



The Crucible

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The Crucible

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And The Rest Is Too Sad To Tell

G. DAVID PORTER

Whenever I happen to be in a conversation with a group of sports enthusiasts, usually some braggart begins spouting feats of his high school football team, but I usually steal the "conversational ball" and the center of attention when I speak of my high school gridiron days. I simply tell them that I played on the three worst football teams that Jersey Shore High ever fielded.

I feel that our team was unique. Winning teams are soon forgotten, and even some championship teams are forgotten eventually, but Jersey Shore will never forget the teams that I played on. Oh, Jersey Shore has had other losing seasons, but none like ours. We were not just defeated, we were really "skunked." It seemed as though we were nearly always whipped by at least forty points. No, the people of Jersey Shore will never forget the night that the Lock Haven Bobcats, our arch rivals, belted the mighty Jersey Shore Bulldogs fifty-one to nothing. Probably, the "most unkindest cut of all" was when Montoursville beat us for the first time in eleven years.

Before I continue my enumeration of these terrible defeats, I had better review some of the facts pertinent to the Bulldogs who went lame. Jersey Shore, before 1953, had always been regarded as a football powerhouse. There were days when the Orangemen beat Williamsport, Johnstown, and Mansfield Normal (now Mansfield State College). Why, in 1922 Jersey

Shore beat South Williamsport one hundred twenty-two to zero!

However, in 1953 the victories were not so great and not so often. The coach retired because of poor health and poor pay; however, he left behind probably the finest junior varsity team in the history of the school. I was a member of that team my freshman year. We had the fastest backs and the largest line ever to don castaway varsity equipment. In the annual frosh-varsity scrimmage, we beat the varsity thirteen to nothing. Perhaps that number thirteen had something to do with what was to come later. The school board was very impressed by the victory of the J.V.'s and they hired a fiery young coach. They even went so far as setting up a more rugged schedule for the next season.

The new coach was a football scientist. He had tall book shelves in his office that were filled with football books. He used to say, "Boys, the split-T is so easy that it's just like cheating." And he believed it. He had approximately two hundred and fifty plays that he could run from the "T" formation, but he was the only one that could run them. No matter how hard the new coach tried, he could not get the boys to run more than ten plays correctly, and in a game we could not even run the ten right. One thing, though, the opposition could not scout our plays—they were never the same from one game to the next. I really do not know

why, but for some reason the team had a natural resistance to those fancy plays, and the plays were really fancy—so fancy that the coach kept them in an embossed leather notebook, and each play-diagram was sealed in plastic. In this form they were a thing of beauty, but the way we executed them in a game resembled a clown act in a traveling carnival. In fact, we were so bad that we could not even punt! Our punter looked good in practice; he could punt for at least fifty yards. However, when he was in a game, he punted fifty yards all right, but always straight up. The opponents were usually in a better scoring position after the kick than they were before it. I do not know how well the "Toe" could have kicked extra points, for I do not recall his ever having to do so.

We paid dearly for the mighty records of the Bulldogs of the past. The old teams had had a habit of running scores up on their opponents unmercifully. Those enemy elevens got even in my day by running the scores up on us unmercifully. Things were so bad in my sophomore year that when Bellefonte defeated us by only twenty-five points, the irate Bellefonte fans rioted after the game and stoned us out of town. We were punished in other ways too. After Lock Haven had trounced us fifty-one to zero, we ate our post-game dinner at the Davis Restaurant in Lock Haven. The Bobcat fans made faces at us through the huge picture windows of the restaurant. We felt like a group of zoo animals, and people always like to watch zoo animals eat. The coach would not close the blinds, either. He

said that *we* had it coming. As I recall, he ate in the back room with the bus driver.

One evening Danville walloped us by some terrific score, and after the game (if it can be called that) the coach made us all lie down on the playing field at one goal and roll a hundred yards to the other goal. We were all sick and dizzy when we had finished, and this was the only time that evening that we crossed the goal line of the Ironmen. This would not have been so bad except the band played "Taps" while we were rolling. We would have turned on them had it not been for the fact that the band was all girls. Besides, we did not want to embarrass our parents any more than they had been. Our parents were the only fans we had left. They were known as the "Loyal Thirty." The reason that there were thirty parental fans was that there were only fifteen played on the entire squad. Two-thirds of the squad had quit by my junior year. I really do not know why the rest of us stayed on. I guess that it was a sense of honor and duty to dear old Jersey Shore High. One thing, though—when we faced a squad of eighty-five players during pre-game "warm-ups," we said our "Lord's Prayer" in earnest. We were scared!

One of the hardest things to take was away games. It seems that every team had Parents' Night or Home Coming when we came to town. The Booster Clubs of the opposing teams knew that their boys would look like All-Americans against us.

Near the end of one season our Booster Club decided that possibly they

could inspire us to win a game. They arranged a Parents' Night. The "Loyal Thirty" were given a reserved section in the stands. Actually, there was no need for this special consideration—our parents had their choice of any seat in the home stands, for hardly any one else attended the game, even for Parents' Night. The mothers were given roses, and the fathers were given big orange paper footballs. The fathers were to pin these footballs to their chests. The footballs had an inscription on them that read, "My son plays football. His name is _____." Later my father told me that nearly all the fathers took their signs off at the end of the first quarter, when it became evident that we were going to be trounced again. I do not know whether Dad exaggerated or not but he said that he saw several mothers weeping into their roses. There was one bright moment in this game for the parents. The good-hearted opposing coach let us score against his junior varsity in the closing minutes of the last quarter. After all, it *was* Parents' Night. That score was the first touchdown registered on the home field all year! Unfortunately, we did not make the extra point. We tried to run it over, but the J.V. line held firm. Still, our parents cheered with such vigor that the referee had to hold the game until they quieted down.

Things were so pitiful for us that we were ashamed to get our hair cut in Jersey Shore. We used to drive to Williamsport to get our "flat tops." Then we would not have to face the Saturday morning quarterbacks at the local barber shop. I doubt seriously whether Harry

the barber would have cut our hair, anyway. He had played on the team that beat "South Side" one hundred twenty-two to nothing. We were not worthy of sitting in his chair.

Just before practice started, my junior year, the "scientist" packed his "Football Made Easy" books and quietly stole out of town. The tired coach left town without telling a soul. The school board appointed all three assistant coaches as head coaches. All three of these men were good orators, and apparently they thought that they could cure our ills with pep talks. The pep talks that we heard sounded as good as those of Rockne, the only difference being that Rockne's pep talks worked.

There was one outstanding player on our team; his name was Frederick. Frederick had a habit of swearing at members of the opposing team, till the referees would throw him out of the game. Finally, Fred overcame this handicap by swearing in German, his native tongue. Amazingly enough, though, Fred never passed German in school.

The home town newspaper would never print a write-up of the entire game. The kind local sports editor would point out a few things that we did right and let it go at that. His column was never very long, and he always closed his article with these words: "... and the rest is too sad to tell." Most of the time he did not even print the statistics of the game. Our yearbook staff was kind also. In fact, they did not even want to print the scores, but the yearbook adviser made them do so. It was rumored that someone tried to talk the printer into skipping the football

section entirely. However, the staff was tactful in their presentation of the fallen Bulldogs. Here are quotes from the 1955 and the 1956 yearbooks: (1) "Despite the fact that the squad went into most of their games the underdog, they showed that typical hustle and fight

that dominates all Bulldog teams." (2) "Despite the fact that the club went into the greater part of their games the underdog, they showed the never-dying spirit of Jersey Shore High."

Recently at my class reunion, not a person mentioned football.

Swan

PAUL MORRIS

We cannot, by placing our paddles into
the placid water and pulling
Silently, neither splashing nor
speaking,

Catch or come close to the swan swim-
ming before us, always unattainable,
Wan-white, with webbed-feet
underwater

Pulling more silently than paddles.
Then at—is it the sound, scent,
Or some sign?—he strikes wings
to summer air

And lifts lightly, like some swallow,

into the serene-sunshine,
Swings south-west, away around
the river's bend.

We cannot, by canoe, come close to him
where he hides in the marsh grass
Around the river's bend, always
unattainable.

I want only to catch the color of his
eyes; I christen him "God,"

And our laugh sends him around
the bend,

Always unattainable.

Attempt

MAUREEN A. DOLAN

What is man
but a thin blade of grass
in a huge growing meadow
or a fleeting particle
of a second
among many hours
of dull-witted attempts
to understand?

Small Packages

JACK CAPRIO

There was a time when man was not humble. He had his cave and his club and was a master of his domain. No one dared challenge him, for he was man, central figure of the universe. Today man no longer considers himself master. He speaks of himself as a "speck in the cosmos." I have heard this term used more than once and by more than one learned man.

This new humility probably had its beginning in the advance of science and astronomy. Man has discovered his physical smallness. Indeed, physically, man is but a speck. He is but one of millions of specks existing on a slightly larger speck which we call the planet Earth, one of nine known planets and perhaps many thousands yet unknown.

Our planet hangs as a tiny fragment of a vast universe. It is a body dwarfed by those around it—Jupiter for instance—which could easily contain fifteen hundred Earths. Even Jupiter is a midget beside the stars, some of which are tens of thousands of times its volume.

It is the great distance between us and the stars which makes them look minute. These distances cannot be measured in mere miles, but in "light years," a new term which makes trillions of miles more easily expressed. One light year is the distance which a beam of light traveling at 186,000 miles per second can cover in one year. One light year is six trillion miles. Astronauts say

that our universe has a radius of over two thousand million light years. If a man could travel the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second, it would take him two thousand million years to cross the universe.

If you still consider yourself anything more than a speck, let me add that there are countless numbers of galaxies hanging in space, and in our little galaxy alone there are suspended millions of heavenly bodies. If our galaxy contains the average number of stars and planets and we multiply this number by the possible number of galaxies, the resulting number of bodies which are hanging out there in space is staggering. Consider now that if there is human life on only one percent of these astronomical bodies, you and I are but two units of a number that dwarfs the number of blades of grass on this continent.

When man discovered that the planet which he lives on is not the center of the universe as he once believed, his ego was shattered. He found out that he lived on one of the lesser planets that had little if anything to do with keeping a balance in the universe. It could stay here or it could disappear and have no effect on the rest of the universe. Man now feels even less important because, possibly, he has the power to annihilate the planet. But this power is not a great power. If man does use it to erase the earth, then what? The earth

would be no more, but Jupiter would still be here, and Betelgeuse would still be there. They would not even miss our tiny earth. Man's removal of one drop of water from the ocean would have a no greater effect.

Is it any wonder that after considering the vastness of the universe modern man has a feeling of insignificance? But in my opinion he should not have such a feeling. Learned astronomers have done their best to show that man is far from being the center of the universe. Some even say that the greatness of God is lessened by the magnitude of the world. Have they forgotten the cause of this magnitude? If a man designs a great superhighway, its greatness does not lessen the man but rather reflects his ability. It shows his great knowledge and capabilities. God therefore, as creator and designer of our universe, shows forth his own greatness.

Most men agree that there is no greater power than God. He created the universe from nothing and is therefore its master from the largest star to the smallest atom. God is landlord as well as master. A landlord makes his house beautiful and comfortable for his tenant's enjoyment. God built the universe as a home for man. He made it large and beautiful for man's enjoyment, not to give him a feeling of insignificance.

We are told in old proverbs that size has nothing to do with importance, "good things come in small packages," for instance. A small germ can kill a man, but no one has ever died because of the vastness of space. It seems that man should be able to look into the heavens and say to himself, "My, how

big it is!" rather than say, "My, how small I am!" Yet, more and more, the trend of thought seems to be toward the smallness of man. In schools, in literature, and in the opinions of scientists, man is being humbled before the universe. The universe does not even have life, let alone knowledge, emotions, and reasoning power. Man, in all his smallness, can formulate theories on the universe, yet the universe with all its greatness cannot give a theory on man.

Trees have inhabited the earth for millions of years before man ever got here, yet in all that time they never got the knowledge to walk or talk. The first man who walked the earth controlled trees that had been here for centuries before him. He picked their fruit and cut their branches; and regardless of their size and age, they could not stop him.

It did not take man long to conquer the other inhabitants of the earth. The world was made for him; otherwise he would not have the knowledge to use its resources. If any other animal had been meant to be the central being, then man would not have been able to control it. If, for instance, Fido had been meant to be the earth's main inhabitant, would he not long ago have gained control over man, and would we not now be living in a basket in the kitchen?

Modern man feels small and alone because he is one of millions. Is this rational thinking? Each of these millions has his own thoughts, feelings, and desires. When he eats, only his hunger is satisfied. When he sleeps, only he is rested. When he does a job well, only he feels satisfaction. No one

in the other millions feels what he feels. One man may have a higher status, more money, and more material possessions than another, but he cannot have another man's feelings. Each man has a right to make his own decisions on any situation presented to him. No two men need have the same opinions. This is the right of individuality. This makes any man equal before God to any other. No man on earth has a right to call another man lesser.

My idea is not that man should not be humble. Humility is a great virtue. Man should humble himself among other men, but not to the degree that he

becomes nothing in his own opinion. He must realize that God created him as the most important being and nothing else, regardless of its size, is his equal. He must not let objects of lesser importance humiliate him by their immensity. This is not their destiny nor his. He was put on this earth to improve it and in doing so to overcome problems no matter how great. He was given the ability. The greatness called intellect, will, knowledge, or what you will, put into man by his Creator, enables man, although not big in physical size, to overwhelm even the immensity of space and the vastness of time.

Mercy, Memory

PAUL MORRIS

But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time

—SHAKESPEARE

Your name has been forgotten,
But while the others fashioned castles
from the sand,
Your wide eyes watched small-highways
being built and
Shells and sticks becoming cars and
Hands and fingers making speed and
motion;
While all the others smoothed themselves
with lotion
And the sun, hotter here than in
Goshen,
Dried it, while all the other lips were
laughing,
Your lips were crying as you listened to

horns blowing
And tires squealing and people screaming.
While all the others lay there dreaming
With the sun, an orange poker-end
pointing
At them, the story stopped,
And the sea slapped the beach,
And a wave slid up the land
And washed out the road
And the cars.

While others fashion castles in their
dreams,
You lie awake; and some small memory
of screams
Comes to your mind:
You cannot find
The reason for the echo, but
Time is not such a slut.

Dave Rome's

RICHARD N. SAXTON, JR.

Now that I think about it, or *try* to think about it, I doubt that I could describe Dave Rome's if I wanted to do so. It's a little different from just writing a story. What I mean is, a writer can produce a story, and everything in that story can be purely a figment of his creative imagination. That is probably one reason more than all others why it is easier to be a fiction writer than a non-fiction writer who writes about what he has seen or experienced and not about made-up places and things and people. Those made-up places are easy to describe. It's difficult, for me, at least, to sit down later on and describe some place perfectly, especially if that place was a bar and didn't really mean too much to me in the first place. I mean, I can close my eyes and see *parts* of it, but it's just one of those things that are beyond honest description: a couple of booths hidden behind wooden pillars, five or six, maybe seven, tables with chairs in the middle of the floor, and a long bar that ran the length of the far side of the wall opposite the entrance and ended right beside two paint-chipped doors, one marked WOMEN in white paint on a black sign and one marked MEN in white paint on a black sign. Between the doors, at about chest height of a good-size bartender—Dave—stood a pay telephone. Above the phone was the brightest light in the place, at least the most piercing light, a little one, actually, with a plastic shade that wasn't quite

pink nor quite white. The light not only lit up the phone but it also illuminated what I'd been told by Dave were some really good telephone numbers.

It seems to me, now, suddenly, that I should have been more observing in my trips to Dave's so that I could safely describe the place, but I wasn't. I guess it's my own fault, really, but I'm just not the observing type. Why, I can't even tell myself now, let alone someone else, how many windows were in my home room at the high school or what my fellow English teachers used to wear to school. It's just one of those things, really, and if for no other reason than personal satisfaction, I should try to do better. And I do try, honestly, but it's the little things that upset me the most, little things like placing a particular pencil somewhere and thinking all the while that I am placing it there that I will remember where it is later. And I never do. I'm not kidding myself. It's frustrating, so much so that I have given up telling myself that I will remember. Now I simply put my pencil, or whatever it may be, down, wherever it is I last used it, in complete knowledge that I will be helpless when I try to find it again. That's why I say I doubt that I will ever remember anything, let alone some place that meant absolutely nothing to me, or at least, almost nothing. Once I start taking things for granted, no matter how important or insignificant those things may be (like a pencil or a bar), I've

had it. That's why I can't describe the inside of Dave Rome's—or the outside either, for that matter. When I moved to that small town I just hunted a bar, found Rome's to be the *only* one, and moved in, stopping there religiously at four o'clock every afternoon, Monday through Friday inclusive. I never met anyone there of much concern, really, except Dave Rome, who constantly tried to explain the physical benefits of investing one thin dime in a telephone number. But all I wanted was a cool Martini or two after an all-day session of trying to cram something that I thought, and still do think, was of value to any budding human being into the blocked heads of pseudo-students who weren't old enough yet, to terminate officially their formal education by taking out working papers and traipsing off into the mines. My first intentions were honorable, and probably somewhat noble, which is fine, on my part. Every teacher should be possessed with such a code, but, believe me, it's useless for an English teacher. Well, practically useless. Once in awhile there was a bright spark of hope that I thought might possibly have blossomed into something better-than-average, but it didn't pan out—ever! At least, it didn't in this particular town where one was either a coal miner or a farmer, by birth or choice; and coal miners and farmers are not reknowned, at least around these parts, for their literary might. I know about Burns and Whittier and even Robert Frost, and just maybe—it is possible—just maybe, I was looking for another such person there. I gave up looking, fast.

That's the way it went, there, and after a while I got used to it. I no longer tried to create a worldly fire. I just simmered on, corrected my standard tests, laughed out loud, to my and my students' embarrassment, when I tried to visualize one of them as Robert Frost, tried *not* to advise the school annual too much, and sat in Dave Rome's with my Martini.

There were several other reasons why I left that town.

And every once in a while I sit down now and just happen to think about it. I usually do it over a Martini in another town, in another bar. Twice I did it after having deposited a dime in a telephone in search of Dave Rome's advertised-type of female entertainment. And there's just one thing that sticks in my mind, one situation that happened right there in Dave Rome's Bar that outweighs what could possibly have been some rather vivid and amusing situations that happened to me, or were made to happen *by* me, while I "worked" there.

This then, possibly, is why I decided to leave. I'm still not completely convinced, myself.

Without being too terribly trite, it goes without saying that I'll never forget that last trip into Rome's. I don't even remember now what day it was (they were all so much the same) except that it was winter. I know that because I had to wait until the following fall before I could get another job, and in the meantime I went back to State and picked up enough credits that I lacked to get me a master's. I also know that I had to buy a new top coat, but I've

given up briefcases.

When I went in that cold day, the place was deserted save for Dave, who was leaning over the bar laboring on a cross-word puzzle from the day-before's *Times* which I had left on the table. I left one there every evening. I don't know why I even bothered carrying it in with me as it was definitely too dark to read in there. I just picked it up at school from my mail box, folded it neatly, stuck it under my arm, and dropped it off at Dave's.

He looked up and asked me for a three-letter word for something-or-other beginning with P, or something, which I told him. He thanked me and began to mix my Martini without asking. He used to ask me repeatedly, "Beer?" and when I said, "No, I'd much prefer a Martini," he ceased to try to convert me to what was far-and-away the premium seller in that town. I picked up my drink and headed catty-corner from the bar to my table. It was wedged safely into the corner, and from it I had the vantage of the entire room, which, as I said, was now deserted.

I sat there for a few sips, hesitated, and gulped it off, calling to Dave with an upward motion of my arm. He replaced my emptied glass slightly off-center of the last water ring. He always did that, almost as if it were done on purpose. It bothered me. I sat there making a Ballantine three-ring sign in water with the round bottom of my fresh, sweating glass when I felt a cold draft on my legs. I looked up.

I recognized the fellow who entered. He came in every day at this time. I

never did find out his name, or if I did, I've forgotten it, but he was one of the town's two mailmen. His brown bag was empty and he flopped it on a table as he headed for the bar. Then he unzipped his blue jacket, unravelled his maroon scarf, and proceeded to consume a quantity of draft beer. Dave moved his stool to the postman's end of the bar, the far end away from me, and the two talked, quietly and then laughingly and then quietly again, and were disturbed only by my hackneyed cries for replenishment.

A few drinks later, several other town characters stopped in: There was Brady, the poolroom owner, a cripple with a club left foot, one of the few fellows in town I *did* know. (I knew him because I used to shoot a few racks of pool in his place on Saturdays. Everyone called him Diamond Jim. He was supposed to be rich or something. Anyway, there was always a card game going on in his back room and he was supposed to be quite a gambler.) And several other fellows entered and left, all carrying beat-up lunch buckets. They were miners, black and crusty, all needing a bath and a haircut—in that order.

After that, the place became quiet, Diamond Jim and the postman being the last two to leave.

I took the next Martini that Dave handed me and gave him another three-letter word. Or maybe it was a four-letter one. It doesn't matter now, I doubt that he ever finished a puzzle. He definitely wasn't in the *Times* category.

It must have been close to six o'clock when I felt an awful draft that engulfed my body, feet to lips. I heard the door slam. In stormed a short, stocky man with graying hairs around his pudgy red ears, below his bald pate. I'd seen him in there a few times. Usually he just calmly walked in, ordered a bottle of Budweiser, took it and a glass to the last booth down—nearest the door—and sat there and quietly became loaded. Dave always seemed to be at his table the moment he swigged the last drop from each successive bottle.

That night, the night in mention, he stormed up to the bar, shouted "Beer!" to Dave and practically ran across the room to his booth, muttering and cursing beneath his breath.

He sat there and drank.

The telephone rang.

Dave answered it and called across the room to this fellow, who was evidently known as Porky. Porky said "yah" and went over to the phone and belched out several well-chosen curse words through the wires and returned to his booth and booze.

It rang again.

Dave answered and called out that it was for Porky again and that it was his wife again and that she said he was to come home right away because his supper was getting cold and she was going to throw it out if he didn't.

Porky answered with a quick wave of his burly arm.

Dave replaced the receiver, shrugged his shoulders, and then rescued Porky's empty with a full bottle of beer.

Fifteen or so minutes later the phone rang again. Porky met Dave half

way to the instrument and motioned that he'd answer it. I couldn't quite hear what it was that was being said, but I could definitely see by the light above the phone that the back of Porky's head was getting a bright red. He continued talking, waving his right arm above his head viciously and finally the redness settled completely about his previously shiny head. He muttered the only audible word I heard during the entire tirade—"Christ!"—slammed the receiver in the general direction of the cradle, missed, tried again, jammed it in place, and stormed back to the table.

He sat there for a while longer, visibly angry—definitely. I sat there, visibly amused—definitely.

Perhaps that—my amusement—is what caused his head to rise and turn toward my general direction. He was sitting in more light than I, and I detected a squint in his eyes. He must have been trying to see who I was, because he stood up, grabbed his bottle and glass in one large hand, and plodded toward me.

He pulled a chair out from beneath the table and plopped into it. He didn't say a word. He just stared across the table at me and then down to my hands, which were swivelling the half-empty Martini glass.

He burped, deep, from his lower thorax.

"You a teacher, right?"

I nodded, still amused.

He sat there, drank off his beer and called over his shoulder to Dave: "A Bud and a whatever-the-hell-it-is-he's-drinking," pointing to me.

I said nothing, nothing at all, and accepted his offered drink.

"Married?"

I answered in the negative, almost too joyfully, I guess, for the look I received.

He didn't answer.

"Ever think about killing your wife?"

I rephrased my marital status in bolder terms. He looked disappointed and rambled off into a dissertation concerning marital bliss—or the lack of it, to be much more specific—that was both interesting and sad. He told me how when he was just working regular-like, he used to take home 125 bucks a week and gave it all to his wife. And he was a son-of-a-bitch, he said, when he asked her for a couple of bucks for beer. A no-good son-of-a-bitch! I nodded, not quite knowing why.

And then, he said, the work got real good, down the mines, and what with all that overtime and all, he was taking home 200 bucks a week. But this time he was keeping himself 25 bucks—25 measly bucks—and she found out about it. Now he's another kind of a son-of-a-bitch. Same sentence, he said, different crime.

I wanted to stop to analyze that as I definitely felt there was really something to it, but he didn't give me ample time to de-cloud my Martini-muddled brain.

He wanted advice, he said. The only problem was, he didn't shut up long enough after asking for such to enable me to give him anything, let alone what he asked for.

He launched into what seemed (and

probably *were*—to him) all the troubles in the world. The hell with politics, foreign and domestic. This man had problems!

In a way, I'm now rather glad that he didn't shut up, as I'm not sure that I could have told him anything. I thought of that particular inability of mine at the time, too, and was more than glad to hear him run on. He was the first person I'd met around that town who didn't seem to be an actual part of the town, as the mines were a part, or the fields were a part. He was unique, at least to me, and I was going to be damned before I went and ruined the opportunity to enjoy him.

And the phone rang again.

Dave answered it and called my friend over. He went, but was back with me presently. He lifted his glass to his mouth, bounced it back to the table, and informed me that he'd be right back, that he'd be *right back*. He said he lived just down the road. He informed me that there was some unfinished business that he hadn't started but that he had to finish right away, and that I was not to leave because he'd be right back.

The look in his eyes sent shivers into my numbed brain and I just *had* to remain to see the ending of this drama. At that point in this particular experience all I could think about was "The Brighter Day" or something that used to be on television in the afternoon when I was in school.

Before I could finish another drink, he was back, huffing, the white breath fogging before his round head as he entered the door. His wool shirt gave

off a collected coolness as he brushed against me while sitting down, this time right next to me. I noticed, or thought I noticed, a faint burning odor as he handed me my Martini. He need not have done that since it was sitting right in front of me.

I asked him politely how it went.

He answered, "Fine."

"Ever kill anyone?" he asked.

I answered that I'd never had the pleasure or the opportunity, but I had thought about it several times. I started to tell him about this particular kid I had in third-period Sophomore English who deserved about as much, but he interrupted me before I got to third-period.

"Never did, huh?"

Again I said no.

"Terrible thing," he said. "People shouldn't do it, cepting that there're times when nothing else works. Know what I mean?"

Either to be consistently polite or out of fear that a positive reply would render him speechless, I answered no.

He looked as though he felt extremely sorry for me. He put his arm around my shoulder and said:

"Well, son, it's sorta like this way:

..."

And he launched into a repeat of his earlier story, but this time with more detail, much more, vivid detail about how a wife can just be so much and then nothing more and how when she forgets just what it was that she was supposed to be, she can't really blame a fellow who *hasn't* forgotten for doing the things he does.

I couldn't quite digest that bit at

that moment and told him so with a quizzical "huh?" and he explained more vividly by rapidly running down by heart the list of numbers surrounding the telephone. Then he graphically launched into the individual talents and assets of each particular telephone subscriber who was fortunate enough to have her name engraved upon the wall. He explained that there were almost as many numbers there as names on the town Victory Board.

"And all I take is twenty-five bucks for myself and she couldn't understand it!" he said, finally withdrawing his arm from around my shoulder, which was by that time rather uncomfortably heavy and warm.

I nodded sympathetically.

The phone rang.

I informed him that it was more than likely for him.

"Naw," he said. "Not this time."

I asked him if he would excuse me, then, because I had to go to the men's room, which was the truth. He said sure and I left the table.

Dave was just answering the phone as I opened the door marked MEN. I had done what it was I had to do and was washing my hands in the sink right inside the door. I could hear Dave on the phone. He was excited.

"Yah, Sheriff, he's here. Why?"

Pause. I turned off the faucet, tight, and listened.

"What?"

Pause.

"Oh, my God, no!"

Pause.

"I won't. I won't! All right. All

right I won't!"

I threw the paper hand towel toward the receptacle and opened the door.

Dave was standing at the front door of the bar, half in and half out, looking up the road and into the bar with a herky-jerky motion.

I looked over at the table. My friend's head was tilted high up in the

air. He was draining his beer.

My coat and briefcase were at the table.

I left them there.

Dave held the door open for me and moved back, allowing me to leave.

"'night," he said.

"So long, Dave," I answered.

The Autumnal Equinox

MAUREEN A. DOLAN

Like static,
dull pellet sounds
of rain
on stone
and tin spout
interrupt
the silence.
Like a conch,

rain murmurs
incessant
distant strains
of rhythm.
It surrounds.
It envelopes.
It reaches in
and lulls the mind.

Cellophane

MARY CUNEO

Your crystalline eyes,
And cellophane face
Often make we wonder,
My dear,
Who you really are—

So much more perplexing
Than the hapless creature
In my kitchen
Twenty years ago
Whose studied smugness
Was more a virtue
Than this new blandness
Of middle age.

You don a green dress,
You put flowers in your hair.
. . . For me?

A bridge date,
Long conversations with old friends,
New interests—
Keep you too late
For a good-night kiss.
But every morning
You greet me
Smiling.

An Exposition on the Stupidity and the Impossibility Of Men, or One Woman's Enlightenment

MILDRED DOLAN

Many of my close friends—those who claim to know and understand the "inner" me—are perhaps a little perplexed when it comes to my convictions about men. They consider me, for the most part, deluded and somewhat bitter in my opinions on the subject of those most necessary evils, men.

During the closing days of a memorable relationship with the masculine gender, one of my schoolmates and I became involved in a conversation concerning my decisions about my fellow of the time. My friend is the gullible type; she believes almost anything anybody tells her, and she goes along with some pretty wacky propositions. She is particularly gullible when it comes to men. I am the exact opposite—skeptical and wary—and nobody pulls anything over on me—least of all a man. That is why I pointed out that this conversation occurred during the last days of my relationship with Tom. Tom, basically an all-around good guy, offered me one of the most inconceivable ways of life that I had ever heard of. I, of course, declined his invitation. After all, who could submit to a marriage that required me to go to the coast of Ghana and spend probably the rest of my life in Africa, while my husband went off on some wild expedition digging for buried bones and cities in hopes of obtaining a cultural contribution for and a large check from a museum for his efforts. I

explained to my friend the ridiculousness and impracticability of such an affair, and she was aghast. She just couldn't understand how I could pass it up!—how I could pass up a deep-thinking man like Tom and as exciting a life as his promised to be. She thought it a marvelous opportunity and told me that if she were in my shoes, she'd marry Tom and go to Africa on a moment's notice. The only thing I gained from the conversation was the conviction that not only were a large majority of the world's men stupid but also a small fraction of the women. I made the mistake of telling my friend this and was left alone to contemplate the absurdity of man's reasoning.

Dorothy Parker must have spent considerable time and thought studying the subject of men, for how else could she have come up with a statement that sums up my opinion of them so thoroughly?—"They make me sick, they make me tired." Francis made me sick, and he made me tired. He was the first man in my life I ever considered marrying, and he was the first man that ever caused me to do some serious thinking about men. He was, to put it bluntly, stupid—not stupid as far as intelligence is concerned, but stupid as far as his sex in general is concerned. He didn't know the first thing about how to handle a woman; he was conceited, boorish, and irresponsible. He was a

show-off, a loud-mouth, and a spend-thrift. He knew how to show a girl a good time, but he didn't know what she liked to hear from a man—if he did, he certainly didn't practice it. Our affair lasted for four years. I have decided that that's why I considered marrying him—the challenge of getting him to ask me. When finally he did ask me, I saw him for what he was—all the things I mentioned previously—and I decided to give him up. The proposal itself was enough to confirm my beliefs about him. His words, as I recall, were, "We've been kicking this thing around for three years now; let's get hitched." Real moonlight-and-roses material, eh?

The next man in my life was far from being stupid; the fact is he was a little too smart. Alan can be classified as semi-genius, and his approach to love and life can be categorized as the same. He offered me a highly intellectual relationship—a relationship I greatly desired. My friend Betti was particularly disturbed when I broke off with Alan and refused to sympathize with my reasons. She's the intellectual sort herself and considered a life with Alan's type a perfect union and a successful achievement. But Alan was on an inventing kick, and I wasn't about to live in a house with a reactor-equipped basement laboratory full of acids and electric machines and bomb material and heaven knows what else. He certainly wasn't being considerate or romantic either when he suggested a tour of the Smithsonian Institution as the major point of interest of our honeymoon. I consider myself as possessing intellectual pursuits—but on a honey-

moon?

I'm willing to go half way in matters, and I'm willing to compromise and to try to understand a person's foibles and weaknesses. I'm willing to talk over differences, and I'm willing to give things a trial session, but the other person involved has to submit to concessions, too, and that is where my men failed. Tom, Alan, and Francis failed. Tom could think of no reason why I shouldn't be perfectly happy sharing a life with him in the wilds of Africa; Francis was stubborn and outwardly insulted when I refused his proposal, and he tried to convince me that he was the only man for me and that I was making a big mistake by walking out on him; Alan passed my decision off with a shrug of resignation and never even suggested we talk the matter over—a rather unpredictable reaction, in my mind's eye.

It was some time before I became aware of Phil as a possible mate. Phil and Alan were best friends, and because of this fact, Phil and I had had an opportunity to develop a close personal relationship. He was the sweet, warm, understanding, sympathetic, big brother type—*while* I was going with Alan. And when Alan and I parted, Phil was there to lend his shoulder. He listened to and sympathized with my laments concerning my last affair, and because of this trait, I began to see him in a new light. Things were just delightful for several months; then he tried to change me. He went on an all-out campaign—I'd look better with short hair . . . I wore my dresses too tight . . . I wore too much make-up . . . I was crazy if I appreciated

Bach . . . How could I sit there and cry over such a dumb movie. When he asked for my hand, I just about gave it to him—flat across the cheek. I reached the confirmation that men are not only stupid but also nervy, possessive, and unpredictable.

Tom followed Phil, and I have already elucidated my experience and resultant conviction concerning him. It was at about this time that I was in complete agreement with Dorothy Parker's "Experience." I had even thought of writing to Mrs. Parker, citing several other examples of "some men" and their revolting traits. And it was about this time too that I received a post card, post marked Washington, D.C., saying, "Having a wonderful time on our honeymoon. The Library of Congress was utterly fascinating. Plan to spend the entire day tomorrow at the Smithsonian. As ever, Alan and Betti." It just goes to show that that old adage about opposites attracting doesn't hold much water any more.

I had just about given up on men and resigned myself to a life of bachelorhood and service to my fellow man. By fellow man, I mean man in general, which includes women and children. In all of my relationships with members of the opposite sex, I had been in control of the situation; I had been on the top. I was the one who took it or left it—I was the one who left it. I was superior, and I was proud of my superiority. I thrived in feeling superior to that lowly creature, man. Oh, I knew what I wanted all right—not the perfect man, of course, because there is no such man; I just wanted the next thing to him. So

I lived from day to day, feeling satisfied with myself and with my convictions. I didn't consider myself bitter or deluded in my attitude or unjustified in my opinions and conclusions. After all, hadn't I had some dillies of propositions from possible lifetime partners, didn't I understand their motivations? I began to consider myself pretty much the expert on men. And even when I received the letter from Tom and Alice (my gullible friend), who were living in Africa on sunlight and a \$10,000 check from the Museum of Natural History, did I waver or alter my convictions. My feet were planted firmly. Who needed men? Such overbearing, insincere, warped individuals. That's exactly what I considered Paul when I met him—overbearing, insincere, warped. We met on a blind date—a swim party. Ten minutes after I had met him, he had spilled a Southern Comfort on my new \$35 bathing suit, pulled a chair out from under me as I was being introduced to Senator Fulbright, the guest of honor, slammed a door in my face, and knocked me into the pool, beauty-parlored hair-do and all. As if those incidents weren't insult enough, he had the nerve to ask me to dinner the next night. And before I knew what I was saying, I had accepted!

I dressed with unusual care, all the while wondering why, when I was going to spend an entire evening with such a complete oaf. Over martinis we discussed Goldwater and Rockefeller, and by the time we were finishing our crab Louie, we had rolled around to Zen-Buddhism. He left me at the door of my rooming house in utter bewilder-

ment and with a promise to phone me the next day. Two weeks later when he did call, I was infuriated at his flippancy. "How about some bowling tonight?" was all he said. Sputtering and gasping, I again accepted! We went bowling and finished out the evening rowing quietly around Lake Tahoe.

Our relationship continued in the same vein, and slowly I became beware of the fact that I was no longer in control of the situation as I had been hitherto. And I began to think again. What was happening to me? I still felt that men were pretty lowly creatures, but I also felt my superiority slipping, and along with it some of my deep-rooted convictions about the basic unreliability,

insincerity, and stupidity of men. I was becoming low man on the totem pole, and I wasn't sure whether I liked the shift or not. Alice had had faith in Tom and had found a satisfactory existence with him; Alan and Betti had reached a high relationship of understanding together; Phil and Francis had long since found mates and established comfortable life patterns. Man had mastered the woman; woman had succumbed to the man. Discovering, with a great sense of enlightenment, that that's the way it's been ever since this whole crazy world began, I humbly accepted Paul's proposal of marriage, even when he told me he had always dreamed of going to the South Pole for his honeymoon.

Golden Extreme

MARY CUNEO

A little man

With a booming voice
And slightly receding hairline
Went strolling through the streets
Proclaiming his intentions
Of saving a dying nation.

And the people listened,
Harkening to the words of
Their redeemer.

He promised to lower the taxes,
Cut government spending
To underdeveloped countries,
To increase the tariff
So that the internal security
Might be preserved.

He said
There would be a Rare Deal

When he was elected next year.

And the people lifted up their voices
To embrace the little man
With gold teeth
Who promised victory
For the people.

And when the day came
They flocked to the polls.
There was no question at all
Who would be
The Victor.

It was a day to remember,
Some one said,
When the will of the people
Swept the Nation—

And democracy gagged in the dust . . .

Oh, Brother

CAROL JAVERS

He's neat, I mean he's really neat. Don't think that's just my opinion. It's not. Everyone thinks so. I know they do, because that's what he tells me. He's tall and really built. Well, maybe not really built, but he told me yesterday that his 135 pounds gives him that "V" look from shoulders to waist, and that's the look everyone's dieting for. I guess if you would see him you might say he is thin. I mean in a bathing suit you might see a rib or two, but just remember, he's a perfect "V."

He thinks it's his hair that attracts everyone, though. It's very light and from a distance you might think he didn't have any, but he has hair all right. It sticks out all over like little bristles on a brush—an old brush. He keeps it resembling a said brush by carefully waxing it exactly four times daily. It's just not everyone that uses Roll-On-Wax with such devotion. Maybe that's what makes him so popular. Everyone likes him. I mean everyone who's anyone. You see, he explained to me all about the two kinds of people in this world—the Ins and the Outs. It's sorta like this. The Ins are the only ones who are anyone. It doesn't matter what the Outs think. I guess you can see that because they spend their whole lives wishing they were Ins, anyway. I'm not sure about all this but that's what he told me. Well, anyway, Ron's an In. I guess I didn't tell you his name is Ron. Well, see, it used to be Ronnie, but now it's just Ron. Try and remember

Ronnie three times before I remember. He never forgets, though. He just nie anymore. Sometimes I call him that because he doesn't answer to Ron-stands there mute, like a stone, until I correct my mistake. It's annoying when I'm in a hurry. He tells me that it's my error in the first place and I shouldn't expect him to answer to someone else's name.

He doesn't really hold it against me, though. I think this is because he has already decided I'm on the dull side. Personally, though, I think it's because I give him money. I mean when everyone else has refused him he sometimes lowers himself and asks me. I usually give it to him. I've found it's easier than giving him twenty good reasons why I shouldn't give it to him. It isn't that I'm a slow thinker or anything, but around the sixteenth reason or so I usually start repeating myself, so he wins automatically. That's part of the rules. I don't remember the rules myself. I don't try to. I mean why should I when he's always changing them?

Ron always looked lopsided somehow, probably because he always carries a basketball under his arm. It's not that I don't like basketball or anything like that, and really I shouldn't say anything because he did win a trophy for playing the game. I mean the very fact that his team captured fourth place in the summer league was an honor in itself, and no one should forget it. It's not that you could ever really forget. Ron re-

minds us on the average of ten times a week. Some weeks it's more, but ten's the average. Once I merely happened to mention the fact that there were only five teams entered and the fifth team was forced to forfeit due to lack of players. As soon as he hit me in the head with that pillow I was sorry. Mom says some people just can't take a joke.

Another of his attributes, Ron tells me, is the fact that he's such a great dresser. I mean he's what he calls a real style-setter. Mom tells him he shouldn't spend so much money on clothes, especially since he has never earned any money himself. But he knows the family wants to maintain its pride in him so he's always the first to try something new. Take for instance the green-speckled loafers he was wearing when I was home last weekend. You have to admit that you haven't seen too many pairs of those around yet.

As for shirts, the word is button-down. I've also noticed that sweat shirts are a big thing with Ron. I'm not usually so observant, but I mean he has one for every occasion. I know he has, because last Sunday he had one on for Church till Mom made him change.

Sometimes I get a little upset when Ron answers the phone. Once or twice I've been knocked to the floor as he dashed by to get to the phone before me. It's not really things like that that bother me. It's just the way he considers the phone his personal possession. I mean when someone calls and asks for me he immediately tells them I'm in the shower.

It never used to bother me but then my friends started asking me just how many showers a day I take. I mean you can only be so clean! Ron explained to me that he only does this to keep the line open for emergency calls. Just suppose Steve calls to find out what Ron's wearing to the dance. It would be too bad if Steve had to get dressed without knowing what Ron was wearing. I mean he might show up looking like a freak or something. He'd probably wear shoes when everyone else had on sneakers.

But I shouldn't complain. I mean it isn't every home that has such a treasure. That's what Ron says, too. He's our treasure, I mean, ours alone, and like I said before, he's really neat!

Football, 1907 --- an Excerpt

PAUL CHANDLER

Chalmers had not played football in high school because he was slender and because he worked after school, and he had not had any inclination to play during his first three years in college. But in his senior year at Eakin the football squad was so small and so poor that pressure was put on every man to "come out." He didn't want to go out, but he felt it his duty to the college, and on the first day of practice he showed up. The coach put him with the ends. He didn't like any part of it, and the danger of being injured seriously or even permanently worried him.

Late in the first game of the season tion hit him just as hard, in the stomach Crawford had Eakin forty-one to nothing. The first-string end had been taken out of the game completely exhausted, and the substitute had been hit so hard he could not get up and had to be carried off the field. Chalmers was sent in because there was no other end left on the bench. He reported to the referee and took his place at right end. The teams were already lined up. Crawford had the ball. The quarterback began calling the signals—the huddle wasn't known in 1907. Then everybody seemed to be shifting towards him, not only the backs but some linemen too, he wasn't sure just why. He was shaking, and his mouth was so dry he couldn't swallow.

He knew it was going to be a wide

end-run. Before he had taken three steps across the line of scrimmage, two men hit him, knocked him down, and fell on him. When he got up he knew that his hip had been bruised and that he had a splitting headache. When he looked about him, he saw that the Eakin backs had forced the ball-carrier out of bounds and Crawford had made a four-yard gain.

The next formation was the same as the one before. He knew they would be hitting the weakest point. Just before the play started, a man ran out past him toward the side lines. A forward pass, he thought. When the ball was snapped, he started forward again. Then he thought a locomotive had hit him—the man who had run out had darted back and caught him completely unawares. Before he had got his wits collected a halfback coming from the other direction this time, with his shoulder, and sent him back the other way just as far as the locomotive had sent him. He tried to remember where the locomotive had hit him, but he was sick at his stomach and he was gasping to catch his breath. He wondered whether his ribs were caved in. He ached all over. Slowly he walked to where his teammates were lining-up down field. He could see Crawford had only one yard to go for a first down. They will surely make it through the line, he thought. But no, they were coming his way again. His knees were trembling, and he couldn't make them

stop. He put one knee on the ground and held the other one steady with his hand. When the ball was snapped, Crawford came straight at him. He did as he had been coached. He angled forward and threw himself longways under the interference, his back to it. A knee hit him over the kidney and some terrific force hit his head. A stampede of steers was passing over him. Then it reversed its direction. Then they were all collapsed on top of him. There was no air to breathe, only the stinking sour smell of sweat. The stench nauseated him, and he was not sure that he was entirely conscious. Will I ever get out from under this, he thought. Am I maimed for life? Will I live to finish college? When the steers had finally collected themselves and moved their tons of weight from his head and hips and arms and legs and shoulders, he turned over painfully, pulled one knee up and then the other, and by exerting all the energy he could muster, he slowly raised himself from the ground. A group of blurred figures was moving about him—football players, he realized. That's right, and he was playing in the game. He walked and took a position beside another man—the tackle? A player came up and began pulling him and told him he was lined up with the wrong team. He could hardly understand what the man was saying. The player kept pulling at him, but he didn't know quite where he was to go or why. Then two students came from somewhere, put his arms over their shoulders, and the three of them started off the field.

They passed the referee. He was

standing with his foot on the ball and looking far down the field with a bored expression on his face. The image was to stay in Chalmers' mind for years to come.

As they neared the grandstand, he felt he was moving in a great quiet. He thought, I must not appear so helpless, so weak. Near the sidelines he said to the students, "Let me walk." Summoning all his strength he walked painfully, slowly but steadily. He heard the grandstand break into a loud cheer for him, but he did not know that the cheer was for him. He supposed his team had stopped the enemy on the next play.

One student said, "The coach told us to go with you to the gym. He won't need you any more in the game today." They walked past the end of the stand and finally into the dressing room of the gym. It was warm in there. He felt numb. The numbness was better than the pain he had endured. The students carefully took off his uniform and gave him a warm shower. They half held him up as they soaped his back. They were helping him dress when the squad came in. No one was saying anything. The only sound was the tramp of their cleats on the floor. As they walked past him on the way to the showers, he knew that some were stopping to peer at him, but his head hurt so that he didn't look up.

One of the two students with him asked the janitor what the score had been. "Forty-one," he said. "They had two yards to go on the fourth down after his last play," nodding at Chalmers. We held them and took the ball." But little of this registered on Chalmers' mind.

Jiggs, the Aquatic Canine

JAMES ENGEMAN

Most outdoorsmen are familiar with the hound—that is, with the fox hound, coon hound, and blood hound; and to say the least, the average person has heard of these dogs in association with their services to mankind. Well, I thought that I was familiar with, if not well informed on, the hound family, too, but after the summer which followed my junior year in high school, I had a different and lowly opinion of my knowledge of canines.

And now to get on with my story of Jiggs, the dog that opened new vistas to me on the world of dogs. This dog, a year-old beagle, was sold to me by a man my uncle knew in Blanchard. The man claimed that the dog was pedigreed, but he admitted later in the transaction that the registration papers to the dog's parents were "lost"; however, the dog was "guaranteed" to run rabbits, and since I was more interested in a hunter than in a scrap of paper to lay in a desk drawer, I bought the dog for five dollars. Because he was supposed to be a rabbit-dog, and he *did* look like a hunter, I figured he'd have to be called Jiggs. You see, Dad had had a real good rabbit-dog that was named Jiggs when he was a boy.

I had had Jiggs for nearly that whole summer before I really admitted to myself that he just wasn't a hunter. He wouldn't run rabbits right from the start; in fact, when I put him on the trail of a tame rabbit I had borrowed to train him with, he showed no interest whatsoever until I finally brought the

rabbit to him and put it down beside him. Immediately they became real pals. Jiggs licked the base of the rabbit's long ears and playfully nudged him with his nose. And day after day I found him cuddled in the cool shade of the lilac bush by Jiggs' pen, and worst of all, when I told him to find the rabbit, he would jump as high as his stubby legs would allow, looking all about as he leaped—and never never thinking of lowering his nose and trying to smell out his gentle pal. After I was resigned to the fact that running rabbits was not for him, I decided to try him on foxes because foxes have a stronger scent than rabbits. Well, he wouldn't run foxes either. I tried him on 'coons and on squirrels too, and he wouldn't run any of them. I even went so far as to try him on deer, the animal with a scent so strong that few houndsmen can break their dogs of chasing deer once they have associated the scent with the joy of the chase, but to my not very great surprise, deer were no more exciting to him than cows. Shortly after I got him he did not even bother to bark at some cows that had wandered down from their mountain pasture and were eating my mother's newly blooming sweet peas. As a matter of fact, when mother discovered them there, she saw, from the corner of her eye, Jiggs watching the proceedings in a disinterested fashion while he worried an empty sardine can that he had been carrying around, off and on, for several days. All he would do, when I took him into the woods

behind our house, was head for the creek and wade in the water. At first I thought that perhaps his feet were sure, but I looked at his feet time after time, and they always seemed all right. I thought maybe he had worms that were giving him a constant thirst, but Doc Fretz, the local vet, looked him over and said that he had nothing wrong other than a dose of fleas. After I had given him a good dusting with flea powder and was fully convinced that there was not a single flea on his whole body, I took him back to the woods again. I had hoped that Jiggs had been trying to drown his fleas, that now he might forget about the creek and start looking for game; and as luck would have it, we were no more than fifteen feet into the cover before a rabbit shot out from practically beneath my foot. I was overjoyed. I called Jiggs over to me and pointed to the small depression of flattened grass where the rabbit had been sitting and said, "Here he is, boy, go find 'im." When Jiggs showed no interest I grabbed him by the collar, pulled him to the spot, and shoved his nose into the depression. I think even I could have smelled that smoking-hot rabbit scent if my nose had been that close to it, but Jiggs just ambled off, tossing me a disdainful look as if to say, "How utterly revolting—getting one's nose pushed against the cold, damp ground!" and headed for the creek again. Finally I took him home to his kennel—thoroughly convinced that he was absolutely worthless. Jiggs stayed in the kennel from then on, except for an occasional weekend with us at Dad's hunting camp, where his only interest

seemed to be in watching some butterflies that kept congregating on a damp spot by the front steps.

One fall Sunday afternoon when Dad and I were at the camp and Jiggs was having one of his sessions with the butterflies, old Fred (Hap) Hazzard from the farm nearby stopped in to talk to my Dad. While he was there it started to rain, and he stayed an hour or more, talking of crops and stock and the like. As he left, he happened to notice Jiggs, who was now wading around in a small pool of water that had collected from the rain spouting, and he said, "By gosh, son, it looks like you've got a real trout hound there!"

"A trout hound!" I exclaimed, "What's a trout hound?"

"Why, it's a fish dog," he said, "a dog that hunts trout. Not too many uv'em around anymore." With that remark he ambled on up the lane towards the main road. "A trout hound?" I thought. "There isn't such a dog. He must have been kidding, yet it doesn't seem like old Hap to be telling tall tales, being so religious and all." As I watched Hap disappear around the bend in the lane, I was tempted to run after him and find out if he had been kidding, but my thoughts were interrupted by Dad calling for me to come and help him refill the oil stove. After that, I didn't give the matter much thought, and if hadn't been for what happened some months later, I would have forgotten all about Hap and his calling Jiggs a trout hound.

By the time spring rolled around and my primary interests turned to trout fishing, I had more or less forgotten the

extent of Jiggs' failure—that is, his always-wagging tail, his quick-to-lick tongue, and his big, sad hound eyes helped me to forget his hunting failure as well as to appreciate him as a companion, even to the point of taking him along when I went fishing.

The first time I took Jiggs with me was in the first week of May, when the army of fishermen had just begun to dwindle down to the usual hordes. We went to Long Run, a mountain stream about six miles from town that was best in early months of trout season. As soon as we got close to the stream (I suppose close enough that Jiggs could *hear* the gurgling water rather than smell it), Jiggs began moseying along the bank and even in the water at times, investigating every "nook and cranny" that attracted his attention. When I arrived at the bend in the stream, which was the beginning of the stretch of water I wanted to fish, Jiggs was wading at least a hundred feet downstream and paying no attention to me; hence, I started to fish the water in front of me. After a few minutes in that spot with no luck, I decided to fish downstream. Jiggs was intent on something in the water but I didn't give it a second thought and continued fishing. As I fished downstream, I came closer and closer to Jiggs until finally he was right in front of me. At first I thought maybe his disturbance had ruined the fishing there, but then I remembered the time Dad and I had muddied the water on purpose a few years before and the fish had bitten like crazy in the discolored water. With this experience in mind I fished near where Jiggs was wading. On

one of my casts I put my bait almost on top of Jiggs and—wham! I had a heavy trout hooked that was bending my rod almost double. After a ten-minute battle I landed a fifteen-inch brook trout. While putting the trout in my creel I thought to myself, "Was it Jiggs or was it just a coincidence?" Before I could draw any conclusion, Jiggs caught my attention. This time he appeared to be watching something. He was standing in the middle of the creek with his nose almost touching the surface of the water, watching, yes, actually watching something—something that could be, might be, a fish! I carefully moved upstream so I wouldn't disturb Jiggs, until I was standing on the bank adjacent to him. With extreme care in my aim I cast my worm just ahead of the dog's nose and—wham! Sure enough, a fish struck, but I missed that time; how the fish would no doubt bite again. I was so excited, excited from knowing ever, my hook hadn't touched him, and what Jiggs *could* be doing, that I could hardly rebait my hook. Well, I missed that fish again, and I pricked him with the hook too, which told him not to bite again. But that didn't matter; there would be more fish and bigger fish. What mattered was that I could have a fisherman's gold mine, a dream come true. I could catch my limit easily every time I went out. No more fancy lures or new-fangled gadgets if Jiggs could find fish. Yes, Jiggs might be the greatest boom to fishing since sonar!

Now that I was hoping that Jiggs really was finding the trout, I remembered what old Hap had said about Jiggs' being a trout hound and I could

hardly wait to ask him more about the trout hound. The next Saturday, as soon as Dad and I had opened the camp and unloaded the car, I headed straight for old Hap's farm. With luck he'd have his barn work finished and I would find him sitting on the porch reading or maybe just dozing a little. And sure enough, there he was, sitting on the porch in his bib overalls, reading. I trotted up to the porch and up the steps and said, "Good afternoon, Hap."

Old Hap peered up at me from his *Christian Worker* and said, "Afternoon, son. How come ya ain't fishin' or sump-thin'?"

"Well, Hap," I said, "I would be except there's something I want to talk to you about."

"What's on yer mind?" he asked.

"Do you remember last fall when you said that Jiggs, my dog, looked like a trout hound?" I asked.

"Oh yea," he said. "He sure was actin' like one at the time. Well, what about it?"

"I was just wondering, Hap, if you were kidding. You see, I think Jiggs really is a trout hound. I took him fishin' with me Tuesday, and I caught a trout right next to him. Why, he even had his nose right down to the water like he was pointing one, really pointing one. When I fished where he was pointing, a fish struck, but I missed it because I was so excited. Can you believe it?"

"Why sure, son," he said, chuckling and showing his tobacco-stained teeth, "I could tell the minute I saw him in the pool of rain water by your Dad's camp. Why, anyone could see by the

way he was wading about with his snoot to the water that he's an honest-to-goodness trout hound."

I sort of shrunk down in the porch glider after he said that. I hadn't even heard of a trout hound, let alone been able to recognize one. Are there very many around, Hap? Trout hounds, I mean."

"Not that I know of," he said. "Used to be, though, but for some unknown reason, they get scarcer and scarcer until now there's none, 'cept fer yours, of course. Why, yours is the first one I've seen in these parts fer years. There was an article about 'em in the *Fin 'N' Feather Digest* a few years ago. Mebbe I kin find it."

Then Hap got up and went into the house. My doubts about trout hounds rapidly vanished and changed to a hungry curiosity while I waited for Hap to return. I wanted further confirmation that there was such a dog. After fifteen minutes or more, Hap returned carrying a torn and yellowed magazine.

He said triumphantly, "Finally found it——way at the bottom of the pile. Here, take a look for yourself."

Below a picture of a mongrel-looking dog with a trout in its mouth was a caption: "*Canis tructus* (the combination, for the Latin nomenclature, of *dog* and *trout*) or trout hound is a dog of no specific species that instinctively finds and point fish, usually trout. It is most commonly found in areas abundant with trout-filled waters; however, it may be found elsewhere.

When I looked up from the magazine, Hap had a wad of tobacco in his cheek and was grinning a big lopsided

grin, and he said, "Now was ole Hap Hazzard kidding or not?"

Of course, the magazine article could have been one of those tall-tale types of stories that are sometimes printed to arouse the readers and then give the magazine a couple pages full of letters-to-the-editor for the next month's edition. I felt like pushing Hap a bit further by asking if he had any other pictures or literature about trout hounds, but because his sincerity was sufficiently convincing, I didn't say anything about the magazine. When I left I was just as sure as he seemed to be that Jiggs was a trout hound.

All that summer Jiggs and I went fishing together. To other fishermen he looked like just another dog tagging along with his master. Each time I went home with my day's limit, my friends thought I had some special bait or a secret spot.

No one suspected that Jiggs was doing most of the work. Not even Goose McCaslin or Tucker Keen, the really expert fishermen of Clinton County, suspected my "method." In fact, I was not surprised to hear rumors that I was an outlaw using an illegal device. Yet, who would believe me if I said that my dog was finding the trout, and all I had to do was drop the bait under the fishes' noses? They'd say I was lying to avoid giving away my "secret." Why, I even hesitated to tell my Dad. But one Saturday afternoon after I had returned from Little Pine Creek with my limit of nice browns and Dad kept insisting that I tell him how I caught the trout, I told him that Jiggs was responsible. After I stuck to my

story despite Dad's laughing and scoffing, Dad became a little bit hot under the collar and stormed out of the kitchen muttering, "Won't even tell your own father, uh! If that isn't selfishness!" From then on I told him the same answer I told everyone else——that they were just biting good.

Unfortunately, I couldn't use Jiggs after that summer. The last day of trout season Jiggs and I were fishing on Fishing Creek near the Federal Trout Hatchery at Lamar. About noon I had sat down along the stream and was getting out my lunch when I discovered that Jiggs was gone.

I called him awhile, and when he didn't come I decided I'd better see if he was in the hatchery; I didn't relish paying any fines. Don't ask me why, but for some reason, I was sure Jiggs was in there when I reached the high fence that completely surrounds the hatchery. The fence, a twelve-foot-high heavy wire barrier with barbed-wire at the top, was ideal to discourage trespassers, but it was no obstacle for Jiggs. He could crawl under almost anywhere. Sure enough, there he was——right in the middle of one of the ten-foot-deep ponds trying to tread water and point a big trout at the same time. Frantically, I threw off my fishing gear and started to climb the fence, for I knew Jiggs would never leave that trout until I got there——no matter how loud I yelled or whatever I did. He would never leave——not even if he drowned. And that's what he did. He drowned, as I tore my hip boots beyond repair trying to get over that fence. He died happy, though, and in no better place for a trout hound to die,

and as I stood by the pond looking at him there, wet and limp, I would have sworn he was smiling. But I couldn't

smile, Jiggs, the only trout hound I had ever seen, was dead.

Beware of Friends Bringing Fear

PAUL MORRIS

I am alone, that state when planets
whirl out farther than the stars,
Rivers out-roar the wind-whipped
sea-waves,

And each systole sounds above my
breathing in this silence beneath
space.

A motor roars, and I pull back
the curtains;
Outside, a friend, for five years hidden
from my universe, arrives.

I greet him with my hand and
ask him in;
He has grown thin, his elbow like a
wishbone-bend; his cheekbones shield
his eyes like the slim viper's wedge
Which grooves the optic-rubies well
down in the deadly skull;

His thinness saps his nerve-
sheath's fat,
And a shaking takes his hands and
tightens the tendons of his neck-back.

We talk of friends I had forgot-
ten, whose names
Hang in the night like lost unnum-
bered bats on cavern walls:

Of Walter Regis, who shot a
neighbor boy
With an old musket and flintlocked
him to the tomb-land of death; and
Of Crazy Jim, who sculptured

cows' heads half his hours.

We did not talk of how I introduced
him to the windshield of a Ford
So that his smile twists one half
his face

And scars run from his chin to chinks
of red beneath his hair.

He had been handsome, a blue-
eyed German blond,
But his blood soaked into my black t-
shirt; I picked glass from his face.

I feel that his scars have grown
into his brain,
And that he shakes because he fears his
mission, some revenge to me.

The night wears past its double-
numbered hours,
And the dawn draws up behind the
mountains readying for its spring.

Before my sleep, I fear to sleep
for fear
His hand might undo me as I dream
the dream of death.

Near to noon, his thin hand, trembling,
shakes me from my slumber;

Those scars I thought he had
He never found or has forgotten in five
years.

Y. M. C. A. Beach

PAUL MORRIS

The Susquehanna is calm tonight.
The town-lights laugh at each other
As, perhaps, your eyes laugh at mine.
The moon is full but ringed by warm
clouds—

Too many megatons of earth-bound suns
Have produced too many Great-Circle-
following clouds.

Out beyond, a filigree of copper needles
rainbows

The sphere. Come to the water, warm
are the ripples.

They slide shoreward and cough their
phlegm upon the sand;

The diseased and fishless river flows
calmly tonight.

Not far from this place at Warren and
Danville

They are taking brains apart. "My labo-
tomy was nice."

They are tacking brains together with
shock treatments

And talk. My thoughts are of my own
mind.

Trapped in the small white room of the
skull,

The small heat of its ideas warms the
bone

And sends out rays into that large black
laboratory,

The universe. The rays mix with the
non-existent ethers

And swing around the star-producing
center of the vast.

When they return, the receiver will not
be present—

All manner of thought mixing memory
and desire into metaphor,

Mixing madness and sanity into some
middle ground

Which is misunderstood and un-under-
standable.

And all you ask is that I understand—
not much

For us, being tied to compass points
swinging

In concentric circles of physical begin-
ning and ending.

Hear the river. You must listen closely,
For it is not the Colorado nor the
Niagara;

It rapids little, neither does it fall;
It is shallow and lazy, and islands loom

Before you all its length. Ah, love,
If life were such a languid stream . . .

Yours and mine. The nightmares of
youth

Which were half-dreams now reoccur,
turning warm nights cold

And turning cold nights warm—and
the non-dreams which quake

Deep within us, unknown to us, yet,
driving us through life.

That white spider doubled down the
mirror making me think

Some star-filled thought within which
red stars mated

Blue stars and produced diamonds
which produced you

Sitting in the sand and mixing almonds
out of the mud.

(No, I have confused the image some-
how; my mind, somehow.)

And you think thoughts of diapers and
dishes,

And the children come to you with their
desires
As you dream of bombs and death and
how my books
Can be used to produce an emergency
bomb shelter.
All I ask is that you understand, and
all you ask
Is that I understand.

Ah, love, let us exist
With one another! for the universe
Is too great, too vast, to notice our
dreams
Or to be aware of us here on an obscure
sphere
Dividing East and West while asinine
armies
Clash in the nowheres of Laos and
Tibet.

Pretty Girls

JAMES ENGEMAN

Pretty girls! Pretty girls!
Pretty, pretty, pretty girls,
Pretty girls have pretty hair.
Pretty hair! Pretty hair!
Pretty, pretty, pretty hair,
Pretty girls! Pretty girls!
Pretty, pretty, pretty girls,
Pretty girls wear pretty ribbons.
Pretty ribbons! Pretty ribbons!
Pretty, pretty, pretty ribbons,
Pretty girls! Pretty girls!
Pretty, pretty, pretty girls,
Pretty girls wear pretty ribbons
In their pretty, pretty hair.
Pretty hair! Pretty ribbons!
Pretty, pretty hair and ribbons,
Pretty! Pretty! Pretty! Pretty!

Pretty girls in pretty clothes,

Pretty clothes Pretty clothes!
Pretty, pretty, pretty clothes,
Pretty girls! Pretty girls!
Pretty, pretty, pretty girls,
Pretty girls pin pretty flowers
On their pretty, pretty clothes.
Pretty clothes! Pretty flowers!
Pretty, pretty clothes and flowers!
Pretty! Pretty! Pretty! Pretty!

Pretty girls — pretty hair,
Pretty girls — pretty ribbons,
Pretty girls — pretty clothes,
Pretty girls — pretty flowers,
Pretty Pretty! Pretty! Pretty!

Pretty girls are pretty, oh so pretty,
pretty, pretty —
And they're pretty, pretty trite!

Cloudy Decision

RICHARD N. SAXTON, JR.

On a cold March night sometime
between 1950 and 1953 a small speck of
dust is sucked off the island of Nunivak
and whirled up into the darkened sky.
At longitude 165 degrees north, latitude
60 degrees west, it meets another little
speck of dust and another and another,
and they all join to become a storm
cloud. A strong wind pushes this heavy
black cloud southwest across Attu of the
Aleutians and west across the Bering Sea
and over the Kamchatka Peninsula. It
halts for a moment, picks up new gusto,
and heads over Petropavlovsk, southwest
to Hokkaido, south to Tokyo. Suddenly
it makes a sharp right face and jettisons
across the island, across the Japan Sea,
and halts somewhere north of P'yong-
yang, North Korea.

Far above this cloud glares the moon.
Below this cloud lies the crumpled
dirt of a crumpled nation, grimy in the
melted snow that has mixed with the
mud and then has frozen solid again.
The mountains are painfully bare—and
dark. The trees are hiding from the bul-
lets. Anything flying is bullets. The
trees know that. The birds knew that.
The flowers knew that, too. They all
banded together and went away. The
cloud knows that.

The cloud smiles, black, ready to
unleash its accumulated whiteness on a
black earth in hopes of purifying it.
False hopes.

And somewhere down there below
the cloud, amidst the snow and ice and
frost, a door slams and cracks the chilly

night. A small red light illuminates the
face of a man. Then it goes away. Then
it comes back again, but only for a
moment. Far above, the cloud watches.
An arc slits the darkness and ends in a
snow heap. A door slams.

Outside it is quiet. Inside three
typewriters pound noisily, each oblivious
of the other two. Six arms hammer,
statically out of step, at the keyboards of
the machines. Gray cigarette smoke
curls toward the ceiling, dissipates half
way up. One large light hangs nakedly
from the middle of a two-by-four that
runs across the ceiling of the green
dried-seawood roof. The yellow light
casts shadows on the floor. Three
bronze table lamps illuminate the type-
writers and the Collins radio receivers.
Two of the bands on the receivers are
lit; the third is burned out, conspicu-
ously. Beside the typewriters, gray-
white coffee mugs sit, like aiding Red
Cross Gray Ladies. One mug is empty;
two mugs are half full. Cigarettes are
smouldering in three ashtrays cluttered
with crumpled butts. Intermittently an
arm shoots out, grasps a cigarette, races
it to parted lips, lets it dangle there
while the hand hustles to catch up with
the escaping message.

Above the silence of the room the
jumbled-up *ditty-dit-dah-dit* of Morse
code drones on endlessly. Unheard,
except by the typewriters, the *dits* and
dahs enter deaf ears, trip a neuron or
two, and become another symbol on a
letter-cluttered sheet of yellow paper.

Pacing the room behind the three men is another man, older, and clad in faded fatigues. On his large tattered sleeves he wears the fraying chevrons of the technical sergeant. The three men work in T-shirts, the tops of their fatigues tossed carelessly over the back of their chairs. Black headsets hide their ears.

Faster the sergeant paces, stopping at each man, peering over his shoulder, murmuring "Shit!" aloud and walking on to the next man.

Something is happening, he says to himself. *But what? All morning long there was silence, good old-fashioned radio silence, but now! Good God! Something is happening. Why doesn't it break? No . . . as long as the keys keep pounding, nothing is going to happen. Keep pounding, keys*, he pleads, *please keep poundng.*

On he paces, inhaling one cigarette after another, tossing the butts onto the floor and grinding them lifeless with his toe, then reaching down, picking up the blackened paper and stringy tobacco and placing it meticulously in an already cluttered ashtray.

The tearing of the paper suddenly stops him. He turns and hurries to the operator holding the yellow sheet out to him with one hand and racing the chatter roll up to a new, clean sheet with the other hand. The hand with the message is anxiously shaking and telling him to get the hell over here and to get it. The sergeant runs to the operator holding the yellow sheet out to him. It is Rafael: *the best operator in the whole Army*, thinks the sergeant. *No, the best operator in the whole damned, screwed-up*

world. What a brilliant title: The World's Best Radio Operator. Damned Spic kid can copy thirty-five words a minute dead drunk. Drunk! Hell, we haven't even smelled booze in two months now since we got back from Japan. Japan and Kirin beer. Japan and . . .

He takes the sheet and carries it to his operating position where there is not only a receiving radio but a transmitting one, and an operating key. He sits behind the desk and searches the drawers, hunting a particular chart. He find it, runs his fingers across it and stops, flips two switches on his Collins, and begins to pound staccato V's on his key. VVV VVV VVV. Then he sends his call signs, careful that he encrypts them perfectly, lest there be unfavorable repercussions. Security. Contact is made. He smiles and goes on with the message, receiving the authentication and re-flipping the same two switches from ON to STAND-BY.

He stands up again, stretches, unconsciously brushes his hands along the coarse ceiling—*Damn small Orientals!*—refills the three empty coffee cups from the galvanized pot, and walks to the door. He opens it. Immediately the cold air blasts in on him. "Phew!" the cold air hunting his lungs. Three heads instantly turn toward the door. He hears a soft "Goddammit!" He smiles and closes the door behind him, pulling a bent Lucky out of his pocket. He re-buttons the flap of the pocket and lights the cigarette. In the light of the match he sees MILLION DOLLAR HOTEL printed on the back of the packet. *Ah, Tokyo*, he thinks. *Jesus,*

that last R&R was something. Those Jap girls really are worth a year's pay. What was her name? Yosicoo or Yoshika, or something. He snaps his fingers. Babysan. That was it. Oh, Babysan, you small and delicious little girl. Where are you tonight? Are you looking at this same moon or are you in bed with some other G.I. telling him how much you love him? It really doesn't matter. I know you can't really love anyone. You just pretend to. That's the way it is with Japanese "business girls," isn't it, Babysan?

But this is not Japan! The naked, cold thought suddenly brings him out of his dream. This is Korea and a police action. Police action, my calloused ass! War! And, quote, war is hell, unquote! You die just as dead in a police action as you die in a war. Matter of fact, it doesn't matter where you die—once you're dead, that is.

His lungs expand, taking in new, hot smoke.

Wonder if I'll go to hell? Seriously, I do wonder, he thinks. *Hell and heaven bother me. I just can't understand how they can exist. If they do, it isn't fair. I mean, what about, say, Aaron Burr? If anyone went to hell, he surely had a good chance, and that means that if he did, he has almost a hundred years head start on me. That means that if he's to be there for eternity, he is going to be there one hundred years longer than me. That can't be right. Still, how the hell else could it be? Wonder who the first guy there was? Cain? Seems to me he should be the leader, then. Just imagine how long he's going to have been there when*

judgment day finally comes. You really must admire him, taking such a chance.

Taking such a chance! That's a hell of a thing to say. Stow that crap, Sarge. You're talking like you're drunk or something. Save that bullshit until you are drunk. Then no one will care and will just say that you're drunk and pass it off. But I can't forget death. You die and no one gives a damn, except maybe your wife if you're lucky enough to have one—or not to have one. And then she only cares until she's spent all the insurance and then you go right on being remembered as a dirty bastard all over. Only this time you're safe. She can't throw a lamp at you when you're dead.

Another drag.

Matter of fact, she can't throw a lamp at you now either, Sarge, can she? Hell, this is as good as being dead. He chuckles aloud, "Huh, huh!" Korea-Death. Death-Korea.

He stops, flips his cigarette ominously in an arc toward Manchuria.

There's no goddamned difference. I wouldn't give a good damn if they cut this peninsula loose from Asia and drifted it clean to oblivion. Good idea. Why doesn't MacArthur think of that? Bomb Manchuria? Why not, you dizzy bastard? Sure, bomb Manchuria and you'd punch a hole in that border that would let loose more yellow Reds than you could ever count, let alone kill. Then what the hell would you do? Swim away from Japan and shout that you'd return? Maybe you'd better choke on that damned pipe. Don't bomb Manchuria, Douglas A. MacArthur. Please don't. Don't you see? Those Reds are like can-

cer, malignant. If you give them an arm they soon infest the whole body until they eat into the brain and finally kill everything that's good from Lin-oln to Truman.

He lights another cigarette. He still thinks. Nothing coherent.

He tosses his cigarette away and stands there staring at the sloping V antenna etched faintly against the new moon. *Our only connection with humanity*, he thinks, disgustedly. *Intelligence! Huh!* The wind whistles across the gulley and twings the antenna, sending chills up his back. It is an eerie sound. A sound for witches and hobgoblins and Halloween, and maybe for real ghosts in real cemeteries. The cloud drifts across the moon, full and black. It looks smug as hell to the sergeant. *Must be full of more goddamned snow*, he figures to himself. The cloud smiles at him knowingly. He gives the cloud an obscene gesture with his finger.

"Sarge!"

He hurries back inside, suddenly very warm again, sickening warm from the smelly oil heat. He doesn't notice the heat nor the smells. He races to his position and answers the incoming call signs. He can barely hear them. "Damned ORM/N," he mutters, turning the volume clear up. The message cackles in his ears. His numb fingers spontaneously race across the keyboard. *Jesus*, he thinks, *that character on the other end must be sending with his goddamned elbow*. Faster he copies.

Suddenly it grows very quiet. His machine dies down. He jerks his head up. It is graveyard-quiet. He stares across the room. Six ghost-like eyes

pierce at him, questioning. He glances at Rafael. Rafael shrugs his thin shoulders and lights another cigarette. They all look at him as if he can make the proper correction—he's a sergeant. Air wave silence! He knows what that means, now. They all know. They *didn't need a goddamned message to tell them*, but the sergeant rereads it anyway. A sickening feeling comes over him. He knows instantly what has to be done in such an outfit when it is in danger of being captured. He should know. He's been told about it enough times. So have his men. The brass have some high-sounding terminology to explain it, but anyway you say it, it's the same. It is something they had often talked about, over a beer or a cup of coffee during a bull session; something they had often joked about, and laughed at, funny-like, the way some guy getting rolled in a dark alley is funny. It's funny, O.K., until that guy happens to be you! Then it isn't funny anymore.

He motions them over. Slowly they rise, two kids and Rafael. *Oh, my God!* he exclaims to himself, *Rafael is a soldier, really, but those other two! They're just green kids. How many times have I heard them ask me why it is that they are old enough to fight for their country and old enough to die, possibly, but not old enough to vote? How many times have I heard that? How many? It makes me sick to think about it. Damn kids!*

They come to the desk, hesitantly, and look at the message and stare hard. "Oh, my God!" someone mutters. He doesn't know who, they all said it inside. His knees shake, something as they

shook at Salerno, one war ago. Instinctively he walks to the cabinet against the wall and opens it. He pulls out a .45 pistol, checks the clip, slams it home, jams it into its worn-black holster and straps it around his waist. He turns just as two of the men, minus Rafael, race for another closet on the opposite side of the room and pull out two short carbines. He hears the familiar click-click. They lay them on a table.

He watches Rafael watching them. *Let them go*, the sergeant thinks, *they'll feel better—now. They just don't know the futility of a couple of carbines against a thousand Reds. Rafael knows, though. Good.*

Methodically the four of them carry out the prearranged destruction plan, a plan they have discussed many times, laughingly, and often threatened to use, especially on nights when there were sun spots and communications were out.

An ax cleaves through a radio. The sound of broken glass pierces the air. Cathode-ray rubes pop. Cathode-ray tubes always pop.

"Careful for flying glass," he commands as he puts a match to a pile of papers marked TOP SECRET. They kindle and burn. He races across the room and empties all the desks, tossing the contents on the burning heap.

Jesus, he thinks, *I'll never be able to do it. May it never happen. Please, God! Listen to me! It can't happen. Killing in war is something else, but killing your own men! What power on earth, or heaven can command that? And taking your own life?*

He turns and watches as everything is being destroyed. Littered parts of

metal give no hint as to their former shape. He looks outside the shack. It is still dark, and so cold, only he no longer feels the cold. His heart is racing. His pulse is pounding. He shivers. Far off he thinks he hears noises. *No. Must be the wind.*

A cloud smiles.

The door slams shut, and he rejoins the three men who are sitting on the desk. Rafael is playing solitaire. The four piles are meticulously placed in rows above six lines of cards. The three of hearts, ace of spades, four of clubs, and seven of diamonds are showing. The other two soldiers sit there staring into space, their carbines between their legs. They look pale and hollow and funny without their headsets about their ears. He joins them. He honestly wonders what they will do when the time comes. If it comes.

I should turn the lights out, he thinks and starts toward the switch. He stops half way to it. *No. I can't. If I turn them off I won't be able to see anything, let alone the men. And if I turn them off, I won't be able to see who is going to come through that door. Oh, God! Let no one come through that door!*

He returns to the men. They sit there. Nothing can be heard save an occasional snap of a card as it is placed upon its respective pile.

What are they thinking? he asks himself. *Tokyo? Home? Parents? Death?*

But he really doesn't care. Why should he care that Rafael is thinking of nothing except his brother. Rafael loves his brother dearly because his brother is

older than he and used to be here in Korea with him. That was before their mother died. Before that, Rafael loved his mother more but now he loves his brother. The sergeant knows that Rafael is thinking right now as to where his brother is. The sergeant knows that he is in prison. Rafael's black eyes are half-opened. He can still see that captain.

That goddamned captain! he screams inside himself. *That no-good son-of-a-bitch!*

Rafael can still see him, smiling behind his desk that morning when he and his brother first went to him with the telegram. His brother showed him the telegram from the Red Cross and explained that their mother was dying and that they wanted to go home to be with her. Rafael can still hear the captain saying no. He can still see the veins swelling on his brother's neck. He can still feel his own light head as they left that hut, his brother's arm about his shoulder. And the next morning they went back as if they had never been there the day before and they told the captain the same thing and he again told them no and something else about a war, but they didn't hear him because their mother was going to die and they wanted to go home to be with her. Rafael can hear his brother now: He didn't get mad. He didn't raise his voice. He just politely told that smiling captain that tomorrow morning they were going to come back into that hut once more and tell him the same thing and show him the same telegram and ask him again if he would let them go home to their mother who was going to die.

And Rafael hears his brother telling him that if he wouldn't let them go he was going to leap over that varnished railing and kick the shit out of him. And they left again and returned the next morning as though nothing had happened and told the captain the same thing as if he had never heard it twice before. Rafael can still hear the captain saying no and he can still see his brother leaping over the railing and kicking the shit out of the captain. He can still feel himself pulling his brother off the captain before he killed him but not really caring. And now he sees the court-martial and listens while everyone agrees that it was really too bad, but there is no reason that anyone knew of that allowed an enlisted man to kick the shit out of an officer. And Rafael cried when they took his brother away and sent him to Leavenworth. He knows now that he cried not because his brother was going to prison, for his brother was really right, but because it was by then too late and their mother had died and had been buried and they hadn't been there.

He slams the duce on top of the ace of spades.

The thump of Rafael's thumb hitting the desk brings the sergeant back to reality. *He knows what Rafael is thinking about. He somehow knows that it is all he thinks about but never talks of. But he can't care. This is war!*

He turns his head and looks at the other two, sitting there, staring. *They must be thinking too. Of what? Mother and brother?* he asks himself. *Probably.*

And they were. They have quite suddenly forgotten all about the war and that last R&R they all took together to

Japan where the sergeant took them to their first whorehouse and waited in the little bar across the street sipping a cold Kirin beer and talking to the Mamasan about Missouri and how it was really a *state* first and *then* a ship.

He remembers them, now, as they bounced across the street and into the bar discussing something, probably the girls they had just left, and laughing and bragging. He remembers that he smiled and bought them a beer and a shot of Sun Tory whiskey, and they both choked, and one of them spit the foul stuff across the bar. He forgets now which one that was.

It doesn't matter anyway. They've forgotten it too, he decides.

Then they hear it. All at once. It is a noise that doesn't sneak up on you. It just isn't there one minute and is the next, clamoring and ungodly, indistinguishable, droning and sickening. His heart sinks. Louder the noises get. He can distinguish the clanging of the cymbals now. There must be a thousand of them. And horns!

Fighting against guns is war. What is this?

He jumps up, grabs the carbines from between the legs of the two boys. Their heads jerk up. He tosses the guns across the room. One boy jumps from the desk. The sergeant's hand shoots out to his pistol. The boy pleads, begs, and begins to cry, whimperingly at first, then sobbingly.

Stop! the sergeant screams to himself. *God damn, stop!* No one hears. He knows what is required of him. They all know, now.

But why me? Is that why I am a

sergeant? I can't do it.

His mind races, filling with the noises of a battle that hasn't really begun yet.

Then he hears another noise, whispering. He glances at the desk. One of the boys is on his knees, beside the desk.

"Hail Mary . . . full of grace, the Lord is with Thee. Blessed art . . ." His fingers ache and tremble on the pistol. ". . . Thou among women . . ." It is ungodly heavy. ". . . and blessed is the Fruit . . ." *But I don't have to do it until the last moment. . . . of Thy womb, Jesus . . .* *Why shouldn't they have their rifles?* "Holy Mary, Mother of . . ." No. ". . . God, pray for us . . ." *I know what I'd do if I were them and had a gun. . . . sinners now and at the . . .* *I know they knew too. . . . hour of our Death . . .* *And yet, we cannot be captured! We can't.* ". . . A-Men." *We swore on our country not to be captured. "Hail Mary . . ." Shut up! Shut up! Why? Is it worth it? Being captured cannot be that bad. Not as bad as, as death. That phoney colonel saying that about only one life for our country! And then grinning! Fat chance of him having to give his life. God damn colonels!*

The thundering noise becomes louder still and suddenly the screaming, wheezing sounds of artillery pierce his aching ears. "Hail Mary . . ." Wheeze. ". . . full of grace . . ." *Shut up! God-damnit, shut up!* He clasps his hands to his ears, the heavy pistol banging against his head. The noises of the shells erupt into exploding booms. He wants to shout at the shells and tell them to go back. He wants to scream at

everyone and tell them he doesn't hate them. He wants to tell them that the world has to be big enough. *Can't someone hear?*

Sweat runs down his collar and chills his spine. *When that door opens, I have to do it. Oh, God, don't let it open, please, don't let it.* The words ring in his ears. He is shouting aloud. Three fellows sit, one crying, one praying, one staring at the mixed-up pile of cards.

This isn't our war. We can't win or lose it alone. War is bigger than any one man. I'll surrender. That's it, surrender. It hits him cold. It knots his stomach. "Surrender! Surrender!" he screams aloud.

A head jerks up. Two glaring eyes steam through a tanned face. He knows, now, definitely. His head dips to his chest.

No, not surrender. Death, maybe, but never surrender.

There's no real difference, except death is longer, and a .45 slug makes a terrible mess. A small, round hole where it goes in and a little blood trickles out, blotting against the green of the uniform. He's seen that many times. He's done it himself a few. His mind remembers when, suddenly, and he can see, vividly.

Never turn the dead guy over. He made that mistake. No, never. Behind him is a hole bigger than a boxing glove and black and gory that gapes and seems to breathe.

... I must aim for the chest, he thinks, his head suddenly clearing into military precision. *It's better and quicker that way. Yes! Yes! The chest! But it must*

be quick or they'll try to run at me.

The silence rushes in on him and jerks his head like a blow from an irate drill instructor. It grows deathly still. Then the sudden burst of machine-gun fire splits the air. Then the plunk-plunk of carbines and the lobbing groan of mortars. Louder groans.

Must be tanks. Whose? he asks. Whose?

He can't tell anything now. It is like standing between the counter of a shooting gallery and the ducks without seeing who is shooting and which ducks are falling. Or are the ducks shooting back?

A thud pierces the noise. A sudden explosion rocks the hut. The lights flicker twice but stay on. A form drops to the floor, flat, pulling two others. Another thump, another blast. He drops to his knees. Tears run down his face. His finger tightens on the trigger.

No! I must wait. The last minute. The last possible minute!

Silence. It grows very quiet. He strains his ears trying to hear, listening for what seems a lifetime. He watches his men. Their heads turn up. Their eyes now dry. "*... pray for us sinners ...*" He listens. Nothing. Nothing!

Then he hears it. A small noise, outside, faint. The noise of footsteps on the frost-hardened mud. Boots crunch, faintly. Closer they come, slowly.

They could be ours. Yes! Yes! They could be ours!

He pulls the hammer back on his pistol until it clicks, twice, and points it toward his men. His arm jerks. It is all he can do to hold it up. The footsteps

stop.

He aims.

A crashing blow splinters the door and a machine gun, small, with the barrel perforated to air-cool it, bursts in. Behind it a dark form enters.

His .45's loud roar shakes his ears, another, "*... at the hour of our Death*

..." and another. Then one more final roar. He hears it begin. He never hears it end. He never hears it grow quiet. It does grow quiet.

And snow begins to fall. Fast. Whirly. A big, black cloud is crying and draping the foul countryside in white tears.

Return

MARY E. KNIGHTS

It was a drab brown house,
And the porch steps sagged;
The hall stairway creaked,
And the water faucet was always dripping.

But none of that mattered to me.

The dining room smelled of pipe tobacco,
And the pantry smelled of good food.
I ate in the sunny kitchen,
And when I pretended my hands were cold
I warmed them by the big black coal range.
In summer I blew soap bubbles through
an old spool

On the back-porch steps
Or played on the front-porch swing.
Sometimes I sat beside him in his big
rocking chair in the living room,
And sometimes I blew out the match
when he lit his pipe.

Sometimes I pounded the old piano in
the hall;
I remember how the keys would stick—

There in the drab brown house
Where the porch steps sagged,
Where the hall stairway creaked,
And where the water faucet was always
dripping,

There where my grandfather lived.

The Saxton Story, A Criticism

CAROL BROWN

Tension, despair, futility—these words describe the mood of Richard Saxton's latest story, a story which has as its setting the Korean police action. From the first sentence, when the specks of dust gather to form a dark cloud—a symbol which always seems to indicate something foreboding—to the last sentence, when the snow falls over P'yong-yang, North Korea, "draping the foul countryside in white tears" (*draping* bringing to my mind the adjective *funereal*), Saxton maintains this mood of hopelessness.

Inside the radio shack there is no feeling of camaraderie among the four men; there is only tension emphasized by the continuous, monotonous pounding of the telegraph keys and a feeling of isolation. Though there are four men, each is necessarily alone—the sergeant because of his job, Rafael because he is a real soldier and the two boys are not, and the boys because their fear is so great, their desire to live so strong that they do not have strength enough left to help one another. Saxton pictures this isolation perfectly as he describes the wait in the radio shack through the sergeant's eyes: "Three fellows sit, one crying, one praying, one staring at the mixed-up pile of cards."

What do these men look like? The author never tells us. He says they are wearing fatigues and that the sergeant's sleeve bears the fraying chevrons of a technical sergeant. What are their names? Only one is given—that of

Rafael. But the names do not matter. Nor does it matter whether the men have light hair or dark. The reader feels as if he is there in the shack, as if he can see each man perfectly, as if he can reach out and touch their sweaty T-shirts (they *must* be sweaty; the G. I.'s have been there for a long time), feel the solidity of the sergeant's arm under his fatigue jacket, brush a hand across the fuzzy growth of baby whiskers which *must* cover the boys' faces. The author has made his characters live.

Many other points might be made about the author's style—his use of short sentences and word groups to emphasize the tension, his effective use of picture verbs to depict the life going on in the shack, as when he says an "arm *shoots out, grasps* a cigarette, *races* it to parted lips," his use of details which could have come only from his own military experiences in Japan, as when the sergeant talks to the Mamasan "about Missouri and how it was really a state first and *then* a ship." Perhaps the alliteration seems strained for the first few pages—"six arms hammer *statically*, out of *step*," "ashtrays *cluttered* with *crumpled* butts," the sergeant "*sits . . . and searches*," but either Poe's influence on the author was slight or he got so involved in his writing that he forgot to search for series of words beginning with the same letter, for he does not maintain this device noticeably throughout the rest of the story.

All in all, "The Saxton Story" is the skillful work of a young writer.

The Saxton Story

CHARLES Q. SIMCOX

As war drifts into the past, we tire of stories about the valor of war heroes—sung and unsung. A peaceful society forgets and rejects all thoughts of a war now dead. Writing on such a subject, the author begins with two strikes against him. It is hard to find a new twist that will bring life to a worn-out subject, but Saxton appears to have found it.

The story is not so much a war story as it is a tale of a man who must make a decision about a decision already made. In brief, the plot involves four soldiers who man an intelligence post far in front of their own main line of resistance. They have been sworn that, before capture, they will make the supreme sacrifice for their country in order to silence forever the information they are capable of revealing. That time finally presents itself, and it is the technical sergeant who is responsible for carrying out this mission of doom. It is through his inner conflict that the reader receives the full impact of the situation.

The story starts as slowly as a drifting cloud and continually gains momentum, carrying the reader faster and faster towards a dramatic climax. Saxton heightens this climax by clever utilization of an old gimmick: that of using the "Hail Mary" as a background for the sergeant's last mental struggle. However old, it was selectively and dramatically interjected into a moving termination.

Saxton gives us the significance of life—and the insignificance of a death

—in a war that really doesn't mean anything.

The overall atmosphere of this story is tremendous. The author expertly foreshadows the ending with the feeling of hopelessness that the tone implies.

It would seem that a most important element in fiction is characterization. Characters must create sympathy and they must live and breathe. Only one character in this narrative demands the reader's sympathy. That is Rafael, a Puerto Rican boy that has recently lost his mother and his brother. Upon a refusal of permission to visit his mother in her dying days, Rafael's older brother assaulted a superior officer and was sentenced to imprisonment in Leavenworth Penitentiary. Rafael and reader both feel a deep loss.

The sergeant is an angry man. Angry at everything, even nature. He does not evoke the required reader sympathy, but he certainly lives and breathes. In appearance, expression, gesture, and habit of thought we are aware that he is a real technical sergeant.

Had the reader just finished a Hemingway work and picked up this Saxton story, he might have felt a great similarity between them. Is this bad? I think not. Hemingway and Saxton have both used an effective style of writing and both have produced interesting stories. Hemingway pointed out in *Green Hills of Africa* that "Some writers are born to help others write just one line." Is there any reason why Saxton should not reflect some of the things he has learned in studying the craft of Hemingway?

Why I Am an English Major No More as of Now

FRANKLIN MEYER

When I first entered college, I did not want to become a Social Studies teacher, I wanted to be an English Major and go out into the world to learn the kids around the various high schools the correct way to speak and write. As you can see, it readily became apparent from the beginning of my course in English I that me and that English book were going to have a battle on our hands, I mean you know both of us were going to have a fight, with each other, you know, we couldn't get along with each other, or something to that effect. I hope I got my message across, because my teacher, Mrs. Schmaltz, says I sure have a fantastic linguistic ability for speaking for hours and saying a second's worth. At first I thought this was a compliment, my speaking ability I mean, but the more I thought of it, I really don't know what to think.

Like the time she told the rest of the class that Mr. Meyer (that's me, you know) would be given the task of reading the daily bulletin from the college to the class each and every morning. I believe she said, "If Mr. Meyer doesn't do anything the rest of the year, he will at least contribute constructively to the group in this manner." I really suppose I should have been flattered with this great honor bestowed upon me, but I kinda figured it was due to my last composition, or theme, or whatever you

call what the teacher says it is that you write. You know the one I mean, that outstanding one that took me thirty minutes to write, the one entitled "Why I Believe In Santa Claus." That really wowed the class, and I figured that a topic such as that would jar folks back to reality. I don't know why, I just did.

Mrs. Schmaltz and I finally parted company in the best-of-friends tradition, that is at least from her side of the desk, from which I got a "D" out of the course. Of course I still tell myself that stood for DOGMATIC in my beliefs, and, after all, you can't hardly get them no more, beliefs, I mean.

My next step along the English trail was that horrid subject known as Speech II, that is where after you have already learned how to speak properly in Speech I they take you and make you correct your corrections you have already made from the day you entered Speech I after coming from your own high school.

Now this in itself was bad enough, but upon entering class for the very first time, I was warmly hissed by my old friend Mrs. Schmaltz, which was enough of a hint that things were not going to be dandelion that year. The first thing that we took up was introductions, that is one person must introduce another, whom is then introduced in return by the introduced in the first place. I was teamed up with a real farmer called Sam Clod. I don't know

why I drew him except that I figure Mrs. Schmaltz was still trying to gain a measure of revenge for my Santa Claus theme in English I. Well, Sam was just not one of those guys who goes around shooting off his mouth, as a matter of fact, Sam never even said beans. But to continue with our introductions, I suggested that we make it unusual and sort of play-like because I assured him that this was the natural way people introduced each other. He stared at me kind of funny, but then I guess he stared that way at everybody. I really didn't see why people thought it was funny, because I kinda figured you would get used to seeing one green and one gray eye after while. Maybe you don't know me and that I have two eyes, each a different color, one green and one gray.

Well, anyway, we hit upon the unique idea that we would both sit at a table up in front of the room. We chose to sit for support, both moral and otherwise, and then while sitting and looking at each other, expound each other's virtues (and not vultures, as Sam

said) and climax this introduction by presenting each others' full and given name to the class. Sam said that this was OK if he could be first so he could get it over and done with, and so when our time came, Sam proceeded to give me a terrific buildup, winding up with the phrase, "It gives me great pleasure to present to you at this time Mr. ——. He looked at me in shocked disbelief. He was frantically trying to remember my name. Finally, when he had convinced himself that he had never known my name, he could control himself no longer and yelled, "Say? What is your name?" His words must have shocked me, but I had real presence of mind, and I yelled right back, "I don't know, but I'll find out," and hurriedly grabbed my wallet and glanced at my Social Security Card to see who I was.

Well, as you can well imagine, after two rather hectic struggles with Mrs. Schmaltz, whom I don't believe ever became fond of me, you can appreciate WHY I AM AN ENGLISH MAJOR NO MORE, AS OF NOW.

A Conversation with Me

JOHN CROWLEY

There are billions of persons in this world, yet to each of them there is really but one. A single being among masses of single beings, alone, never wholly shared or sharing, he is always in his own world of pain, fear, hope, and reflection.

Hilaire Belloc, in his short essay, "A Conversation with a Cat," "... sat down at a little table by . . . (himself) to meditate upon the necessary but tragic isolation of the human soul." He was freed from his despair by a cat who seemed to single him out from the masses and graced him with the intimate kinship he so desired. The silent communion was ended when he sought to make the cat his own, to hold it in close and eternal camaraderie.

I often lie in bed and let my thoughts flow uninhibited. I listen to them like one disembodied, hearing them skip and jump to and fro, ponder, then pass on again into new confusion or clarity. A tape recording with splicings from all my day's thoughts and experiences rolls on and on, pieces from here and thoughts from there flashing through my mind, never slowing the process, never interrupting the constant stream of nothingness released. Tensions drain from my body and a sort of Yogi-peace permeates my being. Sleep comes swiftly, as another part of the tape unrolls and deeper figments of my subconscious prevail.

"The necessary but tragic isolation of the human soul." Why, when all

persons have a similar soul, are they so individual, so personal, so isolated? Everyone must marvel at his tape-recorder mind as I do. Each of us must realize that he will never reach a complete intermingling with another's mind, that he can never *love* completely or give his entire being to a cause or to a companion. The nights must come and with them come the inner voice, the other person, the fellow inside us all, who is essentially our only companion. We are two, and we are one. When I speak my thoughts, his also are spoken. My experience and learning are recorded by him, and in his depthless environment he mixes them and makes them a part of my conscious and subconscious whole.

It disturbs me to know I can never find the closeness I sometimes desire, but at other times I am pleased. My moments with Amatheia, the consoling cat, are few but sustaining. They, unlike Belloc's moments, are actions rather than associations or written and vocal expressions. To paraphrase Tennyson, "Words, like nature, half reveal and half conceal the grief (and other things) I feel." To feel my body, firm in its youthful strength and vitality, pulling and straining at opposing forces—to run, to jump, to grasp and crush, these give me great satisfaction. They give me faith in my lonely stand against the pressures of society and social being. I am à rock, a young Hercules. Come what may . . . I speak as the strongest of

the isolated men. I believe in *me*.

A problem and a solution. No evident strain on my reasoning. Inner me has formulated the answer, outer me automatically expresses it. I, entire, am proud to be an isolated, reasoning organism. I have faith in my mental reactions, faith in inner me. My mind and my body, together we stand and challenge our world.

At times such as these, when youth, intelligence, and experiences are exciting and stimulating, I believe in the "necessary isolation" of my soul. I praise it for being mine alone. I am overjoyed to be its sole mover, its sole possessor.

Again comes the night. We lie alone and try to justify our existence. We ask our direction and our meaning, search for a cause, a consolation. Outer me, strong body, youthful now, will age. Inner me, now agile and alert, may not console me in later years. Is it companionship I desire, or justification? Can death (or afterlife) be the time when the "isolated souls" of all these billions will unite in an eternal comradeship? Will this be paradise, when all being is justified?

I'll turn off the lights and ponder this. Perhaps in the dark I shall find my justification and my unity.

Interim

MAUREEN A. DOLAN

When I was ten
her hands picked up
a tea cup.
The tiny nodules
whitened
as her joints bent.
When I was thirteen
her shoulder ached
and her face contorted
and the little bumps
pained
as they rubbed
her sore shoulder.
When I was fifteen
her ankles swelled
and her knees became
inflamed
and I watched her crawl

on hands and knees
because
the pain pierced.
When I was seventeen
I saw her look
at larger bumps
as she moved her fingers,
and her eyes filled
with tears.
When I was nineteen
I watched her crippled hand
pick up
a tea cup.
Now I'm twenty,
and I watch her move about,
knowing all the while
the despair
she feels.
I'll soon be twenty-one.

Dale's Bear

RAYMOND TOMASZEWSKI

We had been hunting deer in country unfamiliar to me when we came to the edge of a ravine so deep that a train moving along the floor of the ravine looked like a row of tiny match boxes. And the slope of the ravine was so steep that actually we were standing on the edge of a cliff. Dale suddenly gave a start of recognition and said, "I know this place. Right straight down there where that train is is just about where I killed that bear I was telling you about last week." I couldn't remember that he had told me about killing a bear and said as much. "Oh, I guess it must have been your brother, then. I wasn't talking to you down in front of Wentz's Feed Store about ten o'clock last Tuesday morning?" I told him that he hadn't talked to me anywhere downtown on any day last week. "Well, sit down," he said, "and I'll tell you about it. I was glad to sit down, to lower my center of balance, for I don't like high places, and I didn't relish taking a shortcut to the bottom of the ravine.

"There's a cave right under this rock we're sitting on, and the bear was in that cave."

"Down by the railroad?" I asked.

"Oh, no. Right under us. We're sitting on the roof of the cave. I'm sure this is the spot." Then in what seemed to me a most reckless manner he flopped himself down on the rock and reaching out over the edge and down, he exclaimed, "Yes, this is the place, all right. Roll over this way a few feet and you

can reach down and feel the opening. But sorta keep your feet anchored."

"I'll take your word for it," I said.

Then he began the story.

"W-e-l-l," he began. Dale always drags out his *well's*, especially when he has the floor, as it were. Then he explained again that the rock we were sitting on was the roof of a small cave and that inside this cave was where the bear had been. I was wondering how the bear could have been in the cave at the beginning of the story and then got killed at the bottom of the ravine, but I was so fascinated with Dale's account of the size and ugliness of the bear—it sounded more like an Alaskan grizzly than the black bear of Pennsylvania that I knew it must have been—that I did not interrupt to ask how the bear happened to be at the bottom of the ravine when he killed it.

"W-e-l-l," he went on. "I was sitting here on this rock, about like you're sitting there, only out nearer the edge, when I saw this bear stick his head out and then pull it back in. Pretty soon it stuck its head out again, and it kept doing this about every three or four minutes, like my wife when supper's ready and I ain't home but expected. Only the bear wasn't growling. It was bear season, and I wanted that bear. I knew it would make a wonderful rug, with its head laid out flat and its mouth open. Jimmie Eldred has one like it, and the kids are always laying their apple cores in its mouth. Makes Jimmie

mad. I coulda shot it easy, but I woulda spoiled the head, and I figures the only way I could get that bear the way I wanted it was to watch my chance, and when the bear stuck its head out, drop down and grab it around the neck. It would jerk back in the cave, I was sure, and I would have my knife in my hand when J jumped, so all I would have to do would be to stick my knife in its heart. Well, everything went fine except that I didn't know that my kids had been cutting jack-o'-lanterns with my knife and dulled it, and the knife didn't penetrate the skin, just tickled the bear in the ribs. He twisted and twisted. I would have been glad to let go, but the cave is so small there was no way for me to put even an inch of distance between us. As a matter of fact, I was afraid we'd get wedged together in there. Wouldn't that have been something? Then the bear just seemed to give a heave, and in the next second the two of us were tumbling down the side of the cliff. You can see for yourself, it's pretty steep. But I was lucky. I know how to keep my head. I knew I had to kill that bear on the way down or he would kill me when we landed at the bottom—provided, of course, we were both alive. Anyway, I wasn't taking any chances. I still had my dull knife in my hand. And do you know what I did? I held that knife so that as we rolled and tumbled and even bounced through the air, I kept scraping the knife on every rock I could reach. You know what I was doing. I was sharpening that knife. And before we

were three quarters of the way down the cliff, I could see it was getting a real edge on it. And just before we landed, I plunged my knife between that bear's ribs. I felt his body go limp. And when we landed, the bear's soft body broke my fall. I sure was lucky. Your brother's old pal Dale is pretty generally lucky."

"But how did the bear get into the cave in the first place?" I found myself asking before I thought.

"You know," Dale replied, in a serious tone, "that thought has wondered me a couple of times since. Maybe—" And then he spoke with more fire and enthusiasm than he had used in the whole tale. "Let's investigate. It's as simple as rolling off a log. I'll hold your feet, and you can hang down over the edge and look back in to see what you can see."

I had several sensations at once, but the one that stands out in my memory is one I always experience when I dream I am falling through space—little shooting pains just under my ears. "Oh, that won't be necessary at all, Dale," I said. "I believe your story, Dale, and it doesn't really matter how the bear got into the cave."

Dale seemed a little disappointed in my lack of intellectual curiosity, I could tell from his manner, and shortly he ended our little cliff-edge sojourn with, "I guess we'd better get with it—the buck we're after isn't likely to come here looking for us." I could have added, "—even if it is a likely enough spot for bears." But I kept my peace.

Along the River

JOHN BUSH

Deliberately I walked across the long gray bridge and started down the gravel road that runs between the hinge factory and the river. The clanging of the factory's metal presses sharply contrasted with the tranquility of the river and its shore. Their tranquility, along with yellow-stalked bushes and sturdy trees beside me as I walked, soothed an otherwise tense afternoon.

As I took up along the dusty road, the late summer sun cast long shadows that quivered ahead of me. I had not felt this way before, but I had walked this road a thousand times.

Walking, walking, walking, always walking—today along the river.

Past the last scrub bush before a small grassy clearing, the long, low profile of the river against the wet brown sand lay before me. There in a marshy patch near the muddy shore he stood, a snow-white egret. Dried mud stained his yellow, stilted feet, and his high-cropped plume moved, now left, now right. Then laboriously he turned and faced the shore and me. Against the fading August sun he seemed to depict an elemental simplicity. There must always have been moments like this.

Farther down the road I turned to see if he was still there, but a patch of low trees stood between us. The dusty road left prints where my walking feet had been.

Walking, walking, always walking—today along the river.

After I had passed two empty corn cribs and a run-down brown farmhouse, there came two boys. They seemed to be speaking in serious tones. One of them was saying as he drew near, "I saw it on the way to the store this morning. I hope it's still there." He was taller than his shoeless companion. Three safety pins on the front and sides of his shirt held up his breeches. The small boy was pale, as if he had been sick recently. Both needed haircuts badly.

As they hurried past, I could see that the smaller boy was carrying something along his side. It was a rifle—a twenty-two rifle.

I looked back over my shoulder. They were beginning to run, and the dust kicked up behind them. I turned to watch them. Once the smaller boy almost fell, but the other pulled him upright. I knew that I should go back, but I hadn't the time.

Soon the August sun fell, and a faded glow moved in before me. Soon it would be dark, but a thought still raced about. I walked faster now . . . walking, walking.

Walking, walking, always walking—today along the river.

Souvenir?

MARY CUNEO

You look back
And remember
Signs of the good life:

The thin babies
With broken rattles
Crying for an angry mother
Whose proud husband
Has gone off to kill
Thirty Huns
Or more.

And there's Anya,
Guzzling vodka
Behind closed doors—
No foul-weather Jack
For her tonight.

There's a tall man lying dead,

A great Liberator,
Who enjoyed a play
Now and then
Till someone
Shot him in the head.

There's an old lady screaming—
An old man defending
His muddy tracks
In her clean kitchen.

And the crying child who has found
A sack of drowned kittens
In the river.

Remember—
When someone did them
All a favor
And dropped a ton
Of cobalt?

My Powers of Mental Telepathy, or How I Burned A Hole in My Mother's Afghan

MILDRED DOLAN

It all began three years ago. I was seventeen then. I had heard about Paul's knack for getting into trouble, but I refused to believe the rumor and took his class ring anyway. How I happened to get his ring is a story in itself. When I say I took it, I am not joking. I snatched it one day in physics lab. We were combining sodium hydroxide and hydrochloric acid to make salt or something and Paul had hung his ring on the ring stand where, he authoritatively told me, all rings should be placed before working with acids. After the explosion, Paul was in such a hurry to escape the smoke fumes that he rushed out of the room and forgot his ring. But I didn't forget it; I grabbed it, ring stand and all, and hurried after Paul. Because I had been so thoughtful, Paul said I could keep it. That's when we started going steady.

Ours was a strange and wonderful relationship—he was strange, and I was wonderful about it all. I didn't really mind our Saturday night dates on his motorcycle. It was rather exciting to hear that roar, sputter, and cough as he pulled up to the curb, to see him squeal to a stop, jump over the bike, and take the porch steps two at a time—sort of like a Marlon Brando movie. I had seen it coming for a long time, though, and the night of the junior prom it happened. Paul didn't make it over the bike. Luckily he wasn't hurt—just a little angry. But he did look pretty funny sprawled all over the front walk

ger was within four yards of us, then in a tuxedo. Paul pompously helped me onto the back of the motorcycle, long blue evening gown and all, roared away from the curb, and headed for the school. I didn't actually hear the rip, but I became increasingly aware of the sharp draft that was hitting me just above the hem of my can-can slip. I tried not to scream when I looked down and didn't see my can-can slip. After Paul had extricated the bottom of my evening gown and yard after yard of crinolin from the spokes of the motorcycle wheel, we wordlessly roared through the crowd that had gathered and back to my house. We spent the evening listening to Lawrence Welk records.

Paul didn't actually try to be oafish; it just sort of came naturally to him. And I suppose he wasn't really clumsy; just a little accident-prone. And he *did* have a unique sense of humor. The summer of my senior year both our families rented a cottage in Atlantic City for two weeks. Both Paul and I eagerly anticipated the advantages of such an arrangement. We had done a lot of growing up in the past year, and Paul's sense of humor had reached an all-time high. Paul invented a gallant game to liven up our days on the beach. He would wait till the beach was crowded, swim out about fifty yards, plaster seaweed on his head and shoulders, swim back in to shore, and stagger out of the water, waving his arms and croaking and groaning like a sea monster.

And one day I buried him in the sand so that nothing was visible except his head, leveled the sand off to give the appearance of an ordinary stretch of sand, then placed a cardboard box over his head. Twenty-five people kicked the box, found it didn't move, lifted the lid, and peered inside. Two fainted, five ran, eight screamed, nine swore, and one called the lifeguard.

When we heard the lifeguard's whistle, we decided it was time to go up on the boardwalk and shop for records. Paul noticed this newly-opened bookstore, and being an avid Huxley fan, suggested that we stop and browse. I don't particularly care for Huxley, which is putting it mildly, so I meandered over to the children's literature rack, noticed a "Chuckles the Squirrel" book, saw my chance for some fun, and called to Paul, who was at the other end of the shop, "Hey, Paul, here's a Huxley book you might enjoy." If I had been Queen Elizabeth walking up Broadway in a bikini, there wouldn't have been so many eyes turned in my direction as there were then, but good old Paul sauntered to my side. *Then* he saw the story book I was holding in my hand. He waited until the store mana-

got a shocked expression of indignation on his face, stepped back, and exclaimed in a clear, resounding voice, "Whadda ya mean, go to a motel with you? . . . I don' even know your name!" turned around, walked out of the store, and left me standing there, stunned, speechless, and staring at a stupefied store manager.

When I recovered, I found Paul outside, collapsed on the boardwalk and convulsed in laughter.

Our families left for home that afternoon, and Paul and I went our separate ways. I entertained the thought that he'd probably call and apologize before I left for college that year, but when he hadn't called the night before it was time for me to go off to school, I realized that our relationship had come to an end. But the morning I was to leave, I heard the old, familiar roar of a motorcycle. I raced downstairs, ran to the front door, flung it open, flew outside, and knocked Paul flat on his back. Lying there, looking up at me, he sighed that he had met his match and that we were stuck with each other. That was three months ago. Paul and I are married now, and we still go out Saturday nights on his motorcycle.

Horse Trading of Another Color

G. DAVID PORTER

Economists in general agree that the automobile industry is the most important industry in the United States. One out of seven people employed in the United States is employed in some phase of the auto industry, and one out of six businesses in the United States is automotive in nature. Such industries as steel, rubber, glass and the like depend heavily on auto manufacturing. As a person can see, the economy of this nation rests on the building and selling of cars. I maintain that the building of cars is very simple as compared to selling of them. Nearly anyone with the least bit of mechanical ingenuity can build a car. The real problem today is selling it. There were days when selling cars was comparatively easy. In the late 1800's and early 1900's anything that had wheels on it and would go around the block by itself could be sold for a good price. In the period right after World War II cars were easy to sell. Cars had not been made during the war, and after the war was over, there was a large demand for new cars. Today things are quite different. Since the life-span of the modern automobile is 125,000 miles and since the average car owner drives 10,000 miles per year, roughly speaking the need for cars in the United States has pretty well been filled. This means that a car lasts about twelve and a half years. American mass production has filled the need for basic transportation, and practically over night the auto industry has

become largely a replacement industry of seven million cars a year.

If Detroit builds and sells 7,000,000 cars a year, the economy of the United States is in fair shape, and if the automen can create a need for more than seven million cars per year and market them, the economy of the nation booms. Creating this need is a terrific problem. I have stated earlier that the needs of transportation have been pretty well filled. But the appeal of a car is half practicability and half aesthetic, and the manufacturers are now playing on the whims of people to sell cars—in other words, they are creating a need. A great deal can be done by building appealing cars and by advertising. However, the largest responsibility rests upon one important person, the car salesman.

There is a certain stigma in the public's mind regarding car salesmen. To most people the car salesman is nothing but a worthless, fast-talking huckster. I have never heard a doting parent say that he wanted his son to grow up to be a car salesman. Actually, being an auto salesman is a noble profession, since so much of the economic well-being of our nation depends upon the marketing of automobiles. Unfortunately, the car salesman's calling has a badge of infamy pinned to it, if not tattooed on its forehead. This loss of caste dates back to the days when there was a great deal of money in the car business. Of course, that attracted a good many unscrupulous "fast buck" men. I mentioned those

days before; that was when the automobiles were first introduced and also during World War II when there were no cars built.

Practically everyone was selling cars then. The largest blot on the car salesman's reputation developed during the war. Cars that would be junked today were sold then for well over a thousand dollars. In fact many cars were brought back from their junkyard graves and rejuvenated. They were sold for terribly high prices. It stands to reason that these transactions fostered ill will. The situation is different today; the car business is highly competitive, and only the honest salesman stays on the job.

A person will find that today most auto salesmen are dedicated, hard-working, under-paid individuals. We shall look now at the car business from the salesman's point of view. First of all, he is terrifically underpaid. I know personally the highest paid car salesman in Williamsport; he makes approximately one-hundred and fifty dollars a week. That sounds like a substantial salary. Well, it is not. He works on the average of one-hundred hours a week. That means that he makes a dollar and a half an hour! The reason for the low pay can be traced to the modern market. Factories have over produced, and they have set up too many franchises. New-car dealerships of the same brand are about ten miles apart, and in the cities they are closer together than that. People shop from dealer to dealer in order to get the best deal.

The mark-up on a new car is only twenty per cent in the first place, and that really does not amount to much

when a person considers the amount of overhead an agency has. A showroom, other than as a showroom, is almost a worthless building, and a dealer considers himself fortunate if his shop pays seventy-five per cent of its cost. A person should remember also that cars are not sold as hamburgers, hotcakes, and most other things are sold; the dealer must take a trade-in and convert that to cash. No, a twenty-per-cent mark-up is not much as compared to the one-hundred-per-cent mark-up in jewelry, the one-hundred-per-cent mark-up in furniture, and the fifty-per-cent mark-up in shoes. Even banks double their money; they pay three and one-half-per-cent for their money and they lend it out at six per cent and over. A recent national survey revealed that Ford dealers, on a national average, made only seven dollars per new car after expenses and taxes. That is not a very good return when a person considers that the mean price of a Ford is about twenty-five hundred dollars. A dealer would do better investing in savings bonds.

Shopping for good buys on cars has become a national pastime, and with some people it is a fetish. The majority of the great American public will go to any end to get a "deal." In some circles, it is a symbol of status to be able to "steal" a car. Probably this stems back to the days of horse trading. The upmost compliment that could be paid a person was to say that he was a gentleman and a fine horse trader.

I will now draw from my personal experience as a car salesman in order to show the reader how far the customer will go to get a bargain. The publishing

industry has aided the consumer greatly; in nearly every periodical there has appeared at one time or another an article on how to outwit the car dealer. These articles usually list the following six steps:

1. Park your car around the corner and walk to the lot. Let the salesman think that you do not have a trade-in. He will naturally give you a better price, since he does not have to sell two cars to make a profit.
2. Tell the salesman that you plan to pay cash. Of course he will welcome this arrangement. Then he will not have to take the time to finance the car, and the dealer will not have the risk of guaranteeing the payments. (When the customer does not pay as agreed the dealer must repossess the car and re-sell it. This procedure cuts profits.)
3. Have a mechanic look at the car. Make sure he checks the front end, the body, the motor, the brakes, and the tires. Contact the original owner of the car, and see what he has to say about it. Remember, do not trust the salesman—you are trying to beat him.
4. Tell the salesman that you will take the car without a guarantee. He will lower the price even more, since he will not have the cost of additional work on the car.
5. When you get the salesman down to his lowest price, bring in your trade, ask for the guarantee, and for terms. The dealer has committed himself and probably will

not go back on the deal, for he has admitted his profit margin.

6. Send for a copy of *Confidential Dealer's Wholesale and Retail Guide*. This list of wholesale and retail prices will let you see how much the dealer is making. Mail \$2.00 to: Dealer Research, Inc.
P.O. #18
New York, 17, N.Y.

Step number six is probably the "most unkindest cut of all." I know of no other business where the public has so much information on the wholesale price of an item. The price book published by the National Automobile Dealer's Association is probably more widely read in the United States than any other book. Copies are sold to banks, finance companies, insurance men, etc. Needless to say, copies of the N.A.D.A. circulate to the employees. It might as well be put in the libraries. Recently, a secretary of a finance company told me that I was trying to make too much money on a deal that I offered her. She said that according to the "book" I was one-hundred dollars too high. She had neglected to take into consideration that her car had been rolled over in an accident. The roof of her car resembled the top of a loaf of bread!

In selling just one car, a salesman must talk to at least twenty-five people before he makes the sale, for so many people are just casual shoppers or hobbyists. These people take up a salesman's time, but the salesman always talks to them in hopes that one of them might be a buyer. Over a period of time a salesman meets all kinds of peo-

ple; however, something seems to happen to perfectly normal people when they are trying to get their "deal"—they go through humorous and degrading antics. The following is a list of types that I have categorized in my own jargon:

1. The "chinch bug" — He is the person who wants something for nothing. His usual request is for an older, cheap car that is in perfect mechanical shape and very economical to run. He wants a guarantee and wants to pay around fifty dollars.
2. "Ducks" — These are people who work outside, and when the weather is bad, they do not work; they shop for cars. I call them "ducks" because they never wear rain coats. They stand, look, and get wet.
3. "Lot Jumpers" — These are frog-like people who run a strict schedule. They car-shop six and sometimes seven days a week. Each day of the week is set aside for a visit to a certain dealer. They spend almost the entire business day on the lot. I used to have a group that came every Tuesday to talk cars, but they do not stop any more. I tried to put them to work.
4. The "Mole" — This is the fellow that believes that he can find a car's faults by crawling under it. He is usually small in stature. In fact, I ran over a "mole" on one occasion. It happened when I was late for an appointment; I hurriedly got into the car to speed away—I stopped when I heard

the anguished scream. We were both lucky. I only ran over his foot. I can still see the insurance adjuster asking him what he was doing underneath the car in the first place.

5. "The Reader's Digester" — These are people who shop according to the *Reader's Digest*. Once, while I was watching the used car lot, I saw a big 1958 Buick start bobbing up and down. A first I thought the air suspension system had gone berserk. I ran to the car only to find a little old lady in white gloves jumping up and down madly on the rear bumper of the car. When I asked her what she was doing, she replied succinctly, "Why, young man, I'm giving it the *Reader's Digest* shock-absorber test."
6. "Tooth Pickers and Tire Kickers" — These are the fellows who kick tires and thump fenders. Then they stand and pick their teeth.
7. "The Town Criers" — These are the people who shop dealers in a radius of a hundred miles. They go from town to town comparing prices, and they keep track of the "deals" on a large piece of paper resembling a scroll of papyrus.
8. The "Barney Oldfields" — These are the engine racers. They just sit behind the wheel of a car that is sitting still and race the engine. They nearly always have a mad gleam in their eyes.

No doubt the most exasperating thing that a salesman goes through is the demonstration ride. This is a har-

rowing experience and is truly "above and beyond the call of the commission," for strange things happen to people behind the wheel of an unfamiliar car. They never watch the road because they are busy seeing whether the radio and cigarette lighter work. They invariably stall the car, flood the car, and grind the gears of the car. All this ordinarily happens in the heart of downtown traffic, and it can prove embarrassing for the salesman. One time I was demonstrating a powerful car to a young girl, and when she tried the passing gear out—she froze with her foot pressed hard to the accelerator pedal. After a great deal of shouting on my part, finally, at ninety miles per hour, I collected my senses and turned off the ignition switch. I did not make the sale; she said stream. The water shorted the engine, that the car was too hard to drive. When I demonstrate a sports car, I always send up a silent prayer, for the

sports car "buff" always wants to go for a high-speed drive over a curved road. There is one consolation here, however; if he wrecks the car it can be sold to the insurance company. The "Jeep" demonstration is the worst of all. Jeep customers like to see if the Jeep will do all the things it is advertised as being capable of doing. One prospect, before I could stop him, drove a Jeep into a creek. I was the one that had to wade to a phone! It is one thing getting a stalled car out of down town traffic; but getting a Jeep out of a stream is another matter. His only comment to me as the wrecker towed the Jeep out was, "Well, they do it all the time on TV."

By this time the reader is probably wondering why anyone would want to be a car salesman. After writing this essay, I am bothered by the same question.

Hamlet

PAUL MORRIS

The coffee keeps me sleepless; the second-hand swings stiffly
 On the silent clock-face; stars, flung out in space by speed
 And spinning some millions of millenniums ago, sputter and die
 Sending us light still—only a clinker, an ash, remains in darkness.
 Sleep came like the light from dead stars, after its time,
 After my wish for it was gone. The steamy summer night,
 The spider spinning in the apex where the walls meet,
 And my wife's calf clapping to my shin as she turns in her sleep
 Manipulate the matter of my mind.
 The sweat soaks the sheet,
 And sleep slides under the ceiling and waits.
 Sleep catches me with eye-lids down
 And controls me, but I did not expect the ghost of you,
 My father, or some transposed substance of you in my dreams;
 I had rather sleep the sleep of death than entertain your visage
 And your voice. Your velvet robe is black as Bible-binding
 And blends with the night-dream-nimbus behind you, and behind you
 The mist swirls into forms and words.
 World without end:
 World without end or beginning; only your white face and voice,
 And forms flowing behind you, you coming to convert me
 With tongue on fire
 burning bronze runes
 Of wisdom on my ruined brain, handwriting
 I no longer long to understand.
 You brought with you Job sitting in sackcloth, ash-filled sores,
 Burning-bushes, wine from water, sight from spittle,
 And things that I no longer long to understand.
 I call Job a Jewish writer's gem,
 And the Book war stories for Jews;
 But you cannot be bitter toward me, O great Christ-like love.
 You are flesh-and-blood, and tactful when not in my mind;
 And I wish you not to come back into my dreams again.
 I dread the day the long, dark glass of dreams is gone
 And you plead my conversion—face-to-face clearly:
 Dreams are dreams and the Bible books by men.
 I awaken bathed in sweat; it slides
 Into my eyes. I know my fate, to be some odor out beyond the stars
 Or some ball of lint beneath some bed.

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