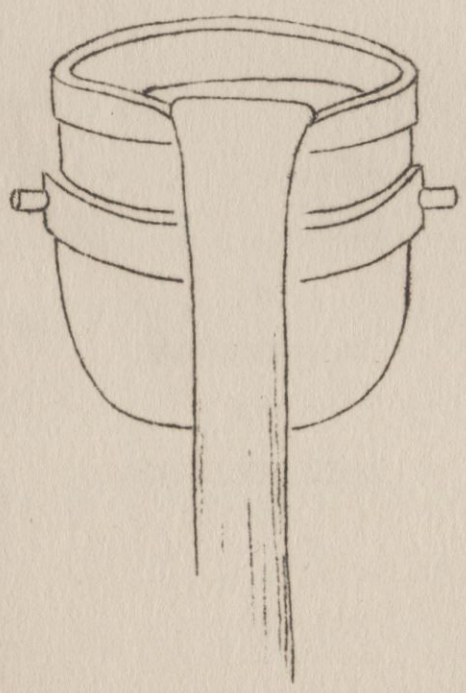
THE CRUCIBLE

[1942]



The

CRUCIBLE

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MR. GEORGE WASHINGTON SMITH

Mr. George Washington Smith was not the type of person that you would expect to meet on the street in some modern city of to-day, but there was a time when the Mr. Smiths were very common indeed. Mr. Smith lived about forty million years ago somewhere in southern Europe. He was a very funny looking individual, having practically no fore-head, and about the same amount of clothes. Mr. Smith could not talk very well, he had to use a few grunts and groans to mean about everything he knew to talk about, which was not much.

One day Mr. Smith was out looking for some more wood to put on his fire. Oh, yes! They had discovered by this time that burning would make things taste better. He looked all about him, but could find no more wood. In disgust he leaned against an old tree to collect his thoughts. The weight of his body caused the tree to fall and break into little bits just the size to fit his fire-place. Mr. Smith was astounded over this and spent the rest of the day pushing over trees.

The next day Mr. Smith, remembering the fun he had the day before, picked up his staff, and saying "umb" to his family, went out to gather some more wood. Mr. Smith found that he could not push over some of the trees. This made him rather angry. In fact, he got so mad that he picked up a big rock and threw it at one of the trees. Luckily he hit the tree and it fell over. Mr. Smith jumped up and down in glee. He was so happy that he said "bumf" and proceeded to pick up more rocks and knock over more trees until all the small trees were gone.

After a couple of days of knocking trees over with rocks, Mr. Smith discovered that a rock with a narrow edge would make a dent in the tree, and if it did not fall over he could make some more dents in the tree, and when he had enough the tree would fall over. This, decided Mr. Smith, was pretty swell. He spent the rest of the afternoon picking up rocks with narrow edges amd making dents in the larger trees until they fell over. By this time Mr. Smith figured that he had something, besides more wood than he could use to roast a Mammoth.

Mr. Smith spent the ensuing months picking up rocks and cutting down trees He found that he could knock chunks out of the rock and make the edge narrower, and with a sharper edge make bigger dents.

One day Mr. Smith was walking through the woods knocking down trees with his favorite stone when he saw another man, also knocking down trees. The other man was using a large club. Mr. Smith watched for a while, and then demonstrated his great discovery to the other man. As the other man was of equal intelligence he realized the merit of Mr. Smith's rocks. But he also knew that he had something in his club idea; maybe he was just a little conceited. So the two great men put their heads together and said, "Bimp." Tying the rock on to the club, they proceeded to cut down all the trees they could find.

This tree cutting spree was not only the beginning of our modern axe, but the beginning of our coal deposits, and a few deserts. Of course some people say that this took time. Well, I guess it did, but Mr. George Washington Smith lived to be quite an old man in his community. Archeologists have found the ruins of an ancient lumber business with a stone sign hanging in front of the door reading

MR. GEORGE WASHINGTON SMITH

WOOD CUT CHEAP

Three trees as low as two
dinasour teeth

---------John Akeley

Life is

A moment in

An eon of time. Death

Is a brief interval between

Two lives.

----------Dale Olmstead

BUT THE SUN CAME UP JUST THE SAME

Susy kept running from the closet to the bed until I could stand it no longer.

"Susy," I began grimly,"if you don't stop hopping around like a mad hare-"

"Oh,I'll have to borrow your stockings," she said. "Mine are so full of holes they look like Pearl Harbor after the Japs went home." She grinned at me and hauled a shoe out from under the dresser. "Find my other shoe for me like a good girl while I find the comb."

"Susy, what are you doing?" I asked,looking in the desk. The shoe was not there. My search ended when I picked up my pet panda. The shoe was stuck defiantly on his left hind paw. My soft ,wooly panda was the one thing I would not part with. Wherever I went, he followed. I called him Wordsworth. Susy,who did not like pandas but did like Robert Taylor,had papered her side of the room with pictures of her decorative hero. The pictures were arranged very neatly in a huge V, a symbol, it seemed to me,of cooperation among geese. My wall was barren.

"I have changed," she announced with a Garbo"I want to be alone" intonation. "Tonight I am going to a party,a big, social party." I stared at her incredulously.

"But Susy, you don't like things like that," I protested. She waved the comb that she had found under the rug.

"Yes, but I have changed. Beginning tonight I am going to become a bud of society." She wriggled out of her skirt and threw it on a chair that already had three books,a sewing box and a can of kidney beans perched on it. "You see,I'm tired of missing everything,tired of living in these two little boxes we call home. Out there in the

world is what I want, and I'm going to get it. I'm going to be like those people who have what they want. I'm going to dress as they do, eat what they do, talk as they do,drink what they drink. Oh,I'm going to start living,really and truly living,instead of decaying in this damned apartment that the rats won't even live in." She paused for breath and I toyed with a radio we had acquired since last winter. I was frightened,for what would Susy do in a mood like this? She was irresponsible enough when in a contented frame of mind;so I could expect nothing less from her now than a fourth degree murder.

"But golly,Susy, you were never so discontented before." fearfully as she jerked my stockings in place.

"That's 'cause I never thought before." She nodded her head sagely. From downstairs we could hear the landlady's two sons and one daughter mastering "Deep in the heart of Texas". The daughter played the melody on the piano and the sons clapped at each pause of the music. One son, however,forgot to clap at the same time as the other, and neither could keep pace with the pianist.

"Tonight",Susy continued, "Iam going to begin doing everyting I have missed. I'm going to change into an entirely different person. You wait and see. By morning not one thing will be the same,not one thing," she ended dramatically.

"And what are some of the things you missed?"

"Why,lots and lots of 'em. Good food, a beautiful house,pretty clothes,a grand time,and plenty of time to play. That's why I'm afraid to die; I'm afraid I'll miss something. Don't you ever feel that way?" she asked curiously.

"A good many times," I answered,trying to give my eyes that dreamy look that Susy disliked so. "I want to see Broadway at midnight and Times Square on New Year's Eve. I want to go to an opera.

and before I die I want to take opium and I want to have a baby." Susy gaped at me dazedly.

"But-but you don't even like babies," she stammered.

"I know, but I don't want to miss having one," I grinned. "Curiosity, you know." She groaned aloud and renewed her attack on her clothes. In half an hour she was gone to the party that was going to begin the change in her life.

I tried to concentrate on my history assignment but found concentration an impossibility. Would Susy drink too much? Would she make a fool of herself in front of those people? (We always referred to the upper class of society as "those people".) I worried and fretted on the bed with my history and Wordsworth to keep me company. But both were poor company and at last, in fine disgust, I threw the history book aside and picked up Boccaccio's Decameron Tales that I had sneaked from the library. If anything could divert my worries from my roommate, those "Tales" could. They did-for the first hour. When my mind began to stray even from those wild triangle plots, I knew that I was beaten. So I went to bed.

When I awoke, the light was on and the clock's hands pointed ominously at three o'clock. I blinked drowsily, then sat up in bed with a jerk that knocked Wordsworth to the floor. Suzy stood in the middle of the room and looked at me through puffy eyelids. Only a feeble grip on the bedpost kept her swaying body from dropping to the floor.

"Oh-h-h, oh"-she moaned. "I'm sick, I'm awful sick." Her voice sounded thick and blurred, as though coming through a mouthful of mush. I threw back the covers, revealing the loaf of bread which we had bought that morning and which had mysteriously disappeared.

Suzy didn't seem to notice our bread, but then I couldn't blame

her too much. I placed my arm across her shoulders and she collapsed against me heavily. Now Suzy was not especially famous for a slim body; so I was thoroughly winded by the time I had dragged her to the bathroom. I dumped her on the floor and stretched her neck over the bath tub.

"Okay, Suzy, you asked for this," I spoke relentlessly to the girl. But she seemed not to hear. Her head drooped against the tub and soft little moans escaped her dry lips. I poured some hot water in the basin and made it froth with soapy bubbles. I had to use some of the landlord's shaving cream to make the froth thick enough, but Suzy wouldn't be able to tell the difference. Armed with a glassful of the bubbles, I bent over the recumbent figure. Suzy, to my unaccustomed eyes, seemed to have passed out completely. I held her head up and began to pour the warm, soapy water down her throat. After the liquid was half-way down, I remembered with horror that no one should force a drink down an unconscious person's throat. The person was likely to strangle to death. But not Suzy. She was made from sturdy stuff.

Now, I had heard of warm soap suds and how effective they are to make anything come up that had gone down. But I was totally unprepared for the deluge that followed my ministrations. I was almost tempted to join Suzy in her generous outpouring, but with an heroic effort I refrained.

At last Suzy stopped spouting and hung breathlessly over the tub. Her eyes were wild and frightened and there was a long runner in my only pair of stockings. I filled the glass again.

"Here you are, Suzy. The first glassful was for today. This is for yesterday." Yesterday, however, was a poor day. I washed her face

nd made her rinse her mouth with Listerine. She could sit up by her-
elf now. I turned the water on in the tub.

"Oh, my goodness!" Suzy moaned. "If I ever eat pickles and cake
gain, just shoot me quick." I turned the water off in the tub.

"What did you say?" I asked carefully.

She looked up at me wearily. "It was an awful party. I don't
ver want to be like they are. But they had such good food! I ate
ysters and cake and pickles and milk and cheese and celery and olives
nd lobsters and ice cream and---"

"That's enough," I snapped, then laughed in sheer relief. "Oh,
uzy, I thought you were drunk. And instead of drinking too much, you
te too much."

"Nope, not me," she grinned feebly, but it was the same impish
rin that had first endeared her to me. "I don't like the stuff and
hen I don't like nothing---I mean anything---I let it alone. I guess
'll have to let those people alone, too." I helped her up andguided
er into bed. She threw the bread into the waste basket, curled up on
er side of the bed and half of mine and went to sleep, drowsily
urmuring "Everything is going to be changed. Nothing is going to be
the same, nothing- --nothing---"

But the sun came up just the same.

-----Alyce Barr

Dulcet
And delightful,
The soothing drip of rain
Cools the fevered earth and lulls me
To sleep.

-----Sonia G. Venger

CORPORAL CLOUD, BEFORE BATTLE

"You do remember playing war,
And running after one who just
Had finished chasing you? Before
I came to this place a disgust
Came over me for those who were
Afraid of war. Now I am so close
To it, my memory goes back
And clutches on my bellicose
Boy-games. I lived those games. Attack,
Retreat, I played as if my life
Was staked with win or lose. My fear
Was such a passion that a choked
Scream gurgled out of me, severe
And painful in its terror when
My chasers were too close behind
Me. When I was caught--and shot--why then
I fell in simulated death
Almost joyfully. The ground
Was peace and rest...--and then
I was another man--my breath
Had slowed to normal and had found
Its sympathy with heart-beat still
Retained.
"I learned a simple trick--
A little bit of childish skill--
That might, in turn, be politic
Upon the battlefield; to turn
And chase the one who chases you
When he becomes so near as to discern
Your fear.
"But then there's just one thing:
When I was shot--in play, of course--
I died, and then I was reborn.
I knew that <u>then</u>, but still the force
Of run, and fight, and die--my scorn
For those who fear is even less
When this comes in my mind--I ran
Afraid then. I will run, recess
And chase and be chased, all this, a man,
In earnest. There's one thing I've yet
To face; emotion stopped when I
Was shot in childhood play--I met
That often, but when I must die
Here on the field..."
A whistle destined
For a football referee
Shrilled out. A frantic rush began.
Corporal Cloud went out to see
The difference between child and man.

——— William R. Bittner

SWING ROMANCE

She had straight black hair and red lips, and her face was twisted to one side a little. Every day she went swimming and was among the crowd of boys. Every day, John, sitting with his sister Martha on the Adirondack bench beside the pool would watch her and nod when his sister would say, "Isn't it funny a girl like that being popular? I wonder what they see in her." Every day at this point John would get up from the depth of the bench, put his hands in his pockets and pull his shorts into a more comfortable position, then wait till Martha had pushed her girdle down on one side and tugged it up on the other. Then the two of them would walk around the pool, past the girl and her cluster of laughing, yelling boys. John always caught her words and often he found them lingering in his memory. Her voice was low and unhurried, and her lips moved---how was it?---with the charm of music. But every other word stunned his ears; it was either "hell" or "damn". And she spoke of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as if they were intimate friends she was in the habit of rescuing from the deep end of the pool. Half reluctantly, half with a feeling of freedom, John would walk over to the Coca Cola vender, Martha trailing.

"Boy, two Cokes."

The Cokes were always cool and refreshing, and John and Martha welcomed them. John was eighteen, and Martha was a year or so older. Their Mother was fond of explaining their ages and adding that neither of them ever touched anything stronger than a soft drink. She had sent them down here to her brother's summer hotel for a two weeks' vacation, and they often spoke of their mother as they sipped their Cokes. In two weeks John and Martha would be entering summer school at the College. He was telescoping his course, and Martha was trying to keep

up with her class and at the same time take all the courses that were offered that session by the tired and gentle Mr. Clemens. John was beginning to be glad that there were only a few more days of their vacation left. This girl worried him when he thought about her. Wasn't she making a mistake? Boys all the time, so much swearing? When he was alone, he would shake his head and sigh a deep sigh. When the memory of her voice came too insistently to him at night, he would lie and plan completion exercises or a list of matching phrases as if for an examination on school law: "The vehicle need not have an emergency exit (T F)."

One evening after dinner Martha had gone to her room to change from her evening gown to something more practical, now that the mosquitoes were beginning to come, and the girl walked right across the porch and sat down on the swing in the place where Martha usually sat.

"We ought to know each other," she said, dousing him with a smile. Before he could shiver, she had gone on, "You should come swimming with me at the pool so I could see what you are like." Chills ran up and down his legs, and the hair of his legs sent little sparks back and forth between his skin and his white flannels.

"I'd like to, but I'm with Martha."

"Well, who's Martha? She isn't your wife, is she?"

"She's my sister," he said with pride. Good old Martha, always at hand, except for this one embarrassing occasion. The girl covered his hand with the warmth of hers.

"Well, for crying out loud! You're old enough to take care of yourself, aren't you?" The chills gave up their game on his legs and began chasing each other up and down the length of his spine. He felt that he ought to tell this girl before it was too late, before he had

ehind desks and kids say, 'Go to the basement?' to?" He nodded, feel-
ng the straw sticking out of him at all the seams.

"You're too damn good looking to be a teacher. I always picture
teacher---" She mussed his hair with her supple twisting fingers.

"No reason why you can't come dancing with me at my cottage."

"Well, I don't know." Where was Martha? If Martha would come
ow he would be telling her "Imagine: She asked me to go swimming."
it Martha did not come.

"Could we go to the movies tonight, just you and me?" Her voice
evered, did it break, or almost break? Good will welled all through
is being and poured out with a, "Yes!", that would have melted the
eart of a whole ward of criminally insane. Why did he have to wear
is voice on his sleeve? She was saying, "I never met up with a future
chool teacher before. We will go as soon as it gets dark, or ~~or~~ ~~[illegible]~~."

What had he done? Martha, Martha. But then he, MacArthur took
pan with a deft twist of his little finger (he hoped). "We haven't
car," he said.

"Oh, hell, I have a car, gas, and good tires." She stared at him
owly, lingeringly, from head to foot, from foot to head. "The others
ll be jealous of me dating a college boy."

John's eyes clung desperately to the double screen doors.
rtha, Martha, Martha! The doors swung open but only long enough to
low Uncle's Pomeranion slip through. Martha! A vehicle conveying

dren to and from a public school must be of such and sufficient ensions to allow each child'---how many cubic feet of air? More he was enjoying now, anyway. Before he knew these words leaped his fear, "You're too bold!" He expected her to make a sharp ly but she only ran her hand up and down her bare brown shin and d her leg a little closer to his. He could feel the heat of it iating through the white flannel cloth of his trousers.

"Bold?"

"Yes, you expected me to fall for you. Well---"

"Did you?" she asked.

John had to move away. He stood up and backed against the bannir. He forced his voice to ask, "Why talk like that? I didn't even ice." She stood up beside him. Her eyes looked into his. They one like mountain lakes at twilight. He swallowed desperately. ddenly the lakes were full of stars.

"No," he said, "No--"

She slipped her hand under his arm. Without having willed it, upidly, he found himself walking the length of the porch beside the . Her black hair was dancing on his shoulder. It was fragrant.

"Tell me about yourself." What was he saying? "No, you don't ed to," he added lamely.

"I was in a car accident about a year ago. I got out of the spital about six months ago. Now I am having the time of my life. got five thousand compensation for this crooked smile." She was lent for a moment. "Maybe some one will ask me to marry him, and ick like a hawk I will."

John felt himself melting and running in puddles. His knees rst. She had told him everything about herself, truthfully, things

he had not wanted to know. He knew now what the fellows meant when they talked about the power of women. Nothing could prevail against it. His knees would go any minute now. They were shaking, and there was an unswallowable lump in the top of his throat. They reached the end of the porch and stood facing the pool, with some of the rose from a quiet sunset reflected in it.

"Now tell me about yourself," she said. "Is teaching your highest aim in life?"

John looked into her clear blue eyes...into the mountain lakes. They too seemed to reflect the light of a quietly setting sun. Then, right there in front of his Uncle's astonished dog (returning from his jaunt around the pool), John kissed her. He knew that he was awkward as-all-get-out, but he was reasonably sure she liked it. He almost wished Martha would come now and see him kissing this crooked mouthed girl with a voice like a bell. But Martha had stopped to write a hurried note to Mr. Clemens, and it was turning into a letter. "I wish you would tell me more about yourself," she was writing.

----- Joe Arrigo

NUBBY SWEARS

As Nubby sat quietly on the porch with Granny, he kept thinking about the talk she had given to him after Sunday School. She had said that nice little boys didn't swear. Nubby felt sorry for Granny because she seemed to be unhappy because of his faults. He sat thinking and watching desperately for an opportunity to prove to Granny that he really wasn't so bad. Suddenly he jumped up, pointed his stubby finger toward the road, and excitedly exclaimed, "Look, Granny, at those Goddamn boys throwin' stones on Sunday."

-----Jean Coffey

Noble Savage Dissolved in Tears

My two brothers and I were playing Indians in the "shop", a le with the second floor transformed into a carpenter's work room. had removed our outer garments and bound burlap potato bags about waists as loincloths. With lipstick swiped from Mother's bureau, had smeared and streaked ourselves with hideous warpaint. Frank, oldest and ringleader, was Chief Black Wolf, because he had re- tly found some black and gray turkey feathers that had once been t of a beautiful fan. In the junk piled in the corners we found ancient hatchet that resembl d a tomahawk. This was claimed by ef Black Wolf without any objections from us two braves, Black ar and Running Water.

Because there were but three of us, we did not choose des, but suddenly scattered into the "woods" of the stable and work- op. Chief Black Wolf ducked around a corner, and Black Bear dashed wn the steps. I took to the tree tops on the third floor. Putting wooden tomahawk between my teeth, I squirmed on my belly out on e of the rafters, imagining all the time that I was crawling out huge limb of a tree. I could hear Black Bear creeping up the rock- trewn hillside of the stairs. Chief Black Wolf was moving stealth- ly through the leaves of shavings as silently as a cow.

Suddenly Hell broke loose below. Black Wolf emitted a warwhoop nd Black Bear screamed. Boxes were overturned, and tools clattered o the floor. Heedless of the part I was playing as a noble Indian rave, I crawled in off my limb and dashed down the stairs to see what as happening. Chief Black Wolf was standing on the workbench hold- ng Black Bear by the forelock, his tomahawk raised to deal the death-

blow. Forgetting the game, I Running Water, was seized with the most un-Indianlike panic. I cascaded down the steps with such speed that with ease I flowed up the steep grade to the house and swung in a swift eddy through the kitchen and swirled into the dining room. The first pale-face I encountered was my Grandmother; she blanched at the sight of me and her mouth opened to speak. Panic gouged at my innards, and I rushed on screaming at the top of my lungs. No warwhoop this, but a long drawn out wail, "Mamma! Mamma! Frank's split Billy's head open with a hatchet!" The combination of this news of fratricide and my nearly naked appearance was too much for a visiting neighbor lady, and she suddenly and silently fainted away across the arm of a chair. Grandma collapsed onto a nearby love seat. Mother ran for the shop. I stood, quivering with terror, until she returned with the protesting Chief Black Wolf and the unharmed Black Bear in tow. It was too much for all of us and seeing the two prostrated women we three began to howl. Lo! there we stood, three almost naked Indians, weeping and afraid, all the noble savage in us dissolved in tears.

J. Russel Gabel

These be
Three pleasant things:
A vagrant fire--the clouds--
The nonsense of a childish brook
In spring.

Friendly
Old houses sit
In silent groups smoking
Their chimneys and dreaming
Of spring.

-----Sonia G. Venger

THE PLEASURE OF A SOMETHING

I have found that life has many pleasant off-moments; time when the mind, as well as the body, leaves the fashioned path and I find myself being a more complete person. The cloud-puffs fastened in the Spring sky possess no more quiet than these off-moments.

I have known these times to come to people when they were looking for Something in a trunk and found an Everything. Finding an Everything necessitates sitting down and holding and feeling the Everything. Sometimes in touching the Everything, a person catches, as nearly as he ever will, something he has lost. In finding the Thing Not Looking For people have met themselves for the first time. But then there are people who never quite reach these moments; the nearest they ever get to them is when they go upstairs looking for something and come downstairs without it and wondering why they went upstairs.

When I was a child I thought the nicest world was an upside-down world. An upside-down world seemed to have more room and a sidewise bend. It was fun to sit in my rocker and pretend I was walking on the ceiling. At first it made me feel like a paper doll, my arms and legs moving as a front but with nothing behind them, until I thought about it. Then I could feel all of me walking on my ceiling floor. The floor was as clean and alone as a bird-tracked snow and it had all kinds of unfamiliar corners to think about.

It was queer how hard I had to think to walk on that kind of floor, but when I pretended I was walking on it I was never in a hurry; it was as slow as walking through a sunny woods. I decided I would have my Something, an upside-down house, when I grew up.

For years I have listened to myself about the cave I originated.

I pretended my bed was the boardwalk that shut out all the sun from the cave and made it a nice place to dig for gold. The cave was just for me; no one else could crawl into it, except my cat. I kept him with me to talk to and to help me dig. I told other people about my private cave, but now I know I was not the original owner. I found the owner when I was looking through a book of children's poems. Margaret Widdemer was the owner of "The Secret Cavern". Parts of the poem went like this:

> Underneath the boardwalk, way, way back,
> There's a splendid cavern, big and black--
> If you want to get there, you must crawl
> Underneath the posts and steps and all,
> When I've finished paddling, there I go--
> None of all the other children know!
> . . .
> There I keep my treasures in a box--
> . . . .
> It's a place that makes a splendid lair

After reading the poem I felt the same as if I was about to say something, but stopped because I knew I had said it before. It was as if I had met me. I was certain of that, just as certain as the book was mine because my name was written on the flyleaf. My name was written twice; it convinced me that I had met Something.

I have watched other people have these moments. Years ago I asked a little girl to help me make a jack-O'lantern. After I had removed the top and was standing away looking at the mouth I had cut, I noticed Ann. She was squeezing strings of pumpkin through her fingers as if coolness had something else. This may be a form of self-hypnosis,, but at least it does not require a black pool of ink.

These moments or Somethings are rapid. I was out walking trying to cover myself with some of the early morning's lightness, watching a bushy tail make a ring around a tree trunk when the hard and fast knock of a woodpecker caught my attention. The knocking continued and echoed

in confusion until I could not tell in which tree the woodpecker was, so I looked at the sky. As if by magic, the blue sky, broke around a white pocket; it looked as if the wind had turned a cloud inside out, rushed off to play and left the sun to shine golden through the pocket. It was unlike any pocket I had ever seen. The pocket was light and exposed, and I felt as if I had to reach my hand into it and touch the bottom, but I was afraid of what I might find there. My moment was gone and my fear pushed away by heavy steps, and, "Nice Day".

When I was a child I stopped at a stucco house every day. It was so unguarded, and while other houses had people living in and out of them, this house never seemed to have any people. I liked to pretend things about the stucco house, that when winter left she was in such a hurry that she pushed the stones out of their rough setting and scattered them on the walk around the house. When I picked up the stones I liked to pretend that they had fallen from a king's crown as he moved along the path kicking his velvet robes back into place. The stones I held in my hand never faded but left pinched designs if I held them too tight. The stones seemed to be the beginning and end of color, not just a thin line like my crayons made. Later the joy of finding the eye-pleasing stones was abandoned when I felt the pleasant struggle the stones made before they gave against my nails and fell into my hand.

Recently I had another of these moments. I was scraping gelatin from a pan, previous to washing the pan, when I noticed the little tracks my fingernails traced in the gelatin, and a piece bounced onto the floor. I picked up the piece and sat down and pulled more of the gelatin from the bottom of the pan and felt it bounce and quiver in my hand. I squeezed it through my fingers; it looked like three hundred carat snowflakes, the kind the sun sparkles early in the morning.

I forced more of the gelatin snowflakes through my fingers until they became smaller and smaller. Then I wondered why gelatin was not used to imitate snow instead of cornflakes. The snowflakes sparkled and quivered, but the Something was gone.

—— Alice June Homler

An oak
Rears cloudward
Waving its massive arms in the wind.
Lovers carve white gashes
In its rough bark.
An old man takes shelter from the sun.
A robin builds a nest between two slim fingers.

One day the owner comes, Elk's tooth and cigar.
He and a friend, big diamond ring,
Pound the rough bark,
Arguing about the age of the tree.
"It's a hundred and fifty
If it's a year," says the cigar.
"Nonsense," replies the ring kicking
At the tree with his heel.
"I'm willing to bet a hundred dollars
It isn't a year over seventy-five."

They return with an axe and a saw
And eat their way
Through the yellow-white flesh
Of the tree.

And when the tree is down,
The men count the rings,
One after the other:
One, two, three, four---
And then one of the men says,
"O.K. You win. You are right."

——Dale Olmstead

"Yeah, and then he says to her, 'Pardon me, Madame, but your dress is sticking out.' "

The two soldiers began to laugh. The short blond one turned his head toward the one who had told the story and said, "You know any more, Cal?"

"Naw, I hear them, and they go in one ear and out the other."

They walked along the pleasant street in their summer uniforms, both pairs of legs bending at the same places at the same time.

"You know it sure is nice out this evening. Look it, how kind of red that maple tree is around the top. And then that green about half-way down; it's like a -- I mean--it's--pretty. Don't you think, Jeff?" Cal paused awkwardly, hoping that Jeff would see what he meant.

"It sure is pretty. Reminds me of the tree we had on the lawn at home. It was big and crooked--crooked as a bastard--and we used to have a shack in it. The tree always used to get red in the spring. Mom always said it was embarrassed."

Cal and Jeff walked on in silence, each thinking about home. Silently Cal pulled a pack of Luckies from his pocket and held them toward Jeff. Without a word Jeff took the cigarette.

Reaching in his pocket, Jeff pulled out a wooden match and scratched it across the seat of his trousers. When he held out the match his hand bumped Cal's. Then he saw that Cal was holding a match toward him, too. They laughed, and then lighted each other's cigarettes, drawing the yellow match flames up into the tobacco.

"You know, it's a funny thing about home. When you're there you hate it sometimes. I mean--you just kinda get fed up. But when

you're away you always miss it." Cal concentrated his attention on the white and green house across the street until he was sure of Jeff.

"Yeah, I know what you mean. I used to hate to mow the damned grass, but I remember how we used to sit on the porch at night. We lived on the corner, but that big tree I was telling you about kept the street light off the porch. In the spring the kids used to come and ride their bicycles around and around under the light. Then sometimes they'd play kick-the-wicket or hide-and-seek. I--I guess it was kinda nice."

Jeff pulled at his tie. "God damn it, I'm gonna open my shirt collar. It's too damn hot."

"Guess I will too," Cal answered. "Boy, I hope we don't meet an officer though."

"You know what I used to wear in the summer?" Jeff asked. "I used to have a mess of polo shirts, all colors. Then I had a pair of brown gabardine pants. I'd wear those pants and keep changing the polo shirts around. All colors they were------except no damn olive drab."

"I always liked polo shirts. Sleeves bother me in the summer time. That's why I liked polo shirts I guess." Cal shot his half-burned cigarette into the air. "I always used to work around the house on Saturdays--up until supper time, that is. Then I'd take a bath and put on some summer clothes and take some decent girl to a movie. Didn't seem like much then, but-----" His voice trailed off, and the only sound was the plump of their rubber heels on the sidewalk.

"Jesus! Would you look at that guy strutting along up ahead. You'd think he owned the world the way he's walking. Hey, Cal, look at that sport coat he's wearing, green and brown plaid. That's a hum dinger."

"Boy, that is a nice coat," Cal replied. "Nice pants too," he added more softly as they got closer to the boy.

"That's what burns me," Jeff said with a soft intensity. "He can strut around all dressed up and do what he wants to, and we gotta dress like a couple a thousand other men and take orders from some stinking sergeant."

"Yeah, damn him," Cal said. He was surprised to notice that he had sworn, and that it felt good.

"Let's get him," Jeff said.

"O.K.," Cal replied, and he felt his stomach tighten.

Jeff and Cal hurried until they were just behind the boy; then they started to pass him. Jeff stumbled into the boy, and Cal grabbed the coat and ripped it up the back. Jeff tore at the lapels, and the kid kept saying,"What's a matter, fellows?"and trying to get away. Finally Jeff shoved the kid back hard, so that he fell to the ground, and then he and Cal started to run down the street.

Cal noticed that Jeff was making funny noises in his throat, and he was surprised to feel tears running down his own face.

After they had run for almost three blocks they slowed to a walk and Jeff said, "Let's find some girls." His voice sounded almost normal again.

—— Dale Olmstead

They asked
For bread. We gave
Them a gun. When we give
Them bread will they return the gun?
Perhaps.

—— Dale Olmstead

THE CALL

It was snowing everywhere else in the darkness, but Jack could see only those flakes that tumbled down within the radius of the overhanging street light. He kept shaking the snow from the soft tweed overcoat so that it would not be too wet by the time he reached Shirley's house. His chilled hands dug deeply in the big pockets of his best overcoat and he stood and waited.

If it had been summer he would have walked, but her house was too far to wade snow to in these new shoes. He had artics, but only a sissy would wear artics to his girl's place. A couple of wisps of breeze blew the chilled flakes under his pork-pie hat and against his face. His smooth skin tingled in response to the cool burn. He turned his face upward with the expectation that his checks would glow giving him a ruddy complexion like that of some hero attacking a blizzard to rescue a girl or get the mail through to Nome.

He had left home early to catch this bus. Nervousness infested his hands and legs when he had to sit and wait at home. His parents only knew that he was going to a party----he wondered what they would have said if they had known the truth! Through the translucent curtain he saw the red and green lights of the approaching bus. As he stepped off the curb, one of his buried hands tightened its grip on the bus check that he had taken from his father's desk drawer. The lively flakes scattered from under his feet like drops of water running from a hot stove lid. The bus rolled to a smooth stop, and the door neatly folded against the side. The check tirkled down the metal cone and into the glass box with its other checks and coins. Jack tried his best not to stagger or hold on to anything as the bus jolted from its position, but his feet trampled stiffly through the narrow aisle to the broad seat in the back. Here he could watch without

being watched. Most of the people were looking out of the windows at the lighted houses, but he felt safer back here where they could not see him and wonder about his destination. He felt joyous and much relieved at the thought of knowing that few people would see him leave the bus for Shirley lived almost at the end of the line.

Jack propped himself into a corner and looked out the window across the aisle. He did not do much thinking. He was too nervous to think. The street sign posts raced past in the blurred snow flakes faster than he wanted them to---Pine, Walnut,Peach, Center---another three blocks, and he would be there. From his coat he took a fresh pack of cigarettes and ripped off the cellophane cover. It was the first time he had ever taken any of his father's cigarettes. (The carton was half empty, so his father probably would not miss one pack--at least he hoped he wouldn't.) "Fifteen is too young for a boy to start smoking,"his father had warned. He reached for the taut, white cord overhead; a dull buzz sounded, and the bus slowly stopped at the corner of High and Elm. Only a sleepy, old man was left sitting in the front seat. Jack stepped into the twinkling snow while the grinding gears pulled the red and green lights into the falling crystals. The only thing that came to his eyes, when he looked across the street, was the dim light in the big, porch window at Shirley's house. His clean nails bit in the opened end of the pack of cigarettes, and a cheap lighter threw its weak flame towards the dry tobacco. A large snowflake lit near the glowing end, ruining the beauty of the pure, white column.

Jack felt a heaviness swell inside himself as he crossed the street. An invisible force seemed to retard his steps, and he wanted to turn back---but only sissies turn back. This feeling was abruptly checked as he saw the door open. Prickly bubbles of heat crawled up his

face to the top of his head, until his brain felt like a boiling mass. He could not think.

"Well, quit standing there and come in out of the cold." Shirley's voice was sweet and demanding. It seemed more mature than Jack's in that it did not quiver.

"Are you sure no one's home?" he asked hesitantly.

"Of course, I'm sure! At least for an hour,anyway."

—— Jack Probst

" ...TO THE SUN AND THE STARS"

If I were swift as light,
In one night,
I could go to the Sun for you.
If my speed were that of a Herzian wave,
And you craved
A star, when several years were through
You'd have it.

I am not quite as swift as light,
Nor quite
As fast as radio's passage-lanes;
So if you send me out
About
A star, or empyrian counterpanes,
I shall be late.

—— William R. Bittner

Each star
Is a symbol
Shining in remembrance
Of someone eternally loved
Though dead.

—— Sonia G. Venger

INCIDENT IN '18

Joey was a right guy. I've thought so ever since that summer of '18 and no one has ever had the desire to tell me differently. You see, I am a gent of considerable dimensions, and when I'm sold on a guy the usual run of people just leave my likings alone.

Joey must think I am a right guy too. He didn't at firs t, but army life does funny things to people and I came to know, finally, that I was really A--1 with the lad. I was his Sergeant in the '17- '18 show and I was one of these hard-boiled top-kicks who very often wound up after a skirmish with a belly full of slugs which had never been near an enemy gun. When a kid who has done as much K.P. for you as Joey had done for me runs out and exposes himself to fire long enough to toss a pineapple into a German sniper's lap in time to save your life, you know that the kid has something of a liking or admiration for you. Youngsters with a full life left to live don't bet hopeless odds against Death to save a Sergeant they don't like. I knew where I stood with Joey after that.

We always boasted that the Engineer's were the first over and the last to come back; so I had some time to get to know Joey while in France. That was after Joey got his two Corporal's stripes. Even we non-coms had our little caste system in those days. Well, we pulled around a lot, got drunk, were in and out of the usual scrapes with the Fregs and Limeys together, and then it was over. I pulled out one day on the Leviathan and Joey was booked to come home on some smaller tub.

I saw Joey off and on through the years. You know--a Legion Convention here, a sales meeting there, and we'd always do the usual things.

First we'd shake hands quickly and from four feet apart and then more solemnly with our left hands on each other's shoulders. There's something real about men shaking hands--something that measures. Women never will be able to understand the bond which grows suddenly taut after that long period of laxity when pals have not seen each other.

After that we'd find some way to ditch the ladies, if they were along, and then we'd step into the nearest bar for a glass or two of beer. Strong drink isn't needed between strong men at times like that--just something to ease that lump and give you something to do with your hands. Sometimes we got a little too tight and gave some of the old songs the once over. You know--"Caroline," "Back Home in Indianna," and "My Buddy"! That was during Prohibition when we were drinking cheap stuff and needed something salvaged from the old days--even if it was a sloppy song.

After that we'd promise to drop in on each other sometime when we were in town and "see the wife and kids," and then one of us would look at his watch without seeing it, mumble the usual "Got a meeting, see ya' around" line and leave.

It was queer, but Joey, who had always been the Company loud-mouth, never had much to say when we met. It seems that I always spoke all the words that meant anything. Joey just seemed to nod agreement and say the things I expected him to say.

We never did meet at our homes. A wife and kids had no doors to enter through when Joey and I got together. It wasn't wrong, Martha knew the feeling and respected it for what it was. It was natural, and that's all anyone could say about it.

There was something about going to conventions year after year and looking for Joey. Even now, whenever the fellows get together, I find myself looking for the boy who turned out to be such a man.

Well, my kid's in the Army now. He's a Corporal of Field Artillery. He thinks he's going over somewhere soon and he says that he has a good chance of becoming a Sergeant as soon as they dock. He writes, "Just wait 'till my three stripes come through. There's a cocky Private in our outfit that I'm laying for. He isn't a bad sort, but the first time he steps out of line---"

Tonight I'll have to write to my son, the Corporal. I'll have to set it down in black and white. But how can I tell the boy about <u>my</u> "cocky Private" who died that dawn in the summer of '18 when I can't believe it myself.

DOG

Dog was a little black and white pupny with long ears that banged about his ckeeks when he walked. And sometimes when he teased Cat he even tripped over his long ears. And how embarrassed he was then and how Cat laughed at him!

Dog had been sleeping in the garden under Boy's red wagon all afternoon. Between his front paws rested a big juicy bone and every ten minutes Dog opened one eye and chewed loudly at his bone, then closed his eye and went back to sleep. But one time Dog opened his eye and saw Cat, just as she went out the garden gate, and it did not take Dog long to open his other eye and go scampering down the path after her.

Now Cat was an intelligent animal and from the corner of one yellow eye,she saw Dog coming. So she ran as fast as she could run, then suddenly made a sharp turn and jumped over the fish pond. There she sat down to wait.

And along came Dog with his nose to the ground running almost as fast as Cat herself. He ran on and on laughing to himself because he was giving Cat such a scare. But suddenly he came to the very spot where Cat had made the sharp turn. And it surprised Dog so much and he had to turn so sharply that he tripped over his long ears and went spalshing into the fish pond so hard he hit the bottom!

Gold-fish had been swimming about in the fish pond and wondered why Dog was splashing so much,but Cat sat on the other side of the pond and giggled up her furry black sleeve,her yellow eyes dancing with joy.

"Meow,meow,meow," she laughed,"Go back to your bone,Long Ears."

Poor Dog climbed sheepishly out of the pond and hurried up the path,leaving a funny little wet design on the path all the way to the garden-gate. He went back to Boy's red wagon and curled up into a

chubby little ball and began to cry.

"I am the most miserable puppy in the world," he sobbed. "That horrid black cat with the yellow eyes made fun of me again,and it's just more than I can bear. Why of why do I have such big ears?"

He sobbed himself to sleep. He awoke feeling very hungry,but when he got back to the kitchen door,there was Cat already eating the supper put out for Dog. He was too ashamed to talk to Cat so he rubbed his empty tummy with his fat paw and went back to the red wagon.

But Dog was so hungry he could not sleep,so after making sure that Cat was still eating at the kitchen door,he tiptoed down the garden path to the gateand walked slowly over to the fish pond. He walked cautiously up to the edge and peeped over just to prove to Gold-fish that he did not fall in every time. But what he saw in the pond frightened him so much that he almost fell in again.

For there in the water was another dog, and he was not just an ordinary dog but he had big ears every bit as big as Dog's very own! And suddenly the dog in the water spoke.

"If you are ashamed of your big ears,why don't you tuck them behind your collar when you run? That's what I do,and my ears never bother me a bit."

Now this really did surprise Dog. It surprised him so much that before he thought, he sat down and tucked his long ears behind his collar. And then he began to run. He ran faster and faster and faster round and round the fish-pond. And then he began to laugh,and he laughed louder and louder because he did not trip over his ears. And Dog was happy again.

Just to celebrate, he ran back to the kitchen door and chased

Cat away from his pan and ate a hearty supper. Cat was so scared she went to bed without taking a bath and was not seen until next day.

Dog wore his ears tucked behind his collar for five months. And then one day he was looking into the fish-pond and he saw the other dog again. And this time the dog said,"You are a big dog now. Your legs have grown long. You will never trip over your ears again."

This time Dog remembered to call "Oh thank you,thank you so very, very much for everything."

So Dog sat down and pulled his ears out from behind his collar, and his legs really had grown long,and his ears only reached to his knees. Dog knew that his ears would never bother him again and he was even happier than before. He hurried up the path in search of that Cat.

Margaret Shaffer

STALEMATE

Their move--perhaps a lowly pawn,
Blitzkrieg of a graying dawn--
Bishop back,and then, a castle play,
One man lost--the troops we lost to-day!
Bishop? Queen? A momentary pause --
Thought! Production! To one obsessing cause,
To checkmate--tanks,knights,pawns,rations--
Dictators,empires,generals,nations!
The board,in chaos,disorderly,distress--
And we, the people,wonder--what is chess?

Ethel Batley

THE IRISH WAKE

A short time ago I discovered,to my consternation,that the majority of my acquaintances had no conception of an Irish wake. Being a confirmed promoter of all things Hibernian,it seemed essential that the matter be rectified at once. Since I did not wish to refer my companions to the biased observations of a casual visitor in Ireland, I decided to attack the problem in my Grandma's way.

Grandma had a formula,which,she claimed, would absolutely guarantee a successful wake. First,it was requisite that a good Irishman expire. It is wise not to place too much stress on the adjective "Good." The Irish interpret the word in a slightly different manner from that of the remainder of the world. The term "good" does not necessarily concern one's moral state; rather it is an indication of the scope of one's vocabularly when directed at a certain nation across the Irish Sea.

To return to Grandma's formula: After a suitable corpse had been obtained,the surrounding countryside was notified. Invariably the good inhabitants would evidence considerable interest. Before dusk of the first day, the dead man's cottage was filled with mourners.

The first part of the evening,from dusk till nine o'clock,was devoted to that earliest of blues songs-the Irish wail. Standing in a semi-circle about the bier,the mourners began the chant-half a prayer and half the cry of the Banshee. The man who cried most volubly received the favors of the night.

At the stroke of nine,the fiddler came in and began to tune his instrument and the cry ended abruptly. Soon the floor was swaying with the t hump of merry feet and dust settled on the figure near the candles. The dead man was pushed farther into the corner to make

more room for the dancers. Grandma said that probably the reason the corpse never objected was because he remembered the fine times he had enjoyed on similar occasions.

At midnight the women were sent aloft. The men settled down with their tobacco and demi-johns. Any good Irishman,now residing in Uncle Sam's homeland,will argue that the pride of the Southland-corn liquor-is lemonade in comparison with Irish poteen. Since they were men,they talked of things until dawn,at which time they dispersed to the pub until the following night.

In this manner,the festivities continued for three nights. All this carrying-on was exceedingly hard on the bereaved family,as they were obliged to foot all expenses. The story is told of a certain Mrs. Murphy, who expressed their general sentiments rather well. It seems that Mrs. O'Toole came in to view the late Patrick Murphy. As she gazed at the deceased she remarked to the widow,"Sure,Mary,Pat looks as if he were still alive." To which Mrs. Murphy,weary from the last few days,retorted,"Well,be he alive or dead,he is going to get the divil out of here in the marnin'".

With the departure of the corpse on the day of the burial the frivolity ceased. Life returned to its normal run until the advent of a wedding or another wake.

Esther Marie Shea

FINE AND DANDY, SISTER!

You're always proud of your parents, but somehow, just being proud isn't enough when you're in first grade. You have to brag a lot sometimes--and exaggerate. Lots of times you have to resort to the old "My-pop-can-lick-your-pop" line. (And then somebody would always come back with "Yah--I'd-like-to-see-him!") But when I said, "Well, my father is bigger than your father. Stronger, too", nobody ever talked back very much. The kids all knew about Daddy. He could eat popcorn by the dishpanful, raw peanuts by the pound, and fresh-fried potatoes right out of the skillet! Once he'd fallen off the top of a high bridge onto the ground--and wasn't even killed! And he was never sick in bed at all.

One time, though, he almost was. It was when we were all sitting in the dining room after supper, and Mother was darning one of Daddy's socks where his big toe went through; I was doing my arithmetic lesson, and Daddy was sitting in his big chair with his feet propped up reading the Williamsport Sun. And then, all at once, Daddy sneezed. I jumped. Then I looked at Daddy, and he was blowing his nose real hard on his blue hankie. Mother looked at Daddy, too. She said, "You must be getting hay fever again, Josh." I knew she was only fooling because it was winter. Then she laid down the sock and came over and put her hand on Daddy's head. He put his hand on top of it, and Mother said, "Want some soda, Honey." Daddy said, "Aw-w-w." So he took some soda.

He didn't sneeze the next morning at all. I asked him how he was, as I did every day, but instead of saying, "Just fine and dandy, Sister!" and kissing me, he coughed a little cough. "Got a touch of sore throat this morning, Baby," he said, and just lifted me up to the ceiling.

When he came in from work that night, something was making a bulge in his coat pocket. And it was a big bottle. I asked him what was it, and he said, "Medicine." He let me unwrap it. Mother came out where we were, too. "Some stuff Ray Seely told me about. Boy, this ought to fix it," he told Mother. Daddy reached up in the top shelf and got his special tumbler that holds almost a pint of milk, and poured the medicine in it. I smelled it--just a short sniff. "What's the matter, Baby?" Daddy asked me. I wrinkled up my nose. Then he said "Here goes!" and I stood where I could watch him gargle to see if he'd swallow any. He didn't. Mother came over by the sink, and she said, "Josh! Didn't you dilute that?" Daddy laughed and pulled her apron strings untied. "I don't believe in doing a thing half-way, Hon," he said. "Kill or cure!"

The next day Daddy's throat was all right. I heard him tell Mother that he was telling the fellows what good stuff he used to fix up his sore throat.

And then he had to have an examination by the doctor on account of company rules. Mother and I went to meet him when he came from the doctor's. He had a funny look on his face as if he were going to laugh maybe, but didn't. Mother raised her eyebrows a little at him, like a question. Daddy winked. "Perfect condition," he said. "Your husband is a perfect physical specimen. Yes sir." Then his eyes wrinkled at the corners and he shook at the shoulders like when he laughs real hard. He pulled his big hankie out of his pocket.

"Doc looked down my throat," his voice was laughing, "and he said,'When did you have your tonsils out, J.L.?' and I said, 'I never had my tonsils out, Doc!' and he said, 'Well, J.L., those bad tonsils of yours aren't here any more.' " Daddy laughed so hard he had to wipe away the tears.

I told the kids the next day about my Daddy gargling with plain Zonite and his tonsils disappearing. Boy! My Daddy is the strongest guy in the world , I bet.

—— Phyllis Wolfe

PRIDE GOETH

My first pair of high heels! Real spectator pumps! The occasion was a trip to New York City with Mother back in '36. They made me look much older---at least sixteen or seventeen maybe. My but I was proud! I was showing them off to the best of their advantage for the benefit of the boy across the aisle in the day coach. I could see he wasn't really concentrating on his Advertiser. He looked college. All the way from Elmira to Scranton I had been imagining things about him. Probably he had a Mercury convertible, or maybe he was a trap drummer. He pretended to go to sleep, but I could see in the window that he was watching me in his window. All too soon the conductor bawled, 'Scranton'. Mom and I planned to break up the trip by staying there at Aunt Bert's for an evening. I would have to leave my friend without ever knowing whether or not his name was Anthony. But, no! He was getting down his luggage. He stepped back to allow Mother and me to proceed him. We managed a grin and murmured 'Hello'. I hit my heels a smart little click and started down the steps. Oh, my ankle! Bump, Bump, Bump! I hit every step! My overnight bag flew open--underwear, P.J.'s, toothbrush--all over the poor conductor.

I saw Anthony just once after that in the station. He didn't see me. He was laughing about it with his friends---laughing at me. I heard him say, "I bet she feels plenty rural!"

—— Ethel Batley

Just Something I Remember

The blue car shuddered to a stop and through its yellowed ising glass windows I could see three little bungalows that were exactly alike. Mother helped me drag my suitcase from the car.

"Our home," she said, "is the one in the middle." I could feel the pride in her voice.

"Our home." I said the words softly, experimentally. They had such a pleasant sound. Suddenly I had a feeling of comfort like drinking hot cocoa with buttered toast or playing jacks on a warm pavement.

"Yes, this is where we will all live." the man said.

I looked at him curiously as he stood mopping the perspiration from his bald head. "This is Mr. Manos," Mother had told me at the boarding house. "He is your new Daddy." As I stood gazing at Mr. Manos in his wrinkled linen suit, I knew that I should never be able to call him Daddy.

The house was cool and refreshing after our long trip from the boarding house. As soon as we opened the door, a little black spaniel skidded joyously in and out among our legs yelping excitedly and pushing against us with his front paws.

"Down, Ginger, Down!" Mr. Manos demanded.

"You little imp," Mother warned, "watch my silk stockings."

Ginger and I got along splendidly from the very first. In no time at all we were friends. I cuddled him in my arms and strcked his long soft ears all the while dodging his quick pink tongue. My growing fears and worries were forgotten. This new life would be fun with a little dog to play with.

After supper in the white breakfast nook, Mother said, "Bedtime.

Time for little girls to be asleep," and I felt embarrased to be treated like a baby. I sat there and stared fixedly at the blue plates with dragons and bridges. I wondered if I would ever know Mother well enough to run into her arms as Jackie did when his mother visited him at the boarding house. Should I be able to tell her my secrets and laugh with her? I thought of the dime I had hidden in the lining of my shoe. Then looking at Mother I decided I could tell her-----later.

"Daddy thinks you can sleep on the settee tonight," Mother said brightly. I could tell she was trying to interest me. I felt queer and choked. I longed to hear the noisy chatter of the boarding house. Everything here was so quiet and strange. Even rubbing my foot on Ginger under the table didn't comfort me. We got up from the table and Mother playfully pulled me into the front room. "You see," she said gaily, "Daddy and I made a little bet. He thinks you can sleep on the settee.

I obligingly curled up on the small settee proving Mr. Manos to be right. I <u>could</u> sleep there.

"Oh, no," Mother said. "Stretch your feet down."

When I stretched out to full length, my head and feet were wedged against the squeaking wicker arms.

"There." Mother announced triumphantly. "The child couldn't possibly sleep there. She's fully an inch longer than the settee."

Mr. Manos fumbled in his pocket and took out a worn leather billfold. With pudgy fingers he selected a limp bill.

"Madam, you are right as always." He bowed with a flourish, kissing the bill, and handed it to her. "My compliments. I held three aces last night when I won that ten dollars.

They pushed two trunks together and padded the tops with blankets. "A bed fit for a queen," They told me. "Tomorrow you'll have a bed of

your own." Later, when they thought I was asleep, I could feel them standing over me.

"Don't cry, Baby---" Mr. Manos's voice was husky. "We'll make it up to her." I peeked through slitted lids. Mother's hair was shining in the light and Mr. Manos was kissing her gently. She seemed like a little girl too.

-----Sonia Venger

THE LATER CRUSTACEAN

Let the men of the future have terrible faces
In order to frighten their foes;
Instead of fingers let them have maces,
The better for battering blows.
May they have voices like air-raid alarms,
And ears that can hear things afar,
And eyes that are set on the ends of long arms
For seeing that's needed in war.
And let them change color to suit their surroundings,
And let them make homes in the caves.
Let them grow armor resistant to poundings,--
Let them shoulder their graves.
Then they'll be ready for war-but include
That they will likely be warring for food.

-----William R. Bittner

NEXT WEEK WE WILL TAKE THE CAT

The window slammed down imprisoning the acrid odor of formaldihyde within the walls of the small lab. Ed Braily raised his head from his disection and looked toward the closed window. "Who the hell closed that window?" he bellowed.

Laying his scalpel beside his note-book he stood up and moved to open the window.

"Boy, does that feel better!" he said as he took a deep breath. "Say, Paul, are you through with that last drawing of the frog's brain?"

Paul raised a portion of his head into view and grunted, "What the hell do you think I am? We've fourteen drawings to do and this is only the second hour we've been working and you want to know if I've done the last one."

Ed struggled his thin frame into the small swivel lab seat across the table from his partner. "What's the matter, have you gone virtuous and stopped copying out of your book or is old 'Scalpel Nose' watching you too close?"

Paul deftly flipped his disecting needle so that it stuck in the wax bottom of the tray which contained the remains of Ed's frog. "Nuts, Wise guy," he said, "I suppose that you've yours all done."

"Naw, I'm going to finish mine to-night." Ed replied as he carefully removed one of the muscles on his specimen's leg; tearing it only in two places. "Say, you ought to see the book I found in the library. It has all the drawings we need; boy, this is going to be a cinch."

Paul started to label one of the few drawings he had done. "I'll be down tonight." he said.

"What's the matter, are you allergic to the library? Find your

own book."

A large smear of ink appeared on Ed's drawing as one of the other fellows at the table moved. "Dammit! Why can't you guys hold still?" he demanded. "Christ, I wish they'd fasten these tables so they wouldn't move."

"Where do you think you are? In some---------College?" Paul sneered at him.

Scalpel Nose's voice grated above the small arguements of the students. "If you gentlemen will shut up for a minute I have some rumors I would like to spread." The room became comparatively quiet. "Thank you," he went on. "If you have the frog completed this week, and I see no reason for not having it done, we will start on the cat next Wednesday. We are going to take two or three weeks on this phase of the work so that you will become better acquainted with mammalian anatomy. All right. Now get that frog done."

"Get that frog done," Paul mumbled. "Two more hours left in this week and he says get that frog done."

"Yeah." Ed chimed in. "What does he think we are, anyway? " I can't even copy all of the drawings in one night."

Paul looked up as Ed started to work on the viscera of his specimen. Ed's scalpel made a few scratchy strokes along the frog's stomach, nothing happening except the appearance of a slight dent in the tissue. "Sharp, aren't they?" he said.

"Yeah." Ed said, "But what can you expect for ninety-eight cents a set." With a mighty effort he cut through the thin wall of muscles, and two or three of the organs within. Following the instructions in his lab book he laid the muscles back, and repaired the damaged organs as best he could. He surveyed his work. "Not bad, not bad at all." he said, "You know I think I will do all of the dissecting on our cat."

So we can tell what we have."

"Yeah?" Paul said, "You couldn't even clean your nails with one of those scalpels. Let alone do a good job on the cat."

"What's the matter, don't you like my technique?"

"Is that what you call technique? If that is good dissection work then I am a surgeon."

"Well, you're no surgeon. You couldn't cut your way out of a paper bag."

"I'm going to handle this job, Bud. I want to be able to see what we are working on, not parts of it scattered around."

"Pretty Cocky, aren't you?" Ed said.

"I wish I was as good as you think you are."

"Yeah!"

"Yeah!"

That familiar grating voice stopped them as they were about to come to blows. "I forgot to mention something." Their instructor was saying. "In your work, as you know, you will be working two on a cat. Well, most of the dissection requires both people to cooperate on the work. So pick some one you can work with for a partner."

Ed looked at Paul, "You can hold my instruments," he said.

"OK," Paul replied. "I'll see you tonight and we will finish this frog."

John Akeley

Morning
In Spring, perfumed
Breezes, cool dewy grass,
A world tied up in cellophane.
Sparkling.

Ethel Batley

SAUCE OR SALT

Mark cut the rhubarb down last year;
He does it every year,
But I have never said anything before.
I have lived next to Mark long enough now
To talk a bit.
I moved over to the line,
Where Mark was cutting the rhubarb,
And I said, "That is nice rhubarb to be cutting down."
    Mark said, "We have had enough this year,
And when it gets hot outside
It makes me tired to look at it,
With its withery leaves.
It kind of bothers me so I cut it down."

"But Mark," I said, "Did you ever pull a stalk out
And fan yourself with it
Until you got cool enough to eat it,
Dirt and heat too?"
    Mark stopped cutting long enough to say,
"Yes, but that was a long time ago--
When the rhubarb grew
Next to the peach trees.

"You can still carry a little salt in your hand
And eat it."
    "Well, I like it better when Maud
Makes sauce out of it."

"It does fit in with spring; soft and warm,
And it looks like a skein of river grass
Floating in a dish.
But Mark, did you ever pull a stalk
And look at the color of it?
It is as scarlet as a sprouted acorn,
And the root is all rose.
And when you peel the skin off
The sour taste grows in your mouth
And stays there after you eat it,
Unless you have a little salt along."
    Mark looked at the line
As if our talk was ended
And he said, "See you again,"
As he dropped the rhubarb
On the pile by the barn.

Alice June Homler

AUNT TACIE WAS LIKE THAT

It was almost ten o' clock when Aunt Tacie bustled into the kitchen. She was wearing a rose satin housecoat with big blue flowers splashed all over the front. I thought it was very beautiful. I wished Mama would wear one sometimes, but she sisn't have time. Gram Ettie looked at her and kind of sniffed. "That thing dragg-in' 'round your heels!" she said. Aunt Tacie just sat down at the table and drank her orange juice and then her coffee, without any cream in it, or sugar. She said that was so she could keep her girlish figure. I know she was only kidding, though, because I had gone up to her room 'bout nine-thirty when she was just getting up, and she was only in her corset. And she bulged out all around it--at the top and bottom both. And her face was covered with mud, so I could only see her eyes. She had curlers on too, and little brown wisps of hair stood up all over her head, because they were too short to put in "kids". (Once I heard Mama tell Aunt Mary that Aunt Tacie dyed her hair.)

When she was through with her breakfast, Aunt Tacie went into the pantry to wash the dishes. But Gram Ettie said, "I'll do that, Tacie. You're too dressed up for the kitchen. Come out and sit down now." You'd have thought Gramma was talking to me instead of a grown-up lady even if she had been her little sister once.

"Now, Ettie," Aunt Tacie went right on slushing water in the dishpan, "You know I can do them faster. I'll have them done in no time. Don't worry about me now. I'm not going to slop."

Gram Ettie made a lot of dust with her broom and didn't say anything. Then she saw me. I was just sitting over by the canary's cage being quiet. "Why aren't you practicing, Phyllis?" she said. "It's past time." So I went into the other room and practiced softly. There was only a partition between me and Aunt Tacie.

Aunt Tacie and Gramma were at it again. Gram Ettie sounded mad. Aunt Tacie didn't sound so mad, but she was hollering. Once in a while I could tell what they were saying; it didn't matter much, though, because they were always having words about something. Then I heard the dishpan clatter, and it sounded as if it was being thrown into the cupboard. And the roller towel creaked a little because it was being turned so fast.

"When I leave this time," Aunt Tacie was saying,"I'll never be back again. All you do when I am here is pick, pick, pick. Just like you did when I was a kid." Her steps sounded heavy as she puffed up the stairs and slammed the door to her bedroom.

I banged into "Marche Polonaise" for a while. Then Aunt Tacie came in where I was. So I started "The Maiden's Prayer." Her breath was warm as she leaned near to me, smelling powdery and soft.

"Listen, Phyllis." She put her pudgy hand on my shoulder. "Then are you going to memorize that for Anut Tacie?"

I said I didn't like to memorize pieces.

"Dis I scare you this morning, Baby? I bet Aunt Tacie looked funny, didn't she?"

I said, "Yes", and played a little run. I looked out of the window, and Aunt Tacie did, too. Mary Lou and Hester and Sara Mae were all skating on their new rollerskates. I was saving pennies in my bank for new skates, too, but I didn't have enough yet. It takes an awful long time to save that much money when you're earning it. You see, every time I washed Gram Ettie's dishes, or watered her plants or dusted her parlor, I earned a penny. That was so I'd learn the value of things, she said.

Then Aunt Tacie reached over on the piano and picked up "The Maiden's Prayer". "If you have this memorized when I come back again, I'll give you a dollar. How about it?"

So I nodded, and Aunt Tacie took me by the hand, and we went to see Mama. She was sitting on the porch, darning. Aunt Tacie plunked down beside her, and sighed deep, because her feet hurt when she stood up. I sat down on a little stool behind the swing. Aunt Tacie talked to her every day about Gram Ettie. Today she said, "It's a shame, Bea, that a woman of your mother's intelligence, and your mother's abilities..."(Here she sighed another little sigh, but it was a different kind)."Should let herself get like that." She said some more too, about the way Gramma wanted to have everybody under her thumb all the time, and how she'd henpecked Grampa all his life, poor man. So I went back into the house.

Gram Ettie was peeling potatoes, standing up by the sink. I asked could I help her, but she said, "No, thank you." Then Aunt Tacie called me, and I went out again.

She said, "Would you like to go down town for me, Phyllis?" I said, yes, I would. So she gave me an envelope with a note in and some money. "Down to Thornton's, Baby. You know where, don't you?" Sure I know where.

I went down the walk, carrying the envelop tight in my hand until it got kind of soft and sweaty. And then I wondered what Aunt Tacie wanted at a hardware store. I opened the note. It said, "This is for you--in advance. Save your pennies for Gram Ettie's birthday. It's next month, you know...Don't you dare come back walking. Love to my best little grand-niece. Aunt Tay."

----------Phyllis Wolf