



# **The Crucible**

**Volume 1 1961**

**Lock Haven State College**

**Lock Haven, Pennsylvania**



# The Crucible

E. B. HILLS, Faculty Advisor

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# The Crucible

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## First Thing In The Morning

GEORGE J. MYERS

Norman Hamm pressed his foot down on the gas pedal. The engine choked once, then picked up until it reached a high-pitched scream. Out of the back of the car, small clouds of black smoke arose until they hung in the cold December air directly above a sign which read: DON'S O.K. USED CAR LOT. Norman turned off the ignition, climbed out of the car, and walked around to the other side. "What do you think of her, son?" The young boy, about sixteen, didn't answer. Norman began again. "If I didn't own a new Oldsmobile, I would buy her myself." The young boy kicked the front tire, ran his hand across the dull metal of the front fender, and then jammed his hands into his tight-fitting jeans.

"It sounds all right, I guess. How much did you say you were asking?"

Norman needed this sale. It had been a pretty good week, but still he felt that he must make a sale. "Four hundred and ninety-five bucks, and it is all yours. And that is a damn good price for a '53 Mercury that's in the tip-top condition that this one is."

The boy looked unsure. "I don't know. Maybe I had better bring my old man around to look at it."

"Listen, kid. I'm going to level with you. I have a guy coming in the first thing in the morning for this car. I'll take four hundred and fifty for it tonight. The only reason I'm giving you

such a good deal is that I would like to see you tearing around town with your best girl seated right next to you, the envy of every kid in the high school. Just picture yourself, kid, behind the wheel of that baby with one hundred and sixty-five horses just waiting for your command."

"It really sounds great, but you see it will take me some time to save the down payment and enough for insurance. But, I'm interested. I want to get something — that is, after I save the money."

"Yaw, sure, kid. When you get the dough saved, drop around and see us." Norman turned and walked into the small office. As he was going through the door, he noticed that the cloud of black smoke was still evident in the night air. It seemed to hang like a dark shroud above the aged and beaten '53 Mercury.

These damn kids don't have the price of a package of cigarettes, and they come around here wasting my time.

Inside the small office, Norman's boss was preparing to close for the night. "How did you make out with that kid? Does he want that Mercury?"

"Yaw, Don. He told me he would be back first thing in the morning."

"I'll bet."

"No, honest to God, he said first thing in the morning."

"Okay, Normie. Let's call it a night."

"Okay, Don. I'll see you the first thing in the morning."

Norman decided to drive up Lincoln Avenue. It was several blocks out of his way, but he wanted to see the Christmas lights. At forty-three, Norman Hamm was still fascinated with the long strings of red and green lights. He remembered the first time he had seen the lights. He was fourteen, and his aunt had taken him all the way across town on the Hanna Street bus. The lights were beautiful against the pitch-black of the cold December night. Above all of this, he knew, there were millions of golden stars. Norman couldn't remember which he finally decided was the more beautiful—God's display or the City's. It also puzzled him as to how those lights could stay suspended over Lincoln Avenue. He wondered about this for almost a week. Then, about two days before Christmas that year, Norman came into the city with his aunt in the middle of the afternoon. The first thing he saw were dirty, black, twisted coils of wire between and connecting each individual bulb with the next. The lights looked dirty and ugly, cold and alone. He almost cried that night, and ever since then, he didn't like to look at the lights in the day time. But at night he could stare for hours at them. Norman was brought back to reality with a sudden, sharp crack. The front of his car had rammed the back of a small delivery truck. There was no damage to the truck and only a small scratch on the car Norman was driving. "As long as your truck isn't hurt," Norman said.

"No, mine is all right, but you have a small scratch in the chrome of yours."

That won't hurt this old wreck. I just bought it for the wife to tear around in. It saves the fenders on my new Cadillac."

Norman got back into the car, and after having a little difficulty in getting it started, drove off. Maybe he could get it back on the lot without the boss seeing it. Norman was tired of borrowing a car from the lot every time he wanted to go somewhere. The boss didn't mind, but Norman wished he could afford a car of his own. He dismissed the whole unpleasant subject from his mind. However, he was still angry thinking about the way those delivery drivers thought they owned the whole road.

Norman thought about the delivery truck business. I'll bet there is a lot of easy dough in a racket like that. It would be just the kind of business for me to get into: eight or ten delivery trucks racing all over town while I sat in the office taking in the business. Yaw, that would be great. I'll have to keep my eyes open for some good used panel trucks at the lot. Then, slowly, I could start buying one or two a month, until I had seven or eight good ones. After that, I could walk into the office and announce to my boss that I am quitting and that he and the whole damn car lot could go straight to hell. It was time that I got into my own business. After all, I am not getting any younger. One of these days something will break for me. It was just a matter of time. I know it. I can feel it. Very soon now I am going into business for myself.

Norman was waiting for a light to turn green when his eye caught a sign in an all-night laundry: OPEN ALL NIGHT-WASH-25c-DRY-35c. Now



there is something to get into. Why, with a few washing machines, a guy could clean up. Norman thought of the pun he had just made. With a few washing machines a guy could clean up. I should have gone into radio or television as a gag writer. I was always good in that sort of thing. I'll bet those guys make the dough. I'll have to talk with Helen about this laundry deal. I am sure she would go for it. She could supervise the shop while I am out drumming up business. I wonder if Mr. Klinefelter would object to a few alterations? We could remove the wall which separates the living room and the dining room. That would make room for about six or seven washers. Six washers at twenty-five cents a load . . . and, if each washer took thirty minutes . . . that's fifty cents a washer an hour . . . fifty cents times twenty-four hours . . . My God! That's twelve bucks a day per washer. . . times six washers is seventy-two bucks a day.

Say, this is a good idea. Seventy-two bucks times seven days is . . . add one . . . seven seven's are forty-nine. . . . Five hundred and four bucks. The sum of his figures almost staggered Norman. Five hundred and four dollars a week! Why, this is a small fortune. The mental effort of Norman's mathematics seemed to have a sobering effect upon him, for he suddenly remembered that his wife had asked him to pick up some things at the drug store.

He parked the car in front of Grossman's drug store. He got out of the car and started to enter the store when he remembered the letter he was supposed to mail. Attached to a telephone pole in front of the store was a small mail box.

Say, that was good thinking. Normie old boy, pick a drug store with a mail box right in front. That's killing two birds with one stone. I should have been one of those efficiency experts. I'll bet I could have saved thousands of dollars for some big company. Norman deposited the letter, slammed the shutter twice just to be sure, then turned and walked into the small drug store.

For some reason, Norman felt very good and very important. Inside it was warm. And Norman spent some time examining a toy train display until a clerk informed him that it was close to closing time and asked him was there anything he wanted. Norman spent the next twenty minutes selecting the few things his wife had asked him to buy. With each purchase, he informed the clerk as to why he was selecting this brand over that one. "That will be two thirty-eight, sir."

Now Norman, for the first time, really looked at the clerk. She was a rather plumpish woman of about thirty. She looked very tired. Norman was feeling very good. He liked being called sir. He paid with his last five dollars. "Oh, yaw, give me a couple of those Hershey bars, too. I'll probably be back in a few weeks to buy a couple of those electric train sets. How much are they?"

"The ones that you were playing with are twenty-nine, ninety-five."

"Yaw, that's what I thought they were. I would buy a couple tonight, but I'm in a pretty big hurry. I have to see a couple of guys about a deal I got cooking."

Norman turned to leave the store, but he couldn't resist looking at the toys one more time. After a few minutes,

the same clerk walked up to him. "Did you want something else, sir?"

"Oh, no. I was going to take a couple of these train sets home with me tonight, but I'm in kind of a hurry." Norman noticed that it was the same clerk who had waited on him before.

"Good-night, sir."

"Ah . . . yes. Good night."

As Norman was walking toward the door, a thought occurred to him. I'll bet that dame was trying to put the make on me, the way she was calling me sir. Norman sneaked a look back at the clerk. She was sitting at the counter drinking a cup of coffee and smoking a cigarette. Well, I can't play around with every tramp that tries to make out with me. No, sir. I have a good wife at home. No playing around for me. Norman thought about the trouble Ed Fayette was in because he had been stepping out on his wife. No sir, Norman thought, no playing around for me.

Outside, Norman slammed the shutter on the mail box again. He let it clang noisily shut. He looked at the red, white, and blue mail box. I'll bet there is a fortune in this business. The government was always complaining about losing money every year. It was no wonder, with those thieves in Washington stealing the government blind. I'll bet I could have been a really good politician. Why, with my gift of gab, I could have ended up governor of the state. I wonder why no one ever thought of getting into the mail business? If I started out in a small area, say, right in this city, all that I would need is eight or ten carriers and some mail bags. I wonder why no one ever thought of this idea before. Maybe there is a law against it. That

sounds just like the government; they won't let the small man make a nickel. They want it all for themselves.

The rest of the way home, Norman tried to figure how many letters, at four cents a day, he could have delivered in a day. Thinking about the letters reminded him not to send a Christmas card to his brother this year. I never got one from him, Norman thought. At least, I didn't get one from him last year.

That's what happens when you get an education. You think you are so damn important that you can't even mail a Christmas card to your own brother. Well, that's four cents the post office isn't going to make off me this year. If my own brother is too cheap to mail a lousy Christmas card, so am I. Except, with me, it is a matter of principle. I should have gone to college and been a school teacher like Harold. I wonder if my old G.I. Bill is still in use. Say, that would be a great idea. With all of the experience I have gained since I was out of high school, I wouldn't have any trouble competing with those young kids. Sure, that picture I saw with Bing Crosby last summer was about a guy older than me who started back to college. He didn't have any trouble at all. I'll have to drop by the V.A. the first thing in the morning and check on this.

Norman parked the car in front of the house, locked it, and walked onto the porch. He looked back at the car. He couldn't remember if he had locked the back doors. He walked off the porch and tried the back doors. They were both locked securely. As he was turning to walk away, his eye caught sight of



the package from the drug store lying on the front seat. He took out his keys, opened the door, and picked up the package.

Norman's wife was seated on the couch watching television.

"Hi, honey. I am home."

"Hi, Norman. Did you get the things from the drug store?"

"Sure, I got them. This isn't a bottle of champagne under my arm," Norman quipped.

Helen, his wife, emptied the contents of the package on the kitchen table. "Where is the tooth paste?"

"The tooth paste?"

"Yes, the toothpaste."

"Ah . . . they sold the last tube just before I got there, the clerk told me."

"Oh, for God's sake, Norman. I never heard of a drug store running out of tooth paste."

"Well, they didn't exactly run out. They were out of Colgate, and I knew that was your favorite. So, I didn't want to disappoint you with some other brand that you wouldn't like. You noticed I didn't forget the Vick's?"

"No, Norman, you didn't forget the Vick's. But it is a little difficult to brush your teeth with Vick's, that's all." Norman laughed, his wife smiled. They both walked into the small living room and sat down. Norman picked up the paper.

"Norman, you did pay the insurance today, didn't you? It was due yesterday."

"I am going to pay it first thing in the morning, dear."

"Well, what about the electric bill, Norman? I gave you the money to pay that last week."

"I know, dear. I am going to take care

of them all at once, even the note at the bank."

"Norman, you don't mean that isn't paid either?"

"First thing in the morning, dear. I was busy all day today. But it will be taken care of first thing in the morning. You know, Helen, that would be something to get into, I mean, the loan business. Why, with a few thousand dollars, a person could really. . ."

"Oh, for God's sake, Norman. Last night it was the chicken business, the night before, house painting, and the night before that it was rug cleaning or some other nonsense."

"That rug cleaning idea was all right, Helen. Why, just the other night I was reading about this guy who started with only sixty bucks, and in a few short weeks he. . ."

"Norman, will you forget those hare-brained schemes of yours? If you would just do your job and pay attention to me when I asked you to do a few errands, our troubles would be cut in half. It's late. I am going to bed. Are you coming up, Norman?"

"In a few minutes, honey. I want to finish the paper."

"And, Norman, don't forget to turn off the hall light. It burned all night again, last night."

"I won't, Helen. Good night."

There wasn't much in the paper to night that interested Norman except the ad about the rug cleaning business. He glanced at the editorial page. I'll bet this newspaper game would be a good racket to get into. I used to be pretty sharp in high school on writing themes. I'll bet, in no time at all, I could be right up there with Drew Pearson or Jim Bishop,

maybe even a war correspondent. Norman was very tired. His eyes burned. It had been a busy day. He folded the newspaper and started up the steps. He leaned a little on the banister as he made his way up the narrow steps. He noticed that the hard, smooth wood of the banister was lighter at the top from coming in contact with thousands of tired, sweaty hands. I'll bet no one ever thought of going into the banister

refinishing business. Why, with a little varnish I could have this old banister rail looking like new. I may even make this into a profitable business that can operate right from my own home. I'll have to pick up varnish and sand paper from the hardware store the first thing in the morning. At the top of the steps, Norman turned left and walked into the bathroom. Downstairs, the hall light was still burning.

## Cadences For These Times

SANDRA HAMMANN

The raindrop falls  
alone.

It is unique  
for a short while.

The drop is joined  
by others

Which together are absorbed  
into a stream.

The stream is important  
for a few miles

Until the river swallows the stream and  
flows its several hundred miles.

Then the river is important—  
But not for long.

The river is engulfed  
by the ocean.

Identity is lost  
in great masses.



## Terse Verse or Verse Yet

DICK SAXTON

A witty poem  
I think I'll write.  
I'll try my might  
to make it trite  
and always light

Verse  
or something terse-  
ly written  
to be spitten  
at  
or bitten  
by  
Poet's kitten

Claws  
Or frowned upon  
by those now gone  
who wrote from dawn  
Until the middle  
(how they diddle!)

Of the night,  
presenting frights  
Which, on first glance,  
would scare the pants  
Off editors.  
My little lines  
are going to rime  
And speak of love  
from far above

Earth  
Or down below  
where others go  
(for now I know  
One finds love all around).  
Upon swamp grounds

I hear the sounds  
of church bell rounds  
Ground out by Pa  
and partner Ma  
Who said love would never last.  
And now the blast  
of fabled past  
in shotgun cast  
Above me lingers  
if hairy fingers  
Itch.  
Oh, how I twitch!  
For now I fright  
at means enlight-  
ened by the sight

Of Pa and Ma,  
who said they saw  
it all.  
I told them, "Naw,  
I'll never stay  
to end this way."  
And Pa cocked back  
the hammer bright;  
I made no track  
into this night.  
So, now I'll stay  
and this I'll say:  
When you and she  
tend to agree  
and feel this warmly

Way,  
Stay out of barns  
down on the farms,  
for only harm  
Can come

of love.  
Or should my poem be  
a mystery?  
The possibility  
that I may see  
my destiny

Paperized  
In ink  
is more, I think,  
Than I can bear.  
It's sure to stink  
Of ageless plot  
that was begot  
by those who sought  
To make themselves  
with worldly wealths  
On television.  
No! No!  
I'm no Hitchcock  
for I can't talk  
In riddle.  
I'd rather piddle  
right in the middle

Of nothing  
than sing  
a foreign ring  
that I can't bring  
to make a thing

Of.  
My poem may sound  
as if I've found  
all proper nouns  
And adjectives  
that always give  
A silly rime,  
and yet, I'm  
Quite demure  
and not too sure  
if this manure  
Is worth a dime.  
But it is fun  
to make a pun  
until I run

Right out of words  
I've never heard.  
Don't be absurd —  
I'm sure there's more  
in someone's store  
or repertoire  
That tells us well  
what poets swell  
Inside with.  
And so I'll quit  
and glibly sit  
before I'm hit  
With ball-point pens  
that scratch like hens  
Around pig stys  
while searching whys  
And wherefores  
(which rimes with *therefores*  
and *canker sores*  
And *prostitutes.*)  
I am astute.  
I have to be  
for can't you see  
I'll never be  
completely free  
To build up *my* sense  
And acquire  
Poetic License.

## Cinquain

GEORGE J. MYERS

Grey, cold  
metal and pools  
of white office paper  
are her infirm allies against  
sly tears.



## Statement

RICHARD LIPEZ

I am going to state the problem of the writer today. Not that this hasn't been done before. In this age of miracles in communication (or at least in the tools of communication), the writer has been prone to spend more time stating his problems than writing. This is partly his fault and partly the fault of his new-found mass audience, which often is more interested in the writer than in his writing. But, no matter. I have promised myself to begin work on the Great American Novel as soon as I finish this; so I shall proceed with a clear conscience.

First, let me amend my topic sentence by saying I am going to state the problem of the *serious* writer today. He is the fellow who is writing because he has something to say which he thinks is important. He may deal in high emotion, cold logic, or giddy humor, but he means it.

A serious writer has two responsibilities. He must record the character of his time, his people, as he sees it. And he must search out and try to approach what he innocently calls Truth. The former is not easy, but is possible and enjoyable if the writer has wide eyes and clean ears. The latter is not so simple. Let's, for the moment, define Truth as what happens and what it adds up to. A good, sensitive craftsman can jot down what happens, but then he is stuck. What does it add up to?

There are two possible answers he comes up with: nothing, or something which he is not capable of knowing. Both prospects are dismal, but he is stuck with them. If the writer is skillful and lucky enough to put his findings on paper in just the right way at the right time, his words will last a thousand years because men will see the truth in them. If he constructs "a magnificent new novel of faith and affirmation so desperately needed in these trying times," he will sell a half million copies and get seventy-five thousand dollars for the screen rights. But his work will be forgotten in ten years.

(Some will say I am begging the question, that I am trying to palm off my own personally evolved philosophy on all writers of all time, and perhaps there is some truth in this. There is no such thing as a totally objective judgment. Each man can gather his information as carefully and thoroughly as he knows how, but his decision is always tempered by all his life, all his experience, which culminates in the man at the moment of his judgment. So I will apologize for being a human being, if that is necessary, and proceed.)

In all books in all time, including *Paradise Lost* and the *Bible*, no matter what the veneer or how numerous its layers, the underlying tone, the most basic theme, is the same: the ultimate chaos and bewilderment of life on this

planet. That is not to say that serious writing must be no more than a skillfully contrived patchwork of whines and moans. The greatest written art (including the books I have mentioned plus, for example, *Huckleberry Finn*) has stated the deepest truth, has spread the darkness of life as a huge, immovable backdrop, and then has demonstrated against it a lesser but maybe more important truth: the ability of man to face up to himself, to come to terms with his world, to make the best of a bewildering ordeal. It is this truth that makes art complete, enables man to find occasional joy, and to endure. But to state one of these truths without the other, or to minimize the larger, that is a cowardly lie.

All this presents a problem to the serious writer. He gets his terrifying image from a distance and sees man functioning as a whole. But the writer cannot forever remain detached from his world. He must return and make his way in it and know its people. And how shall he act? What shall he say? Shall he tell of where he has been, what he has seen? Shall he tell all of his story? Or just the best part? Or maybe the worst part? Which? How? The writer must move about in a society which has been so totally overwhelmed by the major themes of life that it often rebels at even the mere mention of anything but the immediate, the trivial. Obliteration of all life is always just minutes away, so there is a mood of muddle-on but don't look up. The social world enwombs itself in the moment, in the here and now, and instinctively withdraws from him who spins tales of everywhere and forever.

And to halt this withdrawal, to close the horrifying, always threatening gap between the writer and his world, the writer will need to give in, to sacrifice himself to something in which he does not altogether believe but for which he holds an unexplainable affection and a deep need. And how much should he give in? To what extent can he embroil himself in the slow insanity of man's daily business and still remain the detached observer, the independent explorer of larger truths? That is not easy to say.

Related to this dilemma is the special problem of the writer who is also a teacher. The serious teacher is at heart an impassioned humanist and necessarily somewhat of a pragmatist. It would seem that he should tell only that which will benefit, which will aid and inspire his students to improve man's lot. How can he convince his daytime students that their efforts will not, in the end, be meaningless, and then transport his nighttime readers to the dark bedlam, the void, that he knows will win out? There is a narrow bridge between these two seemingly contradictory ideas, a bridge that is difficult to find and twice as hard to travel.

And there is always the growing possibility that the writer is wrong about it all, that he has been fooled and consumed by his own past, which is his present momentary self. For myself, I do not feel qualified to make judgments about the Universe and I have never really met anyone else who seemed to me qualified, but I make them anyway and so do others. But unlike many, most writers (including this one) are aware of the fallibility of their human



judgments, and cannot escape the possibility that their philosophies and ways of thinking and living are totally false.

Another facet of the writer's problem has nothing to do with sociology or metaphysics, but has to do with the writer himself. Writing, like building outrigger canoes, is a craft. Not everyone has the abilities and temperament required, and those who try must spend years of practice, perfecting their skills, often to find that in the end they do not have that special knack, that elusive extra something that guarantees a superior product, a work of art. Especially to the young writer this is a terrifying prospect. Even if he holds no hope of duplicating the man's success, the young writer is continually tempted to ask what Faulkner was writing at twenty-two. What sort of work was Mark Twain doing? Sometimes a sort of infantile relief results from these secretive inquiries, sometimes deep fear. No matter what his philosophy, his emotional mien, no writer can ignore his inherent limitations as a working craftsman.

Perhaps the greatest problem of the serious writer is that of being misunderstood. To present the whole picture of the lunacy of life is to present an ordered image of the parts, each of which is more painful than the whole. Men are ludicrous, men are heroic; men are dull, men are brilliant. And that is how the writer tells it, in painfully etched example. But often the inexperienced reader will misunderstand, misinterpret. He will rebel at the ugliness he recognizes as himself, and then pass over the beauty of which in reality he is also a part. This is infuriating to the reader,

frustrating to the writer, and makes for bad relations all around. And there is another point. The reader can toss the book in the garbage can; the writer is stuck with it. And he is also stuck with the reader's dislike and distrust. The serious writer, then, may have fulfilled his responsibilities, to record the nature of his time and people, to approach and state what he sees as truth, but his effort has been rejected. He is misunderstood. Many writers of great skill and insight live to see their efforts understood (and often worshipped), but the great majority do not. Perhaps they are better writers for it. I don't know.

I must make clear that this paper is not a plea for all to believe that anyone who falls into the serious-writer category has *The Word*, and so should be respected and studied and handed a trophy. It is written in behalf of young writers like me and is intended as an apology for our past shortcomings, an explanation of our limitations and of our hopes, and it is a statement of our purposes. I have not spoken for all, but, I think, for many. And now that I have written about writing, I will get busy and write. Thank you for your patience.

## SLOW WALTZ

THOMAS C. MARTIN

You see, Kiddo,  
After a while a fella feels as though —  
A fella feels as though he doesn't  
give a damn.

That's it — he just doesn't  
Give a damn.

Must be the flame is —  
Dying out, Kiddo.

## Sand

PAUL MORRIS

In one great malicious flash of dark mystic light  
My neurons did homage to all that is empty,  
All that is darkness and death.  
In one splashing wave of electric outpouring  
My mind was full-flooded  
With forty circlings of rain clouds.  
In a mountain-depression of a minute,  
A second of strife, I saw the black ravens  
Sit down on the spirits of all the small beings  
Who strive beneath bright stars  
And tear out their transparent eyes.  
I saw all the children of mankind,  
Gathered at some hot-tar boiling river,  
Slashed down by a flaming, singing-a-dirge sword.  
I saw all the musty and moss-covered caskets  
Lift open at the blast of one hot emerald trumpet,  
And all of the corpses half-rotted, half-bone and half-flesh,  
Seemed to step on the threshold  
Of red-carpeted life everlasting—  
When all of a flashing a mad-rolling cloud  
In one iron crushing pushed them into the dust of the earth.  
I saw all the women who loved life and singing  
Four-quartered by teams of sad-eyed purple oxen  
And slit by a great diamond axe  
With a blue-purple handle from the soft of their loins  
To the nectar they held in each larynx now screaming,  
And I pulled up to shield me the thin lacy wisp  
Of a silver-gold weaving left by one there before me,  
And through holes in the web-work  
I watched as a white-whiskered beast  
Placed my image exact on a balance  
Which shone with the red rust rays  
Of the unlight of endtime  
And then pulled the lever named Doom,  
Which started a cruel, massive rack  
Ripping my soul from my brain cords,  
Wresting and twisting my tendons to tautness,  
Tearing my tear-spotted, blood-spangled tissue asunder  
From my thin and translucent toenails clawed earthward  
To my long-sinewy fingers straining for sand-grains.



I could not comprehend this,  
 I could not cry out to my senses  
 For some kind of drunken white curtain  
 Of light to surprise it,  
 I could not call up some gay  
 And alive and brilliant aurora,  
 I could not sink deeply  
 In some womb of compassion,  
 I could not be baptised  
 In some water all cleansing,  
 I could not take communion  
 In teacups with saints,  
 And now I have left on my neurons  
 The notches and dents of a warble of wasting,  
 A singing of sorrow, a scorch of the sand,  
 A furrow of salt.

## Man Can Know Nothing Vast

THOMAS C. MARTIN

Man can know nothing vast.  
 His vaunted mind  
 (His only great possession)  
 Is blank at last.

His mind that thinks knowledge all,  
 That theorizes and accumulates  
 (The knowledge of men—dead)  
 Thinks nothing at his body's fall.

Man pretends he has love; but true,  
 Sacred, cherish love  
 (He knows in his heart)  
 Is seldom shared by two.

Riches are nothing but cost;  
 The gem, the luxury  
 (Of this he is well aware)  
 Are easily lost.

Man strives and loves and gropes;  
 His infallible mind  
 (As he watches himself deteriorate)  
 Dies with his hopes.

## The Loss

THOMAS C. MARTIN

As a boy  
 I swam naked in muddy ponds,  
 Smoked cigarettes behind the toilet,  
 And chased my girl-cousin into the barn,  
 And I was proud.

As a man  
 I shower privately,  
 Smoke openly,  
 And am faithful to my wife,  
 And there is no pride.

---


$$E = mc^2$$

PAUL MORRIS

When one tiny magenta violet  
 Can grow into the now-of-beauty,  
 Lord, that is love;  
 But when a wisp of helium  
 Or some small pebble-part of near-  
 nothingness  
 Can spitball  $m$   
 Through a silly-second of  $c^2$ ,  
 God, that is hate,  
 And hell is a playground  
 With a merry-go-round  
 And swings  
 In the mind of one feeling  $e$ .



## Cycle

SANDRA HAMMANN

"Someday," I thought, "I will find the guy for me."

I was sitting in the green basket-chair in the living room of my expensive little apartment. I live alone in New York. You see, I would rather live by myself and live the way I want to than share with some other girl. I am a book reviewer for a prominent magazine and do a good bit of reading in the evenings. I had just finished reading *The Silver Fountain* and was listening to the quiet, soothing voice of Johnny Mathis coming from my stereo. As always happens when I play this particular album, my thoughts had taken a romantic turn.

The telephone broke into my reverie. "Hello."

"Hi, Jayne. Doing anything special tonight?" The voice on the other end of the phone belonged to Diane. Diane Young is my flighty but sophisticated friend. She is everything I used to dream of being — beautiful, friendly, and, particularly, pursued by many men. Whenever she has any problems, she calls me. She often tells me what a comfort I am to her. She never seems to have time to be a comfort to me.

This time she wanted me to do something. I could tell by the sweet, sugary voice and the forced cheerfulness with which she spoke.

"Well, Diane, I do have to finish a review tonight," I said. I was not going

to commit myself to anything until I knew what she wanted. On the other hand, I didn't want to miss anything that might be fun.

"I have a neat evening all planned for the four of us," said Diane. Her evenings were always described as neat. "You can't refuse to go. Tom came back from Canada today, and he wants to go out. I really didn't expect him until tomorrow, so I made a date with Dick. Be a dear, Jayne, and help me out. We can all go to the Goodwin Club and have a terrific time."

I pondered this suggestion for a moment. I wanted to go, but I had previously helped Diane out of similar predicaments. The evenings usually went the same way. My date talked about his work, Diane, his sports accomplishments, what fun Diane was, hunting, how pretty Diane was. Some even asked me what they could do to make Diane partial to them.

"Sounds like fun," I said. "I'd really like to go." After all, I could hope this evening would be different. I knew Tom, and I liked him. He seemed serious and sincere.

"Thanks loads," a relieved Diane said. "I knew you'd go. We'll be over in an hour for you."

I put the receiver back and tried to decide what to wear.

"I might as well give this date a try. After all, something may even come

of it." I was talking myself into having a good time.

Since we were going to the Goodwin Club, I decided to wear my new Adele Simpson. I dressed carefully, then inspected myself in the full length mirror. I saw a neat, slim, stylishly dressed young woman who was a little taller than average. Noticing my height, I changed from my high silver slippers into my low black suede shoes.

"There," I lectured myself in the mirror, "You look fine. Now go and have a nice time. This is your evening to find a fellow."

As it wasn't quite time for the others to come, I began to write the review. I liked the book, and it was relatively easy to praise a book I liked.

"Working as always," teased Diane as I let her, Dick, and Tom into the apartment. "Shall we go right now? I feel like dancing all night."

Tom held my coat and waited while I turned off the lights. Then we hurried to join Diane and Dick.

The ride to the Club wasn't bad. Diane talked most of the way. I was a quiet observer who laughed on cue and tried to be sociable. Try as I might, I couldn't be witty or a tease without sounding unnatural.

Dick had reserved one of the best tables at the Club. The floor show was just beginning when we sat down, so I didn't have to think of anything to say. We heard Tim Sullivan tell jokes and sing love songs for a half hour.

Diane told us about her work that day while we sipped our martinis. She is a high-fashion model and has more unusual experiences than anyone I know.

"Let's dance, glamour girl," Dick broke in. They got up and left Tom and me looking at each other.

"How's the law practice, Tom?" I asked, trying to make conversation. Tom was a junior lawyer with Bates and Stevens.

"Oh, same as always," he answered. "Shall we join the group on the dance floor?"

"Love to," I answered.

Tom was a good dancer, and we glided silently around the floor several times before he spoke.

"Please excuse my silence, Jayne," he said. "I have a tough case in court tomorrow, and I can't get it off my mind."

"Tell me about it, Tom."

"Well, it will probably bore you, but this is the kind of case I enjoy," he began. "I'm representing a firm which is being sued by a customer for breach of promise. There are a lot of details involved, and I have to keep them straight in my mind so I can present a good argument in court tomorrow."

Tom kept talking about his work. I really felt relaxed and began to enjoy myself for the first time since we had left the apartment. I found myself asking questions about his case.

"Jayne," he said, "you're the first girl who seems sincerely interested in my job and intelligent enough to understand the problems involved. I've talked enough about myself. Let's hear about your job and you."

"You really wouldn't like to hear about my job," I said. "It's monotonous."

He insisted that he did, and I started, haltingly at first, to tell him what I did as a book reviewer. His gentle prodding and questions soon had me telling him



all about my job, how fascinating it was to read new books, and how careful one must be to present interesting reviews.

When we finally returned to the table after half an hour on the dance floor, Dick and Diane were sitting at the table sipping their second martinis. Diane threw me a glance which clearly told me to treat Tom nicely but to kindly remember that he belonged to her. I didn't care. I was having a wonderful time and nothing could spoil it.

"You should have seen that drive straight down the green!" Dick was telling about his golf game that day. "I not only made a three-under-par, but I also made a three thousand deal with Sandler Shoes for the firm. Boy, was the old man pleased with me today!" Dick works for his father's advertising firm. He is the public relations man. I found myself thinking unkindly that his job could more appropriately have been called recreation manager.

"What are you doing in court tomorrow, Tom?" Diane asked brightly.

"Nothing interesting to you," Tom replied. "It's one of these technical cases that you needn't trouble your pretty blond head about."

When Dick and Diane got up to dance the next time, Tom turned to me and said, "Let's get out of this place, Jayne. We can take my car, and Dick and Diane can take a cab home."

I agreed to this suggestion, and we left the Goodwin Club. The night was warm and springlike. The car radio was playing soft instrumental music, and I was so pleased with the evening that I was humming.

"Happy?" Tom asked as we drove along. "Where shall we go now? I'd like to go someplace quiet." He reached for my hand and pulled me close to him.

"Well," I suggested bravely, "we could go to my apartment to listen to records and find something to eat. It's always quiet there."

"Sounds good," replied Tom.

Neither of us said much on the way to my apartment. The quiet peaceful mood was too nice to be broken by words. The quiet was comforting.

"I'm glad I went this evening," I thought to myself. "I hope Tom asks me out soon. I think I am more his type than Diane. Besides, she has loads of men chasing her. One less shouldn't make much difference."

When we arrived at my apartment house, Tom parked the car and came around to open my door. We took the elevator up to the tenth floor. As I unlocked the door, I was thankful for my habit of always keeping things neat and in their proper place.

"You can put some records on while I make coffee," I said as he helped me out of my coat. I went into the tiny kitchen. I could hear Tom humming softly as he chose the records. Soon the romantic sound of the Jackie Gleason orchestra filled the apartment.

"What's taking you so long, Jayne?" Tom asked.

"I'll be there in a minute," I answered cheerfully, as I plugged in the electric percolator.

"See, Jayne, someone does like you for yourself. All you have to do now is be natural," I lectured myself. I smiled at my little pep talk and went into the living room.

Tom was standing at my one big window looking out on the roofs and the street below. We stood there side by side for a short while watching the traffic and the people.

"Mademoiselle," Tom said with a mock bow, "would you honor me with this dance?"

Laughingly he took me into his arms and danced slowly around the small space in the center of the room. We danced through two songs and then Tom sat down on the couch.

"I'll get us some coffee now," I said. I was so pleased with the way everything was going.

"He is so nice and easy to talk to," I thought to myself as I poured the coffee. "I wonder when he is going to ask me for a date. I hope we go to some place small and quiet."

I was just bringing out the coffee and a plate of brownies when the phone rang. I put the coffee and brownies on the table beside the couch and went to answer the phone. I was annoyed at the interruption.

"Hello."

"Hi, Jayne," the cheerful voice of Diane came from the receiver. "I hoped you would be home. Is Tom there?"

"Yes," I answered apprehensively.

"Be a dear and let me speak to him for a minute."

"Tom," I said slowly, "Diane wants to talk to you."

He looked a little startled and came over to the phone.

"Hello," he said questioningly.

I couldn't hear what Diane was saying. Tom's back was towards me so I couldn't tell anything from his expression. I wondered what Diane wanted

with Tom.

"Okay, Diane," Tom said finally. "Bye."

Slowly he replaced the receiver and turned to face me. I waited expectantly.

"Say, Jayne," Tom began slowly, "it sure was nice of you to go this evening. I really had a nice time. Sorry I have to leave so soon, but Diane wants to see me about something." And then he left. "See you around."

A feeling of finality came over me as Tom walked out the door. I stood for a moment in the center of the room feeling very much alone.

I couldn't sleep now, so I might as well do something. Decisively I walked to my typewriter and inserted a piece of paper.

"*The Silver Fountain*," I began, "is the epitome of reality. The beautiful girl gets any man she looks at or calls for."

## To Karen

THOMAS C. MARTIN

How far from me you are,  
Not in distance, but in degree.  
I can but contemplate your star  
And marvel at your mystery.

Your star (not shining in the sky—  
That's done well by lesser lights)  
Is your warmth, your sigh,  
My dream of you through the quiet  
nights.

Your mystery—beyond my belief,  
As wondrous as life or sea  
Or mountain or leaf—  
Your loving me.



## Abandoned Farm

SHIRLEY GRACE

The house stands lonely in the twilight grays  
 Beneath the sun's last beams. Light spills  
 Across the staring windowpanes and plays  
 Along the rotting, crumbling eaves and sills.  
 Piled winter wood decays beside the house,  
 Assumes at dusk a somber silver hue;  
 Beside the well-stacked slabs a tiny mouse  
 Chews lustily upon a worn-out shoe.  
 The late sun dabs a brush. Extensive sweeps  
 Across the canvas mute the toll of years,  
 Restore lost grandeur — till the artist creeps  
 Behind the hill. His art work disappears.  
 Resounding stillness stirs a vague dull pain  
 In one who turns to wander down the lane.

## Portrait Of The Poet As An Oyster

PAUL MORRIS

Within the smooth serried shells of mind and body  
 There must be some irking granulose thorn working,  
 Pointing outward from the inward of my silent soul,  
 Pointing somehow skyward to some somewhere someone,  
 Pointing sometimes earthward to the layers of the dust,  
 Pointing sometimes to dust boxed beneath dust-free,  
 Pointing to hot hell-lead boiling beneath dust-boxed,  
 But always pointing, always alien, always burning,  
 Always am I feeling burning, always torture, always pain;  
 Am I more despised than other men or more in grace?

II

Turning inward trying to sooth,  
 Trying to coat that turning outward;  
 Trying truth for twelve peers  
 Living in unreal flashed on silver,

Extroverts against an egovert;  
 Falling into snares of inside,  
 Trying to turn an inside outside,  
 Trying to put a poem on a point,  
 This is my fate.

III

When the microcosm of me can take the macrocosm of you  
 Hands in hand into the littleness of my largeness,  
 When I can show you the within-me city larger than I,  
 When the I can exalt the you to the same electric level  
 Of word-wave-meaning within the mind and soul of me,  
 Then those giant liplike lids of shell will open wide  
 And on the tender cushions of a shining soul laid bare  
 Will lie a limpid black roundness pointing rays to everywhere.

## Paradox

DWIGHT C. STONE

Wandering helpless,  
 I in a cloud  
 Go walking  
 And thinking aloud:

Can love be a  
 Real thing for  
 Me to know?  
 (And emotions soar.)

Is it true that  
 This feeling,  
 From my heart,  
 Sends me reeling?

Damned fool! By now  
 You should know  
 From the *mind*  
 Emotions grow!

All right, all right,  
 Then! This I *do* know,  
 And I laugh because—  
 There *still* is a glow!



## Just Thinking Of Nothing

DICK SAXTON

The most frustrating predicament that I know of is thinking. When you have to, you can't; when you don't have to, it's all you can do. And when you must concentrate your thinking on some particular subject, it is impossible.

Thinking is something that is taken for granted. Take, for instance, the following setting: Jon and Maria are sitting in front of the dorm and it's almost time for her to go in. The moon is bright and the stars are winking down on them as they share that last cigarette. It's cold out, but they don't notice. The motor is running to keep them warm. Everything is peaceful and calm with Jon on one side of the car and Maria on the other. The radio is playing softly. Not any particular song; just music. No word has been spoken and then she breaks the silence. "What are you thinking?" Maria asks. "Oh, nothing," is his stock reply. Now, take that situation, for instance. He's a damn liar. He is *too* thinking. He's thinking, "Will she? Won't she? Dare I?" or, "My gas tank is kinda low so maybe I'd better get her in now before I have to walk home."

Let's face it. There isn't a single moment of the day that a person is not thinking, and yet, each time someone asks, the reply is inevitably, "Oh, nothing." Right now I'm thinking. I'm not only thinking about writing this, but I'm also thinking about the fate of the

Yankees, and why Pitt defeated Syracuse. And you too, kind friend, are also thinking. You're thinking that this essay is terrible, or you're thinking that the period will soon be over, or you're wondering just why in the hell I wrote this. Now, that last question is a good one, but don't feel bad. I haven't finished it and I'm wondering the same thing, and if you really want to know the truth, as of yet I don't have the slightest idea. It's five minutes to one in the morning and I should be in bed. I'm beat, and yet I know that I have to finish this sometime. I hope that I don't keep anyone awake with this pecking on my typewriter, but if I do, I imagine I'll be so informed in short order. And if these annoyed souls decide to so inform me, neither you nor I will ever know what prompted me to take up such a ridiculous project. What I'll probably do is wake up in the morning and turn this nocturnal product into much needed scratch paper. But since I am not tired and no one has yelled at me yet, I might as well try to tell you something personal, as I was instructed to do. I could tell you about the time I was thrown from a horse and had my wrist broken when he reared and stepped on me, or then I could tell you about the six stitches I acquired in my chin during a baseball game that I didn't even get to play in. But I don't think that I will. No spe-

cial reason, I just don't feel like telling it. Makes me look like a down right fool. Maybe I am.

How about the time I was aboard the troop transport heading for Japan and this kid fell overboard, with a brilliant sailor spotting him and promptly shooting the bobbing soul smack in the head with a yellow-dye marker? That was rather funny, but that's the whole story. Or the time I got picked off first base with the bases loaded, and then the kid at bat hit a home run? That too was funny. At least everyone there thought it was. Well, not quite everyone; the coach blew his stack and asked me if I'd mind warming the bench.

Then, of course, there's always my first trip to Tijuana, Mexico, that I could tell you about, but that would get censored before I could finish it. That's the best one that I can think of, though, and if you really want to know what happened I'll be only too glad to tell you sometime, providing you're male and over twenty-one.

Isn't this ridiculous? I've covered a few topics quite personal and still I can't come up with *the* answer. I guess that I'll just have to take a break, smoke a cigarette, and start thinking (that "start thinking" is supposed to be a pun, if you'll be so kind as to recall my theory mentioned beginning paragraph three).

Two cigarettes later and I'm back, and I have thought of only one possible incident that I feel is both personal and relatable. It's not funny either, but since I have to tell something, it might just as well be this. And here it is:

It was winter back in 1956. Well, yes, it was. It usually is winter in De-

ember, and it was December. (Please forgive me, I just have to try for *some* humor, and if I should fail, just bear with me, for it won't be the first time.) As I was saying, it was December—and winter—and I had just received my shipping orders to go to Japan. Since I was stationed in Southern California and had to travel all the way to Pennsylvania to take my thirty day leave that the Air Force so benevolently gives one under such unfortunate circumstances, I decided to fly by military transport—*hop*, as we airmen refer to it—and save myself some money. My hop consisted of a ride in an antiquated B-17 that was headed for Shreveport, Louisiana. From there I would have to find a ride north. I didn't mind because I had never flown in a B-17 before. Now that that experience is history I only pray to Buddha (I am a Buddhist. Let's face it. It's better than being a nothing!) that some fool doesn't offer me another ride in one of those flying Campbell soup cans. The first three hundred miles of the flight weren't bad. We were flying at an altitude of 23,000 feet. It was a sight, soaring up there like a bird. I know that it was the first time I had ever seen the top of a cloud. I'd say that it was like so many fields of cotton, but then I'd get called down for using hackneyed expressions. What it was really like was clouds. Acres upon furlongs of ugly, white clouds, and I just knew that somewhere down there was good old *terra firma*.\* (I'll put my footnote here to save you from having to hunt for it, because if you do have to hunt it you'll either lose your place and forget the whole damn thing or wait until



you come to it and forget what it was footnoted for. What it was footnoted for was just to let you know that this author firmly believes in the practice of italicizing all and any foreign words. But then, if I were a Spaniard or a Russian I would have to italicize the whole damned essay, wouldn't I?) Meanwhile, back at the airplane. There we were, flying at an altitude of 23,000 feet or so, and I had for company one full Colonel (a doctor) and a Warrant Officer. They both looked shot. I overheard one of them say that this time he'd be glad to get back to the Mrs. That was the Colonel. He was asleep before the plane left the runway and, boy, I'm glad that we didn't have to use the parachutes, because he had confiscated all three of them and was using them as a mattress. I doubt that they were in a class with Sealy Perfect Posture, but he didn't know the difference. Maybe he did; after all, he was a doctor.

The Warrant Officer, who was extremely fat, just sat there listening to the pilot and the co-pilot talk over the inter-com. He had a pair of headsets and one of those cute little throat microphones. They're really nice little bug-gers, those mikes, and rather tricky if you happen to think about them, as I did. There's this one little tan strap that you fasten around your neck and supports these two little black disks that look like three pennies stacked up on one another. These little disks are connected in such a way that they fit snugly or, if you have a big neck, tightly, on both sides of your voice box. The Warrant Officer had a big, fat neck, and he almost choked to death.

My "friend" played with this toy for awhile and then gave the mike to me, commanding me to listen to what was going on up front. I guess he wasn't too smart, for he neglected to give me the headsets, and that was to prove disastrous.

Everything went fine until we were circling the runway at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, and approaching for a landing. The Colonel was still sleeping. We were nearing the runway. The Warrant Officer happened to glance out the window, which had formerly been a gun turret. This turret had been replaced with plexiglass. We were approximately three hundred feet off the runway by then, and all of a sudden he went wild. He screamed something that I couldn't make out over the hum of the motor and jerked at the headsets that were still about his fat ears. He made so much of a disturbance that he awoke the Colonel. The Colonel looked out from beneath his hat, which was pulled over his eyes, yawned twice, and promptly fell back to sleep. Then it dawned on me that the Warrant Officer was trying to relay a message to the pilot, but before I could give him the mike or he could give me the headsets, I found out just exactly what it was that had aroused that mass of flesh to such a state of delirium. The left landing gear (wheels to the novice or less informed) was not down. Well, that's not quite true. I found out later that it was halfway down, and when the plane hit that cement landing strip the gear completely collapsed. I don't feel that I'm qualified to relate the next few hours to you, my patient listeners, because I just wasn't

there. Well, physically I was, but my mind was really somewhere else, and I just don't have any inkling as to where that place was. The next thing that I knew, I was lying in the base hospital. I awoke slowly until I realized that I had just been in a plane wreck. Then I sprang up, glanced around, and knew that I was still alive. I heard that fat familiar mouth uttering fat, black, familiar oaths. It sounded as though someone was killing him—really not such a bad idea. I could see that the medics around him were fruitlessly trying to bandage his nose. Ha! That much tape used on him would skyrocket Johnson and Johnson stock one hundred points. It seemed that his head had rammed against the plexiglass window and that fat nose, which before had looked strangely like a ripe McIntosh apple, had been smashed. And a funny thing that was, because do you know that no one else on the entire plane had any damages inflicted upon

him other than that bump on my noggin. The plane had just collapsed, broken off the wing tip, and slid to a screeching halt 500 feet off the runway. I still don't know just what I did hit my head on, and as far as I know now, the Colonel just snored right through the whole mess. Some guys can sleep through anything. I stayed in the hospital over night and then took a train home.

There. I did it. I don't know that I've accomplished anything, but if nothing more, I will have plenty of scrap paper. But this little incident was something personal that happened to me, and something that I'll never forget.

You must excuse me now; my brother has just come in and is standing in the middle of the floor staring at me, then at his watch, and then at me again.

"What the hell are you thinking?" I am going to ask him.

Guess what he will say.

## Love Song

THOMAS C. MARTIN

I see now,  
But it makes no difference,  
For by gaining sight  
I lost the essence.

I know now,  
But by being wise  
I lost the dreams and hopes  
That were in your lies.

No matter now,  
No need for wisdom, sight,  
For without you  
There's nothing to know,  
It's always night.



## Teeth

RICHARD LIPEZ

"What do you think of Fitzgerald?" she asked.

"Edward, F. Scott, or Ella?"

"Oh, you know, the one with the screwy wife."

She must have meant F. Scott.

"He's all right if you go for that college boy stuff," I said.

"Yes, I know exactly what you mean, exactly what you mean," she said.

"I like the really socially aware writers like Aldous Huxley and Vance Packard. Did you read *Brave New World*? It really scares you, I mean it really does, if you just stop to think about it a little."

"Most people never stop to think," I said.

"Oh, God, isn't it the truth?" she said, not addressing me.

"This is National Library Week," I said. She jiggled her ice.

"Well, maybe that's the answer."

"What?" I asked.

"If they made everybody in the country go to the library and read one book a month the way we have to in General Lit Two. . . ."

"But, that's socialism," I said, looking hurt.

"God, is there no way out?" she said, looking over my shoulder at someone else.

"Fantastic," I said.

"It's even this way in Pittsburgh," she said.

"I know," I said, dropping my head and blinking a few times.

"What do you think of Robert Frost?" she asked.

"Well, I'm not going to say the obvious," I said.

"Fantastic!" she said.

I jiggled my ice. It was melting.

"Well, then, what do you think of Bergman?" she asked.

"Ingrid?" I asked.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" we both laughed very hard and loud.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

We sighed and then laughed some more.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Fantastic!

"This guy I've been dating off and on," she said, "who is an Ampli Phi Loud at Pitt, took me to this movie they had out there about Hiroshima and the bomb and all that. It really scares you, I mean, if you really think about it—"

"Most people don't stop to think," I interrupted.

"God, isn't that the truth?" She continued. "They showed these newsreels they took right after we dropped the bomb, and it just made you sick, I mean actually sick. Sometimes I wonder whether we should have even dropped the atomic bomb, I mean sometimes I really wonder. I'm just glad I wasn't Truman and have to live with that all

my life."

"Yes," I said, squinting.

She jiggled her ice, which was melting rapidly.

"Could I ask you something personal?" she said, tilting her head to the left.

I leaned toward her, formed a little megaphone with my hands, and whispered through them, "Yes," into her

right and upper ear.

"Have you ever read anything by D. H. Lawrence?" she asked. "I mean early D. H. Lawrence?"

I said nothing in that moment. She looked at me.

"Fantastic," she said.

"Fantastic!" I said.

She reached over and squeezed my palm. I smiled at her, showing my teeth.

## Lazarus And Another

THOMAS C. MARTIN

Lazarus, there was, full of sores  
That were licked by roving curs,  
Existing on crumbs from Mammon's  
table,  
A mark for spittle,  
A butt for slurs.

Another, there was, clothed in purple,  
Who knew not dearth,  
Nor soul remorse;  
Who metered his value,  
Rejoiced in his worth.

At death, each found his place.  
Lazarus, loving God  
And acceptable in his sight,  
Awakened to Abraham,  
Forgot earth's rod.

The other, tormented in flame,  
Cried to Abraham  
For mercy, for moisture.  
He who on earth  
Disdained the Lamb.

Abraham listened  
And grieved and said,  
"They heed not the prophets;  
They will not be persuaded  
Though one rose from the dead."



## Comment

ROSS WILSON

A year from today  
will my aspiration for literary greatness  
be as forceful  
as it is now?  
I do have the habit  
of forgetting what I learn.  
So how can I elaborate  
tomorrow  
on something I learned yesterday  
and forgot  
today?  
See what I mean?

But it really doesn't matter —  
you needn't feel concerned;  
and it doesn't either — matter, that is.  
Where was I?  
Oh-oh, you noticed that too?  
Miserable habit,  
isn't it?  
As ancient as our times  
already are,  
it would still be helpful  
if we would quit dawdling about  
and write.

## To Gert -- A Love Letter

RICHARD LIPEZ

Loving you, Baby, as we do,  
Baby, detracts not from  
Your status as a fraud;  
But God, Gert Baby,  
How gay, how spring,  
How gleefully green,  
Was your cheer! Your sneer  
Was the egg in our beer.

Thanks for nothing, Baby,  
Thanks for no thing.  
We saw through it and we loved it  
And we always will.

## Our Scotchman

MARY GRANT

I remember as a child hearing my father say he believed all the Scotch blood in the family flowed through my veins. At first, I didn't understand. I knew that I "saved" very well, and I caused a great deal of trouble by keeping candy until after my brother's was gone, then eating mine in front of him. But to me, *Scotch* meant Scotland with hills, bagpipes, and dancers. Finally I learned that *Scotch* also meant *thrifty*.

I guess my family's accusations were not without grounds. This was especially true in pecuniary areas. I irregularly received an allowance of fifty cents. I insisted on having my money in coins; I didn't like dollar bills. My father said I even counted my money like a miser. I would arrange the coins on the dining room table, first in one-dollar piles, and count; then in two-dollar piles, and count; then in three-dollar piles, and on in that manner. I went through this every time I got a new fifty-cent piece. Since I lived in the country, my expenses were few. Movies and ice cream cones were no problem. My brother and I were usually guided into buying stamps for savings bonds with our money. I liked the idea of paying \$18.75 and getting back \$25.00, but it seemed like an awfully long time to wait.

When I was about twelve, I agreed to take over the management of a pen of ten hens. At one time we had had

4,000 chickens but my father's health had necessitated selling all but enough for our own and a few neighbors' use. My brother and cousin had already given the hens up as a non-profit endeavor. I took the chickens in the spring. At first all worked out well. I gathered an average of seven eggs a day. Chicken feed cost \$4.80 per hundred pounds, and one bag would last approximately three weeks. I sold my eggs for fifty cents a dozen regardless of market prices. If eggs sold in town were thirty-five cents per dozen, I charged fifty cents; if eggs in town were fifty-five cents, I still charged fifty cents. Bicycle delivery was part of my service at no extra cost. With some simple arithmetic you can see that I spent \$4.80 every three weeks and took in \$6.00 in the same time. A dollar and twenty cents may not sound like much, but with it in three weeks I could attend about four movies at twelve cents apiece. Add to this ten cents for popcorn each time and it totals eighty-eight cents. I still had thirty-two cents left to an unforeseen expense fund. (After you were twelve years old, you were supposed to pay twenty-five cents, but I was skinny and looked younger. I paid twelve cents for another year, until they raised the prices.) Business was so good that invariably there were no eggs for the family, and Mother had to go to town and buy them. Except for the inconveni-



ence of the eight-mile drive, this was, for her part, usually the better way. She could buy them in town for about forty cents a dozen; and as I said before, I charged a consistent fifty.

As fall came, my father and the rest of my family noticed that the chickens went into a molt. My father also noticed that I continued to show a profit. Upon investigation he discovered that as profits from the egg sales started to fall off, I cut down on mash rations. I reasoned that if it was going to take me five weeks to sell enough eggs to buy one-hundred pounds of feed, I had to make the bag I had last until I could afford to buy more. We closed the chicken business that month by putting ten hens in the freezer.

As I grew older, I made a conscious effort not to be "cheap." But even as late as last summer I had to be careful. My mother, brother, and I were all home, all working a different shift in a different place. Keeping cars going was hectic. Mother owned and ran a Ford. My brother and I jointly owned an Oldsmobile, and my uncle had loaned us a jeep truck, which only my brother could drive. On days that Mother drove to work, she took the Ford, I took the "Olds," and my brother had to take the jeep. On days that Mother didn't have to drive, I took the Ford, my brother took the "Olds," and the jeep sat home. Mother kept gasoline in the Ford. Since my brother claimed the "Olds" as his and he worked at a gas station, he kept gas in the Oldsmobile. I drove both and didn't put gasoline in either. When I finally realized this, I tried to remember to put some gasoline in one car every week.

I'm afraid my Scotch characteristics showed up in fields other than those involving money. For instance, when unexpected company arrives for supper I'm always allowed to serve the dessert. I'm the only one in the family that can get eight pieces out of one pie or twenty-five pieces out of a cake. I also do well in serving to seven people strawberry shortcake made for four.

Perhaps, instead of trying to reform these traits out of my character, I should buy a set of bagpipes, a kilt in the Clan plaid, and start learning to be a good Scotchman.

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## Interlude

THOMAS C. MARTIN

At dusk  
I go to the forest  
To find peace,  
To be still and listen to the night world,  
To hear the sounds uncommon to man,  
To feel the cool dampness,  
To see the moonlight glisten on the moisture,  
To be apart from men and strife and love,  
To rest my weight against a dark tree trunk,  
And know that I am alone—  
With peace.

## Dust

An Autobiography

RICHARD LIPEZ

There is a tapping in my skull.  
I hear it from within.

Something in the structure, in the bone?  
Or from without?  
Which?

There is a hammer, a chisel.  
A tapping.

(A chip falls.  
THE SPIRIT.  
There is a movement.  
A dropping  
A fizzing.  
Dust.)

Eyes snap shut, quick, tight,  
Look inward at the skull.  
(You have to strain.)  
Stars,

Constellations,  
Roman candles.

A tapping (from hammer and chisel?)  
A tapping.

(A chip falls.  
THE FLESH  
There is a grinding.  
An expenditure.  
Dust.)

The floor of the skull  
is covered with dust.  
Ankle deep.  
(If there are ankles in the skull.)



The dust rises,  
The moon is obscured.

The dust settles,  
The moon is gone.

The floor of the skull  
is covered with dust.  
Waist deep.

(And there's a tapping, tapping, tapping,  
The highwayman comes tapping . . .)

Something in the structure, in the bone?  
Or from without?

Which?

How?

(I saw a man of seventy-five,  
The dust was running out his ears.)

A chip falls.  
Bats come here in in the winter.  
They do not remain.  
It is cold outside,  
But something frightens them here.

A tapping.

The floor of the skull  
is covered with dust.  
Knee deep.

(She waded in the water  
And she got her knees all wet . . .)

There is a moon on the sky of the skull.  
And a tapping.

DESPAIR.

(A chip falls.  
The hurricane,  
Dry flame,  
Black torrent.)



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