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1

CALIFORNIA

A JOURNAL OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

QUARTERLY

NELSON ALGREN
THOMAS MCGRATH
MILLEN BRAND
STANLEY KIESEL
EDWARD HUEBSCH
NORMAN ROSTEN

BORIS PASTERNAK
ARTHUR BOYARS
PHILLIP BONOSKY
DELMAS W. ABBOTT
LAWRENCE FIXEL
DON GORDON

AUTUMN 1952

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY

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A CLEAN 6 X 9 READING EDITION

Things of the Earth gives this issue its argumentative center, with Nelson Algren setting the terms. The fiction—*The Trade-in* by Edward Huebsch; *Fear* by Phillip Bonosky; *Rain on the Road* by Delmas W. Abbott—moves among private crisis, social pressure, and public consequence, with each story's title and setting supplying a distinct point of entry. The poetry runs from *From a Parade of Freaks* and *Comment* 1951–52, shifting between grouped poems and single lyrics rather than settling into one house style. Essays and reviews carry that movement into *A Letter from a Freedman to His Old Master*, so the issue reads as a conversation rather than a stack of unrelated contributions.

This edition resets the journal's literary texts for reading. Each piece begins on a fresh reader page and identifies its original journal page and PDF scan page; advertisements and decorative matter are omitted. Artwork and irreducibly visual material appear as labelled original plates.

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Notes on Contributors

DELMAS W. ABBOTT was born and raised on a Kentucky farm. He has a social worker, ship's purser, hotel worker, and, during the war, a Seabee. His work has appeared in Prairie Schooner and other magazines.

NELSON ALGREN is the author of *Somebody in Boots*; *Nero Come Morning* *Neon Wilderness*, a collection of short stories; *The Man With the Golden Arm*, and *Chicago, City on the Make*.

PHILLIP BONOSKY's stories have appeared in many magazines, including *Masses & Mainstream* and *Collier's*. He is working now on a novel dealing with his childhood in a steel town.

ARTHUR BOY ARS edits the international review *Mandrake*, which has achieved wide recognition. He divides his time between England and Italy.

MILLEN BRAND's *The Fire at Cat Creek Bend* appeared in our Winter, 1952, issue. His poems in this issue are from *Local Lives*, a book in progress, poems from which have been in *Cross Section* 1945, *Poetry*, *Accent*, and other magazines.

LAWRENCE FIXEL, a resident of San Francisco, appeared in the Spring, 1952, issue of *THE CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY*.

DON GORDON of Los Angeles was an "unfriendly" witness before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1951. Long employed in the motion picture industry, Mr. Gordon now devotes an enforced leisure to the dangerous pursuit of poetry. Non-screen credits two collections of poems.

EDWARD HUEBSCH is a blacklisted screenwriter, now residing in Hollywood.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT has been associate editor of *Masses & Mainstream*, and has written and published poems, stories, and criticism of art and literature.

STANLEY KIESEL is a young Los Angeles poet published first by *THE CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY* in its Spring, 1952, issue.

THOMAS McGRATH was well known as a poet when he became an editor of THE CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY. His books include *To Walk a Crooked Mile* and • *Long-Shot O'Leary's Garland of Practical Poesie*.

BORIS PASTERNAK is a Soviet writer of international repute; his *Selected Writings* are published in the United States by New Directions, Inc.

NORMAN ROSTEN's poems have been widely published; in the collections, *The Big Road* and *Poems for Patricia*, and in many magazines, including the Summer, 1952, CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY.

BRIAN VREPONT is a young Australian poet whose poem was sent to us through the courtesy of the Melbourne literary journal, *Meanjin*.

DOUGLAS WOOLF has published several stories in the little magazines, among them *Perspective*, *The New Mexico Quarterly*, *Western Review*, *Prairie Schooner*; has lately turned to the novel, is at work on his second.

Things of the Earth

Nelson Algren

From. an address delivered last summer to writers' conferences at the Universities of Indiana and Missouri.

The struggle to write with profundity of emotion and at the same time to live like a millionaire so exhausted Scott Fitzgerald that he was at last brought down to the point where he could no longer be both a good writer and a decent person.

"So I would cease to be a person," he planned, "kind, just or generous. I would be one with the beady-eyed men cWho say, 'Business is business,' or 'You hould have thought of that before you t into this trouble,' or 'I'm sorry, but at just isn't my department.' "And a smile," Fitzgerald decided yly. "I would get me a smile that would mbine the best qualities of a hotel maner and a ballet dancer with an infected, a pansy pulling a profile and a progetting stuff at half its market value.... If you are young, and should be so fatuous as to ask me how to become a sombre literary man writing pieces on the state of emotional exhaustion which so often overtakes writers in their prime, I would not so much as acknowledge your letter unless you were related to someone rich or important. I no longer like the postman or the milkman or the cousin's husband and they in turn will come to dislike me. The sign Beware of the Dog hangs over the door and life will never be very pleasant again.... I think the natural state of the sentient adult is one of qualified unhappiness."

An observation so melancholy as to recall Mark Twain, turning, after one of his last lectures, to a lifelong friend to say, "Cable, I am demeaning myself. I am becoming a mere buffoon. I cannot endure it any longer."

For the writer's lot, like the policeman's, is not a happy one. A hardy life, as the poet says, with a boot as quick as a fiver. But it isn't till now, in the American Century, as we have so recklessly dubbed it, that tribal pressures toward conformity have been brought to bear so ruthlessly upon men and women seeking to work creatively.

"The young man and woman writing tod-ay have forgotten the problems of the heart in conflict with itself," William Faulkner observed

in accepting the Nobel Prize for literature; "they write not of love but of lust, not of the heart but of the glands. Of victories that carry no real hope, defeats in which nothing of real value is lost, and of griefs that leave no scars."

I seriously doubt that the young man and woman writing today have forgotten the problems of the heart in conflict with itself. I doubt they've forgotten a thing.

Is it not, rather, that they have become so infected with our manic passion for personal security that they decline to take any risk which might conceivably imperil that peculiarly native mirage?

.For there -are no loyalty tests for the heart, the heart has no country at all. So long as living is something more than passing safe and dry-shod, something more than just not dying, the heart never can conform.

Nor do I, personally, get any real large lift out of the assurance, offered so often, of the long-remaindered intellectuals of the Time-Life-Partisan- Review chain, that compared to the drive for conformity in the U.S.S.R. we haven't as yet any true notion here of what the real thing is like.

When I'm standing knee-deep and sinking in the muddy waters of the Little Calumet and Mr. Lionel Trilling paddles anxiously up to inform me that were I standing in the Volga I'd be up to my ear-lobes, and paddles as anxiously away, I don't feel he's done a thing for me.

Any more than when Mr. Richard Rovere, a roving mercenary with a shaky Garand, warns me, from somewhere up there in the foliage that affords protective coloration, that it's unpatriotic of me to holler Ouch when Joe McCarthy gives another turn to the screw, lest the Kremlin overhear and tape-record my yelp for rebroadcasting to Europe.

Today Babbitt doesn't even remember that he was once whipped. He has won back all he has lost, and his features have a sterner cast. Indeed, his profile resembles that of McCarthy himself, and his fingertips touch the very levers of power. He has pegged the price of non-conformity to the point where not only is one's livelihood at stake, but one's freedom as well.

vWhen we can make a hero out of a subaqueous growth like Whittaker Chambers, or a heroine out of a broomstick crackpot like Hester

McCullough, it is time to take stock. And no handout advising us to be cool, that things were actually worse in 1935, ought to divert us. When, since Cotton Mather's time, has it been possible to place a government employee under charges because unidentified informants alleged that his convictions on the question of equal rights "extended slightly beyond that of the average individual"?

"The permissible area for calm discussion is being narrowed and the range of ideas so limited that we have closed our minds to the receipt of ideas from Asia," Mr. Justice Douglas observes.

s "The philosophy of strength through freedom of speech is being replaced by the philosophy of strength through rerepression.

"Now git out of the way," Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Dooley was fond of warning. "Now git out of the way. For here comes property, drunk and raisin' Cain."

No, it isn't that the young writer has forgotten the ancestral problems of the heart in conflict with itself, but rather that he is unwilling to pay the price now asked for non-conformity.

Leaving writers with a choice easier for some to handle than others.

If it isn't the writer's job to relate mankind to the things of the earth, it must be his job to keep them unrelated, lest he find himself, not passing safe and dry-shod, but in angry waters up to his ears and no shoreline in sight.

A complacent satisfaction in our marvelous mechanical ingenuity is being peddled as the answer to the question of human happiness. A sort of spiritual isolationism, more lucidly expressed by Mr. Charles Wilson, when he decides for all of us that "war has been inevitable in our human • affairs as an evolutionary force. We should abandon the false phraseology of a 'war economy' and a 'peace economy' for a continuing program supported by a three-way partnership of industry, government and army."

"Whin business gets above sellin' tenpinny nails in a brown-paper cornucopy," Mr. Dooley differed, " 'tis hard- to tell it from murther."

A Carthaginian faith in the ships of trade and the chariots of war is recurrently reflected on the campuses of great universities in the idea that the undest education for the young is one that equips them for aerial adventur~ or adventure in the laboratory - wherever our technological

frontiers may be pressed yet further - that that is all that is needed and all that really matters.

As if life were no more than a Ford in one's future and a Nash in one's past.

A Ford in one's future, a Nash in one's past, a TV aerial on the roof, a deepfreeze in the basement, a faithful wife in the kitchen, no passions and small cares.

(Let me add hastily that I am not opposed to Fords, Nashes or fidelity. I favor all mechanical improvements. I wish only to voice a suspicion that a whole houseful of gadgets do not of necessity add up to happiness.)

The implication is that the truly sensible writer never lets himself be caught on the side of the losers - that the main thing is never to be a scapegoat; never to be a victim; always to take care lest one be used.

To be, indeed, precisely the sort of man Fitzgerald feigned so mordantly to admire as "one of those who say 'Business is business,' 'You should have thought of that before you got into this trouble,' or 'I'm sorry, but that just isn't my department'."

For Fitzgerald himself became so submerged in the waters that have no shore that he had at last in anguish and bewilderment to cry out, "Why was I identified with the very objects of my horror and compassion?"

Thinking of Melville, thinking of Poe, thinking of Hawthorne and Whitman and Stephen Crane, thinking of Mark Twain and Vachel Lindsay, thinking of Jack London and Tom Wolfe, one begins to feel there is almost no way of forgetful of your life," the young French novelist Rossi writes, "keep your life. Your life is all that matters."

becoming a creative writer in America without being a loser.

Or look at it another way. Look at some of the winners. Look at Louis Bromfield.

All that matters among the things of the earth. That are more easily discerned with the eye than realized with the heart.

They say that, when the ancient Egyptians decided to have a ball, they put a mummy at the foot of the table to remind themselves, even at the height of their festivities, of their own mortality. Let us now, at the height

of our own festivities, look to the foot of the table where he sits with a copy of *The Rains Came* under his hand. Lest we too be proud.

Possession is the price of creation, and the man or woman who declines to be possessed cannot create. And, if possessed, he has to move against the currents of his own time; though by his own lights the true shore lies against the current. Even though aware that the only way he'll find land will be when the waters toss his blue and bloated carcass up.

Perhaps upon those very sands where the ones who played the safer game are drinking cuba libres under beach umbrellas, murmuring, "You should have thought of that before you got into this trouble. I'm sorry, that just isn't my department. After all, business is busiquest."

"For it is in the impartial practise of life that the artist finds the promise of perfection for his art," Conrad wrote, "rather than in those absurd formulas prescribing this or that concept or method or technique. Let him mature the strength of his imagination among the things of the earth."

Meaning, I choose to take it, to believe in your God if you can. But above all to believe in your life. "If your God is On Saturday mornings of early summer, when I was a sprout on Chicago's streets, we used to go on reconnaissance against the Hun. Every eight feet of gravel behind tavern or tenement became Chateau-Thierry. I don't know why it had always to be Chateau- Thierry. I recall that we lost it one Saturday to the Swedes on the next block - doubtless the only triumph of Swedish arms in modern times. It was on the morning we went out to counterattack that one of us strung a wire between two empty tomato cans and thus invented the field telephone.

Moreover, it worked. Lying prostrate, you could communicate with the scout in the next trench. By standing erect you could,. of course, simply tell him what you had to say, since he was only three feet distant. But lying prostrate was infiinitely more strategic.

The accurate ear and the retentive memory of such a writer as James T. Farrell constitute a sort of literary field telephone, a two-party line sufficient for stenographic purposes. It not only gets the message down straight, but does so without engaging the reporter's emotions. And is thus much safer than standing upright in your shallow trench and getting your fool head blown off five inches below the shoulders.

A method based upon the sensible man's promise that, if you can get enough of such code set down fast enough, the end result is art. Where it fails, for the One suspects that Bromfield will live to a mellow old age.

exact reason that it will take no risks, is to afford the breath of life. So that while Faulkner's people are sometimes more real than the men and women you meet on the street, Farrell's lie prostrate as the print, poor inkblots more fit for a Rohrschach than living.

What Wolfe and Fitzgerald, Dreiser and Faulkner do that the field-telephone school does not is to participate emotionally. A participation that commonly proves too costly. "I've asked a lot of my emotions," Fitzgerald took a mournful count, "one hundred and twenty stories. The price was high, right up there with Kipling. Because there was something not my blood, not a tear, not my seed, but something more intimately me than these - that went into every story. Now it is gone, and I am just like you now."

But he wasn't like you or me or James T. Farrell or anybody. For he stood on the precipitous edge of exhaustion; by bonds of pity and pride and love a man who spent himself into spiritual bankruptcy. "Why was I identified with the very objects of my horror and compassion?"

Infected as the younger writers are by the current passion for personal security, the field-telephone affords a method whereby one is unrequired to spend one's emotions recklessly. But, to paraphrase the old biblical saw, you have to lose your life to gain your art; and time inevitably decides against those who play the safer game.

The hardest sort of truth. And yet it was in his personal failure that Fitzgerald's art succeeded. For he recorded life not through a field telephone, but through his own heart and flesh, and brain; until the flesh, like Wolfe's, failed under its emotional load.

As one also suspects that it is among the things of the earth that one comes closest to the spirit of our times. That the bluebirds among us fly too high to sing any but the most serene songs. That from up there we must appear the happiest, healthiest, sanest, wealthiest, most • tolerant, wisest, most inventive folk ever to grace the earth of man a carnival of 4-H clubs trooping the meadows of an everlasting summer in a happy land, a happy time, the only happy land, the only happy time.

It must be true, for Partisan Review implies it and Leo McCarey produces it. It must be so, for T-men always get their man. By Peek and Pie and Look and Esquire, by Gaylord Hauser and Senator Tobey, by Rudolph Halley and Ginger Rogers' mama, by Doale Carnegie and Sonny Wisecarver, by Westbrook Pegler and Paul Harvey, by the Legion of Decency and Howard Hughes we know it must be so. Johnny Ray alone moves gallantly against the tide, toward the lights of another shore.

For it is not in the great cities of Europe nor in the lion-colored villages on the Sahara's edge, not in the terrible slums of Naples, nor in the half-sunk huts along the ruined walls of ancestral cities in Yucatan, that one sees the most dehumanized faces of our time. Not• in the backwash of time and poverty or war, but in Los Angeles and Muncie and Chicago and New York, in the backwash of the American Century, that one discovers the most harried, intense, debauched, irresponsible faces in the world; full of an astonished good faith and an incredulous disappointment.

In suggesting that the true climate of the human condition on the home grounds may best be gauged underground, I'm referring not only to the sociological strata but also to those who are submerged emotionally, of whatever strata. It is possible to live underground even while skiing in Sun Valley - you don't have to live in an• alley to be submerged.

Although that does seem a good way of going about it.

For nowhere before have men and women felt themselves divided by so vast a discrepancy between life and the representation of life. Never on the earth of man has he lived so timidly amidst such psychological disorder. Never have men and women lived so hygienically while troubled by such a sense of personal uncleanness. Nowhere has any people been so outwardly confident that God is on its side while being so inwardly conscience-stricken lest he be not. Never has any people set itself such a rigid moral code while applying it quite so flexibly. Never has any people possessed such a superfluity of physical luxuries companioned by such a dearth of emotional necessities.

"It is as if we were being endowed with a vast and thoroughly appointed body," Walt Whitman prophesied, "and left with little or no soul."

For we are today living in a laboratory of human suffering as vast and terrible as that in which Dickens and Dostoevsky wrote. The chief difference being that we can afford, as the England of Dickens and the Russia of Dostoevsky could not afford, a glittering psychological façade, a coast-to-coast tote-board upon which hourly bulletins proclaim our national contentment.

An assumption of happiness through mechanical ingenuity none the less tragic for being naive.

For the bulletins are as false as McCarthy himself. As false, let us say, as Mr. Whittaker Chambers, hand over heart, confessing, "I never inform on anyone but I feel something die inside me" - and in the same breath murmuring thank you for \$75,000 in magazine serial rights.

This is how a creature of the deep sees life steadily and sees it whole.

To my own lights Matthew Arnold's phrase today means, rather, the capacity to see that our myths are so many, our vision so dim, our self-deception so deep and our smugness so gross that scarcely any way now remains of reporting the American Century except from behind the tote-board.

From behind the TV commercials and the Hearst headlines, the car-ads and the subtitles, the editorials and the conventions. For it is only there that the people of Dickens and Dostoevsky may be found once more. The lost and the overburdened who have to meet life so head-on that they can afford neither the tweeds that make such a strong impression in certain business circles nor the deodorant that does almost as much for one socially. The lost and the overburdened, too lost and too overburdened to spare the price of the shaving lotion which automatically initiates one into the fast international set.

In the acres and acres of furnished rooms as well as in the smalltown slums; along the dim-lit streets behind the bright-lit boulevards as on the rutted roads behind Main Street; in the chickenwire flops as in the all-steel cells with the solid doors; in the backroom brothels as in the Central Police lineups; in the wards and the courts and the hospitals, the dens and the dives, we see and touch the bone and flesh of which our time is forged at last.

Accustomed to taking daily strolls along the untterraced edge of utter disaster, long used to being booted by the hindquarters of destruction,

these are the ones whose victories fall close enough to the heart to afford real hope; whose defeats cost everything of real value; and whose griefs leave scar tissue enough to satisfy Ilsa Koch.

"When one is peacefully at home," Chekhov observes, "life seems ordinary. But as soon as one walks into the streets and begins to observe, then life becomes truly terrible."

And when one walks into the courtrooms where women are being tried, it begins to seem, after a while, that they are the innocent ones. That it is the judge and the matrons, the arresting officer and the bailiffs, the lawyers and the witnesses and the indifferent spectators who are the more truly guilty.

Guilty of indifference. Guilty of self-satisfaction. Guilty of complacency. Guilty of self-righteousness. Leaving the writer's duty forever with the accused. Guilty or not guilty, with the accused. We have too many denouncers of those already denounced, too many Budenzes bidding for the privilege of condemning publicly in return for arguments made privately; too many dickerchief-heads bowing and scraping hope of a buck and a round of applause. Too many roving mercenaries, capable of rationalizing, on a split-second's notice, any position at all; and will- ing to take any position at all. Move over, Whittaker.

"Our dangers are not from the outrageous, but from the conforming," the wise old hand wonderfully named Learned Hand writes, "not from those who upset our complacency by unaccustomed conduct but from those, the mass of us, who take their virtue and their tastes, like their furniture and their shirts, from the limited supply offered on the open market."

Nor is the writer's patriotic duty to subserve the private political purposes of members of the U.S. Congress, whether the summoner be named McCarthy or McCarran or Jenner. His loyalty is to his own lights, and to his own lights alone. His only duty is toward that woman, however red her legal guilt, who asked the judge in open court, "Ain't anybody on my side?"

It is also to the eighteen-year-old who, when a judge asked him, "What in the world do you do all day?" answered languidly, "I lean. I find a hallway or a washroom and take a shot. Then I lean. I just lean and dream."

It is also to the nineteen-year-old who never saw twenty, the one who, when sentence of death in the electric chair was passed upon him, paused in his gumchewing only long enough to comment, "I knew I'd never get to be twenty-one anyhow."

It is also to the demented girl who warned everyone away from the barricaded door, "Only Jesus Christ can come in here!"

"We paint life as it is," Chekhov wrote, "and beyond that, even if you lashed us with whips, we could not go. We have no politics, and we do not believe in revolution. We have no God and we do not believe in ghosts. And personally I have no fear of death or blindness."

"And you know it ain't habit-formin Jack," the peddler whispers slyly. "I just makes you want to try it again."

Which may be why the woman told the crowded courtroom quietly, "All I have to do is shove a little strychnine into my next hype and you'll all die." A sort of suicidal truculence that accounts, to a degree, for the widening use of narcotics.

Americans everywhere seem to face gunfire better than guilt. Yet it no longer means what it used to mean to be an American, Europeans have become fond of saying. Meaning that we are so hung up by a frontier tradition of aggressiveness that, with that frontier gone, we seem to have to expend our aggressiveness either upon other nations or to turn it inward upon ourselves. In this sense McCarthyism becomes the sort of twoedged weapon which Hitler turned upon the German people when the outside world thwarted his ambitions. This sort of inverted truculence became discernible at the time our troops were losing ground in Korea - the moment they began to regain that ground the search for scapegoats back home became somewhat more leisurely.

For the underlying similarity between the philosophy of the drug addict and that of the McOCarthyite is that someone always has to take the blame, somebody always has to be punished, somebody always has to pay. The difference being, that the McCarthyite finds a subversive next door while the addict takes it out on himself. "When the thunder killed the devil the devil killed a Jew," is how the peasantry of old Poland put it.

"Junk is like God," a girl of twenty assures me. "It makes a place in your heart you never forget. You know you got to be punished for

believing in it, but you go right on believing. I know right from wrong all right. But I can't get foot on the ground either way."

The increasing use of narcotics amo the young is a rebellion. A sorry sort rebellion, to be sure. A rebellion agai the way we have made the air sick wi fear, as well as the fashion, out of t same fear, in which we have packa Virtue with Success. So that to fail me so much more than loss of money goods. Since it is either the one or other, young people are sometimes t diffident to compete at all; not unde standing that the only true failure is • not trying. So they just lean, in one wa or another. Just lean and dream.

"All I'm after is a job with a pensi to it," a sprout just out of high sch tells me. And another, when asked w he volunteered for the army when he' had a chance to go to college instead "At least in the army they can't fire me.

The narcotics traffic is latching on thousands of young men and women w don't know what to do with their liv Not that they aren't capable of do" great things, but that they don't kno there are great things to be done. " know right from wrong but I can't foot on the ground either way."

"And do you know," somewhere o of Dostoevsky's people cries out sudd ly, "do you know it is impossible charge man with sins, to burden with debts and turning the other ch when society is organized so meanly t he cannot help but perpetrate villainies when economically he is brought to lainy; and that it is silly and cruel demand of him that which he is impot to perform?"

Well, nobody yet ever learned to wri at a writers' conference. For these are social occasions; while writing, always and everywhere, is as secret and antisocial as safecracking. All you can possibly learn here is what other men's lights are.

You have to have your own lights to go by, and your own fences for leaping. And these you find only off by yourself. Off on your own where you learn to set your own pace, take your own chances, and your own sweet time as well.

For in the end it is only in the impartial practise of life itself that the writer finds the promise of perfection for his art. It is only among the

things of the earth that he may mature the strength of his imagination. In the end it is only his life that counts.

Therefore, if you can, believe in your God. But above all believe in your life. If your God is forgetful of your life, keep your life. Your life is all that matters.

And, whoever you are, your God is not mine.

PRIVATE LIVES

From a Parade of Freaks

Thomas McGrath

MR. AND MRS. FOXBRIGHT X. MUDDLEHEAD, AT HOME

Comes the murderer's evening, ami du criminel,
And Foxbright, Mr. Muddlehead -
 putting his X
On the dogchewed livingroom carpet, perplexed
By the activities of the love bird and the fish in the deep well.
Television turns wild horses loose in the hall,
And the radio laughs while supper and Vesuvius burn
And a three ring circus, with lepers, jumps out of the wall.

Meanwhile Mrs. Muddlehead, erotic in blue jeans
To Foxbright X, is answering three phones -
The Book Club, Christ Inc., Rebels Ltd. call while the bones
Of the wild goose flap in the pot and sail off the scene.
So, supper over, the Commanches enter, alas
As children, with axes, and proceed to chop down the lamps.
Mrs. M, lovely, smiles at the phones. All things will pass.

All things pass Foxbright. Comes another day
And the smile on the phones is the same. The children burn
His Sunday paintings while Mrs. M in turn
Queries one phone, then another. Hurried away
By destiny, and the need for the rent, Muddlehead keeps
The smile of his wife like an exile's memory of
Snow on the homeland, or love. And at last time creeps
Past smoky, incestuous noon with its straddling hands,
While the world and Foxbright wrestle. But on the clock
Of Mrs. M the whirling pointers mock
The busy degrees of her circle. Who understands
The world's needs but herself? And who will give

The Word? To her club? Or to God? The fish and the bird
Is each in his element happy. To serve is to live.

The children blast out a wall. Like a wolf from the hill,
The wind comes in with a rush. It is bad for the bird.

And the fish. And for Mrs. M, who does not know a word
Of the language the children have recently learned, and is ill
With the air, and the anguish of offspring asking for love,
And evening, and X coming home, and the three phones ringing,
And the rich demands of the world, which are never enough.

So 'Mrs. M takes her leave, as her surrogate spouse,
With his ex-life in his heart, like a dinosaur bone,
-Returns from his dubious battle, mistaking as home
The place where he lives. O, ever the fish will browse,
Loved, in his glass room, and ever the love-bird cry
Secure on his perch. But will Foxbright X return
Always? Tie years pass. They go by

Foxbright like falling stars or Mrs. M, drawn
To PT A or a Black Mass: perilous, hurled
Like no known comet at the unwitting world
Elliptic. Cutting his orbit. Gone
To Duty. The goldfish swims. The .moon
Provokes the bird. O lovers, pity, pity,
Pity them, who, in some lost summer, loved, were young.

THE SEVERAL FORTUNES OF JONAH HOPE

Here Mister Hope (or the lines in his hand)
Exhibits a love for music. Three
Several dangers have passed him unnoticed. He
Is waiting for a dark woman. Mrs. Bland
Promises a voyage on a raft of money. Love
Like Divine Grace everywhere over him hovers.

Here Mister Hope (or the leaves in his tea)
Is drenched in Destiny. A promise of power
Haunts him Caesar, but the epiphane hour

Is not on the clock. For an extra fee
He may speak with the world of the dead, but Mister Hope
Is too much with the one world in which he is groping.

Here Mister Hope thinks: What's in a name?

(The mystic number of his own has struck
Amazement to the heavens.) Would "John Luck"
Assure him his heritage of love and fame?
Failure is not in ourselves but in our stars,
Says Mrs. Bland. The stars do not argue.

Nevertheless the fortunes of Mister Hope
Seem never to change. Locked in the pack
Forever lie the Queen and the daring Jack
Of the happy years. Oh, dearer than any dope
To an addict is that image of the past
Where all his splendid future is everlasting.

Incorruptible, there. But year after weary year

(Though he is industrious, sensitive, lucky on each
Monday with full moon) his wish just out of reach
Hangs, like a golden apple, or a tear.,
Or his life, long wished away. He cannot command
That fortune whose power was always in his hand.

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Great Age

Millen Brand

A grandmother among her children
old and dying too slow,
she sits confined, her chair
the miserable end of the world.
She got up one morning early,
wanting to go to the privy,
and closed the housedoor on an untied shoe lace.
She was thrown headlong down,
and she has not walked since.
She sometimes complains, "My ass hurts,"
as the long days irk her.
Towards night she dreams of being loved
in a chair of darkness,
• a pillow of the softest hour
under her as the prison fades.

A German of an old name
who goes back to the old sounds.
Perhaps something Indian in him.

He stands still often.

He stands still in a road to listen,
a back road between a field and wood.
A farmer is suspicious.
Anybody who stands still.

He is the lover of the place.

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Ralph Berky

Millen Brand

He knows the sound of the beeches, bird against cone-bur,
hemlock shadows,
the boring, hypnotic drill of the sapsucker,
the touch of wind,
the touch of wind in grass,
the approach of rain in the distance.

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Both Married

Stanley Kiesel

I thought of how
Skillfully we'd hollowed out our boat,
And how successfully
We'd hid in it
Our store of home-made adjectives

It was skillfully simple.
We'd gift-wrap our words,
Then later, alone,
Open them up.

I thought of how
I had let one thought
Lie around in my head
Like an invalid
How reason turned into a butler
And waited on it hand and foot

I had unfurled a smile
Dug a little till I found a yes
And ... drafted an army for love.

I remember
Ramshackle towns -
Our eyes in cahoots -
Places where we'd swim out,
Drying our clothes on silence .. • ..

We strummed
The colloquial
And sang;
Sundays were our verbs.

Now I think of you at your glass

And how you swallowed
The digestible arrow
Of our parting,

And I marvel at the ease
With which we mounted our smiles
And rode off.

The Trade-in

Edward Huebsch

When he saw his son across the disordered lanes, Ernie broke into a half-run. Everywhere families were scrambling to find their young men, tying up traffic, embracing to a chorus of snarling horns.

He kept losing sight of the boy, and he swore aloud, forgetful of his wife panting beside him, their younger son loping behind.

Out of the glut of cars Robbie came toward them, unhurrying. Ernie assured himself the boy'd hardly changed, perhaps a little leaner' by eight months of training, yet he could not avoid seeing the new way he held his shoulders, the tenseness around his mouth that had not been there before, an obvious impatience in the way he let his mother kiss him - he who had always taken her in his arms on coming home from the plant.

"Hey, Pa," Robbie said, getting out of his mother's embrace, "the new car threw me. When'd you get the Chevvie?"

"Oh, we'd never've made the trip in the old crate, so I let a salesman pressure me into a deal." Ernie didn't want to boast of the purchase at a time like this.

"Now all I got to do is figure out how to keep up the payments."

"Well, you wanted to come," Robbie said, and turned to his younger brother. "Hi, squirt. What's the squirt got to say for himself?"

"Hi, Rob." Ned's response was almost inaudible. He seemed painfully aware of his brother's uniform and importance. His embarrassment touched them all and they stood there without saying anything. "Let's get out of here," Ernie said, quickly. "I mean - will they let you, Robbie?" "All of us guys on shipment draw a midnight pass. We pull out right afterwards. There's nothing to do in town, though."

"Look," Ernie made his voice cheerful, "let's all of us tie into a real feed."

"I had chow," the boy said without enthusiasm, "but I'll go along."

"There's no hurry." Alice lifted her face to the wintry sky. "While there's still a little light, we can take some pictures."

She made them all take turns, posing and snapping, even commandeering a passing G.I. for a shot of the whole family. Though Ernie knew the album had become almost a daily consolation • since Robbie went away, he chafed at this waste of time, when only a few hours remained, when he wanted so much to make the boy see that they knew the rotten deal he was getting, when there was so much to make him understand...

"There I" Alice completed the roll with a triumphant turn. "I'll send you copies, as soon as they're made, I know you'll want them."

"That'll be ducky, Mom." Robbie grinned. "Just what I'll need."

Ernie, seeing Alice wince, opened the door on the driver's side. "Want to take the wheel, son?"

"You drive, Pa." "Go ahead," he urged. "She packs plenty, for a six."

The boy hesitated, his hand fondling the metal of the fender.

"See how sweet she is," Ernie said. "I believe you." Abruptly Robbie swung toward the rear door. "Ned and me'll ride in back."

Heavily Ernie climbed behind the wheel. He had planned to sit up front with the boy and share his joy of putting the car through its paces. Suddenly he felt exhausted, as if he had walked the hundred miles from home.

All during supper, Ernie waited for the boy to open up. Robbie seemed a million miles away - his aloofness like his uniform, on open display. Alice had come reflexively prepared with news about each of his friends, but he showed no interest. By dessert time Alice gave up, not touching the food, her face almost gaunt.

"Tell me," Ernie said, "this rifleament deal. It's about the worst there is." "Oh," Robbie said, "guys like to stick with their outfits. But you hear some say it's better to go into an outfit where there are guys with experience to back you up."

"I thought," Ernie complained bitterly, "you were supposed to get a year's training first. They said you were going to be in the States at least a year, didn't they?"

"Well, they say a lot of things." Robbie did not look at his father. "What's the difference, anyway?"

"I guess I know how you feel," Ernie said.

"Then let's skip it." Robbie no longer avoided his eyes. "If you do, let's forget it, huh?"

"You know I think the whole thing smells to high heaven." Ernie kept his voice low, aware of the crowded room. "But the thing is, you got to keep your head, take the bad with the good. Just remember, lots of men have gone through this and come out of it."

The boy's face was armored with scorn. "Okay, okay," he said. "I'll be a good little soldier, keep my mouth shut and my shoes shined."

"That's not what I mean, Robbie..." "Oh, Pa, what's the use?" His eyes burned with impatience. "We could talk a hundred years and not get anywhere."

Ernie gave it up, then, contenting himself with watching the boy devour his second dessert with the mechanical gusto of youth.

It was too cold outside to stroll about the town. Instead they piled back into the car and headed for the motel. Alice told Robbie the trouble they'd had finding a place. Every hotel in town, every motel along the road to camp jammed, even the expensive places. The managers were soaking everybody, sky high prices for holes in the wall. Alice became indignant; anyone who took advantage of poor people, at a time like this, ought to be put in jail!

But Robbie only smiled in a cynical and almost lofty way. "Don't take it so hard, Ma. The only thing this town makes is soldiers."

The motel room was all beds, two big doubles, and with the whole family in it there was no space to move, while the hot air belching from the heater made it hard to breathe.

Ernie leaned back against the headboard, his legs stretched out, the heat, food and long drive weighing him with weariness. He watched the boy restlessly pace the narrow aisle between the ends of the beds and the wall. He could not keep track of what Robbie was saying to his mother. One thought throbbed like a headache he wishes we never came, he can't wait to get rid of us...

"... but there's bound to be a truce." Alice was perched uncomfortably on the edge of the other bed, her brown eyes earnest. "Everybody says so - all the mothers I talk to."

Robbie stopped pacing, his mouth curling. "We'll be in a spring offensive," he said. "That's the straight poop. That's what we're going over for."

She lifted her hands up to her thin breasts, defending herself from this at- • tempt to take away her hopes. "Robbie - how can you be so sure - the papers "Ah, Ma!" His tone was one of intense vexation. "That's for the birds! Flush it down!"

"But there's going to be elections The throbbing in Ernie's head kept mounting. Couldn't she see she was making it worse, with all that star-eyed talk? "For Christ's sakes, the boy knows what he's talking about! Leave him alone!"

Her eyes swung to Ernie, her lip trembling with an effort to hold back tears. "You know better, you always do I"

"They'll never stop this, not while they're getting hog-rich out of it."

Robbie glanced at his mother, then turned to his brother who sat hunkered on the baggage near the door, his face a round cushion of neutrality. "C'mon, squirt," Robbie said, "let's us take a walk."

After the door closed Ernie rose from the bed, his legs aching. He looked down at Alice, her hands a tight knot on her lap, her shoulders pulled together as if against a cold wind.

"Alice," he said, "for the love of mike can't you see he hates all that gush?" "Every time I said something since we left home, you shushed me. Even if I'm wrong, I'm sick of it."

"But the boy's in it. He knows." "You - you're not!" She flung it at him, a challenge and an accusation, hammering her knotted hands into her lap. "Maybe you wouldn't be so calm if you were!"

"Oh, well." It was impossible to reason with her. She was so filled with hope and longing, she couldn't see the simplest things. "I guess it was a mistake to come," he said, sighing, and went to take the whiskey bottle from the valise. He had brought it from home, three-quarters full, hoping they'd all have a quiet family drink. In the tiny bathroom he found a water glass and poured himself a stiff shot, mixing it from the faucet. The stuff tasted of toothpaste, and he drank without solace.

She was turning down the covers on the bed, working with desperate energy, her hands thumping the pillows, sorrow making each movement distinct.

"Yeah. Too bad I'm not a millionaire!"

"You don't care. You say you do. But you don't! That's the truth!"

"Want a drink?" She shook her head. "I dunno," he said. "Maybe it will end. Who can tell?"

She thrust the covers under the mattress, ignoring his apology. "Don't you see... he's so changed... not our Robbie any more... "Growing up." His defense of the boy was automatic.

"No." She was perfectly still, looking down, examining a fresh internal wound. "Growing up's one thing. Not believing in anything is another... "It's not easy, seeing us. Not on any of us."

She wasn't listening. "And he's only a boy," she lamented softly. "Only a A boy, he thought, and the word tolled within him, calling forth a hundred images of Robbie, eager and curious as a child, impatient to be a man, helping out the family by doing part-time work when the tube plant had shut down just before the last war; and then, later, going to work in the plant himself, determined to get a job at his father's side, on the lathes. Serious minded, too, a boy you could reason with... "He'll be all right," Ernie said ardently, out of the well of recollection. "Don't you worry about our Robbie!"

Alice looked up at him, staring, as if in disbelief. "Oh, no, I'm not even supposed to cry. Everything's fine! Let's buy another car we can't afford and -- "Alice, for Christ's sakes, can it!" "No wonder he hates us!" Her voice rose to a shout. "A lot we've ever done for him!"

"Oh, Jesus, Jesus." Raging, he stamped over to the bureau, jerkily refilling the glass, gulping it straight. "Behind him she cried out, "Go ahead, that's it, get pig-eyed!"

He clutched the bottle by the throat, stemming his fury. "I'll get Robbie. It's getting late."

The cold outside was a relief, the stars remote and logical. She'd never see it. Sure, the war stank. Ask any man in the plant. Nobody was being taken in by the crap the big boys were dishing out. But there were times to take it easy. Start sticking your neck out, and every little stoolie and his mother would go run to the boss, and there would go your overtime, or even your job. Besides, there'd always been wars, and believing in fairy tales about peace wouldn't help any of them, the boy least of all.

As he got into the car, he was surprised to discover that he still had the bottle in his clenched fist.

Half a mile down the road he spied Ned perched beside Robbie on a fence, talking and smoking, his diffidence gone. Ned was supposed to be too young to smoke, though Ernie knew he'd been at it secretly for some months. As they came slowly up to the car, Ned made no effort to duck the butt, but their faces were so solemn, Ernie decided to let the issue ride.

On the way back, Robbie acted as spokesman: "Pa - you think there's any chance of Ned's going to college?"

"Maybe." Ned still had a year of high, and the question had been held in abeyance. "We'll see."

"I mean, the squirt's been giving himself a bad time about me being in, and him staying out. So I been telling him to ask any guy in my outfit, all they want is out. Anyway, I'll kick in my pay, or most of it, if he'll study hard. At least that way he might stay out of it a couple of years."

Ernie's spirits lifted with pride and he scored another victory in his argument with Alice. So the boy was getting hard, was he? "I thought you wanted to save that money."

"What for? Clothes and junk?" Savagely the boy mocked his past stupidity. "This way, it evens things out."

He ached to put his arm around the boy, to comfort him. Emotionally he asked, "What have you got to say to that, Ned?"

The youngster, between them, was slumped almost to the level of his sneakers, his round face watchful, but, to his father, inscrutable. "Okay with me," he grunted, "if it's okay with Robbie."

"Everything's getting out of line," Ernie said, reflecting on the payments still to make on the house, the kitchen stuff they'd bought last year, and now the newly acquired chev. "But we might do it. Your mother's got her heart set on it, too."

When they halted before the motel, Ernie sent the boy in to get his mother. Alone with Ned, he began to praise Robbie to the skies. "Not many brothers who'd be as generous as that. You ought to remember this when it comes time to write Rob a letter, instead of finding excuses about having nothing to say."

As always, Ned hid behind a monosyllabic shield, leaving himself uncommitted. After a time the conversation petered out, and Ernie luxuriated in the gentle warmth of the car's heater, wondering what was taking Alice so long. Robbie jerked open the car door. "Got to get back. Now."

"Isn't your mother coming?" "No, she don't want to. Let's go." Explosively, Ernie ordered Ned: "Yo stay with your mother."

"Ah, Pa, gee whiz... Yet, seeing his father's face, he let h" brother take his place. Robbie said, "S long, squirt. Keep your nose in the book. If I hear you falling for any of tha recruiting shmoo, I'll crown you."

"I ain't that much of a dummy!" Ne was trying hard to adopt Robbie's own sureness. "They won't stick me!"

Even after they were out on the road, Ernie still heard Alice's cries - as wild and uncompromising as if the boy were already dead.

Under a flat wintry sky, a thousand cars choked the road. It seemed as though an entire town were on the move, victim of some great catastrophe, Ernie cut in and out of the slow moving column, his son's bleak silence impelling him to even more daring chances.

"She can't help taking it hard," Ernie said. "She counted on your being here for a while. I can tell you she sits up late listening to the radio until I hav to drag her back to bed."

"I'm sorry I got sore." Robbie lit up a cigarette. "But there's no good bawling about it, is there?"

"Guess not," Ernie agreed. "But it' hit her real hard, don't forget that."

"I said I'm sorry, Pa." Robbie gazed out at the cars ahead, now a dense, funereally moving mass. "Hell, what's holding them up?" he demanded disgustedly. "Don't they know there's a war on?"

"There's still lots of time," Ernie said. "We'll get there in time to spare."

"Yeah." The boy leaned back. "See how they got me trained, Pa?" And he laughed without mirth.

Ernie didn't answer. In the face of the boy's practiced bitterness, he felt suddenly hollow. On the long drive from home, he had planned a dozen careful ways to show his anxiety and love, but now, searching his mind, he could remember none of them.

After a time, Robbie said: "How's the job?"

"Any more layoffs?" "No," Ernie said. "They got a mess of ordnance orders."

"Any overtime?" "Not much." Ernie's answers were dutiful; time was slipping by, he had to talk to the boy now. "Robbie, I wish I knew what to tell you..."

"Hell," the boy said, "it's like the guys say, some get lucky and some get to be eighteen."

Ahead the traffic had come to a standstill, and all along the line horns blared and headlights blinked in rhythmic distress. Ernie applied himself to the horn, emptying his frustration into its bleating, cadenced protest. "Damn it," he swore, "they're not moving at all!"

Robbie offered to go see what the trouble was. He returned within a few moments, reporting, "Usual Army foulup. All of a sudden, no visitors in the parking lot. I'll walk the r-est."

"I'll go with you," Ernie volunteered at once, and pulled the car onto the muddy shoulder. Ernie and Robbie found themselves among entire families marching in the mud alongside the steel fence, babes-in-arms, young soldiers and their young wives, grandmothers and grandfathers. They all walked very slowly. Their dragging steps reminded Ernie of a demonstration he'd been in during the depression - Robbie had only been an infant then and Alice had carried him when they'd gone to hear one of the union leaders protest unemployment right outside the plant's main gate. Then, as now, people had pushed themselves along, as if going uphill, delaying their inevitable arrival at the entrance, where the company guards stood, rifles ready.

Only these were M.P.'s, their snowwhite helmets gleaming as they protected the gates from the inward surge of the crowd. In the dense throng, parents clung to their sons, even though the farewells had been said and done with a dozen times. There was almost no talk, but here and there some weeping, muted by packed bodies.

"Well, Pa..." They had stopped within a few feet of the M. P. booth at the entrance. "Be seein' you..." "Robbie... write your mother." The boy nodded neutrally. "Send my regards to the platform gang, if they still remember me."

"They do. Greenie said to be sure to say hello."

"How's Greenie - still squawking?" "Same as ever. Don't forget, drop him a card." Ernie put added meaning into the words, to prove to the boy how much they thought of him. "He'll run all over the plant showing it off."

"You mean," Robbie said, " - until Terrence chases him back to the plat- Ernie grinned. "With Greenie squawk:- in' a mile a minute all the way."

They stood. silent a moment, close to each other, recollecting the short time they had spent together in the plant. "Pa you think I'd be on the lathes with you by this time?"

Only a boy, she had said, and her words came back to him, and he felt the edge of her sorrow.

"Sure you would, Robbie." "So I'm not." His eyes were hard with the present again, disdaining his momentary weakness. "Whose nose is that any skin off?"

"Robbie... " his voice was hoarse with appeal, and he hung onto the boy's arm, "it's not all that way."

"No?" Robbie's face was bitter. "Everybody's getting theirs, up and down the line. I'd probably be the same. I'm not beefing." He broke away from Ernie's hand. "Pa, time to shove off... "

"Look, Robbie. You're coming back. You hear?"

"Natch," the boy said. "Only don't take any bets on it."

Quickly Robbie turned and cleaved his way through the crowd. Ernie felt his stomach rise and fall over a void. He stood on tiptoe to follow the boy's figure as it passed the gates to the parking area, where open-ended trucks were lined in even rows and officers scurried about with lists in their hands, shovelling men and bags aboard. And then, suddenly, the boy was swallowed up among them.

Shoving, Ernie made his way through the crowd, buffeted again and again by soldiers escaping from the embraces of their families. By the time he reached the chevvie, he was panting, his body covered with sweat. Feverishly he dug into the crook of the cushions for the bottle. He drank awkwardly. Some of it ran down his chin and he mopped it up with his sleeve, unmindful that it was his good suit.

He made no move to go. The thought of facing Alice in that motel room with its sickening heat kept him paralyzed. Better to stay here, he decided. He'd wait until the trucks pulled out. Maybe he'd get to see Robbie, just once more.

He drank again, slower this time. Many of the parked cars were beginning to leave, turning in the road, their headlights raking his eyes. He let his head sink down on his chest. The luminous dial on the dashboard clock glowed cheerfully. The only clock in all the cars he'd owned that ever worked. Past midnight they'd be taking the boy away in a minute.

Tomorrow, he thought glumly, they'd be home, and the next day he'd be back at the bench again, and the rest of the men would mumble something for the record and turn quickly away. Hell, he'd done the same thing when they'd take Resnick's kid, hadn't he? Besides, you had to hustle to keep up with the heavy work-loads, without standing around gassing about things. Not that it had bothered him, he'd stay ahead of the line, any line they dreamed up, seven days a week...

A siren's shrieks. Two motorcycles, wide open, were leading the convoy out onto the highway, the truck drivers purposefully blasting their exhausts to create the maximum July-Fourth effect. They careened dangerously onto the road, their human cargoes whipped from side to side like involuntary banners.

The last truck flung itself upon the concrete and the roar of departure filled his mind, distending his despair. He'd gone, he thought, maybe I'll never see him again. They've taken him away, without a word of comfort, oh Robbie, Robbie!

Ahead of him several of the cars began to take out in pursuit of the convoy. Ernie shoved his own car into gear, giving himself rapidly to the chase, seized by the illusion that so long as he attached himself to the cavalcade's din, he was yet, somehow, bound to his son.

The wind and noise roared inside him, and he kept adding speed, passing one car after another, catching up with the last true one. From its swaying platform the soldiers cheered and jeered him on. Ernie pressed down on the pedal, swinging out to pass them, waving at them in exultant comradeship, his misery anesthetized in their shouts, in the truck's sputtering thunder.

At last - when he had wobbled dizzily through three quarters of the convoy - he felt certain he saw his son. He halflifted himself out of the

seat to wave, shouting his plea at the top of his voice, even though he could not be heard, "Listen, Robbie! You see how I feel! Don't you, son?"

Just before the chevvie's wheels caught in the edge of the highway, the boy he believed to be his son smiled and nodded. For twenty feet the car skidded along the soft shoulder, out of control, before it came to rest, grille and fender buried in the steel link fence.

e Shaken, he slid out of the car and began to examine the damage - the tangled mass of chrome and enamelled steel, the left front tire all chewed up, the headlights shattered. The frame, if that's bent, it's done for, and I haven't even started to pay, he thought in panic, and threw himself under the car to inspect it. But no. Thank God! It wasn't, it could be fixed.

Only when he had crawled out and scraped the mud off him did he remember the boy. He spun toward the road. The convoy had passed him by, its rumble echoing away. The concrete was a barren desolate strip.

I let him go - the full weight of his betrayal bore down on him - and all I could think of was that pile of junk.

He took a few aimless steps down the road and stopped. A tide of anger swept through him. I let them take away my son and leave me this. I let them suck me in and rob me of my own flesh and blood.

He stared unseeing at the pile of inert metal. Oh, Robbie, he thought, oh, Robbie, Robbie, I'll cry, like your mother. I'll cry too. I'll cry till they hear me. I promise.

Some time later he went to get a towcar, and he was very sober.

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Jefferson Memorial

Norman Rosten

It is night. There is a half-moon adrift
 over the city.
I have just swum the lagoon, with the dogs
 baying behind ;
I can hear him across the water, my blind
 fellow countryman,
Urinating in the water, a hum of voices, and
 murder there;
A form of anarchy sworn in as law, holding
 those tight guns.

Then, stumbling, I find your broad stairs,
 and I follow
Where your image looms, goes upward, uplifting
 the rotunda,
Rising above the lagoon and avenues of man,
 above mankind,
Your eyes beyond Virginias and the generations.

I hear
Your massive head like iron sounding
 on our age!

From your forehead rushing forth as a dove,
 is the dream
That still astonishes, that drives our blood
 through the eras.
O thou heart, dear to this hour, I think surely
 the dead

Stay dead, that stone is stone : yet do I know
the night's courage
Is not merely the night, but your stone's
presence.

Nearby, the domed buildings, the law-givers
orating under glass;
Nearby, the slums brooding with the dark
children;
.Apd I, in neither world, am found at the base
of a pedestal.
Are cities determined by statues, or by living
men and women?
Are they asleep? Do they hear the hounds
in the marshes?

We are camped upon the foulest year, polluted
with armies
And staged alarms: O each with his crisis
about him wound,
Which like a chrysalis must fall away to make
a man,
Come forth in the image of ardor, bravery, and
brotherhood.
For the time is dead, the time stirs, is
born again.

I stand in a fear-haunted air, the half-moon
adrift,
The dogs howling, men and their madness, and
I say
That statues, like bells vaulting the numbed air
, of a city,
May rouse us, sicken us, shame us to save

ourselves,
Nor let our smallest pride rest, nor allow
a slightest pity.

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Stalingrad

1943 — *Boris Pasternak*

I will remember
the countless unnamed men of besieged cities
who stood firm when the paving blocks
leaped from their beds, where the bricks
of their homes crashed about their heads,
and death sang its shrill monotonous whine.

I will remember them
on the hasty barricades in the quiet suburbs
where the cherry tree lived peaceably in the garden.
They lay on the roads, shouting for reinforcements
with no one near enough to hear.

I will remember
the chunk of bread they sank their teeth into
crossing the torn wheat field
to the burned house.
They made their fingers familiar
with the sleek rifle butt
not for praise or power, but the cold
knowledge of the job that must be done.

It was not enough to be angry.
It was not enough to be thirsty
for blood to match your child's blood
darkening the ground behind the roofless schoolhouse.
They needed quiet eyes and iron hands.

I will remember
the yammer of machine-guns at their shelter,
and how they lived always with whispering ears
from the bullet's passing;
how they came back from the outpost,

walking carefully like dead men reborn,
told the commander where to find the enemy;
how they went back again to the dangerous corner
among the pockmarked bricks.

I will say
how they died in the fullness of their lives
and became part of our songs
and walked among the thunderbolts and eagles.

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Paradise

Arthur Boyars

paradi

(After the poem by Gabriela Mistral)

One night above the golden way
On yellow softness of the bed
Two shapes like golden orbits lay;

An incandescent form that wakes
And one with mastery of words
Upon the plain where no one speaks ;

A breath where other breathing takes
A face made vibrant by his own
Within a plain where nothing shakes.'

Recalls the agony of light
When each had time enough, and more,
Had learned its grief, but kept from sight

This hour adorned with golden show
Where Time remained outside the door
Like dogs that have no place to go.

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Fear

Phillip Bonosky

Night came like a false destination. It brought no peace, only the illusion that I might rest. What dawn lay on the other side did not interest me. Daylight would reveal once again the daylight horror of this country, of this time...

Beneath the boards the hot wheels g, the iron springs absorbed nothing, the shudder of the car came through and shook my blood, and ached in my head and droned endlessly through my ears.

Sleep was a fever from which I started shivering, seeing neither light nor dark - I lost in a sense of urgent, meaningless movement as my eyes stared blankly upon an empty field, dark now, with not a stone to recognize in it, not a tree, everything in the sleeping past gone forever, myself included in it now as forever... Sleep merged with the passing landscape and the loneliness of one stained loneliness of the other. A tree or a snapped suddenly upon the passive. Long after it happened, I lay as though I were dreaming it, unable to rate one from the other. I was still sleeping perhaps, but sitting rigid in the corner of the car, sweat pouring like blood down my side. Briefly outlined against the lesser darkness of the door, there had been someone, some thing - like the snap of the finger - and then nothing again. The train roared; the rails beat; even the groan of the engine could be heard. And through these I could feel a sharp breathing.

I had carried with me for three hundred miles an iron bar about three feet long and two inches in diameter. It had been my only friend and sole security all the way down the eastern coast. And now, half-dreaming still, straggling through the darkness to whatever enemy had climbed through my dream, I reached for the bar, seized it, drew it near. At the same moment, I was heard. I could feel a sudden tensing in the darkness, a quick shrinking of flesh as though touched by a match, then a voice cried: "Somebody there?"

A whistle far at the head of the train shrilled as we approached a crossing.

Again the voice cried desperately: "I heard you - I know I heard you I Better speak up!"

My fist closed more tightly around the bar.

"Not going to answer!" the voice cried. "Going to wait - think I don't know you're there, think you're going to catch me! Well, come along - come along, I'll be ready for you! Be here ready for you! Make up your mind!"

There was nothing to say. I listened calmly to the fright in his voice. It leaped through the car again, suddenly: "Tell me who's there? White or black? God damn, I'll kill you if you don't speak!" Now it rose high and desperately: "Don't care for my life! Nothing matters to me! Do you hear? Ain't afraid to die. So come, come! Come to me!"

I knew this car intimately I pinpointed each noise, each shadow. I listened beneath the great roar of the train to the little sounds inside the car. I would hear him crawl, I would hear him move! My own body had grown quiet and simple with waiting. I heard myself answering the voice, but only to myself: "I can't trust you, pal - just keep where you are!"

There was a heavy sobbing of breath in the other end of the car. Over and over it repeated the same despairing cry: "You come for me and I'll kill you! Didn't live this long just to die here, like a rat! Didn't go through all that just to die here! Come for me, I'll kill you! Ain't got nothing but my life left - nothing but that, that's all I got!" And then it added: "White or black - I'm ready for you!"

"So am I!" I cried to myself. I had picked up the iron club outside of Baltimore and had carried it with me, throwing it into the car ahead of me as I climbed in, throwing it out before me as I jumped out. Sleeping, I would stretch my hand through troubled dreams to touch it, and hold it like the hand of some loved one reached for at night, sleeping calmly then until morning. There was only this bar and the great hostility of the world. Now it felt warm as if it were flesh; as if it were my own flesh. I would beat the darkness with it and all hidden enemies in the darkness.

Outside, lights glimmered for a sudden moment and were gone. Once, unaccountably, the moon came serenely into view, so sane and simple I wanted impulsively to cry out to the other human in the car See, look - the moon/ But darkness snatched it away.

I couldn't hear him any more. He had backed against the far end of the car in the corner opposite to mine; I could tell how he must be sitting, his knees hunched, his spine against the solid wood, his body tensed, his arms free and ready.

Did he have something to fight with - a knife? But I understood the terror in his voice and I sat still and raised my bar across my knees. So I had sat, it seemed to me, all my life long...

He no longer cried to me but talked earnestly to himself only to leap suddenly to his feet and scream: "I hear you! Got you located! Thought you caught me, didn't you? I hear you, sir! Now, you're going to get it-come closer, get it over with!"

All the time I would not have moved; my breath was small and easy. Sweat formed slowly on my brow; slowly, as if it lived a life of its own, it formed and grew and groped coldly, like chilled beads, down my forehead into my eyes. Just as slowly I raised my hand and wiped it away.

I longed suddenly for the moon to come back, and stared out of the open dark door. I watched and waited for it. Dreamed...

time to lift the crow-bar to swing, the skull to split!

Dreams came, even now. My mind floated easily away from this terrible anchor. I saw a warm kitchen in which bread was baking. Through the screendoor I could see an old woman opening the oven door with a broom-straw poised in her hand. Outside on the porch smelling of new-born-puppies I sat eating muffins and bacon, there were cherries in a bowl beside me and a glass of milk. A great big green parrot hung in a gilded cage over my head, and as I ate it looked down at me and croaked: "Watch out, watch out!" until the woman called from the kitchen: "Hush, you dirty bird, hush up!"

This had not been a dream; this had been two afternoons ago, and the woman, who was afraid of tramps, had said: "Don't come back because I won't give you any!" She had added: "Why don't you pick some mulberries off the tree down the road apiece? Eat them as you walk, they'll make a difference."

Or this... the way the girl had gestured at me as I came down the road, and I clambered over the rail fence walking slowly through the cabbage garden, conscious of the painful smile on my face; and then

when I arrived, she crying: "My goodness, who are you? A tramp, Ma - we got a tramp!" Then the great collie, as big as a pony, came bellowing at the top of its voice; the desperate run across the path and over the fence, ripping my knee. That girlish laughter floating down the road, and the cackle of the mother; but feeling no resentment, only a bottomless horror.

So one could dream! There would be Night would pass. The rocking of the car was painful, it shook bones and blood, but kept one awake. I was grateful now. Dawn would come. Birmingham lay somewhere in that dawn. It was destination enough for the moment, as Chicago had once been, as had Detroit, always merging on arrival with the past.

I wanted, in a moment of pain, to reach over through the darkness and lay a hand so swiftly on that other strange hand there would be no time to resist, or fear to intervene, and say: "I don't mean you any harm. I yearn to trust you. We're not enemies because we're alone; we're not enemies... the enemy is out there! Let us trust each other, and sleep in peace...!"

Fantastic thought! Such simplicity could mean my life; how many had given up their lives on these long night-soaked trips through hunger and loneliness, weakening on such human grounds for a moment? The morgues of little cities on the way were full of the anonymous.

Such weakness was dangerous. I gripped my bar harder and brushed the darkness with my senses to locate him again. I could feel that he was sitting hunched in the corner of the car, straining through the darkness toward me, his eyes wide open, his hand gripped around - what? When the noises of everything resounded louder I could feel the desperation with which he listened under them, thinking I would choose this moment to pounce. Once he cried: "I ain't asleep, remember!"

Light came slowly. It was a bruised, gray dawn, bringing cold with it. The open door let it in, first only a thinner layer of night, then gradually the ghost and hollow: "Do you know how far are from Benson?"

of the outer world, all gray and mournful; shapes briefly thrust across the open gap mounds of trees or hills, or a house, and once the far off cry of a rooster floating down over the pearly countryside, a sad and thoughtful cry.

Inside the car it was still dark. But now that we could both see the oblong of gray in the doorway, and knew that daylight was certainly coming, we felt each a slight relaxation of tension. Staring at the doorway, I even nodded, even dozed for a moment; even slept perhaps. For when I came to with a start I could see, hunched in the opposite corner, my enemy. He was sleeping. As I watched, he, too, came awake with a start, half struggled from the floor, raising his arms blindly above his head.

His face was not yet visible. I could see only that he was a tall lean man;

he had a coat - a long winter coat - on him. He had nothing else; I could see nothing in his hands. I saw him peer over the car to me, but he said nothing. He slowly sat back against the wall, his one knee drawn up while the other lay flat against the floor.

So we sat down as dawn grew, as the train bore us madly through unknown countrysides. When it stopped at a water tank I stood up and walked to the door to stretch myself and look out. We were passing a little town, still innocently sleeping; in its midst stood a canning factory, and huddled around it, like stepchildren, were the huts of the workers. I saw a huge red tomato on top of the factory. Some artist had transformed the tomato into a beaming jolly fat face. I could see that gigantic smile for miles as we rode.

I turned away, finally, from the door and said, in a voice slightly trembling. He answered nothing for a moment sat as he had been sitting, and I thought he hadn't heard me. "How far -- began; and now my voice sounded sh • in my ears.

His head flew up, and he answered quickly: "About thirty miles, I guess.

I turned back to the door; and a moment later, with my back turned to • I started to talk; slowly, as though were learning natural speech again.

"Where'd you get on?" "Holleytown," he said after a slight pause.

"Oh," I said nodding. I raised my voice. "I didn't hear you climb on. I was asleep." When he did not answer, I added: "I was dog-tired; been riding since yesterday... "

He said nothing. I stood looking out into the gray countryside.

"I figured you was asleep," he said, almost to himself.

Slowly, now, he dragged himself to his feet and came over to the door. Under his dark, wilting hat I made out the Indianesque features of a Negro man, about forty. His face was lean and narrow, with a thin nose, high cheek-bones, narrow eyes; he was a dark walnut color that looked like stain in his skin. A cross-scratch of white beard covered his chin. He walked stiff-legged. He came to the door and stared out and then, after only a brief look, went back to his corner. His long coat was buttoned from top to bottom, down to his shoe-tops, which were army issue, and laced with heavy twine. His hat covered all of his head but his face. In his eyes were the sharp bites of fever.

"Where you bound, Bud?" I asked him.

"Reckon it's Birmingham," he replied. I took out a cigarette and lit it, bracing myself on the floor of the car as if on a ship's deck. Only after I had taken a deep drag did I notice his hungry glance.

"Here," I said, and reached my pack over to him. He stretched a long gray hand to accept it. Silently I lit a match and cupped my hands about it. He leaned his unprotected head into the flame and I heard him suck the air through and watched the cigarette-end brighten.

The smoke slid out of his mouth like a sigh. He forgot to thank me but took the cigarette out and looked at it and then wiped his forehead as if he were wiping away the thoughts of the night.

I stole a glance -at him with a bitter irony. Before daybreak I had hidden the bar beneath the straw in my corner.

All morning we rode, saying nothing more to each other, since talking was so hard in the jumping car. I unwrapped a sandwich I had bummed from a workingman who had given me half of what he had, and slowly ate it. I offered him nothing. He didn't seem to see me eating but sat hunched on the floor, with his arms gathered around his body in a self-embrace; his head was lowered and although I couldn't tell, it seemed to me that he was sleeping. • I was grateful for simple and natural things, and I slept too.

At Benson I learned from a friendly brakie that the train would lay over for two hours, which meant that I had time to scout the edges of town for a meal. I would offer to cut wood or clean out the furnace for food. But all I got this time was two hard doughnuts and some fatback. On the way back to the railroad yard, I found a red candy sucker in the

alley, wrapped in cellophane, which some child had lost. I picked it up and stared at it, strangely moved then I put it carefully into my pocket.

My car-mate hadn't moved, it seemed, while I was gone. He was huddled, as he had been, in the same corner, his head sunk into his arms. It was only as we began to pick up speed right outside of town that I discovered my iron bar was gone...

It was gone, there was no bar underneath the straw, no hunting could find it. I knew I should have jumped from the freight, no matter how fast it was going. But I only sat there, half-numb, groping behind me and around me in the semi-darkness. More terrible than the loss of the bar was the profound return of fear, of a disappointment that was like a pit opening beneath me. I sat, frozen and paralyzed, unable to think, betrayed...

We stopped for nothing but water all day long. It was a hot day. The landscape was the same yellow, brown, green and on it, like seeds, were sown the Negro share-croppers, toiling in the sun, looking monotonously like the ones I had seen the day before and the day before that in an endless backward line of limitless figures and numberless huts, all the same, all belonging to one destiny.

Toward evening, he came to life, and brought out a heel of a loaf of rye bread and began to munch it. I could almost hear his mouse-like noises as I sat and watched. I searched his clothes for signs of the bar hidden underneath that long mysterious winter overcoat. It was hot, the boards seemed about to smoke; yet he never opened the overcoat.

I watched the darkness gather. One by one the trees blotted out, the sky closed in like a lid; I watched day go with desolation. Bit by bit the man in the corner dwindled into shadows that had grown like mushrooms there in an hour. Again I began to think about the bar. My side felt naked. I searched my end of the car for it once more, going over it palm by palm. I tried to visualize what shape it would take hidden underneath his overcoat. I felt sleep rising in me, and thrust it off in panic. Then, teasingly, there crept into my thoughts a child's game. Rise up - oh - get up from there and slip, slip behind me now and clap your gleeful hands over my eyes and cry fVho'f And in the darkness of panic never to know who, but to struggle like a man under heavy water desperately into consciousness again, refusing to guess, expelling childhood. Sleep clapped its hands over my eyes, laughing.

I struggled, frightened cold, from these fatal images. What softness, what memory of what, had made me stoop for that pink candy in the alley of this nothing-town, staring back to childhood as though over a desolation of years? Where is the bar! I cried, as though tearing those words from my flesh. I could almost see him coming crab-like across the floor. I began to question him under my breath. "Are you going to wait till I fall asleep? Where are you hiding it? Why didn't you trust me? Give it to me now-Now!"

The night deepened. As we lumbered past the lights of a town, I yearned to run to the door and leap blindly out. Meanwhile, the man at the other end of the car sat unidentifiable. No man was there. It was true no man was there. Only the crazy fever of his eyes.

By all the force of my will, I would stay awake this night. I would sit out this white man's vigil. In the morning, I would jump the freight and let it go on alone. Now I felt in the long reaches of the night that the man sunk in the shadow across the floor was thinking, as I was thinking, of the endless horizon of crimes against himself, all in the white face. I wanted to get up and speak to them all now Look where you've brought me! What words of brother• hood existed still, I wondered, instantly recognizable? What could I say to him? I could think of nothing.

The rhythm of the car constantly threatened to lull me to sleep. I staggered to my feet, my face suddenly wet and cold. It was darker than ever now. Even the world outside had congealed in this darkness and our freight seemed to have lost itself and was blindly charging forward into this hostile and disastrous darkness.

Suddenly, the veins nsmg rigid over my throat, my throat tightening like a fist, I screamed into the darkness: "I know you got that bar! You got it - I know you got it!" There was no answer. My words had been whipped out of the door into the night by the wind. Then, with a fury that seemed to burst inside me, shattering every fear: "You stole my bar, I know you did! You didn't believe me! You didn't believe me!"

I felt as though I had told him everything, and he had not believed me.

Now, a rage at the unanswering shadow rose gigantic in me and I began to shriek and swear at it, while beneath the car bolted, the wheels ground, the engine ahead screamed at some indifferent watcher: "If you think I'm going to go to sleep and let you beat out my brains because of

what they did, you're crazy! I've never hurt anybody- I'm not guilty. I tell you I'm not guilty! Give me that bar - it's mine; it's my protection. I'm going to come over there and you're going to. give me that bar I" My eyes blurred, my head roared. How I hated that bar! If only I could get rid of it, we could sit down again and smoke a cigarette! Why didn't he give me the bar! Why did he torture me with it? Why was he hiding it?

With fresh rage, I began to stagger blindly through the bucking car. "I'm on to you!" I yelled, unheard above the noise. "I know you got it! It's hiding under that coat, that long coat! That's where it is! I'm coming for that bar!"

Now suddenly he heard me, and his breath came in a sharp gasp. He scrambled to his feet, his fingers clutching for the swaying side, and we met in the violence of our fear and blindness. Our heads struck together and we crashed to the floor, hitting the shaggy boards heavily. I heard his tense breath in my ear, felt the rough stubble of his beard as his face pressed against mine in an agonized embrace. Except for his wheezing, we rolled silently along the floor, clutched tightly in each other's fear, alone in the moving car that screamed its whistle through the unwitting towns. I cried in his ear: "You wanted to kill me!"

And yet, even though I gripped his hot bony body in my arms, I felt its unreality. I could not feel murder in that body only a desperate struggle for life. But I couldn't break loose, and held him tightly as the car-floor bounced up and beat us, like an independent fury, as we rolled. A sense of desolation came over me as we gave up the struggle for a moment to rest; and in that moment I ached with longing to find what simple words I could whisper into his ears that would let us unloose each other, extract us from this nightmare.

The thought had relaxed my arms, my vigilance and suddenly with a thrust he broke free of my grip and began to crawl across the floor away from me. Panic now open and violent in me, I reached with a cry through the darkness and caught his leg. With a twist I crashed him to the floor.

Lying there, he began to scream.

That scream pierced even the thunder of the rolling freight. I let go my hands as though they were burnt and listened. He lay on the floor, his screams of pain rising and falling; and it seemed he was pounding the floor with his body. I could see it rise and fall.

It was a long time before I tried to speak. His screams had died down, but he was lying where he had fallen, short moans coming from his body.

Finally I said: "Can I help you at all?"

He didn't hear. I said it again. "Can I help you, Mister?"

The answer came in gasps. "My leg - it's - bleeding." I dug out a stub of candle I carried with me and lit it, and brought it to him. Slowly he opened his long coat, and underneath I saw only a long suit of prison woolen underwear, no shirt, no pants. The leg of his underwear was dirty red, and through the old caked blood, new glistening blood was rising. I rolled it back. Underneath was a thickly wound bandage that had been torn loose. It was soggy. This, too, I began to unwind, and finally as he lay back with his eyes closed, I exposed the leg, and the long wound that stretched from knee to ankle. It was deep and welled steady blood.

leg," I suddenly cried, fiercely. "You' got a fever, too. Your head's hot I"

"I didn't know about this," I said. "That's all right, son," he gasped. "That's all right." Then he added softly so that I could barely hear: "Don't • worry about your bar, son. I just picked it up and heaved it away. I figured that was best for both of us. Maybe I was scared a little. I seen you was scared."

"I thought you'd stolen it... to use it," I said.

"I stole it," he admitted. "I was watching you all the time. I seen the inside of your mind," he said.

I tore one of the three shirts I carried and made strips of bandage from it and bound up his leg again.

"So I heaved it out," he said, "where it couldn't hurt none of us."

"You ought to get a doctor for that His face looked even thinner and mo gaunt than before. I had to lift him to a sitting position. I lit him a cigarett "How could I know?" I said. He tasted the cigarette and inhaled; weariness came over his face like a mask.

"Did I hurt you?" I asked. His eyes flew open. "I don't mind that," he said. "It was the other - that sitting and waiting - that was bad I" "How could I have known?" I asked again. And desperately: "What were we fighting for?"

He closed his eyes. "We weren't fighting us," he said.

"I could have killed you I" He nodded his head slowly and opened his eyes. The candle-light flickered over a pool of blood on the floor.

"Yes," he said.

Rain on the Road

Delmas W. Abbott

Morgan saw a hedge of white dust down the road, rising and speeding closer. He turned his back to it and pulled his straw sombrero lower down on his forehead. An automobile roared and zoomed; then it was past, stretching its hedge of dust on up the road. Hardy and persistent as crab grass, the hedge spread out in all directions.

Morgan could feel the grit settling down on his sweaty arms and face. It made him itch as though he had peach fuzz rubbed all over his body. There were muddy streaks on his flesh where the sweat had beaded and run through the sticky mess.

He could smell the dust, and he could taste it. He wiped the back of his hand on the bid of his overalls; then he gouged at his eyes, rubbing them raw and bringing ~ears to wash away the grime. He beat his straw hat against his legs to shake the dust out of it, like beating a meal sack against a tree; then he shook the dust from his chambray lhirt.

"Damn fool musta been doing sixty," he said out loud. "Looks like they could slow down passing a body's house. Especially when they's siclness in the He looked up at the mid-morning sun and put his hat back on; then he looked at the rows of potatoes he was hoeing. "Taters cain't breathe and grow right covered with white dust like that. Even the bugs don't like to eat the leaves like that."

Over in the garden, white dust was settling on the beans and peas, on the radishes and lettuce - a mighty punylooking garden it was becoming. There had been no rain for almost a month. Dust covered the shade maples in the front yard and the peach tree in the backyard. The roof of the house was white with it, like being covered with a heavy frost, and it was seeping through the cracks of the weather stripping into the three rooms of the house.

Maw would be coughing now and more than likely yelling to Tillie for a drink of water. Damn this dust. Why couldn't those scattered clouds up there get together and send rain down to settle it? Damn the automobiles, and damn the highway department for bringing the road up

out of the valley and digging it right through the corner of Morgan's front yard.

It was getting so he couldn't have any peace of mind all summer. He couldn't sit out in the shade for getting covered with dust. He couldn't sleep for dust coming through the windows and cracks of the his house, filling up the pores of his skin, and making him hotter. He couldn't even enjoy his wife any more. It was not only the gritty, sticky flesh of the love-making times. It was the way Tillie was now, too, quarrelsome, stubborn, blaming him for everything. He might have to run her off if she didn't get back to being like she was before the road came through the yard.

And the drinking water got dirty setting on the shelf. Morgan could feel the grit like fine creek sand in his teeth when he took a drink. At mealtime the dust settled in his taters and beans. Lord, but Morgan wished it would rain.

It had been like this for six years, ever since the road was cut through and gravelled. It was supposed to be a state highway now, and at every election time somebody said if he was elected he would see that black top or concrete was put on the highway. As soon as the election was over, the big talk was forgotten, and Morgan Adams, with Tillie and Maw, went on living in the dust every summer and cussing it. In the winter it was not so bad because the ground froze or snow and rain made mud of it. Sometimes the gravel broke through, and there would be chugholes of mud to make going hard, but Morgan didn't have much going to do. The chugholes didn't make any difference to his mule when he had need to go to the store or post office.

Morgan finished his row on out to the end of the lot nearest the house. Another automobile passed and sent fresh swirls of dust out over everything.

"Looks like ever damn fool's got somewhere to go today," Morgan said. He leaned his hoe against the picket fence and went to the house.

Tillie was putting dirty shirts and overalls, dirty aprons and dresses, and grimy sheets into an empty washtub. She lifted her blue checkered apron and wiped sweat from her face. She brushed back strings of loose hair and poked them into the knot at the back of her head.

"It's punishment to be fat when it's so hot and when dust shoots in at you like smoke from a bee-gum smoker ever time you turn around," Tillie said. "Looks like I keep gitting. fatter ever year."

Morgan went to the bucket on the shelf by the stove. He dipped a gourd of water and started to drink. He spat the water out and said, "It's warm and gritty. You ort to keep fresh water in the house when Maw's feeling worse. Looks like you could do that."

"The water gits warm mightnigh by the time I can git it here from the spring. And soon's I set it on the shelf, dust gits in it. It winds me to go atter it so much. You go fetch a bucket yoursef."

"I've got taters to hoe so's we'll have something to eat this winter."

"And I've got all these dirty clothes to pack down to the creek and warsh. Ain't no use trying to warsh them up here in all this dust. Everything gits muddy 'fore it gits dry in this desert dust storm you make me live in, mightnigh smack in the middle of."

"I ain't making you live nowhere. You can go any time you've a mind to. But Maw ort to have cold water."

"Go git it yoursef. She's your maw. I cain't git this warshing done if I have to go to the spring ever time I turn round."

"Tillie, one of these day..."

Morgan saw Tillie's face reddening, and splotches of red were showing on her neck while her upper lip paled. He knew this was a sign that she was getting mad. Well, he was mad, too. They had both been mighty touchy lately. That was the way this dust and heat worked on a body with no letting up.

He put the gourd on the water shelf and picked up the bucket.

Tillie got matches, bluing, and soap. She dropped them on top of the soiled clothing, and lifted the tub to the top of her head where she held it with one hand while she carried a big empty willow basket in the other hand; then, without looking at Morgan, she said, "I'm going to do this warshing. You better come see about your maw once in a while. You're closter to the house than I'll be." Then she walked out the back door.

With the bucket in his hand, Morgan went out the door, too. "You're just doing your warshing today to git outa this dust. You aint never done it at the creek before. You better git back up here 'fore dinner time... if you ever want to come back."

Tillie didn't say another word. She just kicked a small rock out of her way and walked on toward the creek.

It seemed to Morgan that Tillie could always pick out the worst times to get into ~er worst moods. But she was no better than he was. She could stand it if he could. He had to work in the dust to make those damned taters grow. Tillie could at least stay near the house and look after Maw. She always had done her washing out in the backyard or in the kitchen. No use to argue with her though. Her mind was made up, and she would go to the creek now in spite of everything. Might as well argue with a jackass. She made Morgan mad sometimes when she took her spells. But living with her for twelve years, just him and her and Maw, he had gotten used to her. But maybe now he was getting un-used to her. She had not always been like this. But, damn it...

He was almost back from the spring with the water, and another automobile sent dust over the house and yard. Morgan hurried into the house. He heard coughing and went into Maw's room. Maw was propped up against the wooden bedstead on her pillow. Two plaits of gray hair, tied at the ends with gingham strings, lay against the white muslin nightgown over her flat breast. Her thin, white face was drawn from the strain of coughing. She was coughing more than she used to. She lifted a newspaper cup to her lips, spat into it, and dropped it into a shoe box on the floor.

"Ain't you feeling no better, Maw?" Morgan asked.

"Seems like this dust just gits thicker and thicker inside me. Sometimes I think I can feel it working in my chest like sand in a biling spring," Maw said.

"Damned fools... driving like they's crazy. I'd like to break bottles in the road and make them slow down."

"Maybe someday we'll git a judge who'll see fit to put blacktop on the road.

I could make a pallet out under the maple trees agin then and keep a sight cooler."

"Ever' damn politician in the state ort to have to live in this dust a whole summer, and breathe it, and eat it, and drink it."

"Will you fetch me a drink, Morgan?"

"I had to go to the spring and git a fresh bucket. Tillie let the water git hot agin, and she wouldn't go git any mo.re. She had to traipse down to the creek and do her warshing today so's she could git away from the dust. She's having one of her worst spells. I don't know what's gitting into her."

"Tillie's hateful sometimes, but she's a good woman. She's been mighty good to look atter me most of the time. It's this weather and dust."

Morgan brought the water and set the bucket on a chair beside Maw's bed. He left the gourd in the bucket, but he set a teacup on the chair for Maw. She never used the gourd that he and Tillie used.

"I reckon this'll do till Tillie comes up to git dinner, if she ever makes up her mind to come," Morgan said.

"Hand me that apron hanging on the telephone mouth on the wall there. I'll spread it over the bucket to keep the water clean."

The morning was getting hotter with only an occasional breeze to cool it. A few clouds were in the sky, but none of them ever crossed the sun's rays to make shade for even a minute. It seemed that a fresh cloud of dust spread over the potato lot every time Morgan finished a row. There couldn't be much dust left in that damned road.

Morgan remembered how it used to be. There was deep, clean, sweetsmelling grass then, grass that was good to lie in after supper at nights or on Sundays when there was no work to do. There were rose bushes and flags along the fence then, and beds of bleeding hearts and peonies inside little circles of rocks. Tillie took pride in the yard then, like she took pride in a clean house and plenty of good victuals at meal time. But now, she didn't seem to bother much with the yard. She just let everyt • get whitened and puny with road d On real hot nights, Morgan and T' used to take quilts and sleep in the gr under the maples. It was good to sl with Tillie then. He liked a big worn It wasn't like trying to make love to fence rail. Tillie didn't have sulky then. She'd been a good wife. But d her the way she was now. Damn politicians. Damn the dirt and the it got into everything, into a body's m' dirtying up his thoughts so he couldn have peace of mind.

Dust spread over the potato lot fr a passing automobile.

"Damn you! Damn you!" Morg said.

He leaned for a moment against the yard fence. He was wiping dirt from his face when he heard the phone ringing in the house. He couldn't tell if it was his ring on the party line.

"Damn that Tillie. A man's got to tend a crop, look after the sick, and take care of things around the house." He threw down his hoe and walked fast toward the house.

The phone had stopped ringing. "Was that our ring?" he asked Ma. "I couldn't tell from out there, and couldn't get here in time."

"No. It was two longs and a short. That's Elbert Browder's ring." Morgan walked over to the phone and took down the receiver to listen. In a moment he butted into the conversation. "Hello, Elbert. I want to ask you a question before you hang up. This Morgan Adams."

"I recognized your voice. How'd Morgan. How's your maw?"

"She's not getting any better living • a dust storm. That's what I want to ask you about since you're the magistrate for this precinct. What about the blacktop for this road? When is somebody going to do something about it?"

"I don't know, Morgan. Other roads got priority, I reckon."

"Wasn't nothing said about priority when I give a right of way through my front yard."

"There's some argument about funds. Some from the state; some from the county. Nobody can seem to agree who is to pay what."

"And there's no election for another year. So nobody'll even pretend to agree on anything for another year, I reckon. Can't somebody even pour a little tar on the road to settle the dust?"

"I don't think they'll do that. Not when the plan is to pour asphalt later. It'd be an added expense. You know how that is, when it's so hard to get enough money set aside for the asphalt."

"Couldn't you ask the county to do that much?"

"I know it wouldn't do any good, Morgan. I know how you feel. I know how it is with your maw the way --"

"You don't know. Damn it, you don't." Morgan hung up the receiver and walked out of the house.

He hoed four rows of potatoes without stopping. He dug into the ground with vigor and anger, like each time his hoe hit the soil it was

hitting a dust-making automobile or some lazy political thing which would not concern itself with a road.

He stopped by the fence, wiped his forehead, and looked up at the sun which was straight above him now.

The sun straight above him? His body throwing almost no shadow at his feet. It was dinner time. He had not seen Tillie come back to the house. She must have come while he was hoeing away from it. Morgan dropped his hoe and went to the house.

Tillie was not there. No dinner was on the table. No fire was in the cooking stove. Maw was coughing in her room. Morgan went to her and poured her a cup of water.

he said. "Tillie ain't here, and dinner's not ready. I'll make you some coffee. I think there's some cold biscuits, and I'll open some peaches. There's a crock of milk cooling at the spring."

Morgan started into the kitchen. "Maw, Tillie's just... You know Ken Willet's widder, Nannie? Lives by herself in town?" He didn't wait for an answer. He took down the telephone receiver and rang the phone. "Hello. Nannie? How are you, Nannie? Yes, I'm well, but Maw's right porely. I called, Nannie, to ast if you could come out to my place and stay for a spell. To keep house and take care of Maw."

He listened for a minute; then he said, "No. Tillie's not going to be here. She's going somewhere else. Can you come out tomorr'? All right. You git somebody to bring you, and I'll pay him. Goodbye, Nannie."

"Morgan," Maw said. "You ort not to done that. Tillie's not gone. She's "Tillie's going." Morgan went into the kitchen to fix the cold dinner.

After Morgan had given Maw her dinner, he got the water bucket and went to the spring. He could see Tillie standing by her tub which was propped up on some logs. At her feet was a large willow this dust," he said, but he thought might rain though.

basket filled with twists of wrung-out clothes. A small pile of unwashed clothes lay across a log beside her. Morgan set his bucket down by the spring and walked to the creek to her.

Tillie's sweat-wet dress clung to her massive body, and her huge breasts sagged loosely in the dress swinging back. and forth as she rubbed clothes over her washboard. She had not seen Morgan.

"You can take your duds and git out. You can wait until morning if you want to, or you can go before night. I don't care, just so you go. Nannie Willet'll be out tomorr' to look atter Maw and keep house for me. If you're too good to be in that dust with Maw and me and git dinner for us, you can just stay out of it for good." Morgan waited for a moment, but Tillie did not stop washing her clothes.

"Damn it. Did you hear me?" Tillie's big breasts swung in front of her, and she kept on dipping dirty clothes in sudsy water and scrubbing them on the washboard.

"You heard me," Morgan said. Tillie turned slowly toward him, and she pulled her wet dress loose from her breasts. "I heard you, Morgan Adams. I heard you all right, bellerin' there like a cow-hungry bull. Look at this dress. Look at this basket of warshed clothes. I been working as hard as you have, dust or no dust. I'm mightnigh finished, and I aim to finish 'fore I go back up to that house." She looked up toward the sky. "Look at them clouds gathering. Might be it's going to rain. I want to have these clothes warshed and hung if it does."

Morgan looked up and saw that the clouds were beginning to bunch, but not yet between him and the sun.

"It ain't likely to rain here. It ain't likely to ever rain here agin and settle. If you mind that dust so much, might think of jacking that house up wheels and moving it down here cl to the creek, out of that dust. But ma if you was man enough to do that, woulda been man enough to keep t road outa our yard in the first pl when them courthouse men took a noti to run it there," Tillie said, and went back to her washing.

"You heard what I told you," Mor said. But Tillie didn't even turn.

He walked back to the spring, pick up a fresh bucket of water, and took to the house for Maw.

Back in the potato lot, Morgan t a good look at the clouds that had be bunching while he was having his di ner. Almost suddenly, it seemed, th were gathering and coming from o the road the way the dust was com. In the morning they had been very s tered and white, but now they were ginning to thicken and darken. The was a heaviness about the air that seem to make the road dust settle more quickl after it was roused up.

Breezes began to shake some of t dust from the leaves on the maples, the leaves began to turn their botto sides upward.

Morgan hoed faster. He was cool some by the breeze and spurred on by the prospect of rain. He thought about what he had said to Elbert Browder and Nannie Willet on the phone, but thought mostly about what he had said to Tillie at the spring. He wondered • she would go to her paw, or maybe her brother John's house. She always had thought more of John than any the rest of her folks. Morgan thought too, that that was a big washing she had done down there by the creek. She could get a lot of work done when she was in one of her moods. And what about jacking up his house and moving it? He had never thought about that. Tillie must have just thought it up while she was down there doing the washing. Maybe he could do it so Maw could have a clean place to die anyhow. What would Tillie think of that after she had gone?

Morgan beat his hoe against some dry clods, and little clouds of dust were whisked across the potato rows. More dust was whipped off the green plants as the wind grew heavier.

"Just blow as hard as you want to," he said out loud. "I don't care. Blow that whole damn road away, if you want to. Blow it all down to the county seat and fill up the courthouse. Blow it off the grass and the trees. Blow it outa the cracks of my house."

Away before time for the sun to be down the clouds filled the whole sky, and the land grew as dark as sundown. The trees jerked every which-a-way. Morgan forgot about being mad at Tillie. He felt that he could do a square dance, a whole set, right out there in the potato patch. It was times like this that beat the dust down and cleaned the green things so they could get their breath for a while. People could breathe deep, too.

Morgan looked toward the creek and saw Tillie with her tub on top of her head. She was coming toward the house now as fast as her size would let her. She wouldn't let her washing get caught down at the creek in a rain and then have to do it over. She could stay a jump ahead of everything but that damned dust.

As Tillie got to the backyard she called to Morgan, "Ai, Morgan, I can see the rain. It's coming up the holler. Coming in sheets. You better come arunning, or it'll ketch you."

Tillie was over her sulky spell. That was the way she was. She'd just start right in talking to a body like nothing had happened.

Morgan started on a run for the house and just made the kitchen door as the rain hit the yard. Then the rain came in a downpour like barrels full of it were being poured on the house and on the trees and planted things.

Morgan closed the windows, and Tillie spread her washing over the backs of chairs and tables. Morgan left the door open in Maw's room and brought a chair there so he could watch the rain. Tillie fixed Maw's pillow so she could sit up straighter and watch, too.

The wind beat the rain against the roof and walls, and it was good to listen to it, good to feel the coolness, good to feel the dust going like a plague of locusts going. At first there were muddy streaks on the maple leaves and muddy water falling on the grass and the old flowerbeds; then the leaves were clean green, and the grass was green, beaten flat to the earth.

A hard steady rain poured for almost an hour; then suddenly it stopped, and the sky was light. Two automobiles passed, but there was no dust, only the sluggish sound of wheels turning in wet gravel and thin mud.

"Open all the winders now, and let this house air out good," Tillie said to Morgan. "Take the sheets and quilts off the beds and air them out good while I git supper."

"I feel like a yearling calf," Morgan said.

"I'll git it, and you finish the dishes," Morgan said.

He shook out the bedding; then he went to feed the mules and milk the cow before supper. He would go to bed early tonight. There would be no dust and sultry heat to keep him awake.

At supper, Morgan said, "Seems like the road was still down there in the valley by the creek. Seems like it was when we first moved here and Maw wasn't so sick."

"If I'd just waited, I coulda done my warshing up here 'stead of packing it down to the creek," Tillie said as she got up to clear the table.

"Don't seem like we been married twelve year, does it, Tillie?"

"Not nigh that long. Winters are short. It's the summers that's so long, having to live in that dust. Times like this makes you forgit them for a while though."

"I'll help you with the dishes, and we can git to bed early."

Maw was coughing again. Tillie went to the water bucket, picked it up, and without saying a word, started out the back door to the spring.

Before he went to bed, Morgan sa to it that all the windows and both door were wide open so the cool air woul fill the house. The bed felt fresh an clean. - In bed, Morgan said to Tillie, "May I could git help and jack this house u on wheels and move it down by the spring and the creek. Maybe I could do that."

He put his arm around the big m of Tillie's chest. She moved closer to him. "I'll have to phone Nannie Williet in the morning and tell her not to come out," he said in a hesitant voice.

Tillie did not answer. It was if she hadn't heard him. As if she hadn't heard anything he had said about Nannie Willet.

He pulled. her close against hi~. Damn, bqt she was a fine woman. Never held a grudge. The kind that understood.

Down along the creek the bullfrogs seemed louder than usual tonight, and in the front yard the breeze rustled the leaves of the maples.

PARLOUS TIMES

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Year of the Bloodhound

Lawrence Fixel

Year of the bloodhound ; of the foremost nose
that follows the concept back to the skin:
the trail with wheat-stalks, asphalt, and a kiss,
in the beast's brain is a memory of treason;
in the flight toward corners of the calendar
over blossoms and ice, the verdict of baying;

Year of the honored ear that lived on wire,
and guilt shrilled in a voice of neighbors:
the finger endowed from the witness-stand,
points to the downed one in a winter of weeds,
and the fable formed in the amateur mouth,
spreads on the shrinking city like moss.

Year of the queer, legal hunters; of the twelve
who appear in the posse; with the season open
on john the doe; with the no-limit flesh
circled in the cross: death is not the falter
and the failing, but in the fanged now
as steel measures to the bending bone -

but who in the chase wears a dry throat, crying ho, for the fox of the future:

far from the rifle and the gavel, aloft in the fields;
who fills the tracks with the size of his shoes,
and as the punctured image forgets to fall, who learns
the profile of his yesterdays from the stalked name.

Year of the jaw, months of the tongue, days of the teeth -
the fugitive freest in our swamp.

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The Investigation

Don Gordon

Somewhere in his mind,
Like a lost toy in the attic
of his childhood,
There must be an absolute, the secret
that will rescue them.

The man and the girl were seen in the doorway:
He must have said something to her
and she to him.
If they knew what it meant, they would
all be saved.

Someone besides the police must have been
at the scene of the crime. He was on another continent at the time:

in uniform, a gun in his hand.
What were his intentions?

When the special and sacred explosive
was dropped,
The cabinet explained: it was to save
the city.
They have saved the city, he said,
but the people are dead.

On a morning of sun and birds he was heard
whistling in his house.
A whistle can be dangerous: it could lead
to singing.
The budget unbalanced

the deficit mounting
what if they danced in the streets?

Yesterday he talked of the sail on the azure line
after the hull vanished.

The day before: of the sun like a flower, the earth
as circling insect;

Or later in the stone room the men hooded, sandals
on their feet,

The book open at the fatal page; or in the village
on a rockbound coast

When a child was sick or the corn failed
there were evil eyes.

The bailiff in his gray corner,

the gendarme at the door like a public statue, cowed or bare, the committee is always in session:

tell
tell the secret
·tell us before we go.

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The Witnesses

Charles Humboldt

the witness

They died of death crawling on all fours
And forgave the guilty who had trusted them,
Absolved themselves of the sinful love of man,
Prayed for old comrades in their off hours;

From bowels unleashed by purifying heat
Denounced the fallen and unyielding wretch
Who would not trade his friends for what they fetched
From the confessors of the sacred state;

And pointed out the hard of heart who dreamt
Of selfish pleasure for their worldly brothers,
The proud, absorbed in the intricate cares of others,
And it so simple and revealing to repent.

Now they are kind to children and at the least
Rebuff burst into tears, reproach and follow
The hunted as though they were being holloed
Through halls and borders like a tired beast.

If ever you start to pity them, remember
What meek as well as fervent devils cost:
. From silent man pinned on their flaming cross.
To millions scattered over the soil in embers.

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The Careful Life

Charles Humboldt

They can't keep cats they eat too much

They can't raise rabbits

they breed to quick

They can't have children

they cry at night

Nor cocks they crow in the morning.

They can't have teeth

they bite to hard

They can't have eyes they see too far

They can't have brains takes up the space

That bombers need for a landing.

The ancient tigers fought their deaths

Until the lime took flesh and fang

But these drool at the lime pit's edge

And make the most of a killing.

The mammoth could not bear such cold

As stand these solid citizens

When they're dug up black ice will flow

From their deep wounded feelings,

Who never feel it never pays

Who never think

they might think twice

Who never pause they might pause once

Between the boast and the screaming,

Who figure this and figure that:

The threat, the pounce, the prayer, the feast

And hope to die an hour before

Their crimes cost them something.

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Comment 1951-52

Brian Vrepon

comment 1951-52

The City has been flagged three days;
The first day a strong breeze
Streamed them stiff, their insignias
Patent as an infant's primer.

The second day the wind stiffened,
Flapped and furled the colours
Round their poles;
The third day a gale savaged them,
Made them scarecrows of history,
And I echoed the mocking ghost
Of war's millions'-bones unmelted,
And of living millions waiting
Stupefied and feared, dreading
Common destruction.

Beneath the blood-flags swarmed
Accidental parents and children
Active with the promise of cemeteries -
Unconscious love's reward
For feckless fecundity.

Tartan petticoats,
Khaki and blue trousers,
Street-strutted their peacockry;
Bagpipes and drums and brass
Brayed, banged and belched,
Metronoming Death.

Press and pulpit echo the mouthings
Of Parliament, and there are no children
Older than five without pistol or sword,

Press and films the poison
Of their imagination.

Observing war's tragic clowning,
I thought of Life frowning
To remember its last music lesson.

A grim picture, indeed,
Of incurable insanity,
Were this a completed picture;
But behold! O stupefied,
Tormented and dreading millions,
Peace is not dead, but being birthed;
War's roots are rotting
In the swamps of man-made Death;
And I, observing, shuddering in my moment,
Know Peace arises.

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The Pilgrimage

Douglas Woolf

Now he could see the town ahead of them, but he could not feel the train slow down at all. For a minute he was sure it would rush right past the depot, as though it too had been brought here against its will. But the next he knew the conductor was pulling the signal cord, his mother was tugging at his arm, the black-lettered sign at the end of the platform was jerking to a halt outside their window. He looked down at the town stretched below them like a neat grey graveyard of granite monuments, and he imagined all the tiny people on its hilly streets had come to pay a visit to the dead.

As they climbed down from the day coach only the conductor and one stooped old man saw his mother's blackgloved fist dart out and rap the hand he held to her. Hastily he pocketed the offending hand, hoping that his thick tweed trousers would muffle the popping sound his knuckles made. All winter long his body had tingled with new and exciting currents, and this was the way he had found for releasing them. Just as soon as he had tried the nine possible joints of the right hand he brought it out and gave to it the heavy wicker lunch basket, freeing his left and pocketing it. But then in the nick of time remembered that his mother's definition of a gentleman was a boy who did use his pockets when walking with lady.

He wanted to ask her how a gentleman behaved when walking with ghost. He almost smiled at the thought of asking his mother such a thing, then, glancing guiltily aside at her, did smile at the answer he imagined she would give. He imagined the thin black shoulders bracing themselves against impudence, the black spidery glove with its roses reaching across her breast grasping that gaudy astrology magazine which she had been reading before joined her on the train, tucked it most safely beneath the black fold of her sleeve; and then, only then could he imagine the bleak white face fixing upon him a look both hurt and spiteful because she would have read so much more into his teasing question than he could possibly have meant. For his mother knew better than he that always, and especially

today, they traveled in the company a ghost, that it was only in such company that she was ever at her ease.

ss He tried to remember how many times they had made this pilgrimage before; eleven, twelve, thirteen? He had been three, almost to the day, the year his father died, and yet recently, since this anniversary had become for him a "holiday" from boarding school, the number of his annual visits to the grave, plus three, would somehow fail to add up to his present age. It was like an arithmetic problem at school which puzzled him more and more the longer he looked at it. "How many times does this make?" he asked, his eyes watching the uneven pavement beneath their feet. "Twelve?"

"For you, yes," his mother answered, not stopping to think at all. "For me, thirteen. I came alone the first year, the year after your father died. You had a cold that day."

I tad a cold, he thought, and shuddered, for it seemed to him he had had a cold for thirteen years. It seemed to him that this place, this grave, they were visiting had become his own grave too. What gives life to her kills me, he thought, and for this he stared glumly at his mother. Why must we always look for him in death, he silently asked her, why not just once in life? But aloud, he said: "Tell me what he was like, • Mother - when he was alive, I mean." "Like?" His mother was deep in thought, and she shook her head impatiently at him. "I never know what you mean by that."

"Was he the biggest man you've ever seen?" he asked, straightening his shoulders up. "Was he as strong as he was big?"

"Martin, really," she said, and sighed. "I've told you all that before again and again."

"No. When?"

"Shush," she said, and left him as usual to shuffle through his pitiful store of mementos and memories the small gold watch, its monogram his own, which he would inherit when he was twenty-one, the great fur-collared Chesterfield which he could not tell yet whether he would inherit ever, the shelves of books in which his father's carefully written name proved that he had not known he would die so soon, the musty photo album in which his father's face lay dim and yellow among all the rest, the single photograph in which that face somehow beamed through

the poor photography, eager, strong, alive, as though saying no to all the things his son would hear of him that he did not go out with girls until he was nineteen, that he did not drive a car until he was twenty-one, that he liked, adored, carrots and stringbeans, that he had learned not to scoff at astrology by the time he died. It was this bright photograph and not the other faded one in his mother's mind which caused Martin to grab her arm and ask, "Did he like to dance?"

his mother asked, deaf suddenly. "What? Your father? He danced." And then, as if her own words too were heard critically through a cupped black hand: "Ah, why must we always talk about your father in this way, his worldly follies? Why can't we try to accept him for what he's become, not what he was. He's dead, and there are no follies among the dead. Death purifies." She stared at him with anger and pity, and he knew the anger was for him, the pity for her who had him as a son.

"I'm sorry," he said, but in his mind he listened to her words again, and he couldn't believe in them because the follies of which his mother spoke were life itself, or all things which stood between man and the Soul, the Word, the One, that eternal magnificence in whose presence even God must blink his eyes. Life to her was a crowded horoscope in which ugly little crabs and rams tripped up the body as it ran in circles from the soul, and the soul had only one object, the body's death. Suddenly dizzy he took his mother's arm again. "I'll leave the basket here," he said, for they were at the edge of the graveyard now, staring at the rusty gate. Beyond, the cemetery lay neatly raked and pruned and dead. "It's heavy," he explained to her, but in reality he could not bring himself to rest their food on that cold gravedirt. "You go first."

His mother stood critically examining him, as though he were at this moment joining her on the train. "You're cracking your knuckles again," she said, and then, "I thought you would have worn your black suit today. You always have before."

Welcoming any delay, he laughed. "Have you seen it?" he asked, knowing that she had not since he left for school last fall. "It comes to here!" Stretching one large-boned wrist from its grey tweed sleeve he pointed to a distance far up on it where the black sleeve would have come. "When I move my arm it comes to here!"

"You don't have to exaggerate, Martin," his mother said. "You haven't grown so very much."

"Oh no?" he said proudly, extending his long arms sideways as far as they would go, feeling himself hover above his mother like some great grey hawk. "Look at these sleeves, just look at them. Is that where they're supposed to be?"

His mother lowered her eyes shook her head. "Put your arms down your sides," she said, "at once."

"Gladly," he answered her. "GI But if you'd been at the dance the o night you'd have seen me dancing my arms that way, down at my sid mean. Like this." He held his arms d at his sides, a little stiffly, his large h cupped inward to press his partn hands, Jennie's, against his thighs. " was so my sleeves wouldn't hitch like this," he said, and laughed as jerked them up again.

"Stop showing off, Martin," mother said, passing through the "What dance?"

"The dance! The dance!" he hoo after her. "The one I wrote you a The one I took Jennie Roberts to."

"Oh? And who might Jennie Rob be?"

He ran to catch up with her, pass h "Who might Jennie Roberts be?" he peated, wheeling to laugh in his mothc strained white face. "Don't tell me don't know that? I thought every knew about Jennie Roberts - the Be Grable of Pine-in-the-Woods? She's year older than I am, of course, she's a tiny little thing, a blonde."

His mother darted onto a path leadin to the right, as though escaping him, an said, "Since when have the boys b allowed to invite their own girls to th dances? I thought the school did that."

"Not for the upper form, they don't," he said, speaking more patiently now, for this was a fine point and he did not wish to lose her interest. "It's written in the student constitution that way. In the upper form you get to invite whoever you want and you get to stay up after the dance is over. Your date does too."

"After the dance?" "Till two." "And what do you find to do till two!" "Find to do I" he cried. He halted there in the path and muffled his cracking knuckles in a hearty laugh. "Come now, Mother, come down out of the clouds. What did you used to do?"

He was still laughing when his mother spun and leaped, not toward him but away; when her black fist lashed out at him with the frightened

fury of a cornered cat. Like a great cat she crouched there before him in the path, alert to the gasping sound his dying laughter made, her eyes fixed on him with horror as though he had suddenly become an enemy. He raised his hand to his face and there was blood on it when he held it out to her. "What is it, Mother?" he asked, and took a cautious step in her direction. "What?"

His mother stared at his bloody hand. "It's nothing," she said. He watched her straighten up, still with her eyes on him, and smooth her coat. "You'll have to excuse me," she said. "I shouldn't have done that, Martin. I don't know what came over me. I must have thought I heard him again."

"Your father, yes." "In me?... In me?" he asked incredulously, and then, with joy, exultantly, "Why yes, of course, of course in me!" Laughing he sprang toward his mother, lifted her up, high up above his head, let her down again, not heeding the blood he smeared on her, heeding nothing as he grabbed the crimson flowers from her hand. "Of course in me!" Past her he bounded and hurled the roses, not in a tight bunch as his mother would have done but in a grand profusion upon the grave. "There!" he said, whirling to her again. "That's how he likes them."

"Martin, Martin," his mother moaned, and he saw her shiver as she looked at him. "Have you no respect at all for the dead?"

"None!" he cried, throwing out his arms extravagantly. "None at all, I assure you."

She turned and fled from him among the graves, along the noisy gravel paths, through the rusty gate, and he laughed to see that in her mad rush from him she remembered to snatch up the lunch basket on her way. He laughed and, stooping, plucked a rose blossom from the grave, snapped its stem to fit his button hole, before he ran after her.

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Life and Letters

In our Summer issue we invited our readers and writers to comment on our aims and policies as outlined in our editorial article. To generalize, the response was predominantly favorable, with exceptions one of which will be presented at length together with further editorial comment.

First, to accentuate the positive, the following is from contributor George Abbe:

"As an artist, I live on movement and attrition. As a progressive minister of God, I am interested in salvation through truth. Your magazine is a new and wingfooted savior....

"I had accepted immobility until the Age of Coercion and Terrorization should have run its course. The avenues of critical expression were closing. Forum magazine, which had printed my social satires, was defunct; the literary journals almost exclusively were precious and jejune; one of my novels, an odyssey of a religious rebel, once under contract with Little, Brown through Angus Cameron's sponsorship, dropped by them when he left the concern... all these things were inducing apathy and spiritual putrescence. Then your terrific editorial to writers and readers, the electrifying glory of your fiction and verse, especially Com bat Fatigue. It has given me new hope...

"P.S. I had sworn not to take an magazine or newspaper, but I am breaking down and making your CQ my o luxury."

From established poet writer Bernard Raymund in Flori came this dissent:

"To your editorial, 'To Readers and Writers,' we cannot subscribe in whole much as we admire your splendid reasoning, much as we applaud the feeling with which your editorial is animated. The things need saying, cannot be said too often. Such a statement of policy by the nature of things cannot fail to be exclusive, rather than inclusive. And when we are more than willing to see excluded from your view of letters such figures Paul Bowles and Truman Capote, I am afraid your judgment upon them likewise judges Ezra Pound and John Steinbeck, and upon the same grounds.

"All that you have said about the writer's concern about race hatred, censorship, warmongering, the struggle for social betterment is true. As writers

livi in a society where all these transpire no can escape them. But are these all Where does your argument leave Henry James? I believe you take a swipe at Marcel Proust. Where, in your view of the state of lefrers, would you fit Eudora Welty or Carson. McCullers, or any writer, however humane, whose gift lies in the depicting of the human comedy! I wonder....

We should like to assure Dr. Raymund that we have the liveliest interest in comedy, and that our red carpet is out for the Ring Lardner of 1953.

Another stout Cortez, or Balboa if you really must stickle, who has discovered something new is Pennsylvania University student Pierre H. Delattre.

"For an undergraduate honors thesis I made a study of the little magazine situation in the States.... I was very unhappy with what I found among the so-called avant-garde and little mags.... Poetry had reached the point where it was advisable to lay off controversial or disturbing ideas because they distracted the reader from an appreciation of pure form and technical genius.... I wonder ow many other guys like me, now working on poetry and novels and short tories..., laid hold of a copy of THE CALIFORNIA QUARTERLYRLY and felt sudenly like... opening a bottle of wine r... plunging into their work with eeper conviction.... I know that several rofs have, and I know that my friends· ack at Penn. have.

"If you think this magazine of yours is anything less than a great thing in American letters, I write to tell you:-otherwise. You're going to see some good stuff written by me and guys like me t'.IOME of these years, and when you do you can give yourselves plenty of credit for helping to produce it....

"I want you to know how much it means to me to read an ~ditorial like that, expressing what so many of us have felt so strongly about. We're with you.... I don't know where you get your finances, but if you ever get into trouble... be sure not to quit until you've sent out postcards to your subscribers....

"P.S. It's not just what you print that's important. It's the fact that you're there."

In re our finances, we direct our correspondent to our inside front cover piece, Cultural Perspectives.

Millen Brand, novelist, poet, and now editor of Crown Publishers, begins with a hard-hitting topic sentence: "Herewith is my subscription renewal." And continues no less rewardingly:

"There's no magazine I could be more loyal to. The current issue is swell. I particularly liked the long opening statement, except that maybe the first two sections of it could have been more concrete. But from there on it 'went.' And the issue is alive and good from cover to cover. It gives the definite feeling of loving care and interest, and that the editors are developing something out of that care."

And now it's time to present the most critical and the most thoughtful of our letters. It comes from Peter and Ruth Simmons in Berkeley, Calif., and concerns chiefly the reportage by Herbert J. Biberman, entitled Saturday Night with Hamlet, in our last issue:

"Mr. Biberman gained the deep respect of all liberal Americans by his strong stand before the House Un-American Committee, and his subsequent activities place him in the forefront of those fighting for a better America. That he

"In your editorial you state:

'We shall welcome creative work rooted in the simple truth... that human beings, without distinction of race, colour or 'nationality, are infinitely more than brutes or children, that they are irrevocably committed to struggling to improve their lot... We shall discourage writing which... expresses attitudes contemptuous and destructive of human aspirations, writing which pictures man as a will-less cipher or a moral idiot, the prisoner of his infancy, of his barbaric past or his eternal frailty.' "The major weakness in this principled stand is your neglecting to include sex among those distinctions which history has proven hinder progress. Not only racial and religious discrimination... but all discrimination on the basis of sex must be destroyed.... That you neglect this as a major consideration is further shown by your printing Mr. Biberman's story which presents women in a most 'destructive and contemptuous' fashion.

"The tale is permeated with the attitude that woman has only one value, that of a sex object for the dominant male. The height of this

degradation is reached... [when] the author finally sells Hamlet to his companions on its merits as pornography. The very vocabulary strips woman of all individuality and deprives her of even the simplest human dignity... "

The Editors of THE CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY are proud of the alertness of its readers as instanced by the foregoing letter. We agree with the Simmonses that we were guilty of a serious omission in our editorial when we failed to recognize sex discrimination as one of the dehumanizing attitudes rife in American literature today. We join our correspondents in denouncing the derogation of women and the stereotyping of women characters in fiction. As man is neither brute nor child, so woman is neither harpy nor harridan, domineering nor scatterbrained ingenue nor nymph maniac. So long as woman is relegated to the literary kitchen, acted upon but not acting directly to advance or resolve the story, American writing will be tethered to the dubious case history and the comic book, the sadistic mystery and Untrue Confessions.

We seriously regret that Saturday Night with Hamlet offended these readers as "destructive and contemptuous of women. In the opinion of the editor Mr. Biberman's reportage was intended as a reaffirmation of faith that human nature - even in prison - is never quite extinguished by adversity, and that great art can serve to reawaken a damaged soul. Blooey's attitude toward women expressed his deep but not irreparable hurt his portrait of his wife must be seen as distorted by his own pathetically disordered emotions. His response to the admittedly oversimplified lesson of Hamlet indicates a beginning of regeneration which could bring progress, even to ultimate acceptance of his wife as an equal. As to whether the author "sells Hamlet as pornography" or merely as sex (which is not at all the same thing), we do not wish to quibble; for we agree that it is properly criticized as an opportunistic act. It completely distorts and falsifies the complex human conflicts in Hamlet and ignores the historical, moral and philosophical essence of the play.

The question of Blooey's vocabulary is at once a more difficult and less imis one of the finest and strongest short stories that I have read in a long time."

portant problem, one that bedevils all writers dealing with characters torn from normal social life-soldiers, for example, who tend to employ the most insulting words for things and persons toward whom they do

not necessarily feel "destructive and contemptuous." However, we do not approve slavish fidelity to naturalistic detail; nor do we think the answer is mere self-censorship. Mr. Biberman in our opinion made an effort to deal with this problem, and there is room for a difference of opinion as to how far he succeeded or failed. Unfortunately we were unable to reach him for a comment.

These were not the only readers to object (some liked the article) to Mr. Biberman's reporting. Some have charged that the story presents prison inmates as being corrupt, ignorant, insensitive; that it tends to perpetuate the prejudice that all people who land in jail deserve to be there; and that this deliberately obscures the social and economic injustices, discriminations and political persecutions that cram our jails, mostly for crimes against property, but also for fighting for peace and an equitable life for the people. In our view, Blooey, however uninformed, is neither insensitive nor too blinded by personal bitterness to respond (as he does) intelligently and humanly to the difficult lesson of Hamlet. Nor can we agree that the 400 prisoners who applauded Hamlet are hopeless or unfeeling - in spite of their vocabulary.

Another contribution that stirred some differences was William Norton's first published story, *Combat Fatigue*. "Your quarterly is acquiring greater personality, character and point of destination with each new issue," writes Jacob Miller... "Combat Fatigue, by William Norton, "While I can praise it as literature, I condemn it as propaganda," contradicts Joseph W. Ehreth, to whom we are deeply indebted for designing our cover. "Assuming the error of Korean policy, this story is still a slander upon the brave men we have fighting there. And do not say that any man at the front does not show his courage in his mere staying there. I say the author is a coward. Let him go to Korea and peddle his story at the front.

"As to the war," continues Mr. Ehreth, "I agree that it is a sickening, senseless mess. And I believe the fault is largely ours. We have been guilty of incredible degeneracy in the burning of civilians, in the handling of prisoners, in the bolstering of a dictator. These crimes should not be forgotten in the pushing of every kind of democratic activity. I have worked eagerly for your magazine because it is needed and I hope to continue to help, but I could not let this matter pass. You urge signing of

the [Authors'] World Peace Appeal which says We condemn writing liable to sharpen existing hatreds. Of the story, I ask, what love is this?"

We are not sure that we understand Mr. Ehreth. We had thought the point of Mr. Norton's story was that Mitch, having discovered that the war was a "sickening, senseless mess," had loved his fellows enough to try (in his sick exhausted way) to stop it - and lost his life in the attempt.

Something of the sort must have been understood by Robert Ellis when he wrote:

"I want to express my thanks for... William Norton's Combat Fatigue... His story is the conscience of our nation.

must be at the core of the material we write, paint, talk:.... The cry, 'End the war,' must resound in this country.... I say, the judgment for work is does it pass through the dead eye of Norton's Mitch?"

In the following excerpts, culled from the correspondence of our first year of publication, we believe you will be interested to note the sense of personal responsibility for the magazine by our contributors and subscribers - with, of course, the exception to prove the rule.

"Judging from the obtuseness of your letter and commentaries of my work* I am certain that I cannot be interested in your oldfashioned magazine, so you can cancel my subscription. I do not like to support pedantic, academic, unprogressive publications." -Anais Nin.

"... You are directly abjuring the privilege, the very purpose of a literary publication, which is to expose the humanities without any concern at all with the hackneyed formalities that have made the mass (and class) magazines so hopelessly without value.... At first your notes proved the thoughtful, the poetic. Now, in recent months, you've made a reversal. You seem now to seek stuff for Tom, Dick, and Harry. Make Tom, Dick, and Harry meet you. Don't meet them, even if you fall dead among rocks as you beckon to them." - LeGarde S. Doughty.

But we like meeting people, whether named Harry or LeGarde, and we do not plan to fall dead among rocks.

*rejected by us as old-fashioned avantgardisme of the 20's.

"I'm very happy that you will publish Combat Fatigue.... I feel that your lective criticism of the story was entire basis of the improvement I able to make in it.... Thanks." - Liam Norton.

"... it is not clear what the Quarter will do except that it will try to avoid the business of dissecting the skeleton as the critics who examine other cri-

will do; but how can we be sure the editorial board itself will not ap exactly the same kind of dissection to story, or the poem, or the piece t select?... "-Paul Anderson.

"It seems to me clear that these fi issues are launching an important litera magazine. I applaud your having phasis on poetry. I think the appr.aran of the magazine is excellent. Of i importance to progressive authors, the can be no overestimation whatsoever. is a very big cultural contribution th you and your fellow editors ing.",-Albert Maltz.

"Thank you for the helpful note. see what you mean and intend to wo the poems over in the light of yo suggestions.... You say what I, for on ·have been feeling for some time. One almost afraid to write anything that be too readily understood. I liked way you expressed your aims and I ho that I have submitted work, this tim that is in keeping with them." - Doroth Dalton.

To a sergeant in the Air Force w give the last word: "After reading th current issue... with shattered ego humbly began writing letters to everyo in my address book to tell them abo CQ."

SECOND PRINTING

The extraordinary piece of Americana reprinted below is self-explanatory. It first appeared in an anthology entitled THE FREEDMAN'S Book, by L. Maria Child, in 1865.

CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY / VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1 / AUTUMN 1952
JOURNAL PAGE 63 / SCAN PAGE 65

A Letter from a Freedman to His Old Master

Jourdon Anderson

(written just as he dictated it)

Dayton, Ohio August 7, 1865.

To my old Master,

Col. P. H. Anderson Big Springs., Tennessee Sir:

I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this.

I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got the chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy - the folks call her Mrs. Anderson - and the children - Milly, Jane, and Grundy - go to school and are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to. Colonel Anderson. Many... would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write

and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshall-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirtytwo years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest for the time our have been kept back, and deduct you paid for our clothing, and three tor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth Mandy, and the balance will show w we are in justice entitled to. Please the money by Adams's Express, in of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. you fail to pay us for faithful labors the past, we can have little faith in promises in the future. We trust the Maker has opened your eyes to wrongs which you and your fathers done to me and my fathers, in making toil for you for generations without compense. Here I draw my wages ev Saturday night; but in Tennessee t was never any pay-day for the Neg any more than for the horses and c Surely there will be a day of recko • for those who defraud the laborer his hire.

In answering this letter, please s if there would be any safety for Milly and Jane, who are now grown and both good-looking girls. You kn how it was with poor Matilda Catherine. I would rather stay here starve - and die, if it come to that than have my girls brought to shame the violence and wickedness of th young masters. You will also please st if there has been any schools opened f the colored children in your neigh hood. The great desire of my life now to give my children an education, have them form virtuous habits.

Say howdy to George Carter, thank him for taking the pistol f you when you were shooting at me.

From your old servant,

J OURDON ANDERSON