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THE CRUCIBLE

A Publication of the English Club
Lock Haven State Teachers College
Lock Haven, Pennsylvania

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EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS STAFF

The Students in the 1956 Creative Writing Class

CRUCIBLE

We plunge
Our potentials
And pitfalls
Into the furnace of thought
That they may fuse
And endure.

ADVISER

E. B. Hills

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BORDER CROSSING

John Jurick

Johnson wiped the nervous perspiration from the palms of his hands and said, "Well, well, we go again, Reilley."

Reilley grunted a quick "Uh-huh" and continued to rub dirt into his hair.

Johnson finished tying his shoe, then addressed Reilley softly, "Look, Kev, you don't have to go. I can handle this one myself. You've done enough time on the border already. I haven't seen you take a break in the five and a half months we've been over here."

"Forget it, kid," Reilley snapped.

"But you've got Evelyn—"

"Shut up!" Reilley spun around viciously. His lips were two white slits. He put the back of his hand in his mouth. The fingers were trembling. Seeing this, he shoved his hand into his pocket. He started to speak, but his voice broke. Taking a deep breath, he said, "Eddie—Eddie, I'm sorry. I—I didn't mean to—"

"It's all right, you just need a rest," spoke Johnson softly.

The door opened and Bob Nicholson stepped into the room. "All set?" he asked.

"Just about," replied Johnson offering him a cigarette.

Nicholson went on, "Final briefing in an hour. Be on time, huh?"

"Wouldn't miss it for the world," said Johnson, looking directly at Reilley. Reilley turned away quickly.

They returned to their preparations. Johnson put some of the dirt in his hair as Reilley had already done. He donned the peasant outfit. As he pulled the tattered sweater over his head, he yelled, "Phew! Man, does this stuff ever stink!" He tore apart a cigarette from a foreign packet and sprinkled some of the loose tobacco in his pockets. Then he walked to the bureau and extracted a silver box from the drawer. From it he took a foreign-looking dental plate. "I really hate this," he muttered, exchanging it for the one he had in his mouth.

"Give me a hand with this damned thing," called Reilley.

Johnson's hand closed around the .25 caliber automatic. "Put your foot up on the chair," he said to the now-trouserless Reilley. Johnson took the roll of adhesive tape and tore five strips about eighteen inches long. The ends of these he attached to the top of the bureau.

Reilley accepted the weapon from Johnson and held it flat against his shaven inner thigh.

Johnson then wrapped the strips of tape around it tightly.

Reilley stamped his leg several times. "I guess it'll hold," he said. "Here, let me help you with yours." The process was repeated with Reilley strapping a small pistol on Johnson's thigh. The weapons were placed thus so that the men might retain them even if searched.

Pulling his trousers up, Johnson said, "You've got time for a letter, Kev." Then he left the room.

Twenty minutes later, they were gathered in the improvised briefing room in the basement. It was a small room with doubly-insulated walls. The only furniture was an ancient desk and six crude, wooden folding chairs. A man was assigned to walk continually through the adjoining rooms and areas while the briefing was in progress.

Nicholson sat at the desk. "Come over here," he said. Reilley and Johnson rose from the chairs along the wall and stepped quickly to the desk. They looked earnestly at the elaborate map taped to the top of the desk.

"This is where you'll crackerjack," spoke Nicholson. "Crackerjack" was the code word meaning "to cross the border." "The guerillas will create sufficient diversion approximately a kilometer south of Point Baker. This diversion will occur at exactly 11:57. Be sure to synchronize your watches." Nicholson's words were exact and methodic. He continued, "The border guards change at midnight. By scheduling the diversionary action for 11:57, we stand a pretty good chance of drawing the entire guard relief away from your area."

The two men were straining to absorb Nicholson's every word.

"Besides that," he went on, "one out of every two men at all their outposts will rush to the point of alarm. You'll cross at 12:10 sharp. Here," he pointed to the map "is where you'll make rendezvous with Kleschak. You know how important it is that we get this transmitter and code system to the Indians." "Indians" was the code title given to the courageous band of guerillas led by colorful Kleschak. "Kleschak," Nicholson's voice droned on, "Will be tending a flock of sheep about five hundred yards up the mountain directly to the rear of this twin-towered church." He pointed to the cross on the map which denoted a church. "Rauchfeldt," he indicated the town in which the church was located, "is ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent Commie. In fact," he said, "I wouldn't be surprised if Kleschak's boys were the only non-party boys for a good many kilometers around."

Reilley said, "That's quite a ways in. Isn't it possible for Kleschak to get a little closer to the border?"

"I'm not afraid," answered Nicholson earnestly. "They've been making it pretty hot for him lately."

Johnson continued to stare silently at the map. When he looked up, a vivid picture of the entire area was stamped clearly on his mind.

"Mail this for me, will you?" said Reilley. His mind seemed to be thousands of miles away.

"Sure," answered the calm Nicholson. "How about you, Johnson? Have anything you want mailed?"

"Nothing," snapped Johnson. "I guess we'd better get started, huh?"

Nicholson rose. "Kleschak will have all your return information. Here is your East Zone currency," he said handing them the money. Reilley and Johnson pocketed the bills, then looked at Nicholson. Nicholson addressed them softly, "Men you've done far more already than most men who have been in your situation before. I just want to reassure you that your work has a definite and necessary purpose. I am grateful to you—as every American should be. I'm not trying to wave a flag. You know me too well for that. Creedon will drive you to the train. Good luck and God speed." As they shook hands, Nicholson seemed to let his grip linger.

Johnson glanced at his cheap German watch with the precision mechanism concealed beneath the inexpensive face. It was 6:20, less than six hours till they would cross. They made their way to the outskirts of town and started down the old dirt road which had been indicated on the map. Dusk would soon be upon them. In less than an hour, rapid, determined strides had carried them to the little shrine which was their orientation check point. In the gloom they studied the shrine carefully. Counting up seven stones from the base of the shrine, Reilley worked the loose stone out of its ancient fitting. Reaching in, his probing fingers grasped the tiny transmitter and removed it.

Johnson, replacing the stone, said, "Nicholson has really gone cloak-and-dagger on this caper."

"Let's get some cover," snapped Reilley tensely.

Johnson put the tiny instrument under his jacket and together they entered the edge of the woods. "Strap this thing to you while I go take a look," said Johnson. "It should be just over the hill."

Reilley watched as Johnson's phantom-like shadow moved stealthily into the darkness. He guessed that it was about seventy yards to the crest of the hill. It took several tries before he successfully strapped the portable transmitter to his sweating

back. After putting on his shirt, he sat down on his jacket and rested. Glancing at his watch, he noticed that it was 3:40. He began to wonder about Johnson. The brush rustled, and he wheeled violently. A wave of relief engulfed him as he made out Johnson's form moving toward him through the murky shadows. Seconds later, Johnson was seated on the ground beside him. "What's it look like?" asked the anxious Reilley.

"I'm not exactly sure," replied Johnson. "Doesn't look too rough, though. The outpost is about five hundred yards down in the valley. Lights all around—and there's wire, Kev."

Reilley's head jerked upward at the mention of wire. He recalled another time on another mission when he had been slashed severely trying to escape armed pursuers by clambering over an eight-foot barbed-wire fence. His foot had slipped and his clothing had become entangled in the treacherous barbs. Had it not been for the loyal Johnson, he surely would have been taken. Johnson had turned back and pulled him down, then half-carried, half-dragged him to the shelter of the woods. As they had plunged into the brush, a burst from a submachine gun had transformed Johnson's sleeve into a mass of perforated rag.

"It's 9:15, Kev," Johnson's words jarred the loud silence. "We'd better sit tight for another couple of hours, huh?"

"I think we'd better move up to the crest and wait," replied Reilley.

"Okay," Johnson grunted as he got to his feet. They moved carefully up the dark hillside.

Johnson's voice droned tersely, "11:54 — 11:55 — 11:56 — 11:57." Their burning eyes hungrily absorbed every detail in the valley below. All was calm for an instant, then the angry sound of a siren, accompanied by the shrill blasts of a whistle, turned the serenity into frenzied activity. A man rushed from the building calling loudly to the sentries. Two guards ran toward the building. Already the sound of a vehicle being started stabbed through the night. The siren ceased as three men hurled themselves into the jeep, which did not stop completely as it received its hurrying occupants. It sped off into the darkness. The lone sentry remained inside the building.

Reilley's hand gripped Johnson's as he said, "Good luck, Eddie."

"Ditto," retorted Johnson. They moved quickly downward, their bodies transposed into two cold methodic machines of purpose. Making their way to within fifty yards of the fence, they rested momentarily. A shrub growth offered meager cover. Reilley stared at the luminous dial of his watch. His right hand was clutched tightly to Johnson's shoulder. As the instrument regis-

tered 12:10 to the second, he squeezed Johnson's shoulder and both men began bellying their way toward the area of fence nearest the woods and farthest from the building. They found a faint semblance of shadow as they passed between two spotlight concentration areas. The wirecutters bit greedily into the stretched metal, and two heads anxiously turned toward the building as the faint click of the severed wires sounded deafening to their sensitive ears. The cutters clicked once more, and almost immediately there was the sound of movement from within the wooden guard house. The two men waited for an eternal minute, but no one appeared. They shuffled underneath the fence and began the tedious crawl toward the shelter of trees some forty yards away. They had gone about fifteen yards when the door of the building opened. Johnson and Reilley froze, their faces buried in the cold loam of the trampled terrain. A figure appeared at the doorway; he was about to step through when the jangle of a telephone pierced the quiet night. As his form retreated, Johnson and Reilly threw caution to the winds and raced for the thicket. They hurled their bodies into the blessed cover and lay panting for several minutes.

They walked languidly after coming upon the sign which read, "Rauchfeldt 3.5 Km." Along the way they passed several vehicles and ox-pulled carts. Occasionally they raised their arms to acknowledge a friendly greeting from a whip-wielding ox-driver. Reilley's watch showed 9:20 as he reached for the package bulging from his jacket pocket. He pulled it out and unwrapped it, then handed a portion of the dried meat to Johnson. He began to rewrap the newspaper binding, then stared at it in amazement. "Look at this, will you, Ed," he blurted. Bob Nicholson had wrapped them a typical peasant lunch in a Rauchfeldt newspaper—the newspaper was only three days old!

"Holy cow," drawled Johnson, obviously surprised. "How much cover can you ask?"

Reilley was still shaking his head as they arrived at the outskirts of Rauchfeldt. The town lay slightly below them, and the twin-towered church protruded majestically above the other buildings. They quickly noted that the church faced south. This meant that the rendezvous with Kleschak would be made five hundred yards north of the church. They decided that it would be easier to circle the town and come upon the slope from the side rather than approach it head on. They followed this course until they could look almost straight down the slope and see the rear of the church. There was no Kleschak in sight. A dog barked, and they looked at each other anxiously. Walking on a little

further, they looked over a small knoll, and a wave of relief swept over them as the flock of sheep came into view. A huge bearded man was standing on the slope with a large shepherd's staff in a bulky challenging fist. Reilley waved to him and proceeded in his direction. Johnson stayed behind as was planned. After a brief greeting Reilley chanced the first half of the counter-sign.

"How many black sheep have you?" he asked in German.

"Seven," came the arrogant, expected answer. It was the correct reply.

"I thought I counted eight," tested Reilley. He had barely glanced at the sheep.

"That is because you counted my dog," came the memorized reply. Their hands grasped in a sincere respectful handshake. Understanding eyes exchanged understanding looks. Reilley turned and waved to Johnson, who trotted down hurriedly.

"It is a pleasure to meet you," spoke Kleschak in perfect English after Reilley had introduced Johnson. "I presume Nicholson sent the material. I hope he didn't make you swallow it, although I have learned that nothing is too fantastic for the fabulous Mr. Nicholson. You will find that we have a great deal of respect for him."

"You are not alone in your opinion," stated Johnson suddenly feeling proud to be associated so closely with a man so renowned. He had carefully avoided answering Kleschak's question as to whether they had the "material."

"Yes, we think a lot of Carl Nicholson," spoke Reilley.

"Carl?" questioned Kleschak. "I thought his name was Robert."

"We have the material," spoke Reilley in a tone that told Kleschak he had been tested once again.

"Believe me, I am genuine," he laughed. "We will make the exchange at dusk."

They remained with the beaming Kleschak for several hours. As they rested on the ground, the two men could not help admiring the giant-like form as he went about tending the sheep. White teeth sparkled as he called to his vigilant dogs. His ancient hat shaded a wind-burned complexion, and the Slavic eyes saw more than his expression indicated. As the daylight hours faded into dusk, they began to drive the sheep upward toward the more-wooded areas and Kleschak's cabin.

There were four crude chairs around the table. A rabbit-skin rug sprawled cozily in front of the fireplace. A broken shepherd's staff lay in one corner. Directly above it was a

beautiful hand-carved cabinet containing china. A pretty little cuckoo clock hung jauntily from the wall above the fireplace. The shadows of the flames danced crazily on it as Kleschak made the fire. Rising from his task, he asked them to sit at the table. He went outside and made a quick and final survey of the area around the cabin. Satisfied that there was no one else in the vicinity, he reentered and seated himself at the table with the two men. "We will see what you think of my roast mutton shortly, but right now I should like to see the set," he said.

Reilley stood and removed his coat. Unbuttoning the lower three buttons of his shirt, he unfastened the strap which held the tiny transmitter to the small of his back. He removed the mechanism and laid it gently on the table.

"Amazing," whispered Kleschak. His probing fingers caressed the leather casing. The miniature transmitter was no larger than a small camera. As Kleschak removed the leather cover, a rubberized packet tumbled to the table.

"That should be your code system," said Johnson. Kleschak opened it and sheafed through the papers quickly. Reilley and Johnson did not look at the printed matter. If they were taken, they could not reveal what they truly did not know.

Kleschak rose suddenly and went to the corner of the room. He picked up a portion of the broken staff and began to pry on one of the wooden boards beneath the rabbit-skin rug. It creaked upward stubbornly. He reached in and removed a canvas bag. Bringing it to the table, he placed the transmitter and coded material in the bag, then returned the bag to the gap in the floor. He replaced the board and stepped on it heavily several times. Reilley quietly picked up a straw broom and swept into the fireplace the dirt which had fallen from the board.

"Gentlemen," spoke Kleschak, "you have accomplished your mission. You will remain here tonight. I expect to have your return information before dawn. There are blankets in the trunk." He pointed to a large chest on the far side of the room. "Make yourself a bed on the floor near the fireplace, and I will prepare a feast. Accept my food and drink as a memento of my humble gratitude." He went to the cabinet and returned with a liter of cognac and three glasses. Pouring, he said, "I should like to propose a toast." The glasses were full. The three men stood, glasses in hand. "Gentlemen, let us drink to the success of a valiant insurrection."

They raised their glasses as Reilley stated solemnly, "To humanity's reprieve."

"And the Brooklyn Dodgers," Johnson added. The cognac disappeared into the mouths of three thirsty men.

INQUIRY

Autumn Finlan

Anne Rutledge was one of the women—
Gone from Illinois now
These hundred and twenty years.
Her parents were pioneer farmers
Who had always found it hard going.
She loved a lawyer from Kentucky—
The schoolmaster described him
As "a sedulous young man."
Hers was a short full life.

Mary Todd was another—
Like Anne Rutledge
Gone from Illinois now
Her more than a century.
She was born of prominent Southerners.
She properly met an ungainly
And precarious
Statesman.
They moved at the same time
Into the White House.
He, like them, has been gone a century and more.

THE LEAST OF THESE

Helen Fontana

The first few flakes of snow were beginning to fall. The neighborhood was filled with the shivery sound of sleds being dragged on the sidewalk to get the rust of the long summer's dormancy off the runners. By late afternoon there was a thick covering on the ground, and with much cheering and shouting we were off. We scorned the gentle contours of the hill where the rest of the town had already congregated and plodded through the woods to the cemetery. There we flung ourselves on our sleds and began the dangerous descent, dodging tombstones, bouncing over graves, and grinding to a stop just before crashing through the hedge at the foot of the hill. We knew that sled-riding in the cemetery was frowned upon, but nothing could stop us. When a sleeping marble lamb was knocked off its base, we calmly replaced it. When someone went through the hedge and rammed into the hard shale bank across the road, we administered first

aid and returned to our sport.

At church the the next Sunday a portion of the sermon was directed at the defilers of the Church's holy ground. We stared innocently straight ahead, came home and got our sleds and headed for the cemetery.

I had gone down the hill once and was following my tracks back up when I saw a little mouse lying in the snow, neatly sliced in two by the runner of my sled. His tail was already frozen, his blood turning to reddish crystals. I patted the snow around him in the semblance of a grave and continued up the hill and home, dragging my sled slowly behind me.

THE OPPORTUNIST

Robert England

When one was gone
She took another;
The second was
The first one's brother.

All's well with her—
But does she ponder
Which one she'll claim
When she goes Up-Yonder?

AS EVER, EVE

Helen Fontana

The theatre was quiet when Nancy got back from confession. Benny, the stage manager, was reading a newspaper in his chair by the door. Low voices came from the dressing room, and through the door of the green room she could see a pair of black-net stockinged legs propped on the arm of the sofa. This was the way she liked the theatre—quiet, but with an air of anticipation. The show opened tomorrow night. It was a musical, and had been a big success on Broadway five years ago. The Newport Playhouse didn't believe in experimenting. Its directors produced only plays that were familiar, and now in October, the house was sold out till after Christmas.

Nancy's part in the show wasn't very big, but it was of tremendous importance to her. Like the rest of the apprentices, she spent all her time after classes and rehearsals working back-

stage. For Nancy this meant sewing on costumes. Eve O'Dell, who was head of the costume department, was her best friend. She hurried upstairs now to see Eve before rehearsal.

Eve was sitting on the big sewing table pinning velvet ribbon on an orange bodice. She was four years older than Nancy, almost twenty-three, but she looked much younger than that as she sat there. Her brown hair was cut short and straight all around with bangs in front. There was a bottle of Coca-Cola beside her on one side and a cigarette on the other. Eve always worked like that, alternately sipping and inhaling. She looked up now as Nancy asked, "How's it coming? Are we going to make it?"

Eve smiled. She was always optimistic. "Of course, we'll make it. Can you work tonight?"

"Sure, if you need me."

"I came down and watched rehearsal a while this afternoon. I hadn't seen you on stage before. You looked beautiful."

"Beautiful? Why, Eve, I didn't even have my make-up on, and my dress wasn't finished."

"Makes no difference. You looked beautiful."

Eve's words had been offered casually, and outwardly Nancy accepted them as they were given. Inside she was reeling. She wanted to run away somewhere and hold the wonderful words close, whisper them over and over to herself.

Benny's voice came over the loud speaker.

"Places, please, for Act One. We're starting on time."

Nancy hurried to the door, and without turning around said, "I'll be up afterward."

The dressing room was a confusion of girls zipping each other into costumes, searching frantically for lost hair pieces and lipsticks, and cursing desperately under their breath as they tried to maneuver their wide hoop skirts in the crowded room. Nancy listened to the conversation around her as she started on her make-up. The show was in terrible shape. The dancers didn't know their routines. The chorus kept getting mixed up. The director's wife, who had a small part, was accusing two of the younger men of trying to steal her scene. There'd been a bad moment this afternoon. She'd just stopped in the middle of things, looked at her husband and said, "Get those Keystone Cops out of here."

It wasn't until Nancy was waiting to go on stage that she had time to think about Eve's remark. She meant that Nancy beautiful. Nancy knew what she meant. She meant that Nancy had given the impression of being beautiful, which meant more than being told she had a pretty face. Nancy had listened to too

much good-natured kidding to be deceived on this point. Her round face was liberally sprinkled with freckles, and her nose turned up a little too much.

Benny came over to her and said, "What're you looking so happy about? The show stinks."

Nancy laughed and said, "It's the best show I was ever in." She added to herself, "It's the only show I was ever in."

It seemed years since she'd been at home. Actually it had been only a few months. The theatre was another world, thousands of miles away from her life before. She'd had a hard time coaxing her parents to let her come to work at the theatre, but they'd finally given in, and now this was her home, and she felt as though she could stay forever.

Her thoughts snapped to the present. The end of the first chorus—count six—now. It wasn't hard to smile tonight. She felt like smiling. The routine was simple; walk up the steps, bow, turn to your partner, down the other side. The trick was in managing the hoop skirt; sometimes it seemed to have a life of its own. She smiled graciously at her partner. Usually it was an effort because his hands were always clammy, and he couldn't see well without his glasses and sometimes stepped on her skirt. But tonight was different. She enjoyed herself on stage as she never had before.

Afterward in the costume room she and Eve drank coffee, turning the chipped cups around in order to drink from the smoothest edge.

They both looked up when Kenneth Bostwick came to the door. He was the star of the show. The girls in the chorus were all infatuated with him and made elaborate plans to attract him, but their composure fled when he looked in their direction. He was blond and so tall that his head almost reached the top of the door. His coat didn't fit right, he said. Eve reached up and smoothed the shoulders, pulling a little here and there. Her manner changed around men. Of course, this made her no different from other women, but Nancy was sometimes embarrassed by the way Eve acted. She was looking up at Kenneth now, her hands still on his shoulders, her green eyes half-closed and a lazy smile on her lips.

"Well, if you didn't have such broad shoulders, maybe we could find a coat to fit you. Why don't you leave it here, and I'll work on it tonight." She unbuttoned the coat slowly and helped him take it off.

Kenneth had just left when Bernie Watson came in. Bernie was on the stage crew, and he was Eve's husband. People were always surprised to find out that Eve and Bernie were married.

He was not attractive—in fact, Nancy found him a little repulsive. He had a ragged moustache and pale blue eyes behind dark-rimmed glasses.

Bernie had a pack of cigarettes for Eve. Her eyes lit up like a little girl's, and she came over to Bernie and put her arms around him. He ruffled her hair and called her "Funnyface" and kissed her on the tip of her nose. Nancy watched, amused. That was the wonderful thing about Eve. She flirted with every man in the company, but anyone watching could see that she and Bernie were really in love.

"Nancy and I are working late tonight," she said, "so why don't you leave the car for us?"

"Okay, sugar," he answered. "But don't work too late. You look like you could use some sleep."

After he had left, Eve lit a cigarette and walked over to the window. She stood there for a while looking out. You couldn't see much from the window at night. Just the roof of the apartment house across the street. Even the stars were hidden by a layer of smog.

At midnight Eve said, "Let's drive awhile. The car's parked down in the lot." Nancy was willing though she was tired.

There was something peaceful about riding around late at night like this. That was another thing she had come to understand about Eve, her need sometimes to get away from the theatre, to forget all about her work. They often drove at night, never anywhere in particular, the windows rolled down, and Eve singing as they went along.

But Eve didn't sing tonight. Nancy looked at her and thought, "It's just a mood. I won't ask her what's wrong. She'll tell me if she wants to."

After a while Eve asked, "Have you noticed anything wrong between Bernie and me lately?"

"No. Is there something wrong?"

"I want a divorce, Nancy. The sooner the better."

"A divorce! But Eve—I thought you and Bernie were happy together."

Eve's voice was bitter. "I've never been in love with him. I married him because at the time I thought I should settle down. But a thing like that just doesn't work."

"But Eve—the cigarettes, tonight when he came in—"

"I know. Poor dear—I feel sorry for him. I try to make it up to him. But it isn't right, being married and feeling like that. Look, Nancy, I've told you this much, I might as well tell you the rest. I'm interested in someone else."

Nancy turned suddenly to look at Eve, and the question was out before she had time to think.

"Who?"

"Can't you guess? No, I don't suppose you can. I don't know what you'll think, but I believe you're grown up enough to understand. I've rented a room up on Ninety-sixth Street, and Ken Bostwick and I have been going there together for the past several months. We're very much in love."

Nancy couldn't say anything for a while. The whole thing was too much of a shock. It was too hard to believe. She made herself think back and gradually recalled little things that she had wondered about at the time, and then, knowing Eve, had forgotten. Eve would be gone for an afternoon sometimes, and when she came back she would be smiling and happy and every once in a while she would give a secret little laugh.

It was on days like that Eve would go to the window and look out and say, "Life is wonderful. Remember that, Nancy. You can do anything at all, or be anything you want, as long as you want it badly enough."

They'd talk then, about the things they wanted to do. In these talks, Nancy had faced for the first time the huge reality of her desire to be an actress. She had begun to think about this desire in terms of something to be achieved instead of as a distant dream. And Eve was encouraging. Just keep working, she'd say. Don't let anything stand in your way. Remember, it's yours if you want it badly enough.

Eve had stopped for a red light.

"I wanted to ask you," she said, "whether you would stand up for me in court."

Nancy's voice was small and tight as she answered.

"I can't, Eve. You know that I don't believe in divorce."

"That's right. I'd forgotten. Well, I suppose I can get a couple of the kids from the theatre."

"Look, Eve, why don't you give it another chance? Maybe you can make it work."

"I've thought about it, Nancy. I've thought about it for weeks and weeks, and this is the only way. You don't know what it's like, being with Ken for a few wonderful hours, then going home to Bernie. And it isn't fair to Bernie. No, I've made up my mind. Ken hasn't asked me to marry him. I think someday he will, but right now what we have is enough. It's getting late. We'd better get home."

Nancy had a room in an old house in what had once been the better part of the city. There were "Room for Rent" signs in the windows, and the once-beautiful homes were either covered up

with artificial stone or left to turn splintered and gray. Nancy said goodnight to Eve and walked slowly up the porch steps. Nothing's changed, she told herself. Just because you know this about Eve doesn't change what she's done for you. Remember what she said today? About looking beautiful? Well, then act as if you were. You're not a baby. This is the theatre. Everyone has something to offer you, and you've got to learn to take it as it is given. And forget that people lead a different life outside the theatre. Look up. Walk into the house as if you were proud and beautiful. See if it doesn't still work.

The two elderly sisters who shared the downstairs apartment hadn't gone to bed yet. Their parlor door was always open, although they never went out and never spoke to any of the other tenants. But tonight Nancy smiled at them, inclined her head slightly, and said, "Good evening." They didn't answer, and she started up the stairs, slowly and regally. She heard the remark as she reached the landing.

"Who's she think she is? The Queen of Sheba?"

Nancy reached her room, still walking straight and tall. Once inside the room, she leaned against the door, her shoulders sagged, her head fell forward onto her chest. She walked the few steps to the bed and fell across it, and after a few minutes she started to cry.

POEMS

Robert Jacobs

CONTROVERSY

Music makers' folly
Can be
When on the stage
They play
Music made for blasting
Throughout a holiday . . .

Parade—

For up and down
The street
Much volume is the fad
And sweet but little toots

Cannot be heard . . .

Or weighed.

(14)

THE NOCTURN BEAM

It meant nothing
To creatures of the blind:
A giant dark-bulb
Closed all sight
Into a coal-black tomb
Just before noon today.

To those dependents
Upon the light and sight
And daytime after time
There was havoc,
Being to the utmost—
Blinded,

Much the same
As when myriads of winged bugs
Red-eyed monsters of the night
Fly toward my carbide lamp
Or when deer stand motionless
Stilled by a searching light.

My horrified self
In sensuous gloom . . .
Clawed the walls
And tripped on friendly things
Where bats flew
On guided wings.

Solemn now, sure that I
Could not survive
A lightless, lifeless world
Wherein
Science had derived
A sightless thing—

I reached and broke
The nocturn beam.

ANYWHERE BEACH

The sea
Drags us to remorse;
The blue-black depths
Reach out
To claim a victory.

(15)

THE UNSEEN HORN

Tiny men heaped with candlestick fame
Turn earthward remembered deeds.
The soul, action, the uncommitted want
All haunt an earth more truant
Than endless time upon time,
Reaping hellish harvests of unwanted men.
What . . . when virtue lives
Infinite years more than a lifetime span
To guide, to live, to leap upon
Bitter men—the unsought-for ones,
The sons of sons,
The race of races . . .
And looks for life continued
In man alone graveward bound
And sobs and cries at imagined gates
That swing wide to self-formed fates
Where weeps a fallen Gabriel
Blasting an unseen horn,
Often pardoning prayers unintended
For One more learned,
With self-source wisdom self-contained,
Who views man in his virtue state
With virtued doors or virtued gates
And unsoothed minds
Kindled to unvirtued hates,
With the knowledge of truth?
And how wronged these mundane men
Returning earthward remembered deeds!

PROPAGATION

A tree grows . . .
And from what?
A simple seed
Thrown to the ground,
A little water,
Some heat:
Then two tiny shoots
Twist their determined ways
Up and down.
One a root,
The other a stem
Finally claim the world.

JAUNDICED RAYS CIRCLED

Juandiced rays
Circled
Where I sat
Watching shadows
Become darkness.

Suddenly . . .
Not too soon . . .
Giant hands
Uprooted bushes and trees.
Animals were scared.

Then
Many rivulets
Fled seaward
And leaves drooped
Bloody from battle . . .

As I searched
For the sun—
Knowing
A dispute in blackness
Had ended.

THINK

I ask you—
What is more absurd
Than hearing someone say
“What do you think?”
I say this is the most,
The overstated understatement,
The nonconformal,
The crack-pottest idea
Of the year.
What do you think?

MEN ARE

Men are foolish,
Unruly,
And mulish.
But . . .
The women
Are the ones
Who rear the sons.

AUGIE'S NIGHT OUT

George W. Bilicic

The second time Augie Koffer walked around the park, he stopped at the drinking fountain. He was a tall boy just sprouting into manhood. His arms and legs were a little too long and skinny, and he looked uncoordinated. After taking a drink of water, he sat down on one of the green benches.

"Yessiree, man, this is the life," Augie thought. "No more hick towns for me."

Bright lights mounted on long green posts surrounding the park pushed the darkness out into the street.

"I'm glad I'm on my own," he thought. "No one is ever going to be my boss again."

Augie whistled and the small brown and white mongrel wandering about in the park pranced over to him. The dog wagged its tail furiously.

"Hello there, long-ears," Augie said. "What's a little runt like you running around this late at night? What did you do—break your leash? You're too small to be running around like this. I ran away from home too, but you—you don't have a reason to. You better go home. You might get hit by a car. All right, puppy," Augie said, patting the mongrel's rump, "go—go on home."

The dog chased after a shred of paper sent scraping along the stone walk by the sharp wind that zipped through the park. Augie tightened the knot in his yellow tie and then lit a cigarette.

"Wait'll the gang hears I left home," Augie thought. "It was none of Mom and Pop's business how late I stayed out, and the guys I ran around with was none of their business either. I'm old enough to take care of myself."

A short stocky man meandered into the park. He gazed at the boy sitting on the bench. When the man reached the second park light, he hesitated and looked at his watchband. The frayed ends of the man's jacket cuffs mingled with the hair on his wide wrists.

"If Pop would have signed those enlistment papers, I could have gone to the Marine Corps with those guys. They really razzed me about not being able to go. I'll show them I'm not tied to no apron strings."

Augie took a deep drag on his Lucky, then flipped it away and let the smoke out of his mouth without inhaling it.

"Darn it! Why do they want me to go back to school in Sep-

tember? Who wants to wait around a whole year just for a diploma?"

The man stopped to look at the stone soldier with the upraised sword, cast a quick glance at Augie, and then drifted toward the drinking fountain.

"I feel kind of funny about not telling them I left," Augie thought. "Oh well, I'll write them a letter in a couple of days so they won't worry about me."

The man leaned his heavy body against the drinking fountain and stared in Augie's direction.

"They think I'm sleeping at the clubhouse tonight. Boy, it was easy getting my clothes out of the house. Lucky for me they were both in town. Wonder what kind of shirts Mom bought me."

When Augie pulled out a pack of cigarettes, the man strolled toward the boy.

"Howdy, chum," the man said placing his foot on the edge of the bench.

"Hi, mister," Augie returned.

The man sat down beside the boy.

"What are you doing in the park at this hour?" the man asked. "Getting a little fresh air?"

"Yes, something like that," Augie said. "I'm looking the town over tonight. Swell town, too, as far as I can see."

"This your first time in Washington?" the man asked.

"No, it's the third, but I never got to see much. My parents were always along. All's they wanted to do was look at monuments and things like that. Tonight I'm really looking the town over. I've been hitting some of the joints. I didn't have any trouble getting served. Drank about six drafts."

"Six beers. That's quite a few."

"Yah, but I don't even feel it. I'm a pretty heavy drinker."

The one side of the man's broad face cracked into a smile. He fiddled with a button on his faded maroon sport shirt. Then he made a noise in his throat and pointed at the pack of cigarettes in the boy's hand.

"Got an extra cigarette? Let me borrow one, will yuh? I just ran out."

Augie handed the pack of cigarettes to the man. The man tapped the pack on his knuckles and seized two cigarettes between his fingers. He put one behind his ear and the other between his thick lips.

"Thanks," the man said. "Where you from?"

"Rankin—that's in Pennsylvania," Augie answered. "I'm going to live in Washington now, though. I ran away from home."

"You don't say," the man said. "Anybody know where you're at?"

"Nope," Augie said, shaking his head, "nobody knows."

"Nobody, huh. What are you doing for money?"

"Heck, I got money," Augie replied. "I had a job this summer and saved some. Anyway, if I go broke, my brother lives here."

"Hey, kid, I thought you said nobody knew you were here."

"That's what I said—nobody knows. I'm not going to his house until tomorrow. I want to look the town over first. I just got off the train a couple of hours ago."

The man traced his finger along the thin purplish scar on his square chin.

"You got some loot, huh?" he said thoughtfully.

He chuckled and then slapped Augie on the back.

"You're all right, kid. Tell you what—how would you like to hit some joints with me? I know a couple hot spots."

"Well, I don't know," Augie said. "I was going to go to an all-night movie, but—"

"I thought you wanted to paint the town," the man said.

"Not chicken, are you?"

"Who me? Heck, I like a good time. I'm no chicken."

"Well?" the man said impatiently.

"Sure—sure thing, mister. I'll go. That's why I'm here—to have a good time."

"That's the way to talk," the man said slapping the boy on the back again. "I got a good place in mind if you want to walk a little ways."

"It's OK by me," Augie said. "Let's go. Say, what's your name? We might as well get to know each other as long as we're teaming up tonight."

"Ah—Smith—Smitty," the man said. "Ready, kid?"

The man called Smitty got up from the bench and started walking out of the park.

"My name's Augie Koffer," the boy said as he fell in step beside Smitty.

When Smitty stopped at the corner, Augie leaned against the telephone pole. He watched a lone car glide along the narrow street. The car's headlight flashed in the pockets of night between the occasional street lights. In back, footsteps clicked on the concrete sidewalk.

"Say, Smitty, how much farther is this place?" Augie asked.

"Take it easy, kid, we're almost there," Smitty snapped.

Smitty turned his head and looked back. The footsteps clicked nearer.

"This way—no, this way," he said. "I know a short cut. Come on."

Augie followed Smitty across the street. The footsteps in back ceased when Augie and Smitty disappeared into the lot filled with half-constructed apartment houses.

"Things ought to be really jumping when we get there," Smitty said. "Maybe you can find a nice looking girl to dance with. You like girls, don't you?"

"Yah," the boy answered. "I was dating a couple of girls in my class."

"Regular ladies' man, huh," Smitty said with a snicker. "Regular ladies' man."

Moonlight glanced off the steel girders of the tall skeleton-like structures. Smitty quickened his pace, letting Augie trail a few yards behind. They walked deeper into the lot.

"Jeepers, I can't see where I'm walking in these shadows," the boy complained. "I should have stayed in town. This place is too far. Let's go back, Smitty. We'll take a cab back to town. I'll pay for it. I got money."

Smitty remained silent and walked at a slower pace, letting the boy catch up to him. Suddenly the man whirled around and faced the boy.

"Where is it?" Augie asked. "I don't see anything around here."

The man laughed and clutched Augie's arm.

"There ain't nothing to see," the man said. "Where's your wallet, kid?"

"What do you mean, Smitty? Wallet?"

The man jerked Augie's arm violently. Augie stumbled into the man.

"Yah, wallet—fork over that damn money, stupid."

"What is this?" Augie gushed as he tried to move back.

"I want your dough, not back talk," Smitty said.

He swung his hand around and caught Augie on the cheek. Augie let out a cry as he fell to the ground. Smitty moved toward the boy, but Augie quickly leaped to his feet and sprinted for the street.

"Come back here, you little punk," Smitty yelled savagely as he ran after Augie.

The gap between the man and the boy widened as the runners drew nearer to the street. When Augie reached the last structure, he stumbled. The weight of his body increased his speed. He plunged forward clawing the air and then dropped to the ground. He raised himself to his hands and knees, crawling toward the street and trying to gain his feet at the same time.

PLIGHT

Up a dusty, thorn-shrouded path
A man walks,
A small man.

Behind him in an endless valley
People dance and sing, unaware of danger,
As he is.

Ahead, in the middle of the road,
A lone ant stretches,
Pinned to the earth by a pebble.

The man falls, his cheek brushing the ground,
And sees the little creature and its plight.

As its boulder is lifted,
The ant scrambles to its feet
And looks at its saviour who blots out the sky.

Up a dusty, thorn-shrouded path
A man walks,
A big man.

ONE BY ONE

One by one,
Up and down, snow flakes fall,
Grasp,
Struggle,
Fail.

Falling, make beams of light substance,
Branches white. Onward they
Flutter,
Flounder,
Fall.

Little men void of breath,
Idols here on earth,
Think,
Swirl,
Topple.

PLACID ON THE SHELF

Leaves of white spattered with black,
Joining together worlds, minds, and men,
Transforming lives and ideals—
This black block speaks of many things,
Of life and death
And that which in-between brings.
Wars, sorrows and joys alike,
Emanate from its pages.
This is a book, lying placid on a shelf,
Any shelf, anywhere—
Mindless of men, undisturbed by time.
Potency containing only that which
Men bring to it—
This is a book, a force.
A force limitless and inexhaustible
A book binds ages,
Charges worlds.

SIMPLE THINGS

Empyrean tears of Gods long since faded
Splatter and trickle
Down a thick-veined leaf;
Meeting at the tip, they form a tiny drop
Which falls swiftly to earth.

A lone ant poking its way through a
Labyrinth of green
Is struck,
Washed,
And knocked aside.

The dazed creature scrambles to its feet,
Little knowing the cause of its journey's interruption.

Simple things—
A raindrop,
An ant.
But:
When did this happen?

BACK TO KANE

Nick Tsamoutales

The cold water hit his back and shoulders. He turned around and twisted the porcelain knob. There was no hot water, no hot water in September. He turned the shower off and stepped into the bedroom. He felt the radiator. It was cold too. The entire bedroom was cold. He put on his terry cloth robe to ward off the mountain chill while he rested before dinner.

The size of the room was the same; only the furniture, the colors, and the rug made the difference. Twelve years ago he had been here, but in the room below, which was one made up for employees then. Now that room served as part of an additional cocktail lounge.

The branches outside the window lifted and fell in a brisk breeze. Then he noticed an empty nest among the leaves. He remembered that he had watched a nest being built in almost the same spot—twelve years ago. And later there had been young birds. He began to dress. Dinner was at seven as always.

It was dusk in the dining room. A couple sat near the piano, probably paid well to look young and in love. He tried to remember the song. He recalled that he had thought it rather lovely once; all he could remember was the way he had felt then. He had been among those who had waited for the guests to eat and get out. Now as he looked around, he could see himself as a waiter again. He chose the boy who was short and scrawny. Himself—twelve years ago. He wondered if the boy had the wonderful times at the lake, in the woods, and at the wiener roasts and corn broils the way he had twelve years ago. Probably, but has he met his Helen? That was when he had decided he would make something of himself.

"Mr. Wheeler?"

"Yes," he replied.

"I'll be your waiter for the week, sir. I hope you'll enjoy your stay here."

"Thank you," Wheeler replied.

"Will Mrs. Wheeler join you tonight, sir?" the scrawny waiter asked.

Norm Wheeler stared at the tall green candle while it wasted away under its flame. Table for two and an empty chair. It was 1955, and the other chair was empty. The couple near the piano held hands desperately. Helen would have laughed. She would have said that they were both at least thirty and that make-up was an old art. The girl was an artist, too...holding

hands with one man while gancing at others.

"No, Mrs. Wheeler will not join me."

"Yes, sir."

The waiter took the order and walked away.

She hadn't been Mrs. Wheeler; she had been Helen, and she had liked Kane Lake because it was quiet. People ate quietly, talked quietly, and even those who got drunk did so quietly.

They had met here. They had planned to come back here together, get away from the city rush and the people who knew them. Relive their younger days. They had talked and laughed and loved here in the quiet.

"It's the only way to live. I think I could compose music there. I feel I could do anything I wanted to there." Helen had been sitting by the window in the bedroom. "We've been in the city too long. We need the change. Why not make it next year definitely?" She had stared out the window as she spoke. He understood.

He walked past the couple near the piano. They seemed very young. She looked up and smiled at him.

The man behind the bar looked familiar. Norm ordered a martini.

"How long have you been here?"

"Five years, sir."

He guessed all bartenders look alike.

"They're serving cocktails on the patio, sir."

"Oh. Are many people here these days? It used to be a good time of year. It's so damned chilly, though."

He looked at the open doors. Drafts, they always affected his knees.

"Quite a few. It's been a good season."

"What's wrong with the hot water? I had to take a cold shower."

"I don't believe they have any hot water this time of the year, sir."

"That's damned silly. I got a chill."

He had two more martinis before three young ladies came into the bar. They talked and giggled and drank manhattans. Norm nodded to the bartender and strolled out to the patio.

He looked around, but found no one he knew or remembered. He pretended the white metal chairs were the hand-made pine ones he remembered. The metal ones looked out of place. He and Helen had sat on the pine chairs to wait for the slow September nights to come in, and to talk.

The forest began at the steps of the patio. They had sat listening for sounds in the woods. He imagined them as bears

or even mountain lions. Helen had said they were probably made by a couple of mischievous boys trying to frighten someone. He tried to remember the music that had been coming through the door behind them, but he had only the impression of its having been lovely and appropriate at the time.

He went down the steps, putting his hand on the rail as he looked toward the lake. At the bottom he buttoned up his jacket, then picked up a handful of damp pebbles. He had come down this path so many times. It had never bored him to walk along the same way, day after day. It seemed familiar to him rather than unexplored. He turned his ankle in a rut and dropped some of his pebbles. When he had regained his balance, he stood and lobbed some of the remaining pebbles one by one into the lake. He liked the sound, but for some reason it gave him a feeling of uneasiness. With a final thrust he threw in the rest of the stones.

He walked more carefully as the path turned down even closer to the lake. He found a dry rock and sat down. Apparently no one had discovered how fascinating the beach was after sunset. There was only a breeze and the quiet woods behind him.

"This is the most peaceful spot in the world. God must have sat down here to rest on the seventh day." He remembered one of them had said that. He chuckled to himself, thinking it must have been he, and wondered if Helen had thought him trite.

It was getting damned cold. The jacket wasn't enough. He should have brought a sweater along. He chuckled again, remembering how he used to come down here with only his dungarees and a T-shirt. They even used to take their shoes off and wade in the cold water. His stomach was bothering him. He wished he hadn't ordered the shrimps. He should have stuck to his diet.

"Excuse me."

"It's all right. I'm just digesting my dinner. Don't leave. This place has plenty of room for two."

"I guess I've missed the sunset. I stayed for cocktails."

"Where's your boy friend? Doesn't the sunset interest him? It's damned cold down here tonight."

"He's in the billiard room with some of our friends. What was it like?"

"What? Oh. I missed it too. Won't he mind your coming down here alone?"

"I'm not alone."

"No, that's right, you're not."

The rock was getting cold beneath him and mist was settling over the lake. The damp chills became a reality in his knees. Aren't you getting cold in that dress?"

"It doesn't bother me at all. It's so beautiful here in the evening."

"It's too cold to stay beautiful." He stood up. "You'd better go back. You'll catch a cold."

"Well, I guess you're right. Would you . . . wait about ten minutes before you follow me?"

Now why the hell?

"Oh, certainly. Go ahead."

"Thanks for the conversation," she said. "I hope I didn't bother you."

"Not at all."

The fog was getting thicker. He wondered what fool idea she had got in her head. Ten more minutes down here and he'd have pneumonia. He bent over and picked up more pebbles.

I PURSE MY LIPS IN A WHISTLE

Margaret Mitchell

I purse my lips
In a whistle.
Then memory returns to me:
He is gone.

Turning, I see him
Standing before me,
His bright eyes
Searching my face.
Then he is gone.

A green rubber bone
Lies partially buried
In the muddy yard.
A yellow pan,
Worn thin by constant use,
Protrudes from behind
The lilac bush.
A collar,
Once too large for its owner,
Hangs motionless
From a nail
Somewhere in the woodshed.
He is gone.

I purse my lips
In a silent whistle.

THOSE ERUDITE FRIENDS OF OURS

Helen Fontana

I was stopped not long ago by an acquaintance of mine (of the intense, unkempt variety) who wanted me to recommend a girl for him to cultivate. His were not the usual requirements. He did not say that she must fill a sweater neatly or have a pretty face, only that she must be intelligent. Ordinarily I would have given the asker of such information the phone number of Elsie M., whose I. Q. is 150 and whose weight is considerably more. I knew, however, that his only reason in stating that the girl be intelligent was to provide him with an audience who would recognize the choice bits of poetry he chose to quote and respond to his knowledge of philosophical literature: even Elsie would have been completely bored.

I was reminded of the boy who liked me, he said, because I was so intelligent. Had the remark been well-founded, I might not have minded, but the truth was that, failing to impress him by laughing at his cynical wit, I had followed his lead into a discussion of *What Is Wrong with the World Today*. I didn't know and didn't care, but I have always tried to keep on hand a little store of general remarks that can be applied in any conversation. My statement about the sense of values of the man in the street met with great success and provided fuel enough for him to hold forth on the subject for the rest of the evening. He said he hoped he would see me again; maybe we could work on some double-crostics together. I shuddered at the thought and bade him a hasty good-night.

I do not disapprove of learning. On the contrary, I have the greatest respect for the true intellectual, the man whose search for knowledge results in the well-ordered life, the quiet wisdom whose depth cannot be measured. My complaint is with the esoteric little groups who dig up a few obscure poets and authors, learn the names of some of the more occult religions, and then sneer at the rest of the unenlightened world.

I have long since given up trying to compete with the intellectual on his own ground. My knowledge of psychology doesn't go much beyond schizophrenia; I have no idea what Transcendentalism is. I have found that the best way to puncture the balloons of the Cultured Cult is to interrupt some deep discussion with a question like "Dylan Thomas? Who's she?" or "I love modern art, but what does it all mean?"

I was at the apartment of a friend one evening, and among the guests were Clayton and Estell, devotees of the school of

modern music. They clapped their hands and squealed with delight when someone brought out a Bartok album, and settled themselves cross-legged on the floor, the better, presumably, to decipher the composer's confused message. Before the records were half over they were both sound asleep. That is the main trouble with the intellectual; he is too easily betrayed. The pose is too difficult to maintain.

It seems very significant to me that there are few athletic intellectuals. I am sure that if one of our erudite friends discovered that he had a tremendous potential for throwing the discus or doing a half-gainer, his books would lie forgotten under the latest issues of "Sports Illustrated" and the "Health Ed. Journal." Such a reversal never happens, though, and the intellectual goes on, Parnassus-ward plodding his weary way.

POEMS

George W. Bilicic

THE OLD COUPLE UNDER THE LINDEN TREE

We turned our backs on the little village,
knowing that we should never return to its streets
and its churches and its houses,
to the laughter and the warm glances
around lamp-lit tables.

Once, before descending the hill, we looked back
and saw the old couple standing side by side
under the linden tree.

We waved, and then we walked on.

We traveled third class.

And we laughed with the tourists when their black disk
stopped on the painted square, and we felt their
disappointment when it fell short.

We stood huddled in awe of the tall gray lady so high above us.
What lay beyond her? What streets? What churches?
Would there be—

It was hard to feel at home.

I got work in the mill near the settlement
where we rented a room.
We worked hard.

"See, Mother. He's too clumsy. He can't play baseball." Jerry had said.

Tommy's lower lip had begun to quiver. A big tear had rolled down the five-year-old's cheek.

"Now, Jerry, that isn't fair to Tommy. After all, he is younger than you," Mother had scolded. "When you were his age you couldn't play baseball either."

Angrily Jerry dug his heel into the grass. Of course, he had known how to play baseball when he was five. Don't most boys? Little brothers only get in the way. He glanced at Tommy, who was playing on the porch with a red truck. All younger brothers wanted to do was play with cars and trucks.

At that moment the sound of whistling came from the other side of the back yard fence. Then Allen was pushing his way through the gate. A shiny bat was slung over his shoulder. Allen's six-year-old brother trailed behind him dodging through the fence just in time to escape the swinging gate. Jerry and Tommy raced across the yard greeting their friends with shouts.

"Hi! Want to play baseball?" Allen called to Jerry. "Look at the new bat I got." Allen proudly thrust the bat into Jerry's hands.

"Sure, I'll play," Jerry answered. He ran his fingers over the bat lovingly. "But why did you bring Jeep along? He'll only spoil the game."

"Jeep? Oh no!" Jerry exclaimed. "He's a great player. In fact," Allen drew himself up to his full height and thrust out his chest, "I taught him how to play myself. He's almost better than I am. Show him how you hit the ball, Jeep."

"O.K., Al," Jeep said importantly and took the bat from Jerry. He strutted several feet away and proudly spread his legs as his brother had taught him. Swinging with all his might, Jeep sent the ball rolling only several yards.

"That's all right, Pal. The next time it will go farther. Now let Tommy hit the ball," Allen called. "Jerry must have taught you how to play. He's a great ball player." Allen grinned at Tommy.

Jerry dug his hands uneasily into his pockets. He could feel his face reddening as Allen continued.

"I'm going to throw the ball, Tommy. Let's see if Jerry has taught you as much as I have taught Jeep."

Tommy took the bat Jeep offered him and looked at it. Confused, he looked up at Jerry.

"Now remember how to hold the bat," Jerry suddenly said.

"Hold it halfway up and swing like this." Then Allen got ready to throw the ball to Tommy. The ball whizzed through the air. Tommy swung awkwardly and missed. Expecting angry words from his brother, Tommy hung his head.

"That's all right, Tommy. We'll practice tomorrow," Jerry comforted his brother. "I'll make you the best player in the neighborhood. I'll show everyone my brother can play ball."

RECUSANCY

Helen Fontana

I walked right-left when others walked left-right,
I scorned sweet wine and drank a bitter gall,
I wanted black when all the rest chose white,
I sang the loudest or sang not at all.
I laughed at rules and damned tradition's name
"Conform" and "bend" were words I didn't know.
"I'll stand alone," I said, "You're all the same."
The world agreed and gladly let me go.
Since then from pale grey shadows I look out
At sun-lit faces, lovers arm in arm.
They do not hear me crying, and I doubt
If they would notice should I come to harm.
The lone dissenter always casts his lot
With empty dreams of have but learns have not.

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