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Plight of an Existential Man

There are too many spheres
 too many worlds
 too many doors
 to enter
 at the gate with my cup
 begging
 indiscriminately accepting
 too many offerings
 false gifts
 tarnished gold
 foul fragrances
 unsoothing unguents
 for these open
 sores — these
 gaping sores of
 the mind
 the body
 burned
 flagellated
 maimed
 waiting to be broken more
 in the whirl of spheres
 the destruction of worlds
 the slamming of doors —
 Is yours the acceptable offering?
 Is Now the acceptable time?
 Am I (are you) too early — too late?
 No —
 We are Now
 which is never past
 never future
 ungrasped without realization
 unrealized *sine* discrimination
 indiscriminate unless knowing
 blind without faith
 and darkness within —

Let me
let these
let all
be light!
Laugh in the light!
Dance at dawn!

All is
soon
will be
never
gone —

Choice remains.

— FRED BRUNGARD



Girl

JOSEPH KNIGHT, JR.

The Coming Of Spring

by

WANDA ZEAMAN

JOHN turned from the highway and started up the valley toward home. He walked slowly, almost reluctantly. The late summer evening was just coming on. The sun was down, but it still sent light from behind the hills on the western side of the valley. Here and there a star shone silently against the pale gray sky, and somewhere the moon waited its turn to light the dusty road. John watched the night coming but he cared little about the miracle of it. He walked on the left side of the narrow road, near the hillside, where the forest grew to the very edge of the road. There the trees made a night of their own, and a cool, almost autumn wind chilled John's soul. He shrugged his coat higher on his neck and buttoned another button. He shoved his hands into his pants pockets and walked slowly toward the northern end of the narrow valley. About two miles up the road he came to an old bridge that crossed the small valley stream, Half-way Creek. He stopped and leaned on the shaky wooden railing. By this time night had fallen over the whole valley. John stared at the reflection of the moon in the noisy water, but he did not see. He listened to the night sounds. They soothed him and slowed his thoughts, and finally as always made him remember Mary,

home and supper. He selected a pebble at random from the roadside and tossed it carelessly at the moon reflection, momentarily shattering it into blackness. Then he turned toward home, head bent, always walking in the deeper shadows of the trees.

"Mary—Mary? I'm home." John hung his coat on the peg behind the door and walked to the pump at the far end of the kitchen to wash up. He heard Mary's footsteps as he splashed cold water from the bucket on his face.

"Supper's ready. I'll just dish it up." Mary's voice was low, almost toneless, and she recited the words, as if from memory.

She walked to the stove next to the sink and ladled stew into two bowls. She was young. Her brown hair was pulled away from her face and braided into a bun at the back of her neck. Her figure was slight and angular but she held it proudly. She came only to John's shoulder, but she always seemed as tall as he was when they were together. Her face was neither beautiful nor ugly. There were promises there, half-hidden, beauty, but no emotions fulfilled them. Only pride, a haughty absolute pride gleamed in her eyes and she was plain. She wore a dark brown dress, unrelieved by

any decoration but a row of small white buttons down the front.

John finished washing up just as Mary set the last dish on the table.

"Chickens and cow fed?" John asked as he sat down.

"Yes."

John started eating the thin stew at once. He was hungry after the long walk. He studiously ignored Mary, whose head was bowed slightly over her bowl. When he heard her pick up her spoon, he looked at her.

"I made an extra two dollars working late today. I asked Mr. Jansen and he says he can use me lots at the mill if I'm willing to work late sometimes. I figure I can do it 'til winter sets in so's we'll have some back — when the baby comes." He said the last all in a rush, for Mary had been staring at him intently, and almost angrily.

"The Widow Hansen was over today and brought—some things." Mary hesitated at "things." The beautiful baby quilt and the bonnets lay in the upstairs closet where she had carefully laid them. "She's leaving for her son's tomorrow. She says winter's likely to come early this year. The days are shortening fast." She stopped abruptly, looked down at her plate and started eating. They both ate in silence for awhile, not looking at each other.

"I was thinking a lot on the way home, Mary. If we got a mortgage on the house or—or even a loan, we could live in town for the winter. We'd be near the doctor and

I'd be able to get to work every day and—." He stopped and looked up because he knew Mary was staring at him again. They looked at each other for a long second.

"There'll be no mortgage and no loans. This house belongs to me. I deserved it, all I did for him. We don't need to go beggin' for a place to live. We have this place. We'll manage." Mary's voice was strained, her face haughty. She rose and walked stiffly to the stove, and even in the soft glow of the oil lamp she looked sharp and angular, and as yet she showed no signs of pregnancy. John watched her as she walked.

"Are you sure you're—?" He began the question before he even thought.

"Yes," she answered, her back to him.

John almost seemed about to say something but Mary anticipated.

"I'm going to start killing a few of the old hens. They don't lay worth anything, and they'll make fair eating." She poured strong black coffee into two heavy mugs as she spoke and brought them to the table. She went on. "The rest of the hens lay good, the pig's butchered, and the cow gives enough milk. I'm going to start diggin' potatoes this week. We'll manage." She sat straight in the high-backed chair. Her face was in shadow, just outside the circle of light the oil lamp cast on the table.

John tried to look at her, to understand, but presently he slumped

over his coffee cup and raised it listlessly now and again to drink the bitter brew. Her coffee was always strong and bitter — like her, John thought.

John's mind went back to another August evening three years ago and another cup of Mary's coffee.

"My Pa's sick. I can't do all the chores myself. I need some one to do the heavy work. I can't pay anything, just room and board." Her hair was braided at the neck then as now, but her face was pale and thin.

"That's fine with me. All I need's a place to stay, and I'll be worth my meals. I'm used to hard work." John somehow wanted to impress this straight, proud woman, to tell her she needn't worry, he'd do his share. He felt self-conscious, uncomfortable, in the bare, very clean kitchen. His clothes were old and dusty and he needed a shave. He was tired from the long walk from town where he had heard about Mary.

"Her father's laid up pretty bad and she's all alone out there. Rec-kon she could use a hired man, not that she could pay ya much. Her Pa's farm never amounted to much money-wise. Guess he was too mean-minded to make a good farmer—or a good father for that matter."

John had thanked the storekeeper and left. He didn't want much. Just a place to rest, a place with peace and quiet.

A place to forget all the other places, the orphanages, the bare rooms and all the other lonely spots he'd known.

John stayed. That night he slopped the pigs and bedded the cows. And all night, as he tried to sleep in the spare room, he heard Mary walking back and forth in answer to every whining demand of the old man in the parlor. He heard the old voice, cracked and dry.

"We don't need no hired hand. You're strong. Ya alus done the chores before. I tell ya he'll ruin the place. How much ya payin' him? I'll bet you're in cahoots. Gonna steal everything when I die. Bring me somethin' to drink. Hurry up! I'm thirsty."

All John could hear from Mary was a low toneless murmur now and then, and the almost silent sound of her ever-moving feet. In the morning John came into the kitchen. Mary stood at the stove, hair braided, in a brown dress with white buttons (like the one she has on tonight thought John surprised as he glanced at Mary, sitting silently beside him). He turned back to the memories.

"Good morning, ma'am."

"Morning. Breakfast's ready. Just wash up at the sink."

"Is your father better?"

"He's asleep now. After breakfast I'll show you what to do."

John knew then he'd do anything she wanted, and he wanted to tell her so and make her happy.

But instead he ate breakfast and worked for her a year—until her father died.

"He's dead." Relief filled her face, and she laid her head on the kitchen table. There was a long silence. John almost reached to touch her shoulder, but he was afraid she was crying, and if she was, he didn't want to know it. She was too strong, and because he loved her, he could not bear to see her crying.

In a moment, she raised her head. Her eyes were dry. John was relieved.

"What do you want me to do, Mary?"

"Go to town. I want him buried tomorrow. Hurry so's you'll be back 'fore dark. I'm tired." And her face was tired. John knew. But all he said was, "Goodbye."

A month later they were married. John and Mary. Husband and wife. Even now, almost two years later it had a strange echo in John's mind.

While John drank and thought, Mary finished her coffee and cleared the table. John left her washing dishes and went into the parlor. He lighted the lamp and sat down by the fireplace. Even though it was only late August, Mary had built a small fire there, for the nights were cold.

He sat and watched the flames dance wildly, but did not really see the fire. He tried to believe what Mary seemed to know—that they could manage through the winter. He figured his wages with over-

time, the bill at the store in town that Mary didn't know about, the potatoes they could save, the small pig smoking in the shed. And the baby due. "Early spring," she had said. Strange how she wouldn't talk about the baby. All she said was, "John, I'm going to have a baby come spring. But don't worry, I'm good and healthy." Just that, one evening over supper. Right there, over the bitter black coffee, without a change of expression that he could see.

* * *

JOHN did not pause long on the bridge. The air was cold, and the falling snow clung tenaciously to everything. No moon reflected in the water. The creek rushed angrily down from the hills. Already ice lined its banks; soon the whole stream would be hidden beneath ice and the harsh churning sounds that now assaulted John's soul would be muted and less angry.

"Only the First of October, and it's snowing this hard," John thought, squinting up into the snow-filled sky. "It's going to be a long, hard winter." He brushed the layer of snow from his dark hair and pulled the collar of his coat tight about his neck. Head bent, shoulders hunched, he stamped off down the dark, snow-silent road to Mary. He walked close to the trees where the snow could not so easily reach him. And the wind closed behind him and hastily swept the road clean of his footprints.

"Mary—Mary? I'm home." John hung his coat, dripping with melted snow, on the peg behind the door, and took off his boots. He walked to the warm stove and held his hands above it, then rubbed his face to restore feeling. Mary came up beside him.

"Supper's ready. I'll dish it up," she said not looking at him.

John could not bear the thought of washing in the ice-cold water from the pump, so he walked over and sat down at the table. Behind him Mary spooned pork gravy over fried potatoes and put some salt pork on each plate. In the dim yellow glow cast by the oil lamp, she stood straight and proud, her braided hair neatly pinned; her face still promising but never giving beauty. She looked fuller now, more womanly somehow. If only she would not hold herself so taut, so defensive. She gave John his plate and sat down, her body in shadow despite the lamp light.

Mary's head was still bowed when John stood up suddenly, went to the door, and pulled something from his sodden coat. He brought it back and held it out to Mary. It was several moments before she raised her eyes. She glanced at John's face, then at his hand which held six spools of white and two of black thread.

"Here are those spools of thread you said you needed. I could only get two black though." Mary took the spools and laid them beside her plate. John sat down.

"The storekeeper in town gave me a good price. Said he only kept them to please the women anyway." John stopped talking. Mary looked at him. "It is October First," he said, looking down at his plate. "Our second anniversary. You said you needed the thread, and I got as many black as I could."

"You want some coffee?" Mary asked, rising.

"Later," John mumbled, and they finished the meal in silence.

Mary washed the dishes while John drank his cup of coffee. Why couldn't he have just forgotten it was their anniversary? Somehow Mary felt guilty about the thread, as if she didn't deserve it. And that made her angry. She vented her anger on the grease rings floating in the dish water, sloshing them one after another out of the pan. Somehow, John never did what she wanted—and yet he did everything she asked. Mary tried to understand that. If only just once he'd do something she asked him not to do. If only he hadn't brought the thread. She'd told him she needed it and he'd brought it for a present.

She took the pan of dish water and went to the door, opened it, and stepped outside. A cold snow-filled wind rushed around her. She threw the water onto the ground, where it made a black hole in the whiteness.

The cold reassured her. She felt almost happy in it after the oppressive winter-warmth of the kitchen.

Almost reluctantly she went inside and closed the door.

"It's really storming outside," she said to John's back. And then, because that back looked tired and unhappy and because she loved him somehow, Mary went and stood by him just outside the brightness of the lamplight. "I really needed the thread," she said and turned quickly and went into the parlor.

In the morning John could not go to work. The snow was three feet deep on level ground and the drifts between the house and the smoke shed were almost above John's head.

His shoulders sagged as John stood by the stove in the kitchen and looked out the window. He knew for sure now that the winter would be long and hard. And he was scared. They should have moved to town. John knew the drifts on the road would make it impassable for a walking man, let alone the doctor's buggy. They should have moved to town. But Mary had said no and what could he do? She was so strong, so right.

John turned away from the window and went in to Mary, who sat mending by the parlor window.

"It's going to be a long winter, Mary?"

"We'll manage. I never had one of these winters beat me yet," she said and her head raised proudly and she looked grimly at the snow that drifted silently against the window sill.

* * *

JOHN stared down the valley where he knew the road lay hidden under the deep, silent snow. The end of February and the road still blocked his way out.

He turned wearily and climbed the steps to the door. His arms were full of wood for the fires. "Here's the wood, Mary," John called from the door. He dropped it on the floor, took off his heavy boots and hung his coat on the peg. "It's not snowing today, but the air's bitter, and there isn't any sign of sun." John picked up the logs and walked to the stove. He put some there, and took the rest into the parlor where he put them in the old black box that stood beside the fireplace.

Mary was making the bed they had moved from upstairs when the winter turned cold. Her angularity was gone, and the child weighed heavily on her frame. Her face was full but only looked tired. She wore a dark blue, shapeless smock that only emphasized her condition. Her hair hung in long silky waves almost to her waist. It was beautiful in the pale early morning light; a soft childish brown.

"I milked the cow, but she didn't give much, Mary, and I brought in the last of the potatoes. If this weather doesn't break soon—"

"Don't worry. It'll break," Mary said almost angrily, as she braided her hair. "Just don't worry. We've managed this far, haven't we?" She spoke as though addressing a little child who is frightened of the

dark.

John watched her in silence as she braided her hair and pinned it expertly at the back of her head. He wished she had left it down today.

What if the baby came early? What would happen? What could he do? He walked to the parlor window and stared at the whiteness. It covered everything. Only bits of black here and there and the odd shapes of buildings and bushes revealed what lay beneath the winter's snow. John felt so isolated, so alone there in that trapped house.

"Breakfast's done," Mary called from the kitchen.

After they had eaten the fried bacon and biscuits, John rose and put on his coat.

"I'm going to see just how bad the drifts are on the road, Mary. I'll be back in a little while." He opened the door and went into the sunless whiteness before Mary could answer. She wished he hadn't left. She felt so strange this morning, and the baby inside her moved so often she was frightened. She sat at the kitchen table with the breakfast dishes scattered on it. She did not even want to wash them. Why did it have to snow so, she wondered. The child gave a violent kick that both surprised and hurt her. The gloomy kitchen only made her feel more alone. The black stove with its kettle of dish water steaming, the sink with its pump to be primed, the table with the re-

mains of breakfast all challenged her. Finally she stood and picked up the dishes to wash. She felt dizzy. Her eyes kept going out of focus. "John! Help me!", she called. And somewhere between the table and the sink with the breakfast plates in her hand, Mary fainted.

John wandered into the untrampled snow until he came to the first bend in the now-hidden road. Here the snow had drifted higher than his head, and he knew it was useless. With a hundred other curves like this one, the road might as well have vanished, for all the good of it. He turned around and walked back toward the house, glancing now and again at the gray, cloudy, unfriendly sky. There was no sun and maybe, he thought bitterly, there never had been. I hope Mary will be all right till the snows melt down enough. She said the other night that there's almost a whole month yet. And we need food and firewood and —. He stopped his mind in despair. He just wouldn't think about it. It did him no good anyway. Mary never seemed to worry.

John climbed the steps. A strange silence met him. "Mary, Mary, I'm back." He hung his coat on the peg and took off his boots. "Mary." He walked toward the table but before he got there he found the broken plates on the floor. "Mary?" The word was a plaintive question. He almost ran into the parlor. Mary lay on the bed. Her eyes were closed and her face was ghost white. The

dark blue smock was damp and clung to her body. Her braided hair was loose and a few strands lay like dark lines on her cheek.

For one long moment John thought she was dead, but then he heard her deep, slow breathing and she opened her eyes and looked at him.

"Mary. Mary. What happened? Are you all right?" He knelt beside the bed and took her hand.

"I fell. Fainted, I guess, in the kitchen. It's time. I'm going—." She stopped and the hand tightened on John's. "The pains are starting." Her voice was shakey. She clutched John's hand desperately, and as she lay there, two tears fell. Only two, but John knew she was frightened, and he was amazed. His strong Mary, who always knew what to do, who was too proud to ask for help, could be frightened. And he was not ashamed of her. "Mary—Mary, don't worry. We can manage. I know we can. We'll have to." He smiled at her tear-filled eyes. "Now here, you get under the covers and" he stopped until her pain passed again, "And I'll build up the fire." He kept talking as he stacked the logs and stirred the embers. "I'll heat some more water. How long do you think it will be?" He returned to her side.

"I don't know," she almost whispered, her eyes never leaving John's face. "Are you sure you can—do everything?" She hesitated as she spoke, glancing for a moment at her body under the heavy quilts.

John smiled and reached down and pulled a stray pin from her hair, then he resolutely took out the others. Mary started to protest, but she stopped and let him unbraided her hair and smoothed it on her shoulder. "You'll be more comfortable," he said taking her hand. "Now listen. I've been working around farm animals all my life and so have you. I guess between the two of us we'll make it. I've always tried to do right by you and I won't stop now. Just let me help you, Mary. I'll do all right." John squeezed Mary's hand and noticed she was really crying now. "Mary, don't. Everything will be all right. You'll see."

"I can't help it. I guess I'm scared a little." Mary looked up and smiled weakly. And at last she was beautiful.

The morning passed slowly after John made what preparations he could. He sat beside Mary and held her hand and occasionally changed the cool cloth on her head, and wiped the tears from her cheeks. The pain came and went—the times between gradually lessening.

John suffered with her and he kept thinking of what lay ahead. His face looked worried only when Mary wasn't watching. Can I do it, he thought. What if she or the baby dies? Do I really know enough? Can I really do it? Oh, why didn't we get out of this damn place. Damn snow! Damn sun! Damn everything! But then he would look at Mary, her face drawn

in pain, and he would know it didn't matter, he couldn't lose Mary. He wouldn't lose her. He had seen her cry and knowing she could cry made him know she was not as strong as he had thought. And if she had weakness, he had to have strength. He thought of the baby to come. I must save that too, he thought, but that part seemed unreal and far away.

Mary clenched his hand until it hurt. "It's time John It's time! Please, John, please help me!"

And it was done. John lifted the sleeping Mary into a chair and put clean sheets on the bed and then lifted her back into it. He looked down at her face, quiet in sleep with a faint, tired smile on her lips. Her hair lay in long wavy strands about her face. John smoothed it with his hand.

He walked over to the basket in the chair by the fire place and looked down at his son. John had wrapped him in a quilt, and it all but hid the little body. Only the eyes, nose, and mouth showed above all the wrappings. "He's wonderful," John said to no one in particular. He slumped down in another chair about half-way between the basket and the bed. He felt tired and his head dropped to his chest. He awoke a few minutes later to Mary's voice.

"John, John. Is the baby crying?"

John got the baby and took him to Mary. She held him gently.

"You saved him, John. You didn't let him die," she whispered.

"We did it together, Mary. You and me together. He is a fine looking baby, don't you think?"

"Beautiful."

"You know, Mary, before—today I always thought of him as your baby. Now it seems as if he's part of both of us if you know what I mean."

"Yes." Mary looked at John and he looked different, taller somehow. Maybe it was just because she was lying in bed, but he seemed so much more of a man to her.

John sat down on the edge of the bed. He cleared his throat. "Mary," he began, then stopped.

"Yes?"

"What'll we name him?"

Mary looked at John and then at the little old-man face peering out of the quilt.

"Well, I think we should name him John, after you."

John exhaled loudly and smiled. "Yes, I guess that would be nice." The smile stayed on his face for quite awhile. And he held Mary's hand for a long time.

* * *

IT WAS SPRING. John could see it, smell it and hear it. April the second and it was spring. Johnny was a month old already.

John went inside for breakfast. He hung his winter coat in the closet off the parlor. He wouldn't need it anymore. Mary came in from downstairs. "Johnny's asleep. I'll get your breakfast." She smiled. "It looks like spring's come," she said, looking out the window.

"It has," John said from the kitchen where he was starting to wash up.

"You know, John," Mary said as they finished their coffee after breakfast, "I've been thinking maybe we should sell this place and move closer to town. It would be a lot better for us all.

"Maybe you're right, Mary. I'll see about it in town. But don't worry if we can't find a place. We know we can always manage here."

John rose and kissed Mary on the cheek, and ran his hand through

her long brown hair, which hung almost to her waist.

"I'll be home early tonight," he called as he put on a light coat and went out the door.

Mary watched him from the window as he walked off in the early morning spring with the sun on his shoulders. He walked fast and almost eagerly down the narrow dirt road and he walked deliberately on the left side, away from the trees, so he felt every ray of the spring sunlight on his shoulders. Spring is sometimes a long time coming. ■



CAROLE SPRITZLER

Demise of an Empire

The ruby sphere once bright as Inca gold
Now soon to meet the earth, in need partakes
Of shadows' aid, extends its life with stays
Of gray to help postpone the dark of night;
To stop the loss of realm for lack of light.

The sky is filled with signs of protest now
In shades of leaping flame, rebellious veins
Reflect the sun's chargin as swirling winds
From midday whispers grow, to rend, dispel,
Destroy the clouds and day's last light as well.

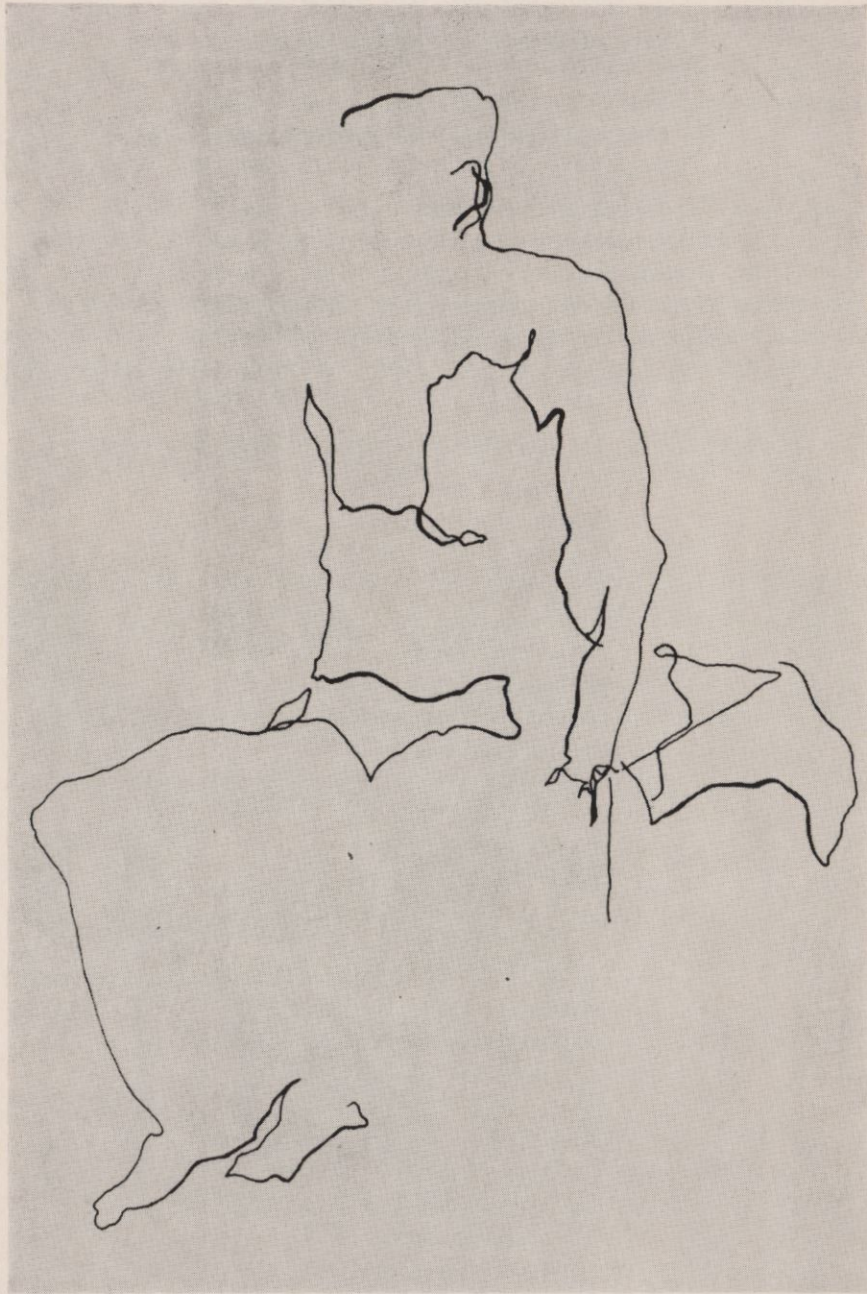
— SHERIDAN T. HAINES, JR.

Reflections in a cup of coffee – with cream

So tipped a cup
that the upper rim
becomes a half — now
a quarter moon
in the soft brown
surface of ascendent
steams — fractured
dreams — incoherent
streams of thought
caught

Miles' muted Midnight sounds
change to a Chinese flute
spirited by Yusef Lateef.
(Are Tu Fu and Li Po
off drinking together
in some Green Jade palace)
"Blues for the Orient."
A cigarette — perpendicular
to the floor — burns down
to the filter
unpuffed
forming an Islamic minaret
and collapsing.
The cup is emptied.
A naked bulb from
somewhere overhead
fills stained porcelain
with One kind of light.

— FRED BRUNGARD



Gene

CAROLE SPRITZLER



JOE KNIGHT

"Epitaph For A Young Boy"

by

ELMO IRWIN

"HELLO."

"Hello, Ralph, this is Charlie. Ralph, I thought I better call you. We have an emergency and I thought you could help."

"What's wrong, Charlie," Ralph said as he snapped on his lamp.

"Well, I really hate to bother you this time of night, and all, but my boys are lost somewhere in the Greenwood Mountains and I thought that since you know the mountains so well, maybe you could help."

"What time is it, Charlie?"

"It's two o'clock."

"Why did you wait this long to call?"

"Well, we didn't want to bother you if the boys weren't really lost. At first, I thought the boys probably killed a deer, and it was taking them a long time to drag it out of the woods. But then around ten o'clock, I started to worry. I didn't quite know what to do, so I called the State Police. They came up, but said they couldn't get a search party until morning."

"Okay, where are you now," asked Ralph.

"We are out home," Charlie answered in a hopeful tone. "Can you come out?"

"Yes, I'll be out as quick as I can. What's the weather look like?"

"Well, it was raining a while ago, but as cold as it is, it will be turning to snow before long. Hold on Ralph, Emily wants to talk to you."

"Ralph," Mrs. Ross sobbed.

"Now, don't get worked up, Sis. Those two strong nephews of mine are all right. They probably got themselves a buck and they just couldn't get it in before night fall. They probably built themselves a campfire and are going to wait till morning."

"They've never done that before, Ralph. I'm worried."

"I'll come right out. You get a thermos bottle of good hot coffee and some sandwiches. I suppose those boys are going to be mighty hungry."

"Okay, Ralph, Goodbye," said Emily somewhat reassured.

"Goodbye," Ralph said. He began to wonder where the boys could have gone. He knew one place they liked to hunt, but that wasn't too far from their house. If they were hunting there, even if they had killed a deer, they would have had it out long before now. His thoughts went to the boys themselves. What if they're hurt?

Approximately ten miles from where Ralph sat tying his boot laces, Ronny Ross was tying a

splint on his younger brother's sprained ankle.

"Is that too tight, Johnny?"

"I can't even feel it," replied Johnny. "My ankle hurts too much. I can't feel anything."

"It's my fault this happened," Ron began, "I should have known better than to try and go anywhere after dark. We should have stopped and built a shelter and a fire, but I thought we were real close to the road. I wanted to try to make it back so Mom wouldn't worry too much. I suppose now they have a search party out looking for us."

"Do you know where we are?" asked Johnny.

"Well, there's no sense lying to you. No, I don't. But I'll get us out of here. Don't worry. The first thing I've got to do is build a fire. You stay under this pine tree and I'll see if I can find some dry wood. As soon as I get a fire going I'll build us a little shelter under this tree so we can get dry. Don't worry, Johnny. I'll get us out of here in the morning."

"How are we going to build a fire, Ronny? Everything is all wet."

"I'll find some dry wood under the leaves."

Ron stumbled through the dark woods, picking up pieces of wood. He knew he didn't dare show how frightened he really was, or he wouldn't be able to keep his brother from getting frightened. After he had gathered enough wood for a fire, he tried to find something dry enough to start it. Nothing would

light. Everything was too wet. When he decided he couldn't build a fire, Ron started building a shelter. It had started to snow now, and it was really coming down. By the time Ron finished his crude shelter the snow had started to accumulate.

"I'm cold, Ronny."

"I know. I am too, but try not to think about it. We'll just have to keep talking to each other until it gets light enough to see where we are going."

"Why can't we go to sleep, Ronny?"

"Because we might freeze to death while we're sleeping. You remember that movie we saw about a guy who was lost in Alaska, and he was trying to stay awake so he wouldn't freeze. Now snuggle up close to me, and maybe our body heat will warm us."

By this time Ralph had been to his brother-in-law's house, picked up the coffee and sandwiches, reassured his sister and Charlie, and begun his search for the boys. Charlie wanted to go along, but Ralph talked him out of it. He knew Charlie would only slow him down because of his bad leg. He remembered one place he used to take his nephews hunting. He had told them never to go there alone because they could easily get lost, but then, he knew that wouldn't stop them. He had a rifle, a flashlight, and a knapsack containing the coffee and sandwiches as he started down the

side of the snow-covered ridge toward a place he hoped the boys would be. It was about five a.m. as Ralph reached a creek at the foot of one of the ridges. He fired a shot into the air hoping the boys would hear it. He knew that from where he was standing, the shot could be heard from four different ridges, but there was no reply. The boys might have been able to hear the shot had it been a clear day, but with all the snow that blanketed their little shelter, they couldn't have heard it if it was only one hundred yards away.

"I'm freeze cold, Ronny," said Johnny through chattering teeth.

"Okay, Johnny. Don't worry. It's almost light enough to go. Once we start walking, we won't be cold. Do you think you can walk on your sore ankle?"

"I don't know. I can't even feel it."

"Well, let's give it a try," Ron said as he peered out through their little shelter.

Johnny stood up and walked about two steps, and then slipped and fell.

"It hurts, Ronny, it hurts. I can't walk on it."

"Okay. Don't worry. I'll carry you. We'll leave our rifles in the shelter and then when we find our way out, I'll come back for them."

Ron lifted Johnny on to his back and began to walk. It had snowed continuously and the snow had accumulated about twelve inches.

After Ron had walked about a hundred yards through the deep snow with the added weight of his brother on his back, he was exhausted. He stopped and rested. Then he began again.

"It's no use, Johnny. I can't carry you. It will take us a day to get out to the road this way. I know what we can do."

Ron reversed his direction and followed his tracks back to the shelter.

"You stay here and I'll find the way out and get help. I'll give you my coat to help you keep warm. I'll be walking and I won't get too cold. Now, you aren't afraid to stay, are you?"

"No," Johnny replied, "but how long will you be gone? What if you can't find the road? What will I do?"

"If I can't find the road in about two or three hours, I will follow my tracks back here. I won't leave you alone. Don't worry. There is probably a search party looking for us right now. Keep my coat wrapped around you, and remember, *don't* go to sleep! Okay?"

"But how am I going to stay awake with no one here to talk to? I'm real sleepy, Ronny."

"Here, take my knife and carve something on that piece of wood. That will keep you busy until I come back."

Ron followed his tracks once more in the direction he hoped the road was in. Now and then, places would look familiar, but upon clos-

er look, he would see he was wrong. He had no way of knowing how long he had walked before he finally realized how hard the wind was blowing. The wind was blowing the snow off the trees and beginning to make drifts. He knew he had to make a very important decision. If he took the time to go on looking for the road and couldn't find it, the snow would drift over all his tracks. But if he went back to Johnny without finding the road, what good would that do? Besides, the road could be close. He decided to make one more try in another direction. If he couldn't find it within the next hour, he would go back.

Seeing the wind beginning to pick up, Ralph knew the sound of a shot would carry a long way. He fired three shots. He waited for about a minute and fired three more. No answer. He waited another minute and fired again. This time he heard a shot that sounded as if it was behind him. He fired again to make sure of the direction. It was behind him. He hurried back in the direction he had just come from. He fired again, and heard another shot closer than before. When he got to the top of the ridge, he saw who was firing. It was the search party the state police had sent out. They were both disappointed to find the shots had not come from the boys. Ralph told the leader of the search party where he had been and the approximate area he had covered. He told them

where they should search and warned them not to get separated. After a brief rest, they all set out again.

It was about twelve o'clock noon now, and Ron had not found the road. He knew Johnny would really be getting worried by now. He had been gone longer than he had expected, but each time he wanted to go back, he had the feeling the road was just over the next hill. Now, the wind was really howling.

Ron knew he had to go back. He had an awful feeling of uselessness as he started back in his tracks. The further he walked, the harder the tracks were to make out, until finally he could not find them anywhere. He ran a big circle around his last track, but could find nothing. Ron was so tired and scared that he just sat down in the snow and started to cry.

He had not found the road, and now he had even lost his brother. Even if he did find the road, now he could never find his brother. As Ron sat there crying, he heard a rifle shot.

He screamed, "Here, . . . Here!" He whistled as loud as he could. His Uncle Ralph heard the whistle and hurried in the direction it came from.

Ron was almost hysterical when Ralph found him. "Uncle Ralph, Uncle Ralph, I lost Johnny! His ankle was hurt—He couldn't come with me. I was going back. I couldn't find my tracks."

"Wait. Wait. Hold on now. Slow down. Here, drink some of this coffee. Now, tell me what happened. Do you want a sandwich?"

Ron cried as he told his uncle what had happened. Ralph put his arm around Ron's shoulder, and tried to console him.

"Don't worry. I found you, didn't I? We'll find him. We'll find him. Maybe the search party has found him by now. Which direction did you come from?"

"I don't know, Uncle Ralph. I got turned around a couple of times, and now I don't know where I was."

The two of them searched for Johnny for the next few hours. Ralph fired shots intermittently until he ran out of shells.

"Well, Ron, if we are going to make it out of here by dark we had better get started now."

"No, I won't go until I find Johnny. Why did I ever leave him? Why didn't I stay with him?"

"No, you did the right thing," said Ralph with a little crack in his voice. "Come on, let's go back to the road and see if we can find the search party."

Ron dropped his head, as if in defeat, as he walked beside his uncle. When they reached the road they couldn't find any of the searchers, so Ralph took Ron home.

As the car pulled in the driveway, both Mr. and Mrs. Ross ran out to meet it.

"Ronny, Ronny, you're all right! Where's Johnny?" Mrs. Ross asked

as she hugged Ron.

"We haven't found him yet, but we will Mom."

"I don't understand. How? Why?"

Ron proceeded to explain the details to his mother and father.

"Maybe the search party found him and they're bringing him in now," said Ralph.

"No, the search party stopped by here just about dark. They said they hadn't even seen a track. They were going in for some lighting equipment, food and clothing."

"Oh, my God! My little boy out there in all that cold snow," Mrs. Ross sobbed.

"I'll find him, Mom. I'm going back out and look for him."

"No, you're not," replied his mother.

"You'd never find him in the dark, Ron," said his father. "Maybe the search party will find him."

They were all sitting in the kitchen waiting for some word from the searchers when the church bell at a nearby church began to ring.

As Johnny lay out in that cold woods, shivering and half dead from exposure, he could hear the bell. He could hear the bell now because the wind had changed and all the snow was blown from the trees. He thought he was dreaming. He had fought sleep this long, but now when he heard the bells, he started to drift to sleep. He was dreaming that he was home in bed. Just as he was about to fall into a

deep sleep, a little bit of snow fell from his shelter into his face and woke him.

Now he heard the bell plainly.

"How can that be a bell way out here," he thought. "That can't be a bell. I must be dreaming."

He pinched his leg and slapped his face to make sure he was awake.

He heard it again. He tried to stand up, but his legs were stiff. He worked at it until finally he was up.

He dragged himself to the top of the hill. Once he was there, he could see the lights from the town a short distance away. He half walked, half crawled down the hill and through a field to his house. Just before he went up to the house he threw the piece of wood away that he had been carving on.

It read: JOHN ROSS . . . Born August 3, 1955 - Died November 21, 1967. ■



Face

CHERYL KIRKNER

The Olive Green

Over against the side wall
clings an unruffled fear of olive green.
Light shades of mourning fade into it.
Out of it flows moisture of the nightly stare
and when the dusk holds hard its straining light
it rolls, like fleece, into its corner.
There it waits and prays to the morning moon
that beneath a mist shys from the sun.

— ETHEL MAE STRUNK

The Glass

How the glass of young fools
does want to play
and noisily fill the emptiness of day.
But in the muted life
one sound saved will suffice
to re-echo and sooth
the wise fools' vital nights

— ETHEL MAE STRUNK

The Call

The ornamental paint of the war lute
lies chipped in patterns
between the green earth-born swords.
Blue fifes hum heroic hymns
but the battered birds will not listen.
They care not
for the stuffed one's blank face
nor the broken brown hue
of the cornfield and the crock.
Tiny flags press the calm eternal
conjuring breezes to boast their bravery
but the battered birds
their silence hoard
and the day lights fade away.

— ETHEL MAE STRUNK

Reply

Beauty, I have not beauty
Only youth.
Beneath my mole graced ear
you whisper awkward
three unctuous greetings to her.
Your great unkept but gentle hands
trace her flawless flow.
Your anxious aura awaits
her fragile warmth
Oh precious flatterer
it is her fantasy you seek.
a limited ageless sage.
A restricted foolish child.
So to you
I impart this last farewell
for to the dusty ancient mounds
I am betrothed.

— ETHEL MAE STRUNK

The Window

The white of a bloodshot eye
follows hustling sounds on the pavement
between faded brick pattern curtains.

Little jostled figures fidget on,
their swift profiles fleeting by,
the same stiff smooth cheeks
invariably powdered.

The red squinted eyes.
Sore temples instinctively couch
on the familiar contortions
of self-embracing arms.
The quiet sorrowful nose.

His heavy arms unfolded into sleep
and in the morning
he pulled the shade.

— ETHEL MAE STRUNK

Ode to the Dandelion Fluff

I had stayed here
to keep rude youths away
and annoying plots
of innocent creatures.
I had stayed here
these most reverent hours
lest the wind should awake
or the jealous rain
thy airiness denounce.
But now I am lonely
for it is all gone.
In one last sigh of faith
the wind in my heart
has blown thyself away.

— ETHEL MAE STRUNK

Black Sonnet

We watch the coming shadows sweeping near . . .
Cool masses quick and solemn racing hard
To swallow living woods. We cannot hear
Rejoicing from the sky that once was starred
With winking lights soon lost in sable, swift
And silent. Run! It's moving. Run! Our stares
Across the lush green treasure lands now drift
In night so black it seems there's nothing there.
We feel the chill that tingles tender skin
Forewarn the cold approaching night and know
That warmth and light like children dance and spin
Through gardens growing close by river flow.
We flee toward shining days though dark pursues. . .
The final, fate- ruled chase that we must lose.

— JOHN WEHLER

A Little Enjoyment

by
YUKO NISHIDA

THE VEIL OF EVENING was coming down slowly. A little girl carrying a rattrap which resembled a wire basket with a handle approached across the bank of a river. When she found the steps that led down to the nearly dry river bed, most of which consisted of pebbles, she began to hurry with big strides.

When she reached the water of the river which streamed in the middle of the dry river bed, she stood there and looked about. Then, confident that no one was around, she stooped down and began to open the basket. The little creature in it found his unexpected freedom and ran quickly on the pebbles and disappeared into a dark little hole, a chink in the stone wall of the bank.

After the little girl had let the rat go, she spent a little more time there. She sought out the biggest stone by the river and sat on it, though it was not comfortable. She looked into the sky that flamed like a big fire and wondered why the sky becomes red in the evening. She also looked at the surface of the water, which was glittering like many stars. Sometimes she was startled by the fishes jumping up into the air above the water.

Then the chill autumn wind gave her the idea that she had better go home. She picked up the empty

basket, dipped it into the water once, then walked to the bank. She stopped to look into the dark little hole there in the dusk. She wondered how the rat could have entered the little hole and disappeared.

When she got home, her mother wondered how the rat had been drowned so quickly under the water, for the little girl had come back earlier than her mother had expected her. Her mother knew that it took a little while to kill the rat even under the water. The little girl answered her mother with clever eyes, "He did not take much time to die. He must have been very old."

In her little town, the rat population had increased. People are afraid of disease and damage of houses, and were intent on destroying the rats. To kill the rats in the river whenever they were caught was the little girl's job.

The little girl went to the river often to kill the rats, but actually to save them, to enjoy watching them run away so gladly. Always when she saw the little creatures with their two tiny black eyes, two tiny pieces of white teeth, two tiny ears, and whiskers, she could not believe that they were such bad animals as people said.

In time people recognized that

the rattraps were not enough to destroy all rats. They decided to use poison. If the rats took the poison, they would be blind and would die within a few days.

When the little girl realized the situation, she was not a happy girl any more, for she knew that she had lost one of her enjoyments. ■



Hands

YUKO NISHIDA

Songs Before a Castle Dawn

I

Dawn becomes a blister
an infection that spreads
Sickish pink and in time
a greenish blue aqua.
Past the guise,
before that rupture
the slip on the stair
of one who wanted to be silent
there is a silence,
the silence a pregnant woman owns,
all golden and round
and sleepy.

II

The forest in a fashioned desire
waits,
stranded on a plateau,
and always this thing at dawn
when, still with sleep in their breaths,
the rumblings becoming again life,
the animals,
their eyes mellow with darkness
awake,
and when this turbulence,
and there is something,
and not when all was a child
asleep in night.
The lowest branches rustle
with the faint sound,
perhaps the sound of a gesture
that must be made
when a man dies.
And now the animals
grumbling about age
bones again beginning to flow,
until these sounds are a breath,
and the breath that moves a leaf
is an only breath.

But the awakening
the exuberance in tautness
when caught in a pose of dawn
the sun
a burlesque queen
in a show full of drunks,
teases . . .
"either too early or too late"
but there, to be there!
Watch the sliding
the descent from a night into life!
. . . and down in the valley
the hills rimmed with animal eyes
the farmer finds a light
and starts.

Giving the forest to mindless patter
that is lost in the tumbling of arousalment,
for the animals have gone
and only the leaves
so sallow and pale
fall, slowly
as slowly as the farmer
trudging for the barn,
still breathing night air,
his breath a soft brush.
The leaf falls
with the sound of a tympany
once heard before,
and I am an animal
nestled against a tree
the soft leaves drop
softer than rain on my back
and who am I to tell,
sleep child sleep . . .

A Poem About

It is this afternoon I return to you
finally awake, after a groggy
morning with sweat
and an uncomfortable bed
with a strange delirium that
arouses me to a pale dusty breath.

"The morning is the best time to write,"
I sleep in the morning,
waning in a still fashion
seeing myself lying there so still
I have nothing to do but wake up
not trusting what is below me
afraid of what I cannot touch above me
and by then
past the bitter coffee and cigarettes
opening my windows
to hear children and cars
I sit down, my pencils dulled
my mind still somewhere
near the pillow
my muse lost in fear
of "do I have time?"

but at night, exhausted
clinging to the bed post
I scratch a crude poem
singing it to myself
until I sleep
and then I sit upon this
chair watching a restless death
too amused to write.
It is a shame we cannot meet.

— STEVEN ROTH

In The Forest Dampness

Always in that hour before dawn
I wondered if I would see you
moving, taciturn,
in the forest dampness, on wet leaves
smelling of dampness and rot.
Your being with the mist,
clinging half-hidden behind trees.

A certain vividness gone from you,
emptied out in the wind
as a sack of seeds
would open in Spring,
to scatter,
to tumble and quarrel with the wind.

I remember they said
you were pale and thin
and — I believed them
there while with them —

for I imagined you to be
a panther of sorts,
dark with the arches of the forest
sulking with anger
in your forest a silent ruin
a silent run, the leap
your iron jaws
ripping into bone.
Your teeth carrying death and blood
and iron paws
indestructible
raking over ribs spilling fat,
blood on your lips
as was said to be on your hands.

But you weren't all real
with one hand and a limp.
And in the morning checking my traps,
my breath making me
the clinging mist,

my hands ice,
desiring and yet not wanting
to see that struggle
I would find;
to see the frantic glow
the prism eyes the frothing mouth
of an enraged being
flare up at me in ignorance
creating a disturbance.
So raising my club
I struck down
reaching for the limp body
felt the clot of blood
already colder than my hand.
I reset my traps,
hungry for a better pelt
but you and things like you
stole my bait my gains my traps
I cursed you
feeling as you felt, and angry.

You slept in the barn that winter
creeping into the straw
still breathing violence
and we, around the kitchen table,
warm, in the house
not realizing your courage
in announcing this violence.

The barn housed your violence and weariness.
Our hearts, ours,
and we so detached from
your grotesqueness,
cowered with each other in
gossip and legends of your deeds.
Grandfather with his bourbon,
that wove a silk thread through his body,
a soft daze,
and the old very old aunts
and uncles, sitting in pious fashions
much as the furniture rests,
being the starkness
of their own voices in
the ill-lighted kitchen.

And I heard them,
through the parlor walls.
I in muddy boots after
searching for you
curious as to what
with snow now falling
unable to find your tracks
they would say next,
thinking you dead
thinking you to climb a
vast machine and overpower their hamlet
overpower their last queries
of your existence.
And laughing I would again
pull my boots on
and go back out into the cupped hands of winter
to watch the snow dangle and fall
and laugh throwing snowballs
at squirrels, perhaps between your eyes
making you an enemy.

It was the owl
that gave you away
and the pigeons cooing and applauding

that dusty fantasy of hand strewn rafters
towering over me
sitting with a mighty heave
to hold the barn there
or was it the pigeons that gave me away to you?

With all my courage

the barn creaking as an ancient ark might,
I opened the wide doors and there
you, in the straw, sleeping.

Perhaps the bells I heard were your chains
I had grown familiar with
the church bells
tumbling up through the valley
on cold Sunday mornings,

or the old school bell in the yard
propped and posted, rusting
on a rotten wood frame
used in summer to call us from the field,

the peals of opening
and falling down,
down past the meadow
now green like a mumbling river
into the darkness of the swamp
past my traps and gunsights
my violence is also there!
following following
through handknit snow
under tired trees
over the battlefields of dead corn
where stalks had fallen
into jagged doomed positions
as a warrior would with
my spear in his chest.

I carried my violence with weary hands
the dogs angry with your smell,
And then as rain or snow,
you disappear.

After my search, wet, like ice
I sit on the old couch
in front of the stove
afraid to move because of cracking and melting,
dry my wet clothes.

They tell me,
the aunts and uncles
of the widows your wrath left behind
the hideous emptiness you caused
in your rashness.

But past my traps, dogs my search
my quest to this your simplicity
I bring compassion
and want to unburden your wrath
singing your story
lifting my hands waiting for the thaw
and the mud to trap you,

the mud to climb around your ankles
become a part of your flesh and hold you
through the parlor
with muddy boots
bringing you into the kitchen
in front of the stove
and then would we lift our heads
rattle our chains and laugh.

— STEVEN ROTH

"Did You"

Do you ever wonder —
Why hair grows on top your head
instead of the bottom of your foot?
Why your knee bends only one way?
Why dogs prefer fireplugs to flagpoles?
I do - - wonder, that is.

Do you ever ask yourself —
Why eyes are called eyes?
Why ears are called ears?
Why you have ten fingers and toes instead of nine?
I do - - ask myself, that is.

Do you believe —
That rivers would do better to flow upstream?
That fish would be better off if they could walk?
That frogs would replace dogs if they could bark?
I do - - believe, that is.

Do you ever wish —
You had leaves growing from your arms so you
could be a tree?
You were a bear so someday you could be a rug?
You had horns growing from your head so you
could be shot at in November?
I do - - wish those things, that is.

Are you worried about —
The price of grapes in Greenland?
Whether stick margarine tastes better and spreads
easier?
Whether or not you're sane?
I'm not - - sane, that is.

— ELMO IRWIN



TERRY BERLINGER

Someday

Someday we will walk by the sea.
Someday in the brisk cool morning
When the sun makes a pink halo
Over a blue green isle of foam,
We will walk by the sea.

Someday we will run along the shore.
Someday when the sun is hot
And miles of sugary sand call us
To run and be free in the wind,
We will run along the shore.

Someday we will love by the sea.
Someday in the coolness of the night
When the only sound is love
And the still soft swish of the waves,
We will love by the sea.

And the world will be ours alone.
And the soft stillness will surround us
Making us free to love as one
In a world we've made for only two,
A world that will never end,
Someday.

— NANCY L. NEITZ



Male Figure

YUKO NISHIDA

Where Do I Go From Here?

by
ELMO IRWIN

HAVE YOU NOTICED lately how hard it is to be a great man. Pick up a paper some time and look. How many times in the last month have you seen Abe Lincoln's name in the paper? Not too many, huh? I've been trying to be a great man all my life. People told me that in order to achieve greatness I must first do something spectacular to gain attention. So I tried.

I remembered reading somewhere in history about a man who stood up in his boat as he crossed the Delaware. It sounded silly to me, but it worked for him, so why not?

I didn't have a river near my home as wide as the Delaware, but there was a fairly wide fishing creek nearby. I borrowed an old wooden rowboat, and I hired a crew. We started upstream from where the men were fishing and came right down past them. I stood up in front of the boat and began shouting commands. "Ahoy, Matey, Cast that bowline starboard. Alas, ye rummies." (That's about all the naval talk I knew. I learned that from an Earl Flynn movie.) I must have really been impressive looking. All the fishermen stopped and stared at me. There wasn't one man on that creek who didn't have his eyes on me. My heart swelled with pride, and I held my head high as

we went through their fishing hole. Sure, they knew a great man when they saw one. Thus far my crew had been carrying out my orders beautifully, but then it happened. We hit a large stone just beneath the surface of the water, and we had a little accident. You probably think I fell out of the boat, but you're wrong. I fell back into the boat, and my foot went through the bottom and the boat sank. My crew had to swim ashore, but he wasn't too mad. I stood in the water for a few seconds just to show those fishermen that a great man was down but not out. But then I had to get out because they started yelling, "Get the hell out of there. What are you, a nut?" I thought to myself—sure, sure, kick a man while he's down. Just a few seconds ago, they were speechless while watching my magnificent crossing of Chess Creek. Now, those ungrateful fools are saying I belong in a funny farm. Funny farm, huh! I'll show them.

I spent all the next week trying to grow a mustache and practicing German. I had read about a guy in Germany before World War II who achieved greatness by giving speeches to the crowds of people who followed him. I combed my hair over my forehead, and squinted to get that wild look in my eyes.

I practiced in front of a mirror for a while and I was ready. I went down and climbed up on a monument that was in the center of town. I didn't know how I was going to attract a crowd, but you know, I didn't have any trouble at all. I yelled, "*Mein Kampf*, Lowenbrau and Dum Koff!" (That was about the extent of my German.) People were really coming around the monument now. Sure, I had them in the palm of my hand. I was just about to give a speech on the identification of poisonous and non-poisonous snakes when one of the guys in the crowd blurted out, "Hey, look, it's Lloyd Bridges from down at Chess Creek the other day. Remember?" Oh, no, not them again. I was desperate. I thought if I'd scream *Mein Kampf* they would be impressed. But when I said it one of the guys shouted, "Hey, you wouldn't talk so funny if you would shave that fuzz off your lip." Another one said, "Ya, what did you shave with, a hershey bar?" I was crushed. They had the whole crowd laughing at me. If I had known a German swear word, I certainly would have used it. I could still hear them laughing as I drove out of town.

I gave the town a few days to forget the incident at the monument. I didn't know quite what to do next. It was a toss up between two former European greats. It would either be England's little guy who smoked a big cigar and walked around holding two fingers in the

air, or the one from France who stood with his hand in his vest and wore his hat sideways. I thought of possibly combining the two, but decided against it. Those clowns in town would probably think I was Maurice Chavlier or Ringo Starr.

I had another idea. I knew of a cow pasture nearby that resembled the Little Bighorn. I bought a wig, a fake beard, a buck skin outfit, and a long sword. This time I was determined to do something spectacular. I put an ad in the local newspaper for Indians. The ad read:

INDIANS WANTED—Must have headdresses. Horseback riding not required. Come to Elmer Lezzer's cow pasture tomorrow at noon. Be dressed for work.

I spent all night shining my sword. Early the next morning I slipped into my buckskins and combed my wig. I went to the cow pasture a little early. The other guy that tried this had a whole cavalry unit, but I was going to do it alone.

I took my position at the bottom of the hill. I stood with one foot facing the hill and the other behind me. My sword was raised and ready for action. I stood like that for almost an hour, and my arm was getting tired. Finally, I saw them coming. They were strange looking Indians, all dressed in white outfits, and no headdresses either. I thought they were probably a new breed of Indians. They didn't carry bows and arrows either, but they had big nets instead. I was disappointed in them because they weren't whooping and hollering either. I thought

I probably should have specified that in the ad. Before too long they were on me. I fought magnificently for over an hour, but finally one of the braves slipped a net over me from behind. I was down, but not before a gallant fight.

I'm not sure whether I was a success or a failure that day, but I've got some great ideas for the future—if I can figure out a way to get out of this padded tee-pee these Indians are keeping me in. ■

Time

Time— snapping at my heels
Time— ticking, ticking, ticking
Time— laughing as it kills
Time— ticking, ticking, ticking
Coming, rushing, following
Onward, forward, pressing
Stop, stop, stop, stop,
But there is no stopping!
Crowding, pushing, closer
Onward, forward, smothering
Time— gnawing at my guts
Time— ticking, ticking, ticking
Maiming, mauling, mocking
Trampling, torturing, killing
Stop, stop, stop, stop
Time— ticking, ticking, ticking.

— MARIANNE WATERS

Timing a Timeless Time

What if time stopped
And all time became
A timeless time
In time

And I became you
And you became I
And we together traveled through
This timelessness time

And in time without time
We never stopped loving
And our youthfulness stayed youthful
And boredom was never boring

Having fun and joyful joy
In this time without time
To imagine this with you
Is but to dream

— H. ROBERT MENCER

I.

Millions of stars
stare at me in the nights
(let thousands of
teary rain drops drop
to me)
Amidst the hundreds of
peoples that swarm around
every sixty seconds of a time
Not worrying about a worry
or caring to stop and wish a
well to any soul Clustering
as the seeds of a fruit
and (being sucked from their
home by the lips) being spit
to the ground: and buried

II.

The rough brown weeds soon became
a rolling soft green. While gentle winds
seemed to sweep over the earth, caressing
the heart and soul of new blossoming
dandelions. The hers and hes of couples
walking arm in arm
(looking like a tangling array of limbs and branches)
walking in a soft downing
rain that washed the world
And while the rain fell
I ran
from the warm
to the street.

— H. ROBERT MENCER

ALONE

a loner
a lonesome loner.
gaiting along a mountain path
of emotions. smiling to yourself
without explaining why.
slipping and tripping and
grateful there's no one
to see.
romping like a child
after an eternity of rainy days.
you run.
running in all directions and all at once.
to reach the end is everything
you think.
finally . . .
glancing over your so-what shoulder—
you meet with a thousand questioning eyes
and you fall on the ground and
laugh like hell.

— ANNE DELYCURE

Somnambulist

in
a
down elevator.

Running
Underground.
Neophytic dilettante.
Naked underground runner.
I dreamt once i was alive there.
Naked. underground. running.
Groping fastidiously for a fictitious
fig leaf.

— ANNE DELYCURE

to my efficacious friend during halftime.

they said it couldn't be done
but you did it
because they said it couldn't be done
and then you say
but i did it because it's
what i want to do
and you do that until they say
it's being done
and then you say you don't because
that's doing it in.
and anyway you're doing something else
they said couldn't be done
but you're doing it because they said
it couldn't be done
and your garrulous game goes on
till some smart cat
deciphers your cryptogram of
book jacket banalities
and discovers you've memorized a
master plot on life.

— ANNE DELYCURE

The Silent Poet

Young lady looking through the dusty glass,
Soft hands that softly clasp behind your back,
What do you see? Does yellow Autumn cause
Your comely lips to lift in smile . . . provoke
The somber gaze of eyes to glow? Perhaps
your listless voice is lost . . . I hear no purr
of pleasure whispered while you watch. Perhaps
a secret pen records the browns, the golds,
The reds, the greens and fashions from the scene
Small verses that drift slowly with old rhymes . . .
Lines kept forgotten, locked away from view
In tissue sheltered by a vacant stare.

— JOHN WEHLER

Material

The world is a fascinating fantasy.
It is bizarre, grotesque and absurd.
Full of fancy, whim and daydream.
An endless prism of colored colors
And dazzling dazzles,
Floating through time and infinity,
Traveling in an indefinite vacuum.
Where nothing exists but
Air and airless bodies.
A single creation.
Where man is the sole soul.

— H. ROBERT MENCER



Margaret

CHRIS KREITLER

There Is Still Hope For Everyone

by
ELMO IRWIN

MY NAME used to be the Sad Green Giant. I was sad because I had no friends. When I was younger, oh, about 12 I guess, and not quite as tall as I am now, I suppose I was 25'9", I had some so-called "friends." I call them so-called "friends" because if they would have been true friends, I don't know why they would have gotten so mad at me for all I did. Here's what happened.

Some of the guys who lived in the Valley had a baseball team, and they let me be their bat-boy. (They said I was too big to play, but I was satisfied being the bat-boy.) One day during a very important game, it was the last of the ninth, 2 outs, and the score was tied 4-4. Our last hope came to bat. His name was Smokey Jones, our star pitcher. Smokey was a pretty good hitter, and all the guys were cheering for him to blast one. Just then, Smokey connected with one that left the park for a home run. The guys went wild. Everyone ran to home plate to congratulate him. They were jumping on his back, shaking his hand, screaming and shouting, "We won, we won!" They got me so enthused that I began jumping up and down and running around slapping Smokey on the back, and yelling, "we won, we won!"

The next day they told me that total damages to the park was in the amount of \$843.20, and the doctors said Smokey would be O.K. in a week or two. Gee, I was just being enthusiastic, that's all.

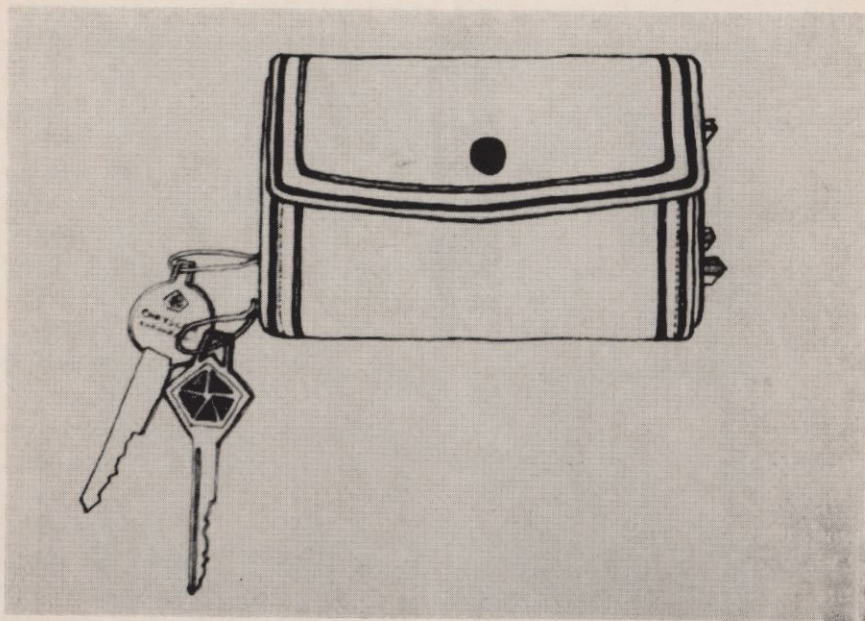
Well, anyway, that's the way my childhood went—one incident after another until finally I had no friends at all. As the years went by, I stayed to myself, then when I got a little older I met a guy who was about my size. His name was Theodore K. Kong. The people called him King, for short. King was a hard guy to describe. He had real hairy legs and arms, and an enormous chest, that he beat constantly with his fists. I never really figured him out, but we became friends. King taught me how to swing on bridges and climb on towers. We had great fun together. But then, I made a bad mistake. I taught King how to smoke cornsilk. He was O.K. at first, cornsilk was enough. But later he had to have something stronger. He began smoking tea leaves, ragweed, and eventually he got to the big stuff—banana peels. He would stay hopped-up on banana peels all the time. I begged him to stop, but he wouldn't listen. Then it happened. One night he took a bad trip on the peel. He thought all the buildings in New

York City were giant banana trees. He climbed 94 stories up the Empire State Building, and, as you've probably guessed, he fell. I used to blame myself for King's death—if only I hadn't started him on the weed.

But, that's all behind me now. As I said I used to be the Sad Green Giant. Now I am the Jolly Green Giant. It's all because of a girl I met on Manhattan Island.

I was wading in the ocean one day, thinking of what a useless life I'd had, feeling sorry for myself. When all of a sudden I look up, and there she was, just standing there with her arm extended calling me to her. I could see that she was

sad too, because she was carrying a torch for someone. I thought I could probably cheer her up, so I asked her out. She told me that she was on duty right then, but she would see me after midnight. I went back that night at 12:30 and she was waiting for me. We took our shoes off and waded in the ocean, and talked all night long. I'd never been this happy in my life. We've dated now for about a year. Last week I got a job for a TV show making advertisements and tonight I am going to ask her to marry me. So the next time you are watching television, watch for me. If I say HoHoHo, you'll know she said yes. ■



Keys

STEVE SENTE

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