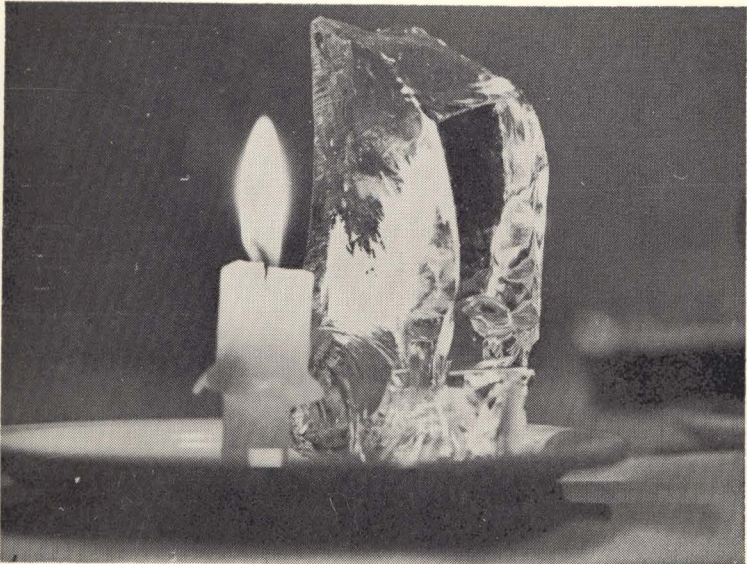


Winter 1966-67 69/67

Day

THE REFLECTOR





THE REFLECTOR

Literary Magazine

Shippensburg State College

Shippensburg, Pennsylvania

WINTER, 1966-67

Editor-in-Chief: Jeffrey Walker

Short Story Editor: P. B. Frank

Poetry Editor: James Hummer

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FIRST PLACE AWARD

TO

THE REFLECTOR

Shippensburg State College

March 11, 1966

Columbia Scholastic Press Association

College and University Division

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*Editors' Choice: Short Story****The Milkman Cometh***

. . . DEAN R. KOONTZ

The window of my attic faced southeast. My mother had curtained it, but that had small effect. I always woke with the first light . . . There would be the stillness of dawn, the rather forced quiet like people standing about a coffin. Night was dying. Then, as it was laid to rest and day came brilliantly to life, the birds began singing far away in the woods, and the trees rustled with the passage of the wind.

I had the feeling, on those warm summer mornings, that I was the only person in the world and that my life was to be spent in viewing the wonders of the earth, the crystal and golden and diamond wonders of an entire planet. But promptly at 6:00, that illusion was shattered by the rattle of an old Ford truck and the groan of arthritic axles praying to whatever strange god machines worship. The groaning and creaking signaled the coming of Mr. Mahoney.

Occurring, as it did every morning of the summer, the passage of Mr. Mahoney took on almost religious significance to my thirteen-year-old mind. He was the prophet, passing by just as I knew he would, coming with the dawn, venturing on some unknown pilgrimage. He would come and pass through the town while everyone slept, and his journey would be unnoticed by all save myself.

I rolled out of bed and hunched over to avoid cracking my head on the low beams of the ceiling. The window had a wide inside ledge where I often sat, and was so fastened that glass and all swung outward on hinges, like shutters. At 6:03, when Mr. Mahoney drew up in front of the house, I would swing it outward and give a soft bob-o-link call.

"Is it safe to talk," Mr. Mahoney always asked, having braked his car at the curb, and sitting on the fender.

"It is."

"What should I tell you of?" he would ask.

Depending on the kind of morning it was, my answer would be different. On a dreary morning, I might say "witches." But it was a fine morning.

"Magicians," I said.

"I am goin' to see one now," he would say. "Have ya heard of Frambis?"

"No."

"I am surprised ta hear that. Well, Frambis is in charge of all the magicians in this state. He drew up the fust charter that forced the gov'ment to grant his people their liberty. A fine man, he is. A fine wizard, should I say."

"Why are you going to see Frambis?"

"Oh. Oh, that is rather secret. It deals with matters of dragons and magic and castin' spells." He would look up slyly. "Well, I guess ya can be trusted. But if a word o' this gets out, mind ya, the Black Patch Gang will come after ya." He would look up and down the street before continuing. "The dragons are in rebellion. Somehow, they have found a magic potion which makes them invincible. They cannot be harmed, ya hear? Now Frambis asked my help, and I told him I would be flying to his side with the correct magic words—"

"You're a magician?" I asked.

"Of course."

"What are the magic words?"

"Dragon, flaggon, staggrin, Dragoon,

Tear drops, star shine, yellow moon,

Make these lizards sing another tune."

He would look down at his watch about then. "6:15. Got ta be goin', lad."

The Ford would wheeze, choke, and rattle on down the street to Mr. Mahoney's place of business.

The window of my attic faced southeast. I always lay back down in bed, even though the sun was in my eyes, and waited until 7:15. I would hear the rattle of milk bottles being placed on the back porch. Then, when I was sure Mr. Mahoney had made his delivery and I would not have to look at his white coveralls and simple white cap, I would get up and carry on the business of being thirteen.

BANANA: The Story of The Tale of . . .

Editors' Choice: Poem

In Meditation

. . . LOIS DICKSON

How strange that I should hear a voice
 familiar, echoing within this hollow
 head, and call it prayer; how strange a choice
 of words and phrases I have known to follow
 from this single tongue, and say it's God's
 morphology and syntax, term it best
 you can—in equations for the synods!
 How strange that I should feel a breast
 of drums in this my shade of flesh, and see
 and feel it as the pulse of God; how odd
 a taste familiar to this cavity,
 and savor it body and blood of God.
 Strange, these things, but stranger yet;
 familiar things that more familiar get.

A Death In The Family

. . . JAMES HUMMER

a death in the family late last night
and every plan for today is shot to hell.
so much comparison shopping—
which burial ground offers the most for the money?
which mortician is the finest actor?
which coffin has the softest satin lining?
as if every transgression upon the living being
can be atoned for by
stuffing the corpse's mouth up tight with gold.

the funeral at last, and everyone is moved—
according to his or her degree—
a blood relation may sob,
close friend just choke up,
second cousin sigh,
total stranger fumble
sympathetically
with his handkerchief.

soon it's over, as the guest of honor
is placed at the bottom of a hole in the ground
an covered over with dirt
and left to rot.

then all the dark suits
and somber mourning clothes
and thin black muslin and satin
and velvet emotions
are packed away—
middle left-hand drawer,
just below the one with dreams and hopes,
just above the one packed full of tears.

BANANA: The Story of The Tale of . . .

. . . P. B. FRANK

On the way to Boston last week, I happened to be passing through Kentucky and found myself within fifty miles of Fort Campbell. My nephew, Michael, lives there; he attends Austin Pea State College as a senior. I decided to pay him a visit for he had always been my favorite nephew, and I had not seen him for at least three years. I found him in his apartment just off the army base. He was in fine spirits and greeted me warmly.

"Sit down, Uncle," he said. He began to mix me a drink. I said I'd take a scotch and soda, reminding him; but he needed no reminding.

"What else is there?" he answered simply with a smile and a wide gesture.

I could see that he had just gotten up; that is, I had awakened him. I thought this curious, for he had always been an ambitious young man. I inquired about him.

"I'm no longer in college," he said without the slightest hesitation. This shocked me. I asked him what he was doing.

"I'm studying on my own now." He handed me my drink. "I'm going to be a writer," he said with pride. "I sell to the confession magazines. Someday, when I'm a little better writer—a lot better writer—I'll go in for more serious literature." He offered me a banana; I declined. He sat then, drinking and eating. "There is something I must tell you, Uncle," he said.

I could see he was itching with a tale, so I encouraged him, letting him continue without interruption as I knew he was wont to do.

"One day, just a little more than a year ago," he began, "I found myself in a deep funk. I was disappointed with college, disillusioned with life. I was going nowhere. I was convinced I would amount to nothing. One night I went down to Sam's (that's just down the road a piece)," he motioned. "I was sitting at the bar finishing my fourth drink when a banana sat down on the stool next to me. I immediately thought I had drunk too much; this frequently happens when I go to a bar to relax, to let time slip by unnoticed. I simply lose count. At any rate, I knew this could not possibly be only my fourth drink; bananas do not sit next to me when I am sober. I ignored the banana, of course; I tried to force it out of my mind. I ordered a bourbon and ginger ale, and the bartender served it quite calmly. My belief that this was not a banana beside me was fortified; no matter how many years any bartender has worked, I know none of them has ever served a banana without asking a few questions first. I was drunk; it was a man. Yet I still felt in the back of my mind that this banana had a lot of temerity to violate my self-imposed isolation by sitting next to me in a bar otherwise empty.

"With more than a little contempt, I examined him out of the corner of my eye. From end to end he was about five feet long, but he would have been close to six feet had he not been curved, as are all bananas. He was a deep, rich yellow color. His skin was smooth; angular where it bent around the meat of his insides. I thought him a banana in excellent physical condition; he struck me

as the kind of banana that might do exercises every morning. I think I disliked him a little more for that. There were no bruises on him, and I immediately wondered whether he might be a Chiquita Brand banana. I tried to look for the blue seal that would identify him as one, but I could not examine him fully without turning. I did notice the curious way in which he sat upon his stool. He perched there as no other banana I had ever seen could do. Most bananas, you must know, lie inertly where they are placed, inevitably on their side or back. But that was not this banana's way. He sat as a man might sit, one end pointing toward the ceiling, the other toward the floor. He seemed to be precariously balanced on his stool, and yet there was the stability that either you or I might have at a bar. I marvelled at his ease in maintaining that stability. But he was imbibing his drink in a particularly unsteady fashion. It was the only way he could do it, however, for he had no arms. He rocked his yellow body back and forth on the stool, and at the apex of each list toward the counter, he took a small sip from his drink. I thought he must surely topple from his stool. But he was very agile about the whole thing, the kind of agility that can come only with practice, and I realized he must have been out drinking many times before.

"Suddenly he stopped rocking; too suddenly, I thought, and my beliefs were confirmed. He teetered unsteadily as if about to fall. I immediately extended a hand to steady him.

" 'Whew!' he said when securely back on the stool. 'Thank you. I nearly fell.'

"I said nothing but ordered another drink. I knew I should not have any more; I had had too many already. But I needed something, for when I had touched his skin, he felt like a banana. The entire affair was becoming more and more insane.

"I don't think I've seen you here before," he said turning to me.

"I thought it an odd statement for him to make. I was going to tell him so, and I turned to him, but I could not tell him. He was a banana. I had never spoken to a banana before. He turned from me when I did not answer his invitation to conversation. I felt myself mean, unfriendly.

" 'I'm not trying to be mean and unfriendly,' " I said, staring at my drink the whole time, for I still had not the nerve to face him directly. 'Look,' I continued, 'this is how it is. Evidently I've been here too long; I've had too much to drink. The thing is . . . the thing is . . .' I screwed up my courage. 'The thing is I'm so drunk that I think you're a banana.' I had gotten it out.

" 'Don't let it worry you,' he said after a slight pause.

"I thought this statement quite funny. 'Don't let it worry me,' I repeated sarcastically.

" 'No; don't let it worry you,' he said quickly. And then, just as quickly, he said he was a banana. 'I **am** a banana,' he said.

"I very nearly hit him. I really did almost hit him. I turned to him in anger, but he was right, and I couldn't hit him. He was a banana.

" 'I've been a banana all my life,' he said. 'It used to worry me, but now I've adjusted to it. You see, when you're born with a little defect—' (He really did say that; he really did say 'little defect.') '—when you come into this world with a little defect, when you must grow up with that defect, you become used to it, accustomed to it. After a while it really doesn't bother you. The capacity of the human spirit for adjustment is truly immense.'

' "But you're a banana," I said, facing him. And he was a banana. A yellow banana.

" 'That's a good point,' he said. He was silent then, and we both turned to our drinks. He started rocking back and forth again. I thought maybe I should offer to hold his drink for him while he sipped it., but I was still a little angry at his being a banana; besides, I thought it might embarrass him to be nursed in such a way. He was obviously a mature banana; he was well-adjusted, self-sufficient. Or so it seemed. We all have our problems, and this banana had his.

" 'What do you do?' I asked him, after taking a few sips of my drink.

"He stopped his rocking back and forth at my question (more slowly this time, maintaining his balance carefully). He turned to me. 'Not much,' he said. 'There is not much a banana can do. I've got no hands, you see, nor legs either. I can't do manual labor. I've had the equivalent of a college education, but there is little I'm really good at. I speak several languages, but no one will hire me. Don't be ridiculous," they said. "We can't hire a banana." And I suppose they were right. I've tried doing translations, but they're no fun after a while. And I really don't need the money. Every January, February, and March the government studies me. They give me ten thousand a year. That's plenty; that's more than enough.'

"Here he paused, rather sadly, I thought. He seemed to be saying that ten thousand dollars a year was not enough, not nearly enough. And, of course, it was not. He twirled around on his stool then, facing the door. He seemed about to go.

" 'Wait. Don't go,' I said. I had to know more about him. 'Tell me about yourself,' I said. I felt ashamed then, for I knew that many people must have asked him about himself, must have gawked at him as if he were an animal in a zoo, wondered about him, been fascinated by him, and finally must have left him.

"He continued twirling on his stool for a moment, undecided. Then he turned back to the bar, to me, smiled, and began. 'My name is Percy,' he said by way of introduction. 'I chose the name myself.'

"I thought this wildly funny but said nothing.

" 'I was grown in Nicaragua on an American Fruit Company plantation; you know, the Chiquita people.'

"My previous suspicions were confirmed.

" 'I started out as a small, regular-sized banana, I suppose. I really don't remember that part of it. But unlike the rest of the bananas around me, I did not stop growing. I first noticed my difference when I was about a foot long, which is really quite long for a banana. I grew faster than the rest of the bananas and was noticed early by the plantation foreman. He decided, apparently, to let me grow as large as I wanted. At any rate, he did not cut off the bunch I was on. I was very lucky.'

"I thought I heard a note of irony at this point in his narrative. There probably was, but I never asked him. He continued.

" 'I kept growing and growing. Everybody on the plantation was amazed. They sent for an expert who said I should be left alone to grow. I would make a good advertisement. I would be excellent publicity.'

"He paused here again. He was not angry, not even lightly sarcastic. He was just a little sad.

"Well. I grew to the size I am now. I wasn't picked; I fell off. I can imagine that had I not gotten too heavy to hang there, I would have continued to grow, and grow, and grow. But I fell off. Everybody gathered around in amazement at my size."

"Percy said he was really quite large for a banana. I agreed with him heartily, for it seemed to be the one note of pride in him."

"The foreman was the first one to pick me up. He cradled me in his arms like I was a baby. 'Put me down,' I said. 'I'm not a baby; I'm fully grown.'" He dropped me then, and everybody stepped back away from me. They were really scared. They called in the expert again. He said I should be put to work; I was no good whatsoever for publicity. No one would believe anything a talking banana said. I was put to work picking bananas. But how can a banana pick another banana? It was impossible. So the foreman said I should go around the plantation and scare the tarantulas out of the banana bunches. I thought I could probably do that fairly well. But I couldn't. I don't think the tarantulas believed anything a talking banana said either. Then again, a tarantula's eyes are not the best in the world, and maybe they didn't think I was a banana. They probably thought I was just another worker on the plantation. No self-respecting tarantula is ever afraid of a plantation worker; it's the other way around."

"Percy paused here, rocking back and forth, sipping at his drink. After a few sips, he stabilized himself and continued."

"I was good for nothing. I had to have a rather expensive nutrient soup to stay alive, and I was doing nothing to earn my keep. I was less than good for nothing; I was a blight, a drain on the economy of the Company. The word about me got around quickly in certain circles and was just as quickly hushed up. The government wanted to study me. I was crated up—"

"'Crated up?' I asked, unbelieving."

"'I am a banana,' he said. 'They could hardly send me to the States in a first-class jet.'"

"'Oh', I said inately. I thought it abominable, for Percy was obviously no ordinary banana to be crated up."

"I was crated up and flown to the States in a transport jet. I was sent to the biological research center at Beltsville. They put me through all kinds of tests, asked me all kinds of questions, kept me in bed (it was very uncomfortable; bananas should not be kept in beds). They were amazed at how fast I learned. I went through the equivalent of grammar school, high school, and four years of college in about two years."

"He's a genius, I thought. This banana is a genius."

"They thought I was a genius but found I could learn only so much. I had a very small brain; I had simply used it to its fullest capacity. They were very disappointed. They probably wanted to make me into a nuclear scientist."

"He stopped there. He seemed to be smiling."

"'So they let me go,' said Percy. 'They gave me ten thousand dollars and said to come back in a year.'"

"I was stunned. I asked him where he could go. 'Where could you go?' He was a banana. How could they throw him out like that? 'You're a banana,' I said. And he was, of course. 'What do you do?'"

"I have an apartment. They rented it for me. I only go out at night. I stay off the main streets; if somebody sees me, I just lie still, and they leave

me alone. I come to this bar a lot. The bartender knows me; he only lets me come in real late, though. I meet people, most of them drunk, and I talk to them. I like to think I do some good talking to people, letting them talk to me. The people who drink this late at night are usually pretty unhappy, pretty dejected; I like to think I can help them. It gives me something to do.

"He ended sadly. We both went back to our drinks. After a moment he drew in a breath, twirled about on his stool, rolled to the floor, and arching his yellow body high into the air and twisting at the high point of the arc so that he rolled his way across the floor, left me alone."

I stared at my nephew incredulously. "He left YOU alone!" I yelled. "You fool!" I was outraged. "Why in God's name didn't you take him in? You heartless fiend. What's happened to you since last I knew you?"

In answer Michael only sat and smiled at me as a yellow shape came bounding into the room. "Hi, Mike," said Percy happily. "Oh. I see we have company; sorry I didn't get here sooner. I was sleeping."

I looked at Percy, overcome with disbelief. The story was believable when it came from the mouth of my nephew. But there, with a banana perched in a chair across the room and smiling—

"Hello," I said a little nervously; it was the first time I had ever spoken with a banana. "You're a banana," I said stupidly.

"Yes, I am," he answered.

And he was right; he was a banana.

Sonnet, Geologic

JAMES HUMMER

I wonder that the earth can stand the pain
 Of being underneath the living world.
 She never seems to show the least of pain
 At being carved and trodden, plowed and knurled.
 But all the gross indignities that man
 Inflicts upon the virgin earth's outside
 Cannot lay reign to, infiltrate, or span
 Her heart. The ancient earth may well deride
 Vain man for trying to lay bare cold facts
 Of destiny and temperature and such.
 The earth must smile to see such barren acts
 Fail to find her greatest lesson, much
 Greater than their scientific goal—
 Do not let surface hurts disturb the soul.

From the Rise We Could Look Back

. . . ROBERT FICKES

drifting through the missed clouds
 footsteps rising with slow exhaustion
 we saw the zenith prick the sky
 we saw the cloud ringed majesty
 hard breath echoes creep behind
 kind with time—and wandering
 but singing silence in our hearts
 we rose

the chambered trees with limber breeze
 greet with beckons of soft green
 and soon we too with velvet eyes
 slid softly through the dream
 beams of hope beaconing on our face
 a quiet race to tortoise place and won
 with two to chew the mountain air
 we rose

we left the ancient rooms with tense calves
 to gilded granite desert castles
 slowly easing to the growing sun
 with lichens' air on tongue
 our distant feet steep and crooked floor
 sore to surface more
 but kindred clouds allowed pursuit
 and rose

our hands undone and ravelled some
 we clutch the copper rise
 and careful sighs to realize
 the clouds have flowed away
 but now our eyes command
 and vision sinks the land
 sheets of brisk and phantom signs surround
 while we lie

we rose to see our home behind
 beneath the fallen clouds
 with mystic myriad watchfulness
 and heavy darkened shrouds
 the sun with glittering eyes
 closes her earthen lids
 and following the lightened path
 we rise

The Butcher Shop

. . . JUDITH BOHON

She walked into the shop; her slim hips moved lithely under the tight red skirt she wore. Her white blouse clung to her damp body and the black heels she wore tapped hollow patterns on the dirty wooden floor. Both the butcher and his young assistant looked up; then the butcher spoke.

"Well," he said, "I see you're back."

"Yes." Her black eyes glinted as she faced him.

"Thought you said you'd never be back. Thought you'd had enough." He wiped his fingers on his bloody apron. "Huh?"

She shrugged, her slender shoulders moving a very little under the white blouse. The butcher watched her.

"I thought you'd be back, thought you would be. Didn't think you could do it."

She did not move, just looked at him.

"Well," he finally said, "what do you want this time?"

"Steak."

"Steak." He mocked her. "Steak."

Yes." She was watching his face.

"Well, well, you have come up in the world. Now it's steak." He laughed. "And just what does a nigger want with steak?" He leaned forward, across the counter and toward her.

She did not bother to answer, instead scanned the shop slowly, unhurriedly, waiting for him.

"Steak." He laughed again.

"Yes." Now she was looking at him.

He stopped laughing. "O.k. Steak. God," he said, "I've got to admire your guts." He shook his head.

She shrugged again.

He was still a moment, then he spoke. "Well, c'mon. Let's get this over with. Hey, Charlie!"

His young assistant glanced over. "Yes, Sir?"

"Take over the shop here. Me and Millie got some business to tend to. O.k.?" He winked.

Charlie winked back. "Yes, Sir!" he grinned.

The butcher pushed open the door behind him that led to the back room and went through, taking off his apron as he did so. She followed him.

* * * *

An hour later, the steak in her hand, she walked in the front door of her home.

"That you, Millie?" Her mother was in the kitchen.

"Yeah." She went into the room. Her mother was sitting at the table, her eyes fixed on her hands. Millie walked over and laid the meat down in front of her. The old woman looked up.

"You got it?"

"Yeah."

The Butcher Shop
From the Book 'The Butcher Shop' by Judith Bohon

JUDITH BOHON

ROBERT FICKES

Playthings

LOIS DICKSON

I
 TOO
 (FOUR
 TWELVE)
 CAN BUILD
 WITH BLOCKS
 (ONE THOUSAND
 MILLION) RISING
 NOW TO REACH SOME
 GALAXY OF STARS AND
 PHILOSOPHIC LAWS, MERE
 TOYS DELIGHTING ME TILL
 SUDDENLY I SIT IN SOLACES
 OF DIAMOND PALACES THAT
 GIVE ME UNDERSTANDING
 WHEN I DOWNWARD GO.
 SCATTERED ARE THE
 BLOCKS UPON THE
 FLOOR UNTIL I
 PUT THEM IN
 MY CHEST.
 - UNTIL -
 AGAIN
 ASK
 I

faults. The slang pieces will eventually be meaningless, for slang fades from use to be replaced by new slang. The typography of some of the pieces requires the reader to have a gymnastic eye and a nimble mind. Like e. e. cummings, however, it seems that Ferlinghetti, in this style poem, somehow transcends the typography and succeeds in spite of it.

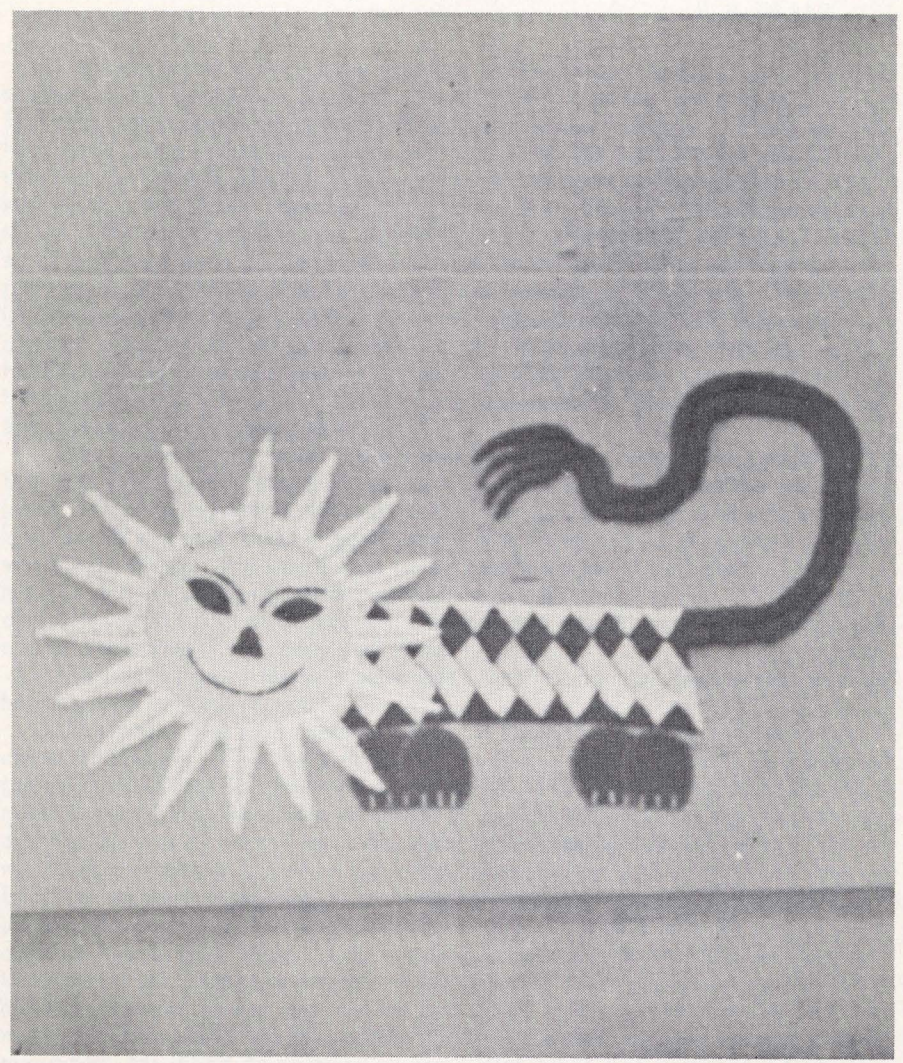
On the positive side, Lawrence Ferlinghetti is one modern semi-beat who does not restrict his subject matter to the psychedelic, in-crowd world. He is universal. He borrows from the Greeks, the French, and every movement in English literature from the Romantistic to Naturalism. His words are well chosen, words of beauty that flow along in a strong rhythm that the reader cannot easily lose. He is, to sum it up, a poet of permanence.

Sonnet Finitum

. . . JUDITH BOHON

Now, while I roam, I move as if in sport,
 not asking what I want or where I go
 nor discontent because I do not know,
 serene in paths that lead to no known port
 but merely lie somewhere within my way.
 I am not still; I keep myself employed
 with finite tasks which fill the finite void
 of time I find in each terrestrial day.
 My eyes play truant, though, and calmly shun
 the mundane this and that most eyes believe,
 fasten instead on what does not deceive,
 the Infinite, where all things merge to One,
 the Ultimate. What matter where I roam:
 my eyes stay fixed and so I am at home.

The Really Tremendous Salesman



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The Really Tremendous Salesman

. . . P. B. FRANK

I was sitting at a back table listening to the Ramsey Lewis Trio. I had just started on my beer when Danny (her real name's Danielle; she's from Spain or France or some exotic place like that) sat down across from me. I knew her well, had dated her a couple of times; I had heard, though, that she was really interested in my brother, Harlin. Harlin and I are the same age; twins, but we don't look alike. You know, fraternal twins. We don't have the same personalities either. We get along fine; pal around together, and all that, you know. Danny and Harlin had been out together a couple of times. She was asking me to explain my brother to her, like he was a DNA molecule or something. That really irks me, because you can't explain a person. All you can do is talk about a person and get a general impression of him. Had I been asked to explain anyone but Harlin, I would have told even a beautiful girl like Danny to beat it. But I like talking about my brother. It's one of my weaknesses. I always feel like talking about Harlin; just try me sometime.

"My brother used to be a real cut-up," I began. She seemed surprised at this, and I could understand why. "Yes," I continued, "in school he was a real joker. He came up with all kinds of stuff all the time; sometimes he was insulting, but most of the time it was in good taste. You know; just funny. Like I said, he was a real cut-up. He was always doing goofy things. Me, I didn't. I kind of hung in the background, watching, wishing I could be like him. But I knew I couldn't, so I just kind of backed him up; gave him moral support; you know. Let me tell you some of the really wild things he did."

This was a side of Harlin's personality that I don't think Danny ever saw; he has changed so much recently.

"This was in the sixth grade," I said. (I have an incredible memory when it comes to Harlin). "We were about twelve then, I guess. Harlin, he'd been at the dentist's all morning having a tooth pulled. He came in about ten o'clock, I guess it must have been, with his cheek all puffed out, and one eye was all red, and his hair was all mussed up. He really looked like he'd had a helluva time of it. Well, the teacher called on him once for an answer (which wasn't too smart a thing on her part, it seemed to me); Harlin wrote me a note real quick-like: tell her I'm not supposed to open my mouth, it said. So I said he's not supposed to open his mouth, Miss Banks. 'Oh,' she said. I thought she could have said something more; you know, like 'I'm sorry'; but she didn't. Well, Harlin just sat there looking rotten as all get out, like he was going to burst into tears at any moment. And he acted like that all day; you know, sullen like, and unhappy; really miserable. He didn't do anything all day. Well, what it all comes to is that after school on the way home, he showed me that he hadn't had a tooth pulled, and he'd never even been to the dentist, he said. We both laughed all the way home, talking about the things he'd put over on Miss Banks. Boy, it was so funny. Mom and Dad were pretty angry, and Harlin got a licking; but he said he thought it was worth it. I thought it was too, but I'd have never had the nerve." I stopped and sipped my beer reflectively; she told me to go on, and so, of course, I did.

"I remember one time in the eighth grade, we were both late getting to school, and we knew we'd get sent to the principal's office. He turned to me as we walked down the empty hallway to class and said, 'Hey, you don't want to get sent to the principal's office, do you? I said, 'No', of course not,' but what could we do about it; we were late, weren't we? So he showed me what we could do about it. He pulled a pack of matches out of his pocket, lit the whole pack, threw it on the floor, and turned in a fire alarm. Then we both ran as fast and as hard as we could down to the principal's office and went in screaming, 'There's a fire in the hall.' Boy! Everybody was really shook up with those bells ringing and everything, and all the people running out of the building, and the fire trucks coming to put out the pack of matches that had already burned out in the hallway by that time. We told the principal we'd turned in the alarm because it was what we thought we were supposed to do; you know, real innocent-like with big eyes. So there wasn't anything he could do on that score; and when Mr. Miller, the teacher of our first-period class, sent us to the office for being late, the principal really couldn't do much of anything then either, because if we hadn't been late, we wouldn't have turned in the alarm, and the whole school might have burned down. It wouldn't have, of course, but the principle of the thing was there. That's ingenuity for you; Harlin was like that." I watched a smile rise through Danny's face slowly as I paused for a mouthful of beer.

"Another thing," I continued, "that Harlin used to do a lot (he started this about half-way through his sophomore year in high school) was to turn words around and exchange their first sounds. The teacher would ask Harlin the capital of Maine. The matipal of Caine is Abel, he would answer. Now that's pretty good, I think. I mean you've got the change of sounds and a kind of interior pun at the same time. And he'd do it real fast, too; like it was really the only right answer. He was really great at it. I could never do it the way he did; oh, I can do it every once in a while, but not all the time and on the spur of the moment the way he did. The teachers didn't like it too much; I don't think they ever quite fully understood what he was doing, or they would have had to appreciate it. I really don't think they liked him too much, and I think he felt the same way about them. I remember one time after class one of the teachers called Harlin up to her as he and I were going out the door. I stayed at the door and watched. The teacher was an old maid, really kind of ugly with short, dark hair; she never wore nylons, and she had pockets on the fronts of all her skirts where she kept the chalk. She taught solid geometry. Well, anyway, she called Harlin over to her desk. He had been in one of his moods most of the day; he got into his moods sometimes, and when he did, boy, you couldn't do a thing with him, and he wouldn't kid around with you; his jibes and jokes got really nasty then; he could really cut you down. Miss Kaempf (that was her name) called Harlin over. She said to him that he didn't seem his usual self today, and she wondered why. She tilted her head at him in a kind of way that I'll always remember her for, because I felt that at that moment she was on the fringe of understanding Harlin the way I did. Miss Kaempf said that she wouldn't let Harlin go until he told her a joke. That would seem ridiculous and very unfair if it were asked of anyone but Harlin; but it would have been easy for him. He looked at her then with a look I'd never seen before and have never seen since. It was a hateful look, filled with contempt. He said he thought he'd call her 'beau-mains'; 'beau' for 'pretty' or

'fair' and 'mains' for "hands." You also have very fair legs, he said; I think I'll call you 'beaulegs.' The thing was she did have bowlegs. Not much, but just enough to be noticed. I think it was the meanest thing he ever said to anyone; and he knew it. She knew he knew it. I mean, he smiled real sweetly the whole time. He left her there stunned, unsure of what to do, and we both walked home together. I told him what I thought of what he had done, but he didn't say anything."

I paused here once again and I asked Danny if she'd like a drink. She said no, but I was thirsty, so I drained my beer and got another. She was still there when I got back, which surprised me, because most people want to leave when I start talking about Harlin. I can really be a first-class bore when it comes to my brother. Danny seemed to be enjoying it, because she asked me to tell her more. I enjoyed it, she enjoyed it; I saw no reason to end it. I continued, watching the light rise in her eyes as I began.

"Well," I said, "after that he never seemed to be his old self again. Oh, he still goofed off a lot, you know; cracked jokes and pulled stunts of all kinds. But they never seemed to reach the same heights they had before. There seemed to be some kind of taint from the experience with Miss Kaempf that carried over into the rest of his life. That was the first time he ever was really intentionally very mean to anyone. He probably felt pretty bad about it underneath. A year or two later (we were both about eighteen then, I guess), he started on another kick. We'd be walking through a parking lot, and a car would go by; Harlin, he'd walk up real close to it and get this horrible expression on his face, like the car had run over his foot, you know. Then he'd start to scream and hop all around with his foot in his hands like it was torn to shreds or something. He used to scare the hell out of those drivers. Another thing he'd do like that was when he was in a crowded department store. All of a sudden, he'd leap up into the air like he'd seen the hoods do in *West Side Story*; you know, spread-eagled and all. Well, he'd do that in the department store with sneakers on. He was real quiet about it. He didn't scream or anything like that. He'd just leap. Way up high. It really looked weird from across the store. He did all kinds of funny things like that. It wasn't as good as the other stuff he used to pull. It was funny all right, but it never got quite as far. It always fell just a little short of the other stuff. I think that time with Miss Kaempf really maimed him."

I stopped here a little surprised at the new angle of my brother I had discovered. That's why I like to talk about Harlin. Every time I do, I discover something about him that I didn't know before. I was anxious to continue, even more anxious than Danny probably was. I swallowed some beer.

"I don't quite know where to go from here," I said. "Things went along like that for a year or two until you showed up. I dated you a couple of times." I paused. "You do remember, don't you?" I asked, leaning forward; I still had the old eye out for her. But she was too involved in the picture I was painting of Harlin to be concerned with me. That's the story of my life. "Then," I continued, once more sliding into thoughts of my brother, "then a slow change seemed to take place in Harlin. He seemed to walk around in a kind of daze, as if he didn't quite know what was going on in the world. He almost entirely lost his sense of humor. He became dead serious. About a month or so ago, he began to be downright morose. Come to think of it, it wouldn't surprise me if

that was poetry he was writing the other week at his desk. But he locked it away too fast for me to be able to tell for sure. I wonder if it was poetry." I felt I had really stumbled onto something important. "Come to think of it," I said to Danny, "he was writing that stuff the night after the football game. Where he met you . . . Danny, I'm beginning to think you know more about all this than I do. How much have you two been seeing of each other?"

At my question to her, she seemed to rise from her reverie. She was about to answer when the door of the little bar opened. It was Harlin. He stuck his head into the room, trying to keep his body outside. He glanced distractedly about, hair falling in his face.

"Here's Harlin now," I said to Danny, and I called over to Harlin.

Harlin looked over toward me, but his eyes didn't stop on my face; they seemed to bolt themselves to Danny's. I don't think I'll ever forget that look on his face. It was as if he'd just been to church, and the Virgin had bowed to him. In that moment I realized he was in love with Danny. Dear brother Harlin in love; how about that?

Harlin came over and stood beside Danny, looking down at her. "Have you decided?" he asked softly. He is really far gone, I thought. I'd have to have a talk with him.

"Yes. Yes." That was Danny's answer. I wondered why she said it twice. Then I found out.

"Dear brother Snerd," said Harlin, turning to me (Snerd is not my real name; he just calls me that), "dear brother, I would like to announce the impending marriage of Danny and myself." He was radiant, smiling beamily.

I was stunned. "Congratulations," I said slowly, realizing what I had been doing for the last fifteen minutes, realizing why Danny was paying such rapt attention. I might make a really tremendous salesman if nobody tells me what I'm doing.

When Harlin asked me what I was going to give him for a wedding present, I said I thought I'd given him about the best gift I could.

To a Metaphysical Mistress

. . . JAMES HUMMER

I marvell when you try to put me off
By saying what I wish just isn't donne.

Yevtushenko

. . . JUDITH BOHON

"Over Babiy Yar
 there are no memorials.
 The steep hillside like a rough inscription.
 I am frightened.
 Today I am as old as the Jewish race.
 I seem to myself a Jew at this moment.
 I, wandering in Egypt.
 I, crucified. I perishing
 Even today the mark of the nails.
 I think also of Dreyfus. I am he.
 The Philistine my judge and my accuser.
 Cut off by bars and cornered,
 ringed around, spat at, lied about;
 the screaming ladies with the Brussels lace
 poke me in the face with parasols.
 I am also a boy in Belostok,
 the dropping blood spreads across the floor,
 the public-barheroes are rioting
 in an equal stench of garlic and of drink.
 I have no strength, go spinning from a boot,
 shriek useless prayers that they don't listen to;
 with a cackle of 'Thrash the kikes and save Russia!'
 the corn-chandler is beating up my mother.
 I seem to myself like Anna Frank
 to be transparent as an April twig
 and am in love, I have no need for words,
 I need for us to look at one another.
 How little we have to see or to smell
 separated from foliage and the sky,
 how much, how much in the dark room
 gently embracing each other.
 They're coming. Don't be afraid.
 The booming and banging of the spring.
 It's coming this way. Come to me.
 Quickly, give me your lips.
 They're battering in the door. Roar of the ice.

"Over Babiy Yar
 rustle of the wild grass.
 The trees look threatening, look like judges.
 And everything is one silent cry.
 Taking my hat off
 I feel myself slowly going grey.

And I am one silent cry
 over the many thousands of the buried;
 am every old man killed here,
 O my Russian people, I know you.
 Your nature is international.
 Foul hands rattle your clean name.
 I know the goodness of my country.
 How terrible it is that pompus title
 the anti-semites calmly call themselves,
 Society of the Russian People.
 No part of me can ever forget it.
 When the last anti-semite on the earth
 is buried for ever
 let the International ring out.
 No Jewish blood runs among my blood,
 but I am as bitterly and hardly hated
 by every anti-semite
 as if I were a Jew. By this
 I am a Russian."

Yevgeny Yevtushenko has, in the past few years, become "the" poet of his nation. A totally new kind of Russian, he is the leader of all young Russians who are tired of the bumbling incompetence they feel characterizes the past two generations and who seek a new kind of society for themselves.

Two themes, the social and the personal, run through Yevtushenko's writing. Intertwining, they form a type of vital and relentless poetry which moves effortlessly in a constant search for truth and, through truth, identification of self. Liberal, sensual, revolutionary, Yevtushenko's verse refuses to accept truth decreed from social highs and is convinced that ends do not justify means.

The poet is the proverbial country boy come to the city. Uncompromisingly honest himself, intensely perplexed by and resentful of any and all injustice he sees in Russia, his world, he nevertheless loves it unabashedly. His poems are nothing if not nationalistic. They reflect the optimism and dogged determination that characterize his people and their land.

At the same time, though, Yevtushenko is quite narcissistic. Fresh, talented, young, self-confident, he writes in a sometimes overwhelming personal manner. His poems, whether long or short, are narrative self-examinations, studies of himself and of everyday life as he lives and understands it.

Technically, Yevtushenko's poetry is not difficult, neither traditionalist nor modern. It lies somewhere between these two extremes, and in free verse, plays with language, using linguistic echoes, puns, near-rhymes, and frequent repetition to create a chain of associations, and a variety of style that is rather complex but is, nevertheless, interesting and easy to follow.

"Babiy Yar," probably the poem Westerners are most familiar with, is an excellent example of Yevtushenko's work. The poem, vigorous and vital, is a

cry of personal outrage against the anti-semitic atrocities which took place in Russia during World War II. The poet walks among the graves of the dead Jews at Babiy Yar, aware of what has happened there, convinced that it must not happen again, frightened that it will. As he walks, he identifies with the dead Jews: "Cut off by bars and cornered/ ringed round, spat at, lied about;/ the screaming ladies with the Brussels lace/ poke me in the ribs with parasols/ I am also a boy in Belostok . . ." He feels the hopelessness of their situation; the trees "look threatening, look like judges . . . I seem to myself a Jew at this moment . . ." He feels their plight socially ("How horrible it is, that pompus title/ the anti-semites calmly call themselves,/ Society of the Russian people . . .) and personally (And I am one silent cry/ over the many thousands of the buried,/ am every old man killed . . .). His scope and intensity somehow lead the reader into a state of almost unbelievable personal involvement in the poem; he, along with Yevtushenko, feels himself . . . "slowly going grey . . ."

It is the poet's ability to cause his reader to identify with what he reads that makes his poetry so effective. Somehow, in spite of the fact that Yevtushenko writes in a poignantly personal way, his work has a universal quality about it that almost everybody can identify with. On reading "Babiy Yar," for example, everyone becomes ". . . a Jew at (that) moment . . ." even the Russian who formerly persecuted members of the race.

It is this rather rare ability to reach his readers so deeply, together with his knack for using words effectively, that makes Yevtushenko the exceptional poet that he undoubtedly is.

A Different Christmas

. . . DEAN R. KOONTZ

The Stygian hue of a black Christmas Eve.

Drifting floating, above the darkened Earth
the moon shines—the only light that hasn't taken leave.

The Earth,

darkened, blackened, smoking all around its girth.

Christmas trees,

silver leaves,

golden bells,

tinsel shells.

Nothing shines;

a baby whines.

All the world has gone to Hell.

Salvaje

. . . CARROLL JONES

The huge chestnut stallion tossed his head impatiently and hoofed the orange clay beneath him. He watched twin colts playfully race by him followed by a German shepherd almost their size. The stallion slowly turned and moved along the edge of a dry, cracked stream bed. He still held about him a sort of awful superiority and determination. Actually, it was more than spirit; it was a stubborn resistance to anything that tried to restrain him.

But he was restrained, in several acres of fenced prairie covered with green and purple mesquite, red-orange clay beneath pale yellow sand, small cactus, and foreboding buttes suddenly looming over the middle of flat nothing. There was water, but successive dry summers and snowless winters had almost completely destroyed the lake and river which flowed, when it flowed, into the Canadian. Now there was only a small stream on the far side of the dry bed, and just enough moisture to keep the quicksand from drying enough to support weight and life. The stallion surveyed his land—his heritage, and the only place left for him.

The stallion was born near here and stayed in the canyon country until his capture. He lived free—free to run and wander, free from the smell and crackle of leather and the pain of the bit. But as more land was fenced, or rather wired, the canyon provided less and less freedom.

Finally, the inevitable happened. He ran and felt the abrasive wind against him and the tall yellow grass brush his legs as he sped a path through it. The herd followed on the open prairie. The flight to evade the captors ended with a plunge into the river at the base of the canyon walls. Ropes flew out and caught his neck—the fatal burning. Blood spurted from his forelegs. Many of the mares and colts died.

Hot blood surged through him as the colts romped friskily around him.

The stallion was taken to a large ranch in the center of the state to be trained and bred. The cinch and bit evoked a flaming hatred in him. There was a single stall with a dusty, straw-covered floor, a corral with a red dirt path around and around inside a rail fence. Everyday, he was taken out to circle the path and feel the bit, then returned to the stall.

The trainer held the gun aimed at the stallion's head with bitter spite, and he looked down at the rocker cast on his own right leg.

The new owner realized the value of the stallion and never forced the bit. The stallion acquired the appropriate name of Salvaje and was set free—within the specific number of acres.

Salvaje stood at the edge of the great, dark butte, his head slightly bowed to watch the red sun burn into the prairie sand below him. The lonely cry of a coyote chilled the dusk. He turned away from the sunset and raised his head toward the dawn as he perceived the mares gently sheltering his colts. All were in the shadow of a wire fence.

Twigs

JUDITH BOHON

The two small boys standing beside the old brick schoolhouse peered out impatiently from under the umbrella they shared.

"For Pete's sake," Joe said, "where do you think she is?"

"You got me," Timmy groaned. "She said she'd be here." He hopped once in masculine disgust.

"Boy," Joe exulted, "she better get here in a hurry or I'll be all frozen. They'll have to take me home and put me in a big oven and unfreeze me. Boy!" He smiled at the prospect.

"Me, too," Timmy agreed, and kicked the brick wall at his back for emphasis.

"Here." Joe held out the umbrella. "You take it for a while. My arm's almost ready to fall off." Timmy took it and Joe began to blow on his hands and rub them together briskly. "Man, is my mom ever going to be mad!"

Just then a car turned the corner and began to move slowly along the street toward the boys. "That's her!" Timmy announced. "See, you can tell by how slow she's going." The car inched over toward the sidewalk in front of the school cautiously and stopped. "Yep, that's her." Timmy wrapped his arms around his head protectively and darted toward a door the woman in the car had leaned over to open. "See you tomorrow!"

"O.K." Joe called back and began to run down the street, holding the big, clumsy umbrella in front of him to keep off as much rain as possible and stepping in every mud puddle he came to.

Timmy climbed into the car and pulled the door shut. His mother released the brake and the automobile began to move. "Well," she said dryly, "it looks like you got a little wet. You're not cold, are you?"

He shook his head.

"Timmy," she asked, "who was that waiting with you?"

"Joe," he told her. "I was sharing his umbrella. Hey, Mom, what's for dinner?"

"Spaghetti," she answered, and watched while he licked his lips eagerly in anticipation. "Well, I guess this is one meal I won't have to stand over you and watch to make sure you eat."

He nodded eagerly.

"Are you and Joe good friends?" she went on after a minute.

"Uh-huh." He shook his head vigorously. "You know what, though?" he went on in a confidential manner. "Miss Jackson don't like Joe."

"She doesn't?"

"Nope, she says he's a troublemaker. I think he's fun."

His mother braked slowly to turn a corner.

"Hey, Mom," he said, "can I have something to eat as soon as we get home?"

"Oh, Timmy, honestly! I just told you we're having spaghetti tonight. No, you can't. You'll spoil your dinner."

"I will not."

She did not answer.

At the next intersection the light was red. His mother stopped the car.

"Timmy," she looked at him, "you do know what a Negro is, don't you?"

"Yeah," he said, "they're people with brown skin. Like Joe." He paused, then, "Hey, Mom, couldn't I just have some cookies? I won't ruin my dinner, I promise."

The light changed and the car began to move again.

"Can I?" he persisted.

"We'll see," she answered.

She switched on a turn signal.

"Timmy," she said, "you know Negroes are different from us, don't you?"

"Yeah." He wondered why she hadn't heard him when he told her before. "They have brown skin." He had rolled his window down and his right hand was outside in the rain.

"Put that window back up; you're letting in the rain! Timmy! I said put the window UP. Now!"

He closed it.

"That's right," she went on then, "he's different. His skin is what makes him that way. Timmy, you know, I don't want you to ever think that you shouldn't be nice to him just because his skin is like that. He can't help it. He was just born that way." She looked at him to see if he understood.

Noticing this, he shook his head.

She went on. "Like it was real nice of him to offer to share his umbrella with you."

"He didn't offer," Timmy said.

"He didn't?" She looked at him again.

"Nope. I asked him."

"Oh." Then, "Why?"

"Because," Timmy said firmly.

She frowned.

"Oh." She was quiet.

"Mom?" It was a question.

"What?"

"If I promised to eat all my spaghetti, could I have some cookies then? Please?"

"I don't know yet," she replied, "I'm thinking it over, I really wish you hadn't done that."

"Done what?"

"Asked Joe to share his umbrella."

"Joe said he didn't care."

"Well, that's good, but you still shouldn't have asked him." She glanced at him. He had picked up an old baseball hat from the backseat and pulled it down over his eyes. His face was hidden. "You see, Timmy, you don't ask just anybody to do you favors."

No sound came from beneath the hat.

"And Joe isn't even like us. He's different. You should have asked somebody else."

The hat emitted a faint, indistinguishable grunt.

"So, Timmy, from now on I don't want you to ask Joe things like that."

"But, Mom!" He pushed the hat back from his eyes and looked at her.

"Joe likes for me to share his umbrella."

"Oh, Timmy," she said, "that's not the point at all. Can't you see?"

His eyes, back under the baseball hat, were hidden. "Yes," he said, "I see."

"Well, good." She sighed in relief. "And you won't ever do it again?"

"No," he answered, then was quiet.

The rain had stopped but the road was still wet. The car moved slowly. In it, Timmy sat with his head down, staring under the rim of his hat at his arms; he held them folded over his chest.

"Mom," he said finally.

She looked over. "Ummm?"

"Now can I have the cookies?" he asked.

The Manuscript

. . . ROBERT J. FICKES

The room was quickly, but gently permeated with darkness, the only movement being the slow confident motion of my hand striking a match. The candle's flame rose, casually penetrating the dense black air. My eyes fixed on the single bright figure, allowing my body to enter a trance or deep meditation.

The flame was clean and straight, growing slowly larger, subsiding, then larger still. I watched its serious flickerings in the night womb, comforted by its warmth. A symphony of light communication ran into my eyes; soft yet sharp were the rays. The light seemed to touch each object in the room, but remained one with the vibrant flame. My mind, too, sank helplessly into its power, sending thoughts on each beacon in the night.

I saw the wax melting and running, hardening and expanding in intricate radiating patterns around the spirit flame. I saw the flame's creation spreading, sinking, engulfing the desert of my floor. The wax would turn and fold and fall, each adding to its strength, each building for its destruction.

The flame was wallowing, slowly drowning, soon dead in the night. I move my hand with slow confidence, feeling the wax mold over it, and know that soon I will not move.

Inevitable

. . . CHERYL WEAVER

It was a hot, sunny day. It really didn't matter to George how the weather was because inside the cave you couldn't feel anything but dampness. He had packed his lunch last night, consisting of three ham sandwiches, some fruit, and cake. He put his lunch along with a thermos of hot coffee and one filled with milk into a large paper bag. George knew the appetite he'd have after climbing around in the cave all morning, that sensation that felt like there was a large rock in the bottom of his stomach, too large to be expelled, and yet not large enough to fill the emptiness. How warming the hot coffee would be, moving down the throat and into his stomach. The hard rock would start dissolving then. He picked up the helmet, the one that the old-timer had given him many years ago, and checked the light twice, remembering the time the battery went dead in Echo Cave. It was good he knew that cave, or that surely would have been his last adventure. Thought he'd better put two new batteries in his pocket, just in case, one for the helmet and the other for his lantern. Everything was ready, so he began walking toward Dintley. George didn't know why, but he always had the same feeling before going into a cave, a feeling of excitement and fear. Tightly clutched in one hand was a map of the cave and in the other was his lunch. Dintley had two entrances, one was at the top of a cliff and the other was in a valley. George didn't like climbing downward, so he chose the valley entrance.

As he entered the cave he could smell the dampness. The odor reminded him of the musty smelling community hall in town where he paid his taxes. George switched on the helmet light and lantern. He needed them now as he moved onward into the cave, down one passage and then another. The passages were getting smaller now, and his arms sometimes hit the walls, knocking loose some of the formations. He could tell the cave was old because some of the stalagmites extending from the floor would soon reach the stalactites. In five hundred years or so. But George wouldn't think about that now, he'd never live to see it. The map showed that he'd soon be approaching a ledge, but it gave no dimensions. He inched his way along the serpentine ledge. His feet were accustomed to the firm floor, and he moved forward confidently. The firmness disappeared. George didn't have time to scream.

No Place

. . . ROBERT TAYLOR

For the first time in years the tears were streaming down his face. But they were for himself now.

He held the baby in his arms. So white and soft he was afraid to touch her with his adult hands. He wished his daughter would never have to grow to be an adult.

She began to cry and he knew what she wanted. It was 2:00 a.m. and time for milk.

He awkwardly went about fixing the milk in the kitchen. When it was ready, he gave it to the baby who was still crying as she lay in her crib. He wondered if it would be all right to just let the baby fall asleep with the bottle in her mouth.

The child's grandmother then appeared in the doorway.

"How is she, Frank?"

"She was just hungry," he whispered.

Frank's mother-in-law said she would watch the child until she was asleep. He went to his bed, which was usually the couch, and lay down.

Karen had often sat up late with him watching television on the couch. He wondered where to start. He had to think about this just as one keeps moving a sore tooth which only aggravates the pain.

He knew Karen had always loved to go places and he was always happy to take her. He didn't really enjoy the plays or movies, but he always wanted to please her. He loved her so much.

It was because he loved her that he had gotten the part-time job at the store. They could live on his teacher's salary but he wanted to give her the extra things she always said she liked. Maybe his working did give her a lot of spare time, but he thought he could make it up to her. Maybe he had forced her to seek friendship during those long hours in the evening.

No, it was none of these, yet all of them. He knew she was carefree and friendly with other men. It had been this way as long as he had known her. In fact, when he had his first date with her, she was going steady with another boy. He thought marriage would change her. He knew hers was a physical love but he thought after they were married, it would be different. Now he knew that he had been wrong. He knew this but never admitted it. He shouldn't have tried to hide it.

He heard his mother-in-law humming to his daughter in the next room. He was only twenty-three. There were still so many years left to live. Maybe Karen would be back.

He stood up when his mother-in-law came into the room. He could not say anything. It was too late. He put on his coat.

"Where are you goin'?"

"Just for a walk," he said.

He walked down the main street. A couple was sitting in a car in front of him. He turned right to go into the small park. As he walked along the road,

a police car pulled up and showed a light in his red eyes.

"Just checking, sir, sorry."

He was out of the park now and walking down a side road. A drunk stumbled out of the shadows.

"Could ya gim, gim . . ." The man fell back in the shadows.

He was back on the street his apartment was on. The couple was gone but two rough looking boys were walking on the other side of the street. They started across toward him so he stepped up his pace and opened the door of the apartment building. There was no place to go — no place in the whole world was there anywhere to go. There was no sense to look anymore.

He sat on the steps and cried as the janitor walked up the stairs past him.

The Lovers

. . . P. B. FRANK

ah, fat and tawny tabby . . .

you sun-seduced and heated lump of fur . . .

why stretch thy leg so primly like a stripper in the tub?

why scratch thy ear and lick thy tail?

and stretch onto the bedframe slowly?

why stop.

and stare into the lighted sun that warms the hard and naked nipples of the one
whom I caress?

As a Fish

. . . . THOMAS TEICHMAN

The fish

Shwimming
shinuuous
shwhirling

floats freely

boneless
filmy
flashing
body
fins

glides glibly

flanks
bends
flutter
flow

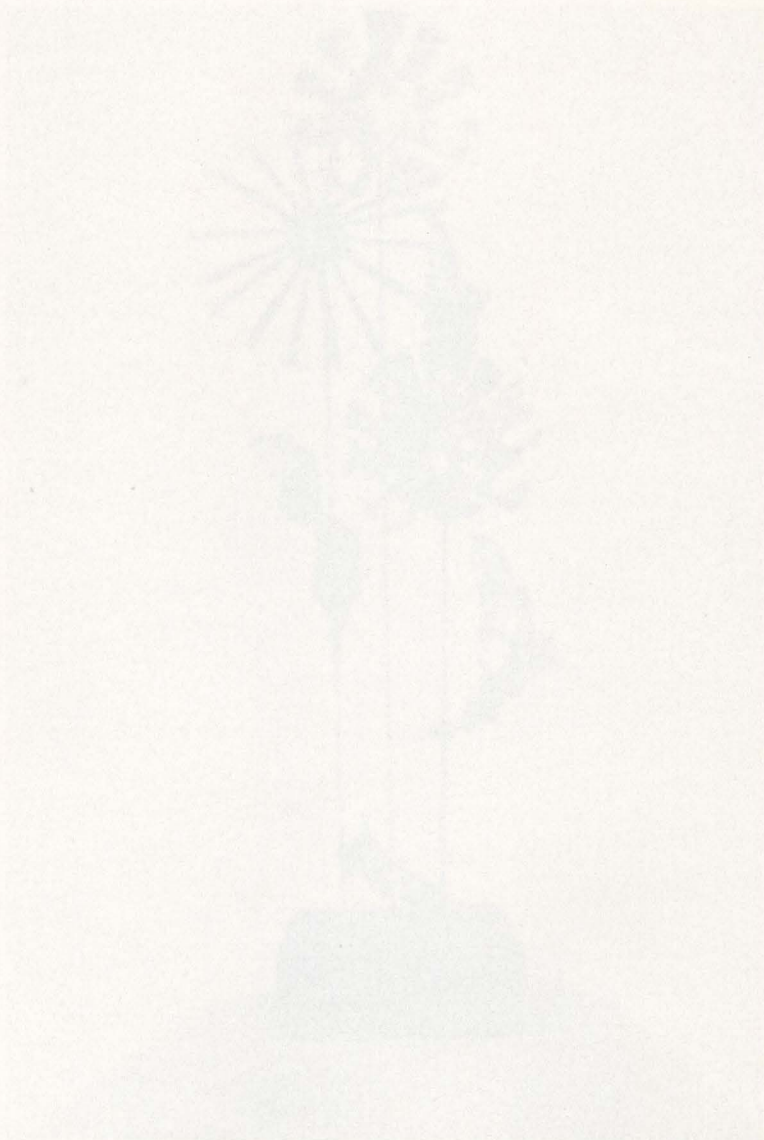
fluid fish

waiting
hatching
mating

catching
caught
finished fish



1950s Metal sculpture by artist
Richard Lippold, titled "The Sunburst"
The sculpture is made of metal rods and
pieces of metal, including a sunburst.



Asteraceae

Asteraceae

The Abandoned One

. . . RUTH OETENGER

Love waits outside our door —
 An abandoned waif, shivering in the cold.
 Melting brown eyes meet ours of cold grey steel.
 I look into your face—
 It is a face I have loved well.
 No different than it was yesterday,
 It is I that changed.
 I cannot leave my pretty independence
 To be burdened by the childish needs of love.
 Standing now at the doorway of this heated barren house,
 I see the child look in patiently, longingly.
 My heart is such that I could stand
 And watch her die from cold.
 I have a growing sense of independence,
 Freedom to be nourished.
 I have not time or food for silly babbling children.

How large her eyes, how thin her cloak—
 Perhaps I could just hand her
 Something warm to drink.
 There would be no obligations then.
 "Feed a stray cat and you'll never get rid of it"—
 My mother used to scream,
 Snatching the milk from my small hands.
 But so innocent, so all alone,
 On this the coldest day of winter.
 "Come in child, but mind you wipe your feet.
 I'll keep you just a little while,
 Maybe till the spring.
 Now sit up straight, and watch how you drink your milk—"
 So cold and tiny your shaking hands—
 "Don't cry honey, this can be your home, for a while—anyway."

I shake off my daydreams, like a dog shakes off flees,
 And rise from the drafty crumbling window sill.
 Standing irresolute for a moment,
 I watch the tall blond man I almost left
 Because I would not sacrifice a little independence
 For the sake of love.
 He sits in his chair looking like a hurt child,
 He has need of me, I knew that all along.

What I never knew was that I too needed him,
 I, who proudly declare I needed no one,
 I, who was too proud to lay my head on any man's shoulder
 In search of comfort—
 Go to him now and ask forgiveness.
 I shall learn quietly and in little ways.

As She Saw Me

. . . . JAMES HUMMER

I saw the girl who broke my heart last night
 and wished that she would shatter it again.
 I would love her once again,
 but two designs in plated metal,
 one on her finger, one pinned on her dress
 say that I must not.
 (once they merely said that none should know),
 and she put them in a little box
 in order that she could love me alone
 and put them on again when he was I.

I saw her, and she taught her metal baubles
 how to shine.
 I saw her, and I did wish not so much
 that she were mine
 as I were hers.

Right now I am my own,
 but that is not enough for me.
 I would be so much more
 if I were hers.

The Ruins
LOS DICKSON
The Puzzle

JAMES HUNTER
JOANNE KELLEY

There was this enormous tree, the fragrant chinaberry tree, suddenly tilting, dark and slow like a cloud. Jeannie's grandmother watched the tree as it came down among the other trees. The force of the tornado had brought many trees down in the grove on the lower side of the Beck's house. Power lines had been severed by the falling trees, and driveways were strewn with broken limbs and fallen leaves . . .

It had been just an ordinary Sunday afternoon, one of those lazy kinds of days when you like to sit back and relax. As the afternoon wore on, the sky became cloudy and the clouds took on varying ominous shapes. Mr. Gregory decided he had better take his daughter home before it started to rain.

"Jeannie! You better come along now. We're going to the hospital to see your mother this afternoon. She'll be glad to see you. You know she gets terribly lonely in her hospital room."

"I'll be there in a minute, Daddy. I want to finish putting this puzzle together first."

"You better come now. It looks as if it's going to rain."

"Daddy, can I take my puzzle to the hospital to show mommy?"

"Yes, dear. Tell your grandmother good-bye now, for we must leave."

"Bye, Grandma. See you next Sunday."

"Good-bye, Jeannie. Tell your mother I send her my love."

Jim Gregory left his mother's house and started to walk to his car. My, it certainly does look like we're going to have a storm. We sure need the rain, so I guess it will be for the best, he thought.

He and Jeannie got in the car and started to back out of the garage. Just as the car went backward, the wind brought the huge chinaberry tree upon the Gregory car. There was a scream from within, then silence. Jeannie's grandmother watched the tree as it came crashing down, too terrified to react. When the ambulance came, they found the pieces of Jeannie's puzzle in her hand.

Portrait

. . . JAMES HUMMER

You would paint a portrait of her?

Oh ask me not her height,
or weight or measurements—
at least until it's possible
to measure up the soul.

She's fair and delicate
and flowing auburn is her hair.
white hands
soft hands, and gentle voice

her voice knows laughter well,
her laughter hints of heaven

her eyes have looked on heaven
and have seen at other times
the first and fairest
circle of the pit.

sometimes an imp peeks through her eyes,
but never looks for long

she looks with love
and walks in wonder
when she walks with me,
for she is mine.

And she is everything.

The Ruins

LOIS DICKSON

It was a perfect day to go to the country. The late August seemed almost like autumn on this day with the crisp-looking blue sky and the slight browning and drying-out of the leaves and grass. It was cooler than it had been during the past few weeks.

"Wish he wouldn't drive so fast — I don't think I've ever ridden with anybody who ever drove as fast as he does. I hope we get there safely!" I thought. He was a criminologist in Rome, and I wondered whether he had ever heard of a law against speeding. But then I remembered there was no such law in Italy. If there were, I am sure he would have known about it — those brown eyes small as fox's, and the little black mustache. He looked like the perfect detective. He was a friend of Dr. and Mrs. White, who had asked the other girls and me to join them in spending the day in Viterno. The other girls were riding in the car following us. "We're going so fast, we're sure to lose them," I worried. But I forgot about that as I glanced outside the car window to see only flashes of trees, grass, and the resemblance of an occasional car going the other way. Dr. and Mrs. White were unusually silent during the ride, and I guessed they were frightened a little by the speed of the vehicle. Marco, another friend of the Whites, rarely spoke either. I wished that we were in Viterno. The only hint of actually getting there was the steady flash of white kilometer poles as we passed them. I began to count, "One . . . two . . . three . . . sixty-one . . . sixty-two . . ."

We stopped. I climbed out of a little whale-shaped foreign car. It was good to stand on terra firma again. In a few moments the second car drove up next to ours. Paulo, the son of the criminologist, and David, the son of the Whites, helped my three friends out of the car. "This is Lake Brissano," the criminologist explained to us. We stood high above a large blue lake. I looked down the steep field of grass, brown and green, dotted here and there with yellow, pink and blue, beyond the green marsh, onto the lake extending itself behind the pined mountains, up to the blue sky with large white clouds. A breeze rustled past and I shivered. I looked at the lake again and saw the breeze shivering the surface.

"Only a few more kilometers and we'll be there," the criminologist said as we returned to the cars. And it did seem only a few more kilometers until we were approaching the small village of Viterno. There was nothing exceptional about this Italian village—another massive golden-brown, clay-like gate and wall standing stubbornly and dividing the village in some unnown way. The wall was very old, and it had been built for some purpose the criminologist was explaining. Now it just remained. I turned in the car to look back at some rectangular structures rising above the other buildings. It was the same color as the gate and wall. You could see bells at the top inside of the structure.

Before taking us to his home, the criminologist asked us to a restaurant for lunch. It was a very simple restaurant with a low ceiling and brown-stoned

walls. Only a few people sat at the tables, and they stared at our comparatively large group as we walked in. The waiters smiled.

As we were sipping anisette, a conversation developed over Goldwater and Johnson. Dr. White said Johnson "had it in the bag." He said we were getting more socialistic all the time. The conversation divided into groups of three or four. I asked David if he didn't think we'd see a swing in the other direction.

"Are you so naive as to believe that?" he answered. I didn't argue the point—he was a Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton.

After lunch, we drove farther into the country to see the criminologist's farm. We drove down a long dusty road, sided by olive groves and citrus trees. The "farm" consisted of two buildings: a house and a barn, sheltering one horse and one donkey. Outside the barn was an old-fashioned haystack. An old woman with a scarf on her head bent over to sweep the scattered wheat into a pile. She picked up the pile and shook it. The grain dropped to the ground. She bent over and collected the grain and stuffed it into a faded sack hanging from her shoulders.

The criminologist wanted to take us to the ruins of an Etruscan theater, not yet excavated by the state, he said. We drove down the farm road until we reached the paved road and followed it until we reached a rather secluded place surrounded by green-brown rolling fields. The semi-circular seats of large rock pieces and the curved row of arched trees at the back of the theater were remaining. Dr. White and David were soon scavenging the area for artifacts. David was in a low area where there were large rocks hiding him. He shouted to his father who was in another area of a higher level. David had found a few pieces of black pottery. It meant something to the two of them, both having an avid interest in this sort of thing. They separated and hunted again.

I couldn't really see the point in just picking here and there, messing up the clues that a real archeologist might find. But as I roamed the area, pretending to be looking for something, I thought of the time when I was much younger, playing in some woods, some secluded place that I could call my own. I played what might be called the role of Mesolithic Man. I would gather nuts and berries and grains, put them on a stone, and grind them into meal. And my friends would be members of the family, and we would make a world of ever-ever.

I walked back to the ruins of the theater and found Marco sitting there. I went over and sat beside him. We started talking about the pebbles and chipped stones on the gray-rock seats and about the lichens that made intricate patterns on the rock. I said I didn't like history.

"Why? I think it is very valuable!" he disagreed.

"A Spanish philosopher said something about present history being a mirror of the past."

"That is true," he said.

I didn't answer him. I just sat there looking at the lichens and wishing I could continue looking at them forever.

Waiting and Wishing

. . . ROBERT TAYLOR

He always got that upset feeling in his stomach when his father failed to come home from work on time. Allen knew what this meant. First, it would be a long evening with everyone waiting and acting like nothing was really happening. Someone would nervously say some completely unimportant words just to try to push away clouds which smothered, yet kept them together. To an outsider it would seem like a normal family evening. But Allen knew that no one was really watching the television program that was on. Each member of the family was thinking his own thoughts concerning their father.

Allen began to wonder of the other possibilities which might be keeping him late — a flat tire, a chance for overtime work at the plant, maybe even an automobile wreck. Allen caught himself just before it became a complete thought. He tried to push it back but could not win. He was hoping, almost praying, it would be a wreck. He didn't want his father really killed, just a little — no, maybe he did want him killed. Yes, that was it. He wished his father would die. Almost anything would be better than to have him come home drunk so often.

Allen remembered other times when he had helped his father into the house, sat around while he spoke of hating his boss, Allen's mother, and himself, then finally helped his father to bed.

He was almost glad when his father would come home. It was as if a great responsibility was taken out of his hands. Then he would not have to wonder about what might have happened. He would know and could hope for nothing else.

Allen's stomach was becoming more uneasy all the time. It had always affected him this way, always his stomach. He wished he could vomit, but he knew this would never happen. He was too nervous to do anything.

He tried to think of other things that were happier. He thought of his twelfth birthday last month. His father had been so nice to him then. Everyone had been. He knew he really did love his father. He wished his birthday could be today, and that his stomach would stop hurting, and that his father was dead, or at least not drunk.

Then he heard the car door shut. Allen knew the sound of their car door. He could feel the tension in the room. It seemed like a lifetime had passed before they heard the door knob turning. Time stood still as everyone looked at the man in the doorway.

"How's everyone," he spoke as he steadied himself against the unsteady door.

To Patterson

. . . RUTH OETENGER

Though I have sworn to myself
 A thousand times,
 Through my every thought and gesture
 That I do not love you—
 There is something in the way the sun
 Filtered through your black curly hair
 just now,
 Something about the way you hold the cigarette
 we're sharing,
 Something in your deep voice grates
 Against my own soft whisper,
 That caused a burning in my thighs,
 A pounding in my head,
 A sensation that maybe is not love—
 But you have charmed me once again.
 And as I drift back upon the soft grass,
 My thoughts melt into haze
 And I abandon myself to whatever this power
 may be
 And the longing of your body's weight
 On mine.

Important: Deadline

RANDY DIETRICH

He went slowly on, turning his face to the pane, though he could have seen nothing real in the whirling world outside except an occasional signal lamp, a light in a window, a small country station. The trip would be long and monotonous, Tom knew that, but at least it would give him a lot of time to think. Time to think, a place to be alone, that was what he really needed now. And, if nothing else, his destination on this trip would give him that. The lights on the train illuminated a sign showing that he was passing through San Antonio.

"Still quite a distance to travel yet," said the man sitting alongside of him.

"Yes," Tom replied, all the while thinking how much he hated the man sitting next to him. It was really what the man symbolized, rather than the man himself, that Tom so much despised. He stared out into the darkness again.

No one ever did understand his own ways and ideas, Tom thought. It had always been the world against him, since his college days at least. Before college everything had been okay. He had never questioned the things which had bothered him so very much of late—things like religion, small town life, respect for authority. His professors had changed all of that.

How shocked he had been when, while sitting in a college classroom, he heard someone express the viewpoint that religion was fake. He had wanted to speak out then, but he could not get himself to do it. Later on he was told by a history professor to watch what he said when he returned to his small home town because people would be watching everything he did and analyzing everything he said. Tom did not believe that that could happen in his home town, but, as the years passed, he found that it did. It disturbed him greatly.

He had decided in his last year of college to become a rebel. By that time he was totally fed up with regulations, rules, and people, in general. Tradition seemed to be his human bondage, and he vowed to break free of it as soon as possible. People were bound by tradition and afraid to break away from it. Men worked at jobs they hated day after day, year after year, and never left them. A man stayed with a woman for years when, by all rights, he should have left her long ago. Tom did not know if these things were a result of tradition or of something that was lacking in man's physical makeup, but he was going to make sure these things never happened to him.

But his first job did become unbearable. People were always telling him what to do, and the clock was always telling him where to be. And, in addition to all that, his students never seemed to care if they learned anything or not. He felt as if he had to do something to show his manhood.

It was really too bad that girl had come to see him after school that day when everything had gone wrong. She could not get anything from his lectures, she said. She could not understand the points he tried to get across in class. When he had tried to explain to her, she had laughed uncontrollably at him. He had grabbed her, and shook her, and . . .

"We're just about there," the man next to him said, snapping Tom from his thoughts.

Tom looked out into the night again. Lights were approaching, indicating the train was nearing a large city. The first sign he saw gave evidence to the fact that he had reached his destination. In large letters the sign said, "Dallas State Prison."

Fate Fluttered

. . . LEONARD JONES

Leaves strained

in vain

against

the unseen intruder

And breaking away

down

come

fluttering

Like sudden words

lost

in night's silent shroud

helplessly conquered

and carried

in meaningless flight

and cast off

forgotten

To die.

The Interview

. . . PAUL PERENCEVIC

Edward Anderson sat in the small office, nervously awaiting his interview. This was the day he had been waiting for. This interview was the last step in a series of application procedures before he got his job. He hoped he could impress Sinclair Taylor, the Vice-President of Dalton Machinery, Inc., and the man who would interview him.

Now the door to an adjoining office opened and Taylor's secretary walked toward him.

"Mr. Taylor will see you now, sir," she said, with a broad smile.

"Thank you," he answered shortly.

As he entered Taylor's office, Anderson was immediately impressed. His shoes seemed to sink into the thick carpeting. Looking around the room, he noticed several expensive-looking pictures on the walls. Taylor's desk, immediately in front of him, was made of fine, dark mahogany.

Very nice, he thought to himself as he looked around the room once more.

Taylor sat working behind his desk, but did not notice Anderson. He was in his forties, had partially grayed, and was wearing expensive clothes. He had a dark complexion, and the expression on his face made him look like an angry man.

Finally, he looked up from his desk, but showed no expression.

"You're Anderson. Pull up a chair and sit down," he said, in a gruff, low voice.

Anderson drew a chair up to the desk and sat down.

"Well, your application says you've had experience with heavy machines," remarked Taylor, as he looked down at Anderson's application form.

"Yes, I have," replied Anderson.

Don't even look at me when you talk, thought Anderson. I don't think too much of you, Taylor, and I don't think I like you.

"See here you were head machinist at your last job. Why'd you leave it?" asked Taylor, still looking down at the application.

"I didn't care for my boss," was Anderson's polite reply.

And I may not take your job either, for the same reason.

"What about farm machinery, Mr. Anderson? Do you have any background in that?" asked Taylor dryly.

"Yes, that's about all I've worked with," replied Anderson.

What an interview! thought Anderson. It's right on the application that I've worked with farm machinery, and you're too stupid to see it . . . How did you ever get behind that desk?

"Good," said Taylor briefly. "Did you like working with farm tools?" he asked as he raised his head and looked at Anderson.

"Yes, I did," Anderson replied cordially. "I see a challenge in it. I like to find ways of improving the parts and making them better."

My god, you finally looked at me, thought Anderson in amazement.

"I like you, Anderson. You seem to show a lot of interest in your work," said Taylor, with little or no sincerity in his voice.

"Thank you," replied Anderson with a smile.

"Yes, I like my work, too. But I also enjoy fishing," remarked Taylor, with a smile on his face. "Tell me, do you like fishing?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact I do," answered Anderson. "I try to get out as often as I can."

You may be all right after all. You seem interested in me now, Taylor.

"Well, I'll do my best to get you in here, Mr. Anderson," said Taylor. "And when you get the job, maybe we can do some fishing on the side."

"Yes, that would be good," replied Anderson, with a slight smile.

Taylor rose from his chair and extended his hand.

"Well, I'm sure things will work out, Mr. Anderson. By the way, what is your first name?" asked Taylor.

"Edward," was Anderson's reply as he smiled.

You are okay, thought Anderson happily.

"All right, Ed, we'll contact you as soon as the application goes through," said Taylor.

They shook hands and Anderson left the office. He stood outside the door for a moment, thinking.

Yes, I like you, Mr. Taylor. You're all right in my book, Anderson thought.

In the office, Taylor sat down in his chair again. He reached across his desk for a rubber stamp, sighed as he looked at the application before him, shook his head, then stamped one word across the front of Anderson's application—UNSATISFACTORY.

Basic Training

. . . DEAN R. KOONTZ

It's just like Johnny-Go-Round-The-Mulberry-Bush or Hide-And-Go-Seek, Jimson thought.

The men were lined thirty to a row, five rows deep inside the landing craft, huddled against the cold spray of the rough water that misted over the bulwark.

Just like Hide-And-Go-Seek. There's nothing to fear about a battle, nothing but fear itself. You go hide, someone seeks. Just hope for "allie-allie-inisfreee."

One hundred and fifty men were packed tightly like rats in a hole waiting to rush out after food under the nose of the cat, the awful lead nose of the cat. Perspiration permeated the air with a tangy, sick-sweet perfume. The sounds of one hundred and fifty throbbing hearts, shuffling feet, scratching fingers scraped the silence of the night. The sight of seven score and ten gray forms humped like sleeping camels was surrealistic.

Jimson could hear the echoing of Jake Studor as it cut through the rushing ocean roar. Studor was singing a song that had been popular when they had all been back home in the States during the last few weeks of basic training:

"In the summertime, life is good to you;
Your hair yellow straw, your eyes cornflower blue.
Yes, life is good to you.
I pledge that I'll be true.
I pledge that I'll be true.
In the wintertime—"

He forced his thoughts away from Studor and focused his eyes on his knees. He did not want to remember the girl back home, for that made it all the more difficult to step onto a foreign beach to face a seemingly omnipotent enemy.

And he felt terribly inadequate. Crawling an obstacle course in North Carolina and shooting at cloth dummies was a much easier task than facing a living enemy with real guns that shot back. There was so much here that was not in basic training. In North Carolina, there had not been fear.

The non-com he had been under those seven weeks—a Negro sergeant with a voice like a bull and more understanding than a priest—told them one important thing before they left the States:

"Knowing how to swim doesn't make a fish; seven weeks of training and a uniform isn't going to make you brave."

But Studor didn't seem bothered in the least. In fact, if one listened to Jake, one would be certain that he was the bravest man in the world. He would tell you so.

"What's the matter with you joes?" Studor asked in a loud steady voice. He craned his head over his shoulders; blank faces met his stare. Blank faces lined in five rows, faces like doodles drawn upon the snow belly of a dead fish.

"I don't expect you're all cowards," he said. "Let's face up to this and be happy about it."

"Shut up, loudmouth." The voice was indistinct, its direction uncertain.

"If I see the man who said that, I'll flatten him. But I suspect I won't see him," he said sarcastically.

"Keep the noise down, all of you," snapped the officer at the end of the first line.

Jake went back to humming his song, but it was a piercing hum that sliced through the gray night air, stabbing through the dark and dampness, and cut into one hundred and forty-nine hearts like a hot blade of torture.

The small bulkhead behind which the pilot stood groaned like an old man with arthritic bones. A large wave slapped them, roaring up like a geyser, and spewed its foamy slush across the deck, washing the area in front of the bulkhead, soaking several dozen men nearest that end of the craft.

Then there was the rough scrape of metal gouging into sand, screeching, moaning. The landing gates clattered down upon the pebbly beach, and the huddled rats ran pell mell into the cat's lair. There was darkness for them. The beach was slate-like, fading into stygian night, visible only feet ahead. As their eyes became somewhat accustomed to the lack of illumination, the huge, black sprawling form of the jungle loomed six hundred yards inland.

Jimson ran, bent double like an old man carrying the burden of time. He skittered to and fro up the sand, and in the nearly organic darkness, he could hear the panting of others around him, the crunching of sand under boot heels.

The bullets spewed forth like lead mosquitoes. Ripping out of the foliage, exploding into the sand like meteorites, digging small graves and burying themselves, they filled the night with screaming. Then there was a different kind of screaming to his left followed by a strange gurgling noise. As if jolted from a nightmare into the reality of a darkened bedroom, he knew this was no game of Hide-And-Go-Seek. The dream was over.

He fell flat to the ground and wriggled forward, tasting the fine glass-like grains of sand on his tongue, tickling in his nose. He wondered when the world would turn upside-down, and he hoped desperately to live.

Ten seconds later, the world turned upside-down. According to plan, the big ships far out on the black sea began lobbing shells into the green hell of the jungle. He did as he had been trained, and slipped the digging attachment onto the end of his rifle. Lying flat, arms forming a triangle above his head, he began to dig in.

They congealed into groups along the beach. Like lizards they came, the bayonet tongues of steel flickering ahead of them. There were three crammed into the pit Jimson helped to construct. Silently, they faced one another. MacReady sat opposite Jimson, and Studor sat between them.

Jimson felt the pounding of his heart ease, the life-throb in his temples slowed to a dull booming. He drew some consolation from the fact that he was with Studor. Some of the courage seemed to be transferred from the big man to himself in an osmosis of the soul.

Studor began to hum.

"Shut up, you imbecile!" MacReady snapped between clenched teeth. He

was a big man, towering two inches above even Studor, out-weighting him by thirty pounds. He planned to be a career man in the army. That is, if he lived through the night.

The shells from the giant shadow ships erupted into dragon life, belching flame, shaking the very earth with the concussion of their **Kami-Kazi** purpose. "You think they can hear us above that roar? God, man, if I want to sing—"

MacReady was fuming. He, for some reason Jimson could not quite understand, disliked Studor. Oh, surely, the big man was not the kind who mixed well, but he did have many admirable traits. "You damn, false-faced kraut!" MacReady spit the words out like hot acid.

Studor gurgled thickly, reached for MacReady's throat. Jimson pushed himself between them after a moment's hesitation and fought to stop the encounter. "Settle down. I don't care if you two want to get shot to hell, but— He wanted very badly to live.

MacReady grimaced but eased and kept quiet.

"You keep him quiet then! You keep his damn mouth tied shut!" Studor clipped the words short.

"You're the one who needs shutting up," MacReady whispered hoarsely. "You're the braggart who shoots off his mouth at everyone else. You're the—"

The grenade hit the ground at the edge of their crater, spraying sand upon impact, and tumbled lazily into the pit at their feet.

Like three marble statues chiseled by the fine and delicate hand of a sensitive master, they sat. MacReady, his mouth slightly open, his hand frozen as he reached for a rosary pinned to his shirt. Jimson, like a clothed David sitting, young and beautiful in his youth — now shocked into utter helplessness. And Studor, his face gone all white like limp gulls stricken by disease, floating in brackish water.

How many seconds? Four?

Four seconds until three men would be snuffed out of existence, ripped limb from limb and scattered over the arenaceous earth to leak their blood, to fertilize the unfertile soil.

Three seconds.

MacReady closed his mouth but could not speak. He seemed to be silently cursing his impotency. His fingers clutched at the prayer beads, their smooth black roundness spotting the blood drained white of his knuckles.

Jimson was young; he wanted to live. But he could not move. He could think only of this one thing: "Knowing how to swim doesn't make you a fish; seven weeks of training and a uniform isn't—"

Two seconds.

And suddenly the tableau was broken by the least and most likely to act. Studor lurched forward and flopped onto the small, corrugated sphere, shielding them with his body.

The subdued **tick-tock** sound vibrated in his every bone. And in the last second, he screamed something that pierced even the munitions roar, something that stopped their small sand world in its orbit. "My chest! My Holy God, my chest!"

The drone of weapons was still loud but dwindling as the night faded into the dawn. The orders came from entrenchment to entrenchment like autumn ghosts on the breeze. They whispered from half-seen faces: "Move out. New

wave. Move out, move, move. . . "

Before leaving the pit and striking for the jungle, Jimson took one last look at Studor. The broad face was surprisingly narrowed, yellowed like an old man in the throes of jaundice, skin creased in a look of horror, eyes wide, teeth bared. The faulty grenade lay unexploded in the sand next to him. The megaton of fear within him had been touched off.

Jimson looked away and pressed on, humming a song that had been popular when he had been back in the States, during the beginning of—he smiled—his basic training.

Invitation

. . . GARY NELSON

I

Through darkness, around corners,
with a grin the little man
talks in whispers,
selling his goods
to lonely men.

Pleasure-for-a-Price
Bedmate-for-a-Night

Comes around when time is up,
sticks his share in his pocket
with all the lint,
then licks his lips
and crawls away.

My
 JOE DICKSON

II

Waiting in a darkened room
 for the next-in-line,
 the next tall short
 thin fat bald hairy
 Caucasian Mongoloid
 sadistic masochistic
 stranger.

Waiting for the entrance,
 the leer, the searching eyes and hands,
 she makes her preparations.

And when the waiting's over
 when her customer arrives,
 she skillfully displays her wares,
 her face a mask of boredom,
 and sometimes she enjoys it.

III

"Smitty sent me."
 She rolls over and slowly puts out
 her cigarette on the oaken floor.
 Soon inexperienced hands explore
 the secrets of experienced flesh
 perspiration, moans,
 the too brief release . . .

The little man outside the door
 is waiting for his share.
 I pay
 and walk away.
 Now am I a man?

of the room.

Mr. Jarrows

. . . LOIS DICKSON

He crossed the empty frigid classroom. He heated only the single room that was his lodging, adjoining the classroom, and looking onto the plateau to the east. He liked to keep the classroom cold so that his students would not fall asleep when he was trying to teach them Latin constructions. Today they were to begin reading Cicero's *De Senectute* (On Old Age), a work Mr. Jarrows considered to be of the greatest value as far as construction was concerned. He loved teaching and reading and learning. "Discipline is the first virtue," he always said. The mind, he thought, was to be cultivated to its fullest extent. The means through which this could be accomplished were proper allocation of one's time, devotion to one's study, and concentration.

He always hated to see the sun fall into the west behind the mountains. He hated to see the way his children, his students became joyful when they were outside the little schoolhouse. "And after all I was really teaching them," he said to himself. The great subtleties of the mind we were experiencing today, the discipline I was teaching them — where is all that now? he thought, turning to gather his pile of books and papers stacked neatly on the desk. He carried the material out of the classroom and into the hall, until he was in the main room of his lodging. It was a quiet place, well-suited to a full night's devotion to study. He struck a match and started to light the fire, but a draft caught the match and it went out. Striking another match, he heard the familiar knock on his door. "Oh, horrors. It's that Sarah again," he said to himself. He lit the fire hesitantly and went over to the door. Smiling, he opened it. "Was just going to make some tea, dear. Let me have your coat. Haven't seen you for awhile."

"Yes. Been busy," she said. Sarah was a young adolescent who lived in Carbunk's Hollow, just down the road about a mile from the schoolhouse. She did not attend classes; she was rather "slow," her grandmother told people. She liked coming to see Mr. Jarrows — he was always so nice to her. He was nice to her because her grandmother had a lot to say about who the village schoolmaster was.

"Sarah, look at this beautiful book. It is one of my favorites. There are such beautiful letters in here."

"I wanna be a nurse. Oh, I just can't wait! I keep thinking of that and how my mother died. Don't tell my grandmother. I just keep thinkin' about her all the time. I wanna be a nurse."

"That's nice, Sarah. You will be. All you need is discipline . . ."

"I wanna be a nurse and my grandmother says, 'Well, you can try, Sarah.' But other people say, 'You'll never be a nurse. You're too dumb.' See, ya know, something happened to my brain when I was born. Now it's gettin' better."

"Excuse me, dear, the tea water's boiling."

She followed him over to the old stove, black as the shadows in the corners of the room.

"My grandmother says if I can't be a nurse that's O.K. I said I'd cook for her and take care of her when she's sick and gettin' old. I wanna learn how to make beds the right way. Oh, I just can't wait!"

"Your time will come in all due measure, Sarah, dear."

"Well, I know my grandmother needs me now. I promised I wouldn't be long."

"Oh, Sarah, so sorry you have to leave so soon. Come back again."

"I will," she said.

She put on her green coat and skipped out the door. "Good-bye," she said waving her hand.

Mr. Jarrows shut the door and moved hurriedly into the chair at the desk by the stove. He read for awhile and then got up to mix something in the pot for supper. He read for a longer time after eating. Then he went to bed for only a short while, so that he could get up before dawn to prepare for the day in the classroom. He read thoroughly.

Morning into Night

LOIS DICKSON

When early morning brings my eye
 To seeing mists of milky-white outside
 The pane and floating over foliage wide
 And green, soothing torn-up dogwood bark, I
 Like to think a new-born lamb has come
 Upon this scene, is waiting for the sun
 To lick away its matrix, life begun;
 To think, when trudging scheduled steps and dumb,
 I was before alive: my life began
 In morning, now in mourning ends the stop—
 Watch, the mists are tinged of grey: the top
 Of business-swirl leaves exhaust, and can
 No further go, and when the night lamb licks,
 I ask the lamb, "Lick away the matrix."

Thoughts (Now Totaling Six)

. . . JEFFREY WALKER

IV

Messages of nature written
in frost, tell me first your
alphabet

V

In anger, I threw a branch into a stream
to change its course.
A beaver thanked me

VI

A swing teased into awkward motion
by the wind, will not resist
the children

