With trench knife in hand, I quickly rip off the pack of the "deceased." Hastily I scan the pockets for a bill-fold or diary. Aha! a watch on his wrist. God! how limber a dead man is. Then a hasty retreat back to the cover of the ditch where the boys are waiting. Well, now to split the souvenirs. Having made the kill I get first choice. I'll keep the watch. Warman gets the Jap Flag, Wittle has the 1000 stitch belt, we all joke as Bub Hay selects a picture of a beautiful Japanese girl. "Tojo won't need it anymore," he said. Others select their items and we settle back waiting for another patrol to pass. This time if its a signal, it will be Underhill's turn. If as many as a squad, we'll have to use the machine gun and grenades. Messy job searching them later, though.

Horrid and repulsive as it is to me now, since I have undergone recivilization, it was once a joke. I once had a religion, believed in man's rights. I lost that for a while. I had no feelings. To me it was "kill or be killed." Death had no fears. When you've gone without sleep for days and nights; lain in mud for hours, cold, wet, hungry; listened to damnable shells shrieking and bursting all around; hearing a wounded buddy crying for help that you can't give, then you don't much care.

Yes, people readily assure me, "Oh, of course the killing you've done was justified. You were in a war. Of course you won't be held accountable for it."

Won't I?

BORES

By Robert Hopper

If not a downright bore, Willie Buchsbaum was at best not a very scintillating conversationalist. He dragged out his stories at such length, and elaborated on such insignificant details, that he was the pet hate of all lovers of peace and quiet. He dearly loved to corner me at my favorite booth in Mitch's a time when, with a friendly beer in hand and several in my stomach, I would be most unwilling to listen to any sort of tale, sad or otherwise—and Willie's stories were most generally sad.

It was at just such a time, some months ago, that Willie trapped me there. Now if I had not been busily engrossed in appraising Chuckie's legs at this time, you can bet your burned-out light bulbs that I would have been at least a thousand miles, if not further, from that spot the moment Willie hove into sight. But Chuckie, who has been heaving beers around Mitch's for several years, has been known even longer for having the best-looking legs this side of Albuquerque, so it is easily understood that I did not see Willie coming until he was already too close for me to run.
On this particular day Willie had a story which was even more sad than usual, because it concerned a female woman, and a blonde one at that, and you don't have to be an Albert Einstein to know that stories about female women, especially blonde ones, are always sad. It seems that the gal's name was Marie Zwingi, and she hailed from Tombsvuba, Mississippi (elevation 564 feet). But not even such handicaps as these kept Marie from getting a job in Danny Marlin's Twelve O Three Club, because she was by no means an old crow. By the time she had shed her Tombsvuba milking clothes and donned one of Danny Marlin's cigarette girl costumes, she was acceptable in practically any circles. Besides, she told Danny Marlin that her name was Marie Young, and that she hailed from Harve de Grace, and anyone can tell you that a good-looking young gal from Harve de Grace is all right, especially if she is good-looking.

By this time I was beginning to believe that perhaps for once Willie had a story that would not put me to sleep, for it is common knowledge that there are so many things that can happen to a good-looking young gal in Danny Marlin's Twelve O Three Club that it would take a good-sized encyclopedia to list them all. In fact, about the only person I can think of, off-hand, that this place is a good influence on is Danny himself, and he collects the profits, so he doesn't count. It is not exactly a dive, but there are better places everywhere for the betterment of manners and morals.

By the time several months had gone by Marie Zwingi Young had gotten to the point where she sold quite a number of cigarettes every night, though whether it was because she carried most of the more popular brands around in that little carrier, or because Danny Marlin's uniforms showed off Marie to a better advantage, Willie didn't know. At any rate she was becoming quite successful in the cigarette-selling business, and at the prices Danny Marlin charged, there must have been some very good reason. Willie was always at Danny Marlin's all the time he possibly could spare from his honest occupation of trying to hustle cash around the race tracks because, Willie said, from the first moment he saw Marie he has been deeply in love with her. Marie, however, showed that she was no cluck, even if she was from Tombsvuba, for the shoulder she threw at Willie was very, very cold.

Instead, Marie had ideas about getting out of the cigarette-selling business, as she would tell Willie very often, for Willie was usually handy in case she did want to talk to him. Furthermore, Marie wanted to marry some rich handsome playboy and settle down to live happily ever after, although Willie said she once broke down and said the guy didn't have to be too handsome. Maybe this was the reason she was seen quite often talking to Chic Kingston, for he was by no means or standards an Adonis, but it was agreed around and about that if he did not have more money than the United States Treasury, he ran it a close second. For this reason, and no other, he was considered quite a guy among the aspiring young females, because he was at least fifty, give or take three or four years in either direction.

One night, however, much to Willie's astonishment, Marie became quite friendly toward him. So friendly did she become, in fact, that she began to cry, and to shed big tears all over Willie's night club suit. Willie was so delighted by this display of affection that he forgot to ask just
why she was behaving in this very unMarie-ish manner. Marie soon relieved him of this responsibility, however, and began to pour out her troubles, with the tears, on Willie's suit.

It seems that Marie had been going around and about with this Chic Kingston, and had even been asked to marry him. Naturally at this sort of talk Marie began to sit up and take more notice of Kingston, even to the point of going with him to his nearest apartment, the better to discuss such matters. It was at one of these meetings that an old lady burst in, inquiring in a loud tone just what was her husband doing with this creature at such an hour in such a place, anyhow. Naturally Marie was quite disturbed to discover that Chic Kingston was married, especially when Mrs. Kingston began to make dire threats about what she was going to do to Marie, or rather what she was going to have John Law do. The upshot of the whole thing was that Marie wanted Willie to do something to Chic for leading her on, and also to Mrs. Kingston for being so nasty, and for ruining her hopes of being Mrs. Kingston herself.

Willie, not being exactly the smartest guy who ever lived, or even the runner-up, now wanted me to advise him something he could do to obtain revenge for Marie, and yet not violate the law. Well, by this time I had had so many of Mitch's beers that I was considerably sleepy, and I was willing to suggest anything to get rid of him so that I could totter off to bed and collect my well-earned rest. So, being slightly woozy, and more bored and tired than anyone has a right to be, I suggested in a half-joking tone, that Willie go get some blunt instrument and rid the world of such un-wanted characters as Mr. and Mrs. Kingston, and then Marie would be so grateful that she would probably marry him. Then, laughing to myself for using such a clever ruse to get rid of Willie finally, I made my way rather unsteadily home and promptly forgot the whole thing.

My memory was jarred back rather rudely the next morning, however, as Willie woke me at the ungodly hour of eleven-thirty, pounding away at my door. I got up, rather reluctantly, and let him in. It was then that I discovered that Willie was even dumber than I thought. He had gone to Chic Kingston's the night before, accompanied by a great big black gun. With aforementioned gun, Willie had shot both Mr. and Mrs. Kingston, and they were both very, very dead. All this Willie told me over my morning cup of java, and I wish to say here and now that when I become president I am going to outlaw conversation of any shape, manner, or form at the breakfast table. It is most disturbing.

Somehow Mitch's brew doesn't taste as well as it used to. Somehow I keep looking for Willie, though before he sat on a very hot seat up at the capitol, he was the last guy in the world I would deliberately look for. Just shows you how times can change. Marie Young went back to Tombsuba and married the blacksmith, or whatever it is that Tombsuba gals marry. Me, I seem to be slipping—it was almost three o'clock before I came to Mitch's this afternoon, and then, while I was appraising Chuckie's legs, Cholly Phillips slipped up on me. What a bore. He drags out the most insignificant details . . . .
WAR STORY

By Lundy E. Beatey, Jr.

It happened on a sultry July night in a little spot just a few degrees north of the equator. A humid wind was blowing out of the West, through the jungle and across the fever-ridden swamps. Outside the hut the evening was black as the Earl of Hell’s boots; inside, one small lamp dispelled the darkness. Around the light a few men played cards while others lay on their bunks grumbling at the heat or idly watching the little trails the sweat left as it rolled down the card players’ bare, dusty chests. Suddenly came the electrifying shout, “Douse the lights; here they come again!” Instantly there was complete blackness broken only by a probing finger of intense white light filling the night sky for the invader. A high-pitched whine penetrated the darkness; the beam jerked quickly and silhouetted a rapidly moving speck, making it a perfect target. From all sides came the “chuff, chuff” of the guns as they opened up with a cloud of death. The enemy banked, dived and zoomed madly, but the rain of destruction marched ever closer; touched him, and plummeted him to earth like a rock.

"Powerful stuff, this D. D. T.,” drawled a lanky G. I., as he pushed his flit-gun and flashlight back under his bunk, “even on Florida mosquitoes!”

THE HOMECOMING

By Erika Fulcher

It stood back from the narrow country road, perched aloof on a knoll denuded of trees. No sound of surrounding life enlivened the old house as I walked toward it; emptiness and silence greeted me when I entered. Great high rooms opened off the wide hall, doors ajar. I felt no presence, no life but that of the withdrawn pride of the old house itself, covering the shame of having been stripped of all its possessions. I had thought I was going home; going home to the place where my people had lived, had been born and died, worked and dreamed and loved. I had thought I could say in my heart, “This is my home, my land, and these are my people.” There surely was some mistake. I was still alone, more alone than ever. This rolling valley was foreign to me, beautiful as I thought it to be. The people who had greeted me on my way had given me no feeling of belonging there; strangeness still hung over me. And now this house, the end of my journey—what is there here of me? The roots of it are dead, and I am trespassing. I should never have built this hugeness impossible to fill; if ever warmth and closeness had been here, they were irrevocably gone, swallowed up in this vast draughty house. I see now that I could never bring such austerity to belong to me; I would be lost here. This place is loneliness itself. There is no feeling of belonging to assuage the loneliness in me.
TWILIGHT

By Betty Lee Albert

I hovered upon the edge of a mighty volcano
And cried to God across the seething depths
(Almost as if I thought to see him there
Standing upon the opposing rim).
I cried, challenging God to defy me by answering—
And hoping he would defy me.
Terrible to wait almost but not quite expectantly.

Terrible—but I was not afraid—only alone,
Alone in the crepuscular atmosphere.
Should God reply, I wondered would I be pleased,
And if beyond satiation of the curious
Would I find completion
Which my soul must find, or else
Hurl itself to mix with the staggering mass of other souls below.

* * *

Turning back, I gazed upon the dim outline
Of countless Christian devotees
Whose Christian God I had disdained.
Funny it would be if all the time I had been wrong.
But if it were their God who stood there
I hoped he would not answer
For he was perfect, holy, good and wise
And I could only stand in awe of him.
I wanted God who understood through suffering
Not for my sins, but for his own.
Ah, well I knew that I would shock their God,
That he would pity and forgive
And I wanted neither pity nor forgiveness.

* * *

Almost better the Hebrew's God, old Yahweh.
He could deal plainly, God to man
And I could stand in pride before him
To pay the price for all my worldly sins.
Yet even he was fierce and much forbidding;
No humor lighted in his righteous eye.

I remember once I thought how
Yahweh must have looked upon his children's tricks
And those he played on them
And laughed and laughed,
I said so once in church school
But everyone looked uncomfortable
And teacher quickly changed the subject
So I suppose God didn’t think anything was funny
After all.

* * *

The modern world had turned within itself
Each searching God inside his own mind-world
Poking and prodding his psyche, and claiming to hear
A still, small voice within say “Here am I, behold your God.”

Furtively I listened
Hoping that such a voice would never come
To break from deeper realms into by sentience.
What glimpses rare I had of the unconscious world
Had shown enough so vile and low
I hoped God had better taste than to reside there.
I longed not for some inner deity
Coincident with conscience.
Ah no! I longed to feel the grandeur
Of a noble God beyond, outside,
Lifting me to him.

* * *

To worship at the shrine of Nature
Is quiet fulfillment for some.
I, too, love all the beauties of this world
And loath I am to leave them;
Nature smothers me with its very being
And I revel in the suffocation
Yet eventually raise my head to seek
The purer air where God in person
Waits.

* * *

If I were brilliant I should figure out
In four dimensions just how God should be,
Attaining that perfection of idea.
Yet somehow ideas of the Supreme
Matter little.
If that is how he is,
Mathematically arranged and fixed just so
Ruling like a delicately-set mechanism,
Then I prefer the loving arms
Of any wretched human.

* * *

It sometimes seems to me that my soul longs
For pagan gods
And that my soul's pulse is attuned
To those Greek rulers dwelling on Olympus.
How grand they were
How overflowing was their cup of life
And they enjoyed it well.
They understood the race of men
Because they, too, loved, suffered, sinned and warred
They loved men warmly
With the beautiful love of comrades who
Know each other's faults.
They and the race of men laughed together
And someday lived together.

Yet they were children's gods, and we are men.
Fain though I would slip back
To wondering admiration of a child's heroes
I cannot.
And tho Jove was magnificent
I put him now aside with Shangri-la and Satan
And my soul still searches
For the footprints on the hills.

* * *

Can all of us be right?
Does each one have a god unto himself?
It hardly seems
That God can please
Moses, Plato, Paul, and me
Yet he is one; he must be one.

* * *

But no more time for philosophizing
The volcano's precipice crumbles
I fall, sickeningly, horridly
Crashing, thundering split seconds
Of agony.
And I shout
"Come forth, O God. Come forth!"
THE BLACK DRESS

By Nancy Moreland

No one but the Morgan twins would have worn lace in mourning, or such gleaming black silk. The black clothes the Morgans wore in their last years were beyond doubt the finest ever seen in our little town.

These fine clothes frightened me when I was a child. I can still look up and see Miss Lucy or Miss Jane Morgan bearing down on me, and hear the swishing sound of dark skirts in the still afternoon air. I remember that when one of the old ladies would come upon me too late for me to run, I would press myself against the brick wall to give her plenty of room on the walk.

I suppose it was really the old ladies themselves that frightened me: their stark white faces, their sharp noses, and fierce old eyes held proudly. Miss Lucy or Miss Jane hadn’t been seen out of the house together in years. When one would come out, the other would stay home—to watch their house, people said; to see that no one stole anything from their dark rambling old mansion.

People would say to Miss Lucy, “Good evening, and where is Miss Jane?” And Miss Lucy would say in her strange high voice, “Well, since father died someone must stay home and keep the house company.”

When Miss Jane would come out and Miss Lucy would stay at home, it was the same sort of thing.

It all seemed queer when I was little. I remember how, when mama was around with the lamps turned up bright, and I wasn’t afraid to think such thoughts, I used to wonder what strange things went on in the house on the hill. I used to see one of the old ladies coming from a distance, and wonder which one was out and which one was staying home. The twins always dressed identically, and in their mourning clothes you could hardly tell them apart. Guessing made an interesting game.

Yet, game or not, I feared them and their black clothes. When I saw them I felt the dawning fear of a strange new word. I know now the word was death. But I was afraid of them because of my great sin. I was running with my hoop that day, rounding the corner at the foot of Lansing Street when I ran into Miss Jane Morgan. I still feel the shock of that collision. Again I struggle frantically to loose myself and be free of the black silk, and again I hear the small ripping sound.

I feel the horror of Miss Jane’s cold fury as she drew herself up and glared at me, and at the little tear I made in her dress just beneath the hobble skirt.

“Oh, you’ve done it now! You’ve torn it!” The words came out in that shocked whisper. “You stupid—careless little—trash!”

I feel the burning hurt of her cane as it whipped out and struck me, leaving me too stunned to cry. I see mama running up, breathless with alarm. I see her standing as straight and proud as Miss Jane, and just as white with anger, though her dress was only gingham. I feel again in my heart the bitter, passionate things mama almost said—and didn’t. I feel again the remarkable quiet force that is my mother.
When she finally spoke it was in a low gentle tone.

"I'm sorry, Miss Jane. If you'll let me take the dress and mend it—"

"Mend it! How could you?" Miss Jane's voice rasped. "I wouldn't let you mend it, if it were never mended!"

I saw mama take the insult and conquer it, and somehow decide not to give hurt for hurt.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly. "That is all I can do."

The Morgan sisters never forgave mama for working. When we needed money she worked. When they lost theirs, they refused to admit it. The paint peeled off the columns in front of their home; the window frames, where panes once caught up the sunset in a red tangle, showed more and more blank spaces. Still, rather than admit they were getting poor, the Morgans would have died.

That was why they wore the fine black clothes, I think: to disguise the fact that they were doing without, eating less, selling some of their brighter clothes of earlier days and even some of their furniture—in secret, of course. They had to keep up appearances. They never could understand how people, like mama could wear gingham and be self-respecting.

I was furious when Miss Jane struck me. I wanted to tell everyone about it. But mama said quietly when we got home, "No, Betty. What good would it do? Isn't there enough gossip around here now?"

Mama forgot everything and tried to help Miss Lucy the night Miss Jane died. It was a bitter February night in 1938. Mama said Miss Lucy was sick in bed, too, and needed help, so she took me and walked to the Morgan place in the rain and slosh. When old Sam, the family servant, came down and said Miss Lucy wouldn't see us or anyone, mama argued with him quietly, before the big door finally closed on us as, so often, it had closed on us before.

But even at Miss Jane's funeral, when the rest of the neighborhood buzzed with gossip, mama was quiet and thoughtful. It was an ugly thing, that funeral with its cheap pine box and seedy flowers. It was like the opening of an ugly closed hand. Suddenly and unavoidably—it showed all the town how poor the Morgans had been.

Miss Lucy wasn't even there. She sent word that she was too sick to come out. But I could hear people whispering that she wasn't sick at all, but just too proud to come out and show her face. It was a small cheap thing, that funeral—not in itself, but in what it revealed. Even the rich finery of Miss Jane's familiar dress could no longer conceal their poverty.

The little knots of people came forward and stood over Miss Jane's casket and whispered, and they didn't notice the delicately mended place which showed beneath the hobble skirt. And I was glad, proud then that I never had told them of Miss Jane's striking me the day I tore her dress. The deed was bad and a little like the whispers going around, and it was a fine thing to keep it so secretly within myself. I remember the odd feeling of bigness which came over me in knowing something the others didn't know, how that feeling grew when the evil, little mended place was buried with Miss Jane and I realized that no one would ever know.

That is why, I suppose, I never gossiped about Miss Jane or about
Miss Lucy Morgan. I could never bring myself to talk about Miss Lucy—not when she stayed locked up in her house alone for so many days after the funeral; not when people said she was off in her mind and slipping out to the cemetery at night; not even when she came back out again, prouder than ever before, in her familiar black silk.

I feel the new calmness that came inside, the calmness that was mama's; and I know why I never told. What good would it have done to tell, to tell even mama? She would have worried. It was just something else to keep within myself, that's all. And so I have kept it till now, when Miss Lucy herself is dead and it can do no harm.

What good would it have done to tell people that, just beneath the hobble skirt Miss Lucy wore to the last, I always saw that familiar little mended place like a crow's foot, just as I saw it that first night she came back? How could I ever have told her that I knew there never was, never had been, but one black dress?

THE IMMORTAL FLIGHT OF LING-HO

By Ed Brinkley

In the village of Sien-Chu, not far from Tientsin, there lived a man named Ling-Ho. Ling was the Candlemaker, but apart from that he was regarded as the most eccentric person in the village.

For years he had been collecting strings, fibres and ropes. He had become a familiar image as he squatted outside his house, moulding the candles with deft fingers. The people who came to buy his candles would bring strands of hemp, jute, flax and other fibres. In the sunny days as he sat working, the little children would bring odd bits of string from here and there. The old man would stroke his white beard and smile upon them. Then, when his work was finished, he would take the strings that the people brought him and sort them out into long strands, intertwining them with threads of silk. He tied the pieces together. This produced a light and strong rope of great tensile strength. Then he waxed it for durability and wound it onto a large wooden spindle which he kept in his house.

As the years passed, the rope on the spindle grew larger and larger. The people would often ask Ling why he was collecting the strands of fibre and silk. But the kind old man, with a twinkle in his eyes, would only smile upon them and tell them to wait a little longer.

There was another candlemaker in Sien-Chu by the name of Lai-Wong, but he often cheated the people. Soon the people began buying all their candles from Ling because he was a cheerful man and his candles were cheap and of good quality. So Ling prospered and was content.

Not very many miles from Sien-Chu there stood a huge hill overlooking the waters of the Yellow Sea. Once a fortnight Ling walked to the hill and stood looking into the heavens with his arms outstretched. Then he would sit down on the rocks and think for a long time, after which he would go through the small forest and back to Sien-Chu. On
One of these occasions when Ling-Ho was looking at the Yellow Sea, he heard a distressing cry of a woman arise from the woods at the bottom of the hill; Ling ran swiftly down the hill, for, although he was an elderly man, his brown muscles were strong.

There in the woods he saw Lai-Wong attempting to rape a village girl who had come there to pick berries. Ling fell upon the man and began to beat him; but Wong, knowing that Ling-Ho was stronger, ran away.

Ling took the young woman, the wife of a coolie, back to Sien-Chu. He told the people what had happened. They formed a large crowd and went to Wong's house where they found him eating rice. They beat him with sticks until he was covered with blood. Then they stoned him out of the village, hurling invectives at him as he hurried off.

Ling prospered in his work as candlemaker, and he continued to collect string and wax it and add it to the large spindle he kept. Lai-Wong had become an outlaw and joined the bandits which roamed freely over the country; and across his chin was an ugly scar he had received in one of the bandit raids he had been in. He had come back several times in an attempt to begin candlemaking again, since it was very profitable: But each time he came to Sien-Chu he was unwelcomed, and each time he left, his heart was filled with bitterness and avowed revenge on Ling-Ho.

The years passed by; Ling's long beard became whiter, and children of the new generation continued to bring him string from here and there. Then one fine warm day he called the people together in the market place as was the custom when events of importance were to be known.

A silence fell over the area as Ling told the people he was ready at last to tell them the secret he had promised them for years. The silence over the crowd gave way to gasps of awe when he told them the strong rope was going to carry him higher than the eagle could fly, into the white clouds where he would find the secret of life.

Now the people of Sien-Chu said that he had become insane, but nevertheless, they were a superstitious people, and believed that the great life secret—the answer to immortality—was indeed in the huge billowy clouds which came out of the East and hung lazily over the Yellow Sea. So their excitement was great indeed, and their admiration of Ling-Ho was greater.

Ling told them he was ready to build the big kite which would carry him up to the clouds, but first he had to have someone to take over his work as candlemaker, for none were to be found in the village.

Meanwhile Lai-Wong, who had long since quit the bandits because of his age, had heard the news that the village of Sien-Chu required a candlemaker. Knowing of the good wages there and of the chance of revenge on Ling-Ho, he proceeded to the village, where he offered his services. His long thick beard covered his old scar and his changed name prevented their realizing who he was.

Ling, with the best kite builders from the province, began work on the huge kite. For many weeks they laboured, and for many weeks Wong patiently awaited his moment of revenge.

Finally the great man-made contraption was ready, and Ling called
the people together once more. The farmers left their fields of kaoliang, millet and soy beans, and the women came with the oxen. They all gathered closely about the old man, intent on hearing what he had to say.

He told them the following day they must journey to the sea and launch his craft into the sky, and he felt sure the great god Tao would welcome him in the White Clouds and tell him the secret of life. Then he would come back to earth and bring the good news to the people of Sien-Chu.

The villagers went home, confident that the morrow would bring a happy day for them. But Wong had planned his revenge, and while Ling-Ho was out talking to the high men of the town he crept into the room where the spindle held the strong rope to fly the kite. He scraped off the wax in several places of the rope and weakened the threads by cutting them. Then he put more tallow on, recovered the rope and left.

The whole village came to the gathering place the next day, in preparation for the short journey to the coast. Children romped about, crying the news of a beautiful day; and truly it was bright and clear. The people would do no work that day. The men helped Ling-Ho with his big kite and the whole procession moved slowly to the coast and then upon the hill overlooking the Yellow Sea. The wind was brisk, and large cumulus clouds billowed out in the atmosphere above.

The silken cord was reeled onto a wooden winch, which was to release the kite into the air and also bring Ling back to earth again. The cord was attached and Ling was tied firmly on the kite. Several of the strong men unwound the rope and took the kite with Ling across the hilltop where the wind picked it up and carried it high.

The men held the winch and slowly released the string as the kite rose higher towards the clouds. The women stood gaping, and the children and mongrel dogs ran around, engrossed in the excitement of the affair but not understanding what was happening. Lai-Wong stood by, his eyes gleaming with anticipation at his forthcoming revenge upon the candlemaker.

Ling-Ho soared high until he was a tiny speck in the sky. The white clouds enveloped him and the people rejoiced, for soon they would bring him back with the secret of life from the god Tao. But the wind was strong and all the men were straining their muscles holding onto the rope, for the force was mighty indeed.

The clouds passed away and again the people saw the tiny speck in the air. The end of the rope was nearing and the men were ready to reel Ling to earth. Then, without warning, the cord broke with a loud snap. The men fell stunned on the ground, and all eyes turned upward to the kite and its human cargo. They saw it quiver without support, and then flutter down into the sea.

The women began to wail and moan, and they were sore at heart, but Wong laughed aloud at the success of his evil plan.

One villager asked him why he laughed; then another man saw the scar on Wong's chin as his beard was parted. The villagers exclaimed aloud that he was the man who assaulted the coolie's wife in the years gone by. They took hold of him demanding to know what had hap-
pened, but Wong merely stammered and denied any connection with Ling's misfortune. But the people examined the winch and broken string. They saw that it had been cut. Then they knew that Lai-Wong had deliberately lied, and that he had killed Ling-Ho.

The men set upon him and dragged him down to the sea, the women following alongside spitting and screaming in his face. There upon the rocky coastline they took sticks and beat Wong to death. The people went back to their homes, but the children lingered to throw rocks at the still body and the mongrel dogs barked until the tide began to move over it. Then, they too, followed back to the village.

BANZAI

By William Stephens, Jr.

Have you ever tried to fight sleep for eight, long hours, when you were alone in a B. A. R. pit on some stinkin' island; when you were so damned tired you couldn't hold your head up, much less your body; when your eyes were so heavy that the sticky, tropic night held them shut against your will; when the mortal fear in your soul had so completely exhausted itself by its own intensity that nothing but a morbid nausea was left; when you felt that, if there were a God, he was too sadistic and merciless to be worth a prayer; when, in your lethargy, you heard sudden shouts of "Banzai!" and felt that dead fear revive—and you cried like a baby, on your hands and knees, for your merciful, Heavenly Father to save you once again.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

By Carl McCollum

The old priest after a final heave and sigh reached his study at the head of the time worn oak stairs. He pushed open the heavy iron studded door and found his way to the chair behind the cluttered desk. No sooner had he become comfortable than sister Clara came in carrying a glass of milk. The priest sat erect, started sorting the papers, ignoring the intruder. Sister Clara came up beside the desk, tapping her foot for a moment before she spoke.

"Now it's no use, your pretending you didn't see me enter. You're going to drink this milk while it's warm and while I watch you. You won't be throwing any more in the waste basket."

Father Frederick winced and lines ran across his forehead as he looked up. A scar over one eye turned red. He appraised the good sister, then the milk. A scowl came across his tallow coloured face.

"Now, Sister Clara, you know—" but he was cut short.
“Father, drink that milk and let me hear no more about it. You can’t live without nourishment. You’ve been out all day, and several of the sisters had to search for you. You know what the Herr doctor said, only rest and no more work. It’s bad enough that you still give the sermon, even with the young priest here to relieve you of all your duties.”

“Sister Clara, if you’ll be gone and hold your tongue, I’ll drink the milk; there is nothing I dislike more than a barking woman. You’d think I had nothing left to do but sit and die.” Clara turned her head to keep the good priest from seeing her wipe the tear from her eye.

Father Frederick reached out for the glass; bits of grime stood out in wrinkled and calloused hand, which was shaking slightly.

“Ach—I have never liked milk,” he said as he set the empty glass back on the table, a little white drop running down its side.

Sister Clara picked up the glass and turned to say something before leaving, but the old man had turned around in his chair and was looking out over the little town. The moon was rising out of the treetops of the Tanus. A few stars were twinkling in the semi-darkness.

“Sister Clara.”

“Yes, Father, I was about to leave.”

“Don’t go just yet. Hand me my pipe and tobacco case, then draw up that chair and sit with me for awhile. I don’t mean all I say. I guess I do want you to be around once in awhile. I’d be lost without you after these many weeks of loving care, since I returned from the concentration camp.”

Sister Clara filled the pipe and handed it to the father. She sat down and held the match to the bowl until it was drawing to his satisfaction. A cloud of blue gray smoke spread upward to the beams.

“Sister, I’m an old fool. We will have no Christmas pageant tomorrow evening. The villagers think such a pageant in Christ’s honor will make us the laughing stock of the world, especially with the prison camp fresh in everyone’s memory. I have tried to explain that we cannot erase the past by being proud and arrogant, but only by admitting our wrong and seeking again the Christian way in sincerity can we, in time, hope to be forgiven. All week I have been fighting their philosophy, but to no avail. Unless a spirit of brotherhood and forgiveness among men is born, Hitler will be master of our destiny even in his grave. I can only hope for God’s intervention.”

Sister Clara’s voice was gentle and calm as she spoke with her eyes on the little village streets, covered with snow. Little people walking to and fro, breaking the streaks of mellow yellow lights which glowed from each window.

“Father, don’t trouble your mind with these thoughts. God in his good time will touch the heart of all his children. The thought of the dead in the dreadful concentration camp cannot so easily be forgotten. Dachau will never be the same again, and with the foreign troops still here, the people are too proud to admit the sins they know are theirs alone. When the occupation troops are gone, maybe then they will again humble themselves.”

“But, Sister, another year will be too late. That I must sit here and let people go on hating each other, allow pride to bottle up the true
feelings in the heart, is a sin in itself." He started to rise; Sister Clara's firm but gentle hands held him back.

"You can't do any more, Father, and you are too ill to go gadding about in the night air. Rest well until morning and then I will walk with you to the church for prayers. Now I must go and prepare your bed." She opened the door and looked back on the gray head, smiling, before finding her way down the dark stairways.

Father Frederick looked out over the village a long while, then he lifted his head and there was a light in his blurred, weary eyes. He turned slowly around and the effort seemed to pain him as he rubbed his chest above his heart. He smiled and took up his pen and set a sheet of paper in front of him. He dipped the pen point in the black liquid and began to write with a frown across his brow. Words gradually took form.

Next morning Father Frederick and Sister Clara trudged through the clear crisp air and deep snow, his hand on her arm, toward the small church. Only the distant tinkling bells jarred the tomblike silence. A blanket of gray windblown mist clung to the mountain sides. Father Frederick stopped now and then to look up toward the mountains.

"Look, Sister Clara, the waterfall. I always enjoy seeing the waterfall drop out of the clouds."

There in crystal cleanness the little fall broke through the mist.

"Yes, Father, I feel like God is so near, here in the valley, when I look up and behold such beauty. But come along now, Father, we must hurry if you are going to give the sermon."

An hour later Father Joseph was helping Father Frederick up the circular steps into the pulpit. He pulled himself up to his greatest height, yet his shoulders were stooped. Out of his pocket came a piece of crumpled paper. He looked out over his little congregation and his voice came soft, gentle and calm.

"Dear people, I have sought after you all week that once again a Christmas pageant might be given to the world. You have said you cannot do this. Why, I see not. If it is the shadow of the prison camp which haunts you, then it is best that we begin now in trying to erase that image not only from our minds but from the mind of the world. Now with the celebration of the birth of our Savior we can show the world that we mean to strive for a better understanding. It is not something to be ashamed of if we humble ourselves and ask forgiveness, but shame upon all present if we allow our pride to keep us from admitting our wrong. I will not preach further, I submit my request to your judgment. Will you stand while I pray."

Father Frederick felt the pain in his chest, but he did not falter. He lifted his eyes and hands toward heaven and prayed.

"Our Father in heaven, it is easy to see how small humans are when we look up to the mountains which tower over this village. How like the village, compared to the mountains and outer reaches of space, are our minds when compared to that of God. Yet throughout the ages there have been those who have felt themselves higher than earthly calling, ones who have stirred the masses with their eloquence and promise of a multi-coloured world, but let us always be mindful that the stumbling block is ever before us, and that when we follow and fail we are crushed to the dust which was our beginning; our just reward. We have indeed
looked away from Thy direction, Lord, but knowing Thee to be a merciful God, we implore upon our knees for Thy return, for unless Thy spirit dwell among us we are doomed. We are hated by our world, that we know and understand, for are not all humans weak when earthly suffering bares its brutal fangs, and when we cannot, will not understand the greater—Master plan for mankind. Out of the turmoil and sacrifice which is upon us we give thanks, oh Lord, for what is left us. We place on Thy shoulders the burden which Thou hast promised to share and ask Thy blessing on our humble homes as we turn again to find the right. Rekindle the spark within our brain that we might give inspiration for countless ages yet to come, that service to the haunting—tragic—suffering humanity might erase the wounds opened in our time.

"Help us begin now at this holy Christmas time the work ahead. Let poverty, chastity, and last but not least humility fused with tolerance be our guiding light. Thy will be done, Lord, not ours. Guide us and direct us in the path Thou would have us to follow; be with us now and forevermore. Amen."

Father Frederick was feeling great pain around his heart and cold sweat formed little balls on his forehead. He was in the great tall canopied bed in the room next to his study. Sister Clara was bending over him wiping his brow. He opened his eyes and saw that she had been crying.

"Now, I'll be up by morning, you'll see." Then a startled, surprised look came to his aged features. "What is it I hear, Sister Clara—it is music. They—they are giving the pageant; I must see it."

"No, Father, you can't get up, you must lie still." Father Joseph and Sister Clara bent to push the old priest back, but he managed to get on his feet. "Help me to my study. Don't you see, I must see this pageant, the realization of my heart's desire. I'll promise now to obey you and remain in bed if you will just help me to the window. Please, please, don't delay me."

They wrapped him in a blanket and led him as he tried to run, to his seat near the window in his study. Sister Clara brought pillows and put them behind his head. The old priest was smiling through his tears as he looked out over the little village. People were running to and fro with fir trees and in each little yellow pane there was a wreath. And there, up on the Tanus, it seemed a million stars moved in an unending procession from the right and left down to the center of the mountainside where a cross was being formed. "Silent Night, Holy Night" echoed out over the little thatched rooftops. Dachau now was clothed in the brilliant light of its ancient tradition—Mother, in her right of the Christian Christmas pageant. Father Frederick sighed and raised a hand as his head and body sank back into the soft pillows. There was a crimson glow on his cheeks as he spoke.

"Look, Sister Clara—the sky is all aglow—look, look there, angels are singing—everyone is singing. I'm so happy." His voice stopped as his breath was stilled. From all around him rose the prayer for the dead. "Out of the depths I have cried unto Thee, oh Lord; Lord, hear my voice." Sister Clara was sobbing aloud as she went to her knees and looked up at his face. She spoke.

"Yes, beloved Father—the whole world is singing."
THE CHURN OF GREEN

By Grey Phillips

The churn of green
On leaving
The horror seen
Lets no thought of late bereaving.
Real is only
The relief
That all the lonely
With distant quiet belief
Did not see the swells push down
Who now would be another one or any.

THE DRAINED POOL

By Ethel Frazier

Look on the silent, hard, grey ground,
Is this the place where once was found
The bloom, the bough, the sprouting seed?
A blinding blast wrung dying groan
From fertile soil that had but known
The gentle, upward thrust of life.
Crashed each tree, its crimsoned leaf steeped
In the nauseous stench; ripped roots lay heaped,
A mangled mass of slippery red.
The quivering land, still retching death,
Gaped open, expelled hot, putrid breath
That burnt what was too dry to bleed.
Time-leveled, now, this sterile earth
Will not stir with seedling birth;
To the lily only will it yield,
Pale, wax-like product; in the barren field
One, cold, white stone is left, and I,
Charred stump against a blackened sky!
He sat there, looking down at his trembling hands—long slender fingers, cold and bone white—thin nervous hands tapping soundlessly on the ivory keyboard of the Steinway in front of him—musician's hands ready to spring into action, to produce the emotions which were welling up in the mind of their owner. He sat there seemingly oblivious of the myriads of eyes staring up at him, thousands of minds pulsing with wonder at his silence—some racing with impatience, others dormant, enjoying this brief moment of respite from the turmoil of their modern lives. Few of them had ever heard of that lone creature, sitting stiffly with his hands spread out over the piano—waiting for no one knew what. They had come out of utter curiosity, wondering what this find of Ravel's might be, how this new virtuoso might perform. A general rustling filled the audience; the noise of programs slipping and the sound of chairs squeaking invaded the unbroken silence. Why didn't he begin? All was in readiness. Then a fine soft strain of music began to float quietly across the auditorium, a few strains of jumbled melody and then a pause. Was this man mad? Possibly it was Ravel who was mad, inviting them here to listen to this unknown discovery who seemed to have forgotten his piece.

Play, play, play, the doctor said he must play. The doctor said that they would like his music, that he would be famous, that he would be well if he played—it would make him want to remember. Remember the life that he had led when these keys meant something to him. The doctor said that he should look back. Look back to what? He couldn't look back—not beyond the Home—not beyond the rest and quiet and solitude. The solitude! Yes, he wished he were back there now. Back in the neat, white-washed room of the Home, where there were no pianos, no eyes glaring up at him, no eyes piercing him through and through—no questioning and condemning eyes wondering what he was, where he had come from, why he didn't play. They would never understand, those uncompromising eyes. They would never comprehend the thought that kept racing through his mind when he saw the keyboard staring up at him. No one would understand—not even the doctor understood, and he was his friend. Friend! He wondered if They were out there watching—waiting with the rest. No, They would not be. They wouldn't be waiting with the rest. They had never watched or waited. They had never believed in him, and he was glad They wouldn't be there. It was too late. He would have pleased them once, but now it was too late. He didn't wish to please them now even if he could. Not now! But the doctor and the man called Ravel, the doctor's friend, were in the wings. They were waiting for him—standing impatiently, the man Ravel, looking nervously at the doctor and shaking his head slowly—the doctor, smiling confidently, urging him to play. He must play. The doctor was his friend, and the doctor was waiting.

His hands touched the white keys and rested there a moment unsteadily. Then the sad strain of music drifted slowly from his fingertips as
if propelled by some strange force. That melody! She had loved that melody. She had smiled when he played it and said softly with the pride shining in her quiet, gray eyes, "Yes, George, that's it. That's the one that will make you famous. That will be our melody, our tone poem; but it's so sad. You shouldn't be sad, George, not on this day anyway." She had emphasized that "this day" in her peculiar, lilting voice because it was a very special one in their young lives—very special because they had been married one year. He was sitting in front of the stiff little upright piano in their cheap, walk-up flat, toying with a tune that had been going around in his mind ever since he met her. A tune that seemed to express their life together, deep, pure and beautiful and happy—very happy, yet sad, too, very sad around the edges.

That piano, for instance, bought with the money that should have gone for other things—clothes, maybe even food—things for her. Things that she had said she didn't want. After all, a composer has to have a piano, doesn't he, and if George were going to be a composer—but that was wrong. There had never been any if's in her vocabulary where he was concerned. She had known he would do well. She alone had known and believed in him.

It must have been hard to believe in him, a struggling musician, who had arrived out of nowhere and was likely to end up in the same place. They had all warned her not to marry him, and they had been right. He wasn't even able to support her. Once he had tried to take odd jobs during the day and compose at night, but that did not work—not at all. He couldn't think, worn out, his mind dulled from too much work and insufficient sleep. The music was there vibrating through every bone in his body, but he couldn't put it down. Not without some rest, some time to think.

Len had realized this as she realized everything about him, so they had formed a pact. She would work, and he would compose. He hated himself for that agreement. He cursed himself for being so weak, so—letting his wife support him.

Yes, he cursed himself; and he was not alone in his condemnation. Her friends scoffed, all very pleasantly, of course, but it was there, that smirking "didn't we tell you so" look in their eyes. However, some of them were actually concerned about his work, and when he finally had a song published, they held a little celebration in the flat and toasted him as a genius—the rising man of the hour—the Herbert of tomorrow. The look in Len's eyes when they said it, had almost compensated for the degradation to which his writhing conscience had subjected him. It wasn't that good. In fact, the tune was second rate; he hadn't really found himself in that one, but he would. He knew he would. Not a second Herbert—much better than Herbert. That was not bragging either, for the melodies haunting his brain were superior to those of Herbert if he could set them down. If only he could get his mind off Len, coming in every afternoon, tired and worn, but smiling up at him; asking him about his work while she fixed supper and spread the little gay cloth over the card table which served as their dining room.

Len had smiled at him in the same way that bleak rainy afternoon when she came in, dripping from the dark, steel-gray streets with her soft blond curls compressed in a mass of tight ringlets around her face.
He hadn't noticed anything different except that she was shivering a little and seemed to be almost too radiant and glowing as someone who had drunk a little too much and was dizzy with the excitement of it. After supper was cleared away, she had curled up on the battered mo-hair sofa and leaned back, closing her eyes as if the soul of her exuberance had suddenly flown and left her completely spiritless. She looked over at him at the piano and said sadly with a sort of lost expression in her eyes, “I'd like to hear it again, George, just once more.”

“You'll probably be hearing it innumerable times, darling, when it is really finished. I can see it now. Carnegie Hall and you with a new dress—scads of new dresses, sitting in a box with those little opera glasses looking at me. I'll be up there on the platform playing our melody. It won't be just a melody, it will be a symphony—our symphony. Len, darling, I have a wonderful idea for a dedication. Of course, it will be to you, but it's a little better than just 'to Len.' It's a quotation, Len, ‘To the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore.’ Do you like it, Len? Len! What's wrong? What's the matter?

“Nameless here forever more?” That was the end of the quotation. Nameless—forever more. It hadn't taken long—three days—that's all. The doctor had called it double pneumonia, malnutrition—all his fault. Her friends, “those scoffers,” had stood around accusing him with their eyes, questioning him. Len's eyes hadn't questioned him—hadn't accused. She had looked up at him, her eyes strangely soft and clear, not affected by the fever, and she had spoken quietly, “It's all right, George. Don't condemn yourself. It's just the way things turned out; that's all. You know, George, to obtain something that is really great you have to give something you love and cherish. You've given me, and I don't mind, George. I love you so.”

That had been all. NAMELESS HERE FOREVER MORE. He sat there in that little flat once filled with love and laughter and with a voice that spoke softly—empty rooms that had once brightened with light steps and brave, smiling eyes. There were no smiling eyes now, only accusing ones. They had come, those who never had faith in him, those who had told her not to marry him; They had been right. Oh, why hadn't he listened to them—why—why—why?

He didn't remember much after that. One of them had started to play the melody, as much of it as he had ever written down—just a few chords. They had said something rather cruel, George thought. Something supposed to be funny about why he hadn't written less and published more. George had torn at them with all the pent up violence he had stored within him.

That was all he remembered except that the melody kept haunting him, running through his mind, crying to be played. One day at the Home he had sat down and played a little—not the melody, just some other things—things of which he had never written down. The doctor had heard him, and had told him it was good. He asked him if he would play for this man, Ravel. Ravel had been kind, and had asked him if he would play before a group of his friends; now here he was, toying with the melody—Len's melody. “Our tone poem, George. Play it for us, George. Remember you had to give something and you gave me. Not nameless here forever more. It will be my name. The work will be a story of our lives. I will live, George! Live in your music!”

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Make her live—of course, that was it. That was what he could do for her. He could immortalize her, and make her live forever. They could never have done that for her. They could have supplied her with the commonplace things like bread, clothes and medicine; but he could give her eternal life—eternal life, not death. He had not killed her; he had made her live!

The sad strain of music swelled and filled the room with full rich tones, then played fitfully with a lilting air, an air that sounded like a voice—smiling and encouraging—deep, pure tones—tones expressed in the calm and quiet of soft gray eyes—the fingers tripping lightly over the keyboard—a sprightly step—and then the sad strain again, but not so sad. No, not sad at all but jubilant! Who was this genius? Where had he come from? What great work was he playing? The program offered only a banal quotation from Poe to "A rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore."

RE-TALED

By Harold Hogue

Trees along the side of the road bowed to the savagery of the storm. The lightning crackled and came in blinding flashes which lighted the whole countryside. Then the thunder rumbled with the fury of a lion as the gods played their mighty drums. The wind blew the rain in waves, and each wave broke over the front of young Dr. Howard's car and ran along the top. It sounded like the rolling of drums—then silence—then another roll.

"What a night to go out on a call," mused the young doctor, "and of all places why did it have to be the old Tittle place. It's a good fifteen miles from town. Didn't think anyone had lived there for years. Everyone says it's haunted. Come to think of it, something was strange about that call, too! Wouldn't say what was wrong—just said come at once."

A flash of lightning revealed the wall surrounding the old Tittle place. Dr. Howard turned his car through the archway and up the drive toward the house. A light shone from one of the upstairs windows but went out when the car approached the house.

Dr. Howard rapped on the door and waited. There was no answer. He knocked again. This time the door was opened. No, the door wasn't opened—it opened. There was no light. The doctor flicked on his flashlight and stepped inside. The door closed, and Dr. Howard turned to greet his host. There was no host.

"I say there. Anyone home?"

There was no answer. The doctor's words rang emptily through the room. The wind banged a loose shutter against the side of the house. Silence.

"Anyone home I say!" Still no answer.

Searching for a light switch, the doctor played his light against the
wall but found no switch. He spied a lamp on a table, produced a match and lit it. The lamp spread its rays and revealed a large room with no furniture save the table, two straight chairs, and an ancient rocking chair. To the left were French doors with many broken windows, through which could be seen another room—an empty room. The wall directly opposite the outside door housed a glassy brick fireplace. Above the fireplace a portrait of old man Tittle, himself, stared down like a tree full of owls. The wall to the right contained a door—very narrow and heavy and elaborately carved with the figure of a large cat. The door was open revealing a narrow staircase.

Since he had seen a light upstairs, Dr. Howard stepped to the door and yelled. There was no answer. This called for investigation, so taking the lamp, the young doctor ascended the stairs. There was a hall at the top of the stairs with rooms lining either side, and a door to one of the rooms on the right side of the hall was open. Suspecting that this was the room from which the light had come, Dr. Howard entered. No one was there. The young doctor's heart skipped a beat, for against the wall opposite the door was a coffin—a very heavy steel coffin. The lid was open. Dr. Howard stepped closer and the rays from the lamp fell full upon the open, wide open, eyes of a dead man. The hideous dull green of the glassy eyes chilled the doctor's bones to the very marrow. He stood frozen with fear for an instant and then raced for the stairs and the way out of the horrible house. The door at the bottom of the stairs was closed. He tried it. It was locked.

Just then there came a noise from the upstairs as if something very heavy was being pushed across the floor. Looking up, the doctor saw the enormously heavy coffin come into view at the top of the stairs. It teetered for an instant on the top step and then plunged toward him. There seemed to be no escape. The door would not open, and the stairway was too narrow to dodge the coffin. He would be crushed to bits.

What did Dr. Howard do? He reached in his pocket and brought out a cough drop—they always stop a coughin'.
BEDS

By Russell H. Ward

A bed is a thing which is very hard to make up in the morning, especially if someone is still asleep in it. There are many kinds of beds; for example, four-poster beds, twin beds, flower beds. (People sleep in the latter only as a last resort). Beds have an unusual characteristic; they are possessed of four legs but have only one foot. This is very odd since most things have a foot for each leg, but since I didn't invent beds I won't waste time apologizing. Pillows are placed on beds so you can tell one end from the other. A pillow is a thing used to prop people up at night, so they won't drop too far when they fall asleep. Pillows are covered by pillow slips which have lace around the bottom. These are not to be confused with ladies' slips which have lace around the top and bottom both. Beds usually have mattresses which are big bags filled with bird's feathers. This is very hard on the birds, especially in the wintertime. The invention of mattresses gave rise to the expression, "naked as a jaybird." People who sleep all the time are called bed bugs. But this is a misleading statement because bugs sometimes have two heads and everybody but my little sister just has one head. Bedroom is what sailors don't have when they climb up in their hammocks. Hammocks are very touchy and even a slight breeze will dump contents on the floor. That is why most sailors have "three sheets to the wind." Married couples are very fond of twin beds, especially when they are used one at a time.

PETE'S TIME

By Loyd Wilson

Pete looked at the watch on his arm. His eyes followed the little second hand as it turned slowly, putting the minutes behind it. In school they had told him that somebody died every so many minutes. He couldn't remember how many it was, but he believed them. Pete wondered how it would be to die. Would there be a sudden flick of pain and then nothing? Maybe there wouldn't even be any pain and everything would just end. It might be that there would just be a slow fade out, as though the lights were being turned out one at a time, and then you would slowly awaken. Everything would be white and shiny and in your hands there would be a little golden harp. When he was a little boy the Sunday School teacher at the Methodist Church had told him that if he was mean, the devil would be sure to get him. Pete knew he had never been mean so he didn't worry about being chased by old Satan.

Pulling back his sleeve, Pete looked at the watch again. Maybe it wasn't running. He put it to his ear, but he couldn't hear the familiar ticking. He looked at it again. The second hand was still moving around. Pete wondered what could be wrong. There were lots of times he had
forgotten to wind it, but he clearly remembered winding it this morn-
ing when he awoke. That was when he always wound his watch, the very
first thing in the morning.

Pete had been sitting in the church all morning, and now it was
early afternoon. It was 1:58 by his watch. He wondered why he had
come here so early this morning, especially without eating breakfast.
He hadn’t felt the least bit hungry, though.

Looking all around the auditorium of the church, Pete knew he
was waiting for something. Hadn’t he been waiting for something or
other all of his life? As soon as he was born he started waiting. He
couldn’t remember that far back, but he knew he must have been wait-
ing for something. He could remember when he waited to get old
enough to go to school and, as soon as he started, he was waiting for the
summer vacation to come around and deliver him from school. Back
then, he was waiting to grow up to be a man; he still was. Part of that
waiting had been for the truck that brought the newspapers; for he
had been the evening paper boy in the neighborhood after he was
twelve years old. The first thing Pete had bought with the money from
the paper route was that watch on his arm. It had cost him $4.98 and
he had gotten it at the drugstore where he waited for the truck to bring
the newspapers. Pete had gotten into a fight one day while he was wait-
ing there. He couldn’t remember why, but he knew he had gotten a
black eye out of it.

The church was getting full of people and to Pete they all looked
sad. No one ever looked over in Pete’s direction. Maybe they didn’t
recognize him, for he did feel a little pale. He had just gotten over a
bad case of pneumonia and still felt pretty weak. Everyone thought he
was going to die before he went to sleep, but when he awoke this morn-
ing he knew they were wrong.

Pete looked at the pretty girl that came in the door, but she didn’t
see Pete. Why did she look so sad? He thought of the time he had
walked home from school with her. All the fellows teased Pete about
his sweetheart, but he didn’t mind. Everybody had a sweetheart some-
time in life, and she was his. Pete wanted to go over and talk to her, but
he decided he would wait.

Some men that knew Pete came into the church carrying a big box.
It was a coffin. Pete hadn’t heard about anyone dying, but he knew
that he had been waiting all morning for this funeral. The men put the
coffin at the front of the auditorium and brought in a lot of pretty
flowers to put around the coffin.

Wondering who was in the coffin bothered Pete. It might be old
Mrs. Copeland, for she had been in bed for the last six years. Why
hadn’t someone told him that she had died? Jimmy Elkins had gone
swimming with him in the icy water of the creek two weeks ago and
had caught the flu as a result. Pete hoped it wasn’t Jimmy, for they
were good buddies.

The minister came into the auditorium and went up into the pulpit.
Pete wished that he would hurry and tell whose funeral it was. Pete’s
mind wandered off for a minute and then he heard his name mentioned.
He snapped up. The minister was talking about him. There was some mistake. It must be a dream. This was his funeral, Pete's funeral. In a wild fright Pete jumped up and ran to the coffin. Pushing up the lid of the coffin, Pete stared in at the body lying there; he saw his own face, and there on the arm of the corpse was his watch—still ticking soundlessly.

STRANGE SPLENDOUR

By Grady McCarty Long

The sun's rays had faded until only a faint afterglow persisted in its eternal warfare against the coming night. The leaves were brittle and rustled softly in the wind.

On the road embankment, shielded from the wind by a group of pines, a crew of travelers rested. Among them were children with pinched, hungry faces, young men and women with weary disillusioned eyes, and many old people from whose faces, all animation had gone, leaving wrinkled expressionless masks, lighted only by eyes holding great bitterness or immeasurable peace.

A small boy whimpered, "Big Mother, will the sun never shine again?"

"Child, I do not know, but there are those who say that the sun's light is burned up—gone, just like an electric bulb burns out; that there is nothing left to make light, and others say that God has extinguished the light to punish those who have forgotten Him."

A sibilant hiss arose, and a man's raucous voice cried out, "Forgotten God? How can one forget that which it not? God? Why God ceased to be even thought about a thousand years ago."

"Aye," she answered him, "I know He has been given little thought, but that does not mean He is not. Perhaps even now He wishes that the sun might shine again; perhaps He is working and struggling to save us from this outer darkness."

"Perhaps! Old Woman, you are foolish to talk of God. Save your breath! No, it is no good saving it, for the light grows more dim; soon we will all be dead. I am dying of hunger; today I found only a shriveled carrot, and the day before there was only bark."

The voice of an old man trembled forth: "That is better than I have done; yesterday I found five grains of corn clutched in the hand of a dead wayfarer, and today there has been nothing."

"Big Mother."

"Yes, John, what is it?"

"Is there nothing more to eat?"

"No, John, there is nothing more. The lentils we found in the maw of the dead fowl yesterday were the last thing. You had those for lunch, but tomorrow—"

"Tomorrow," shrilled a young woman. "Why tomorrow is not, nor
will be! There is only this twilight and death and smell. The odor of death is in the air; all day I have picked my way among dead and dying, and still you talk of God and tomorrow!"

The boy cowered against the old woman. "Big Mother, what is death like? I'm afraid, Big Mother," he sobbed. The gnarled old hands stroked his hair.

"There is no death, John—there is only change. After awhile it will grow darker and we shall sleep and then when we wake there is a fresh new feeling. That is death; it is only taking a nap, and then we wake and go to work again."

"And God, Big Mother, where is God? Why does he not make it light? Can't God make the sun to shine again?"

But she did not answer him. She only stroked his hair and thought; perhaps God would like to make the sun shine again and can't; perhaps he doesn't want us to suffer any more than we want to suffer; perhaps he cannot help some of the things that happen to us and to Him.

A young woman, the traces of beauty still on her face marred by famine, touched the old woman, "Do you think, do you believe it will be over before we die?"

Big Mother shook her head. "No, we will soon all be dead, or what you call dead. We will only be asleep and then we will awaken and go to work. There is no death.

The girl smiled a twisted smile. "You think I won't become dirt when death takes me?"

"Your body will become dust, but you will not be in that body; you will have made progress; throughout the ages man has progressed, and it is only progress when we die. Listen to the hum of that great house flying through the air; see its lights? And a short way back, we passed a rail over which aluminum tubes filled with people passed at so incredible a rate as to be hardly visible. Yes, man has made progress and we will continue."

There was a hushed fitful weeping among the women. Little John was sleeping peacefully and Big Mother drew the faded jacket closer about him. It seemed like a strange dream since this increasing darkness had begun and famine had gripped the lad. A strange and awful dream that deprived one of home and loved ones. But it would soon be ended, for only a crimson blur remained of what had once been the glorious light of the sun.

Cities echoed with emptiness; like phantoms, they stood empty and aghast at the stench of death in their midst. The populace had taken to the fields in search of food, hoping that yet the sun's light might be restored, and with it, life.

Big Mother nodded fitfully, the sleeping girl's head leaning on her shoulder.

"Marya, Marya!" It was a husky, pleading voice, and Big Mother knew it for a man's. She extended a comforting hand to meet the groping figure.

"Perhaps she whom you seek is here. Her head rests upon my shoulder. Sit down, she will awake soon."

Seating himself, the stranger moaned: "God, oh God! How can you
do this thing? My picture was almost finished, and with the money, it would have brought, Marya and I could have married."

Big Mother held the man's hand as he sobbed, releasing it only as little John moved restlessly in her lap.

"Yes, I know how terrible it seems, but when we have passed through this stage, think of the pictures you will paint, and of the things you and Marya will do!"

"But we shall be dust; death will obliterate us—There is no—"

"Death," she finished his sentence; "there is only transition, and when one set of hopes and ideals we have set up fall, we pick up the stones and build again. The years pass and we are never finished, but always we are building."

He had fallen asleep as she talked. His hand was touching Marya's garment.

A great peace was upon Big Mother and she whispered softly within her own heart, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from Thy presence," and she slept.

"Big Mother! Big Mother!" There was no answer and though her hand was on his head, it was cold and stiff and little John knew that she was dead. The light was gone, and though he cried, there was still no answer save an echo and the dropping of dead needles and pine cones.

Little John lay very still, thinking of what Big Mother had said, and it gave him comfort, so that once more he slept; slept the long sleep from which there is no returning—only a going forward through an ever open door.

"Big Mother! Oh, Big Mother!"

"Yes, John, I am here."

"Its light, Big Mother!"

"Yes, John, I came into the light ahead of you, but this dear boy and girl, Alexis and Marya were with me, besides a good company of others. I missed you, but knew that you would soon come."

"Oh, Big Mother, its so splendid; so light, and now there will be food."

"Yes, John, food for the body, and for the soul, and there is work to do. But come, John, come, Marya, come, Alexis, there are others coming and we must meet and assist them."

And eagerly they set out to do her bidding, their faces alight with the strange splendour of a new life.