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Table of Contents

Poems .... Anthony Andronaco .. 5

Max .... Wendell F. Clark 7

MAD but MAD .... Ruth Marie Schmitt .. 8

Twentieth Century Victorian .... Virginia Snee 11

"Sweet are the uses of adversity" .. Arthur A. Spengler .. 13

Fruit Birds of Lima .... Anthony Andronaco .. 16

The Snow-Bird .... Dolores Matelski 19

Abraham .... Donald Kemmerer 20

The Dance .... B. Richard Rutkowski 22

The Preparation .... Francis A. McGinty .. 28

Men, Moods and an Island .... Jack R. Phethean 30

The Keep .... Samuel M. Chambliss 32

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Max

Wendell F. Clark

Max was two years old and almost full grown. Standing twenty-four inches high, his tremendous weight of ninety pounds was effectively camouflaged by his long, rangy body. He had large brown eyes, a dark brown coat of short hair, and a bronze, white-splashed chest. Although he was a half-breed timber wolf, his only wolfish inheritance was his extremely long fangs.

I planned to make a coon dog out of him, if he had the ability to fight. A coon dog must be an excellent fighter, as the wild coon is a wily, powerful, and dangerous animal. Until now, I had deliberately kept Max away from the coon trails, for a savage, pain-maddened coon can kill a young, careless dog in a matter of seconds. However, it was time now for the test, and I turned him loose to roam the forests.

One hot summer day I heard Max baying not far away. Grabbing a rifle and an axe, I raced toward the sound, charging blindly through thick underbrush, heedless of the brambles and thorns that made long, red scratches on my arms and legs. I ripped my way through clinging grapevines, ducked under low grasping branches, and stumbled at last into a small clearing surrounding a large sycamore tree. Max was rearing up against the trunk of the tree, growling deep in his chest, his hackles standing out like porcupine quills. Laying down my rifle, I examined the tree trunk and picked off several long, gray, black-tipped coon hairs. Up in the tree I saw a large black opening about twenty feet above the first thick branches. I tested the keen edge of the axe with my thumb, measured my distance from the tree, and swung the axe with all my strength so that it bit its way through the soft bark into the hard, white timber. The intoxicating odor of freshly cut wood drifted out from the gash in the tree. My axe handle was greased with sweat. The notch deepened, the tree swayed and trembled, wood fibres stretched and snapped, and the tree crashed to the ground.

The coon tumbled out of the hole and landed in front of Max who was quivering and snarling with eagerness. For a second, green, hate-filled eyes stared into raging brown ones; then the dog hurtled forward. The coon reared back on his

haunches and, as scientifically as a professional boxer, slapped the dog with a powerful blow that bowled him completely over. Max leaped up, surprise and pain showing in his eyes. Blood poured from four long gashes on his nose. The grizzled, husky coon backed up against the fallen tree and waited. I cocked my rifle and raised it to a ready position. Max charged in again and the two animals whirled in a kaleidoscope of brown and gray. Max fought like a wolf, using his gleaming fangs in a slashing, swinging movement. As he was unable to parry every stab of those vicious, cutting teeth, the coon, in desperation, leaped to the dog's back and clung to him with tooth and claw. My finger tightened on the trigger until Max started rolling on the ground. Over and over he tumbled, the breath wheezing out of the coon's lungs each time the dog's heavy body rolled on top of him. The punishment was too great. The coon released his grip and fled for the safety of the trees. Making a long, low dive, Max rammed his head under the coon; his neck jerked savagely upward; the coon spun up into the air, twisting and turning, and fell into the wide open jaws waiting below him. Jaw and neck muscles bunched and bulged and strained; the coon screamed in agony as his spine shattered with a grisly, crunching sound.

In the small clearing, the only sound was the heavy panting of the tired coon dog.

MAD but MAD

Ruth Marie Schmitt

Charlie walked slowly up the steps of the sorority house and surveyed the neat lawn and the trimmed hedges.

Just like the sisters, he thought. Trimmed beyond all belief. Manicured lawns, bobbed hedges. What the hell . . . Open houses were open houses, and if he was going to be a wheel, he would have to be seen.

"Hello, won't you come in? It's nice to see you again. Make yourself comfortable." A girl stood by the door, graciously welcoming him.

"Hello. Thank you, I will. How are you this fine day? It's nice to vacation you I sorority perhaps," Charlie said.

He was working under a theory of his that no one at these affairs listens to what you say anyway.

"You say the sweetest things," she cooed.

Charlie walked into the hall and looked about him. Couples drifted about in animated conversation, and paused as they met other couples.

"Newport beach . . . mad people . . . really . . ."

" . . . she wore a French Bathing Suit . . ." The capital letters were actually spoken.

"Oh, but positively mad . . .!"

". . . tanned in splotches! Positively leprous! . . . but the maddest time . . .!"

Charlie walked to a sofa and plunked himself into it, in an advantageous position to be SEEN, and lit a cigarette.

No ash tray. Oh, the hell with it. Good for the rugs.

"Charlie, Darling!" It was Ann. She rushed across the room and skidded into the couch beside him. She was halfway through a sentence before she had settled down.

". . . and really the loveliest vacation I ever had! Up at Maine, and the maddest people! We swam and rode, and I got the loveliest tan on my back . . ." Charlie could have sworn she was about to tear the dress off to show him. " . . . and mad dances! I do love to dance!"

She said everything in this fashion, as if each event in her life were a daring feat. It lent vigor to her conversation, if nothing else.

". . . and you should have seen the things he did!" This in reference to someone Charlie did not know.

"Mad?" Charlie said.

"Positively MAD!"

"You're looking well," Charlie said. "I always admired your mustache," he added, applying his theory.

"Such a dear!" Ann murmured.

"I have a terrible thirst," Charlie said. "Where's the men's room?" The theory was becoming a principle.

"Right over there . . . ginger ale and ice cream."

Charlie smiled graciously. "Makes a marvelous tonic on a hot day."

He strolled over to the table and took a shot of punch. He glanced back at the couch and noted to his satisfaction that Ann had trapped a thin young man with horn-rimmed glasses—of the intellectual type. The young man was plainly suffering. Charlie sauntered out and rounded the archway to the living room. He stood leaning against the pillar and hummed a little tune a med student had taught him. It

was cheerful and comforting to him. A matron of house-mother proportions passed by in time to hear one of the more repugnant verses. She frowned in a housemotherly fashion, which is in no way like a motherly one.

"Elizabethan folk song," Charlie explained.

She smiled a smile which conveyed the idea of what the hell, it's cultural, and passed on into the living room.

A slim girl came up to Charlie and said, "Want to dance?"

"Madly," Charlie said. They slid onto the floor and undulated slowly.

"What name are you in, Miss College?" he asked.

The girl looked up and said, "I'm a major in Betty Snow. The name is New York City and I come from Liberal Arts. You?"

Charlie stopped dancing. "Will you marry me? My name's Charles Algernon Beckett, of sound mind and wind. Prospects good. I don't chew. I drink, I love you."

"Madly?"

"How else?"

"I'm pinned," she said.

"That," Charlie said, "makes me mad. Madly mad!"

"Don't fret. I'll probably be free in a couple of months. I'll see you then. Have you a pin?"

"Gamma O Gamma," Charlie said.

"Nice. I haven't got one of those yet."

"See you in a couple of months," Charlie said.

He strolled away, and as he passed the housemother, picked up the tune again. He quietly swung into the chorus:

His hand it was shaky, his skin it was sere,
His eyes were the color of leftover beer . . .

Outside, a cool breeze blew across the porch. The sun hung low behind the house and long shadows were cast by the tall trees. A golden glow hung over everything with all the street proclaiming that it was five-thirty of an autumn afternoon.

Charlie walked down to the Pit and ordered a beer.

"Busy today?"he asked the bartender.

"God, yes! Mad!"

"Bourbon," Charlie said.

"A mad crowd," said the bartender.

"Make it double," Charlie said.

Twentieth Century Victorian

Virginia Snee

As the blurred memory of yesterday assumes the peculiar attraction of all that is past, each of us thinks affectionately of a time or place to which he would gladly return. For me it would be the little country town where my mother was born and the old homestead my great-grandfather built. "All solid timber," Aunt Lou would say proudly. "He was a fine carpenter. All the Millers can turn a hand to anything."

My father's business required us to live in the city, but we spent many winter week-ends and all the summer months with my great-aunt in the country. The drive from town seemed endless to me and to my three-year-old sister. The minute we arrived, we tumbled out and bursting through the gate would run down the stone steps to the back garden. Hearing the car stop, Aunt Lou would straighten up from her hoeing, and shading her eyes with her hand, would look up toward the highway. Then she would lean her hoe against the apple tree and hurry to greet us.

The garden was Aunt Lou's chief concern, and she exhibited it proudly: holly-hocks, stiff as martinets along the stone wall, clumps of feathery cosmos, ragged bachelors' buttons, feather-wort prim as an old maid, the roguish kiss-me-over-the-fence. Below the flowers were trim rows of carrots and onions, sprawling crook-neck squash, and pole beans with their delicate, clinging tendrils. The two gnarled apple trees had long since ceased to bear; however, Aunt Lou considered them old pensioners because they had been planted by her father.

Beyond the garden lay a meadow, thick with long-stemmed violets in spring. The neighboring fringe of woodland appeared strangely silent and shadowy to our city-bred senses. Here were the fascinations of the unfamiliar: jack-in-the-pulpits and dog-tooth violets springing from the sheltered hollows, the pungent odor of flowering witch hazel mingled with the earthy smell of decaying leaves, a pheasant starting up before our feet with a loud whine or the rustle of a chipmunk scurrying through the underbrush.

With dusk came the elusive fireflies. Only hunger reenforced by my mother's voice wooed us from the tantalizing pursuit.

After supper, Aunt Lou would light the oil-lamp with a paper spill and lead the way upstairs. Each step twisted slightly, forming a cork-screw turn. The treads had been worn thin and smooth as glass through long use.

Placing the lamp on the round center table, Aunt Lou would pull her rocker within the lamp-light and begin crocheting. "The devil finds work for idle hands," she usually observed.

The parlor was always scrupulously neat and never rearranged except in summer, when the red and green Brussels carpet was removed and rag rugs were scattered over the bare floor. Uncle Alec's portrait leaned over the book-case with its faded bindings, surveying the room enigmatically from an ornate gilt frame. The room was sparely furnished: in one corner a black leather arm-chair, spool-back chairs lining the wall, a green mohair couch with a curving headrest, and on the small table by the couch a basket made of hemlock cones and lined with blue velvet. "Your Uncle Ed ran away from home to see them hang Blue Nose Mike. He was a famous highwayman—used to lie in wait for the stage just above the old Red Inn. Ed stuffed his shirt with cones from the hanging tree after it was all over. He always was a limb."

After I learned to read, Aunt Lou would inspect my hands to make sure they were clean before she unlocked the book-case and handed me Anderson's **Fairy Tales** or one of Nye's comic histories. I can see the cover of Anderson yet—a dull green lettered in gilt with a picture of Death stealing a child from its mother.

In winter, I liked to pull the hand-pegged stool close to the round nickel stove and watch the fire hissing and leaping behind the ising-glass panes. Across the room, the damask portieres swayed in the draft. The lamp flame projected our distorted shadows on their folds while half-seen faces seemed to peer from the shadows.

The peaceful security of a Victorian world captured my imagination. Here was the stability of an exsistence that ignored changing manners—the weather-beaten clapboard house behind a white-washed fence, sheltered in spring by fragrant lilacs and mock-orange; within, the musty smell of old wood, the acrid scent of kerosene, sunlight slipping through the yellowed lace curtains to caress the old mahogany and cherry furniture, the cherished possessions brought to America long ago, homespun blankets from Wales, English stoneware, the cumbersome German Bible

with its massive gold clasps. Aunt Lou had fashioned a way of life which suited her exactly, and she had no intention of changing.

A strong, spare woman of seventy odd years, she still rose at dawn to eat a frugal breakfast. Then she tied on her denim bonnet and garden apron and spent the morning weeding or hoeing until the mid-day heat drove her indoors. Hers was a proud poverty. When the wind found another crack in the old house, she simply stuffed the chink with a neatly folded paper. Often curt and brusque, she masked her deep affection for us under a blunt manner, yet she would stop in the midst of her chores to take my sister on her starched lap while I pulled the old stool to her feet. Then she would spin a web of reminiscence to capture our restless minds—the Gold Rush of '49, her grandmother's log cabin, or how great-great-grandmother knifed a deer. Sometimes she would pause and chuckle appreciatively at some thought we were too young to understand. Long-dead figures peopled the room, breathing again under her skilful touch. Through her eyes we glimpsed a vivid picture of an earlier, ruder time. The foot-fall of the past would echo through our lives long after she was silenced forever.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity . . ."

Arthur A. Spengler

Shellback in early nautical parlance was the name conferred upon those sailors to whom sailing on all of the seven seas had become commonplace. Today the term is not exclusive and refers to anyone, civilian or military personnel, who has made an equatorial crossing and has undergone the traditional treatment at the hands of a makeshift King Neptune's court.

I had not been a member of the ship's complement more than two days when I learned that an Order of Shellbacks existed. Lured on by the possibility that I might become a shellback, I asked one of the members of that revered organization for information concerning the treatment ac-

corded the polywogs in making the transformation. He related the grim details with embellishments. After I had listened to him for some time, I concluded he had taken advantage of a recruit's credulity. I questioned another shellback and came to the further conclusion that all shellbacks were unduly chauvinistic and sadistic.

The assignment of our escort division to North Atlantic lanes seemed to discount the possibility of my ever becoming a shellback, much to my dissatisfaction. However, Dame Fate smiled benignly, and on returning homeward, the DE 243 was ordered detached to further a search for marauding German submarines operating in "wolf pack" fashion in the South Atlantic area. A certain number of submarines and a "cow" or supply submarine constituted a pack.

Just as soon as this information was released to the crew they became jubilant over the prospect of having liberty in Brazil and becoming shellbacks enroute. All of the crew were elated over the first prospect; the shellbacks were particularly enthusiastic about their part in helping the polywogs realize the latter.

As the distance to the equator decreased, the activity on board increased. The eight shellbacks we had on the ship held conclaves headed by a chief boatswain's mate who had been at sea so long that the salt content in his blood was unusually high, a condition (so he said) responsible for his insatiable thirst and fondness for liquor. All of the apprehensive polywogs, as casually as possible, of course, watched the carpenter shop with uneasiness as the carpenters busily fashioned brickbats according to the specification given them by the shellbacks. Any reference to the sturdy and rough-surfaced brickbats was laughed off nervously.

We crossed "the line" about 1000 (10 A.M.) of April 4, 1944, and the ceremony began. King Neptune and his court assembled on the fantail soon after the crossing, and to be trite, I never saw a more motley crew. King Neptune was the squint-eyed, squat, and smirking chief bos'n who was a burlesque counterpart of that royal denizen of the deep. A mop had been transformed into a wig and the handle from which the mop had been taken served as his sceptre, another of those wartime economies. His robe was a mattress cover which had been pressed (unpressed) into service and his footwear was a pair of shower shoes. His maids-in-waiting contributed their bit to the comic scene with their tresses of unraveled hemp, generous and nonartistic applications of make-up (we never did find out who

owned the lipstick and rouge), exaggerated padding in the appropriate places, abbreviated mattress covers for skirts, and hairy, muscular underpinnings. Davy Jones, the court scribe, wore something different—a dyed mattress and a mop wig. The court doctor wore the remainder of the ship's costume wardrobe—a barber's coat, dungarees, and make-up. The four remaining members of the court were shirtless and wore on their heads handkerchiefs reminiscent of pirate headgear. It was a halloween on the high seas.

With a "holesome and colorful" smile, the result of years of negligence and tobacco chewing, and a grating "Court is in session," King Neptune officially opened the proceedings.

Officers were the first to be tried and all of the enlisted men crowded around expectantly since the shellback who was designated to wield the brickbat in this part of the ceremony had promised all of us that he would be very enthusiastic and conscientious about his task. Each of the officers was arraigned and found guilty on a given number of ridiculous charges. As each defendant received his sentence and the execution of that sentence, the enlisted men grinned and cheered as discreetly as possible. After all, we couldn't be too overt in our approval; the "gold braid" would be in charge again after the ceremony.

After the initiation of the officers there was a brief pause while arrangements were made for the mass initiation of the enlisted men. All men except those who were necessary for the ship's operation were "piped" on deck. Later the men on watch were relieved to participate in the ceremony. We queued up on the port side of the ship and awaited the signal. While waiting we were sprayed gratuitously and generously with hoses to prepare us for the first obstacle, a system of ropes about three feet high under which each of us had to crawl. Stationed between these lines at painful intervals were the leering subordinates of King Neptune who looked even more formidable with those brickbats. In the process of bending to run this gauntlet, there was one point of our water-soaked anatomy that made a splendid target.

As each of us straightened or tried to straighten after crossing under the last line, he was pinioned against an inclining table and the doctor went to work. An electric shock from the wired table was inducement enough for each mouth to open. The good doctor took advantage of all openings and shot a fiery concoction into each with a reconverted grease gun. Then his two aids came up fast with

the lower end of the table and said polywog was catapulted backward into a vat of salt water. Each shellback was as determined to have the polywog stay in despite the latter's persistent efforts to get out. Each polywog was helped out in short order, though, in order to make room for the next somersaulting figure.

The salt water bath ended the initiation and the ceremony was over. For the next few days there was "standing room only" for the newly acclaimed shellbacks. We consoled ourselves by saying that things could have been worse, and further, we would enjoy sweet revenge on the next crossing.

Didn't I tell you that shellbacks were sadists?

Fruit Birds of Lima

Anthony Andronaco

Have you ever seen a "fruit bird"? He is a little fellow, dirty and unkempt, disdainful, and at the same time afraid of law and order. The world is against him; he has very often neither mother nor father, no one at all to smile at him, to pat him on the head, to make him warm with love. The little "fruit birds" haunt the open market, La Parada. Their fast fingers soon learn to work unseen as the fruit leaves the stands and vanishes into the long folds of their gypsy-like hats, for hunger is a merciless teacher. Rowdy play, movies, fisticuffs, petty larceny fill their days, and to the casual eye the "fruit birds" look perfectly happy.

Senor Bernardino Gines, Indian and teacher (in the finest sense of the word) is a man of great heart, a man not given to looking at the world casually. He suffered to see the buffeting life was giving these little human ships that had lost their rudders. All of his instinctive Indian tenderness rose to the surface and reached out to them, just as in his youth in the Andes village of Muquiyauyo his mother's love reached out and gathered in similar lost souls, orphans of life's storm, or, better still, her own words for them, "Little hearts of mine." Love and tenderness are indeed a Gines family attribute, an Indian attribute.

But how to reach the shy, elusive, distrustful, and seemingly self-sufficient "fruit birds"? Senor Gines resolved to

try. He walked often about the market place and through the streets, slowly breaking the ice by engaging the young ones in short conversations. It was not a task for one day, or one week, or even a month. One day he hit upon an idea to speed up the process; he bought a football.

The "fruit birds" were startled. Could someone actually be thinking kindly of them, enough even to buy them a football? Naturally they were suspicious, but, more naturally still, they were touched. Their hearts beat a little warmer, came a little closer to the surface. Senor Gines took courage, felt keenly this slight change. He talked more freely to them; he joined them in their games and shared their childish pride in the new ball. From the depths of his understanding heart he sent out to them all the tenderness he felt, and the response was coming, slowly but surely. The boys listened to him; they saw the wisdom of his words, first when he pointed out the desirability of fair play in their football game, which up to that point they had treated as a free-for-all, and gradually more and more as he branched out into other subjects, planting always the seed of truth in them, and nursing the delicate seedlings along with understanding.

Then came the first step on the road back, an athletic club. With the patience native to his race Senor Gines worked and waited. A year passed, a year of many small changes in many small hearts, until one day he handed the boys his dream—their own school. They pounced on it with all the hunger and yearning of their little souls . . . only . . . only . . . could they be sure? Could it be possible that the school would not have barred windows and uniformed guards? Life was still a matter of grab and run. Could they safely let down all their defenses so soon?

Behind the scenes Senor Gines had been busy. At long last his campaign before the authorities of the Ministry of Public Education bore fruit. For his dream school he could have a bare lot out in San Miguel, five kilometers away from Lima. Joyfully he carried the news to his ninos (already he was calling them his children).

But still the demon of doubt gnawed at the "fruit birds". They wanted so much to trust and to believe, but they must make sure. So they held a council. With an efficiency far beyond their years they sent forth a reconnaissance squad, gave them definite orders: Look over the situation; go to San Miguel; make a full report. The dream of Senor Gines was hanging by a thread, but the thread was strong.

Hours later the squad came scrambling back. The report was written all over their faces, favorable! It was hard to tell who was more happy, the group of boys or Senor Gines. Now things really started to hum; plans and activities filled their days, and they threw themselves into the project with all the fervor of youth. Twelve happy, childish hearts beat in tune with the big, gentle heart that was leading them on to a brighter tomorrow.

May 1, 1945! The big day, the day they would go to their "school", would it never arrive? Senor Gines smiled; some day he would show his **ninos** the wisdom of patience. And so the days passed, dragging slowly by, one by one, until finally all the world turned over one more page in the calendar of time.

At last, THE DAY! A little cloud tried to darken their horizon. May 1st, workers' holiday, no transportation! But how could such a trivial thing dampen such high spirits! A car was produced, as if out of thin air, and off went the first six boys with their happy teacher, mats, mattresses, and pieces of timber stuffed all about them. No less gaily, and likewise loaded down with materials, the remaining six set off on foot.

Even Bobie, their devoted little mongrel, raced around in pure joy. He'd been their constant companion, their guardian through many dark and danger-filled nights in La Parada. True to his breed, he asked no questions, needed no explanations. He loved his little masters, and they plainly had given their hearts to him in return. That was enough for Bobie; whatever waited in the future for the "fruit birds", good or bad, he'd share it with them.

The happy band trooped into San Miguel. There it was, just as the good man had told them, the fine, wide, empty field. But it was not empty for long. Within the space of a few hours many eager, though unskilled, childish hands had coaxed a rude cabin into shape. Senor Gines fervently wished his savings could have allowed him to buy more than just these bare necessities.

But for the "fruit birds" the happy tomorrow was already dawning. At long last, a home, a blessed spot where they really belonged, where they didn't have to kick out at life and breathe the air of fear.

A great heart had made a great beginning.

The Snow-Bird

Dolores Matelski

Red, all red, a burst of flame
Blending from scarlet to red again
The tanager, of colored fame.

Herald of Spring, yet Winter's child
What are you doing here all alone
Far from your fellows and home beguiled?

Down from some vast Acadian plain
Following a snowflake, then the rain,
Come to rest at my window pane.

Down from the pine-tree's high-pointed tower
Down from the hidden, branch-covered bower.

Down from untrodden Acadian steeps
Where emerald forests descend in the deeps,
That, silent and still, are as dark under noon
As when they lie darkling in light of the moon.

Where aurora burst forth in a spectrum of light
To deck in bright glory the goddess of night;
Where icicles hang from the crest of the moon
And new fallen stars form a frost-laced lagoon.

Out of the land of the Milky Way
Where bright-ringed, bright-winged creatures play,
Out of the land of the midnight sun
To the land of End, your journey's done.

What was the call that lured you on
From the snow-topped castle, house of dawn?
Was it a winter's pleasure trip?
What may the earth-bound make of it?
—Unless you came this way to see
My artificial Christmas tree!

Abraham

Donald Kemmerer

Nobody ever calls Abraham, "Abe". "I've been called Abraham for eighty years; and if it's been good enough for everybody else, you can call me Abraham, too." Other than his name, he is most proud of his bristling white moustache. He says that he shaved it off only once since it grew there sixty years ago. Abraham is heavy now, but his body shows a heritage of sturdy strength and the marks of a robust life. When he laughs, which isn't too often, his ruddy face reminds you of Saint Nicholas. Believing that only the extravagant waste money on new clothes, Abraham wears his until they are completely useless. Only under severe wifely pressure will he get a new suit or hat. His shoes go to the shoemaker every few months for new soles—he never gets another pair.

Abraham was born and reared in the Dutch country of Pennsylvania, on a farm near Reading. His parents were native Americans; but they, like all their neighbors, spoke the local mutilated German. They worked hard from sunrise to sunset on their few acres. And every Sunday they walked miles to the quaint Reformed Lutheran church. The church, with its hard pews and stern elders, impressed Abraham when he was very young. Throughout his life, the philosophy of his church has been his philosophy, her discipline—his. When he married he moved to a mining town near Wilkes-Barre. There he struggled to buy property with most of his stipend from the railroad. Life was easier after he became an engineer and ran the train between Wilkes-Barre and Sayre.

Abraham has many prejudices, as most old men have; but he is a devoted supporter of his family, his church, and the Republican party. Sixteen years of Democratic rule have just about ruined his faith in the political sagacity of the American public. Instead of criticising them, he slowly shrugs his shoulders and says, "Well, I guess everybody has their own buggern way."

Now that every man considers himself an amateur psychologist, Abraham will probably become known as an introvert. He belongs to a number of organizations, but tends to stay on the fringe of every group. When he was younger he argued at great length with his family and friends. Per-

haps if he had had the opportunity he would have become a famous jurist. But now he merely runs a stocky hand through his heavy white hair and remains comparatively calm.

Sometimes as he sits alone with a cigar in his hand and his glasses pushed up on his forehead, his mind wanders back to the days when he was running Number 10 to Sayre. Armed with a big oil can he inspected his engine, climbed aboard, nodded to the fireman, and with a hiss of steam pulled the long train out of the station. Hundreds of people were depending upon him. He knew. Miles of rails raced by and Abraham kept staring through black-rimmed goggles at the track ahead. The station was in view. He slowed down and chugged to a stop. The "Flying Dutchman" had kept the schedule.

As he smiles, he wonders why nobody understands the thrill of railroading any more, of schedules to be kept and emergencies to be handled.

Sometimes, after he has helped his wife with the supper dishes, he stomps down the cellar steps and saws wood for the coming winter. When the beams of a glaring electric bulb catch on his silver spectacles, you think he should be carving toys somewhere in the Black Forest. He is a typical product of nineteenth century America—a German peasant in appearance and religion, but the foundation of our country in his industry and love of freedom.

The Dance

B. Richard Rutkowski

(Said he from far away,
—What makes that fire in your soul?)

There is strange music in my soul . . .
it is there . . . in the night, in the quiet . . .
music strange that fills my mind . . .
rhythm strange that whirls me in the mists of thought . . .
insinuating melody that lifts me to the night
dancing, sweeping through the void . . .
always the dance . . . the dance!

Dance Eternal

Fantastic figures in the dark,
Swirling, sweeping bodies
Swinging, singing
In the
Dark.

Dance—
Dance, Dance!
Eternity!
What is there for
One who can only
Watch, calling,
Crying!
What

Is there that I, who in the dark,
Watching, wishing, may
Hope for? Hope for?
Dance—Dance,

Dance!

(Said he from far away,
—I see no dancers. There is only here
A barren landscape—empty.)

In my soul there is a dance . . .
the shadow figures dance the dance . . .
beneath the cold white melody . . .

Dance Nocturnal

An eerie moon
And a shrieking wind
And gold-silver-green clouds boiling overhead,
And the dancers come.

The dancers come and swing and shout,
They raise their voices in a song
That gives itself to darkness.
The dancers sing
Their wild
Song.

I look and see
In the purple light.
The mad-free-gay forms dancing by the moon.
Then the moon is dark.

The dancers stop and fall and weep,
Their fearful weeping fills the night.
They do not know they can
Not dance for there
Is no
Moon.

(Said he from far away,
—The rhythm of your dance is evil.
But the fire in your soul!
What do you see?)

I see the dance! within my brain
the dancers whirl beneath the moon . . .
I hear the song in rhythm strange . . .
I whirl through space and dance the dance . . .

Dance Fantastic

It is a shriek of color
When the moon
Stealthily breaks through
The somber night-clouds.

Often have I seen them—
The half-lighted forms
Dancing in the night landscape.
The rocks are white and moon-luminous.
And the far-away figures dance
With wide-flung arms
And supple steps,
In broken rhythm
Of music wild.
They sing and shout.

Now they go,
Rhythm changing,
Into whirls, into spins.
Dancers strange step and swirl
In a dance wild and free.

Tempo slow, graceful though,
Slowly mounts. Faster now,
Swinging free, twirling fast
Whirling high dancers lithe
Step and twirl strut and swirl
Twisting turning
Swaying swinging
Singing spinning
Dipping dancing
Dancing dancing
Dancing dancing—

And their wild song
Is a hideous laugh.
A laugh that sways and curls
To the wild rhythm
And rocks the moon-quiet landscape.

The shadows dance
A mimic dance
In silence.

(Said he from far away,
—What strangeness this that has you chained?)

I sit and think . . . and in my thoughts
the melody is wild . . . the rhythm loud!
and I hear a song . . .

Dance Melodic

Walking alone 'mid
The moon-bathed rocks
I saw some dancers
Who shouted thus—

The world is spinning on its axis
Though the stars remain unchanged.
Won't you join us in our dancing,
While the gaunt white fiddler plays?

And the strange forms, though
Drunk with dancing,
Whirled once again to
The tune of this—

You who are living, doing, loving,
Though the others go on dying,
Won't you join us in our dancing,
While the gaunt white fiddler plays?

Some stopped, falling, while
The rest, unheeding,
Danced in a frenzy,
Swinging, singing—

Days will go though the days are coming,
Ere the universe is done.
Won't you join us in our dancing,
Still the gaunt white fiddler plays!

(Said he from far away,
—The melody of evil sings!
The rhythm is corrupt!
Leave off the dance!
Be sane—be free.)

I see the dance! the dance . . . the dance!
I swing and shout! the dance . . . the dance!

Dance Ritual

Green-eyed goddess
With a heart of stone
Watches all the dancers
With her wicked stare.
Wild and free
In exultation
Round and round
'Mid the flames so cruel . . .
Beat, beat, beat,
Music wild,
Throb, beat, beat,
By the flames . . .
Round and round,
Ecstasy
In their dance.
Flames rise high
To their death.
Flickering highlights
On the slim, lithe shapes,
A fat, cruel goddess
Sits upon her throne.
Round and round
In determination . . .
Wild, disjointed
In a dance so cruel . . .
Throb, throb, throb,
Dancers wild,
Beat, throb, throb,
By the flames.
High and high!
Jubilant
Flames roar high.
Dancers dance
To their death.
Beat, beat, beat,
Quiet, faster,
Louder, faster,
Faster faster,
Beat, beat, beat,
Faster faster faster!
Beat, beat!
Beat beat beat beat!
Beat, beat!
Beat beat beat beat!
Done.

(Said he from far away,
—This is not true,
This is not real,
Leave off the dance, beware the night!
Live in the sun, live of the world!)

I see the dancers now devoid
of the masking of the night . . . they dance
naked in the sun . . .

Dance Methodic

The thoughts march by in a martial order,
Step to the beat of a throbbing drum.
The thoughts slide by in a pattern fashion,
Dance to the rhythm of a pulsing brain.

Stepping, starting,
Dancing, dipping,
Arms precise in dreamed of angles,
Graceful movements all in order.

And all alike in a dreadful measure
Trample the dreams of a soaring mind.
The thoughts push down all the fleeting fancies
Leaving a dead, only marching soul.

Fighting, struggling,
Climbing higher,
One intent on joyful freedom,
Soaring dreams, not deadening order!

—Slowly—slowly, intent on freedom,
This is the end of the dancing horde.
Going—going, no more to trample,
This is the birth of a flying soul!

Higher, higher,
Onward! Living!
No longer chained in rhythmic pattern.
Soaring higher—dreaming, dreaming . . .

(Said he from far away,
—Be done with them!
Slay the enticing rhythm!
Dischord the melody—destroy the dance!)

The sun shines on my face . . . I am immersed
in the pureness of the light . . .

Dance Mundane

Gracefully, orderly, dance in the sun!
Naked forms joyfully dance in the sun!
Dance in the world in the world of the sun
Dance of the sun in the world of the sun
Dance in the life of the world and the sun
Dance with the life in the heat of the sun
Dance in the sunlight of the living world.
Dance by the side of the stagnant pool
Dance in the midst of the putrid swamp
Dance in the clutch of the grasping vine
Dance with the snake as he slides through slime
Dance with the life of the foul breath
Dance with its gorging, breeding, eliminating
Dance with its dying in the stinking mud.
Dance to its startling cries of pain
Dance to its animal sounds of love
Dance to its passion that belches from the mire
Dance to its dying in the stinking mud.
Dance for the choking stifling life
Dance for the clutching killing life
Dance for its sweating, corrupt competition
Dance for its dying in the stinking mud.
Dance with the life! Dance with the life!
Dance! Live!
Dance.

(Said he from far away,
—Where is the fire in your soul?)

The Preparation

Francis A. McGinty

I see before me in the morning mist a huge oxblood-colored mountain of metal, battered and grimy from punishment by torrents of rain, blizzards, sub-zero weather and the continual flood of coal dumped into its mouth.

This is a coal preparation plant, the very backbone of the anthracite industry, the source of the industrial might of the state of Pennsylvania. It changes raw material, coal, into a product which is necessary to all America as well as the rest of the world.

As the early morning sun clears away the last of the haze, this giant comes to life. I hear the rumble of shafts within its huge body, the clash of gears followed by the eerie screech of metal upon metal as the dragline crawls lazily up the incline to the very top of the breaker and follows itself back to its base, one continuous line, up and down, groaning and clawing at the coal in its bosom. I hear a sharp blast and to the left of the dragline I see a stubby, pot-bellied locomotive frantically pushing a long line of cars, puffing out great gusts of smoke and ashes under the terrible strain, swaying dizzily from one side to the other; with an exhausted effort it reaches the dragline. There is a crash and a thud as a car is turned upside down by a rotary dump and its contents tumbled into the dragline and slowly drawn up to the top of the breaker. As it reaches the top, the car disappears from sight and I can only imagine, from the terrible crunching, the horrible fate of the coal as it is chewed and devoured by this mighty giant.

In front of the plant stands another building of red brick about one hundred feet long and fifty feet high. From its roof seven massive steel columns rise to the top of the breaker. It is the boiler house which creates the steam and electric power to operate the breaker. To the left a maze of tracks scuttles in all directions, carrying empty cars back to the mines and bringing loaded cars to replace them.

Everywhere I see men running about like restless flies, throwing switches, shouting warnings to pedestrians, scattering sand on the tracks to give the locomotives friction.

Suddenly everything seems to settle back and relax. The eerie screaming dies away to a dull rumble, the men slow down to a lazy walk, the locomotives sway gracefully back for more coal, and the dragline hums a quiet, jerky tune, broken only by the thud and crash of another car being dumped.

Another day in the coal industry has begun.

Men, Moods and an Island

Jack R. Phethean

Tuesday, November 30, 1944.

Only five months have passed since we landed on this tiny, forgotten, poisonous island, but I feel as if I have been here forever. I have come to dread that moment each morning when I awake to face another useless day of boredom and endless waiting. I hate this steaming jungle prison; I loathe its monotony, its cruelty, and its patient calm. I hate it, but I fear it, too. I am afraid of the way it can turn the chemicals of a man's mind inwardly upon himself to break him down.

A few minutes ago, the warm breeze rippling over the island dislodged a coconut from its insecure hold on the mother tree. It thumped solidly on the ground in front of my tent, rolled itself over and over as if seeking a comfortable position in which to rest, and settled back to await the action of the forces that will turn it into a living tree. Tomorrow morning a member of the company "police" detail will dispassionately pick it up and add it to the growing mound of others of its kind that is being built up on a barren strip of sand. The coconut will struggle to keep its existence; it will send out strong, green shoots that will search ineffectually for the friendly earth. Finally, exhausted by its hopeless labors, it will abandon itself to the slow processes of decay. It will rot on this brooding little island just as the minds of the men who are here are rotting.

I am going to cheat the island of a victim tonight; before I go to sleep, I will bury the coconut in the earth where it will have a chance to live.

Wednesday, December 1, 1944.

Joe Wilson died this afternoon; he is free from this damned place. The typhus fever epidemic that has been adding long lines of newly-made crosses to the cemetery on the mainland swept Joe up in its feverish arms and crushed the breath from his lungs. Cardillo and I went to the emergency field hospital early this morning to see if his condition had improved during the night. When we asked the dull-eyed charge-of-quarters if we could visit Joe, he

shrugged his shoulders and wearily said, "You might as well, because it'll be the last time you'll be able to." He was right.

Thursday, December 2, 1944.

The men in the company are listless and sullen; they despise each other, and they despise themselves. Their friendly arguments have turned into bitter quarrels, and some have become too apathetic to raise enough spirit to quarrel. If we are not moved soon, God help us!

Tonight I am going to slip quietly down to the beach where I can free myself for awhile from the invidious fog that hangs over the camp. There, where a narrow strip of sand is a bone-white border between the uneasy sea and the black mass of tropical vegetation, I can project my soul—what remains of my soul—over the watery barrier to the familiar world that is so far away.

Friday, December 3, 1944.

This cursed island is my real enemy in this war.

Saturday, December 4, 1944.

It seemed inconceivable that a man as carefree and happy as "Tex" Dillard could go insane, but he did. Late last night, when the men in his tent were preparing to go to bed, he made the startling announcement that he was Jesus Christ. The island must have chuckled at that. I went with the detail that took him over to the hospital on the mainland. He was calm and quiet on the trip, and when we turned him over to the hospital authorities, he blessed us. His blessing is still echoing in my mind like the far-away sound of a cry for help from the depth of an impenetrable canyon.

Sunday, December 5, 1944.

Captain Rogers called company formation late this afternoon. He told us that we are going to be a part of the task-force that is forming for a "push" on the Philippines. The period of waiting is over; at last there is hope.

The island is strangely restless tonight; it is angry, because it knows that I am escaping. There may be many more islands for me along the way home, some of them just like this one, but I can face them with a new confidence after having conquered this place. I have burst out from the cocoon of hate and fear and waiting that has been irresistibly spun around me. I am free.

The Keep

Samuel M. Chambliss

The box arrived the day Frank became an entry on a filing card. The police told me that as no trace of him had been found for the two weeks following his disappearance he was now only one of the countless thousands who are swallowed up by society every year. At the time, I was sitting in my meanly furnished room deciding which of my few remaining possessions I would take to my old friend at the pawnshop down the block. Breaking into the writing game isn't as easy as it appears. I know.

"This little thing cost me $1.64 C.O.D. charges," yelled Mrs. Mervine as she waddled into the room, dwarfing the small package she held in her hands. (For a landlady she looks more like a retired bricklayer; I like to pay my rent on time. Tonight I couldn't even afford the $1.64 to pay for the box.) I tried to tell her I'd give her half now and the rest the first of the week, but I guess she knew me better than I wanted her to and refused. It took me a quarter of an hour to convince her that if she didn't give me my mail I could have her arrested for obstruction of a government service. Mrs. Mervine didn't get beyond the fifth grade—poor woman.

The first thing that caught my eye about the plainly wrapped parcel, was the return address: 118 Park Terrace—Frank's address. Now that sounds like a swank place, right up with all the bluebloods; but then Frank is, or was, a blueblood himself. Even though we are only second cousins he has always looked up to me as an older brother, why I don't know. He has too much money to my way of thinking. His collection of medieval arms, weapons, and historical data is world famous, but when one can afford to spend a fortune for a rusty old sword, why shouldn't it be. Every once in a while he sends some of his worn-out relics to me for a present, but the cancellation on this package was a week after he disappeared.

Maybe I should read the letter the address is written on, I thought. Inside the envelope was a letter signed by Frank's secretary saying that just before Frank was missed she was given orders to send the enclosed articles to me if anything should ever happen to him.

Well, what am I supposed to do with it—be reminded of Frank for the rest of my life? Of course, it might have something worth a couple of bucks in it; he certainly has enough valuable junk up there on Park Terrace. With these thoughts I shook off the wrapping paper and was met by the odor of musty leather, and another smell almost too evasive for description. Something like the smell of a long closed house, it somehow was an incredibly ancient odor; dampness, rotting wood and clamminess all seemed combined. Sitting before me was an ancient leather box complete with brass-bound corners. The whole was impossibly scarred and worn, seemingly ready to crumble into dust at a touch. The apparently useless rusted hasp was well cared for, however, and yielded readily to the pressure of my now shaking fingers.

This should contain something valuable, I thought. Perhaps it is the coffer in which some great lady of bygone days kept her jewels. Maybe there is even an old diamond or two in it—now that's just what I need, to get what I want out of life. Frank wasn't such a bad guy after all. But with the raising of the lid all these ideas vanished; inside was nothing—at least that would be worth anything to me. The inside of the coffer was divided into two parts by a strip of leather covered by some kind of very soft material. As even I must admit, the larger part contained the most beautifully scaled and fashioned castle I have even seen. Judging from what little I know, it was of the type built around the 14th century in France. I lifted it gently out of its box and was immediately struck by its weight. Being no more than nine inches by nine, and possibly seven high, it weighed almost fifteen pounds.

I might have known, I thought. He wouldn't send me anything worth while, not even as a last gift. I certainly can't sell this for very much. Of course it is a beautiful piece of workmanship. I've never seen a more detailed model—why the tiny stone blocks making up the walls seem to be individually cut and mortered. It must have taken years to build. Even the towers at the corners of the square formed by the walls seem to have been built just as they would be if the thing had been full sized. The battlements might swarm alive with the armored men of another day. But to my eyes the most striking detail of the structure was the donjon, or keep, rising in the center of the area between the walls. As the last place of refuge in the ancient castles, the keep is higher and more strongly built than the walls themselves; even in this miniature—the keep was perhaps

an inch higher than the walls and seemed unyieldingly strong and massive. The structure was remarkably accurate; even the tiny ladder rising out of the fosse surrounding the keep seemed as though placed there by some minute carpenter.

Then, still looking for something more important to me than the miniature castle, wonderful as it was, I turned my attention again to the coffer which had contained the model. Reaching into the smaller compartment, my fingers returned with a weird-looking fragment of a substance resembling glass. Evidently at one time part of a larger piece, this fragment was broken jaggedly in a rough elliptical shape. On the whole it looked much like a convex lens, but a very useless one, resembling glass which has been subject to intense heat and become twisted and contorted. Running at all angles and depths were countless irregular cracks and flaws. At first glance its black opaqueness seemed impenetrable; then, for some reason, I attempted to use it as one would a magnifying glass, and somehow the countless minute lenses created by the contorted surface and the inner flaws made it completely transparent. As it happened, I found myself peering through the lens at the castle. The glass magnified the model, enlarging it until I found myself engulfed by its own vastness. As I looked longer my eyes began to play tricks and my head began to swim, as it does when one concentrates too long on the rails moving swiftly past a train window. Suddenly the whole castle was rushing upwards to engulf me. I would be battered to pieces against its battlements. In terror I dropped the lens and, for a second, I seemed to be suspended in mid-air.

When I regained my senses I found myself seated in my chair, with the castle before me on my desk. The lens was lying against the wall of the keep where it had evidently fallen when I let go of it. I picked it out, and as near as I could tell neither had been damaged.

What strange kind of optical illusion have I just experimented with, I thought to myself I wonder where Frank picked this up. Above all, why should he want it sent to me? But just then my gaze was caught by something in the model, something was not in harmony. At first I could not discover what it was, but then I saw in the corner, formed by the keep and the gallery which led from it to the north wall—just where one of the corners of the lens had hit—an irregularly shaped blob darker than the bottom of the fosse. Seemingly, some small insect had been crushed by the lens when it fell, but what arrested my gaze was the crimsonness of the

speck. I looked through the desk for my powerful reading glass and then remembered that it had gone to the pawnshop along with the rest of my things.

Something, I don't know what, was driving me, forcing me to action. Impelled by an ever increasing conviction-intuition, hunch—call it what you will, I had to find out, by any means possible, if that crimson smudge on the granite of the fosse was, or was not, human. I cursed myself as a crazy fool. After all, it was nothing but a remarkably accurate model and the glass was a mere optical illusion. There were countless insects and bugs capable of making such a crimson mark—one just happened to be there when the lens fell. But I had to know for sure; the only thing I had which would magnify was the lens. Dare I try it again? How could an optical illusion and a crimson blob terrify a full grown man? Fortified by this thought, I once more peered through the awful glass. Once more the terrific magnification, the rushing motion. The castle charged upwards at me, the air whistled in my ears; all time seemed transfixed as I shot through space, and the swirling, revolving, shimmering castle cannoned terribly at me. Again I felt horror but I clung to the lens, trying to keep it focused on the pointed roof of the keep racing ever nearer and nearer Suddenly there was a blast of light . . .

The floor felt cold and hard—Mrs. Mervine was having the rug cleaned—that was it. I had fallen senseless to the floor of my room. But the surface was stone, not wood. Where was I? All around me rose walls, cold granite walls; above me was a cloudless, colorless, endless void, infinitely vast. The sun beat down, blinding me with its brilliance. I was lying next to a wall which rose sheer and straight up into the vastness of what must be the sky. I seemed to be in some kind of ditch out of which rose a tower. There was a silence around me, an unearthly silence; there were no cries of birds, no wind, nothing, nothing but infinity, an infinity of silence. The air seemed full of the same smell I noticed in my room when I was unwrapping the package. Suddenly I knew where I was; the castle wasn't a model, the glass wasn't an optical illusion; I was there—I was in the castle. I was terrified, me, a human being in a castle nine inches by nine inches. Somehow I had become part of another age, another world, doomed to die in this impenetrable silence. Then I remembered the crimson blob by the gallery. Staggering to my feet, I walked and crawled around the ditch, until then, at the final step, I knew what I had set out

to discover—it was human or what was once human; there were clothes, a man's clothes. On the ground something shone. I picked it up and held in my hand a gold cigarette case. The initials were F.C.M. . . . It was Frank's case; I had seen it many times. I had killed him; he was no bigger than a flea but I had killed Frank. I gazed in horror at him —Frank who thought I was his best friend, his older brother. I began to laugh, and the laugh echoed wildly through the silence about me and still I laughed.

It is funny, I thought. I understand now; through your blind faith in me you thought I could save you from anything. You thought that I who hate you for what you have, would help if you failed or were trapped in this place; that's why you had it sent to me. But instead, I killed you. Was there joy on your face when you saw, or felt, me coming? Were you waiting for me in the fosse? You must have been surprised when you saw you were to die.

Then I felt for the first time the hopelessness Frank must have known, only I felt it more—there was no one to save me. Stooping, I picked up a piece of ribbon similar to that which old-fashioned spectacles are attached to. From this ribbon hung a kind of frame. To my joy I saw a few jagged fragments of black glass. I knew it was the rest of the lens which had brought me to the castle. My part must have broken and fallen away when Frank used it. That was how Frank was going to return—the same way he had come. Searching frantically through my pockets I found the lens; it fitted the frame perfectly. Now I could leave; I could leave at will. Again I began to laugh, but the laugh stopped, for just then I saw above me a strange silver-colored object which glinted blindingly in the light. It was long and thin and cruel and it was gracefully swooping toward me. I watched, too fascinated to move—closer and closer it came. Then I realized that it was going to kill me—kill me, who had found the secret of this place—me who did not belong here—I was going to be crushed just as Frank had been. I ran, but I had no chance. Ever closer it came. Then its shadow completely covered me.

When Mrs. Mervine had finished probing in the castle, she wiped the crimson speck off the silver-plated letter knife on her apron and threw the valueless instrument back on the desk; then, muttering to herself, she left the room annoyed with the bug which had marred the whiteness of her apron with a crimson blob.