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spring - 1962

Spring — 1962

Vol. XV — Nos. 1 & 2

Manuscript

THE LITERARY MAGAZINE

OF

WILKES COLLEGE

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Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

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Two Tunes

Listen to the leaves

Sway to the gentle music of unsung songs,

Hidden rhythms flashing in the surface tunes.

As day gestures into night the music changes —

No sun burns; the wind's caresses cease

To swirl the surface of the singing leaves.

Night is a concert hall

After glittering trumpets have gone —

The tunes play without the instruments.

Marc Hirschman

If every day there were but happy life,
And never sorrow, tears or mournful dying?
Would life be loved if never known was strife,
If life were smooth and never called for crying
And never varied pattern, mood or pace?
Would life be full or merely fruitless time
If we moved on and never had to face
Events that break the flow of life's long climb?
Oh no! We'd never know the good from bad,
If suffering had failed to help and teach
That we must all endure what's harsh and sad,
That life's set goal is often hard to reach.
One must know silence well to hear a song:
One must have faltered first to move along.

Margery S. Wholan

Build into a need,
A vision untrue.
Build into a girl,
Susan-perfect in appearance,
A quality not real.
Build into blue eyes,
Sincerity not present.
Build into a look,
A comfort not given.
Build into a need,
A vision untrue.

Dee Amir

On Looking Down South Franklin Street

The sky is a lake of black ice.
The stars are little silver fishes —
Frozen, immobile
Twinkling in a futile attempt to
 free themselves.
A little fish is free;
Iridescent scales torn
From his body shower the sky.
A silver warrior in bloody
 chain and mail,
Faltering, now dying, now still.
Hector bows to Achilles.

Barbara Soyka

Once Upon a Positivist

Read deep,
the echoes of words
hang over their meaning
 like the rainbow shroud of mist
 over a waterfall.

Catch only the first sight
and there is pomp,
catch both sight and vision
and there is majesty.

Read deep,
syllabic prostitutes
yet make use
 of their utility in sunsets
 or polemics;
no whore has served so well,
no sheet worn such worthy stains
as those marking the love enacted
on a sheet of paper.

Read deep,
men make servants of words
and words Pandars of men;
 they often make of truth
 clouds within clouds,
 single drops in a storm,
one instant of light in a day of sun —
yet they cannot
deny it.

Stephen Schwartz

The Genetic Fallacy

I saw a man
 who could see death
 from the corners of his eyes;
made of rice paper
and sticks
with the last breaths of life
rushing through him
 end to end
almost too much to bear.

And in his room
 he would follow the sun
 from window to window
standing for short moments
in the waning framed light,
 never hoping to see out
 past the cracked and dusty panes,
only content that some few
instants of momentary warmth
 would elude the last
chills of his bones.

At night he slept
beneath the cacophony
 of man and stars,
 that slight battalion
 holding the last bastion
of light in darkness:
 Dawn and sunset little more
 than the poles of receding time
whose vanishing tide
carried him out to sea
 speck by unresisting
 speck.

He never resisted
even to the measure
of one act of joy,
 to the vital impetus
 of one fragmentary passion;
never held the precipitous bulwark
against the crushing wave
of time.

He died with a smile;
the last of a multitude
of irrelevant lies.

Stephen Schwartz

Yesterday's Tomorrows

Why save life's last draughts of dew?
A future's savor is for naught.
No bleak tomorrow ever a sure reward has brought
And next years empty vials
Are filled with fickle brew.

Man's quirk of soul to future see
Becomes corrupt when all his living
Is done towards some tomorrow's giving
And yesterday's tomorrows
Are reduced to apathy.

All nature is against this trend.
Winter's days the shortest are,
A point of light the brilliant star;
The shortest space the hourglass'
Final grains transcend.

Life's sweet moments die unmourned.
The moments, senseless creatures see
As stagnant, flow endlessly.
I sense the flow
And wear no moment unadorned.

Harris Tobias

Shabriri*

Speak to me not of roses
When all the earth decays
And air burns the hand of man
And freezes the image of god.
No, roses will not do.
But rather speak of lilies,
Shriveled in their buds,
And screaming things
That live a wasted instant,
Then blend with senseless time.
I cling to one blind irony —
That life's humble tools
Should not her coffin build,
For coffins are dark and rotting places
Where roses never grow.

*The demon of blindness.

Harris Tobias

The Love of the World*

I love the love of the world.
For it makes me wonder and wonder,
For it makes me wonder of many things.

I love the beauties of the world.
For everything is so pretty, very pretty,
For everything is very pretty in the world.

I love the people in the world.
As they go walking, talking by,
As they go walking, talking by.

I love the nature in the world.
As things grow up to live, to move about,
As things grow up to live and move about.

But best of all,
I love the love of the world
For it makes me feel so proud and strong,
For it makes me feel so proud and strong.

I love the love of the world
For it makes me wonder of many things,
How did it happen? When did it happen?
Who made it happen? Why did it happen?
For it makes me wonder of things.

I love the beauties of the world
For everything is so pretty, very pretty
Like the flowers that bloom among the feet of grass,
And the things that are born to be and look beautiful.
For everything is so pretty, very pretty.

I love the people in the world
As they go walking, talking by,
To see them talk, to see them walk,
To see them act as they go by,
As they go walking, talking by.

I love the nature in the world
As things grow up to live, to move about,
To see how they grow up, to see how they live,
And to see them act, to see what they do,
As things grow up to live and move about.

But best of all,
I love the love of the world
For it makes me wonder of many things,
To see how people act, to see nature live,
And to see the beautiful things in the world,
For it makes me feel so proud and strong.

*A contribution from an eight-year old girl whose mother is a student.

from
Black Jazz

The Ivory Flashes!

A two-tone board,

Mixing together.

There is no hate.

The colors cry to America.

It tells of men,

Of hurt.

It tells America of guilt.

They know and they understand.

Savage

The Beard

Edward Whipple

Jim twisted the big knob until the pointer rested on "off." His confused mind slowly filled with a jumble of thoughts and feelings which had been held back by the roaring, steaming shower. He regretted that his shower had ended, but he realized that he could hardly remain under its protection forever. Jim didn't have any particular passion for cleanliness, but the shower did serve as an excuse for not going to work. Four days of the vacation had passed and he had hardly done anything.

He stepped out of the shower stall into the warm, steamy bathroom. He ignored his towel which hung on the end of the row of hooks and stepped wetly across the red tile floor to the brightly lit row of sinks. He looked in the yellowish mirror and surveyed his face. It was covered with a dirty, brown stubble of whiskers. Jim was spending his vacation at the University and had decided to grow a beard during this period of isolation.

As he looked in the mirror, Jim imagined himself walking through the railroad station clad in a tweed jacket, grey flannel trousers, and a beautiful, trim, shiny full beard. He saw himself in The Village in a plaid shirt and dirty dungarees. For more formal occasions he thought that he might select a dark suit and an umbrella to go with his beard, and in the Spring he would wear white flannel trousers, a blazer, and maybe he would even carry a Malacca walking stick.

At the moment, the beard was a long way from fulfilling its promise. If one looked closely, it appeared that Jim had simply neglected to shave. From a distance, his face just looked very dirty. Jim was quite aware of all this and made it a point to explain to the few people he met that he was growing a beard.

Carefully avoiding the cold rim of the sink, Jim leaned close to the mirror and observed a crop of nasty-looking red pimples hidden beneath his whiskers. The beard itched frightfully at times, but Jim hoped that the itch and the pimples would go away as his skin adjusted to its new con-

dition. He saw himself going into a barber shop and ordering the barber to trim and shape his beard. In the meantime, however, something had to be done. He decided that he would shave under his chin. The itch was worst there, and he felt that after the beard had grown out no one would see the difference.

The pneumatic door stop squished as Jim gave the hall door a mighty shove. A sudden chill reminded him that he was wet and naked. He self-consciously straightened his back, although he knew that no one would see him. Somewhere in the lonely dormitory he heard the yammer of a radio and an undercurrent of busy clicks from a typewriter. This reminder of the unfinished term papers gave him a brief fit of nausea but he quickly pushed the thought away.

He went into his room and located the kidney-shaped leather case that contained his toilet articles. He pulled the zipper and was greeted by the sickening candy and antiseptic odor of the various toothpastes, deodorants, and shaving creams which had been kept in the case at various times. He quickly located the razor and shaving cream and rooted for a package of razor blades. Finally, he found the blades and put one in the razor which was clean though not altogether free from rust.

He quickly returned to the steaming warmth of the bathroom and once again confronted the mirror. He visualized himself entering the world of business and commerce with his beard. He was afraid the world of business and commerce might have typical middle-class objections to such a statement of individuality, but he wouldn't work for a firm that refused to accept him as he was. As a matter of fact, although a senior, he had no immediate prospects of working anywhere at all. Nevertheless, he visualized himself bullying his way to reluctant purchasing agents or cowing a group of unruly students by virtue of his beard. Of course, there were the senior job interviews coming up in January. He had been told that one shouldn't even wear a bow tie on such occasions. "To Hell with them!" he thought.

Jim pushed the button on the can of shaving cream and watched the cool white foam roll into his palm. He enjoyed this and always squirted a little more than necessary. He decided to lather his whole

face because he didn't know quite where to start. The razor pulled and burned as he carefully scraped his neck. He realized that he would have to shave this spot every day. One of the reasons that he was growing a beard was to avoid the necessity of daily shaving.

Jim thought of his appointment with the dean which was to occur directly after vacation. He had been called in because he cut too many classes. Jim wondered if the dean would consider the beard a gesture of disrespect. He thought the beard ought to look very good in two weeks. He examined himself in the mirror. "Damn! that mustache has to come off," he thought, "It just doesn't look right there." Also, he decided that his beard would look more like a beard if some parts of his face were clean-shaven.

As he trimmed off the mustache, he wondered how the girls would like his beard. The girls in question were girls from the neighboring women's colleges with whom his friends "fixed him up." Perhaps he would have to start dating a different class of girls, he thought. Maybe he could find them in New York — maybe.

Jim decided to shave his cheeks so the beard would be just a fringe on his chin and jawbone in the manner of the legendary New England sea captains. He pictured himself with his face to windward, peeping out from under a "Sou'wester" type of rain hat. He thought of his first classes after vacation and tried to develop the nonchalant look that he would require to face his staring classmates. He wondered if his teachers would pay more attention to him. He hoped not, because he hated to recite in classes.

"Damn!" he shouted out loud. The razor had slipped and cut away part of one of the sideburns. He regretfully removed both of the sideburns and decided that for the time being, at least, he would have to settle for a discreet goatee. "Maybe a small beard would be better for a beginner anyhow," he thought.

He made up answers to the stupid questions that he knew people would ask him. "I wear a beard because I want to wear a beard," he heard himself saying to an imaginary scoffer. He identified himself with the engraved patriarchs of the nineteenth century and saw himself walk-

ing proudly wherever he went. He wasn't as confident about the response of the folks back home in Wisconsin. They all knew him. He comforted himself by remembering that he wouldn't be able to go home until Spring. He would worry about it then.

Jim stared at the wisp of stubble that remained in the miniature snow drifts of the shaving cream. He knew the beard was gone. "A little beard like that is worse than no beard at all," he thought; "no one but a queer would wear a beard like that." Almost without a thought, he quickly removed the remaining whiskers. "I can grow a beard some other time," he thought. He washed the razor under the stream of hot water and wondered if he had enough money to fly home. He could write his papers just as well there.

The Roses

Barbara Soyka

A soft spring zephyr gently exposed the pale green undersides of the new maple leaves. A wan but friendly sun cast lacy impressions of bushes and shrubs on the dark, moist soil. She saw them on the other side of the hedge. "There they are," she muttered; "they don't have to wear sweaters." Even though she had promised her mother that she would sit in the sun, her mother still made her wear that old sweater. It had been washed so often that its navy blue color had faded to purple, and the white trim was stained an ugly mauve. It was shrunken and stiff. It tightened across her chest like fetters.

A giggle from the girls filtered through the hedge. "They are always laughing about their secrets; they know I'm here and they want me to be jealous." She shrugged distastefully. She left her post beside the hedge and walked to the rose garden. As she walked she left muddy footprints on the new grass. She stood for a while in the middle of the rose bushes, lifting her foot in and out of the thick mud methodically, listening each time for the soft *thunk* as she released her foot.

She ran her fingers gently over the petals of a yellow rose. The yellow bush was the only one that was blooming; all the others had only tight, green buds with tiny white aphids clinging to them. "My mother thinks these roses are really alive. If one of those bushes died she'd give it a funeral."

"Hey, Suzie! Suzie can we come into your yard?"

Suzie started at the sound of her name; she did not trust herself to speak. But they were *really* coming into her yard. Quickly she tore off her sweater looking desperately for a place to hide it, but there was no place to hide it so she threw it away from her.

"Hi, we saw you looking at the roses so we came over to see them too."

"It's only one bush," Suzie stammered apologetically.

"Could we have a rose?"

Could they have a rose? They could have all the roses. She ran to the tool shed and took a pair of shears. She snipped the blooms from the bush with swift, darting motions. She cut recklessly, heedless of the thorns that caught her hands. She had reduced the bush to a few spindly twigs. They stood about her, sniffing their roses.

"Well, thanks for the roses; we're going now." They ran through the hedge brandishing their fresh blooms.

"Oh, please let me come with you," she moaned. They were too far away to hear; besides she heard her mother calling her and the tiny wounds in her hands began to throb.

The Breakwater

Joseph Aulisi

The beach at Hobe Sound was deserted except for the blue and purple Portugese man-of-war washed up on the sand by the early morning tide. It was left there to die in the hot noon sun away from its natural habitat. Here and there several lonely figures sprang from the sand dunes, ran down to the water's edge to pick up a shell or two, and then darted back to the shelter of the big houses hidden in the palms and bougainville along the ocean's front.

Two dots appeared at opposite ends of the white strip. They neared each other slowly, random dots moving on the white field. Suddenly, the two in a pattern of mutual attraction accelerated in a straight line.

The young man caught the girl as she almost ran past him, unable to find her footing in the sand. The two stood there laughing and then stopped suddenly as though they had been caught telling a dirty story.

"Come over here," he said, taking her by the arm.

He led her to a washed-out section in the old sea wall. There were two piles of stone side by side and an old cement mixer in back of them. He brushed away the sand from two stones and offered her a seat.

"Guess they couldn't fix this part," he said.

"The wall's been here since Daddy's father first started wintering in Florida," she answered. And then as an after-thought said "It'll be here for the next hundred years."

"I called you last night, Susan, and your father answered, so I hung up. I thought you said you'd answer if I called around eight."

"Mother insisted that I drive into Palm Beach with her and I couldn't tell her that I was expecting a call from you."

The young man looked out over the water. A solitary sea gull dived toward a blue-green breaker pushing nearer the white beach. He watched as the wave swept up leaving seaweed and black shells exposed in the bright sun. He thought about the shells and how the oil dumped from the Texas tankers stained them and made them slippery.

"Tommy, why don't we go to a movie tonight? I could meet you in front of that little lunch counter in Delray and then we could go on from there."

Tommy turned his eyes from the beach. "When do you go back to New York?"

"Day after tomorrow, I guess. It will have to be by Saturday. School starts on Monday. You know, I never did get that work done and Daddy's just furious. If he only knew why. God, he'll shoot us both."

"Susan, you know I'd love to visit you in June. After graduation." She smiled and laughed. "You know you can't," she said. "I mean after all we've only dated during spring vacations and for only three years. You know how mother feels about that. God, I'd love to introduce you to Daddy and Mother but they are sort of old-fashioned. They think they have to know the parents of every boy I date. It's really archaic but that's the way they are."

"You have told them about me, haven't you?"

"Of course. I mean I didn't tell them that your father was a gardner for the Cadbury's or anything but I told them that you went to Duke and that you plan to study medicine afer graduation.

He looked at her. The printed dress hugged the front of her legs and the afternoon breeze touched the ends of her hair blowing them like wisps of straw on a country road. He had an urge to reach out and touch her hand but instead he asked, "Where are you going this summer?"

"Oh, Daddy's got this huge trip planned. We are going to Cannes to spend the summer with one of his old fraternity brothers, a Mr.

Delafield. He lives in France most of the year; business I guess. You'd really like his son. He plays lacrosse for Yale and he's really great. . ."

She stopped and looked at Tommy. "What's the matter?" she asked.

"I forgot I had to meet my father at one o'clock and it's almost that now. He's going to plant some new trees along the broken down section of the breakwater in front of the Cadbury's guest house. I'd better go."

"Tommy, maybe we'd better forget about the movies tonight. I really have to finish my work. It's all right with you, isn't it?"

"Sure. I guess you'd better do it."

"Listen, if everything works out, maybe I'll be able to come down to Duke for Junior Weekend."

She stood up and Tommy watched the deep sand fill in around her feet.

"You'd better hurry up and help your father with the work on the breakwater," she said smiling.

"Bye, Susan," he said. "Don't forget to write."

She leaned over and kissed him quickly. "Bye," she said and started off in the direction from which she had come. As she walked along she wondered if the beach at Cannes would be as pretty as Hobe Sound's and if Sanford Delafield would be as much fun as he was on their last date.

After the Rain

Barbara Phillips

Anyone who was passing that day might have seen her. If you were sitting on the bus, tired of reading the colored signs above the seats, you might have looked out the window at the rain and seen her. Or if you were hurrying by, your feet soaked and your scarf so wet the dye had come off on your neck, you might have seen her too. She was over there, yes, in the window . . . a small face held upright by two thin arms that were propped on the window sill. Her feet were tucked carefully underneath her bright red cotton skirt which clashed in mock fury with the faded maroon velvet of the windowseat.

"Grandpa died last month," she thought looking down at a small fly who was buzzing about the half-eaten jelly sandwich in her lap. Then, looking out the window at the bleary reflection of Trudy's Lunch Room bathed in watery neon light, "maybe we can go over and get some french fries tonight." She could feel her fingers sticky and salty as she remembered digging her fingers down into the paper cup to make sure all of them were gone. "We always went over there when Grandpa was here." They had told her he died, but all she could remember was the heavy smell of carnations, the food that came everytime the door bell rang, her mother telling her to play quietly, and finally sitting on a tiny seat that seemed made for her in the back of a huge black car.

Grandpa had died, but she didn't know what death was. Grandma had told her that China Boy, her pekinese, died and was buried out by the violet beds in the back-yard; she had rushed outside and started to dig there, but got tired when she found nothing.

The rain stopped; she got up quietly, the sound of her black patent leather shoes muffled by the heavy carpet. Pausing for a moment to convince herself there was nothing in that dark room under the stair well to be afraid of, she opened the door and pulled out the first raincoat she saw. With its hem almost dragging she walked into the hall and pulled open the heavy Dutch door. The pavement was shining and the sign in front of the house saying J. T. Williams, Funeral Director, had

drops of rain running down its face like tears. The wind had blown leaves off the trees, and they lay pressed tight to the sidewalk like lovers. She scooped up one of the shiny leaves and carefully put it in her pocket. She noticed the gutters filled with dirty water, sweeping bits of white paper along in black bubbling crests like sail boats. "I know," she thought, "I'll float my leaf in the gutter and see how far it will go." Carefully, she dropped in the leaf and quickly it spun away. She had to hurry it went so fast; once it got stuck on an O'Henry wrapper and she had to free it. On and on it went, she running along side it, dodging trees and people to keep it in sight. When next she looked up it was almost at the end of the block where there was a great drain. "There is danger," she called to the leaf softly as she reached into the black water to scoop; but it slipped from her small fingers and washed down between the black metal bars of the drain. Down on her hands and knees, her fingers scraping the dirt-crusts bars, she called softly; "Where are you, where are you, why did you go? . . ." Then jumping up she ran, not hearing Trudy from the lunchroom call, "Hey, are you coming over to see me tonight?" Up the steps she dashed, jerking open the heavy door she shouted, "Grandma, Grandma, Grandpa is gone . . ."

Vignette for a Boy, Girl, and Some Others

Stephen Schwartz

It was a summer town and the people came and went with the seasons; and though there were summer people and winter people and the indeterminate, chaotic group of those few caught out of their proper time, you could no more mix them than you could mix the seasons that spawned them. They were people that could be seen out of context, isolated; you could catch them in one small act, one conviction, and you had them completely.

It was a blood sun like an open wound in the late summer sky; it was a sun you could watch set with the hope that it would never rise again; it was a sun that you knew could never rise again no matter how hard it tried; it was the kind of sun no one wrote poetry about but that was hidden in every poem ever written about any sun. It was a sun that no one cared to look at save the very old, the very young, and the possessed; a sun in which to bathe was obscene. But on the beach at the brimming edge of a lake, on the top of a mountain, one boy stared, bathed and laughed to the crickets hiding in the bushes.

A girl named Susan held a cabbage too old to eat in her hand, threw it back into the crate and walked back inside the grocery store. A girl named Susan lived in a town that nestled in a valley that held all the heat in the world and there was nothing wrong with her except that she was very lovely; and this was wrong for she had a soul plainer than any of the mountains became in winter and more parched than any of their streams became when the floods dried. She should have been born a tree hidden in the shade of one larger so that to reach the sun she would have had to have grown, curving away from the plumb straight, but, having passed the first shadow she would enter another, and after that another and then another until at last she had turned about completely and arched into the ground again without ever reaching the light at all.

There is no more perfect time of the day for the extraordinary than twilight, when things have more than one shadow and nothing is certain

or stationary, especially the children. In the morning they emerge angelically bright or daemonically gleaming; the afternoon finds them preparing for the weariness of the night. But in those few moments of transition, where there is no sun but light remains, then their voices lose the shrill chatter of youth and take on not the dry, parchment-rustling whisper of age, but a clacking, metallic sound foreign as well to birth and death, but oh so necessary to childhood.

At twilight the children run in circles, chanting to forswear tomorrow.

A girl named Susan and a laughing boy kissed in the half darkness of the town.

"Sometimes I come out and look at the stars" she said, and he answered, "No one can look at the stars in the same way that no one can look at the sun. The light is too strong and we are blinded, only the stars are so far away that it will take a thousand years for us to notice the blindness."

"Sometimes the sky is first red, then empty, then black" she said, and he answered, "The sky is never red; it is only the blood in our eyes fighting to feed our sight the same as it feeds our body. It is empty only when we close our eyes or turn away to rest, and it is black when it is fullest but we have not squinted enough to see."

"Sometimes I expect something wonderful, but it never quite seems to happen," and he answered, "Nothing ever quite seems to happen."

At twilight the children run in circles, chanting to forswear tomorrow.

Double Exposure

Joel Harrison

The black sedan narrowly managed to squeeze between a tiny foreign sports car and a red Vespa motorscooter. The front doors opened like the gates of a palace, and the two young men stepped out of the luxurious Cadillac onto the uneven pavement of Greenwich Village. It was a warm and somewhat stuffy July evening. The taller of the two young men opened the buttons of his sport jacket and gazed around, closely surveying the immediate surroundings.

"So this is the Village," the young man suddenly blurted. "You sure were right, Lee, when you told me it was neat. It sure is. At least I think it is. Hell, buddy, compared to Joplin, this place is really something."

"Did I ever give you a bum steer, Steve, old man? Just stick with me. We'll have a great time tonight. I know the city like I know myself. Hang on Manhattan, 'cause when two Yalies hit you, you'll damn well know it."

Lee straightened his tie, and the invaders walked through a summery green Washington Square, past the arch and the overcrowded green park benches, and turned onto McDougal Street. A well-dressed Negro passed them rapidly, walking hand in hand with an attractive white woman. Steve stared after them, his face twisted with amazement. "That's nothing," Lee knowingly snapped as he interrupted his friend's daze. "You see it all down here. The place is crawling with queers, dopesters, and all sorts of nuts. Hey, I'm thirsty. We'll stop in the bar on the next corner for a few drinks. I know the place and they know me."

Steve followed his host like a puppy dog into a small, quaint bar on the corner of Minetta and McDougal. The Minetta wasn't very busy yet. They assumed positions on barstools.

"What'll you have, boys?" asked the bartender.

"Two double Cutty Sark's on ice," replied Lee quickly.

The bartender ran his droplet-covered hand through his balding

head of hair and eyed Lee suspiciously. "Let's see your identification, boy," he said.

"Come off it, Jackson, old man. You know me. I've been coming in here for a few years now. Lee Diamond, from Yale." Lee turned to Steve and winked. "The old buzzard will remember me now," he whispered.

"Listen, boy from Yale, if I had to learn the names of all the college guys that come in here I'd go out of my head. Now if you want a drink, prove it." Jackson set Steve's drink in front of him and casually walked to the other end of the bar.

"Christ, that burns hell out of me," Lee complained to his guest as he fumbled through his wallet for his selective service card. "He really knows me, you know, but he can't afford to take any chances, not even with me." Lee presented his card to the bartender, mumbled something under his breath, and finally got his drink.

The two young men sat side by side and sipped their Scotch. Steve made frequent observations about the atmosphere and the people who by this time had drifted in. Lee said nothing more than an occasional yes, no, or maybe, as he stared into his empty glass at the cube of melting ice.

"Want to go another?" asked Steve. Lee looked up. Jackson was gone. Lee wanted to leave. On the way out Steve paid for the drinks.

The sky had blackened while they were in the bar. The Village looked pretty at night when the lights reflected a myriad of color through the skinny streets and against the shop windows. A shower of neon brilliance served as a false face for the otherwise shabby and colorless buildings. Steve and Lee stood in front of a coffee house. A vibrance of modern jazz filled the air as they lazily resumed their stroll through the winding streets, among throngs of other strollers.

"Have you heard of the strip joints?" Lee asked, shattering the silence. "You know, those places like Tony Pastor's. Three or four of them are about a block away. How about it, Steve kid? Really nice broads. We might try to pick up something. What do you say?" Lee draped his arm around Steve's stout shoulder and patted him impishly on the back several times.

"God, I don't know. I've seen some of those strippers in carnivals back home and they're really bad news. I thought as long as we were out on the town we could do something a little more worthwhile." Steve thought for a moment. "I would rather see Miles Davis, Lee, but you're supposed to be guiding this tour. You be the boss, okay?"

The outside of Pastor's was enveloped with bizarre photographs of the performers. A wormy-looking doorman, who looked as if he had been sleeping in his faded purple uniform for the last year, stood in front of the tiny entrance. He acted like a carnival barker by propositioning tourists to enter the club. Lee stood directly in front of a life-sized photo of a stripper named "Shaker Heights" and stared at her gaudy pose.

"Swingin' joint, isn't it?" Lee asked as he stared even harder at the hostesses who were clad in scant costumes. "We should pick up a few tonight," he continued.

The two young men squirmed through the tightly-packed customers to the main room. The small area was filled with many small tables which faced a small stage. Alcohol fumes and musty tobacco smoke clouded the air and made it hard to breathe. Lee coughed. A fat man, dressed in a shiny, black tuxedo with wide lapels, showed the two young men to a corner table. After Lee again proved his age, the waiter placed two drinks on the table and disappeared. Lee coughed again. He gulped some of his drink and cursed the way some people dilute their liquor.

A tall, thin, but very buxom blonde was removing her clothes on stage to the monotonous beats of a bass drum. The echoes of the rhythm sent a noisy crash through the tiny, smoke-choked room. Finally, her number was completed. She put on a few pieces of apparel and began to walk to the rear of the room.

"Hey, sweetie, come here for a while," Lee said, as the dancer passed by his table. "Sit down and have a little drink with Lee. How about it?"

The girl sat down. She looked like she was in her early thirties, her blonde hair was pulled down over one eye and her teeth were crooked. She looked at Steve and smiled.

"What are you drinking, honey?" asked Lee. His voice cracked on the honey and the dancing girl laughed softly.

"Champagne," she assuredly informed the waiter who had reappeared as if out of nowhere. "Better make it a bottle, Charley."

The waiter vanished. Lee moved closer to his newly-found friend and sniffed her giraffe-like neck clumsily. She sat motionless, smiling at Steve occasionally. Lee moved still closer and placed his hand on her neck. "What's your name, my champagne-drinking cutie?" Lee asked.

"Merry," answered the blonde, looking straight ahead.

"My name's Lee. I go to Yale."

"That's nice," said Merry. "Yeah, that's real nice." She drummed her too-thin fingers on the red and white checkerboard tablecloth and made noise with her teeth.

The waiter brought the wine, popped the cork, and filled three glasses. Lee proposed a toast. The blonde yawned. She sipped some wine, picked herself up, and, without saying a word, shuffled away. Lee made a feeble effort to call her back. But he stopped short and sank back in his seat.

"I'd like to leave, Steve kid, if you don't mind." Lee was pale. "That broad was a real pig, anyway." Perspiration dribbled down Lee's forehead and cheeks. "Sorry I ever came here. Wanted to show you a good time. I guess I really made a mess of things."

"That's all right, Lee," said Steve.

"It is like hell," Lee retorted, his voice raised. "I feel like a high school kid, acting like I did. But I'm not like this all the time. In fact, I know New York like I know myself. I really do."

The two young men walked through the crisp night air. The streets were still jammed with people. They turned the corner and rapidly walked towards the car. The street was dark. Steve glanced towards Lee and shook his head from side to side. He buttoned his sport jacket, using an upper buttonhole to clasp a lower button, shrugged his shoulders, and faced straight ahead.

The Daring Professor

by Marsha Case

He had been watching the little blond at the next table for the last five minutes. Her fraternity pin rose and fell as she breathed, and it all made Maynard very sad. "It always happens to somebody else," he sighed. "Never to me; always to somebody else." The blond took a deep breath, and Maynard had to leave.

Gathering up the five thick volumes that were strewn about the library table, he shoved back his chair and watched it topple heavily to the floor. He glanced cautiously toward the librarian to see if she had noticed. She had, and she shook her head at him as if he were a cute but bad child.

"Old bag!" he muttered. "Homely, flat-chested old bag!" He set the chair back on its legs, stomped over to her neat, uncluttered, practically sterile desk, and addressed the brass placard which said "Miss Howard, Librarian."

"I'm finished with these books so you can put them back. In fact, I'm just about finished — in more ways than one."

"Why, Maynard, what a thing to say! And on such a nice day." She seemed enormously pleased about something.

"What would you know about it," Maynard grumbled to himself. He reached into his jacket pocket and absent-mindedly selected one of the three battered pipes he always carried there. "Maynard!" he thought. "A lot of nerve she has calling me Maynard. I don't call her — whatever her first name is."

"Do you have a match, Miss Howard?" he said, emphasizing the "Miss" just a hint as he fumbled vainly in his other pocket.

"I think I do." She pulled open a drawer and dug around for a while in her pocketbook, hardly taking her eyes off Maynard. She was smiling broadly, and he had to admit it improved her face somewhat.

"She's still homely and flat-chested," he decided, "but maybe she's not so old after all."

Ethel Howard wasn't old, unless you think thirty is old. She carried her head high and often tossed it like a thoroughbred, but the nothing-brown hair, wound severely at her neck, added years to the pale face. At last she sorted out a matchbook and handed it to Maynard. A flash of color, made more brilliant by her somber gray dress, invaded Maynard's consciousness. Miss Howard had beautiful red fingernails!

Now Maynard really wanted to get out of there, but he wasn't sure why. Dropping the matches into his pocket, he jammed his pipe stem into his mouth and mumbled something which sounded like "Have to get going."

Halfway to the door he heard Miss Howard's library voice whisper, "Bye, Maynard."

Once outside, he felt a little better, and he took in a great breath of the late afternoon air. All across the campus new grass was pushing up through the dead maple leaves. Maynard paused in a sunny spot by an old stone bench to fill his pipe. "That Miss Howard makes me angry," he muttered, still brooding about the vague uneasiness the library had given him today. "She probably goes home every night and reads murder mysteries for excitement." He reached in his pocket for the matches and lit his pipe.

Walking faster now, Maynard soon passed the college gate and headed for Mrs. Tuttle's rooming house. He turned the matchbook over and over with his fingers, feeling more discontented the further he went.

Maynard was such a creature of habit that even today he stopped in front of "The Book Stall" to peer in through the window. Mr. Barnhart, the proprietor, knew Maynard well; he was one of his best customers. He was used to seeing this slight young man squint through his thick glasses at the books, and then, usually, come in for a chat even if he didn't buy anything.

When he waved, Maynard didn't seem to notice. Instead, he was staring fixedly at something in his left hand. He looked so bewildered that Mr. Barnhart was intrigued — but the telephone rang, and when he could look again Maynard was gone.

Maynard didn't stop until he reached Mrs. Tuttle's gate. He glared for a moment at a pot of red geraniums by the fence and then disappeared inside the door.

The dim hall caused him to pause until his eyes adjusted to the light. Slowly, the umbrella stand and the grotesque clothes tree that Mrs. Tuttle had carted in from one of her infernal auctions came into focus, and Maynard spied a pile of mail lying on the hall table. Wearily he leafed through it, almost surprised to find four envelopes addressed to him. He picked them up and trudged up the stairs to his room.

He was going to read his mail, but there was that matchbook, with a mysterious-looking animal staring up at him from the cover. "The Black Cat?" he said, half out loud. "Where could she have picked up these?" That name sounds familiar, somehow." Then he remembered the kid in his German 101 class who was expelled for going there.

For the tenth time he read the advertisement on the back. "I'm sorry, but I don't believe it," he told his reflection in the mirror. The picture of Miss Howard in black leotards was suddenly so funny that Maynard's reflection smiled back at him, and he had to laugh out loud.

He tossed the matches on the dresser where they landed amid the collar stays and small change, and then he remembered his mail.

"One thing about today, it's different. Four letters . . ." But his face fell when he looked more closely. "Aunt Myrtle sends birthday greetings," he said to the first envelope and tossed it unopened on the bed. "Aunt Maribelle sends birthday greetings." This to the second.

"You are cordially invited to attend the faculty tea on May 28, 1962 at 4 P. M.," he growled, and this one found its way to the waste basket.

"Win a fabulous trip for two to the romantic Virgin Islands . . ."

This last plunged Maynard into despair, and he sank into a chair, almost on the verge of tears. For perhaps five minutes he sat, unmoving. The black cat on the matchbook watched Maynard with its red eyes and the room was silent.

"Maynard Ryder," he said at last, addressing himself in his most profound Assistant Professor of Languages voice, "do you realize that

tomorrow you will be thirty years old and your youth is fleeing? What do you have to say for yourself?"

"Just what have you done with your life?" he continued. "I'll tell you. You graduated 'cum laude' from Princeton, you graduated with honors from the University of Heidelberg, you'll finish your doctorate thesis someday soon, and you'll get your degree because they'll think 'Die Freundschaft von Goethe und Schiller' is a great title and no one will want to bother to translate the rest. Everyday you don your drip-dry suit and confront a class of wealthy morons. But does any kittenish blond ever bat her eyelashes at you, Maynard? No indeed! You probably wouldn't notice anyway, because your nose is always in a book."

He started pacing back and forth between the bed and the old marble wash stand that was another of Mrs. Tuttle's auction gems. "I've got to get out of this rut," he murmured, more placid now. "Maybe I should move." With that he started pulling open drawers and inspecting the chaos that lay within. He tugged aimlessly, first at a shirt sleeve, then a holey sock. He was about to close the drawer and return to his chair when an unfamiliar spot of color caught his eye. "What's that?" he wondered aloud, and dug deeper beneath the pile of old T-shirts. A violent red sweater emerged with a note pinned securely to its neck.

Maynard looked at it quizzically. The note was dated September, 1959 and was written in a faintly wobbly feminine hand.

"Maynard dear," it began. "I read in the paper that students and professors alike prefer bulky-knits for crisp fall campus activities. Your Aunt Maribelle and I hope your teaching venture at Marlboro College will be a success. Here is the bulky-knit. All you need are the activities." It was signed "Aunt Myrtle."

Maynard remembered it now. It had arrived the day he was moving in, right when he had been busy getting organized. There hadn't been enough room for his books, and Mrs. Tuttle was being most uncooperative. When he finally got around to opening the box, one look inside had reduced him to rage. A horrible bright red sweater, so garish he was sure half the student body would have hesitated to wear it, lay inside, lovingly surrounded by tissue paper.

"What on earth could they have been thinking?" Maynard had growled. "Don't they know a member of a college faculty has certain standards to live up to?" He had shoved his aunts' gift in the drawer and had forgotten it until now.

He read the note again and held the sweater up so he could see it. It came half-way to his knees, and there was a big moth hole in the left elbow.

"That's it," he cried suddenly. The next few minutes were a flurry of activity as Maynard whipped around the little room. At exactly 6 P. M. his door flew open and he dashed down the steps.

Mrs. Tuttle was stationed at the bottom, wiping her hands on her ample apron front. "Maynard, you're late. You know we always sit down for supper at 5:58."

Maynard hesitated, but he didn't seem to notice Mrs. Tuttle. He just dashed back upstairs, grabbed the matchbook from the dresser top, and was back downstairs and out the front door before Mrs. Tuttle had a chance to say, "Maynard, what have you got on?"

Nothing surprised the salesman in the shoestore at the corner of Fifth and College. That's why, when Maynard came charging in that evening, he just kept on cleaning his fingernails. When the customer had a chance to stop gasping for breath, he asked, rather hopefully, "Do you want something?"

"Yes," Maynard puffed. "Do you have dirty sneakers?"

"Look, wiseguy, we sell the sneakers. It's up to you to get 'em dirty. Seems' like you could manage that." He gave the rumpled sweater a withering stare.

"Oh, yes, of course. Well, I'd like one pair."

"What size?"

"I don't know; ten, I guess."

The salesman dragged a box off the top shelf and handed it to Maynard.

"Thank you. How much do I owe you?"

"Aren't you even going to try them on?"

"Oh, maybe I'd better." He pulled off his shoes, and got into the brand new sneakers.

The man cast a suppliant look toward the ceiling. "That'll be \$4.98."

Maynard scurried down the street toward the river. It was quite dark by this time, and he always had trouble seeing after dark. The river was calm. He heard a gull cry from time to time, but the quiet was penetrating.

"Maybe this isn't such a good idea after all." He stopped and scanned the silent street. "Courage, Maynard," he whispered, and scuffed along the curb to get his sneakers dirtier.

This part of town was new to Maynard. He had inspected the libraries and the historical sites, but the riverfront area had never piqued his interest. Even when they made the "establishments" along Sailors' Wharf "off-limits" to the students, Maynard hadn't bothered to give it much thought.

The closer he got to Sailors' Wharf, the louder became the noises. For a distance of two blocks he passed bars where the sounds of loud voices and laughter spilled out into the street.

"No question about it," Maynard told himself. "Miss Howard would never come down here on this dark street by herself. She probably found the matches somewhere. That's probably why she gave them to me — too racy for her to keep." Maynard chuckled a little at this, but he was feeling quite uneasy.

"Maybe the place isn't here anymore," Maynard was almost ready to turn around and go home. Then he saw the sign. It was six feet high and cut in the shape of a forbidding black cat. He wouldn't have seen it at all, but the cat's eyes were two red bulbs that blinked on and off in a bewitching manner.

In the next lighted doorway he stopped and bent down to examine his sneakers. They were pretty dirty.

"Here goes," he breathed, and plunged down into the darkness that was one of the "Black Cat's" trademarks.

The blackness was relieved here and there by the glimmer of candles, the thick smoke weaved a ghostly pattern.

Maynard leaned against the wall, gasping for a second in the overwhelming atmosphere. The place was crowded, and somewhere in the recesses he heard a piano and a bass making discordant utterances. The patrons were all clapping their hands slowly to what they considered to be the rhythm of the music.

Locating a table not far from the door, Maynard settled himself behind it. He took one last look around and shoved his glasses in his pocket. They weren't doing him much good anyway in this dungeon, and maybe nobody would recognize him without them.

There was a great deal of chatter, girls in leotards were moving among the tables with trays of little cups, and someone started beating some bongos in a wild, exotic rhythm.

This was all so new to Maynard that he became completely engrossed, and fully ten minutes later, was startled to find that he had been joined at his tiny table by another person.

For the life of him he couldn't discern whether the new occupant was male or female, so he waited, rather tremulously, for it to speak.

After what seemed like an interminable time to Maynard, a definitely female voice began to recite softly: "Out of the night a man appears. He is my knight in a torn T-shirt. His T-shirt is hidden. Only his red sweater can be seen. But, redeeming feature, it has a lovely moth hole in the left elbow."

It wasn't until then that Maynard realized she was talking about him. He wished he could see her. The combination of the smoke, the ridiculous lighting, and those glasses in his pocket was complicating matters unmercifully.

He was able to distinguish, by leaning forward on his elbows, a pale face surrounded by long, long hair. In the shadows it could have been any color. Her arms were long and slender, and they seemed to terminate in the darkness so that all he really knew of her was their stark whiteness.

"Would you like something to eat?" he asked her.

"Heavens, no!" this with a cryptic little laugh.

"I would! Boy, am I hungry!" Maynard suddenly remembered he had missed supper, and all his shyness fled before the thought of food. He took a big swallow of the dark liquid that a leotard-girl had placed before him. It was awful and he choked, but he took another swallow.

"Love me, O sweater man," she began again.

Maynard was drinking from the cups as fast as the girl could refill them. He had never felt so strange in his entire life. What his companion had said didn't seem to make much sense, but maybe it was smoke or whatever was in those little cups. "I thought they only served coffee in here," he told nobody in particular.

Suddenly, a wonderful idea struck him. "I'll get a whole handful of those matchbooks and I'll put them in my pocket and I'll walk out of here and I'll take them to the library and I'll throw them on Miss Howard's desk and I'll say, 'Add these to your collection, Baby.' Boy, will she be surprised!" With that he got up rather jerkily and walked head first into a pony tail. Undaunted, he started in another direction.

"Matchbooks," he sang. "Donate your matchbooks right here."

Nobody paid any attention because the noises drowned out Maynard's voice. It was pretty rough going because he kept running into the furniture, but he was determined.

Then from behind, a hand reached out and grabbed his arm. He found himself being led bodily from the "Black Cat."

Maynard had absolutely no idea what time it was. His head was beginning to ache from not wearing his glasses, and he was so dizzy he was grateful for the forceful grasp. Still, although he couldn't tell who it was who had kept him from collecting his matchbooks, it made him a little mad.

"The moon doth shine, O sweated one," his assailant told him, matter-of-factly.

"Bully," Maynard grumbled. So it was that girl.

"Stay right where you are, my friend," she ordered. "I have to go back for my coat." She disappeared in the direction of the "Black Cat," and Maynard considered the avenues of escape.

"Maybe I shouldn't try to escape," he told a telephone pole. "No girl ever paid so much attention to me before. Maybe if I just walk back and forth here, I'll stop being dizzy."

It was such an effort to lift his feet. The sneakers felt like leaden weights. Hesitantly, he promenaded back and forth, trying to regain his sense of reality. A cool breeze blew over him and ballooned his great red sweater.

"It's like sailing," he sighed, his dizziness replaced now by tranquility. "Good-bye, staid youth. Welcome, uninhibited middle age. Happy birthday to me." He danced unsteadily toward the lovely breeze.

What poor Maynard didn't know was that the lovely breeze was coming from the river. His ecstatic dance carried him right to the edge of Sailors' Wharf. "Up goes one foot, down goes the other. Up goes one . . ." and a hand grabbed him and pulled him backward.

"Maynard! Dear, dear Maynard." It was the girl's voice. Now it sounded familiar to him, as though he had heard it often before.

He turned toward her. "How do you know my name?"

"Here, Maynard." She reached into his pocket. "Put on your glasses.."

Dumbly, he followed her bidding. Settling them on their usual spot on his nose, he blinked and waited for the fog to clear. He could hear the water tapping softly against the pilings beneath his perch. When his eyes could focus in the darkness, he saw her.

"Miss Howard!"

The long slender arm reached out again and fell around his shoulders. "Call me Ethel," she exhaled softly.

Before Hurricane Season

Jack Hardie

Rain ravaged the sidewalk puddles; their grey-white faces pocked beneath the downpour. It was a dismal, rainy Florida afternoon and the youth walked eyes down, thinking. *Less than a month now, before hurricane season.* The shoulders of his tan raincoat were brown stains and a soggy collar rose limply about his neck. He jerked it higher; the wind off the ocean just a few miles away was chilling, but as it sliced through his water-drenched frame the boy shuddered with delight. He groped for words to describe the emotion. None came. How could a journey into the happiness of his past be analyzed with words? He was just home again and he walked, almost skipped along, his gaze on the sidewalk ahead.

His heavy-soled sneakers battered through little pools of chalky water, splattering and destroying them. Flying drops bounced and rolled crazily on the concrete. Like tiny globules of mercury, however, they pulled themselves together again, making new puddles in his wake. *They can't be destroyed, he thought fondly, invincible; they always seem to return to their original beauty.* He hurried to catch the bus.

And ahead, others were already waiting. Bunched together, they held their umbrellas like Roman soldiers forming a *testudo*. *Latin, he remembers, for tortoise.* The multicolor turtle moved to the curb as the bus pulled up. Seeing it, he ran, quickly dashed across the street and around to the bus side of the vehicle. *Just in time;* someone was still getting on.

The woman was painfully old; he had run only to stand in the rain waiting. Her right foot had already conquered the high first step but the left was still laboring to its level. *Lousy rain!* Someone was behind him now so that he couldn't back up and water dripped from the roof of the bus onto his bare head; it ran down his face forming tiny droplets under his chin that slowly swelled and fell as though from a leaky spigot. The woman had paused on the first step; now the right foot rose again. Pause. The left. *Damn,* he was in a hurry. The right . . . the left. When she had finally made the summit, she stood fumbling through a worn

leather change purse for the necessary fare, and at last a wrinkled hand withdrew a shining quarter and placed it in the yawning yellow mouth of the toll register. The driver forced a patient smile. Still she remained, blocking the way to the back of the bus and waiting as though for the coin to be digested. Only after the register had rung three times did the woman shuffle aside, taking a seat beside the door with her back to the windows. She stared unconcernedly at the other row of seats.

The youth took the climb with two long-legged leaps and flippantly snapped his fare into the hopper. At the third ring he was halfway to the back of the bus. His dripping body left a spattered trail down the length of the aisle.

There weren't many occupied seats yet, but he always sat near the back of the bus. Looking forward at the unknowing heads that couldn't see back always gave him a smug feeling. The feeling that he used to get playing "hide-and-go-seek" as a kid; he had always made sure to hide so that he could see to laugh at the vain attempts of searchers. *It was childish, but it's only habit now*, and he dismissed the thought, settling back comfortably. As the bus pulled away from the curb, he opened the book that he had been carrying under his coat.

The novel couldn't hold his attention and his mind wandered. He'd waited a long time to ride this bus again; the ride represented years of dreaming and planning, *stupid old woman, holding him up*; he leered up at the woman who still stared vacantly ahead and then he tried to return to his book. His face wore a triumphant expression; he was almost glad to be jounced by the rickety old bus.

This first day home has been disappointing so far, he stared unseeing at the pages in his lap. So much has been changed! The Sunset, always fifteen cents for the Saturday matinee had cost eighty-five cents . . . just to see how flamboyantly plush and modern they'd made it; and Central City Park, its once-peaceful walks and curio shops now a chaotic scurry of tourists in gaudy short-sleeved prints and open-toed beach sandals. How ridiculous they look! But, hadn't he sort of expected all of this? After all, the city of Fort Lauderdale had been growing when he had left eight years ago; so had all of Florida. What he was really looking forward to doing was going south of the city, into Dania, to see the old neighborhood, the palmetto thickets out behind the

house and especially the big tree on North Road where all the kids had hung out. The "old climbin' tree"; he murmured it reverently.

He remembered the tree well. It was a huge live oak, at least a hundred feet high and the tallest around. The thought of it had always brought him the sound of children's games and shouts for as long as he had been away. Defying blistering suns, its spreading limbs had made a great shaded circle and the earth beneath was always cool. Hidden bluejays flew high above and screamed, crashing through the greenery with the sound of crackling waxed paper. When it rained, the tree's shelter had always been more popular than going home; *today, for the last time, I'll stand beneath its limbs, out of the rain.* The trunk was a graven patchwork reading of long-past romances; his own initials were there, he remembered, *with another's.* The colors, the sounds, the carvings, and even the old tire that was swung from a heavy low limb, every detail of this sacred childhood shrine was with him.

Childhood shrine, yes, home again and no daydream this time. He had returned to "Florida"; the excited word struck chaos to his mind. *It was more even, than just home.* He thought of the salmon's driving spawning urge. *Florida: the mother's breast, the dark warm bed of a child's afternoon nap, nursery rhymes, kindergarten, the first bicycle, a beagle puppy, "cops and robbers", ocean sand, limp palms in the lull of a sultry summer's afternoon, the bushy green of palmetto thickets, the yellow of ripening guavas, and the peace of the climbin' tree.* He couldn't tell his friends back North of these. When they'd point to neighborhood spots and say that that was where they had cut a knee roller skating or that they had played soldiers in that vacant lot he could only be sadly silent. *No monuments to my childhood; and at least, none within his reach.*

And he thought of Ohio, *its cold winter winds, frozen dirty slush beneath the wheels of rushing traffic, street cars, tenement houses, and forests of brick. Dad's black coffin, the candles . . . "You're the man of the house." they'd said: crying in the bedroom. The North was the thief, the North was death, the North was the rude and the cold and the ugly.*

High school graduation, too, neighbors and relatives over for beer and sandwiches, Mom had made cake; the imprisoning barrage of a thousand tongues telling of jobs and the army and going to college.

"Given the future any thought?"; shrugged answers, uncertain and unknown. Before doing anything . . . had to see Fort Lauderdale again, just once.

Outside, now, the rain was getting worse. Through his window the electric lines dipped quickly from pole-top to pole-top; the driver was making good time, they were almost out to his neighborhood. The rain staccatoed happily on the tin of the roof.

He quickly thought of the past three days. A thousand miles of walking, hitch-hiking and snatches of sleep. It had left him physically exhausted, but the happiness of reliving his past would soothe his fatigue. Here, in Florida at last, he would answer his own endless questionings. Only this return could unite the two broken pieces of his life, and now he was on a local bus for his old home.

He peered through the window; the bus was passing the block where he had lived! *No, never mind getting off here, he'd see the house later; right now it was to be, it had to be the tree.* He felt drawn to it, standing beneath its sheltering limbs once more would be like laying flowers on the stone of a loved grave. They were past the housing area now, well out on North Road. Thickets shouldered either side of the road.

There! It was the lumbermill where they used to play on the sawdust mounds. He'd forgotten about that, and just beyond, *the baseball field!* Excitedly, he slammed shut the book on his lap, rose and yanked the buzzer cord. Stepping clumsily over packages, feet and dripping umbrellas in the aisle, he made his way to the front of the bus and stood on the top step as the vehicle slowed. *Only a moment now!* He was ready to dash beneath the shelter that the tree would offer; it would keep him safe and dry once more.

Good, it'll be just off the road where the bus is stopping. Brakes squealed, rat-like, doors folded open; and he caught a moist breath of palmetto musk; it was deliciously intoxicating. He poised in the doorway for a second, squinting into the driving rain ahead, searching for his target before leaping from the shelter of the bus. Through the wall of falling water he saw, first, a spread of knuckled roots, like a giant spider squatting in the mud; and above, the once majestic trunk. It rose only as far as the eight black power lines which swung overhead in the

ocean's wind against a leaden sky, and there it stopped: flat-topped, desecrated, naked; water glistening from its rotten skeleton.

Confused, he pulled himself back into the bus and backed slowly up the steps. The driver was obviously annoyed, "that's another quarter if yer stayin' on", and the young man sheepishly placed another fare into the register and took a seat right behind the driver.

Never mind about seeing the house and the rest of the neighborhood today. It's raining anyway. He'd go back to his rented room in town and spend the rest of the day reading or something. He tried to regain interest in his book.

Now, he thought, I can go home. North again; get a job; or why not college? His mind skimmed away from the novel again and captured thoughts of textbooks, classrooms and ivied buildings.

The roar of the motor suddenly sounded in his ears. He hadn't missed the noise of the bus; *How long have we been stopped here?* He glanced outside; the bus hadn't moved from the shoulder of the road. Across the aisle and through the streaming window, a dark, shadowy obelisk pulled slowly away and lost itself in the rain. Straining to follow it, his eyes found a vacant face. The old woman. She still stared absently forward, not seeing anything or seeming to hear.

Then, as if hit suddenly by a chilling draft, though no window had been opened, the boy felt a sudden compassion for her, the ancient woman, sitting there so small, so withered, expressionless. He returned to the book in his lap.

Fit For A Fiddle

When the fad of physical fitness swept the country, Mr. Babbit was one of the first to undertake a program of vigorous daily exercise. Every morning and every night he bent and stretched and twisted and said such things as, "Oh, my aching back," and "This gives me a pain in my neck." But he bent, and stretched, and twisted on. He did push-ups and sit-ups and duck-walks and head-stands while his wife looked on in silent amusement.

"You'll see," he told her one day. "You may be laughing now, but I'll get the last laugh when I outlive you by twenty-five years. Just wait. You'll see."

And every morning he bent, and stretched, and twisted, and said such things as, "This is the first time I've ever pulled my own leg," and "I'm twisting my own arm!" But he bent and stretched, and twisted on.

After carrying out his program for a month, Mr. Babbit noticed no change in the way he felt or looked. He became discouraged and depressed and abandoned his physical fitness program completely. He over-ate and under-exercised. He became sluggish and lethargic, and within one week he gained fifty pounds. Mr. Babbit's poor body could not stand the radical change, and ten days after abandoning the physical fitness program Mr. Babbit died.

Moral: Neither a wallower or a bender be.

Dee Amir

From The Mouths Of Horses

Joe Farmer had the smartest horse in Hick County. The horse's name was Socrates, and people came from far and near to hear him answer questions vocally and count by tapping his hoof.

Joe would ask, "What month follows April?" and Soc would answer "Mmmmay."

Since Hick County was staunchly Republican, when Joe asked if Soc was a Democrat, he would reply "NAY!" with a ferocious gleam in his eye.

Because everyone was amazed that a horse could count, Joe asked several addition questions such as how much was two and two, four and four, six and six, and Socrates always tapped out the correct answer.

Joe usually ended the performance with a joke such as "Who was that lady I saw you with last night? That was no lady, that was my wife." and Soc would throw back his head, bare his teeth, and "heee heee heee" loud and long.

Everyone in the audience was delighted, particularly with the finale, and the fame of Joe Farmer and his intelligent horse, Socrates, spread over the entire state. Even in the capitol city of Urbansville, people were talking about the pair. The news reached the governor, who had to see the show for himself.

The day the governor was to arrive, Joe combed Socrates' tail and braided it with striped ribbons, made him a new hat to fit down over his ears, and even placed spectacles over his eyes to increase the illusion of wisdom.

The governor's motorcade, complete with motorcycle escort, arrived promptly at show time, and all the spectators filed into the arena and took their seats in the grandstand. The governor insisted on sitting right in front to get the best view.

Joe sarted his routine: "What month follows April, Soc?" and the scholarly-looking horse answered "Mmmmay."

The governor was intrigued, and because his important position gave him authority to interrupt, he insisted on questioning the nag himself.

"What month follows June, Socrates?" he asked, and Socrates answered "NAY!" with a ferocious gleam in his eye.

"What month follows September, you stupid horse?" he bellowed, and the horse tapped one two three four taps.

After more futile questions which the horse answered by tapping eight taps and twelve taps, the governor, who was in a rage by now, shouted at Socrates "You stupid nag, do you know who I am? I am the governor of this entire state!"

Socrates threw back his head, bared his teeth, and "heee heee heee heee heeed" loud and long.

Since that day, Socrates has gone back to plowing fields and pulling wagons to market. He still has ribbons in his tail and a hat on his head but is not wearing spectacles.

Moral: "You can tell a horse he oughter, but you can't make him think."

Lynn Kirby

The Unhappy Emperor

The emperor Nero of Rome was basically an unhappy person. One day, Nero went to see the royal psychiatrist. The royal psychiatrist advised Nero that the unhappiness came from wanting to be a Christian. Nero had great faith in the royal psychiatrist so he promptly applied for admission to the Christian religion. The Christians, however, found Nero totally unacceptable. The Christians hated Nero's practice of allowing a matinee and two evening features at the Palace theater on Sunday, and playing an instrument that too closely resembled the female body. Nero was emphatically denied admission. Nero became infuriated and even more basically unhappy. Finally one day, a Christian called Nero a "lousy pagan pig," and Nero sent all the Christians to the lions. Moral: If you can't join 'em, beat 'em.

Donald Brominski

The Loon vs. the Foxes

Many years ago in a great forest there were two adjoining kingdoms, the kingdoms of the foxes and the kingdoms of the birds. And, because everyone knows that birds are the favorite meal of foxes, there was constant squabbling between the two.

Now the ruler of Birdland was a very old and very wise owl, and serving below him as his national administrators were the mockingbirds and bluejays. The citizens of birdland were especially proud of their government, as they had elected both the owl and his administrators by popular vote. "Government of the birds, by the birds, and for the birds" was proudly carved on trees all over the forest, and all the birds knew that theirs was a much better government than that of the foxes, even though no one could ever quite agree as to what kind of government the foxes did have.

One day, at a conference of all the influential citizens of Birdland, over which the wise old owl himself was presiding, the mockingbirds and the bluejays were bleating the message that the foxes would never conquer Birdland because their form of government was so unstable, and because their educational system was inferior, and because their coats were such an ugly red color. Everyone was agreed and some birds waved flags and banners while others shouted patriotic cliches back and forth hopping up and down and clapping the tips of their wings together.

Then, seemingly out of nowhere, young Lawrence Loon stepped forward and raised his clumsy wings for silence; he seemed to have something to say. With one look at his pitiful appearance and the vacant expression which he always wore, the crowd broke into unrestrained laughter and chattering, but quieted when Amanda Goldfinch twittered, "He may have something amusing to say," and she stared at him looking down the long length of her beak because she was president of the local chapter of the Daughters of the Birdland Revolution and a direct descendant of Sir Francis the Drake. Everyone knew that loons are such stupid fellows, and especially this one. It was generally agreed that the young loon was Birdland's village idiot.

"Fellow birds," Lawrence began in a meek tone, nervously straightening his bow tie; there was a general chortle from the feathered assemblage, "We do not have to be afraid of the foxes rushing in and taking over Birdland as we should be of the birds among us who are spies and fox sympathizers." A barrage of hisses, boos, and catbird calls; he stammered on, "The mockingbirds want us to keep giving food to the rabbits to get them on our side while many of our own birds at home go hungry. The jaybirds scream that we should spend more hours collecting piles of pebbles and poison-dust toadstools to use on the foxes in the event of war and even now we don't have enough time to build good strong nests for our children. The bluejays and the mockingbirds seem to be helping the foxes."

"The loon is trying to make you hate your government so that the foxes can take over!" screeched the mockingbirds. "He is a spy for the foxes!" accused the bluejays. "Traitor!" cried Amanda Goldfinch. "Foxist," thundered a pelican, and others took up the chant, "Foxist, anarchist, propagandist!" "He knows nothing about government!" cackled a hen above the shouting, "Crazy as a loon!"

The uproar quieted as the wise old owl rose before his subjects. Adjusting his monocle and carefully picking bits of down from his magnificent coat, he addressed the shamefaced loon. "Lawrence, m'boy," he boomed, "why don't you just run along and let the conference get some business out of the way?" Young Lawrence Loon sadly moped from the meeting whereupon the wise old owl promptly signed into law five new bills calling for more extensive rabbit aid and increased defense spending.

Three moths later, whether by accident or by the design of the mockingbirds and the bluejays (no one is quite sure to this day), Birdland became so weak that the foxes just trotted in and took over. There followed a huge victory banquet of fried chicken, pheasant under glass, mockingbird stew, and loon burgers.

Moral: Unfortunately, a word to the wise is too often accepted at face value.

Jack Hardie

The Quake in the Grass

Once there was a man, named Sid, who was very sad. Sid was the owner of the A-Z Zoo, and the reason that he was sad was that he had all of the animals from a to z except one. The one animal Sid needed started with q. Every time he would walk past the empty cage between the panther and the rhinoceros he would grow a little sadder. He read every animal book he could find, and asked everyone he knew, but alas, poor Sid could find no animal whose name began with q.

When at last his depression was too much to bear Sid embarked on the only scheme which would end his grief: he had to track down and bring back a brand new animal and give it a name that began with q. And so with mind resolved Sid set out to find an animal that had no name. Sid traveled from the North Pole to the South Pole and from Marmaduke to Cambodia with no success at all. Into the world's remotest corners Sid stalked the strangest beasts; once he saw a wombat in Whiggensboard and once he caught sight of a whole herd of kinkajou in Kenya, but he couldn't find an unnamed creature anywhere.

That is, until one day, in an unknown stretch of jungle deep in the Amazonian rain forest, Sid came upon an animal unlike any other animal he had ever seen before. It was very big and round and covered with bushy red hair, and it had two long blue ears that dragged along the ground. The thing was grazing alone in a field when Sid happened upon it. "Wow, there it is," Sid thought to himself. "I wonder what I should call it? Hmmm . . . I know, I'll call it a quake because I remember reading about lots of quakes in South America." So doing, Sid commenced to capture the quake. "Oh boy," he thought as he readied his lasso, "People will come from all over to see the only quake in captivity. My little zoo will be famous."

As Sid approached the quake, he broke a dried twig and caused the animal to look up and see him. At the first sight of Sid the animal bolted, but not before Sid could throw his rope around one of the quake's ears. The frightened quake took off for the woods dragging Sid behind. The strange burden added to the panic of the quake, who either out of sheer terror or plain carelessness fell headlong into a

rocky ravine. The quake hit with a thud, bellowed once, and died; Sid landed on the quake and suffered only a broken leg. All that poor Sid could do was wait and hope help arrived in time.

Keeping a cool head, Sid appraised the situation. "Even a dead quake is better than none," he thought, "but it might take several weeks before I'm found, and my dead quake won't last that long, and even if it did, in my present state, I'll surely starve."

Sid had just finished the last of the quake when they found him. Every time he would make reference to it in answer to their questions, and no matter how many times he would describe it to them, they just nodded to each other and said a few days rest would do him a world of good. Sid was a very sad man.

Moral: You can't have your quake and eat it, too.

Harris Tobias

The Botch in the Corner

Once there was a little boy who lived with his stepmother. This little boy was very good and his stepmother was very crabby. The crabby stepmother would always pick on the little boy and tell him to wash behind his ears and make his bed and pick up all his toys about ten times a day. Every time the crabby stepmother would shake her bony finger at the little boy and tell him to wash behind his ears, the little boy would stare her right in the eye and say, "One day a botch is going to come and eat you up," and then go right on doing what he wanted. This went on for some time, the stepmother telling the little boy to do something and the little boy telling her about the botch, and each time the crabby stepmother would go away wondering what a botch was.

Through the years the house became full of toys and the little boy's ears were dirty and his bed was unmade and the stepmother was at her wit's end. "Listen here, young man," she finally said, "you can't go on threatening your stepmother this way. Now I want you to come here and tell me what a botch is, and then I never want you to mention one again." Hearing this, the little boy looked at his stepmother and said, "A botch is a green furry animal that sneaks into houses and eats up crabby stepmothers." The stepmother promptly spanked the little boy for telling lies and for calling her crabby. Then she sent him to bed without any supper and made him stand in the corner for a week.

Of course, no botch ever came and the crabby stepmother grew even crabbier. The crabbier she became, the more she would make the little boy stand in the corner, and the more the little boy stood in the corner, the more lies he told. He told her of a blootch and a snogg and a web-footed wriggle and everything his little boy mind could invent. Of course he did all his telling from a corner of a room because that is where he was always sent.

When the little boy grew up he was the biggest liar around. He had no friends and everyone thought he was horrid.

Moral: Too many nooks spoil the troth, or stepmother is the necessity of invention.

Harris Tobias



