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EDITORS: MICHAEL GOLD, HORACE GREGORY, GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ

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Notes on the Cultural Front

By Michael Gold

THIS YEAR I crossed the continent in an automobile. I talked to California longshoremen and fruit-pickers, to Wyoming oil workers and Pennsylvania miners, to waiters, gas-station attendants, and little shopkeepers.

Roosevelt is their symbol of the new, and the C.I.O. stirs them as Columbus and his subjective geography must have affected the Spanish court. The spirit is: we don't know exactly where we're going, but we must be on our way. When the people sleep, it is as if the sun were not shining; pessimism and cynicism darken the mind. But now this American people is in motion, as never since the Civil War. It is possible to breathe again. Destiny and hope hover over the great continent.

NEW YORK, too, had felt the spirit that walks America. Renewing old friendships here in the unions of the garment workers, the food workers, the waterfront workers, and those of other trades, I found a remarkable change. The whole struggle has debouched on a new and higher plane. Communist trade unionists, a few years ago still affected by the sectarianism of any unpopular minority, have learned the difficult art of the united front. Now they think and act like labor statesmen, instead of isolated soap-boxers. They have acquired a sense of power and responsibility, and a deep-rooted importance in the very heart of the class-strategy. The recent New York elections, in which the Labor Party emerged as a national force, and in which the Communist Party first made itself felt as an effective political group, demonstrated this great change abundantly. Yes, the nation is on the march.

It is true that fascism has become bolder all over the world. It is on the offensive, as all gamblers down to their last chips must be. The democracies seem weak and divided. An international class war is in the making, and the Fifth Columns are busily preparing it in every nation, betraying their own people in the process.

Gulliver can always sweep off the feverish midgets of fascist capitalism by merely stirring his limbs in one mighty coördinated gesture.

The people's front is Gulliver's first sortie. Experimental and clumsy, it has already checked fascism in Spain and France and put a spine into the Chinese resistance to fascism. England has been the weakest link in the chain of democracies, but a people's front is slowly emerging there too, against all the sabotage of the sordid labor tories.

And now, by some powerful working of the instinct of self-preservation, we behold the American masses groping their own way toward a people's front—for if these C.I.O. and labor-party movements mean anything in the international scene, it is just that.

So is it not a great hour in American history, a time for confidence, for optimism and heightened action, a time to sink all petty partisan quarrels into a vast united effort? It seems so to millions of Americans; this is the mood of the country, I believe. In New York, however, it appears there is also a group of mourners. They think the country is going to hell, and it is all the fault of the emerging people's front. No, I am not talking about the Wall Street section of Franco's international; I am referring to the Trotskyfied intellectuals.

THEY ARE a small band, working in a small milieu, but what energy, what remarkable ingenuity and persistence they display! Some of them called themselves Communists two or three years ago; but they were rather faint-hearted then, passive fellow-travelers with little passion. Now they overflow with enthusiasm against the people's front, against the Communist Party, against the Soviet Union, against loyalist Spain, and China, and proletarian literature, the labor party, the C.I.O., virtually the whole of Gulliver, the awakening people.

They fill the intellectual and literary journals of the bourgeoisie with their hymns of hate. A few years ago they seriously questioned whether the creative writer would not be injured if he entered the political arena and allowed the working class to lay demands on him. This was when they were "Communists"; now, when they are Trotskyites, they are intensely political, and cannot write a line of poetry or a short fiction sketch without allowing their political feelings to overcome them, and to distort their talents.

It is all strange, until one regards it also as a psycho-

logical, as well as a political, phenomenon. In most people, love and solidarity are the passions that drive them to action; in others, the malice and hate of warped personality can be as strong a motivating force. Shakespeare knew this, and his Iago, a genius of malice, is certainly shrewder, more active and inspired than the noble Othello.

Intellectuals are peculiarly susceptible to Trotskyism, a nay-saying trend. The intellectual under capitalism is not a full man, since capitalism has little use for a culture that brings no immediate dollar-profit. The "intellectual" is rather a stepchild at the capitalist feast. The great and small fiction of the western intellectuals during the latter part of the nineteenth century and up to the present is permeated with the bitter poison of frustration, and the malice and pessimism that accompany frustration. Suspicion of life reached a point among the western intellectuals where, as Nietzsche pointed out, it became a form of biological inferiority.

This suspicion of life, so organic with the intellectuals, has made them the peculiar prey of Trotskyism, which at present denies the whole current movement of the people's history.

Trotskyism has no mass following. It finds its only strength in this isolated world of those intellectuals who, with the frustrate, negative psychology capitalism has implanted in them, were never really at home in the Communist working-class movement. The workers, however oppressed under capitalism, still knew themselves vital to the functioning of capitalism. Every strike was a demonstration of this. If they did not work, the wheels of society would stop. But intellectuals never knew this class feeling of being functionally important enough to be dangerous.

So those intellectuals, who had numberless reservations when they were fellow-travelers in "communism," now have no reservations in Trotskyism. Trotskyism is merely an extension of their previous distrust of the positive working-class philosophy and reaction to life. Now they are at home again with Iago.

We can, therefore, discard all the new "Marxist" jargon these people have learned in the past five years and pierce to the spiritual and psychological core of their new-found energy. It is the simple malice of the Joyceian intellectual, hating life. Iago has found a new mask to assume in a new situation.

I CAN REMEMBER these same people only a decade ago. It was Christmas Eve in the harem, and all the eunuchs were there. Santa Claus asked them what they wanted in their stockings, and they shouted—but you know the answer.

The ivory tower, once a hermit's refuge and revolt against a vulgar, commercialized world, had become vulgarized into a bedroom. The eunuchs pranced and frisked merrily; sex, sex, sex (God knows some of them needed it badly) was the chief preoccupation of these intellectuals; the Coolidge boom was on; and James Branch Cabell, an aristocratic panderer from Virginia, told them "naughty" stories. He was their chief "artist," as Mencken was their "critic," for ten futile years!

Bah! It was a sordid and contemptible time, and I want to spit whenever I think of it. In that period of the triumphant *nouveaux riches,* when even stockbrokers went in for literature, because literature meant "feelthy peectures," only a handful of us remained loyal to the old-fashioned doctrine that literature was more than an aphrodisiac or entertainment.

We were isolated; and perhaps we ranted a little, and sneered, and made mistakes. We must have seemed as one-ideaed as hairy Jeremiahs to those fat revelers at the Coolidge banquet into whose ears we yelled: "Your prosperity is a fraud! You have forgotten the American people! Your literature is no more representative of American life than a French *capote!* To hell with you fakers, wait till your stock market crashes!"

Yes, I was one of the Jeremiahs, and I remember that once that most unfortunate and charming man of talent, Clarence Day, said to me from his "mattress-grave," "You fellows must be awfully lonesome." I answered, "It would be a lot more lonesome among the liars."

I have no apologies to offer snooty young "proletarian" critics who, like Dr. Dryasdust, read the past without imagination and tell us now our manners were bad, and our æsthetics faulty. They didn't happen to be there. They are living in a time when proletarian literature has become important enough for Thomas Lamont's *Saturday Review of Literature* to "demolish" week after week.

Then we were not noticed at all—we were jokes and freaks. If I hadn't read Marx and Lenin, and learned some economics, and learned to trust the people, I might have felt like a freak, perhaps. But I knew enough to know that the fashions of intellectuals are only froth on a mighty wave, and that the real ocean of reality is where the people earn their daily bread.

Well, the stock market did crash, and the "literary" criticism of the "political" Jeremiahs in literature proved correct; the ensuing depression swept away all the gilded, phrase-mongering, bedroom heroics of the Menckens and the Cabells, all that seasonal fashion.

The market quotations went down, and proletarian literature went up. Unemployment brought thousands of intellectuals into our ranks. Overnight, almost like Byron, the concept of "proletarian literature" became famous. Even the dizziest Cabellists stopped contemplating their you-know-what, and turned their eyes outward, on the class struggle. Hunger came through the door, and Eros scrammed through the window. It was a real "boom."

But some of the old guard, like Mencken, austerely unmoved by the cry of twenty million jobless Americans, cast a fishy gaze on this novel sight. "This is just a new bandwagon," Mencken sneered in the *Saturday Review,* "a new seasonal fashion among the intellectuals."

The stern old Baltimore Babbitt was partly right. A swarm of piffling paste-pots, dilettantes, cynics, frustrates, and bourgeois Iagos were among us. For a time they threatened to swamp even us with their alien ideology, their bourgeois zeal to distort Marx and to direct the working class. But in the end, they could not "adapt"; they were only Menckens at heart, after all; old Father Babbitt had shrewdly estimated his own children.

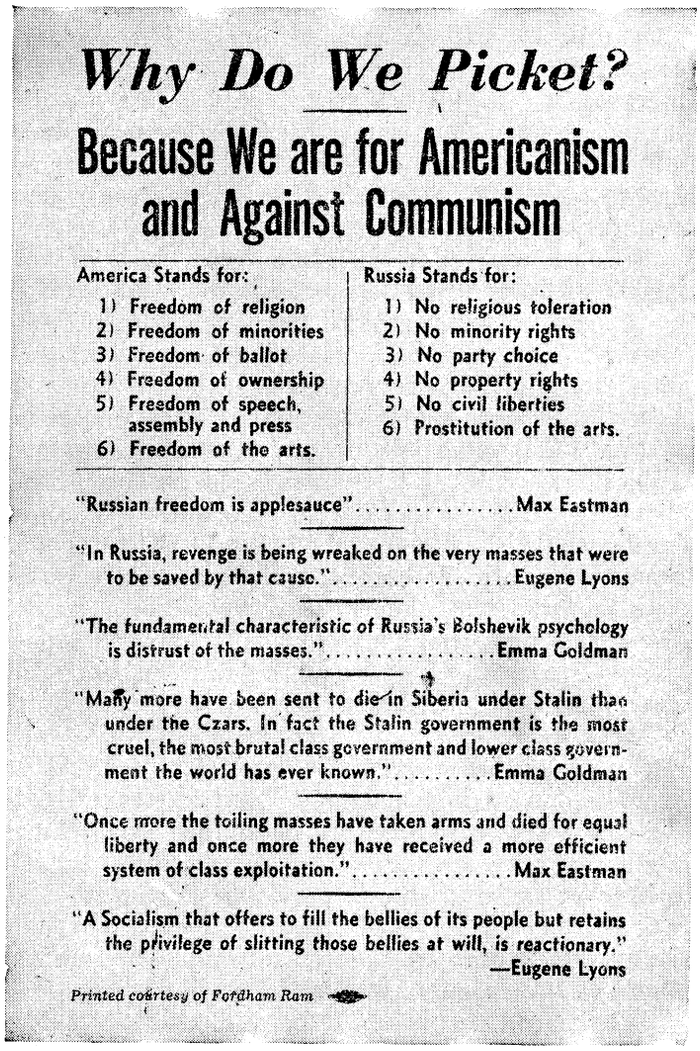
Then, the class struggle sharpened. At the first critical moment, a large group of the "converts" began deserting the proletarian "bandwagon" in a scramble back to their native own. I must confess I was never alarmed. I believe evacuation of the bowels is necessary to a healthy body. This is a purge of unhealthy stuff without any effort on our part.

Yes, they had their fling at "revolution," and they hated it. But they learned something in the process; how to fight with new and more skilled weapons the Communism they had previously feared and distrusted. Now in the name of Marx himself they fight the Marxists; in the name of the revolution, they sabotage the revolution; in the name of the people, they try to confuse, slander, and destroy the people's front. They call themselves "Communists," and the chief enemy they seek to destroy in every land is the Communist Party.

THE PROCESS is becoming clearer every day on the political front. Here is a little incident, one of many:

The other day I attended a Communist mass meeting at Madison Square Garden to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Russian revolution.

In the rain, on all the streets around the great hall, groups of earnest young men paraded with signs. They were Catholic students from nearby seminaries and colleges. Their fascist elders had sent them forth to battle for God and the Liberty League. Their signs pleaded with New Yorkers to boycott the Communist meeting. They handed out various leaflets. The one reproduced on this page is typical.



Why Do We Picket?

Because We are for Americanism and Against Communism

America Stands for:	Russia Stands for:
1) Freedom of religion	1) No religious toleration
2) Freedom of minorities	2) No minority rights
3) Freedom of ballot	3) No party choice
4) Freedom of ownership	4) No property rights
5) Freedom of speech, assembly and press	5) No civil liberties
6) Freedom of the arts.	6) Prostitution of the arts.

"Russian freedom is applesauce".....Max Eastman

"In Russia, revenge is being wreaked on the very masses that were to be saved by that cause."..... Eugene Lyons

"The fundamental characteristic of Russia's Bolshevik psychology is distrust of the masses."..... Emma Goldman

"Many more have been sent to die in Siberia under Stalin than under the Czars. In fact the Stalin government is the most cruel, the most brutal class government and lower class government the world has ever known."..... Emma Goldman

"Once more the toiling masses have taken arms and died for equal liberty and once more they have received a more efficient system of class exploitation."..... Max Eastman

"A Socialism that offers to fill the bellies of its people but retains the privilege of slitting those bellies at will, is reactionary."
—Eugene Lyons

Printed courtesy of Fordham Ram

A Catholic anti-communist leaflet cites as its authorities three self-styled "revolutionists."

There it is in a nutshell. Franco's chief supporters in New York employ Max Eastman, Eugene Lyons, and Emma Goldman as their final argument against the first workers' state. This has become the function of Trotskyism in the present period. Even when an honest man falls into this peculiar camp, innocent, perhaps, and pure in heart as those young Catholic students, he cannot avoid finishing in the camp of the enemy. The Madison Square incident is being repeated a hundred times every day in every land, including Spain; but the Trotskyites see no shame in being used in this manner. They even go on calling themselves "Communists," for it is as "disillusioned Communists" that they are chiefly valuable to the capitalist press.

The whole Dostoyevskian story of the degeneration of these people was told by themselves in the Moscow trials. In America, these trials have been slandered as frame-ups, as if there were no Soviet justice. But the Bolsheviks educated an illiterate nation, and lifted one-sixth of the world out of ancient poverty and superstition into a new historic stage of evolution. The Soviet system is indivisible, and if Soviet nurseries, libraries, and schools are a sound development, Soviet justice must be as sound, for it comes from the same source as the Soviet cultural renaissance.

The Moscow trials are horrible, but they are horrible only because they reveal the malicious depths of the Iago-Trotskyist soul.

ON THE CULTURAL FRONT in America, the Trotskyites are being used by the bourgeois press in the same manner; as "disillusioned" intellectual witnesses to the alleged narrowness and decay of proletarian culture.

The *Saturday Review of Literature,* which, as you know, is subsidized by Thomas Lamont, has been conducting a veritable campaign against our literature. The *Nation,* as Granville Hicks shows in a documented study in this issue, has been second in the campaign, and from time to time *Scribner's, Harper's,* and the slick-paper magazines for the middle class join the refined Red-hunt.

The renegade Trotskyites supply them with their ammunition. When did these magazines ever print an essay by any intellectual who takes a positive position toward the Soviet Union or proletarian culture, even when the intellectual is more distinguished in achievement than a Eugene Lyons or a V. F. Calverton; Romain Rolland, perhaps, or Maxim Gorky. This is obviously not a non-partisan search for truth, but a war on the "Reds."

Why do these magazines need to conduct such a campaign? That, too, is obvious. The depression drove thousands of the American middle class into the left camp, and it has become necessary to bring them back. But tory authors would not be believed; only Trotskyist authors, renegades who have learned the left phraseology, are effective. In Chicago, the head of the Red Squad is a Russian Jew who was once a 1905 revolu-

tionist. He has built his police career on his special knowledge of how the revolutionary movement functions. In our American literary world, similar careers are being made by a group of Trotskyist authors. It is significant that few of them were ever published as freely, or reviewed as cordially, when they wrote on the working-class side. Have they taken such a sudden leap forward in the technique of their art or the clarity of their thought?

Of course not. It is a Red-hunt that is going on, a political battle, and they are valuable to the enemies of communism.

I HAD INTENDED to write some sort of essay that would try to answer all the recent criticisms they have been bringing, and inspiring in others, against proletarian literature. To prepare myself, I read through some of the renegade essays and found that they weren't literary criticism at all, and that it was impossible to answer them except in political terms.

Their arguments always boil down to one basic slander: *viz.,* proletarian literature is dead in America, and it was murdered by the Communist Party which practiced a rigid political dictatorship on it.

The Catholic-fascist circular said: "Russia stands for prostitution of the arts." They learned this from Max Eastman, no doubt, a man who did not scruple to call Maxim Gorky a prostitute and an "artist in uniform." But Eastman's stale thesis has been made the foundation of the whole Trotskyist "line" on proletarian literature in America, I have found.

They have spread this legend of party dictatorship far and wide among the intellectuals. And how can one answer a vague myth? The liars cannot cite a single example of party dictation over literature, or a single extract from the writings of a Communist critic advocating such dictatorship. They have no facts, only a common myth of slander.

In several notable speeches at writers' congresses, Earl Browder, secretary of the Communist Party, made it sufficiently plain that the party policy on literature was one of complete freedom.

> There is no fixed "party line" by which works of art can be separated automatically into sheep and goats [said Browder in 1935]. Our work in this field cannot be one of party resolutions giving judgment upon æsthetic questions.
>
> Within the camp of the working class, in struggle against the camp of capitalism, we find our best atmosphere in the free give-and-take of a writers' and critics' democracy, which is controlled only by its audience, the masses of its readers, who constitute the final authority.
>
> We believe that fine literature must arise directly out of life, expressing not only its problems, but, at the same time, all the richness and complexity of detail of life itself. The party wants to help, as we believe it already has to a considerable degree, to bring to writers a great new wealth of material, to open up new worlds to them. Our party interests are not narrow; they are broad enough to encompass the interests of all toiling humanity. We want literature to be as broad.

Is this the edict of a dictator? Is this the language of "politicians" who would "control" literature?

For a few years, accompanying the fiercest moments of the depression, there was a wave of proletarian literature in this country. Its authors were close to the Communist Party. They found nothing in the Communist Party that hampered their expression, or how were all those novels and poems ever produced?

True, some of the works had a narrowness of theme and some lack of imagination in style. Some were too heavily weighted with the slogans of politics. Might not this have been the fault of the authors, immature experimenters in a new field, rather than the fault of the bogyman, Stalin?

But a galaxy of fine books came out of the movement, along with the lesser work. American literature is permanently richer, I believe, for the advent of such poets and spokesmen of new areas of American life as Jack Conroy, Grace Lumpkin, Fielding Burke, Leane Zugsmith, Erskine Caldwell, Clifford Odets, Albert Maltz, William Rollins, John L. Spivak, Alfred Hayes, Kenneth Fearing, Edwin Rolfe, Isidor Schneider, Langston Hughes, Edwin Seaver, and many others who managed to retain their individual souls under the so-called "dictatorship."

But now the political situation has altered. Stark misery and brutal oppression of the workers marked the period then; now the working class has climbed to a higher stage, and is fighting not only for bread, but for political power. This has been a sudden and revolutionary change, of the sort that can happen only in great historic periods such as ours. The American proletarian writers haven't quite caught up with it; literature needs time to mellow and digest the daily fact. Our American writers, I believe, are experiencing a little of the problem faced by the Russian writers who had to pass from the Civil War into the construction period.

It isn't easy. And it will take a deeper study of working-class life than was demanded in the more primitive period, just as the people's front demands of Communists more integrity and wisdom than ever before. The class struggle is more complex than it was five years ago. This means that a richer and more complex approach will be demanded in our proletarian literature.

So there is a lull, perhaps, while the authors prepare themselves for the new tasks. Meanwhile what has been accomplished is that the work of the proletarian pioneers has already become an influence on the whole national literature. When Hollywood presents plays like *Dead End,* it is unconsciously acknowledging the national victory of literary ideas whose champions ten years ago could be found only in the pages of the MASSES.

But proletarian literature is dead, say the renegades. It was killed by the Communist Party dictators. If it is dead, why fear it so much? Why do they write so many obituaries, why are the bourgeois journals so eager to print over and over those slanderous stale epitaphs?

I SAY AGAIN that we have ended one period and are about to enter another in proletarian literature.

What Mencken did not know, and could never know, is that the bandwagon rush brought us good as well as evil. Thousands and thousands of white-collar workers and professionals were permanently proletarianized

during the worst years of the depression. They will never be the same again. They cannot desert, like the Trotskyist renegades, because they have all their roots in some organization, and in the trade-union movement. These masses of members in the Newspaper Guild, the Lawyers' Guild, and the trade unions of the social workers, architects, and technicians, the teachers, actors, and musicians, authors, and the rest, are new species of "intellectuals." They are dwelling in no ivory tower, but in the real world, where ideas must mirror objective truth.

They are serious, constructive, skilled people, who have learned to think and work in groups. No longer susceptible to the Freudian, bohemian, and phrase-mongering egotism of the previous generation, they aren't Hamlets, or Iagos, or Napoleons—but practical trade unionists. Deep in the American people, their approach to the labor problem is surer and more intimate than that of the preceding generation of white-collars.

Renegades, Red-baiters, Trotskyites, who daily bury the Soviet Union, Spain, China, the people's front, proletarian literature, and what have you in the bourgeois press, have never made any dent on this new generation. These people have had to fight against Red-baiting. The bosses have invariably used it against their own unions. They have been on picket-lines and in jails; they have had to do the things workers do, and make the same mistakes. Nobody can fool them about the realities.

Out of them, I believe, will come a new wave of proletarian literature, different and more complex than the last, more at home in the working-class world. For every white-collar renegade, there are thousands of these "new people." In the factories, mines, and mills are thousands of other lads whose whole outlook is being shaped by the C.I.O. The future of proletarian literature is in these hands. Labor is on the march. The farmers, professionals, small businessmen are stirring. Several thousand young American Communists and liberals are fighting in Spain. A labor party is being born. The American people are in motion.

Who can doubt that all this new historic experience and collective aspiration will not be expressed in our literature, so that the Communist Party, which plays a great role in this political ferment, will not also inspire with clarity and courage the new generation of writers, as it did the preceding one? Where else can such writers go for a philosophic key to the turmoil they are in? Can they go to the nihilists and saboteurs who deny that anything new has happened, or that the people are awakening? Proletarian literature carved a road despite the Menckens and Cabells and Max Eastmans of yesterday. It will go on widening that road despite the new crop of ivory-tower Iagos, Communist-haters, and nay-sayers to life.

Back to Work

By Leane Zugsmith

BREAKFAST was special with two eggs for him and Mildred barely able to nibble her toast for watching him. Each time she cleared her throat, he knew it was not because of what she found hard to say but because of what she wanted to avoid saying. With a bread-crust he mopped his plate clean of egg, at the same time keeping a sharp watch on the alarm clock beside him. Then he held out his cup for more coffee and, as she poured from the dented pot, he noticed once more how thin her arms were and how the bones at the base of her throat stood out like a little boy's bones. But she wasn't a little boy—she was a young woman, his wife, who had been faring on anxiety for more than three years. Only it was all over now. He would fatten her up and buy her new clothes and take her places. It was all over now. There would be no more relief jobs. He had handed in his resignation. This morning he would begin—his eyes reverted hastily to the clock—back with a private firm for the first time in over three years. The solemnity of the occasion suddenly caused his hand to shake; some coffee slopped onto the saucer.

Instantly Mildred spoke. "It's so perfectly marvelous, Seth," she said, her voice high and rattling. "I keep thinking, it's like a painter getting his brushes back and his easel and, oh, you know, everything. Isn't it? Don't you think so?"

"Hey, how do you get that way?" His voice was teasing. "I'm no artist. Nixon, maybe he calls himself an artist; but I'm just an operator, don't you forget it." He grinned. "And a damned good one, don't you forget that, either."

No one could deny that, he thought, no one who had ever done studio work with him. On the relief job, he might not have been so hot, taking censuses, taking everything but pictures. He knew, all right, what she had meant when she talked about getting the brushes back; she meant that he hadn't even had his portable camera to practice with, having had to sell it a couple of years back. And he also knew what she hadn't said but what had really been in her mind. Well, Jesus God, the breaks had been bad, that was all. If they had been good, he might have been running his own studio by now, like Nixon, and signing his name to his photographs. He'd be damned, though, if he would have gone in for the kind of soft-focus work that Nixon had showed him when he decided to give him the job. Not that he couldn't handle a soft-focus lens; he could handle any lens ever produced. And not that he had anything against Nixon; far from it; in fact, it had been

all he could do to keep from kissing him, almost, when Nixon had singled him out of the applicants. He looked again at the clock. He didn't want to get there too early and make it look as if he was anxious. On the other hand, he *had* to be there on time. He felt Mildred's hand upon his own.

"*I* think you're an artist," she said. "I think you used to take—you take marvelous pictures." She squeezed his hand. "Look at your fingers, aren't they artist's fingers? And they'll be all brown again, like old times, from that stuff, what do you call it now?"

"The pyro?" he said airily. "Only, say, when were they brown?" He pretended to be injured. "They were never brown when I got home. I always used the stain-remover."

"Oh, that time I came up to the studio, they certainly *were* brown."

He burst into laughter. "We're nuts, aren't we?" he said fondly. "If any one could have peeked through the windows last night!"

Mildred laughed with him, recalling the scene the night before when, knowing for sure that he had the job, Seth had removed the shades from the standing lamps and arranged the glaring bulbs around her. Then he had moved the imaginary camera stand, while she posed as a bored society matron, and then a flibbertigibbet, and then an embarrassed young man. He had said he wanted the feel of getting the perspective or, as he put it more loftily, the angle of view. He had even peered through an imaginary camera. *Wet your lips a little, please. That's good. Now just raise your head a little. Keep your eyes at the height my hand is. Just hold that, please.* He had even pressed a mythical bulb and removed a mythical plate-holder and pretty soon they had been fooling round like a couple of kids.

"Gee, we acted like a couple of kids," she said, still laughing.

Seth's face became sober. That was what she had always wanted: real kids, not them playing at it. She'll have them, too. It's the turn of the tide, all right; no more relief jobs, no more fear of the pink slip. "Jesus God!" he yelled. "Look at the time." He rushed for his hat and coat and made for the door. Mildred ran after him and pulled at his arm.

"Just for luck," she said and traced a big horseshoe on his back.

He kissed her and raced down the stairs. He was fortunate, making good connections in the subway, and arrived on time at the studio. Nixon's wife showed him where to put his outer garments and took him right into the studio. He was glad Nixon was still upstairs where they lived. It gave him more time to get the feel of things. After three years of doing God knows what, only it wasn't photography, you had to get your hand in again. With the knob he racked the bellows of the big camera, moving first the ground glass and then the lens, focusing on all the objects in the room. He operated the horizontal swing and the vertical; then he examined the lights. They were honeys, not like the lights he had been accustomed to, three years ago. These were big babies with two-thousand-watt bulbs, sweet diffusing screens, and reflectors that were wonderfully designed. They looked like auto headlights. Those old reflectors, familiar to him, had always let the light spread too much. It was going to be a pleasure to work with these.

The equipment in this studio was neat; up-to-date and neat. The only thing that had had him buffaloed, when he had encountered it yesterday, had been the oblong of green glass in the dark-room safelight. He had been smart enough to keep his mouth shut, though, not telling Nixon that he had almost always worked with color-blind films under a red safelight. Of course, he had developed a few pan films; just enough of them to know how hard it was to judge density under the pale glow of the green. But that was all there was to it. Consequently, there was nothing he was unable to do here, except, maybe to retouch and Nixon was bugs on doing his own retouching. That was why he had decided to hire an operator. At the sound of Nixon's voice, he wheeled around and started to hold out his hand. He could feel it shaking and hastily let it fall, just saying in an over-hearty voice: "Good morning, Mr. Nixon."

Most of the morning, he just watched the boss who wanted him to get the hang of his style. In the mid-afternoon, he got his first sitting, a woman with a large face and minute, indistinct features. Seth fussed over her more than he would have; he had a paralyzing feeling that if he didn't get the first one perfect, he might never be any good. He knew how to handle the soft-focus lens, all right. There was nothing to it much, he kept telling himself, except to focus with the lens stopped down, instead of focusing first and stopping it down afterward. Only he had an alarmed feeling that Nixon might be watching him from some hiding-place, and that would slow up anyone. Also, every time he looked, his head hidden under the black cloth, at the woman's image in the ground glass, it seemed as if the highlights in her eyes wouldn't sharpen up. They looked fuzzy; too fuzzy even for portraits. Several times he had to stop and wipe the palms of his hands on his trousers. If he could only sneak out and have a smoke, he knew it would ease him up. For a while he fooled with the lights and moved the camera stand to cover up his indetermination. Then he realized that, although this might fox her, it wouldn't put anything over on Nixon, provided he was watching him. So he knew he had to press the bulb. Once he had done it, the next moves seemed to come easier.

After he had finished, he had to mop his face. "These lights get you pretty warm," he said in apology.

As soon as she left, he went into the dark-room with the films. Nixon wouldn't be able to have a peephole in there. He took the first one at hand out of its holder and inserted it into a hanger. If his hand was unsteady, dipping the film into the tank of developer, it wasn't because he was nervous any longer, it was just that the green light bothered him a little. After you've always worked under a red light, naturally, it takes a little time to get accustomed to the comparative gloom of the green; that was all. If Nixon thought he was going to be a boy wonder right off the bat, he had another think coming. As he continued to dip the film and inspect it against the green light coming through the oblong in the wall, he became a little sore at Nixon. Anybody

ought to know it took a little while to get used to a new job. Then he wondered what in hell kind of formula Nixon used for his developer, because the film just wasn't getting to look right. That big face of hers was as black as night, a dense black blob. Either Nixon's developer was too contrasty or he'd been fooled by those trick lights and had overexposed. Well, he could still juggle a fair print out of the negative, anyway. He jerked the negative hastily from the developer, rinsed it briefly, and put it in the hypo to fix. Developing the rest of the films, he took a lesson from the first one and didn't waste much time on them. The density was fair, even though they were all kind of flat.

When he had them all in the hypo, he went outside to light a cigarette. Nixon looked up from his magazine and stared at him, he thought, rather strangely. Thinks I take too long, he told himself and puffed at his cigarette before speaking. "Nothing like getting back into harness," he said. Nixon nodded his head and returned to the magazine, so it was easy to saunter into the print-room where he could be alone. It was neat, all right, in there, with an up-to-date contact printer and a sweetheart of an enlarger. Everything your heart could ask for, from the print drier to the print flattener.

He made numerous trips to the dark-room, taking the films from the fixing bath, washing them, and waiting impatiently while they dried in front of a fan. He couldn't wait to make proofs. Presently, finding the films dry, he took them into the lab and prepared for the first test print. When the platen contacted the negative, it was marvelous, a snap, to have a reflecting mirror automatically thrown into position, with the light automatic, too. But the negative worried him; he kept adjusting the light, thinking maybe the paper wasn't fast enough. That big face of hers just didn't have any features, and for all the juggling of contrast papers he did, he knew he couldn't keep on kidding himself that it would come out right. Even an amateur could tell from the chalkiness of the whites alone that he had overexposed it. It would be a waste of time to develop the print. He moved on to the next film.

In about an hour and a half, he left the print-room. He was sweating again; and his face had a bad, sickly color to it. He had overexposed every single one of them. It must have been the lights, he told himself, he didn't know how to use them. Nixon had gone upstairs. He wouldn't have to explain anything till tomorrow. He put on his hat and coat and left. Thinking it over, he got it: these new lights were supposed to take only about one-fifth of a second, even with the lens at f. 11, for an exposure. He had just gone calmly ahead and exposed for one second, the way he had always done under the old lights. Well, once you knew, there was nothing to it. And he couldn't make that mistake again. Tomorrow, he would come right out and freely admit to Nixon that it had been caused by ignorance. Talking to himself this way, as he rode home, he got to feeling better. But when he saw the radiant, expectant expression on Mildred's face, he suddenly felt cold.

She reacted at once, scared, as she used to be when she was afraid he had got a pink slip. Although he hadn't wanted to talk about it, the change in her expression, with her eyes going hollow that way, finally caused him to say: "Hey, what do you want to pull a long face for? I miscalculated the time of the exposure, that's all. Anybody could do that. Nixon could do it. It isn't a crime."

To keep from losing his temper, he read the catalogues he had got from a supply-house, during supper and afterward. You could learn a lot about the new equipment that way. He even picked out a speed camera that he could save up to get, now that he had a real job. Only, after he went to bed, he lay for a long time, wide awake in the dark; and he knew that Mildred, she wasn't sleeping, either.

Nixon was good and sore about it, the next day, ranting about how his reputation was going to be ruined if all his clients had to come back for second sittings. Fortunately, there were plenty of appointments for both of them, a steady rush that didn't give Nixon much time to go on belly-aching. Otherwise, it was just more pressure on Seth, although one thing he made sure of was to avoid overexposures this time. The lights in the camera room were under control, all right, but the green light in the dark-room still disturbed him. He just couldn't trust his judgment of the films against that light. It gave him the willies, waiting for the damned things to fix, having to hope, instead of being sure, that they'd print better than they looked in the negative. Later, when he was working on the contact printer, Nixon came out and watched him a couple of times, saying once: "You're quite a demon for dodging."

Seth hadn't answered him because he didn't want to get sore. But when he saw finally how poorly most of the prints developed, he forgot to be sore. He was afraid. At home that night, he tried not to give himself away, rather than have Mildred get into a state. The first thing she said to him was: "How did it work out today, Seth?"

"O.K. We were busy as hell," he told her. "I'm going to turn in as soon as I give those catalogues another look."

The next day was supposed to be a half day, being Saturday. Seth didn't like the idea of its being the end of the week. He wished he had started in on a Monday, instead of a Thursday. Still, maybe it was a good thing to have some time off to brush up; he could go to the library and read some books on photography. Mrs. Nixon met him when he came in and told him her husband was staying in bed with a cold and expected Seth to take over his one appointment for the morning. The subject turned out to be a good-looking girl who came late and announced she could give only fifteen minutes to the sitting. Seth put out everything he had, but he knew he could have done even better if she hadn't rattled him, reminding him all the time that she was in a rush. He let his mind wander too much, he knew, trying to figure out if Nixon really was upstairs in bed or watching, making this a kind of final exam.

After the girl left, Mrs. Nixon popped in to ask if he minded staying overtime to develop the prints because Mr. Nixon wanted to see them before he left. He said "sure" and went into the dark-room, seeing a warning in the request. To his relief, the first film looked sweet and he felt that he was getting onto the green light. It

bothered him hardly at all. But he hadn't watched the next film for more than a few seconds than he ripped out a curse. He had double-exposed. How in God's name could he have taken a double exposure? A child, a beginner would know better than that. Then he thought, if Nixon really stayed upstairs, if he really wasn't watching me, I'll tell him she was in such a hurry, she wouldn't let me take many. It would hardly be a lie, I only did get time to expose six films.

When he came to the next double exposure, he didn't curse. He knew now what he had done. That damned chippy made me rush so, he told himself, that I used exposed films. Only he couldn't blame it on the girl. The first thing *anyone* learned was to put the black rim out so that, with a glance at the holder, it could be seen that the film had been exposed. He must have slipped them back without thinking to keep the white rim inside, the black out. The greenest amateur knew enough to be careful about that. This wasn't a mistake, made out of ignorance, that you wouldn't let happen again, once you knew.

In the dark-room, when he left it, there were only three films hanging up to dry. He had double-exposed the other three. He went right out to Mrs. Nixon and said in a hard voice:

"You can tell him right now that I double-exposed three of them."

Not giving her time to answer him, he went into the print-room and stared at the enlarger, thinking: he may not even want me to stay to make the prints. Afraid I might ball up something else on the job. He'd be a God-damned fool to think there's anything left I haven't balled up already. How would he like it, if he hadn't had a camera in his hands for a couple of years?

Presently he heard Mrs. Nixon's high heels clacking toward him. He rested his hand on the contact printer to steady himself before facing her. When he saw the embarrassment in her face, he felt no more surprise, just heaviness.

She spoke in a low voice and tried not to look at him. "Of course, Mr. Nixon isn't feeling well, so he's more upset than he might be. About the double exposures, I mean. I understand *perfectly* how it is. Even he'll recognize it when he feels better, how it takes some time to get used to a new position, particularly after—after . . ." she halted, flushing.

"After working at something else. For three years. On a relief job," he said grimly.

"It isn't that I don't understand, but Mr. Nixon says he can't afford—he can only afford to have an operator who, well, as you said yourself, has been operating and so on, perhaps more recently." Still without looking directly at him, she held out a little envelope.

He took it from her; there were bills inside. "He makes up his mind good and quick, doesn't he?" His voice was bitter. "After only two and a half days."

"I know it must seem that way to you," she said in distress. "Really, he can't afford it. Why don't you go to a big studio, like Blye's, where they have so many operators, it wouldn't matter so much. I mean—you know what I mean."

"Sure. I know what you mean," he said levelly.

Then he moved to get his hat and coat. There wasn't any use to eat dirt trying to get it back, because he wouldn't get it back anyway. There wasn't any use in kicking about being let out after two and a half days, because he might not be any good after two and a half months. You learned a trade and thought you were pretty damned good at it and then there was no place where you could use what you had learned. Get a load of Blye's putting up with anybody for a couple of months while he learned it all over again and also had to learn not to be afraid that it wouldn't all come back to him. If you ever could learn not to be afraid of that. *What are they doing to me?* Putting me back on a relief job, putting me back to taking censuses, putting me back to waiting for the pink slip.

It wasn't just his hand shaking, it was all of him now. All right, think of the high-school kids who never get a crack at whatever trade they want to go in for. You were lucky, you had a few years at it, a while back. He made a face, trying to stop trembling. Then he held out his hands before him, as though to hypnotize them into steadiness. His fingers were stained with pyro. He had forgotten to use the remover. I'll go home with them like that, he thought, so Mildred can see them brown, once more, last time.

A 'Nation' Divided

By Granville Hicks

THE *NATION* recently celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Union with an editorial, an article, and a book review. The article, by Maxwell S. Stewart, commented upon the industrial growth of the U.S.S.R., the rise in living standards, the progress in agriculture, "the extension of protection against the risks of modern society," the increase in democratic rights and civil liberties, and the beneficent role of the Soviet Union in world affairs. The editorial hailed Russia as the bulwark of western civilization against the onslaught of fascist barbarism. The book review talked about starvation, torture, slave psychology, the correctness of "Trotsky's thesis of the impossibility of building socialism in one country," and the movement of the U.S.S.R. "in the direction of fascism."

To casual readers of the *Nation* this difference of opinion may seem surprising but not significant. To the

regular reader, however, it will seem very significant—and not in the least surprising. Some four years ago the book-review section seceded from the rest of the magazine, and it still exists in a state of rebellion. On the whole, the *Nation* has remained true to its traditions. It has been a liberal magazine, providing a forum for the various points of view the editors regarded as progressive. It has published articles for and against the Soviet Union, for and against the people's front in France, for and against the loyalist government in Spain, for and against the Communist Party. From our point of view, it has often been open to criticism, but it has taken the right side on many issues, and it has always tried to be fair.

The book-review section, on the other hand, has taken the wrong side on most issues, and it has not been fair. About what is the right and what the wrong side there can be infinite argument. About the lack of fairness there can be no argument at all. The bias of the *Nation's* book-review section can be proved.

Let us look, for example, at recent books on the Soviet Union. What is generally conceded to be the most important of recent studies, the Webbs' *Soviet Communism,* was given by the *Nation* to Abram Harris. Of the quality of the review, Louis Fischer, the *Nation's* own Moscow correspondent, has said all that needs saying. "He uses the review," Mr. Fischer wrote in a letter to the editors, "to air his own threadbare, shopworn, and uninteresting prejudices against the Soviet Union, which, I think, he has never seen. . . . What I miss is an evaluation of the service which the Webbs have performed in giving us a rich, comprehensive account of the workings of the Soviet system. . . . Where the Webbs fall down miserably—in their criticism of the Third International—Harris finds them 'more realistic.' "

Albert Rhys Williams's *The Soviets* and Anna Louise Strong's *The New Soviet Constitution* have not, so far as I can discover, been reviewed at all. On the other hand, when André Gide reported unfavorably on his visit to the U.S.S.R., the *Nation* could not wait for the book to be translated and published in this country, but brought out immediately a special and laudatory article by M. E. Ravage, its Paris correspondent.

And now, in this issue with the article and editorial commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Soviets, we find a three-page review by Edmund Wilson. Seven books were given to Mr. Wilson, two of them pro-Soviet, five opposed. One of the pro-Soviet books, Dr. Gantt's *Medical Review of Soviet Russia* [issued in the United States as *Russian Medicine*] is judiciously described as containing some important facts. The other, which is dismissed in a contemptuous paragraph, is Lion Feuchtwanger's *Moscow, 1937,* published four months ago. Feuchtwanger, you know, was impressed by what he saw in the U.S.S.R., and therefore his book —instead of being hailed in a special article—is belatedly and maliciously reviewed by Mr. Wilson. The five anti-Soviet books, according to Mr. Wilson, "fill in a picture as appalling as it is convincing."

Within the past year, so far as I can discover, only one book on the Soviet Union was assigned to a pro-Soviet reviewer. That was Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed,* which was given to Louis Fischer—and also to Ben Stolberg. Repeatedly enemies of the Soviet Union have been allowed to voice their opinions, to damn books like the Webbs' and Feuchtwanger's, to praise books like André Gide's, Eugene Lyons's, and Victor Serge's. When, however, Trotsky's book is criticized by Louis Fischer, his criticism is paired with a fulsome eulogy by Stolberg!

Nor is it only with books on the Soviet Union that the bias becomes apparent. In 1936 Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, published a book called *What Is Communism?* The *Nation* assigned it to Louis M. Hacker. From any point of view, the choice was not a happy one, for Mr. Hacker, as a historian, concentrated his attention on Browder's discussion of the American past, and thus devoted most of his review to one chapter out of Browder's twenty-one. But, apart from the question of proportions and the relevance of the review, the significant point is that the literary editor of the *Nation* knew in advance that Mr. Hacker's review would be a bitter denunciation of the Communist Party and all its works.

James S. Allen's *The Negro Question in the United States* was assigned to Sterling D. Spero, whose quarrel with the position Mr. Allen takes was familiar to most well-informed persons. Maurice Thorez's *France Today* and Ralph Fox's *France Faces the Future* were reviewed by Suzanne LaFollette, who had hitherto not been known as an authority on either France or politics, but who, as a disciple, at least so far as the people's front is concerned, of Leon Trotsky, could be depended on to attack the Communist International and to question the integrity of Fox and Thorez. *Spain in Revolt,* by Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard, was given to Anita Brenner, who devoted her entire review—entitled "Let's Call It Fiction"—to attacking the authors and denouncing the people's front in Spain.

During the same period, I hasten to say, five books that are, in various ways, sympathetic to the views of the Communist Party were given favorable reviews: my *John Reed,* Spivak's *Europe Under the Terror,* Anna Rochester's *Rulers of America,* Joseph Freeman's *An American Testament,* and Angelo Herndon's *Let Me Live,* reviewed by Max Lerner, Frederick L. Schuman, George Marshall, Louis Kronenberger, and Horace Gregory. So far as I can disengage myself from the political convictions that are involved in my estimate of all the books, and the personal prejudices involved in my estimate of one, I think the reviews were, from the liberal point of view that the *Nation* is supposed to represent, more adequate than the reviews by Hacker, Spero, Miss LaFollette, and Miss Brenner. I also think it is worth pointing out that these books do not raise very sharply the issues at stake between the Communist Party and the Trotskyites. Finally, it is obvious that not one of the five reviewers can be regarded as a spokesman of the Communist Party, and some of them are, as a matter of fact, critical of its policies. However, I want it on the record that these five books received favorable reviews in the *Nation.*

Does this disprove my charge that the literary section of the *Nation* is biased? I am afraid not. It only indicates that the bias does not operate all the time—

perhaps because it would be too easily discovered if it did. I have spoken of the way books on the Soviet Union have been reviewed, books on the policies of the Communist Party in the United States, books on the people's front in France, a book in defense of the loyalist government of Spain. I have said that the *Nation* neglected two important books on the U.S.S.R., and I might add that it also failed to review Dutt's *World Politics* and William Z. Foster's *From Bryan to Stalin.*

But what reveals the bias of the literary section beyond any question is that the Communist Party is never allowed to speak for itself. It is at least four years since there appeared in the *Nation* a review by a person who could by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as the party's spokesman. A few sympathizers have reviewed for the magazine, it is true, but for the most part books far removed from the struggle over communism. Books opposed to the Communist Party have been given to reviewers opposed to the Communist Party. Who reviewed James Rorty's *Where Life Is Better?* Anita Brenner. Who reviewed Charles Rumford Walker's *American City?* James Rorty. Who reviewed Fred Beal's *Proletarian Journey?* Rorty reviewed it, and then Edmund Wilson reviewed it again. Did it occur to the literary editor that, in the interests of the forum principle, Beal's book might be given to someone who held different opinions of the Soviet Union? No, it was reviewed twice, and both times by persons who, everyone knew, would endorse Beal's attack.

When Mr. Wilson's *Travels in Two Democracies* appeared, it was conceivable that *Nation* readers might be interested in hearing the other side, but the book was reviewed by Margaret Marshall. Philip Rahv was given Céline's *Mea Culpa,* and, though he could not praise the book, he took the occasion to approve Céline's disapproval of "the present Soviet leaders." Sidney Hook disagreed with Albert Weisbord's *Conquest of Power,* but he used his review to attack "the opportunist leadership of the Communist Party."

It becomes perfectly apparent that the policy of the book section of the *Nation* is not the policy of an open forum. I can remember a time when Communists were asked to review for the *Nation,* but that has not happened since the end of 1933, when Joseph Wood Krutch became literary editor. With his arrival, the Communists went out and the anti-Communists came in. Anita Brenner attacked Hugo Gellert's *Capital.* Edna Kenton praised Tchernavin's *Escape from the Soviets.* Reinhold Niebuhr was given a page in which to praise the pamphlet, *Socialism's New Beginning.* James Burnham devoted a review of Palme Dutt's *Fascism and Social Revolution* to the thesis that "acceptance of the line of the Communist International means political blindness."

Meanwhile it became reasonably certain that any left-wing novel would be damned in the *Nation.* Cool indifference or forthright condemnation met Albert Halper's *The Foundry,* Josephine Herbst's *The Executioner Waits,* Waldo Frank's *Death and Birth of David Markand,* Edward Newhouse's *You Can't Sleep Here,* Thomas Boyd's *In Time of Peace,* Erskine Caldwell's *Kneel to the Rising Sun,* Clara Weatherwax's *Marching, Marching!,* and Isidor Schneider's *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* Nobody argues that they are all masterpieces, but the unanimity of Mr. Krutch's reviewers is a little suspicious. Only last spring he handed three left-wing novels to James T. Farrell for exactly the kind of strong-arm job for which Mr. Farrell is notorious.

During these four years Mr. Krutch's own war against communism has been conducted in his dramatic criticism, in essays on literature, and even in political articles. No Communist has been allowed to talk back. When Mr. Krutch's series of articles, *Was Europe a Success?,* was published in book form, it was assigned, not to a Communist, but to Harry Elmer Barnes, a Scripps-Howard liberal. And Mr. Krutch has protected his friends: parts of Farrell's *A Note on Literary Criticism* had appeared in the *Nation,* and therefore the policy of the good controversy would have suggested that the book's reviewer should be chosen from the many critics Farrell attacked, but it was given to Edmund Wilson, who was chiefly concerned to add a few criticisms of the Marxists that Farrell had been unable to think of.

Dr. Krutch's anti-Communist obsession reached its height when he joined the American Committee for the Defense of Trotsky. Criticized for his action, Mr. Krutch insisted that his interest in Trotsky "was exclusively an interest in fair play." To most of us that interest had seemed quite dormant during the past decade, as one case after another of injustice failed to rouse him to protest. Nevertheless, no one suspected him of being a Trotskyite. We merely felt that he joined the Trotsky Committee for the sake of attacking the Communist Party, just as, for three years, he had been using only too eager Trotskyist reviewers to attack Communist books.

Dr. Krutch has given up the literary editorship to return to the academic life, but the situation on the magazine does not seem to have improved under his successor, Margaret Marshall. Those who were present at the second American Writers' Congress will recall a little group of individuals whose purpose in attending seemed to be to prevent the congress from accomplishing the ends for which it was convened. Chief among the disrupters were Dwight MacDonald, Mary McCarthy, Philip Rahv, and William Phillips. All of them have been contributing to the *Nation,* and it is apparent that Miss Marshall, in her new position, counts on this little coterie, in addition to the larger group of enemies of the Communist Party assembled by her predecessor.

In the relatively short time since Dr. Krutch's retirement, Rahv has been the most active, and it is interesting to trace his career. Prior to the Writers' Congress, his attacks on communism had been cautious. After the congress, reviewing Ostrovski's *The Making of a Hero,* he virtually announced his open anti-communist campaign with a characteristically cheap innuendo: "Marxists, being fond of discerning contradictions in the social process, ought to apply their analytic prowess to investigating the discrepancy between the prodigious dimensions and meanings of the October revolution and the feeble records of it recently produced

on its home grounds by writers seemingly most devoted to its progress."

Mr. Rahv's next gesture was a review, pretentious and sneering and rather childish, of a book of short stories by Leane Zugsmith. It was quite inevitable that Miss Marshall should assign him Walter Duranty's *One Life, One Kopeck* and Robert Briffault's *Europa in Limbo,* and equally inevitable that he should seize upon literary weaknesses, not unrecognized by other reviewers, to prosecute his attack on communism and the Soviet Union. To date, however, his most revealing review is that of Ilf and Petrov's *Little Golden America,* which gives the impression—wholly false, it is needless to say—that the Soviet humorists were so impressed by American machines that they failed to say a word in criticism of the capitalist system that controls those machines.

Miss Marshall's reliance upon this particular turncoat, despite his general incompetence as a literary critic and his peculiar unfitness to review books on the Soviet Union, does not promise well for her regime as literary editor. It seems possible, indeed, that, even more fully than Dr. Krutch, she will make the book section of the *Nation* an organ of the Trotskyites. I do not care whether these persons call themselves Trotskyites or not. I know that they are opposed to the Communist Party, to the Soviet Union, and to the people's front, and that they use exactly the same arguments as Trotsky uses. They are united, I suspect, by a common hatred rather than by a positive policy, but that does not alter the role they play.

It appears to me that readers of the *Nation* are being deceived. The NEW MASSES takes a definite position, and its book-review section is edited according to a stated policy. By no means are all the contributors Communists, but it is not our intention to publish reviews by persons who are hostile to the Soviet Union or are unwilling to work in the people's front against fascism. The *Nation* has no such clear-cut policy. In the body of the magazine, as I have said, it tries to be fair. In the book section, however, it discriminates against one point of view and favors another. And this is never stated.

I presume that most readers of the *Nation* are what we call, not very precisely these days, liberals. I suspect that many of them are friendly to the Soviet Union and would not willingly aid its enemies. Almost all, certainly, are opposed to fascism and are eager to find effective ways of fighting it. They know that the people's front is the strongest barrier against fascism and at the same time a positive force for progress. I should like to convince these people that, all questions of sincerity to one side, the Trotskyites do in effect injure the Soviet Union and hamper the fight against fascism. I think that, if they happened to belong to trade unions or other organizations in which Trotskyites were active, they would see this for themselves.

But even if these liberal *Nation* readers do not share my opinions, I wonder if they really like the fare that is being served them. Do they subscribe to the *Nation* to listen to the notions of a little clique of anti-Communists, or do they want the opinions of representative authorities? Have they not the right to demand that, in its book reviews as elsewhere, the *Nation* should follow the principles it avows? And should they not, if necessary, take steps to enforce their demands?

Poetry in 1937

By Horace Gregory

IT WOULD BE possible to view this season's poetry* with a wearied sickly eye, to see failure everywhere. It would be possible to see nothing in E. A. Robinson's *Collected Poems* except an old man writing his "dime novels in verse," and to read in Sara Teasdale nothing but her last retreat in finding wisdom only in utter silence. One could then wish that Mr. Jeffers had not followed his long road downward, declining very like Spengler's *Decline of the West* into melodrama, until he now sees all his men and women as less than human and far inferior to hawks, eagles, certain breeds of horses, and Pacific seascapes. One could regret that Allen Tate's preface to his selected poems is insufferably pretentious and in dubious taste. One could also complain that Mr. Stevens has taken a symbol for his art which is not inevitable and which too often remains a fanciful "blue guitar." One could say that the younger writers in this group should be far better: one could ask far more of everyone here and at the end conclude that in this year, 1937, a quarter century after the accepted date of a "poetic renaissance," American poetry has gone down the drain and the less said of it the better.

But to arrive at this conclusion would be contrary to my belief, for I believe this moment affords us time to take stock of what has happened in poetry, what is happening now, and what seems now fairly certain to happen within the next few years. Because the early hopes of 1912 were not sustained in 1930, some critics of both

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* COLLECTED POEMS, *by E. A. Robinson. The Macmillan Co.* $3.
COLLECTED POEMS, *by Sara Teasdale. The Macmillan Co.* $2.50.
SUCH COUNSELS YOU GAVE TO ME, *by Robinson Jeffers. Random House.* $2.
SELECTED POEMS, *by Allen Tate. Charles Scribner's Sons.* $2.50.
THE MAN WITH A BLUE GUITAR, *by Wallace Stevens. Alfred A. Knopf.* $2.
POEMS, 1929-1936, *by Dudley Fitts. New Directions.* $2.
NOT ALONE LOST, *by Robert McAlmon. New Directions.* $2.
TWELVE POETS OF THE PACIFIC, *edited by Yvor Winters. New Directions.* $2.50.
TOMORROW'S PHOENIX, *by Ruth Lechlitner. Alcestis Press.* $3.

left and right persuasion were led to think that the streams of poetry in America had narrowed to a single trail of a sunken river-bed in a once fertile valley. But since that time a group of new names have appeared and the prominence of other names have diminished. The poets of *New Letters in America* and of the NEW MASSES represent the majority of the influences now at work in changing the picture from one of a single "waste-land" generalization to another that promises to be a new phase in American poetry.

The *Collected Poems* of E. A. Robinson offers us the opportunity to say a few words in revaluation of a poet whose figure now seems to fill the empty spaces of the decade before 1912. That figure seems far more secure today than it was ten years ago. The Robinson to be rediscovered by our generation is the poet who looked deeply into the world of his young manhood, a world of insecure prosperity, commanded by "robber barons." At its heart he saw the broken Bewick Finzers, the drunken Eben Floods, and as he wrote of literary heroes, even Shakespeare became the uneasy man of property who had built a house to hide his bones in Stratford. The E. A. Robinson, who in the first decade of the present century foresaw disaster where others read endless perpetuation of American success, had learned the technique of making his verse move with conversational directness. This art, so I suspect, was learned from Crabbe and Hardy and today it seems a Robinsonian irony that his method was once regarded as too obscure and too elliptical for critical understanding. He was most assuredly not using the poetic diction of his fellow poets in America, and because his work was too often praised or rejected for the wrong reasons, as he grew older he delighted in confusing his critics by leading them from one sublimated detective story to the next, and there were times when he deliberately recreated modern men and women in the disguise of Arthurian heroes and heroines.

Sara Teasdale's love songs were the contrasting echoes of another voice to Robinson's. She was, I think, more nearly a transitional poet than many who have earned that title in the present generation. Her verse forms, her diction, her desires to create a "mood" rather than to convey precise emotion stemmed directly from the conventions of lyric poetry of the later nineteenth century. Christina Rosetti was her model, and many of her love songs which were popular twenty years ago seem now to be latter-day versions of "A Daughter of Eve." Yet by speaking her poems in a frankly plaintive or joyous note, she was to anticipate the so-called personal qualities of Miss Millay's lyricism: she had created a minor heroine in verse, a young woman, who, if kissed or unkissed, promptly told the world and made the telling seem to express a new era of nascent feminism. The epigrammatic turn of her short stanzas was sharpened by a touch of urban smartness, as though the heroine thus created knew her own way through a city of men who sat on tops of Fifth Avenue buses or who gazed at her over white linen gleaming from the round surfaces of restaurant tables. The city lights were written of in terms of bright beads or jewels worn at evening. The young woman seemed like a good child released for a short moment from the comforts of a stolid middle-class home. At the hour of Sara Teasdale's death in 1933, the phenomenon of her popularity had passed its meridian: other heroines had arrived who were bolder and who spoke a language influenced by imagism, or the seventeenth-century lyricists, or Emily Dickinson, or Yeats, or Hopkins.

Among the changes in public consciousness that had caused Sara Teasdale's world to seem less certain and more trivial was another phenomenon in poetry which appeared in 1926 under the title of *Roan Stallion, Tamar, and Other Poems*. Today that phenomenon seems less important as it reëmerges in Mr. Jeffers's new book which contains one narrative poem and a group of shorter pieces. It now seems unlikely that Mr. Jeffers will ever again approximate the quality of authentic tragic meaning which entered his "Tower Beyond Tragedy," for he has reiterated his familiar story of incest, and on this occasion his study in human pathology opens with sexual madness only to close with homicidal insanity. And here I am convinced that the real reasons why Mr. Jeffers's men and women go insane must be sought out in the poet's rejection of human consciousness. Mr. Jeffers's premise of Wordsworthian pantheism (which was clearly evident in *California,* the book written before *Roan Stallion*) has made it impossible for him to accept man or god, or any mode of conduct here on earth. The political poems in the present volume reiterate his passionate longing for a golden age, a pastoral age, now far behind us: he stands squarely against civilization in all its forms and yet knows well that man cannot live sanely if placed on the same level with animals. The vicious circle he has created closes around him in darkness, saving only for the moment a quality of savage wit in his shorter poems which did not appear in his earlier work.

The distance between Allen Tate and Robinson Jeffers is much shorter than one might at first suppose. Again a defeated passion for a pastoral society plays its role, and Mr. Tate remarks with the curious force of a pathetic fallacy, "We are the eyelids of defeated caves." His present book includes everything that he wishes to save from the three books he has written, and though a few of the poems convey the impression of dignity in the presence of death, the weighted language that Mr. Tate employs more often leaves one feeling that all he says is pretentious rather than deeply felt or realized. Yet Mr. Tate and his work still represent the desire of younger southern writers (who after contact with post-war Europe came home to native soil) to build a cultural movement on the ruins of the old South. Mr. Tate's preoccupation with past glory and its ruins is no less significant in its failure than Mr. Jeffers's concern with the loss of faith in human consciousness.

From these we turn to Wallace Stevens, of whom I once wrote, "He is not merely a connoisseur of fine rhythms and the precise nuances of the lyrical line, but a trained observer who gazes with an intelligent eye upon the decadence that follows the rapid acquisition of power." This was not to say, however, that the poet himself was "left" in sympathy or that his primary intention was to write political poetry. This was to

say that Wallace Stevens's sensibilities in writing verse had made it possible for him to view the world about him with singular acuteness. Today his vision has the same qualities of sharpness, but is now dimmed by the effort to explain his "position" in a medium ill-suited to the demands of exposition. His man with the blue guitar—the blue guitar his art, the man the artist—is a symbol that lacks the power of inevitable choice; other instruments or another color could have been chosen, and it would seem that Mr. Stevens by his choice confuses the functions of fancy and imagination. His defense is a defense of the artist in a world where the things he looks at seem to be intractable materials for his art and are therefore less real than his "blue guitar." Throughout the first half of his book, its title poem, in thirty-three sections, weaves its way and is convincing only when Mr. Stevens recreates what he would call the "anti-poetic" image in such lines as

> Through Oxidia, banal suburb,
> One-half of all its installments paid

And it is only when his real ability in writing satire appears, as in "The Mechanical Optimist," a portrait of a lady at the radio, that his present work equals the quality of his earlier verse. Yet, in contrast to Mr. Tate's irony, Mr. Stevens's satire is far more felicitous whenever it finds a target; and unlike Mr. Tate's verse, the images within it never fail to flow, one from the other, in emotional progression.

Of the three books of poems issued by New Directions, of Norfolk, Conn., Dudley Fitts's *Poems, 1929-1936* is by far the most impressive. All three books have one characteristic in common, for Robert McAlmon's book as well as Mr. Fitts's and Yvor Winters's collection of *Twelve Poets of the Pacific* represent the influences and styles of verse written since 1925. It would be easy to dismiss Mr. Fitts's book as a mere reflection in technique of Pound, Eliot, Cummings, and MacLeish: these immediate influences are so obvious that one meets them squarely on each page, and among them familiar attitudes of rejection, prayer, blasphemy, and irony are reintroduced within the formal patterns so well established by their originators. Yet Mr. Fitts's verse has a quality of gayety and wit that is quite its own. If he may be regarded as a transitional poet between the period from which he has borrowed his attitudes and the present date, he appears as the forerunner of a kind of wit that is beginning to take form in the work of younger poets.

Robert McAlmon is far less fortunate than Mr. Fitts in his application of the techniques which were developed during tht last ten years. Each poem in his collection has little means of guiding a brilliant opening to its conclusion; quite like the verse with which Amy Lowell once experimented, it remains "free" and a sharp image is frequently clouded by an uncertain or merely descriptive close. Of the poems in this book, only the bull-fight scenes in Spain convey something of the physical reality which seems to lie behind their imagery.

Mr. Winters's twelve poets, himself included, are in immediate reaction against the schools of verse represented by Mr. Fitts and Mr. McAlmon. And of these twelve Janet Lewis alone seems to have converted her reaction into a positive virtue. The chief difficulty that Mr. Winters and his group of poets have encountered is in their naïve conception of a rigid verse form. Mr. Winters's seriousness of intention has long been his single virtue. And as he states his program of "clarity" and of "feeling in terms of the motive," there is every reason to agree with him. But the results of this statement, if verse can ever be called the result of any critical commentary, echo the sententious quality of Mr. Tate's verse to which are added the horrors of Victorian platitude in word and texture. I quote one stanza of a poem which sounds very like a translation from the German as it might have been written by a young woman in an English seminary at the close of the last century:

> How could I praise thee
> Loved I not wisdom much?
> How could I love thee
> Were I not praising such?

Contrast the mechanical uses of "form" in this quotation with the genuine clarity of Miss Lewis's

> Mild and slow and young,
> She moves about the room,
> And stirs the summer dust
> With her wide broom.

But Miss Lewis's poems in the collection are all too few and her good work is placed among such college classroom curiosities as "To Miss Evelyn C. Johnson on Her Examination for the Doctorate in English," which closes with the discovery:

> For you have learned, not what to say,
> But how the saying must be said.

Miss Lechlitner's first book *Tomorrow's Phoenix* is in distinct contrast to *Twelve Poets of the Pacific:* there is here far greater variety of texture and feeling and more frequent attempts to master the complex forms of contemporary verse. The book errs on the side of attempting to move in too many directions at once, yet the intention behind it (if I read it rightly) shows an active, if at times too hasty, appreciation of the color and movement in contemporary life. In that sense Miss Lechlitner's work exhibits many signs of promise and in contrast to other books in the selection I have made (Mr. Fitts excepted), it has greater speed and little repetition. Yet her political verse which shows an awareness of events today is less controlled and less effective than her "Song of Starlings" which is far removed from the other poems in the book. And as I read her book, I thought of the essay on political poetry published in No. 9 of *International Literature,* which brings me to a generalization concerning American poetry in 1937.

The essay in *International Literature* reminded its readers that political poetry as such cannot be divorced from other kinds of poetry, no more than we here in

America can ask a poet to be political one moment and non-political the next. If his convictions are secure and contrary to ours, we may deplore the fact, but if his work is mature and centered in our culture, we, as critics, should be able to interpret from it the character of the society in which the poet lives. I for one would rather study certain warnings of disaster in American middle-class society through the early poetry of E. A. Robinson than in the work of many of his contemporaries in prose. Mr. Jeffers's inability to adjust his sense of loss to any sane solution is a warning of another kind, less important than E. A. Robinson's in proportion to his ability as a poet. Some few poems by Mr. Tate are visible proof of the inadequate nature of his longing to recreate a kind of aristocracy in the South, which no longer exists but whose irony has been far more brilliantly revealed by John Crowe Ransom. Even Mr. Stevens's desire to restate his relationship to a "blue guitar" throws light upon matters of concern to writers in existing society. and the books published by the New Directions press as well as Miss Lechlitner's first book show the complex of literary influence at work upon the latest generation of American poets. If confusion or serious conflict between word and intention exists among younger writers, we may be fairly certain of two things: one, a lack of organic meaning in the poetry they write, which may be traced to the conflicts in their environment; and two, a failure to master the techniques they have chosen for their medium.

Meanwhile it is evident that whatever failures may be recorded against this season's poetry in America there is adequate proof that much of it is neither stagnant nor dull. If the reputations of the period between 1928 and the present seem less secure than they appeared to be as recently as 1933, I think we can be well assured that no single destructive influence will long prevail in contemporary verse. The desert, which seemed impassable in 1930 because some critics saw Robinson Jeffers alone within it, has now given way to another prospect of the future in American poetry. Whatever that future may be, it will contain within it younger poets who are more aware of conflict than defeat, and the sources of their work, as in the past, will be the contrasting influences which have given American poetry its singular ability to surmount its many failures.

Literary Fascism in Brazil

By Samuel Putnam

THE STORY of what fascism does to literature is an old one by this time. It would be pointless to relate once again the burning of the books. We now know that this is a characteristic occurrence; and we are not surprised to learn that Franco, upon entering the city of Tolosa, ordered a bonfire of "Marxist" works like the one that was kindled in front of the Berlin Opera House. As Ilya Ehrenbourg has remarked, when Herr Doktor Goebbels—whatever his local name and habitation—sets foot in a library, he instinctively reaches for a match box. There is, frequently, an element of personal literary frustration involved, as in Goebbels's own case, with a resulting intense hatred of decent writing and writers; for the triumph of fascism is at once followed by an upward surge of tenth-raters of the Hans Heinz Ewers brand. This, too, is a fairly constant phenomenon. Accordingly, when we hear that the Brazilian Integralistas have banned *Tom Sawyer* as being a "Red" and "subversive" production, it merely strikes us as being the height of something or other.

Which is to say, literary fascism in Brazil is in general following the stupid line laid down by the Nazi "regenerators," with, naturally, certain variations due to nationality, race, traditions, geographic situation, and the like. It is these more or less distinctive variations that interest us chiefly. The period of the cultural transition to fascism has not been properly studied in connection with either Italy or Germany; and by this time many of the first sharp vivid edges have been glossed over for the outside world. In Brazil, the process is not as yet completed; there is still left at least the remnant of an intelligent opposition, and what is happening at the moment is exciting to watch. Exciting and instructive; since it is from the study of such a period that we in North America, with the signs of an incipient cultural fascism all about us, have most to learn.

Nowhere, for one thing, is fascism's quick stifling of creative effort more startlingly brought out than by a contrast of Brazilian writing for the year 1935 with that of 1936, the year in which the Vargas régime came into power. It is part of the present writer's job, as editor of the Brazilian literature section of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* (Harvard University Press), to inspect every item that comes from the presses of Brazil in the course of the year which may possibly be of literary significance. In 1934, this writer had observed the rise of a literature possessed of true social depth and consciousness, and often with a revolutionary-proletarian orientation. This, for example, was the year that saw the publication of Jorge Amado's *Cacáu* (Cocoa), a novel by one who had been a worker on the great cocoa plantations, and the same author's *Suór* (Sweat), the story of a Bahian tenement. In 1935, Brazilian letters appeared to have achieved a promise which had been maturing for a number of years past. There was a baker's dozen of first-rate novels, and among them at least one masterpiece in Erico Verissimo's *Caminhos Cruzados* (Crossroads), which was

revolutionary at once in content and in technique. There were also several outstanding volumes of poetry; and the impression to be derived from the scene as a whole was one of great creative activity and vitality.

The next year, 1936—after Vargas had been in for a year—it was all one could do to find three or four novels that were really deserving of notice. These were the work of writers who had made their reputations during the past few years of free and socially inspired creativeness. In most cases they represented a slackening of effort on the part of their authors, with a pronounced tendency to deviate from the social to the genre theme (as in the case of Amado), or in the direction of the semi-social sex novel (as in the case of Verissimo). Sex, indeed, has come to be the all-absorbing subject of literary controversy, and the most discussed novel of the year (1936) was, probably, Luis Martins's *Lapa* (the name of a red-light district), which deals with prostitution. At the same time, it is very largely upon the subject of sex that the literary reactionaries are concentrating their fire, in the form of attacks on the Freudian influence, that of D. H. Lawrence, etc., while the intellectuals, in place of fighting out the major life-and-death issue, feel obliged to defend themselves against charges of "pornography."

If the novel in 1935 showed a dismal falling off, poetry practically expired; what one finds is merely a collected volume or two by well-known men. On the other hand, 1936 is marked by a plethora of critical articles and books of criticism. There is an inordinate amount of literary stock-taking, crystallized in the form of evaluations of the 1935 output. Brazilian writers at the present time would appear to be almost exclusively engaged in writing about one another's past performances. This is what commonly happens under fascism: in place of books, endless books about books, an incessant critical rehashing, as in Italy, a thumbing over of the masterpieces of a past year.

But perhaps we may let a Brazilian critic sum it up for us. In the introduction to his 1936 anthology, *A nova literatura brasileira* (The New Brazilian Literature), Andrade Muricy declares that the present-day writing of his countrymen exhibits an "opulence without roots," a "paradoxical Byzantism." He ascribes this to the intrusion of the political, "to the exclusion of an art based upon pure humanity and the human spirit." He sees in it all a *trahison des clercs,* with propaganda usurping the place of literature, and deplores the tendency to a rigid oversimplification, leading to an inevitable aridity. But whose is the propaganda?

Muricy goes on to point out the existence of a "literary fascism" (the phrase is his), which may be traced back to the futuristic disportings, reminiscent of Marinetti's, of Brazilian writers in the early twenties; in other words, he sees this "literary fascism" as the offshoot of an exacerbated "modernism."

There is, however, even in the Brazil of the Integralistas, a criticism that cuts a little deeper than this, and which amounts to a profound questioning of life's realities, social, political, and economic. This saving criticism, the last stand of the Brazilian intelligence, is coming from the anthropologists and ethnologists, a number of whom are semi-literary figures; and the scientists in turn are accused of corrupting the novelists by upsetting traditions of race, Catholic morality, and sexual decency. Most distinguished of the anthropologists is Professor Gilberto Freyre, of international reputation, who is dubbed an "agitator," while his scientific masterpiece, *Casa Grande & Senzala* (the title is not readily translatable), is described in a Catholic-monarchist organ as being "a pernicious book, subversively anti-national, anti-Catholic, anarchistic, communistic," the reviewer adding that "book and author are deserving of purification by a nationalistic and Christian *auto da fé.*"

This last indicates only too plainly the fate in store for the courageous Brazilian intellectual who stands by his guns. The reactionaries are not sparing of their threats. Not only do they find a scientific work like *Casa Grande & Senzala* "shamelessly pornographic . . . watercloset literature"; they also tell us what they mean to do about Freud and D. H. Lawrence, as witness the following from the monthly, *Fronteiras*: "Freud and Lawrence, ah! Once Brazil shall have come mentally of age, she will settle accounts with you."

For an understanding of the contemporary scene, certain peculiarities of Brazilian fascism are to be kept in mind. One is the heavy Catholic complexion of the Integralistas movement, which differentiates it sharply from a "neo-Gothic," anti-religious Hitlerism, and which is characteristic of South American fascism in general. As for the Catholic monarchists, corresponding to the Action Française in France. they would bring back a descendant of the nineteenth-century emperors. Enforcement of the church's precepts with regard to sex and all other matters thereby becomes an offensive tactic and is employed as such. Hence all the fuss over the "pornography" of the few good writers that Brazil has left.

With respect to race, anti-Semitism is by now rampant, as is evidenced by a volume that has just come to this desk, *Nacionalismo; o problema judaico e o nacional-socialismo* (Nationalism; the Jewish Question and National Socialism), by Anor Butler Maciel who, incidentally, is half British by birth. Anti-Semitism, however, has not yet reached the stage of viciousness that it has in the Argentine, in the writings of a Hugo Wast. It is quite vicious enough, for all of that; and we find Señor Maciel making use of the same sources as Señor Wast, namely, the "Protocols of Zion" and the Dearborn *Independent.* The Dutch are hated even more than the Jews in certain provinces.

The Negro fares the best of all. He is the object of a great deal of scientific and literary interest just now, and a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters is to be heard admitting that Cruz e Souza, a Negro and the son of a slave, was "the major poet of modern Brazil." The Negro has also been the subject of a number of recent novels; but in them he is treated as a curiosity rather than as a social being. The truth of the matter is that the brown-skinned native of Brazil is hardly likely to start inquiring too closely into his blood-stream on this side.

This about gives the picture of Brazilian literature at the present hour. Add a few terrible treatises by the pushing tenth-raters, and you will have it all.

Two Poems

THE DISEASE

This is a lung disease. Silicate dust makes it.
The dust causing the growth of

This is the X-ray picture taken last April.
I would point out to you: these are the ribs;
this is the region of the breastbone;
this is the heart (a wide white shadow filled with blood).
In here of course is the swallowing tube, esophagus.
The windpipe. Spaces between the lungs.

Between the ribs?

Between the ribs. These are the collar bones.
Now, this lung's mottled, beginning, in these areas.
You'd say a snowstorm had struck the fellow's lungs.
About alike, that side and this side, top and bottom.
The first stage in this period in this case.

Let us have the second.

Come to the window again. Here is the heart.
More numerous nodules, thicker, see, in the upper lobes.
You will notice the increase: here, streaked fibrous tissue—

Indicating?

That indicates the progress in ten months' time.
And now, this year—short breathing, solid scars
even over the ribs, thick on both sides.
Blood vessels shut. Model conglomeration.

What stage?

Third stage. Each time I place my pencil point:
There and there and there, there, there.

"It is growing worse every day. At night
I get up to catch my breath. If I remained
flat on my back I believe I would die."

It gradually chokes off the air cells in the lungs?
I am trying to say it the best I can.
That is what happens, isn't it?
A choking-off in the air cells?

Yes.

There is difficulty in breathing.

Yes.

And a painful cough?

Yes.

Does silicosis cause death?

Yes, sir.

THE CORNFIELD

Error, disease, snow, sudden weather.
For those given to contemplation: this house,
wading in snow, its cracks are sealed with clay,
walls papered with print, newsprint repeating,
in-focus gray across the room, and squared
ads for a book: *Heaven's My Destination,*
Heaven's My . . . Heaven . . . Thornton Wilder.
The long-faced man rises long-handed jams the door
tight against snow, long-boned, he shivers.
Contemplate.

Swear by the corn,
the found-land corn, those who like ritual. *He*
rides in a good car, they say blind corpses rode
with him in front, knees broken into angles,
head clamped ahead. Overalls. Affidavits.
He signs all papers. His office: where he sits,
feet on the stove, loaded trestles through door,
satin-lined, silk-lined, unlined, cheap.
The papers in the drawer. On the desk, photograph
H. C. White, Funeral Services (new car and eldest son);
tells about Negroes who got wet at work,
shot craps, drank and took cold, pneumonia, died.
Shows the sworn papers. Swear by the corn.
Pneumonia, pneumonia, pleurisy, t.b.

For those given to voyages: these roads
discover gullies, invade, Where does it go now?
Now turn upstream twenty-five yards. Now road again.
Ask the man on the road. Saying, That cornfield?
Over the second hill, through the gate,
watch for the dogs. Buried, five at a time,
pine boxes, Rinehart & Dennis paid him fifty-five dollars
a head for burying those men in plain pine boxes.
George Robinson: I knew a man
who died at four in the morning at the camp.
At seven his wife took clothes to dress her dead
husband, and at the undertaker's
they told her the husband was already buried.
—Tell me this, the men with whom you are acquainted,
the men who have this disease
have been told that sooner or later they are going to die?
—Yes, sir.
—How does that seem to affect the majority of the people?
—It don't work on anything but their wind.
—Do they seem to be living in fear
or do they wish to die?
—They are getting to breathe a little faster.

For those given to keeping their own garden:
Here is the cornfield, white and wired by thorns,
old cornstalks, snow, the planted home.
Stands bare against a line of farther field,
unmarked except for wood stakes, charred at tip,
few scratched and named (pencil or nail).
Washed-off. Under the mounds,
all the anonymous.
Abel America, calling from under the corn,
Earth, uncover my blood!
Did the undertaker know the man was married?
Uncover.
Do they seem to fear death?
Contemplate.
Does Mellon's ghost walk, povertied at last,
walking in furrows of corn, still sowing,
do apparitions come?
Voyage.
Think of your gardens. But here is corn to keep.
Marked pointed sticks to name the crop beneath.
Sowing is over, harvest is coming ripe.
—No, sir; they want to go on.
They want to live as long as they can.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

Madrid to Manhattan

By Hyde Partnow

A FEW HOURS before Hilda's pains came we were seeing Chris off.

The night had dawned into good-by. We were standing on the cracked sidewalk. Chris had the mandolin and guitar strapped around his shoulders and the big cracked suitcase in his tough fist. His stocky wife, Sylvia, was next to him in her nurse's cape. A warm wind was sketching Hilda's belly as she leaned against me.

"So long, Chris," I said.

"Salud," he said. "Remember, Hilda. You two can have this kid for yourselves and no worry. Me fighting over in Spain and you over here having your baby like you want to. It goes together. I'm just sorry we couldn't see it before we got away."

"Why not wait then?" asked Hilda.

"We can't now. Anyway, something comes over you and you can't wait. You've got to do something." He planted his suitcase on the sidewalk. "That's why I ripped the swastika off the *Bremen*. That's why, when pals of mine were kicked out of their homes, I used to come over and put back their furniture. That's why, when some stiffs weren't getting regular eats, I'd chain myself to an elevator post and yell my head off."

"Really Chris, we need more of your kind," I said.

He grinned. "Then somebody's got to make more. Like you and Hilda. I'm glad it's you two who are doing it." He became bashful and clumsy. "I never saw a pair like you. You're matched. Like two birds. Sylvia and me are matched pretty good too. But it's different with us. I don't know, we're always living from hand to mouth. I'm too hot-headed, I guess, and she can't hold her tongue on a job. But if we could do it, we'd throw up babies all right, too. We'd say to those bastards over there, you can't wipe us out. Try and stop us. No matter how many of us you knock over, we'll have more coming." He picked up the big suitcase. "So if they knock me over . . ."

"They won't, Chris."

He grinned. "I'm not wearing a bullet-proof vest, am I, Vincent? What if they do knock me over? It won't matter much. I'll know you're putting up somebody else over here to take my place." He started off. Sylvia was still talking to Hilda.

I said, "Can't I see you off at the pier, Chris?"

"Oh, no."

"Why not?"

"You might get us in trouble. They don't want our people to go to Spain. You know, we're neutral. We've got to sneak off, see? Well, good luck." He waved his free hand. Sylvia kissed Hilda in a hurry and caught up with Chris.

We watched them go down the street. The street lamps were still on, but daylight was coming on. The two of them were solid and of the same height. Sylvia with the bundles and cape—Chris with his suitcase, guitar, mandolin, his big feet. As they turned the corner, neither of them looked around.

Our house felt empty when we went back to it. We went to bed and talked quietly until sleep took us. The baby was getting ready for the big push and we were waiting for it calmly.

Toward morning it looked as if I were right. Nothing would help. The ergot and strychnine and castor oil were sickening slop.

"What will you do now?" I asked Hilda.

The steam-heat was down. The bedroom was cold and dull.

"I don't know," said Hilda. "Something. I must do something."

"You can't," I said. "What could you do? Nothing can help now."

She did not answer at once. Then she said roughly, "I'll get them to clean it out of me."

I said, "Hilda, you won't."

"I must," she said wildly. "It's no use. There's no way out. This time it's all going under. I can't do it. I won't."

The war in Madrid was weighing down both of us.

"Don't you want a baby, Hilda?"

"A baby with a number on its chest? Flies walking on its cheeks? No. No. No."

I could see photos of murdered babies stuck to her eyes.

That was in November. We argued birth or abortion for weeks afterward. Meanwhile we watched newspaper headlines. HITLER AND MUSSOLINI BACK FRANCO. REBELS ENTER MADRID. AIR RAIDS STIFFEN MORALE OF LOYALISTS.

Hilda made an appointment with the abortionist.

I was in agony. I argued. Her answer every day was no. "As long as one gun exists, Vincent, I'm not going to have a baby."

"But this war is different."

"How?"

"It's a war so the rest of us can have babies. We've got to believe in them over there."

During Christmas the headlines changed. REBELS ROUTED FROM UNIVERSITY CITY. DRIVE CRUSHED. *She postponed her appointment.*

New Year's Day she said, "I don't know, Vincent. I still see myself having a baby in a blown-up dugout. What shall I do?"

"We've got to have the courage to reproduce ourselves," I said.

She was silent. Next day I said, "Well, Hilda?"

I could see she was cornered. "After all, you're healthy. I'm working. We're married."

The day before her appointment with the abortion-

ist, she said: "All right, Vincent. I'll run up the white flag." We kissed.

In the months that followed Málaga and Guadalajara and Almería and Guernica and Bilbao were no longer headlines, no longer just newspaper print but organic impulses that went into our flesh and stayed there like wounds or rewards. Madrid to Manhattan was one lifeline. HANDS OFF SPAIN *meant* HANDS OFF OUR BABY *to us.*

Now July was here, and the big drive of the loyalists to break the siege of Madrid had started, and our baby was coming.

My eyes opened and I knew she was awake. I turned around. Hilda was lying on her back, her eyes open.

"Aren't you sleeping?" I said. "What's the matter?"

"I'm sorry I woke you, darling."

"What's the matter?"

"I think the pains are here. Take out your watch."

I took out the wrist-watch from under my pillow. It was only seven.

When a spasm came over her face, I looked at my watch. It was 7:10. Her eyes were serious, but I knew it was a relief for it to come. We were both smiling.

"I'm glad it came on a Sunday while you're home," she said.

Another spasm came into her face while she was talking. It was then 7:22. We smiled some more and I held her hand this time. At 7:34 another spasm came along.

Hilda said, "This must be it."

"We'll wait once more."

Her bag was on the table by our bed. There was everything in it. Hilda had packed it three weeks back. There were the nightgowns and bed jackets she had made, and some toilet articles.

At a quarter of eight it came again. "All right," I said. I got out of bed. "I'll call the doctor." I dressed.

She got out too and took off her nightgown. There were spots on her belly and a big brown line down the middle of it. I helped her on with her shoes so she would not have to bend.

Then I rushed out to phone and rushed back. It was hot in the street.

"The doctor said for us to pack and go over," I told her. "He said we can take our time. There's no hurry."

I shaved and dressed and then we ate breakfast slowly.

Hilda was calm and I kept timing her pains all along. They were coming every ten minutes when we left the house. That was about ten o'clock.

We walked to the hospital. We were both tall, only she was huskier, and it was pleasant to walk with her. The streets were quiet. Everybody was indoors or away. There were no crowds and no trucks and no peddlers and the stores were shut.

We walked along slowly. The hospital was near a park and we could see it between the trees from a long way off. Once Hilda stopped short in the park. She was having a pain. I put my arm around her and she looked at me with her bold eyes. She had had her black hair laundered and the sun was on it.

"Why are pregnant women so damned beautiful?" I said.

She kissed me. We were happy and neither of us was nervous.

At the hospital reception desk a nurse was reading a paper. I said, "Good morning."

She put her paper aside and got up.

"Good morning," she said. "What is your name please?"

I told her. She got Hilda's card out of the files.

"Is it your first?" asked the nurse.

"Yes."

"You aren't scared, are you?"

"No."

"You don't look scared."

Hilda was looking at the headlines of the paper on the desk. REBELS ROUTED AT BRUNETE.

An orderly took Hilda's bag from me. We faced each other in the little white office. I patted her shoulder.

"So long," I said.

She smiled. "I'll try very hard, Vincent."

I watched her follow the nurse to the elevator. It was the first time we had been apart for the nine months. She looked slender from the back and her long legs were shapely and unswollen. She had never had a hard time really. It was going to be easy. I had this unbreakable feeling that it was going to be easy for her.

I waited in the office awhile, then went into the waiting room. Two other men were there. One was reading and wagging his foot. The other was snoring. I sat in a leather chair under the electric fan. The nurse came in.

"Your wife is in the labor room," she said. "There won't be news for some time. I suggest you take a walk or go to the movies."

I went outside. There were kids tearing around in

If I Was Not a Soldier

If I wasn't a soldier, a soldier said,
What would I be?—I wouldn't be,
It's hardly likely it seems to me,
A money lord or armament maker,
Territorial magnate or business chief.
I'd probably be just a working man,
The slave of a licensed thief—
One of the criminals I'm shielding now!

If I wasn't a soldier, a soldier said,
I'd be down and out as likely as not
And suffering the horrible starving lot
Of hundreds of thousands of my kind,
And that would make me a Red as well
Till I rose with the rest and was batoned or shot
By some cowardly brute—such as I am now!

HUGH MACDIARMID.

★

swim-suits searching for a puddle. There were housewives with wet cloths around their heads at the open windows. There were men in shirt-sleeves playing cards on the shady side of the streets. I might have relaxed too, but I kept thinking how for Hilda there was no escaping the heat. I walked.

When I got back to the hospital I asked quietly: "How is my wife?"

The nurse at the switchboard said, "Mrs. Paul is doing nicely."

"Thank you," I said. "Is my doctor in?"

"Not now. He'll be back at five though."

I had lunch in an air-cooled cafeteria, then went to the park. I put on my sun-glasses and sat under a maple and read the Sunday paper. Next to me a lady in a print dress was rocking her baby. Herbert L. Matthews was writing about Brunete. About the Americans under fire. How hot it was for them under the Spanish sun, fighting. It was hard to read. My heart kept jumping. I got up. The sun had dropped and was shining on the face of the hospital. Before going in, I examined all the windows. . . . Behind one of them was Hilda.

Inside there was a light over the switchboard.

I asked, "How is my wife?"

The nurse said, "Mrs. Paul is doing nicely."

I said, "What do you mean?"

"Your wife's doing nicely."

"Nothing more than that?"

"I'm sorry, sir. She's doing nicely."

"Let me talk to the doctor."

"One moment, sir. I'll call the labor room."

He came down smiling. We shook hands. A stethoscope bulged in his pocket.

"How is she doing?" I asked.

"How are you doing?"

"Never mind," I said. "How is she?"

"She's doing nicely."

"Tell me what's wrong."

"Nothing's wrong."

"The hell with your rules. Tell me what's . . ."

"Easy, young feller," he said, still smiling. "We're waiting for your wife to get real sick but she's taking her time."

"How are the pains?"

"They're coming every five minutes."

"Is it going easy?"

"Yes. She's sitting in a wicker chair reading a magazine. It's sunny and she's all right."

I was under control again. "I knew it," I said. "It was easy while she was carrying it too."

"Of course," said the doctor. "She'll come through all right."

"I know she will."

"Why don't you go out and get yourself a drink somewhere?"

"I don't drink."

"There won't be any news before twelve. That's a long time."

I decided to go home and lie down. I tuned in on Spain over the short-wave. Except for the radio light I kept the room dark.

"Hello. Hello. This is Madrid calling. Station EAQ. The voice of Spain." The speaker appealed to the democracies of the world to help drive Germany and Italy out of the infant Spanish republic.

I could not lie down or sit down or stand up or walk. I went down again. All the corners were packed with men waiting for a breeze. All the doorways were crowded with ladies with babies in their arms taking the air long after bedtime.

Soon Hilda would be relaxing too. The baby would be out of her, it would all be over, we would sit up and talk, and I would rush a letter to Chris.

I looked around for a florist, but they were all closed. I went down to a subway station. I bought some gardenias and a bunch of yellow roses from the flower-vendor there. Then I walked to the hospital.

The doors were locked. I rang the night bell.

"I'm Mr. Paul," I said to the nurse who let me in.

"Yes, sir," she said.

I was pushing down hard on myself. "Is my wife . . . ?"

"Your wife is still the same, sir. Your doctor left word that there'll be nothing tonight."

My hands got cold and a cold dizziness went over me. There was one wooden bench in the hall under one dull light. I sat down.

I said, "Is my wife up?"

"Yes, sir," I heard her say. I was staring at the EXIT door. Behind it were the steps up to Hilda. Rush up! Then: control.

I got myself up. "I brought my wife these flowers. Would you give them to her, please?" The nurse took the green package out of my hands. I got myself out.

At home the bedclothes stuck to my skin. My pores were clogged. After a warm shower I could not sleep. It was three o'clock. I dressed and walked to the park.

People were sleeping in their street-clothes all over

★

Out of the Ivory Tower

Rooms are sarcophagi where walls
Of granite and sharp empty halls
Bark the breathy whispers back,
Repulsing all our timid clack,
Teaching the dead his place of shade
And silence, and benumbed charade.

In vain we chafe the mortuary seal,
Despair is acid rust we feel
Abrasive to each finger wound
Around the keys and knobs. And round
Black bars the casement bands, and brick
Each pane—square and cemented thick.

Then suddenly the gates groan full.
Like archæologists we pull
Open from outside, we shout
Our find, we take the mummy out,
And wonder, without talking, how
The lips and eyes are human now!

JOHN W. GASSNER.

the park. Some had their own cots and others were sleeping on the benches or on blankets on the grass. A lot of them were married and slept together. They all looked exhausted. Beside some of them baby carriages were standing. One baby was crying.

I lay down next to a group of men over near the railing. The grass was patchy there and most of it was gravel. I spread a newspaper. Putting my hands under my head, I looked up through the maple trees overhead to a row of lights in the big hospital.

What were they doing to Hilda there, what was it like? She knew. From now on Hilda would know everything. Like these people here. Was there anything they didn't know, these women? They had all gone through it. These men, too. They had waited for it until it was over and now they were waiting for something else. They always waited. For the heat, for the cold, for their dinner, for health, for sleep. Some of them had begun waiting the minute they were born. They were trained for the waiting. They were trained for everything except the big troubles. The wars and the dying and being born and for nothing in the belly. Yet, when the big troubles came they got through them all right. And afterwards they grinned and got hard in the softer places. All over this American earth they were getting hard. All over the Spanish earth they were hard already. . . . Sixteen hours of labor. . . . But it would come out all right. I had placed my faith in it. Tie up with people like these and it would all come out right. Nothing would get us. Nothing would get Hilda. They might cut her and hack at her but they wouldn't get her. They wouldn't get any of us. . . . They wouldn't choke us. . . . They weren't choking us in the mouth and they wouldn't choke us where it was meant for more of us to come out of. . . . It was hard, that's all. Everything came hard today. Think of Madrid. Bombs. Babies. Beds. Bombed in babies. Hitler in bed with the lights on. Babies dead. . . . But not Hilda. Not us. Not any of us. They couldn't get you. . . . Like the heat. If you knew what to do about it, it wouldn't get you. No. As long as you knew what to do and had people behind you nothing would get you. . . .

I got myself up as soon as it was light. My back was stiff. People all around me were getting up too and brushing their wrinkled clothes. It was going to be hot again. I could see that.

As soon as the hospital doors opened I went inside.

The nurse at the switchboard told me, "Your wife is still the same."

She offered me a morning paper and I went into the waiting room. I sat under the fan reading. Herbert L. Matthews was saying that the Spaniards had commemorated the first year of their resistance to fascism with a great battle. Twenty-three planes had been downed. Tonight at Madison Square Garden, another article said, there was going to be a big celebration in honor of the loyalists.

I washed my face in the bathroom and wet my hair. I had no comb and I brushed it back with my fingers. The nurse told me again that Hilda was still the same. About ten o'clock my doctor came into the waiting room.

"How's my wife?"

He said, "Why didn't you shave?"

"How's my wife?"

"The dilatation is better. She's three fingers open. But the pains are lazy."

I said, "Doctor, I can't understand it. I can't. I can't get it."

"You don't have to," he said. "Go home and shave."

"I can't."

"Well, walk around."

"I can't do that either."

"You should have gone to work today."

I said, "Can I phone my wife?"

He hesitated. Then he went to the nurse at the switchboard.

"Will you connect Mr. Paul with the labor room?" Then, to me: "Go into that room over there."

I went in and closed the door. My heart was going like a telegraph key. I lifted the receiver from the hook.

"Go ahead," I heard the nurse say. I said, "Hello."

"Hello, dear." Hilda was making her voice jolly.

I said, "It was lonely without you. The house."

She did not answer.

"Did you sleep, dear?" I asked her.

She said, "O, yes. I had a real eight-hour sleep, darling. I'm feeling good."

"That's good," I said. "Did you eat too?" She said yes.

Then she said, "Darling, I'm trying awfully hard."

"Yes?"

"It's like pushing a telephone pole out of you. But it won't come out."

"It'll come out," I said. "And afterward we'll make you president of the Labor Party."

She laughed weakly. Then she said, "Do you hear it, dear?" I asked, "What?" She said, "The women here. They do scream."

"But you don't, do you?"

The answer was too long in coming. I said, "Hello." Then again: "Hello." Then it came: "No, darling, not me." Weak.

"Hold the fort," I said. "The Spanish bullthrowers won another one today."

"That's fine."

"Did you get my flowers?"

"Yes." Pause. "They were lovely." Pause. "I cried a little."

"Good-by, dear," I said. After she hung up I held onto the receiver and listened to the empty hum. When I came out the doctor was no longer there. I went into the street.

I kept phoning the hospital every half hour from wherever I happened to be. The answer was the same. "She's doing nicely." I was getting to touching things to prove they were really there. At five I phoned the doctor.

"Meet me right away at the hospital," he said.

I rushed over, sweat coming out all over me. I found him in the waiting room.

"That's a plucky kid you've got up there," he said as I came in.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"She's getting very tired."

"Oh," I said.

"The pains are too slow and they are wearing her out now."

"Oh," I said. I could not say any more.

"We're giving her something to hurry them up." He snapped his fingers several times fast. "They should be coming like that."

"Why the hell did you wait so long?" I shouted.

"Take it easy," he said. He cupped his palms. "Here's the womb," he said. "The walls squeeze down like this. Several kinds of muscle put forty pounds of pressure down on that baby. It drives them out usually. But this case is different. Something's holding it back. Instead of coming down as it should, it's staying up there—like that." He went on talking. But I had heard enough. *Something's holding it back.*

"If somebody else must be called in, I'll do it of course," I heard him saying. "Come back around eight."

I walked around a path in the park through the unemployed crowds. Why did I let her do it? It was my fault. When she said she wanted it cleaned out of her, why didn't I listen to her? Now Hilda was getting tired, tired, tired, and the confidence quitting her—the baby getting blocked. As if, yes, Hitler and Mussolini were at her womb, holding up the entrance with their cannon and saying *you can't.* You can't come out. We don't want any more like you out here to fight us. . . . And me thinking the Spaniards were making it all right for her. That the Duce and Führer would never be able to get to it with the Spaniards stopping them. And all the time there were the Spaniards getting the same thing. . . . I must have been dizzy all right. . . . With thousands of them dropped off roofs and peddled on the streets and abandoned in alleys and bombed in their cribs before they were old enough to have measles. . . .

I walked over to the hospital. There were kids in a round fountain kicking up the water.

"Mrs. Paul is still in the labor room," said the nurse.

In the waiting room I looked out the window over the park where the moon was rising. It was red like a sun, and heavy.

The doctor came in in his shirtsleeves. He looked tired this time. "I got somebody else in," he said. "The biggest in the field. There ought to be news for you tonight. Your wife's trying very hard and she's helping a lot. I've been feeling for the baby's heart and it's all right."

I said, "Can't I help?"

"One patient is all we can handle right now."

"When shall I come back?"

"Not before twelve."

"All right," I said. I turned away. He called me back. "Listen," he said, "you've got to be brave about this. She's getting the best we can give her."

"Yes?" I said.

"We're waiting for a normal delivery. But if it becomes necessary we will use the high forceps. Or . . ."

"Yes? All right," I said.

The streets were blurred. I found myself outside Madison Square Garden looking at a stripe of electric-lit letters across the marquee. ONE YEAR OF WAR IN SPAIN. I could feel my feet shoving through torn and dirty leaflets on the sidewalks. More leaflets were pushed into my hands by figures on the corners. As my feet climbed the stairs to the top balcony I got to thinking, *they're writing a leaflet out of my wife's tissues tonight.* I entered a doorway. From the roof down to the floor people were humming. Searchlights from overhead lighted everybody up. I sat myself down. My eyes dropped down the cliffs of the balconies below me. Blur of summer colors—reds, yellows, greens. Long streamers with sharp letters: FIGHT WAR AND FASCISM. TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC WORLD. The stage was lit and speakers moved onto it and sat down. Then a figure came up before the microphone, and the hum came down and a solo voice came up. I stared at the cluster of big horns. The hands of the people banged together.

The voice kept saying, "I must ask you to shorten your applause, my dear friends. I must ask you to shorten your speeches, dear speakers. There is no time. There is so little time. I must ask you . . ."

But the speeches and applause came on, tide on tide. The white hands banging, the people's mouths pleading. And the Garden from roof to floor loud with encouragement.

Mr. Chairman, I found myself begging, *add my wife to this program. Let the sounds of her pain come over these horns from the labor room. Let her screams mix with the sounds of the pain in Spain and go sounding through this Garden.*

The white hands banged together.

I want this applause to be broadcast to my wife in the labor room. She needs encouragement tonight. Please help her, Mr. Chairman.

I kept looking at the cluster of horns until they became mouths. Until the mouths became the mouths of the wounded in Spain with the blood in their throats, became the opened mouths of the fallen, saying to me, *Tell her to go ahead with the baby. Tell her no faltering. Tell her there will never be bombs in her baby's crib. Tell her there will be the singing of lullabies, not dirges. Tell her to go ahead and have as many babies as she wants. We over here are making it safe for the*

Surburbia

Beyond the umbrella tree on the lawn,
Beyond the commuters' train at eight,
The console radio and Monday bridge,
And the Republican editorial:
Beyond the quarterly dividend check:
Beyond the lecture on rock gardening,
The game of golf on Sunday afternoon
And the immoderate passion for hooked rugs:

Look up beyond the stuccoed suburb sky
And see, one day, all roads ahead cut off:
The clubhouse dark, and gleam of bayonets
Along the tennis court: behold the world
An Indian skull turned up on a fairway—
The world kicked crumbling in the trampled drive.

IRENE HENDRY.

★

babies for a long time to come. Some day, tell her, the babies will come out laughing.

Someone then made an appeal for money and the pledges came in. I could hear them coming in from all sides, there was no stopping them. I got out a piece of leaflet and wrote down on the back, *Tonight I pledge to the democratic people of the world one infant.*

Then I was walking out with the thousands of others. The streets were bulging with us tonight. There were a lot of us. And we'd multiply. We were multiplying. . . . I rushed to a phone booth.

"Mrs. Paul is still in the labor room. I'm sorry, sir. Will you call again?"

I leaned against the tin wall of the booth staring at the mouthpiece. Shiny dark whirlpool into that my voice and all dropping. . . .

I phoned again. The ring of the coin and the hum. Ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room. Will you call again?"

The ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Please, Hilda, please—don't get tired now.

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Please let her have morphine, cocaine, please, caffeine, procaine.

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Thirty-nine hours. *Pain from Madrid to Manhattan.*

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Please is my wife in the labor room?"

"No, sir."

Please, please, please.

"Mrs. Paul is in the delivery room now, sir. She was just wheeled in."

The muscles of my heart were cracking. I hung up. I talked to the mouthpiece of the phone. Help, help. Everyone that's brave and clean come help my wife. Everyone who ever marched with me and picketed with me and fought against the guff with me come help her now. This baby is dedicated to democracy. Get it to live. You who were hanged, starved, sweated, gassed, jailed, cheated by the lira, the mark, the peseta, the yen, help her come through. Everything you can do you must do now, now. . . .

I lifted the phone. I dropped the coin. I dialed. I dialed. I dialed. I dialed. I dialed. . . . Then ring . . . ring . . . ring . . . ri . . .

"Hello. This is the New York Maternity Hospital. Good morning."

"I'm Mr. Paul. I . . ."

Please, please, please, please, please.

"Mrs. Paul gave birth to a baby girl at 2:05, sir. She weighs seven pounds ten ounces. Mother and baby are well."

"Thank you," I said.

"You're welcome, sir. Goo——"

"Hold on," I said. "I want to thank you. I mean I want to thank. I mean thank. I want . . ."

"Yes, sir. One moment. The doctor would like to talk to you!"

"Doctor," I said, "how is she?"

"She? Which one?" asked the doctor.

"Hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, hah."

"You sound happy."

I said, "I mean how are *they?*"

"The baby's the image of your wife."

"That's good. How is my wife?"

"She's tired."

"I'll be right over."

"No, you won't, young feller. She doesn't want you or anybody else right now. She's sleeping." The doctor chuckled. "Come around tomorrow."

"When?"

"About seven—if you're up that early. And now, young feller, let me go home. I'm all in. One more thing, though. I don't know what you've got to thank. But you better thank something."

I said seriously, "I will."

I went into the street. There was a small breeze on my face and the moon was bright. I gulped a lot of water from one of the public park fountains. Then I began walking along the empty blocks where the people lived whom I had to thank. The blocks were dark and the houses were plain or rotting. But here they lived—the men and women who quarreled about rent and food. The kids who hollered . . . the intellectuals who dreamt . . . the rooming-house out-of-work home-relief people who waited . . . the workers on drawn-out picket lines who slept between strikes. I walked from house to house and thanked them all.

It was day when I got home. I showered, shaved, got into a pressed suit, and by six I was out.

The sun was on top of the trees in the park near the hospital. The sparrows were cheeping.

As I came in, the nurse at the switchboard was putting out the light.

"Good morning," I called out loudly.

"Good morning, Mr. Paul." She smiled. "You can go right up."

I shoved open the EXIT door with my foot.

In the peaceful corridor upstairs I passed the private rooms—white walls, flowers, mothers in lacy clothes, white beds, sunlight. When I came to my wife's ward I did not halt. I rushed in. She looked up. I got past a blur of beds. She lifted her head. It dropped back on the pillow. Then I was kissing her.

Fumes of ether rose out of her bed and covered our kiss.

I let go and sat down. I sat as close to the bed as I could.

We looked at one another in a new way.

Then we asked one another quiet questions.

"How do you feel, darling?"

"Sleepy."

"Sleep," I said.

"I can't. . . . Are you sorry it's a girl?"

"No. Why?"

"I thought maybe you wanted a fighter. You know. Like Chris.

"Girls can fight pretty good."

"Thank you, darling. . . . Did you write to Chris?"

"Not yet. . . . Did the baby cry much . . . ?"

"I don't remember. I just knew it was all over. Then I slept."

"We'll make a clean place for her won't we, girl?" I said.

She nodded.

"Go ahead. Sleep." I said.

She tried to make a turn. Her eyes shut. Sweat came out on her face.

I jumped up. "What is it?" I asked.

"Nothing. The ether's gone off."

A nurse came in. She helped Hilda. Then she asked would I see the baby. I looked at Hilda. She nodded.

I followed the nurse into the elevator and up to the white nursery. She pointed out my daughter and left.

I looked at her.

The basket she was lying in was like the hundred others. She was bound in pink to the shoulders. Only her face showed. Not a sound or a motion came out. Like her mother, she seemed to be resting after a great shock.

Her head was ugly and blue and her face was grey.

On each cheek was the brand where the forceps had stabbed her.

Marks of labor. Violence. But life.

Contributors

MICHAEL GOLD, who has been an editor of the NEW MASSES for many years, conducts a column in the *Daily Worker* entitled "Change the World."

LEANE ZUGSMITH is the author of *A Time to Remember* and *Home Is Where You Hang Your Childhood.* She is at present completing her new novel.

GRANVILLE HICKS has recently finished the editing of Lincoln Steffens's letters together with Ella Winter, and is now at work on a study of modern English literature.

HORACE GREGORY is at work on *Makers and Ancestors,* a collection of critical essays showing the traditions now alive in contemporary literature. The book will be published shortly by Covici-Friede.

SAMUEL PUTNAM edits the Brazilian section of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies,* issued yearly by the Harvard University Press.

MURIEL RUKEYSER is the author of a volume of poems called *U. S. No. 1,* which Covici-Friede is releasing on December 12.

HYDE PARTNOW tells us that he has in turn been a playwright, actor, editor, and musician, and that he has traveled extensively through America, Europe, and the Near East, and seen fascism at first hand.

HUGH MACDIARMID'S poem on page 18 is from *Second Hymn to Lenin and Other Poems,* published in London by Stanley Nott. A volume of Macdiarmid's selected poems, edited by Horace Gregory, will be published here shortly under the Covici-Friede imprint.

JOHN W. GASSNER is in charge of the play-reading department of the Theatre Guild. He teaches drama at Hunter College and the New Theatre School, and is co-editor, with Burns Mantle, of *A Treasury of the Theatre.* He recently joined the editorial board of *Theatre Workshop.*

IRENE HENDRY is a student at the Washington Square College of New York University.

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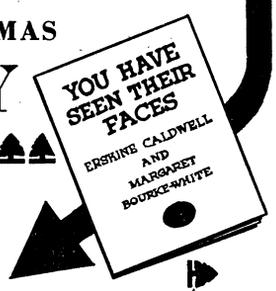

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NEW MASSES
Literary Section

EDITORS: MICHAEL GOLD, HORACE GREGORY, GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ

NEW MASSES, JANUARY 11, 1938, VOL. XXVI, NO. 3, NEW YORK, N. Y.; IN TWO SECTIONS, OF WHICH THIS IS SECTION TW

A Gun Is Watered

By Ted Allan

IT was hot. The earth was hot. The air was hot. Everything was hot. It was Sunday and the boys were resting, not because it was Sunday but because they were tired.

"What's the date?" asked Butterley.

"What's the difference?" answered Durnor.

Butterley, number one machine-gunner, was tired. First the boys had been ordered to march through Villanueva de la Cañada and then on to Brunete; but when they came to Villanueva de la Cañada, they found that if they were going to march through it they had to take it first. They took it. After sixteen hours of fighting. So Butterley was tired.

"Got a cigarette?" he asked.

"You know damned well I haven't got a cigarette," Durnor said.

"I know, but it's nice asking. Say, what the hell's holdin' up the food?"

"We must have advanced too far."

"Advanced too far? Is that a reason for not getting our rations?"

"The kitchen hasn't caught up with us yet."

"Watta hell's the kitchen gotta do with it?" Butterley wanted to know.

"Well, it's the kitchen that hands out the rations, isn't it?"

"Bunch o' bloody bastards runnin' that kitchen if you ask me."

"Yes."

Butterley scratched his head and looked around. He peeked over the small pile of sand-bags that hid his machine-gun. It was the best gun in the army. There was never any better made. All right, maybe they'd made some just as good, but never better. It was a Soviet gun. And it turned up and down and from side to side. Butterley had never handled a machine-gun in his life before he came to Spain. But this gun he could handle the way a pianist handles the keys of a piano. Even better. He cleaned it twice a day. He watered it once a day. No one was allowed to touch it. No one was allowed to carry it. He built himself a special harness and pulled the gun himself. He felt bad when he wasn't near it. He called it Mother Bloor. Never had a man loved a woman with the devotion that Butterley felt toward Mother Bloor. The gun was all right, so he turned back to Durnor.

"This dug-out's lousy."

"What's lousy about it?"

"It's not deep enough."

"Well, let's make it deeper."

"Aw, I'm too tired."

"Well then stop squawking."

"Who's squawking?"

"No one. Me."

Butterley squatted. Durnor was his superior officer. They were quiet for a long while. They paid no attention to the occasional rifle-fire. Butterley fished in his pockets for a cigarette. Sometimes you thought you were out of cigarettes, and then you found one. They tasted better then. You even appreciated a Spanish cigarette after a while. Helluva note though, fighting for days, going ahead, going ahead, then stopping and not having a cigarette. Helluva note. Butterley thought about it a long while.

"Hey, Durnor!"

Durnor didn't answer. His eyes were fixed on the earth in front of him. His curly hair hung below his helmet. He looked at his long lean hands, noticing the heavy dirt in his fingernails. A man thinks the most remarkable thoughts, he said to himself.

"Hey, Durnor!"

"Yes."

"How long do you think this is goin' to last?"

"God, you asked that yesterday, remember?"

"But you didn't answer."

"You got your answer all right."

"I'm homesick."

"Shut up."

"Well, I'm homesick, godamit!"

"Listen, Butterley, I've been here a long time and I'm telling you that you either shut up and stop thinking about it or you ask to get out right away. That's the beginning of a crack-up."

"Aw, I don't crack up."

"All right then, shut up."
"Durnor?"
"Now what?"
"You ain't sore at me, are you?"
"Don't be an ass. Forget it."
"Durnor, what's the date?"
"Hell, I don't know."
"July fourth was on a Sunday, wasn't it? Then Sunday fourth, Monday fifth, Tuesday sixth—that's when we took that town with Canada attached to it."
"It's pronounced Canyada, not Canada."
"Okay, Canyada, but it's spelled the same."
"The 'n' has a twiddle."
"You college guys are always findin' twiddles."
"All right, all right, figure out the date."
"Yeh, lessee. Sunday fourth, Monday fifth, Tuesday sixth, Wednesday seventh, Thursday eighth, Friday ninth, Saturday tenth, Sunday eleventh . . . say it's the eleventh."
"Well, well, well, now you know. Now what?"
"It's good to know the date, ain't it?"
"Yes. Very good. Tomorrow's the twelfth."
"Yeh. Say, Durnor?"
"Yes."
"We have no water for Mother Bloor."
"When did you water her last?"
"Yesterday."
"That's bad."
"I know. Why the hell don't they bring us water? I ain't had a drink since yesterday."
"I thought you were worrying about Mother Bloor."
"Sure. But if we're both not watered, it's twice as bad, ain't it?"
"I suppose so."
"Say, you know the travers lock ain't been workin' so good."
"Fix it then."
"Fix it then! With what? Fix it then!"
"If you can't fix it, then shut up."
"Well, anyhow, it's the best gun in the battalion, in the whole bleddy army."
"That's right."
"I wish I had some water for it. The sun makes it too hot. If there's gonna be action today, it won't be good for it."
"There won't be any action today."
"How do you know?"
"They're as tired as we are, and they've been retreating. It'll take them some time before they're ready to counter-attack."
"Think we'll have some water tomorrow?"
"I hope so, but I do wish to hell I had a cigarette."
"You said it. Maybe some o' the boys . . ."
"Forget it."
"Christ, we could split one between us."
"Forget it, I told you."
"No harm askin'."
"Sometimes for such a good machine-gunner you can be a good pain in the neck."
"Who the hell mentioned it, me or you?"
"Me. I'm sorry. But forget it, Christ, forget it!"
"Say . . . you ain't gettin' nerves, are you?"
"Shut up."

Butterley peeked through the parapet, then looked at his gun.
"Gee, it's quiet."
"Too quiet."
"Funny how when it's quiet a guy gets the jitters and when there's noise a guy still gets the jitters. Seems a guy's always gettin' the jitters. Say you know what's funny?"
"No. What?"
"Well, remember in the movies when a guy gets hit?"
"So what?"
"Remember how he bends over first, then he looks at the sky, and then he takes time to turn around, and then he flops."
"So?"
"Well, it's funny because that's what happens."
"Oh, shut up. Tell me, Butterley, what did you do back home?"
"Me? Thought you knew. I was a seaman and a reporter."
"A reporter? Really?"
"Well, not exactly a reporter. You see I used to get the news and some other guys wrote it."
"What papers?"
"Our paper. The seamen's paper. It was a swell paper. It had two pages. Front and back. And anyways it was a damned sight better'n those big printed papers because it told the truth. We sold it for a penny. If you didn't have a penny, we gave it away for nothin'. Gee-ze, it was a swell paper. Say, what did you do back home?"
"I? I studied how to split the atom."
"Huh?"
"An atom is a very little thing. It's, well, it's so little you can't see it."
"Like a microbe."
"Even smaller."
"Smaller'n a microbe!"
"A microbe is made up of atoms. Everything is."
"An' you hadda split it! Christ!"
"Well, I didn't really."
"But gee-ze—smallern' a microbe. Must be a lotta those things around here, eh?"
"Atoms? Sure, there always are."
"Yeh, but thinka how many atoms're bein' split when a bomb drops."
Durnor chuckled. "Yes."
"I never knew much about those things. Never knew I had to. Never knew they were around for that matter. But there's plenty I know. Plenty. An' I'm learnin' plenty here too."
"Sure you are," said Durnor.
"But they can't win, can they?" Butterley asked.
"Not while you're number one machine-gunner in the second company of the Lincoln-Washington battalion."
"No, no kiddin', waddya think? Can they win?"
"We've been advancing, haven't we? We've been advancing for a whole week."
"Yeh. But now we're sorta resting."
"That's how a war is fought."
"But the Italians keep comin'."
"That's why we're here."

"Hell! Anyway they can't fight."

"Who can't fight?" Durnor asked.

"The Italians, who do you think?"

"Why do you say that?"

"Why do I say that? Look what happened at that place called Guada—something."

"Guadalajara. Yes. But do you know who was fighting them?"

"Naturally, I know. So what?"

"Well, can the Italians fight?"

"Say, what the hell are you talkin' about? The Spaniards made 'em run like hell or don't you know that?"

"Well, it so happens there's a bunch of Italians in a battalion called the Garibaldi and they're in our army and they can fight."

"I ain't thoughta that."

"I know. But think of it."

"Anyway, fascists can't fight. If they didn't have more planes and guns and tanks, we'd beat 'em in a week, the bastards."

The sun still shone. It was a big red sun. It was quiet. No action. No movement. Sometimes a breeze came down from the mountains and waved the long grass in front of the trenches. The fascists were entrenched on a hill. You could see their trench systems. There were no olive trees or grape vines here as there had been on Jarama. Mostly open country.

In the next dug-out were three Americans. One of them had to relieve himself. He couldn't stand since the fascists could see any movement below them. He crawled out on his belly and got over on his side.

Butterley heard a strange sound.

"What's that?"

"What's what?"

Durnor hadn't heard anything.

"Water!"

"Water?"

"Listen . . ."

Butterley poked his head above the ground. He almost choked. Durnor saw him go livid.

"You paw-lit-ically un-de-veloped son of a bitch! Go read a book! You . . . you . . ."

He couldn't talk.

"Durnor! Why, the bastard! Durnor! Look what he's doing on my machine-gun. . . . Why the pawlitically undeveloped son of a . . . God, I'll kill him. So help me. Why the . . ."

Durnor sprang to his feet and grabbed Butterley. He looked toward the gun and chuckled.

"Easy, easy, get your head down and shut up. You wanted it watered, didn't you?"

"Watered?" Butterley spluttered. "He's a spy, I tell you. An achronist. A son-of-a-bitch achronist."

"Anarchist."

"Yeh, achronist. God, I'll kill him."

"Who is he?"

"That Chrysler guy from Detroit."

"He's a good man."

"A good man? A bastard. On my machine-gun. On my machine-gun."

"You wanted it watered, didn't you? Well, you got it watered."

"It'll kill the gun. It won't work. How could a guy do such a thing?"

"Well, a guy has to, hasn't he?"

"Who's stoppin' him? But on my gun, on my machine-gun!"

"Forget it."

"I'll fix him. I'll fix his gun."

"Sure. Put it out of commission."

"Okay, okay. But he should be disciplined. I bet he's an achronist."

"Look, it's not *achronist*. It's *anarchist*. And anarchists don't necessarily do such things on guns. Sometimes with the Trotskyites they swipe them from the front to make a revolution from behind and some of them are good fighters, but it's *anarchist, anarchist,* not achronist . . ."

"Okay, okay, what's the difference? On my gun. On *my* gun!"

They heard the familiar sound of something that sounded like thunder but not quite. They flung themselves to the earth. The shells were coming close. Thunder. Earth flew over them.

"Just keep your head down."

"No, I'll get up and do a dance."

Butterley was sore.

Whine. Ear-splitting noise. Butterley didn't finish what he had to say. Again. Close. Too close. Fear. Dirt. Black acrid smoke.

"Listen, Durnor, can you hear me?"

"Keep your head down."

"Durnor, that extra travers lock in my pocket, don't forget it's in my right pocket."

"Nut, if anything gets you, it gets me."

"I can't hear you. Remember it's in my right pocket."

"Okay."

It became louder and they heard the sputter of machine-guns. They looked at each other and smiled.

"Okay, Butterley boy, get her ready for action."

Durnor looked through the parapet.

"Here to the left."

Butterley pulled the sand-bags from the side of the gun, got up on the ledge, and looking down wiped it with his sleeve in disgust.

"Good thing you got it watered, Butterley."

Butterley didn't answer. He swung the safety and turned his gun to the left. The shelling had died down. There was still heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. Like a million firecrackers going off at the same time.

"Tell Mike we're in position."

"Hey, Mike, we're in position. He says okay. He's in position too."

"Okay. Now kid, wait till they get near and then give it to them. You know how. Take your aim and in short spurts."

Butterley crouched behind the shield, his two thumbs on the trigger ready for action.

"Moors."

Tat-tat-tat.

"You're shooting too high," Durnor yelled.

"Listen, who's shootin'?"

"I'm telling you, you're shooting too high. Obey orders."

Tat-tat-tat. Rat-tat-tat. Durnor thought of how

beautiful it sounded when it came from your own gun. Butterley swung the gun easily, taking careful aim.

Durnor poked his head above the ground. "Mike, better send for more ammunition. Oh, hell . . . hell . . . hell . . ."

"Whatsa matter?" asked Butterley.

"Nothing. Keep shooting. Nothing. Oh, damit . . . damit . . ."

"Whatsa matter, are you hit?"

"Yes. But keep shooting. Just keep shooting, damit."

"I am shootin'. Can't you hear?"

"All right, all right. Hell . . ."

"Bad?" Butterley couldn't take his eye from the gun. The machine-gun spat out a steady stream.

"No. No."

"I can't hear you. Are you hit bad?"

"No."

"Where?"

"Stomach."

"I can't hear you, damn it. Speak louder."

"Hell . . . Butter . . . good ol' . . . you *can* say No Pasaran . . . thought was a lie . . . keep shooting, kid, keep shooting. . . ."

"They're runnin' back!"

"Hell . . ."

"They're runnin' back, Durnor. They're runnin'. Good ol' Mother Bloor. How are yuh, Durnor kid? Christ, kid. Durnor! Oh, Durnor kid. Durnor boy. Mike . . . Durnor . . . gee-ze!"

He looked at the body and then placed his head wearily on the gun and cried, and for the second time that day the gun was watered.

Two Revolutionary Writers

RALPH BATES: A WRITER IN ARMS

By Dorothy Brewster

RALPH BATES's third novel, *Rainbow Fish,* grew out of an image. "Two days after the Revolution began," he wrote from Spain in a letter, "I was standing on a bluff overlooking a lake in the Enchanted Range of the Leridan Pyrenees. As I watched, the lake fishermen drew in their nets with a fine catch of trout. The sunlight upon those fish was so very lovely that I immediately wanted to write (a rare emotion with me). I began the novel that afternoon, to continue it at intervals during the other kind of work which at once had to be taken up. If I remember the book now, it still brings that image of trout struggling in a silver net."

The book is about seven outcasts, and the net they struggle in is not very silvery. Nor is there any escape for them. It seems at first glance a novel about defeat; and that is surprising, coming as it did after the two novels concerning Spain, in which all the leading characters, whether peasants, intellectuals, or city workers, were busy about the building of a new order. But more carefully looked at, *Rainbow Fish* is an affirmation of belief in human beings—even human beings on the bottom of society, like these seven sponge divers who met their death in the wreck in the Ægean. Bates doesn't say everything about these people, but he does stress in each one certain traits, ways of thought and feeling, balked possibilities, that make one realize they had once been worth saving, and could have been saved. "I never intended to say all about these men," he writes in the letter I have been quoting from, "but to loosen the problem, to develop them, rather than to analyze them, to such a point that they would move in the mind of the reader; that the reader should analyze." The nearest approach to an explicit statement of a revolutionary faith in humanity is put into the mouth of the defeated writer, Legge: "I used to feel how miserable human life is. We've come all the way out of the first idiocy or out of matter, out of the depths of the sea if you like, and all we can do is to quarrel and scratch in the dirt . . . sweat grease and drink a bottle empty and light a penny candle against the darkness. . . . Yet I feel we could be *anything* because we have got out of the depths."

There is a kind of belief in humanity that survives only in carefully cultivated remoteness from men. With the first shock of contact, it often lapses into cynical disillusionment. This isn't the kind Ralph Bates has. His is like Maxim Gorki's; it isn't an ivory-tower belief but a front-line-trench belief. When he wrote the letter about *Rainbow Fish,* he was with the International Brigade in Spain, and he concludes: "The stories that will come out of this work will be stories of success." He is now in the United States for the second time within a year, to make clear why he thinks they will be stories of success.

If you listen to him telling an audience about the defense of Madrid and the building-up of a people's army out of an undisciplined, politically divided militia, you will be struck by the skill with which he shapes out of the facts he has gathered a clear-cut interpretation of the Spanish situation, internal and international. He is above all factual and lucid and orderly. But this man in the captain's uniform is still the novelist, who reveals himself in some vivid incident or some sharp picture, lighting up in a flash the Spain he knows from many years of living and working there. It may be a snapshot of a peasant, met in the mountains, who is oddly decorated with a string tied at one end to an

aching tooth and at the other to his great toe. For so the pain will be persuaded down into the earth. What better proof of the backwardness of an illiterate peasantry? But this same peasant turns out to be something of an advanced thinker about religion and education, so that the authorities in his own village have driven him out. Spain is at once so backward—and so forward. Or here is a front-line incident: a group of peasants driven from their fields by advancing rebel forces are now defending Madrid, but their thoughts are with the grain they know is ripe for cutting just behind the enemy front; and so on successive moonless nights they creep with their scythes through weak places in the enemy lines, cut the wheat, and bring it back to help feed the city. As he tells these and other stories, Bates stands quietly, making few gestures with his short, strong hands, but usually keeping them behind him, with thumbs hooked into his belt; until he reaches a conclusion that calls forth applause and cheers—and then his right hand shoots up in the anti-fascist salute. It is a dramatic period, but he has indulged in no oratory. He has only repeated many times: I want you to see; get this clear.

That Bates should be fighting with Spanish workers and peasants after years of living among them is easy to understand. But one wonders why he went to Spain in the first place. Nobody could look more English. He has the bluest of eyes behind his spectacles, pink cheeks, blond hair, and a sturdy figure. Why Spain? He himself thinks it was partly because of a great-grandfather who sailed in trading vessels between Bristol and Cadiz, and dying in Cadiz, was buried there. A photograph of his grave, along with several pictures of Spanish scenes, hung on the wall of the Bates home and fixed a boy's imagination upon this ancestor lying in Spanish earth. When the war, for which he volunteered at eighteen (he was born in 1899, in Swindon, a small industrial town in Wiltshire), was over and he was demobilized, he went first to Marseilles, where he got a job and lodged with dock-workers, and then he crossed to Barcelona. Working on the docks, he came to know and love the men of his companionship, the rebellious, loyal men, lean with poverty and thought—the "lean men" of his first novel. From 1920 to 1923, undeclared civil war reigned in Barcelona—"and I more than saw it. One never knew when a bullet would get the man by one's side or the man by his." Then he started walking over Spain, doing odd jobs at tinsmithing and olive gathering, studying the songs and musical instruments of the peasantry—he once intended to write a scholarly book about all this, but has now turned his material over to a friend in Cambridge—and taking in with a story-teller's eye those regional diversities of landscape and people out of which he created the beautiful contrasts of *The Olive Field.* A brief return to England made him feel like a Latin in a gray Saxon land, and he was soon back in Barcelona. Spain for him, as he has said, represented both escape and reality.

Much of what happened in the next few years—too much of it, he now thinks—he later built into the story of the Englishman, Charing, leading character in *Lean Men.* There was the little circle of workers and poets, becoming less literary and more political as the Spanish crisis ripened and the dictatorship tottered. There were revolutionary strikes; arms had to be smuggled through the passes of the Pyrenees, men wanted by the police had to be helped to escape into France. It is all in *Lean Men,* along with an unforgettable feeling of the city itself—Barcelona, that volcano eternally rumbling, "upon which the order of Spanish society is built." Bates poured into the novel, as if he would never write another, all his amazingly diverse interests—in music, folk poetry, labor revolt, arts and crafts, religious speculation, mountain climbing, love, politics. Many of these interests come through confusedly but excitingly; a few achieve fine expression. Among the readers excited by the novel with its promise of richer achievement to come was Edward Garnett. And to his help and interest Bates ascribes the advance in technical mastery shown in *The Olive Field.* This association with Garnett, and other fruitful relationships with writers like Ralph Fox and Wyndham Lewis, developed during the interval when he was in England, after the declaration of the republic in Madrid in 1931. He was in and out of jobs, and when out, devoted himself to writing.

Bates is quite as interesting when he talks about special problems of the writer's craft as when his theme is the defense of Madrid. One of these problems is an old one, about which, he says, he once had a dog fight with Wyndham Lewis: whether to write behavioristically, or to get inside the characters and feel them. He sees a dreadful warning in the fact that Wyndham Lewis, arch-apostle of exteriorism in England, has become an enthusiastic disciple of Hitler. Bates thinks that the reportage or behavioristic school leaves out the fact of development in a man, the fact of a time-lag, as well as of jump and anticipation. "We must humanize, personalize, if we are to be really revolutionary." Having often been told by critics to "write more dialectically," he has tried to do this, "despite almost complete ignorance as to what that means in novel-writing." He is aware now of "dialectical" failures in his earlier work: "that in *Lean Men* the dockers and longshoremen who stand for the working class do not come into sufficient contact with the middle-class master blacksmith weakens the novel." He pointed out to me a small but significant instance in *The Olive Field* of his effort to write dialectically—in terms of the novel. There is a scene where Mudarra, olive worker, guitarist, and anarchist, arrested after a riot in the olive groves of Don Fadrique, is tortured with thorns thrust under his nails, and other such discouragements of activity against the old feudal order.

The scene closes, and with a sharp transition we find ourselves with Don Fadrique in his study, where in poring over one of the precious old music books that are his passion, he escapes from responsibility for what is done in his name. The book has a quaint frontispiece of a dolphin bearing on his back through tranquil seas a rapt musician. The description of this frontispiece, mingled with Don Fadrique's musings upon it, repeats with subtle variations the imagery of the preceding scene—as in "thorn-shaped" waves, for instance. And this play of imagery suggests the synthesis that will develop out of opposing movements: toward the future in the revolutionist, toward the past

in the aristocrat. Music serves them both: a scholar's escape for the marquis, a living and growing tradition for the revolutionist.

"Writing is part of a man's living, and literature is part of a lived life." This is what Ralph Bates believes, and in practicing his belief, he offers us the exciting spectacle—not the only one in these days—of the integrated activity of man and artist.

NIKOLAI OSTROVSKI: A HERO OF THE SOCIALIST EPOCH

By Joshua Kunitz

WHEN on December 23, 1936, the Soviet papers, in heavy black borders, announced the death of the blind and totally paralyzed young writer, Nikolai Ostrovski, a great wail of lamentation rose over the land. There was not a person that one met, not a house that one entered, but that the death of Ostrovski immediately became the topic of sorrowful conversation. Within three days about one-quarter of a million Muscovites filed past his inconceivably shriveled body which lay amidst mountains of red and white flowers in the Writers' Club. Huge shivering throngs stood patiently for hours, waiting to bid the last farewell to their beloved comrade and writer. It is no exaggeration to say that, though only thirty-two years old and the author of only one brief autobiographical novel (the first part of his second novel has been published posthumously), Ostrovski had by his extraordinary life and work and the Bolshevik types he created captured the imagination and stirred the moral fervor of his Soviet contemporaries.

As I stood in the guard of honor watching the intense faces of the young people who passed the bier, I felt that to them Nikolai Ostrovski was dear because in his optimism, his energy, his faith in mankind, his ability to surmount almost superhuman difficulties and to draw strength, and, despite his terrible afflictions, even creative joy from active identification with the life of his socialist fatherland and the working-class struggles throughout the world, he was the perfect expression of their own most exalted, most Communist selves.

Every society, every age, every class has its own dominant ideal of the good life and its own characteristic hero in whose real or imaginary conduct that ideal is most luminously expressed. There were the Spartan ideal and hero, and the Athenian, the Christian and the pagan, the feudal and the bourgeois. All these various ideals and heroes were reflected in the arts and literatures of the respective societies, epochs, and classes. The Russian hero throughout the whole of the nineteenth and the beginning of this century was a pale, vacillating, self-centered, and self-tormenting Hamlet. The Russian hero was passive; his attitude to the surrounding life negative. This hero was carried over into the literature of the early years of the revolution when the great majority of Soviet writers were still of the bourgeois intelligentsia and when the need for a resolute choice between the two warring worlds further intensified their psychological tortures. The real protagonist of the new era was, of course, the worker. But before he would potently assert himself in literature both as creator and hero, a considerable time would elapse. Meanwhile life was thundering forward through civil war, the N.E.P., industrialization, and collectivization, straight into socialism.

The writers of the generation before Ostrovski's, those who had once specialized in delving into their Hamlet complexes, now found it almost impossible to adapt their perceptive apparatus, their lexicon, their technique to life's new content. Soviet reality was too fluid, changing, variegated, elusive. Life and people were going through breath-taking transformations. Love, friendship, loyalty, ambition, patriotism, the relation of the individual to society, the universe, and death had to be reëxamined from an entirely new angle. Here and there, in an individual act, a fugitive word, a meteoric flash, a suggestive detail, one caught a glimpse of what the socialist ideal of the good life would finally be; but when Soviet literature first endeavored to capture those inchoate suggestions and flashes and embody them in what would universally be recognized as *the* hero of the socialist epoch, the result was usually a thesis, a *schema,* not a being of flesh and blood. To create the socialist hero, to grasp the new, the distinctive, the quintessential in him, to crystallize in poetic image what was already present but still uncrystallized in the seething stream of life—that was a task, the Herculean dimensions of which confounded the most gifted of the older writers. One thing was clear. It was the new socialist humanity, the workers, the udarniks, the Bolsheviks, the builders of the new life, who would have to speak for themselves, realize themselves in their own art, crystallize their own ideals and heroes in their own creative work. And it is in the light of this historically dictated development that the life and work and influence of Nikolai Ostrovski in Soviet literature assume such significance.

Nikolai Ostrovski's life, as he himself and others have recorded it, unfolds before me. I see the little Ukrainian town of Shepetovka, the tiny gray house by the dusty road, where in 1904 Nikolai was born. The stately mansion of his rich neighbors is hidden behind the thick foliage of a magnificent garden. I hear the mingled talk in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and Yiddish. Nikolai's father dies when Nikolai is still a baby. His mother is working. His older brother Artem is also working—a mechanic in the railroad depot. Nikolai is left to himself. He runs about the street unwashed and unkempt. He plays games, he fishes, he swims, he gets into scrapes, he develops a strong, lithe body and a nimble, inquiring mind. In the parochial school he is

a nuisance with his eternal questions. The priest finally chases him out, and that is the end of his schooling. At eleven he becomes a dishwasher at the railroad station. He is beaten by the proprietor and kicked by the customers. Brutality, injustice, exploitation, prostitution, robbing of drunken patrons—the impressionable youngster sees much and learns much on his job. He seeks escape in reading. The life of Garibaldi and Voynich's famous novel *The Gadfly* stir him to the depths of his soul. Though he is not yet fully conscious of it, he becomes a rebel, a bitter foe of all exploitation and oppression of man by man. He has a fight with his boss and, to the dismay of his poor mother, is thrown out of his job. He then becomes an apprentice in the railroad depot. He is bright, he learns quickly. But before long the waves of the revolution strike Shepetovka. Following his proletarian intuition, he chooses the right side. At the age of fifteen, he is already in the Young Communist League. He joins the Reds in the civil war, first the army of Kotovski, later the cavalry of Budyonni.

Bold, courageous, enterprising, he is always in the front ranks. He is seriously wounded in the head, and lies unconscious for weeks. But from this first encounter with death he rises victorious to join the fighting ranks again. When the revolution finally triumphs, Nikolai is demobilized, goes back to the railway depot. But he does not stay there long. His life becomes one endless series of fulfilling difficult party tasks. He is always among the first and the best. If it is on a railway-building job in a swampy region, Nikolai is right on the spot. If it is to guard the border at one of the most dangerous sectors, Nikolai is right there. If it is the secretaryship of the regional committee of the Young Communist League, Nikolai takes the job.

Years at the front and the wound in the head have undermined his health. A grave case of typhus contracted on his railway-building job adds the finishing touches. His health is ruined, yet he clings to his party work. By 1927 paralysis sets in. He now lies flat on his back, he can move only the fingers of one hand. But he does not yield. He continues his party work, conducting Marxist study circles in his home, teaching the younger members of the party.

Then another terrible blow: he goes totally blind. He cannot conduct the study circles any longer. Absolutely immobile and sightless and with almost every organ of his body, except the brain and the voice, in a state of rapid disintegration, Nikolai Ostrovski nevertheless refuses to surrender. True, the idea of suicide occurs to him, but he rejects it immediately as unworthy of a Bolshevik. "Even when life becomes intolerable," says the hero in his novel, "a Bolshevik must know how to make it useful." Ostrovski reports to the party: "Physically I have lost almost everything. What is left is the inextinguishable energy of youth and a passionate determination in some way to be useful to my party and my class."

And so, this blind and paralyzed and hopelessly emaciated being, all skin and bones now—a thinking mummy—sets out on a new career. He becomes an author. He dictates his autobiographical novel *How Steel Was Tempered*. When the novel is completed, he sends his only copy to the publishers, but it is lost in the mails. Undaunted, he starts dictating all over again. In 1932 the first part of his novel is published. It is a simple, straightforward, vigorous, fresh, optimistic, young, fervently proletarian story. It is a success. Children and old people, the cultured and uncultured read it with equal absorption. Like Chapayev, Pavel Korchagin, the hero of Ostrovski's novel, becomes one of the most beloved characters in Soviet literature. The name of Korchagin-Ostrovski, the young Communist hero of the civil war who lost his health, his sight, his limbs in the struggle for the establishment of the Soviet power, but who instead of being crushed is kept alive by an incandescent will to labor and create for the glory of socialism, is on everyone's tongue. Admirers make pilgrimages from all over the country. The Communist Party and the Soviet government surround him with every possible comfort and care. On October 1, 1935, the highest honor in the land is bestowed upon him, and Petrovski, the aged president of the Ukrainian republic, travels all the way to the Crimea personally to pin the Order of Lenin on Ostrovski's chest.

Ostrovski is tremendously moved and grateful. "As long as my heart still beats," he writes on that occasion, "my whole life, to its very last throb, will be dedicated to the training of the young people of our socialist fatherland in the spirit of Bolshevism." He has only one poignant regret: "It pains me to think that in the forthcoming final struggle with fascism I won't be able to take my place at the battle front. A cruel affliction has nailed me down." But it is not in Ostrovski's character to waste time in futile regrets. He'll do his Bolshevik part anyhow. "With so much greater passion," he vows, "will I smite the enemy with the other weapon with which the party of Lenin and Stalin has armed me. . . . "

During the months that follow, despite his rapidly failing health, Ostrovski displays incredible energy and enthusiasm. He knows that he has not very long to go, but plans of large works stir in his head. He is determined to go on, to be useful, to contribute his share to socialist construction. He dictates, dictates, dictates, welcoming insomnia, for it allows more time to work. It takes three stenographers to keep up with him. He suffers excruciating pains. He faints. But every time he comes to, his first words are, "Forward, friends, forward—the manuscript must be handed in as per plan!" He fulfills the plan four days ahead of time and he is jubilant: "I, too, am a Stakhanovite!"

He deliberately and tenaciously fights death. "I'll show the old witch yet how Bolsheviks die," he jests. Only a couple of months before the end, he remarks to a group of friends: "If you are told that I am dead, don't believe it until you come here and actually convince yourselves. But if I am really vanquished, no one will dare say 'he might have lived yet.' I will leave only after I am absolutely licked. While even one cell in my body remains alive, capable of resisting, I will be alive, resisting."

He loves life, and he keenly responds to everything about him, especially to political events. He has the papers read to him every morning. He also follows the news on the radio. Spain pervades his being. To the very end, his first question in the morning is, "How about Madrid, does it still hold out?" And when told

that it still holds out, his invariable cheerful comment is, "Fine fellows! That means that I too must hold out!" Every time he dozes off, he dreams of Spain. And when he wakes with a start, he tells how he and the Spanish comrades had captured a fascist cruiser and what they had done to the fascist officers. Or he tells how, as a soldier in the republican army, he made his way through all kinds of dangers into the fascist camp and killed General Franco. What jubilation there was in Spain and throughout the rest of the proletarian world! The dream of world revolution is his dearest and most cherished dream. "The universal triumph of our cause, that is what we want!" he concludes the recital of his adventures in Spain.

His last great joy is hearing over the radio Stalin's report to the Eighth Extraordinary Congress of Soviets on the new constitution. His last great sorrow comes from the news that André Gide, the very same Gide who had wept over him and kissed his hands, has written a slanderous book about the Soviet Union.

His letter to his mother, written about a week before his death, reveals Ostrovski's Bolshevik character better than anything one can tell about him:

Dear Little Mother: Today I have completed all the work on the first volume of *Born in the Storm*. I have kept my word to the Central Committee of the Komsomol that the book would be finished by the fifteenth of December.

This whole month I worked "in three shifts." I sweated my secretaries to the limit, robbing them of their rest day, making them work from early morning till late into the night. Poor girls! I don't know what they think of me, but I treated them abominably.

Now it is all in the past. I am immeasurably tired. But the book is finished and in three weeks it will come out in the *Roman-Gazetta* in an edition of one hundred and fifty thousand, then in several other editions—altogether about a half a million.

. . . You must have heard about André Gide's treachery. How he deceived our hearts then! And who, mother, could have imagined that he would behave so vilely, so dishonorably! This old man should be ashamed of his action. He has deceived not only us, but our whole great people. Now his book *Return from the U.S.S.R.* is being made use of by our enemies in their struggle against socialism and against the working class. About me André Gide wrote "well." He says that if I lived in Europe, they would regard me as a "saint" there, and so on and so forth. But I won't speak of him any more. His treachery was a terribly heavy blow to me, for I had honestly believed his words and his tears and his solemn praise, while he was here, of our achievements and victories.

Now I will rest a whole month. I will work very little. That is, of course, if I will be able to stand idleness. Our characters, mother, as you know, are exactly alike. Still, I will rest. I will read, listen to music, and sleep more—six hours is really not enough.

Did you hear Comrade Stalin's speech? Write whether our radio is working.

Forgive me, my own, for not having written to you all these weeks. I never have you out of my mind. Take care of yourself and be cheerful. The winter months will pass soon and with the spring I'll be coming back to you. I firmly press your hands, your honest worker hands, and tenderly embrace you . . .

Such was Nikolai Ostrovski. Toward the end he was almost bodiless—sheer energy—a mind decarnate yet mundane, incorporeal yet earthly. He was, as it were, the spiritual extract of the period, the party, and the class to which he belonged. Through him, on a hitherto unattained plane, the two central problems of man's existence—his relation to society and his relation to death—found their exquisite socialist solution.

As I stood in the guard of honor by his side, peering into the eyes of the young people that filed past, it suddenly occurred to me that I was present at one of those rare and mysterious moments when, on the basis of sublime and emotionally charged fact, a great but until now latent ideal was being socially crystallized. For here, to use André Gide's characterization, lay a saint, in the deepest and fullest sense a Communist hero-saint —a pure and glowing symbol of an ideal of life inconceivable in any but a socialist society.

A Summer Night

The wind wheels over Manhattan like an enemy
storming, and we wake before dawn in the midst of bombardment,
turning our heads from the beams of lightning, searchlight of death.

Then like newsreel on the flashing wall, from Shanghai
floating in conquered creek toward the dark ceiling, the eyes
of uniformed soldiers, puffed with decay, the shocking smile.

Long rains of childhood return in the hush of rain,
and the morning twenty years gone, the shouts in the wet doorway:
War At Last and our men over cloudy ocean marching in parade.

Wavering years: the mind burning and our hands unsatisfied ever:
gripping from job to job, in escape or search;
the children grown out of war and restless to return.

Helmet and muddy cheek, the grenade poised to throw,
natural we'll stand at last, watching in the man-deep furrow,
the explosive fountains, the shrapnel flowers with instantaneous growth;

The hateful stance, the habit of bayonets, the doomed
gasping in deadly landscape, and the imagined wound
darkening the sheets while the pulse of guns still thunders in the shallow room.

You gave no choice, Oh shouting rulers, so we learned none.
brave by routine, we'll come to pollute your brilliant guns,
your stadia, and your microphones—with your blood.

DAVID WOLFF.

The Company

By Thomas Wolfe

WHEN Joe went home that year he found that Mr. Merrit also was in town. Almost before the first greetings at the station were over, Jim told him. The two brothers stood there grinning at each other. Jim, with his lean, thin, deeply furrowed face, that somehow always reminded Joe so curiously and so poignantly of Lincoln, and that also somehow made him feel a bit ashamed, looked older and more worn than he had the last time Joe had seen him. He always looked a little older and a little more worn; the years like the slow gray ash of time wore at his temples and the corners of his eyes. His hair, already sparse, had thinned back and receded from his temples and there were little webbings of fine wrinkles at the corners of his eyes. The two brothers stood there looking at each other, grinning, a little awkward, but delighted. In Jim's naked worn eyes Joe could see how proud the older brother was of him, and something caught him in the throat.

But Jim just grinned at him, and in a moment said: "I guess we'll have to sleep you out in the garage. Bob Merrit is in town, you, you—or if you like, there's a nice room at Mrs. Parker's right across the street, and she'd be glad to have you."

Joe looked rather uncomfortable at the mention of Mrs. Parker's name. She was a worthy lady, but of a literary turn of mind, and a pillar of the Woman's Club. Kate saw his expression and laughed, poking him in the ribs with her big finger: "Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho! You see what you're in for, don't you? The prodigal son comes home and we give him his choice of Mrs. Parker or the garage! Now is that life, or not?"

Jim Doaks, as was his wont, took this observation in very slowly. One could see him deliberating on it, and then as it broke slowly on him, it sort of spread all over his seamed face; he bared his teeth in a craggy grin; a kind of rusty and almost unwilling chuckle came from him; he turned his head sideways, and said "Hi—I," an expletive that with him was always indicative of mirth.

"I don't mind a bit," protested Joe. "I think the garage is swell. And then"—they all grinned at each other again with the affection of people who know each other so well that they are long past knowledge—"if I get to helling around at night, I won't feel that I am disturbing you when I come in. . . . And how is Mr. Merrit, anyway?"

"Why, just fine," Jim answered with that air of thoughtful deliberation which accompanied most of his remarks. "He's just fine, I think. And he's been asking about you," said Jim seriously. "He wants to see you."

"And we knew you wouldn't mind," Kate said more seriously. "You know, it's business; he's with the Company, and of course it's good policy to be as nice to them as you can."

But in a moment, because such designing was really alien to her own hospitable and wholehearted spirit, she added: "Mr. Merrit is a nice fellow. I like him. We're glad to have him anyway."

"Bob's all right," said Jim. "And I know he wants to see you. Well," he said, "if we're all ready, let's get going. I'm due back at the office now. Merrit's coming in. If you'd like to fool around uptown until one o'clock and see your friends, you could come by then, and I'll run you out. Why don't you do that? Merrit's coming out to dinner, too."

It was agreed to do this, and a few minutes later Joe got out of the car upon the Public Square of the town that he had not seen for a year.

THE TRUTH of the matter was that Joe not only felt perfectly content at the prospect of sleeping in the garage, but he also felt a pleasant glow at the knowledge that Mr. Robert Merrit was in town, and staying at his brother's house.

Joe had never known exactly just what Mr. Robert Merrit did. In Jim's spacious but rather indefinite phrase, he was referred to as "the Company's man." And Joe did not know exactly what the duties of a "Company's man" were, but Mr. Merrit made them seem mighty pleasant. He turned up ruddy, plump, well-kept, full of jokes, and immensely agreeable, every two or three months, with a pocket that seemed perpetually full, and like the Jovian pitcher of milk of Baucis and Philemon, perpetually replenished, in some miraculous way, with big fat savory cigars, which he was always handing out to people.

Joe understood, of course, that there was some business connection in the mysterious ramifications of "the Company" between his brother Jim and Robert Merrit. But he had never heard them "talk business" together, nor did he know just what the business was. Mr. Merrit would "turn up" every two or three months like a benevolent and ruddy Santa Claus, making his jolly little jokes, passing out his fat cigars, putting his arm around people's shoulders—in general, making everyone feel good. In his own words, "I've got to turn up now and then just to see that the boys are behaving themselves, and not taking any wooden nickels." Here he would wink at you in such an infectious way that you had to grin. Then he would give you a fat cigar.

His functions did seem to be ambassadorial. Really, save for an occasional visit to the office, he seemed to spend a good deal of his time in inaugurating an era of good living every time he came to town. He was always taking the salesmen out to dinner and to lunch. He was always "coming out to the house," and when

he did come, one knew that Kate would have one of her best meals ready, and that there would be some good drinks. Mr. Merrit usually brought the drinks. Every time he came to town he always seemed to bring along with him a plentiful stock of high-grade beverages. In other words, the man really did carry about with him an aura of good fellowship and good living, and that was why it was so pleasant now to know that Mr. Merrit was in town and "staying out at the house."

Mr. Merrit was not only a nice fellow. He was also with "the Company." And, since Jim was also a member of "the Company," that made everything all right. Because "the Company," Joe knew, was somehow a vital, mysterious form in all their lives. Jim had begun to work for it when he was sixteen years old—as a machinist's helper in the shops at Akron. Since then he had steadily worked his way up through all the states until now, "well-fixed" apparently, he was a district manager—an important member of "the sales organization."

"The Company," "the sales organization"—mysterious titles, both of them. But most comforting.

II

THE sales organization—or, to use a word that at this time was coming into common speech, the functional operation—of the Federal Weight, Scale & Computing Co., while imposing in its ramified complexity of amount and number, was in its essence so beautifully simple that to a future age, at least, the system of enfeoffments in the Middle Ages, the relation between the liege lord and his serf, may well seem complex by comparison.

The organization of the sales system was briefly just this, and nothing more: the entire country was divided into districts and over each district an agent was appointed. This agent, in turn, employed salesmen to cover the various portions of his district. In addition to these salesmen there was also an "office man" whose function, as his name implies, was to look after the office, attend to any business that might come up when the agent and his salesmen were away, take care of any spare sheep who might stray in of their own volition without having been enticed thither by the persuasive herdings of the salesmen and their hypnotic words; and a "repair man" whose business it was to repair damaged or broken-down machines.

Although in the familiar conversation of the agents, a fellow agent was said to be the agent for a certain town—Smith, for example, was "the Knoxville man," Jones, the Charleston one, Robinson, the one at Richmond, etc., these agencies, signified by the name of the town in which the agent had his office, comprised the district that surrounded them.

In Catawba there were six agencies and six agents. The population of the state was about three million. In other words, each agent had a district of approximately one-half million people. Not that the distribution worked out invariably in this way. There was no set rule for the limitation of an agency, some agencies were larger than others and considerably more profitable, depending upon the amount of business and commercial enterprise that was done in any given district. But the median of one agent to a half-million people was, in probability, a fairly accurate one for the whole country.

Now, as to the higher purposes of this great institution, which the agent almost never referred to by name, as who should not speak of the deity with coarse directness, but almost always with a just perceptible lowering and huskiness of the voice, as "the Company"—these higher purposes were also, when seen in their essential purity, characterized by the same noble directness and simplicity as marked the operations of the entire enterprise. This higher purpose, in the famous utterance of the great man himself, invariably repeated every year as a sort of climax or peroration to his hour-long harangue to his adoring disciples at the national convention, was—sweeping his arm in a gesture of magnificent and grandiloquent command toward the map of the entire United States of America—"There is your market. Go out and sell them."

What could be simpler or more beautiful than this? What could be more eloquently indicative of that quality of noble directness, mighty sweep, and far-seeing imagination, which has been celebrated in the annals of modern literature under the name of "vision"? "There is your market. Go out and sell them."

Who says the age of romance is dead? Who says there are no longer giants on the earth in these days? It is Napoleon speaking to his troops before the pyramids. "Soldiers, forty centuries are looking down on you." It is John Paul Jones: "We have met the enemy and they are ours." It is Dewey, on the bridge deck of the *Oregon*: "You may fire when you are ready, Gridley." It is General Grant before the works of Petersburg: "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

"There's your market. Go out and sell them." The words had the same spacious sweep and noble simplicity that have always characterized the utterances of the great leaders at every age and epoch of man's history.

It is true that there had been a time when the aims and aspirations of "the Company" had been more modest ones. There had been a time when the founder of the institution, the father of the present governor, John S. Appleton, had confined his ambitions to these modest words: "I should like to see one of my machines in every store, shop, or business in the United States that needs one, and that can afford to pay for one."

The high aims expressed in these splendid words would seem to the inexperienced observer to be far-reaching enough, but as any agent upon the company's roster could now tell you, they were so conventional in their modest pretentions as to be practically mid-Victorian. Or, as the agent himself might put it: "That's old stuff now—we've gone way beyond that. Why, if you wanted to sell a machine to someone who *needs* one, you'd get nowhere. Don't wait until he *needs* one—make him buy one now. Suppose he doesn't need one; all right, we'll make him see the need of one. If he has no need of one, why we'll create the need." In a more technical phrase, this was known as "creat-

ing the market," and this beautiful and poetic invention was the inspired work of one man, the fruit of the vision of none other than the great John S. Appleton, Jr., himself.

In fact, in one impassioned flight of oratory before his assembled parliaments, John S. Appleton, Jr., had become so intoxicated with the grandeur of his own vision that he is said to have paused, gazed dreamily into unknown vistas of magic Canaan, and suddenly to have given utterance in a voice quivering with surcharged emotion to these words: "My friends, the possibilities of the market, now that we have created it, are practically unlimited." Here he was silent for a moment, and those who were present on that historic occasion say that for a moment the great man paled, and then he seemed to stagger as the full impact of his vision smote him with its vistas. His voice is said to have trembled so when he tried to speak that for a moment he could not control himself. It is said that when he uttered those memorable words, which from that moment on were engraved upon the hearts of every agent there, his voice faltered, sunk to an almost inaudible whisper, as if he himself could hardly comprehend the magnitude of his own conception.

"My friends," he muttered thickly, and was seen to reel and clutch the rostrum for support, "my friends, seen properly . . ." he whispered and moistened his dry lips, but here, those who are present say, his voice grew stronger and the clarion words blared forth " . . . seen properly, with the market we have created, there is no reason why one of our machines should not be in the possession of every man, woman, and child in the United States of America."

Then came the grand, familiar gesture to the great map of these assembled states: "There's your market, boys. Go out and sell them."

Such, then, were the sky-soaring aims and aspirations of the Federal Weight, Scale & Computing Co. in the third decade of the century, and such, reduced to its naked and essential simplicity, was the practical effort, the concrete purpose of every agent in the company. Gone were the days forever, as they thought, when their operations must be confined and limited merely to those business enterprises who needed, or thought they needed, a weight scale or computing machine. The sky was the limit, and for any agent to have even hinted that anything less or lower than the sky was possibly the limit, would have been an act of such impious sacrilege as to have merited his instant expulsion from the true church and the living faith—the church and faith of John S. Appleton, Jr., which was called "the Company."

In the pursuit and furtherance and consummation of this grand and elemental aim, the organization of the company worked with the naked drive, the beautiful precision of a locomotive piston. Over the salesmen was the agent, and over the agent was the district supervisor, and over the district supervisor was the district manager, and over the district manager was the general manager, and over the general manager was . . . was . . . God himself, or, as the agents more properly referred to him, in voices that fell naturally to the hush of reverence, "the Old Man."

The operation of this beautiful and powerful machine can perhaps best be described to the lay reader by a series of concrete and poetic images. Those readers, for example, with an interest in painting, who are familiar with some of the terrific drawings of old Pieter Breughel, may recall a certain gigantic product of his genius which bears the title *The Big Fish Eating Up the Little Ones,* and which portrays just that. The great whales and monster leviathans of the vasty deep swallowing the sharks, the sharks swallowing the swordfish, the swordfish swallowing the great bass, the great bass swallowing the lesser mackerel, the lesser mackerel eating up the herrings, the herrings gulping down the minnows, and so on down the whole swarming and fantastic world that throngs the sea-floors of the earth, until you get down to the tadpoles, who, it is to be feared, have nothing smaller than themselves to swallow.

Or, to a reader interested in history, the following illustration may make the operation of the system plain. At the end of a long line that stretches from the pyramids until the very portals of his house, the great Pharaoh, with a thonged whip in his hands, which he vigorously and unmercifully applies to the bare back and shoulders of the man ahead of him, who is great Pharaoh's great chief overseer, and in the hand of Pharaoh's great chief overseer likewise a whip of many tails which the great chief overseer unstintedly applies to the quivering back and shoulders of the wretch before him, who is the great chief overseer's chief lieutenant, and in the lieutenant's hand a whip of many tails which he applies to the suffering hide of his head sergeant, and in the head sergeant's hand a wicked flail with which he belabors the pelt of a whole company of groaning corporals, and in the hands of every groaning corporal, a wicked whip with which they lash and whack the bodies of a whole regiment of grunting slaves, who toil and sweat and bear burdens and pull and haul and build the towering structure of the pyramid.

Or, finally, for those readers with an interest in simple mechanics, the following illustration may suffice. Conceive an enormous flight of stairs with many landings, and at the very top of it, supreme and masterful, a man, who kicks another man in front of him quite solemnly in the seat of the pants, this man turns a somersault and comes erect upon the first and nearest landing and immediately, and with great decision, kicks the man in front of him down two more landings of these enormous stairs, who, on arriving, kicks the next incumbent down three landing flights, and so on to the bottom, where there is no one left to kick.

Now these, in their various ways, and by the tokens of their various imagery, fairly describe the simple but effective operations of the Company. Four times a year, at the beginning of each quarter, John S. Appleton called his general manager before him and kicked him down one flight of stairs, saying, "You're not getting the business. The market is there. You know what you can do about it—or else. . . ."

And the general manager repeated the master's words and operations on his chief assistant managers, and they

in turn upon the district managers, and they in turn upon the district supervisors, and they in turn upon the district agents, and they in turn upon the lowly salesmen, and they in turn, at long and final last, upon the final recipient of all swift kicks—the general public, the amalgamated Doakses of the earth.

It is true that to the lay observer the operation did not appear so brutally severe as has been described. It is true that the iron hand was cunningly concealed in the velvet glove, but there was no mistaking the fact, as those who had once felt its brutal grip could testify, that the iron hand was there and could be put to ruthless use at any moment. It is true that the constant menace of that iron hand was craftily disguised by words of cheer, by talk of fair rewards and bonuses, but these plums of service could turn bitter in the mouth, the plums themselves were just a threat of stern reprisal to those who were not strong or tall enough to seize them. One was not given his choice of having plums or of not having plums. It is no exaggeration to say that one was told he must have plums, that he must get plums, that if he failed to gather plums another picker would be put into his place.

And of all the many wonderful and beautiful inventions which the great brain of Mr. John S. Appleton had created and conceived, this noble invention of plum-picking was the simplest and most cunning of the lot. For be it understood that these emoluments of luscious fruit were not wholly free. For every plum the picker took unto himself, two more were added to the plenteous store of Mr. Appleton. And the way this agricultural triumph was achieved was as follows:

Mr. Appleton was the founder of a great social organization known as the Hundred Club. The membership of the Hundred Club was limited exclusively to Mr. Appleton himself and the agents, salesmen, and district managers of his vast organization. The advantages of belonging to the Hundred Club were quickly apparent to everyone. Although it was asserted that membership in the Hundred Club was not compulsory, if one did not belong to it the time was not far distant when one would not belong to Mr. Appleton. The club, therefore, like all the nobler Appleton inventions, was contrived cunningly of the familiar ingredients of simplicity and devilish craft, of free will and predestination.

The club had the extraordinary distinction of compelling people to join it while at the same time giving them, through its membership, the proud prestige of social distinction. Not to belong to the Hundred Club, for an agent or a salesman, was equivalent to living on the other side of the railroad tracks. If one did not get in, if one could not reach high enough to make it, he faded quickly from the picture, his fellows spoke of him infrequently. When someone said, "What's Bob Klutz doing now?" the answers would be sparse and definitely vague, and, in course of time, Bob Klutz would be spoken of no more. He would fade out in oblivion. He was "no longer with the Company."

Now, the purpose and the meaning of the Hundred Club was this. Each agent and each salesman in the company, of no matter what position or what rank, had what was called a "quota"—that is to say, a certain fixed amount of business which was established as the normal average of his district and capacity. A man's quota differed according to the size of his territory, its wealth, its business, and his own experience and potentiality. If he was a district agent, his personal quota would be higher than that of a mere salesman in a district. One man's quota would be sixty, another's eighty, another's ninety or one hundred. Each of these men, however, no matter how small or large his quota might be, was eligible for membership in the Hundred Club, provided he could average 100 percent of his quota—hence the name. If he averaged more, if he got 120 percent of his quota, or 150 percent, or 200 percent, there were appropriate honors and rewards, not only of a social but of a financial nature. One could be high up in the Hundred Club or low down in the Hundred Club: it had almost as many degrees of honor and of merit as the great Masonic order. But of one thing, one could be certain: one must belong to the Hundred Club if one wanted to continue to belong to "the Company."

The unit of the quota system was "the point." If a salesman or an agent stated that his personal quota was eighty, it was understood that his quota was eighty points a month, that this was the desired goal, the average, toward which he should strive, which he should not fall below, and which, if possible, he should try to better. If a salesman's quota was eighty points a month, and he averaged eighty points a month throughout the year, he became automatically a member of the Hundred Club. And if he surpassed this quota, he received distinction, promotion, and reward in the Hundred Club, in proportion to the degree of his increase. The unit of the point itself was fixed at forty dollars. Therefore, if a salesman's quota was eighty points a month and he achieved it, he must sell the products of the Federal Weight, Scale & Computing Co. to the amount of more than three thousand dollars every month, and almost forty thousand dollars in the year.

The rewards were high. A salesman's commission averaged from 15 to 20 percent of his total sales; an agent's, from 20 to 25 percent, in addition to the bonuses he could earn by achieving or surpassing his full quota. Thus, it was entirely possible for an ordinary salesman in an average district to earn from six to eight thousand dollars a year, and for an agent to earn from twelve to fifteen thousand dollars, and even more if his district was an exceptionally good one.

So far, so good. The rewards, it is now apparent, were high, the inducements great. Where does the iron hand come in? It came in in many devious and subtle ways, of which the principal and most direct was this: once a man's quota had been fixed at any given point, the Company did not reduce it. On the contrary, if a salesman's quota was eighty points in any given year and he achieved it, he must be prepared at the beginning of the new year to find that his quota had been increased to ninety points. In other words, the plums were there, but always, year by year, upon a somewhat higher bough. "June Was the Greatest Month

in Federal History"—so read the gigantic posters which the Company was constantly sending out to all its district offices—"*Make July a Greater One!* The Market's There, Mr. Agent, the Rest Is Up to You," etc.

In other words, this practice as applied to salesmanship resembled closely the one that has since been known in the cotton mills as the stretch-out system. June was the greatest month in federal history, but July must be a bigger one, and one must never look back on forgotten Junes with satisfaction. One must go on and upward constantly, the race was to the swift. The pace was ever faster and the road more steep.

The result of this on plain humanity may be inferred. It was shocking and revolting. If the spectacle of the average federal man at work was an alarming one, the spectacle of that same man at play was simply tragic. No more devastating comment could be made on the merits of that vaunted system, which indeed in its essence was the vaunted system at that time of all business, of all America, than the astounding picture of the assembled cohorts of the Hundred Club gathered together in their yearly congress for a "Week of Play." For, be it known, one of the chief rewards of membership in this distinguished body, in addition to the bonuses and social distinctions, was a kind of grandiose yearly outing which lasted for a week and which was conducted "at the Company's expense." These yearly excursions of the fortunate group took various forms, but they were conducted on a lavish scale. The meeting place would be in New York, or in Philadelphia, or in Washington; sometimes the pleasure trip was to Bermuda, sometimes to Havana, sometimes across the continent to California and back again, sometimes to Florida, to the tropic opulence of Miami and Palm Beach; but wherever the voyage led, whatever the scheme might be, it was always grandiose, no expense was spared, everything was done on the grand scale, and the Company—the immortal Company, the paternal, noble, and great-hearted Company—"paid for everything."

If the journey was to be by sea, to Bermuda or to Cuba's shores, the Company chartered a transatlantic liner—one of the smaller but luxurious twenty-thousand tonners of the Cunard, the German Lloyd, or the Holland-American lines. From this time on, the Hundred Club was given a free sweep. The ship was theirs and all the minions of the ship were theirs, to do their bidding. All the liquor in the world was theirs, if they could drink it. And Bermuda's coral isles, the most unlicensed privilege of gay Havana. For one short week, for one brief gaudy week of riot, everything on earth was theirs that money could buy or that the Company could command. It was theirs for the asking—and the Company paid for all.

It was, as we have said, a tragic spectacle: the spectacle of twelve or fifteen hundred men, for on these pilgrimages, by general consent, women—or their wives at any rate—were disbarred—the spectacle of twelve or fifteen hundred men, Americans, of middle years, in the third decade of this century, exhausted, overwrought, their nerves frayed down and stretched to breaking point, met from all quarters of the continent "at the Company's expense" upon a greyhound of the sea for one wild week of pleasure. That spectacle had in its essential elements connotations of such general and tragic force in its relation and its reference to the entire scheme of things and the plan of life that had produced it that a thoughtful Martian, had he been vouchsafed but thirty minutes on this earth and could he have spent those thirty minutes on one of the crack liners that bore the Hundred Club to tropic shores, might have formed conclusions about the life of this tormented little cinder where we live that would have made him sorrowful that he had ever come and eager for the moment when his thirty-minute sojourn would be ended.

III

IT was a few minutes before one o'clock when Joe entered his brother's office. The outer sales room, with its glittering stock of weights, scales, and computing machines, imposingly arranged on walnut pedestals, was deserted. From the little partitioned space behind, which served Jim as an office, he heard the sound of voices.

He recognized Jim's voice—low, grave, and hesitant, deeply troubled—at once. The other voice he had never heard before.

But as he heard that voice, he began to tremble and grow white about the lips. For that voice was a foul insult to human life, an ugly sneer whipped across the face of decent humanity, and as it came to him that this voice, these words were being used against his brother, he had a sudden blind feeling of murder in his heart.

And what was, in the midst of this horror, so perplexing and so troubling, was that this devil's voice had in it as well a curiously human note, as of someone he had known.

Then it came to him in a flash—it was Merrit speaking. The owner of that voice, incredible as it seemed, was none other than that plump, well-kept, jolly looking man, who had always been so full of cheerful and good-hearted spirits every time he had seen him.

Now, behind that evil little partition of glazed glass and varnished wood, this man's voice had suddenly become fiendish. It was inconceivable and, as Joe listened, he grew sick with horror, as a man does in some awful nightmare when suddenly he envisions someone familiar doing some perverse and abominable act. And what was most dreadful of all was the voice of his brother, humble, low, submissive, modestly entreating. He could hear Merrit's voice cutting across the air like a gob of rasping phlegm, and then Jim's low voice—gentle, hesitant, deeply troubled—coming in from time to time by way of answer.

"Well, what's the matter? Don't you want the job?"

"Why—why, yes, you know I do, Bob," and Jim's voice lifted a little in a troubled and protesting laugh.

"What's the matter that you're not getting the business?"

"Why—why . . ." Again the troubled and protesting little laugh. "I *thought* I was . . . !"

"Well, you're not!" That rasping voice fell harsh upon the air with the brutal nakedness of a knife. "This district ought to deliver 30 percent more business than you're getting from it, and the Company is going to have it, too—or *else!* You deliver or you go right out upon your can! See? The Company doesn't give a damn about you. It's after the business. You've been around a long time, but you don't mean a damn bit more to the Company than anybody else. And you know what's happened to a lot of other guys who got to feeling they were too big for their job, don't you?"

"Why—why, yes, Bob. . . ." Again the troubled and protesting laugh. "But—honestly, I never thought. . . ."

"We don't give a damn what you never thought!" the brutal voice ripped in. "I've given you fair warning now. You get the business or out you go!"

Merrit came out of the little partition-cage into the cleaner light of the outer room. When he saw Joe, he looked startled for a moment. Then he was instantly transformed. His plump and ruddy face was instantly wreathed in smiles, he cried out in a hearty tone: "Well, well, well! Look who's here! If it's not the old boy himself!"

He shook hands with Joe, and as he did so, turned and winked humorously at Jim, in the manner of older men when they are carrying on a little bantering by-play in the presence of a younger one.

"Jim, I believe he gets better-looking every time I see him. Has he broken any hearts yet?"

Jim tried to smile, gray-faced and haggard.

"I hear you're burning them up in the big town," said Merrit, turning to the younger man. "Great stuff, son, we're proud of you."

And with another friendly pressure of the hand, he turned away with an air of jaunty readiness, picked up his hat, and said cheerfully: "Well, what d'ya say, folks? Didn't I hear somebody say something about one of the madam's famous meals, out at the old homestead. Well, you can't hurt my feelings. I'm ready if you are. Let's go."

And smiling, ruddy, plump, cheerful, a perverted picture of amiable good-will to all the world, he sauntered through the door. And for a moment the two brothers just stood there looking at each other, drawn and haggard, with a bewildered expression in their eyes.

In Jim's decent eyes, also, there was a look of shame. In a moment, with that instinct for loyalty which was one of the roots of his soul, he said: "Bob's a good fellow. . . . You . . . you see, he's got to do these things. . . . He's . . . he's with the Company."

Joe didn't say anything. He couldn't. He had just found out something about life he hadn't known before.

And it was all so strange, so different from what he thought it would be.

Words for Federico Garcia Lorca

By Rafael Alberti

THESE are the first words I've written about you since your death, Federico, since that crime for which there are no words committed against you in your own Granada. Although these few lines are intended as a prologue to your *Gypsy Ballads* (*Romancero Gitano*), they are written for you, sent to you, speaking to you through the hearts of the Spanish people who will read them, and who continue to learn your poems by heart.

I remember now the first day of our friendship, in the little garden of the Student House in Madrid, in October 1924. You had just come back from Granada, from Fuente Vaqueros, and you brought with you the first ballad for your book:

Green as I would have you green.
Green wind. Green branches . . .

I heard you read it for the first time. Your best ballad. Without doubt, the best in present-day Spanish poetry. Your "green wind" struck us all, leaving its echo in our ears. Even now, after thirteen years, it continues to sound through the newest branches of our poetry.

Juan Ramón Jiménez, from whom you learned so much, as all of us have learned, created in his *Arias Tristes* the lyric ballad, strange, musical, unforgettable. You, with your "Romance Sonambulo," invented the dramatic form, full of secret chills and mysterious blood-streams. *La Tierra de Alvargonzález* by Antonio Machado is a narrative romance, a terrible Castillian tale put into poetry. It can be told as a story. The happenings in the "Romance Sonambulo" and other poems to be found in your *Romancero Gitano* cannot be recounted. They elude all the efforts of the story-teller. You, on the foundations of the ancient Spanish form of the romance, along with Juan Ramón and Machado, created another style, strange and strong, at once both a support and a crown for the old Castillian tradition.

Then the war came. The people and the poets of our land wrote ballads. In ten months of warfare, nearly a thousand have been collected. You—and you are the greater for it—seem to have influenced almost all of them. Your voice, hidden under other voices, is heard in our struggle. But that which speaks to us the loudest is your blood. It cries out with all its strength, and rises like an immense fist, clenched in accusation and in protest. Nobody wants to believe it. It's impossible. Nobody feels that you are dead. We can't imagine you

standing in front of a firing squad. They took you out at dawn. Some say to a cemetery. Others, on a road. The truth is . . . but can anyone speak the truth about this? That's how it is.

With their patent leather souls
they come down the road . . .

Who could have warned you that these same civil guards of your poems would one day kill you at dawn on the deserted outskirts of your own Granada? That's how it was! That death wasn't yours.

I was on the island of Ibiza on that eighteenth of July when the insurrection broke it. The civil guards came to look for me. I fled. For seventeen days I wandered in the mountains. Rainer Maria Rilke says that some people die with the death of others, not with their own death that properly belongs to them. It was your death that should have been mine. You were executed. I escaped. But your blood is still fresh, and will be for a long time.

The editions of your *Romancero Gitano* increase. Your name and your memory take root in Spain, in the very heart of our land. Let no one try to transplant those roots. The earth itself where they penetrate would not consent. It would burst into flames, into shot and shell, and scorch the hands of those who try to uproot you. The Spanish Falangists, your assassins, attempt villainously now to take advantage of your glory, riddled by the bullets of their own guns. They want to make of you, falsely, the poet of imperial Spain—Mussolini's poor imperial Spain! Let them try! In their shamelessness your executioners seem to forget that your name and your poetry continue to march, now and forever, on the lips of the fighting people in the ranks of Spain's anti-fascist forces. Each poem of yours we recite echoes like a powerful accusation against your assassins.

We remember. We shall remember. We can't forget. We recognize the faces of those who would expose you, standing your body on foot again to help them continue the terrible farce of the most stupid and horrible of crimes committed in this war. But we will not consent to it. They will fail. We will keep your hands clean—we who were your friends and fellow-poets, Luis Cernuda, Manuel Altolaguirre, Emilio Prados, Vincente Aleixandre, Pablo Neruda, Miguel Hernández, myself. With the same sad and magnificent people of your poems, we will guard your memory, your constant presence, and celebrate your name with the fervor that the poets of old held toward the young Garcilaso de la Vega who rode without a helmet against the ranks of the enemy and died, honored alike for his bravery and his songs.

Five Poems by Federico Garcia Lorca

TRANSLATED BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Ballad of One Doomed

Loneliness without end!
The little eyes of my body
and the big eyes of my horse
never close at night
nor look the other way
where sleep like three boats
tranquilly disappears
in the distance.
Instead, shields of wakefulness,
my eyes, clean and hard,
look toward a north of metals
and of cliffs
where my veinless body
consults frozen cards.
Heavy water-oxen charge
boys who bathe in the moons
of their waving horns.
And the hammers sing
on the somnambulous anvils
of the insomnia of the horseman,
and the insomnia of the horse.

The twenty-fifth of June
they said to Amargo,
  Now you can cut if you wish
  the oleanders in your courtyard.
  Paint a cross on the door
  and put your name beneath it,
  for hemlock and nettle
  shall take root in your side,
  and the waters of wet lime
  eat at your shoe-leather
  at night in the dark
  in the mountains of magnet
  where water-oxen drink
  of the dreaming reeds.
  Ask for lights and bells.
  Learn to cross your hands
  and love the cold air
  of metals and of cliffs
  because within two months
  you'll lie down shrouded.
Santiago moves his starry
sword in the air.
Heavy with silence, behind him
the bent sky flows.
The twenty-fifth of June
Amargo opened his eyes
and the twenty-fifth of August
he lay down to close them.
Men came down the street
to look upon the marked one
who hung on the wall
his loneliness without end.
And the impeccable sheet
with its hard Roman accent
gave death a balance
by the straightness
of its folds.

The Faithless Wife

I took her to the river
thinking she was single,
but she had a husband.

It was the night of Santiago
and almost because I'd promised.
They put out the street lights
and lit up the crickets.
At the farthest corners
I touched her sleeping breasts
and they opened for me
quickly like bouquets of hyacinths.
The starch of her underskirts
rustled in my ears
like a piece of silk
slit by ten knives.
With no silvery light on their crowns
the trees have grown bigger
while a horizon of dogs bark
off by the river.

Beyond the brambles,
the rushes and the hawthornes,

beneath their mat of hair
I made a hole on the slippery bank.
I took off my tie.
She took off her dress.
I, my belt with the pistol.
She, the four parts of her bodice.
Neither lilies nor snail shells
have such lovely skin,
nor do the crystals of the moon
shine with such a light.
Half full of fire
and half full of cold,
her thighs slip away from me
like frightened fish.

That night ran off
down the best of roads
on a mother-of-pearl colt
with no bridle and no stirrups.
Being a man, I can't tell you
the things that she told me.
The light of understanding
has made me very careful.
Soiled with kisses and sand
I took her from the river
while the swords of the lilies
battled with the air.

I acted like the true
gypsy that I am,
and gave her a present of a work-box
of straw-colored satin,
but I didn't want to love her
because, being married,
she told me she was single
when I took her to the river.

The Gypsy Nun

Silence of lime and myrtle.
Mallow among the herbs.
The nun embroiders gilliflowers
on a straw-colored cloth.
Seven rainbow birds
fly through gray spider webs.
The church groans in the distance
like a bear on its back.
How well she embroiders!
With what grace!
On the straw-colored cloth
she puts flowers of her fancy.
What a sunflower!
What magnolias of spangles and ribbons!
What saffron and what moons
on the cloth for the mass!
Five grapefruits sweeten
in a nearby kitchen.
The five wounds of Christ
cut in Almeria.
In the eyes of the nun
two horsemen gallop.
A far-off final rumor
tears open her shirt-front,
and at the sight of clouds and mountains
in the distant stillness
her heart of sweet herbs and sugar
breaks. Oh!
What a steep plain
with twenty suns above!
What rivers stand on tiptoe
to glimpse her fantasies.
But she keeps on with her flowers
while the light in the breeze
plays a game of chess
at her high grilled window.

The Arrest of Antoñito El Camborio on the Road to Seville

Antonio Torres Heredia,
son and grandson of Camborios,
starts out for Seville to see the bull fights
with a dry reed for a cane.
Dark as a copper-colored moon,
he walks slowly and proudly.
His oily curls fall shining
into his eyes.
Half way down the road
he starts cutting round lemons
and throwing them in the water
until the water turns all golden.
And half way down the road
under the branches of an oak,
the Civil Guards on duty
overtake him elbow to elbow.

The day passes slowly.
The afternoon hangs on one shoulder
and sweeps its bull-fighter's cape
over the sea and over the streams.
The olive groves await
the night of Capricorn,
while a little breeze on horseback
jumps over the hills of lead.
Antonio Torres Heredia,
son and grandson of Camborios,
walks without his reed of a cane
between the five guards
in their three-cornered hats.

Antonio, who are you?
If you were really named Camborio
you'd have made a fountain
of blood with five streams.
You're neither legitimate Camborio
nor anybody else's son.
The gypsies are gone
who used to wander the hills alone.
Their old knives shiver
in the dust.

At nine o'clock at night
they took him to the jail,
while the Civil Guards
drank lemonade.
At nine o'clock at night
they locked up the jail,
while the sky shone brightly
like the croup of a colt.

Death of Antoñito El Camborio

Voices of death are heard
on the Guadalquivir.
Ancient voices drawing near
like the voices of male carnations.
He attacked their shoes
with the bite of a wild boar.
In the fight he leaped
like a soapy dolphin.
He bathed his crimson tie
with enemy blood,
but there were four daggers
so he had to go down.
When the stars with knives
attacked the gray water,
when the young bulls dreamed
veronicas of gilliflowers,
voices of death were heard
on the Guadalquivir.

Antonio Torres Heredia,
Camborio of the tough mane,
dark as a green moon,
voice of male carnation:
Who took your life
near the Guadalquivir?
  My four cousins, the Heredias,
  sons of Benameji.
  What they didn't envy in others,
  they always envied in me:
  my red-brown shoes,
  my medallions of ivory,
  and my skin that's kneaded
  of olives and jasmine.
Ah, Antoñito el Camborio,
worthy of an empress!
Put your mind on the Virgin—
you're about to die.
  Ah, Federico Garcia,
  call the Civil Guards.
  My body is all broken
  like a stalk of grain.

Three spurts of blood there were
and he died in profile.
A piece of live money
that can never be repeated.
A withered angel placed
his head on a cushion.
Others, weary of shame,
lighted a candle.
And when the four cousins
got home to Benameji,
the voices of death were quiet
on the Guadalquivir.

When Poets Stood Alone

By Dorothy Van Ghent

> He stood at last by God's help and the police;
> But he remembered the time when he stood alone.
> —WALLACE STEVENS: *Anglais mort à Florence.*

THE basic shift from an individualist to a corporate society, which is reflected in every present-day activity and in almost every present-day state of mind, has resulted in a fairly complete discrediting of recent literary tradition. The movement is characterized by volition and consciousness. There is talk of new orientation, of "adjustment," and so forth. Seminars argue on how to embrace the masses in poetry and on how to accommodate the machine. Poetry circles in writers' congresses discuss the difficulties of embodying social significance in the personal lyric. Radical changes in society and accepted philosophy urge similarly radical changes in literature, so much so that we forget to protect ourselves from assuming that literature begins with us.

But despite all this consciousness, there is little analysis of, or perhaps it would be better to say little interest in, the real character of recent traditions, that is, their real character aside from gross philosophical implications. The philosophical implications in the grand sense have been repudiated as effete. And as so often happens when the bath is thrown out, the baby went with it. Now the baby in this case happened to have been a renaissance, and this is unfortunate for us, for a renaissance ought to be something in an America. It ought to be (to change the baby to a dog) one little dog whom we might know and who might know us, and if we have to run with shorn skirts out of earshot of his bark, the time seems awfully long before we can again adjust to our nudities. The nudities to which we must adjust without benefit of tradition are mainly industrialism and social collectivity.

Why without benefit of tradition? Because, so our philosophy shows us, the writers of 1911-29 owed their felicities to the opposites of these facts, to agrarian culture and to individualism; and as social contradictions wore on, the attitudes assumed to be basic to their art became untenable, both for them and for us.

Confining our attention to poetry alone, we find, however, two things that are very curious and not very persuasive about this shift in values. The first is that the "art" of these writers—an ambiguous distinction, of course, and one that must be clarified later—cannot be so identified with whatever effete philosophies they may have held, any more than the baby can be identified with the bathtub. And the second is that there has been a real continuity between certain aspects of the tradition of 1911-29 and our own practice, but that this continuity has been of the most unfortunate character. In other words, where there should have been retention there has been discard, and where there should have been discard there has been retention. All this argues a real lack of literary consciousness. So dominant has been our social and philosophical consciousness, and so abstract, that we have walked right over the matter on which we should exercise ourselves.

Observed from the point of view of philosophy in the gross sense, or from the point of view, in less intellectual poetry, of temperamental bias, the shift from an individualist to a corporate scheme of things and from an agrarian to an industrial culture is very clearly reflected in the poetry of the recent period. Therefore an attempt will be made in the first part of this paper to trace out briefly the features which seem to characterize it. Nevertheless one ought to bear in mind the fact that such a picture is confined to main philosophical aspects and that other aspects lie obscured—even other philosophical aspects, since philosophy is embedded as much in a tenderness for red wheelbarrows as in devotion to death or to the church. The attempt is made merely in order to give the devil his due, since there must be a certain validity in our repudiation of that part of the tradition which is useless to us. It will then be possible to reconstruct those elements which it would be to our disadvantage to lose.

To start at the beginning, the Imagist movement was the touchstone of the poetic renaissance, and the one unadulterated and universally acknowledged Imagist was H.D. In her poetry the hard, the clear, the dehumanized quality of T. E. Hulme's *Third Reich* stood forth with precision. Flowers, stones, and the Greeks. But H.D., as she is described by Amy Lowell, was very busy "flinging herself bravely upon the spears of her reactions": in other words, intense individualism. And because of the basic shift in social attitudes, Imagism of the kind represented by H.D. is dead.

Again, the godfather of all movements was Ezra Pound. From a gross philosophical point of view Mr. Pound's basic shift was Heraclitus: seeing nothing but literature as an antidote to flux, he took flux to his bosom and nursed it on literature: whence the *Cantos* with their disconcerting jumping-around. Chaos, then, in Pound, and chaos is not "facts" or good for us. For Eliot, the other major innovator of the renaissance, the church, and neither is the church facts. For Marianne Moore, "not silence but restraint" and the privilege of being superior people—which again is not the facts of a corporate society. For Wallace Stevens, an increasing sadness and even anguish, an increasing sense that the facts of our present society are the doom of imagination, an increasing fear, loneliness (aloneness having been lost), and preoccupation with the concept of decadence.

As for Sandburg and Frost, renaissance personalities of a peculiarly noble and peculiarly American cast, these more than others are associated with agrarian

culture, Frost with apple harvests and the ache of ladder rungs against the instep, Sandburg with Kansas cornfields and more or less prairified, lone-wolf, and anarchistic figures. Frost's implied theme of emotional starvation, treated not with protest, but accepted with little questioning as satisfactory raw material for poetry, limits his own territory and also cuts that territory off from a generation with other ideas about facts. Sandburg's agrarianism, however, was never exclusive, for Chicago stood in the middle of it. Therefore, Sandburg, almost alone of the older generation, may be said to have adjusted to the bleak furor of industry. But this description of an "adjustment" in his case is a somewhat strained picture of it. At this point one may say merely that to ascribe an "adjustment" to any particular writer is to indicate that he has been able to fit the cloak of former method and point of view around the awkwardly bulging body of new facts. But everyone is always adjusting; the movement is liquid and linear, not cataclysmic and ponderous; and it is just this idea of unusual adjustment, contrary to what does or ought to happen in poetry, that would cut us off from the values of the only tradition we have—and a very good tradition at that. But more of that later.

In a catalogue of shifts, William Carlos Williams ought probably to have gone up near the top, with the early Imagists. Again, however, as in the case of Sandburg, it is difficult to treat him as a real shifter, or rather, shiftee. Williams is a born outsider, a kind of foreign observer, and also, to speak paradoxically, a born member of the social complex. "Insideness," the personal side of reaction to experience, is very minor or almost absent in his poetry, for his poetry presents experience rather than the personal Dr. Williams; therefore, being an outsider rather than an insider, he is a collective person by nature, for he is not thwarted by an incurable I inside opposing itself to the social manifests about him. This is evidently not a case of adjustment, for Williams is as he always was.

And the catalogue, for all practical purposes, ends here. What may be inferred from it? Following the argument which was set in motion above, liquidation in most cases, adjustment in a few cases, and for us nothing but the facts of life all afresh. Obviously, we do not need to start from new facts, but it may be well to consider first exactly what it is about the tradition that we have decided to call quits on. And that is its gross philosophical implications. Sensitivity for its own sake as in Imagism, or at least in the Imagist *par excellence,* H.D., philosophy of flux and chaos in Pound, religious escape in Eliot, the snobbism of privileged emotions in Moore, doubt and implicit decadence in Stevens, acceptance of emotional barriers in Frost. But poetry is not always the victim of an outgrown or even a wrong-headed philosophy. We do not reproach Dante because he was a monarchist. We do not cease to read Emily Dickinson because she believed in God. There are in poetry, if not acceptable ways of thinking, then ways of looking and of speaking. The point is that though poets do start from the facts and have always done so, they are in a pretty pitiful position if they can't make use of a rich and fertile literary tradition which is the work of their recent predecessors, if they can't take a renaissance when it is handed to them.

IT WOULD therefore be much to our purpose if we should review our heritage from the point of view of ways of looking and speaking, for certainly, given our new facts and new philosophy, we haven't got the hang of how to look at the thing or how to express it. Witness the confusion, the blur and choppiness, both morally and plastically, of our best-intentioned poetry. Clues of this kind are what a literary tradition should provide, especially a tradition so close to us and one so fresh, vigorous, and non-derivative in its time. Curiously, at the source, the tradition resembles nothing so much as the program outlined in 1798 by Wordsworth, in his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads.* Wordsworth's petty fallacies and his archaic rationalizations are mere upholstery; the pith of the matter is the same. The use of a contemporary idiom, clarity and accuracy of presentation, freedom in choice of subject. Another tenet of the Imagists is at least implicit in Wordsworth's preface, and that is freedom of cadence; the use of *vers libre,* carried to the extreme of prose statement in Marianne Moore and often in Williams, finds an awakened ear in Wordsworth's long analysis and commendation of prose rhythms in poetry. Of course, comparison of the Imagist manifesto with Wordsworth's preface is nothing new; it was dug up at the start to discredit the movement, since nothing could be more inept than to associate one's taste with "The Idiot Boy" and "Goody Blake and Harry Gill." But the Imagists did not pose as innovators; they pointed out that their program consisted in the traditional essentials of poetry. Incidentally, it is also unfair to them to derive their practice from the too-long-admired philosophical crochets of T. E. Hulme. A structure like Hulme's, so scandalously anachronistic and figmentary, could do nothing more than provide an apologetic for H.D. after she had happened.

And what then? Unfortunately, it was H.D. herself who came practically to represent the movement. One tends to forget that there were anything but expatriates attached to it, to forget that Sandburg's poetry grows out of the same basic program (and not alone, God forbid, the fog coming on little cat feet), that Frost's does also, that the valuable precision and objectivity of Miss Moore cannot be dissociated from it, that William Carlos Williams was one of the first signers and that he writes much the same kind of poetry today.

But it may be said that the Williams-Moore-Sandburg outfit are not "contemporary," that they are too narrow (Williams and Moore) to provide intellectual stimulus to the proletariat, or too diffuse (Sandburg) to be poetic and too sentimental to be safe. This is such a shabby notion that one hates to make note of it. On the other hand, not all poets of the past generation have had as little real influence as these. The two who have done most to model the contemporary tone in poetry are Eliot and Pound, and it is interesting to observe along just what lines this continuity of tradition has followed. To account for it on the one hand, and to account on the other hand for the neglect of the

Williams-Moore-Sandburg combination of qualities, one has to ascertain first what it was in Eliot and Pound that attracted followers and how this differed from the characteristics of the other group. For one must remember that, in the beginning, the program on all sides was pretty similar. Where did the cleavage happen?

In the case of Eliot, the difference is clear. Though Eliot's own talent is original and eminent, and though he cannot be convicted of the faults of his imitators, nevertheless that aspect of his work which has been a determinant influence in contemporary writing is a kind of rhetoric. With Eliot himself it is not so much rhetoric as idiom; his great gift is his ability to invent idiom which, once invented, seems as natural for the world at large to use as bathtubs or radios. But since he is a learned man, and since also he holds to views which have behind them the dimly glittering wealth of centuries of esotericism, his way of speaking has become for us all mixed up with his learning. Critics are gloved cavaliers when they come at him; his idiom is palpably echoed by Tate and Blackmur; atheistic writers show as much spiritual conceit in the use of his word "heresy" for critical analysis as if it came direct and devout to them from the church fathers. Eliot stands in high regard even with the young proletarians who deplore his essential views. And all this means in practice is that Eliot's influence on poetry has been almost completely a verbal influence. The most flagrant examples occur in the poetry of Allen Tate, where Eliot's rhetoric of irony is borrowed almost bodily to convey not the slightest iota of meaning. It must still be kept in mind that the "American renaissance" was not primarily a verbal renaissance, that its interest in language was not for the sake of language but for the sake of the clear and unencumbered presentation of objects, or, as they were called, images.

Pound's case is a little ambiguous. Most vigorous sponsor of the new program, which had to do essentially with clear objective presentation, he, too, was inventor of a powerful idiom. Pound never really deviated from the program; where the *Cantos* seem scrambled, it is Pound's Heraclitean philosophy which does the scrambling, whereas each ideographic "fact"-object-or-image in the *Cantos* is hard and clear in outline. In Pound, the ideographic method is the method of Imagism, but it is not this method—which is the important thing about Pound—and has had an influence on later poetry, but rather the way Pound puts his ideograms together; in other words, his influence generally has been an influence on syntax and grammar, and, in most hopeless cases, an influence actually on punctuation alone.

One of his most notable pupils has been Archibald MacLeish; the long "rhythms" of *Conquistador* are Pound-ish rhythms only by virtue of the fact that the lines so often start with "and," that the images are linked by "and" rather than separated into independent syntactical units, and that asterisks and dots are used to supply other connections—usually connections between something and nothing, whereas in Pound this lax kind of trail-off has the real physical significance of a voice which has got tired of talking or of an interruption in conversation. A more obscure and youthful relation is Muriel Rukeyser. Even more than with MacLeish the superficiality of the influence is evident: Pound's vigor has become plain roughness, his ideographic method has become a wholesale jumbling together of any and every vague undefined element.

Now, therefore, to repeat, what has happened to the American renaissance as seen through Ezra Pound is again a transformation into wholly verbal interests. Objectivity and clarity and "contemporary idiom" were the main tenets of the early program. It is as though this program had never been. For there is as yet almost no objectivity or clarity in poetry aside from that of the older generation who themselves participated in the American renaissance. Neither is there actually much contemporary idiom: this may be objected to, but idiom as it is meant here is something other than the lifting of the language of the cocktail bar or the waterfront or the machine-shop into a page of stuff that looks like verse.

Along these same lines, and before returning to that other aspect of the American tradition which might profitably be employed, one notes the revival of certain types of poetry, revivals which have almost all been in the shape of poets whose most striking qualities are verbal qualities. Foremost among them is Gerard Manley Hopkins. To denigrate Hopkins's influence is not to denigrate Hopkins, for a poet is not at the mercy of his imitators. But certainly it is Hopkins's extraordinary shifts with language, combined with the fact, unromantic for us, that he was so long unappreciated, which constitute his importance for poets today. Almost no one would allow that the "Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" was a wretched poem, which it is. Hopkinsisms are among the paramount types of contemporary poetic usages. Another poet who is more a part of our background but whose influence as it appears today is also largely verbal is Emily Dickinson; curiously, we have got at her through the medium of W. H. Auden, who erected her accidental felicities of quaintness into a system. Another is John Donne. All of these are minor poets, and all are admired for qualities which have nothing to do with our contemporary "facts," for qualities which have little to do with their own real importance. The point here is that the verbal influence which they have exerted is one which is bad for poetry, and bad most of all for a generation of poets whose desire is to get down to the brass tacks of the real world.

So much then for survivals of a tradition, survivals which have been of an unfortunate type. So far they have been looked upon as verbal, but verbal qualities are also qualities of mind, at least reflect mental dispositions. This particular mental disposition which they reflect is hard to put the finger on, precisely because it is a disposition for ambiguity. Where language is used for the sake of language, what the language *says* is a slipshod unknown, and for a long time we have been habitually thrilled by the unknownness of unknowns. The habit goes far back into the romantic revival. In fairly recent times it has been dressed up to fit the mechanical age, most especially by Paul Valéry, who, through a trick of austerity, conferred

on a horrendous something he called an invariable (changeless element, unique and monotonous element, naked ego, etc., etc.) all the scientific plausibility of a center of gravity. Now, as to contemporary poetry, the statement is this: that since clear objective presentation is rare indeed, and since the most remarkable thing about it is its verbal thrillers, what the poetry has to say is simply an unknown. From the most distant parts and disparate parties we find "impossibly tremoring lakes" (in a poem by a "proletarian") and "improbable mists" (in a poem by a Southern Agrarian). Here then is a mode of expression used in the most catholic manner by poets of diverse political faiths. Neither contains a grain of sense: both have a spurious poetic allure arising from the unknown quality of what lies beyond the "improbable" and the "impossible." There is something fascinating about all this. It is the fascination of decadence.

I imagine that what critics who deplore the continuation of the recent tradition find objectionable in the practice of its epigones is represented to some degree by the analysis given above. For though most contemporary poets are Marxists, and though innumerable lines may be dug up in proof of their dialectical approach to political history—and this has already been done in the recent objections and counter-objections among reviewers of and contributors to *New Letters in America*—yet the *sine qua non* of Marxist dialectics is conspicuous by its absence in contemporary poetry, and that is materialism. And an implicit materialism is necessary not only in poetry which would represent this social epoch; materialism is implicit in all poetry that may be called good.

But these aspects are not the essence of the tradition. There could be no better exercise at getting at its essence than by a study of the poetry of Sandburg, Williams, and Moore, poets whose work has been underestimated and neglected while we have taken unto ourselves a portentous verbal canopy. It is, of course, a little shocking to suggest that the poetry of Marianne Moore, this poetic Audubon of jerboas and Egyptian pulled glass bottles, may have more to do with "social reconstruction" than the poems one reads nowadays about strikers and the fascist threat. The intention here is to point out the value of Miss Moore's approach, as distinguished from that of younger poets who have ignored or deliberately repudiated the traditions of her generation. The value lies in the approach, as well of Williams and of Sandburg as of Miss Moore, and no large claims of greatness are made in the favor of these poets. Distinct, however, is the difference of attitude between them and our own contemporaries, and obvious is the need for reassuming the tradition which they represent.

WHY obvious? Well, what are the "facts" which the writers of today have to face? In large, they are an industrial culture as against an agrarian culture, and social collectivity as against cultural individualism. Broken down, these mean, among other things, the following: first and foremost a *common* ground for communication. Collectivity means things held in common, with masses of people functioning in a common activity, just as individualism means things held apart. What, in poetry as in life, are those things which may be held in common? They are the material things, which, when held in common, imply a common mode of conceptualism; just as things held apart imply disparate and exclusive modes of conceptualism, in other words, conceptual absolutes and unknowns. But how "hold" material things in poetry? Well, talk about them. Here, in Miss Moore, are jerboas, steeple-jacks, students, pelicans, nectarines, fish, monkeys, roses, elephants, cats, snakes, mongooses, etc., etc. Here, in Dr. Williams, are George the janitor, glass pitchers, white chickens, palm trees, cod heads, bulls, wallpaper, neon signs, sea-elephants, baseball pitchers, red wheelbarrows, and flowers and flowers and flowers. Here, in Carl Sandburg, are dago shovel men, Jew fish-criers, Anna Imroth, Mamie, Mag, the dynamiter, the ice handler, Chick Lorimer, Inez Milholland, Don Magregor. But it is not enough to say "talk about them." One must insist that it is "talk about *them.*"

This injunction is the essence of the American tradition in poetry, the essence of the renaissance, the essence of Imagism. The early program broached a method of handling material which endowed the *material* with importance by virtue of the clarity of its presentation. Parenthetically, this has always been the method of good poetry. The method of bad poetry is to handle material in a way which gives importance to the poet who is doing the writing, and thus the material is blurred, is no longer, actually, material. The first is the collective method. The second is the individualist method. For material that is known, *i.e.,* clearly presented, is the only thing that provides common ground between minds, is the only thing that issues in collective conceptualism or—a familiar word—"communication."

Right away, of course, enters the objection that neither Williams nor Moore are widely read and that they are considered obscure, Williams obscure with a kind of formlessness and eccentric incoherence, Moore obscure largely because her poetry must be read with more than extra pains of attention—"obscurity" lying thus in the reader's, rather than the poet's, lethargy—and also because she has voluntarily limited herself to "the less popular emotions." All right. The one case stands in the disrepute of smug privilege and superiority —not only because a lot of us have a devilish time getting close to any Egyptian pulled glass bottles or Malay water-dragons, or even to Mount Rainier, but also because the "not silence but restraint" of superior people always seems to cap the climax of any one poem, which is irksome. But no claims for greatness have been made. A minor poet, especially a contemporary minor poet, and especially a contemporary minor poet who is so annoying as to be interested only in minor emotions, in such a case the blemishes do stand up and shout. But no set of blemishes outweighs, in these cases, the positive values of objectivity and precision, for these are the virtues of great poetry and virtues we are sadly in need of.

On the side of Sandburg, who is widely read, the

apposite objection is one of diffuseness. One is inclined to say that "this is not poetry." And the case is difficult. If America as a democracy, or as a nation founded on democratic principles, differs sharply in this respect from other nations which have built up literary traditions, the process of comparing our traditions with theirs ought to yield some contrasts in the results. Sandburg's poetry provides such a contrast, and this is one reason why he forms—like Whitman—a difficult case. We have nothing to compare him with on the other side of the Atlantic, except possibly the Bible. Is it poetry or isn't it?

THIS brings into focus the most salient aspect of the recent American tradition in general, and that is its anti-literary character. The Imagist program was essentially anti-literary, just as the program of the *Lyrical Ballads* was anti-literary. The fact is always commented on in a discussion of the poetry of Williams; Marianne Moore comments on it vigorously in respect to her own poetry; and, for his very carelessness, no poet is more an exponent of the anti-literary than Carl Sandburg. Then is it poetry or isn't it? As to Sandburg, the most striking quality of his work is its oral quality; no more wonderful rhythms are to be found anywhere. Rhythm is, of course, one of the most, or the most, indispensable element of form, and no contemporary "literary" poet has achieved such rhythmic formality as Sandburg. *Vide* Allen Tate. *Vide* that formalist, Yvor Winters. Again, a rhythmic innovator of the first order is Marianne Moore. It is the quality of the rhythms in her one great poem, "The Grave," which contributes—one cannot say how much, but a large part—to the extraordinary firmness of that poem.

If, then, to return to Sandburg, we grant the beauty of rhythm in his poetry and this as a major theoretical element of form, and if the possession of organic form is one of the characters of poetry, the argument is partially settled. Which also does away with the ascription of a "fallacy of expressive form" in his case, *i.e.*, the attempt to express a big loose America by writing big loose poems; for, as has been pointed out, organic rhythm is a formal provision of a higher and rarer order than any of the iambs of the Stanford classicists or the mechanics of reason of Tennessee "reactionaries."

If, on the other hand, one must justify Sandburg as to content or "message" or whatever futile term one wishes to appropriate for the other character of poetry, it is enough to point out his theme of material or quantitative productiveness as the basis of the qualitative productiveness of the future, his faith that the America of "tall possessions" can eventually turn its energy toward the establishment of a living democracy. After all, is there anyone who has said anything more significant? Perhaps so, in cleverer ways. Taken by itself, the thing is not so profound, and perhaps that is why poets have felt they had to dress it up, to sophisticate it with patches of moral equivocation. With Sandburg only is this a palpable faith. Like Whitman's, his poetry must be read in bulk, and since we are accustomed to judging excellence by single examples rather than by total poetic personalities, we are inclined to require of him the type of literary virtuosity which infects most of the poetry of our own epoch.

Leaving, however, our apologetics for Sandburg as a poet, we must return to that phase of his work which it is pertinent for us to notice right here, namely, the same objectivity which characterized the early program of the poetic renaissance. Instead of using his material in the elegiac manner of those who write poetry in order to tout their own doldrums, he uses it in order to clarify it, to present it as itself important, to lift it from surroundings that choke and nullify it, into high singularity of meaning.

This leads directly into the curious phenomenon of a poetry which is objective, that is, whose ramifications are outward and away from the individual, and yet which is manifestly the product of a personality. "Total poetic personalities" we have said, referring to Sandburg and Whitman, for certainly in the poetry of both it is the man who is manifest. Carrying the description to the poetry of Moore and Williams, we find in each the naïve presence of the writer. Williams will point out flowers to you, or a child batting a ball, or "gigantic highschool boys ten feet tall" on an illumined signboard, but you feel you'd never have seen them if Dr. Williams himself hadn't been there in the poem to look out of the window for you. Similarly, with Marianne Moore, the very preciousness of the assorted relics that are laid out in line after line of a poem speaks definitely of the certain kind of a person so extraordinary as to have such interests. The poet is *concierge* and opens the gate and gives you a ticket. He is a docent who takes you around personally to the numbered cases and decently inserts a little information about their contents. You can't get away from him. The condition is somewhat of a paradox if one looks at it only abstractly as a combination of objectivity and private personality. It is not a paradox if one looks at it as the inevitable condition of a materialistic situation. For here is the objective material world and the poet is in it too, otherwise the world wouldn't be there for you to look at, and it wouldn't be material. Take away the poet's personality and you have, presumably, an "objective" poem, for it is sans the element of human individuality; but you have, instead, a loose uncommunicative rumination, a highly *subjective* poem, without a single cleat to Parnassus offered to the reader.

A good deal has been written, both explicitly as criticism, and implicitly as a type of attitude in poetry, against the concept of the poet as personality; all this being mainly a supercilious snub to Shelley, with his poet as *vates*, as participator in divine creation, as fashioner of the social potentialities. Most outspoken is Allen Tate, who gets his cue from Valéry. Mr. Tate puts it this way, that he, as poet, does not have any "experience"; he is merely an anonymous machine for concocting experiences for readers. Valéry, earlier, perpetrated this portable-typewriter attitude, wheels in the head that could go round and round turning out "thought" without the slightest necessary connection with the petty moral persuasions of the poet or with his environment, an "ego" as naked as a zero, as formid-

ably superior to human considerations as a center of gravity. Though the company would not appreciate such an addition to their midst, Miss Gertrude Stein expresses the same philosophical absolutism in her recent book, *Geographical History of America,* whose thesis is the non-relation of human nature and the human mind. All this is pretentious nonsense, of course, and we see it as such by the bare statement. But it is fearful to estimate the prevalence of the attitude as it is implied in poetry which is overtly social in intention. The thing is insidious. It stands in relation to poetry as fetishism of commodities stands in relation to capitalist economy. And just as it requires the strong discipline of a voluntary leadership to achieve a non-capitalist order under conditions of "capitalist encirclement," so it requires a difficult discipline to write poetry like a materialist in a mental atmosphere that is humid with Valérian hocus-pocus. Perhaps it would all work out more sensibly if actually matured personalities should appear in poetry—if poets should begin writing like men of will, as distinguished from men of good-will. The condition is the primary condition for social reconstruction in real life; it is also the primary condition for reconstruction of thought, that is, of poetry. For the sake of critical continuity, one may point out again here that the tradition of the twenties in American poetry was one, on the one hand, of materialist objectivity, and on the other hand, or concomitantly, of developed and evident personalities.

At the head of this essay a couple of lines from Wallace Stevens stand as epigraph, announcing the bafflement and despair of a person who has lost orientation in a world where matter crowds out essence, quantity engulfs quality, and mechanized institutions seem to exist solely for the purpose of overreaching themselves day after day in vulgarity and aimlessness. Wallace Stevens's theme has always had to do with the imagination as an ordering function in a disorderly world. Like Santayana, the exponent of a creative skepticism, he has found satisfaction in the plasticity of apparitions, and he has found faith in the pure animation of nature.

The man who remembers the time "when he stood alone," when the police did not have to prop him up, is remembering the time when imagination was fresh, vigorous, and vivid, when seeming and being were the same thing, when apparitions were valid by reason of their appearance, when the feeling of the animal was his right to the claim of existence. Now with the voracious encroachment of vulgar materialism, of capitalist materialism, animal feeling seems to have been swamped under an accumulation of useless goods. Goods, material goods, have piled up in huge heaps, and man, the animal, dwindles as they pile up. Similarly the imagination which was accustomed to feed on the plastic beauty of the material object is now stunned by the accumulation of useless objects, not only useless objects, but objects that are soul-destroying by the very aimlessness of their production. The poetry of Stevens, as its theme of decaying imagination becomes more overt, has also gradually lost much of the imaginative fervor it had before its subject-matter became more ideological, before its subject-matter became decadence itself.

And here comes the equation. Identifying the imagination with a materialist order that is human and naïve, he identifies the loss of personal integrity with the conditions of vulgar—that is, capitalistic—materialism; and according to this equation the more material that is aimlessly and wantonly heaped up, the fewer persons there are in the sense of persons of integrity and personality. The man who remembers the time when he stood alone is remembering the time when he could value things for what they were, intrinsically; for then he stood also as a thing among things.

And this, in its positive aspect, is the attitude represented in the poetry which has been dealt with in this paper. It is basic because it is *in* the poetry. It is not merely contingent, as are the philosophies of flux or escape which have been pointed out as conditioning our literary heritage. The poets who have been dealt with here were interested in observing the material fact, simply because that fact was interesting and beautiful in its own right. This is the human and the naïve point of view. It is the point of view of a socialist economy.

When such an attitude obtains, there can be no question of "adjustment" to novel facts—as adjustment to the new technology—no problems arising as to how to put machines, for instance, into poetry; no arguments on "regionalism" and recommendations for getting the home landscape into one's blood before attempting to put it into words; for machines, as to the method of one's observance of them, are no different from apples, landscapes no different from wheelbarrows; all are interesting and all are exterior. Is there anything, for example, in the method of W. C. Williams which makes it more difficult to handle electric signboards than primroses? Or in the method of Miss Moore which makes her less articulate in the idiom of "business documents and schoolbooks" than in that of Edmund Burke or Sir John Hawkins? Or in the method of Sandburg that makes him less perspicuous in presenting Mrs. Gabrielle Giovanitti than in presenting cowboys? No, there isn't. And to assume "adjustment" to modern conditions as necessary is to assume a stasis and an absolutism in the person who does the adjusting, for, instead of being in plastic continuity with the observed facts, he has to unbuckle a notch here and ease up a cog there in order to make room for the world in his private system.

In real life, under existing circumstances, this attitude is annulled for all practical purposes, and hence nostalgia and escapism; but in the poetry of Marxist poets it should be living and directive. The only constant limitation which makes itself felt in much of the poetry considered above is the lack of an adequate theme and hence of a mechanism for the carriage of ideas; but today the theme is given and a mechanism for ideas has evolved accordingly. What is lacking today is the materialist attitude, that is, the attitude of the dialectical materialist. And the more materialist poetry is in this sense—and it has, in our recent tradition been very much so—the more, by natural concomitancy, are there poets who are integrated personalities, men of imagination, men of will, men who "stand alone."

Pickup

By Saul Levitt

MOE SNYDER met Esther while spending a weekend with his Aunt Molly at Coney Island. He picked her up on the boardwalk at eleven o'clock with the moon high over the footprinted sands. The boardwalk was jammed. Aunt Molly was orthodox and the way she had set up supper, watching the spoons and forks and the prayer before supper, had driven him out of the house quickly. He chased up to the boardwalk, whistling a song and hoping he could pick up a girl. He was a tall, red-headed youngster with an easy smile, on the lookout for a girl, puffing at a cigarette as he pushed his way through the crowd. The beach was empty after the full, hot day of limbs twined and twined about each other on the sand. The rollers came up out of darkness far out; they came up and into sight like lightning, streaking up the sand.

He stopped for a moment near the rail, threw his cigarette out on the sand. There was a girl standing near the rail, six feet away, and Moe thought she was nice. He stared up at the moon. She was looking, too, and he sat himself on the rail, shifting his eyes between the moon and the black-haired girl until she saw him. He said, "It's a nice night," and she nodded and he said, "How about a cigarette?" "All right," she said. He got off the rail and went over and lit a cigarette for her. He suggested a walk, and they walked for a while on the boardwalk, and then Moe suggested walking on the shore along the smoothened sand, wiped clear of the million footprints by the receding tide. They went down and walked along the shore. Esther was a plump girl with sturdy legs and full hips. Her arms, free in a sleeveless blue waist, were brown; her black hair was cut short and boyish.

They went along the sand, and they sat at last on a bulkhead, watching the receding tide smash against a rough breakwater of rocks, sending spray into their faces. He put his arms around her waist, and she said she had noticed him, too, on the boardwalk and had decided he was a nice boy. "Is that so?" he said, feeling surprised and thinking that he had been the one to do all the seeing and the getting acquainted. "I'm staying out here with my cousin," she said. "I'm out here with my aunt, she's very orthodox," said Moe, "you know about dishes and everything." She laughed. "I hate that, don't you?" said Esther. "It's lousy," said Moe, "you'd think they got rid of that stuff when they left the old country, but they still hang on."

To their right rolled the Giant Wheel and the Red Devil Race and all the other amusements of the island. The neons played in blue and red and purple along the boardwalk. "What are you doing tomorrow?" asked Moe. She thought she would be down at the beach all day. "I'll be over at your place," he said.

And he met her the next day. They stayed on the beach close to one another on the crowded sand and he taught her to swim a little better, for which she was very grateful. He found himself staring at her eyes, noticing the lashes and the snub nose and the swarthiness of her cheeks, and watching her hips as she went down in a green bathing suit with a white cap on her head to take a dip in the dirty Atlantic Ocean off Coney Island.

He took her home that night to a dirty little street in Brownsville, off Pitkin Avenue, and seeing the peddlers and the crowds and the kids in the gutters, dirty and shouting, he said to her, "God, it's just like my street in the Bronx." They laughed. He went up to the Bronx in the hot, crowded train and came home to his street in the Bronx which was just like the street in Brownsville where Esther lived. He got in late, everybody was asleep, and he went to bed because he had to be up early the next day.

THE NEXT DAY he was thinking about her. At the shipping table, with an apron tied around his waist, he wrapped the dresses for shipment to Omaha, Frisco, and points east, and he whistled the way he did every day at work. He was head shipping clerk for Sandler & Son, sixteen-fifty dresses, working in a caged room with a glazed concrete floor for twenty-five dollars a week. He had a black boy for an assistant and they teamed nicely on the shipping table. They sang a duet of popular songs every day. Old Man Sandler came in forty times a day to complain about the slowness of the shipping department. They wiped their steaming heads and grinned at Old Man Sandler and went on working and singing songs. The models went sliding past the caged shipping room in negligee and they said, "Hello, Red." "Hello, kid," said Moe. At noon he went out to lunch with one of the cutters and told him about Esther.

He thought of her all afternoon in a clean and soulful way and not the way he had originally wanted to think of her. On the boardwalk on Saturday he had thought of her in one way, but now he was thinking of her in another way that he didn't like. It bothered him.

He went home to his crowded house. It was noisy at supper with the old man and the sister, Sarah, and the kid brother, Joey, all having something to say and his mother almost in tears because of the heat. They all fought over the bathroom and then over the supper. The old man couldn't stand strawberries and sour cream and said he was moving out never to come back. Sarah's boy friend called up in the drugstore across the street and she got up in the middle of her supper and ran down to answer the call. When she came up, the potatoes were cold and had to be warmed up. Little Joey was tugging at his brother's arm all through the meal, trying to tell him about a big fellow around the

corner who had beaten him up. "What do you want me to do about it?" said Moe. "Aw, go down and kill 'im," begged Joey, "go down and beat 'im up." "Leave me alone, kid," said Moe.

He wanted to think. He went up to the roof, trying hard to think about things, about Esther and the sunny week-end at Coney. There was so much noise in the house all the time, enough to drive a guy crazy. I'll take out this dame Wednesday, she works on Eighteenth.

He met her after work on Wednesday and they went to a movie. And after that he saw her regularly more or less and told her about his home, and she told him about hers, and they talked about their jobs. They did this over the hot summer, and went on trips up the Hudson and to open-air movies. He thought it was great, and gradually forgot about what he had thought in the beginning. It was funny to him that he had changed like that. Sometimes they got passionate, on the boat and in the hallway in Brooklyn when he took her home. They quarreled once or twice that fall, once he started it and once she, and each time it was because of something at home.

Sarah was getting married and getting out, and she wasn't going to give any money at home, which left it all on his twenty-five bucks and the old man's two days a week at union-scale wages. She came home one night and said, "Well, I'm glad I'm getting out of this dump and into a home of my own. God, am I happy—no more fighting." She talked like that for an hour and bawled. There was so much hate in her face Moe was bewildered. Joey stood around, his face puckered up, and asked his big brother for a dime and got it and went down. "Aren't you going to give any money when you get out?" asked Moe. "Not a nickel," said Sarah, "not a penny." "Even five dollars would help," he said. "Not a penny," said Sarah. The old man and Mrs. Snyder were out of it. He felt they were out of it, that they didn't count and couldn't help any more. It was as if he were seeing it for the first time. The old man stood to one side smoking a cigarette, and his hand puttered around his chin helplessly.

Moe went downtown to meet Esther that night, and the sight of her waiting for him, in a gray and green outfit, her swarthy face so reliant-looking, somehow helped him out of a mood. They took in a Broadway show and talked. Esther talked about the two of them doing this and that in a way which he resisted. It was as if they were to be going together for a long time. "Oh, can that 'we' stuff," he snapped, the freckles darkening on his face, and that dark feeling spreading over his insides again as it had earlier that evening when listening to Sarah. He took her home without another word.

On the way home from Brooklyn he wondered why in hell he had to be seeing a Brooklyn girl when the Bronx was full of girls. He was through with her. He'd seen her for four months now and it was enough. Nothing was coming of it anyway, and if it kept up this way he might even think of marrying the girl. He was through.

But the next day he thought of her again, she swept in hard against all of him as if she had her arms around him there in the caged little room where he worked. At noon he had to write her a note, and the next morning, and the morning after that he looked in the mail. A week later there was an answer.

She started something herself once, too, talking to him on a November evening as they walked to the station. He couldn't get it straight. She said it was so hard at home, and in the factory they timed you if you went to the toilet, and maybe they oughtn't to see each other any more. On the corner she held onto him.

"Do you think I'm trying to make you marry me, Moe, darling?" she said. "You know I'm not trying to do that."

"Well, but we could anyway," said Moe. "God, if I thought you were trying to get married and had picked on me, I would have stopped seeing you a long time ago. But what the hell, let's go down to City Hall at noon tomorrow, whaddya say, kid?"

"Are you sure, now, Moey boy," said Esther. "Are you sure you'll never, never say I made you get married?"

"I'm positive," he said. "Didn't I ask you?"

They went walking down Broadway, all the way down. Snow fell. It was the first snow of the year. They were draped in it, and it was cold on their hands and they weren't wearing gloves. They walked all the way down to Fourteenth Street in the snow, the slush forming after a while. Their feet got cold. He told her about the Monday after he met her and what the cutter had asked him, whether he was going to have an affair with her. "This is an affair all right," he said, "it's some affair, isn't it?" He left her at Fourteenth and walked all the way up to Forty-second, with his feet numb and his hands blue, admiring the skyscrapers lighted through the snow. The next day at noon they went down to City Hall and got married.

BUT THEY WANTED a honeymoon and didn't know how in hell to get it and what they were to do about their people at home who didn't know and weren't going to know until it got better for them. They had to scout around for money, too. They thought about the swell places in which you might spend a winter honeymoon—Florida, or California, or Bermuda, and had a lot of fun thinking about those places, the rates for boats and fast trains to tropical isles with pictures of mermaids on surf boards and fellows in linen suits and Panama hats.

It was winter. When they went out for a wedding supper in a restaurant on Forty-first Street it was cold. They had been looking at the magazines with the pictures of all the warm southern resorts for winter honeymoons, and they knew they couldn't do it. Somehow or other they ought to do something. The supper had been good. They stood around undecidedly on the curb, looking up at the buildings and not knowing what to do, what was the right thing to do. Florida rode in on them through the cold. They stood with their hands in each other's pockets not knowing what to do.

And when they went to Forty-second Street, he knew he was going to leave her there, let her go off to Brooklyn as if it was just a date for the evening. It put them in a temper. They weren't mad at each other, but at everything else, and yet the everything else was nothing

that they could put their hands on. They turned it on each other. They fought. He said, "Maybe it's a mistake, maybe we shouldn't have done it." "We'll get a divorce," said Esther. "Tomorrow. I don't care."

They laughed suddenly, troubled and laughing and kissing good-bye, and he went uptown and she downtown. The next day he raised twenty-five bucks in the place. Alf, the assistant, loaned him ten and one of the cutters fifteen, and he got Old Man Sandler to give him a week off on the ground that he was sick. Esther took a week off too. At home he told them he was sick; he had got a week off with pay, he was going up to Fallsburg. He didn't give a damn if they believed him or not. Little Joey said, "Give me a quarter," and he gave it to the kid brother, the while he told them that he was going up to Fallsburg and had got a week off with pay. "How nice," said Mrs. Snyder.

He met Esther at Forty-second Street outside of Liggetts. They decided, with fifty dollars between them, to spend a week at a Broadway hotel and lugged their grips around Broadway and landed at last in a hotel off Forty-third Street. The clerk registered them with wise eyes, the bellboy looked at them with wise eyes. Their room, with bathroom adjoining, looked bare. There was a dresser, a bed with paint peeling off the bedstead. On the first night neons winked on and off their bed in a lurid purple glow. Sun streamed into their room in the morning. They called up the clerk for breakfast to be sent up. Moe cracked his hands luxuriously and got up and trotted around the room, and Esther sat up watching and applauding. Breakfast came up on a tray. They had breakfast in bed and Moe said it was like the movies with Joan Crawford.

The first day was grand for them, but later they felt bad. They fell into a mood of worry about afterward. What were they going to do after the week? But that night, as they slipped into bed, the mood vanished. Daylight brought it back again, evening saw it vanish. When they sat in their room in the evening, after supper in the hotel dining-room downstairs, they talked about a million things—how nice it would be if people could live without the crowding that you got in Brownsville and the Bronx. Wednesday night they talked that way. It broke on them after a day at a movie. They remembered how they grew up, she on a street in Brooklyn and he in the Bronx. But here they were in a hotel off Broadway, with breakfast brought up on a tray and you could sit at noon in a restaurant and have chow mein, with a band playing. It was Wednesday night, four more days to go. The neons of Broadway broke into their window, red and blue across the dresser and bed. They took a walk up Broadway under an intense blue-black sky. A moocher staggered out of a doorway for a dime, and they dug into their pockets and gave it to him.

Thursday night they talked about where they would live some day. Esther thought Flatbush lovely, and Columbia Heights was fine, overlooking the bay and quiet; and Moe said there were swell places around Van Cortlandt Park. "No kid of mine will ever know what a slum looks like," said Moe. "He'll have to have grass in front of him." Esther asked him if he liked to play tennis. She said she used to watch the girls playing tennis in Prospect Park, but was always too tired after work and never got around to doing it, and it cost too much to get a racquet and balls. "I'd like to play baseball," said Moe, stretching out on the bed, "I'd like to get up on Sunday morning and go out to Van Cortlandt and play ball, and I'd like to read books and listen to concerts."

Esther stood at the window, talking and pulling gently at the curtain. Her dark face glowed. "I could take piano lessons," she said. She looked at her fingers, wrinkled at the tips from sewing.

"You know what I wanted to do when I was a kid?" he said, laughing. "I just remembered it. I wanted to get into radio and be a radio engineer. When I first heard a radio as a kid, someone put a pair of earphones on my head, the announcer said Chicago, and Jesus, what a feeling!"

Their minds ran free, like muscles long unused. They talked late.

The next day it was dark and clouded and cold, and they sat still and silent in their room and didn't seem to have much to say to each other. Moe thought of next week, next week, and he asked Esther if she wanted to go down. "No," she said, "I'm staying here today, I don't feel well." He went down and got over to the depot where the busses pull out and stood there watching them for an hour almost, with their markers, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Philadelphia, with the people getting off and on, loaded with grips. And all around him people went by, muffled up to their ears and on the run for something. He stared at them for an hour, and it gave him an irritated feeling. And when he came back to the hotel, Esther was lying on the bed and crying.

"Oh, what's the matter, kid?" he said, kissing her. "Listen, kid, we'll have a great time together. Hasn't it been great so far, hasn't it been grand? Couldn't you tell we were born for each other?"

"I'm just a cry-baby, Moey," she said. "I just like to cry, can't I cry without you thinking that I'm sick or sad?"

They laughed. It was a dark day, cold and with a raw wind racing through the side-streets. They fell into a silence afterward that lasted through the next day, not talking much and kissing almost perfunctorily, with little moments of passion gushing up and dying down. Saturday night they saw a play and had a couple of cocktails in a tavern afterward, and in the room they talked again. Their minds seemed free and easy again, the way they had been on Wednesday when they talked about where they might live and the things they would like to do. Esther was sure she would learn to play the piano. And Moe thought of spring, of playing baseball on Sunday morning in Van Cortlandt and he told Esther about the fellows who came there with their kids on Sunday mornings and took them rowing on the lake. He felt old and responsible and glad about it, though he knew he wouldn't have been glad about it a year ago. But he was glad thinking about it now.

Snow came down outside their window as they talked. It wasn't cold but tingling out, their tongues felt free and daring with the drinks they had taken, and outside it looked cheery and pleasant with the crowds and the theaters lighted and the snow decking buildings. Moe

said he might go to school again, he might continue his high school at night and go on to college and study radio engineering. Esther was sure about her piano. They were calm but sure of themselves that night. Living seemed to be big and powerful in front of them, full of quest and of due reward for trying.

But Sunday rolled into their room, the winter sunlight slanted across their bed in the morning, they looked at each other frowning. When they looked through the window at figures muffled they knew it was very cold today. They had to go home tonight. The night before had vanished, the week had vanished with the long evenings when their minds had soared. They were going home. At noon, at dinner, they said it hadn't been a bad honeymoon, but it would have been great if they could have gone to Florida. Outside on the street, after they finished packing upstairs and walked the streets, the sunlight was frozen against the back walls of the theaters. Broadway was deserted. They walked, and they took a bus and went along the Drive with the Hudson frozen in parts and showing black water in the center and the Palisades Wall bleak and gray. Blue frosty afternoon over the Hudson, clean and austere sweep before them in the view.

They went back to sit restlessly over their grips and not look at each other sometimes, avoiding each other's eyes. The clock ticked in the room, and Moe turned around once and said abruptly, "It's eight o'clock. We'd better go." The doorman said, "I'll call a cab," but they realized they wouldn't have enough to pay the tip. At the subway entrance they didn't know what to say to each other. They hated the idea of going home separately, but there was nothing that could be done now. Esther cried a little and they smoked a cigarette apiece in the entrance-way.

She went out to Brooklyn and he went uptown. He stood in the doorway, his nose against the glass, a serious-looking, red-headed young fellow who had once picked up a girl at Coney Island. He knew just how they would be at home. His old man in the rocker, and his mother complaining about a headache, and little Joe red-cheeked after playing ball and yelling for something to eat. He had never thought much about how he'd grown up. But now it seemed to him that it had always been miserable and dirty, and his old man had always had it hard, and the fellows on his street who had grown up with him and played ball with him were getting married, and some were married and had kids, and whenever he met them they looked worried and busted up about things. The train whirled up toward the Bronx as it had a thousand times before for him since he had gone to work at fifteen. The same tunnel black, the same tired faces rolling with the train's roll, then the outside light flowing in, the familiar landmarks of seared, gray tenement walls, rusty fire-escapes, and drab wash on lines. He didn't want to go home. He didn't want to be married either, though he was in love. The iron road ahead of him, those twin rails ahead of the Bronx express glittered black, snow glittered on sills. He shook his head, trying to free himself of a trap, trying to do something with this feeling of a trap around him pressing down on his head.

Twenty Years of Soviet Drama

By H. W. L. Dana

THE twentieth anniversary of the Russian revolution—like the fifth, the tenth, and the fifteenth anniversary before it—has marked an important new milestone in the extraordinary progress of the Soviet theater. The theatrical season this year in the Soviet Union, as on the occasion of the other important anniversaries, has been made significant by the fact that a whole galaxy of new plays has been produced, exhibitions have been held illustrating the progress of the various theater arts, and many books and articles have been published summing up the development of the Soviet stage to the present. The twenty years of Soviet drama, then, can be conveniently divided into four five-year periods—1917-22; 1922-27; 1927-32; and 1932-37—each ending with a significant anniversary celebration.

1917—1922

DURING THE FIRST FIVE YEARS after the Russian revolution there was an extraordinary amount of experimentation, of imagination, of variety in the theater. All sorts of plays were acted in all sorts of ways.

With the coming of the revolution, the doors were opened wide for producing on the Russian stages countless plays from various foreign countries, many of which had been previously forbidden under the czarist regime. Moscow, the center of what was called the Third International, became the center of a sort of theater international. Nowhere else could the plays of so many different nationalities be seen. Ranging from the plays of ancient Greece, through Shakespeare and Schiller and Shaw, to the latest experiments of German expressionism, this flood of foreign drama was eagerly received by a hungry public. Far from narrowing the scope of dramatic output, the revolution had enormously widened it.

Somewhat similarly, the eager new audience in Russia, far from wishing to cut itself off from the earlier Russian drama, welcomed with enthusiasm all the best plays of the best Russian dramatists. Thousands, literally millions of workers and peasants, who had not had an opportunity to see these plays before, now flooded the theaters night after night as though to make up for lost time.

Indeed, during the first five years of Soviet power, the number of Russian classics and foreign plays in translation far outweighed the number of new Soviet plays. It was only gradually that the Soviet writers could get far enough away from the revolution to see it in its proper perspective and write about it with sufficient detachment to make good objective drama. Immediately after the revolution it was the lyric poets that first caught the fervor and fire of the revolution in their imaginative outbursts. It was only after several years had passed that the short-story writers and the novelists began to write realistically of the revolution. It took still longer to develop an effective and convincing Soviet dramaturgy.

Such plays as were written in the early years after the revolution, were usually written by the lyric poets and were filled with wild, unbridled exuberance. On November 7, 1918, for example, in honor of the first anniversary of the Russian revolution, there was produced in the Communal Theater of Musical Drama in what was then still called Petrograd, an astounding extravaganza in verse called *Mystery-Bouffe* written by the loud-throated, futurist poet Mayakovski. The poster announcing the coming production depicted the "Old World" as crossed out of existence. In the prologue of the first performance, the curtain, representing the old-fashioned theater, was rent asunder. The play itself, produced by Meyerhold without the use of curtains, represented symbolic and satiric scenes of the North Pole, Noah's Ark, Hell, and Heaven. Other plays produced by Meyerhold at this time, *The Dawn* and *The Earth Prancing,* depicted fantastically imaginary revolutions. *Faust and the City* and *The Chancelor and the Locksmith,* philosophical plays by Lunacharski, then people's commissar of education, produced in 1920 and 1921, also dealt with idealized imaginary revolutions.

Even when the October revolution itself was dramatized in a pageant called *The Storming of the Winter Palace* and produced on the third anniversary in the very square in front of the Winter Palace with eight thousand persons taking part, there was a tendency to allegorize the action by presenting a White Stage on the right for the reactionaries and a Red Stage on the left for the revolutionists.

Thrilling as these productions were at the time, they seem today somewhat crude and exaggerated in comparison with more realistic and better balanced later plays. An exhibition of five years of scenic design, held at the end of this first period in 1922, showed the utmost imaginative extravagance of cubism, expressionism, constructivism, etc., run riot to an extent probably not to be found in any other country or at any other time.

In 1922, at the end of this first five-year period—the period of war-communism, the period during which the civil war was being fought to extend and defend Soviet power through the length and breadth of the Soviet Union and during which the theater itself had expressed a corresponding tumultuousness—came finally triumphant stability both in the struggle for power and in the Soviet theater. In that year were established three left-wing theaters that were to play an important part in revolutionary, proletarian, and trade-union drama: the Theater of the Revolution, the Proletcult and the Moscow Trade Union Theaters.

1922—1927

THE SECOND PERIOD of five years, coming after the end of the civil war and after the beginning of the New Economic Policy, represented a period of readjustment in society which was reflected on the stage. The problem of the return of the Red soldier from the violence of the civil war and his attempt to adjust himself to quiet constructive work, the dangers of disintegration and degeneration, the complications of the N.E.P. and the objectionable Nepmen became the subjects of a series of plays: *Meringue Pie, The End of Krivorylsk, The Mandate, Zoe's Apartment, The Pernicious Element, Stagnation, Rust,* etc. The very names of these plays suggest the nature of the social problems which they tackle.

The problems of moral disruption and corruption inside the Soviet Union were made the more serious because of the outside forces working to suppress the Soviet Union and the spread of communism in other countries. A series of plays dealt with the revolutionary struggle against these forces of reaction in various parts of the world. *The Iron Wall, Lake Lull, Teacher Bubus, When the Cocks Crow, Gas Mask,* etc., dramatized the movement of revolt in Germany. *Echo, D. E., Northeast,* etc., depicted the response to the Russian revolution in America. *Roar China!* and the ballet *Red Poppy* dealt with the oppressed workers in China, threatened by imperialist invasion. Not satisfied with representing the revolutionary movement spreading around the world, in *Ælita* the revolution is imagined as extending to the Red planet Mars.

During this same period, Soviet drama, in addition to dealing with imaginary contemporary revolutions in other countries, tended to deal also with historic revolutions of the past: *Zagmuk* in ancient Babylon and *Spartacus* in ancient Rome; *Wat Tyler* and *Oliver Cromwell* in England; and various plays dealing with the French revolution and the Paris Commune.

Earlier Russian revolutionists and revolutions were also the subjects of many plays during this period: *Stenka Razin* depicted the Cossack outlaw of the seventeenth century; *Emelian Pugachev,* the pseudo-nobleman of the eighteenth century; *The Decembrists,* the revolt of 1825; and innumerable plays, the revolution of 1905. By coincidence, 1925 represented both the hundredth anniversary of the Decembrist revolt and the twentieth anniversary of 1905, and many plays and operas and films in that year were devoted to these two historic events. Eisenstein's *Potemkin* and Pudovkin's *Mother* both celebrated events of 1905: Eisenstein's film characteristically more general and symbolic; Pudovkin's, more personal and intimate.

All these plays dealing with imaginary revolutions or historic revolutions in other countries or earlier revolutions in Russia gathered their significance from the light thrown on them by the triumphant October revolution of 1917. Even when these other revolts were represented as failing, the dramas were prevented from being defeatist by a constant note of "the time

will come!" Often they were represented as preparations, as dress rehearsals for the great revolution.

With the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the October revolution in 1927, came a flood of plays dramatizing the revolution itself or still more often the civil war which followed it and was the fulfilment of it. For the celebrations on November 7, 1927, practically every theater in Moscow, Leningrad, and the other cities of the Soviet Union put on a new play dealing with some aspect or other of the revolution. *The Year 1917* at the Mali Theater was a chronical play covering the events of that all-eventful year. *The Breaking* at the Vakhtangov Theater focused attention on a revolt on board the cruiser *Aurora*. *Power* at the Proletcult Theater dramatized the seizure of power. *Golgotha* at the Theater of the Revolution gave us the heroic struggle in the North; *The Days of the Turbins* at the Moscow Art Theater and *Lyubov Yarovaya* at the Mali Theater, the struggle in the South; *Armored Train 14-69* at the Moscow Art Theater and *The Blizzard* at the Korsch Theater, the struggle in Siberia. Many films produced for this same anniversary, such as Eisenstein's *Ten Days That Shook the World* and Pudovkin's *End of St. Petersburg,* deserve to rank with the best of these plays.

The end of the first decade after the Russian revolution was the high-water mark of plays and films dealing with the revolution itself. Sufficient time had then passed to give the perspective in the light of which the dramatists could give their characters on both sides a reality that was dramatically convincing. At the same time the events were sufficiently fresh in the memory to hold the audience spell-bound. Sometimes the actors themselves had actually taken part ten years earlier in the events which they were now reënacting. Often too, the audiences were seeing on the stage or screen a dramatic representation of events which they had actually witnessed ten years before. This double fact lent a concentration upon the drama both on the part of the actors and on the part of the spectators such as one has rarely found in the theater elsewhere.

1927—1932

WITH THE BEGINNING of the second decade of Soviet drama, came the Five-Year Plan and a period of feverish construction which had its natural reflection in the theaters. There was a tendency for the plays to turn away from the blood, murder, and sudden death which had prevailed in the revolutionary plays during the first decade, toward problems of reconstruction, collective farms, and industrialization. It was no longer so much the question of the ten days that shook the world as of the ten years that were building a new world.

The question of the peasants in relation to the new social order was opened up in 1927 by Meyerhold's production of *A Window on the Village*. Other plays such as *Bread, Bright Meadow, Wrath,* and films such as *Soil, The Village of Sin,* and Eisenstein's *Old and New* emphasized the advantages of the new collective farms over the old inefficient methods of individual farming.

In addition to plays dealing with the face of the earth, there were plays such as *The Voice from Underground, Black Gold, The Fifth Level,* dealing with the life of the coal miners in the bowels of the earth. Other plays, such as *The Rails Are Humming,* treated the construction of locomotives. Many plays, *Cement, Growth, My Friend,* etc., dealt with the life in the factories. Other plays, such as *Inga* and *Her Way* treated the problem of women in industry. As the enthusiasm grew for accomplishing the Five-Year Plan in four years, plays appeared emphasizing the time element, such as Pogodin's *Tempo* and Katayev's *Time Forward!*

One problem in connection with scientific industrialization which was very troublesome was the relation of the scientist, the specialist, the intellectual, to the workers' republic. A series of plays beginning with Faiko's *The Man with the Portfolio* in 1928 and coming down to Afinogenov's *Fear* tackled this vexing problem of the role of the intellectual. Satires on the obnoxious bourgeois remnants of the old social order appeared in Mayakovski's *The Bedbug* and *The Baths* and in Olesha's *The Conspiracy of Tastes* and *The Three Fat Men.*

Finally came a number of plays dealing quite frankly with the question of Young Communists and love. Among these were *Squaring the Circle, The Days Are Smelting, Slag,* and *Shine Out, Oh Stars!*

1932—1937

THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION of the First Five-Year Plan, the construction of the great Dnieprostroi dam, the growing prestige of the Soviet Union, and the recognition accorded to it at last by the United States, all led to a period of prevailing optimism in the theater. Even when a play dealt with a tragic death, it was characteristically called an *Optimistic Tragedy.* The plays were brimming with a love of life and the word "life" kept recurring in the titles: *Life Is Changing, Life Is Calling, Good Life, Personal Life.* They seemed to echo Stalin's words: "Life has become better, comrades. Life has become more joyous!" The rights of the individual were more strongly asserted than in the cruder earlier plays and the dramatic clash represented was no longer merely an external conflict between classes and masses, but an internal conflict of emotions within the individual. The same optimistic spirit is seen in the film dealing with the education of homeless boys, *The Road to Life,* or in Pogodin's play about the rehabilitation of prisoners working on the Baltic-White Sea Canal, *Aristocrats,* later shown on the screen as *Prisoners.*

As in Soviet music the proportion of pieces composed in the major key has steadily increased over those in the minor key, so in Soviet drama comedies came to predominate over tragedies. The widespread popularity of Shkvarkin's farcical *Strange Child* and the exaltation of the enthusiasm and inventiveness of youth in Kirshon's *Marvelous Alloy* are characteristic of the high spirits of this period.

In 1937 the extraordinarily exuberant celebration on February 10 of the hundredth anniversary of Pushkin's death revealed the continued eagerness in the Soviet Union to keep alive the best of the literature of a hundred years ago. Within a year thirteen million volumes

of works by Pushkin and about Pushkin were published, and innumerable plays, operas, and films have dealt with his life or with themes taken from the inexhaustible reservoir of his writings.

The struggle in Spain against the forces of fascism has evoked such plays as *A Salute to Spain* and *Alcazar.* The triple threat to the Soviet Union itself from Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperialist Japan with its aggressive invasion of China, has stimulated an interest in the defense of the border as exemplified in Dovzhenko's film *Frontier* and brought about a revival of interest in earlier Russian revolutionary struggles. The revolution of 1905 has been treated with a fresh understanding in films such as *The Youth of Maxim* and *The Return of Maxim;* Katayev's novel *Peace Is Where the Tempests Blow* about two boys during the 1905 revolution has recently been popular in both play and in film form.

It has been, however, above all, the October revolution which has naturally enough been the theme once more of a number of plays on the stage and on the screen. In November 1937, the twentieth anniversary of the October revolution was celebrated, as the tenth anniversary had been, by a whole galaxy of new plays and films dealing with the revolution of 1917. Now, however, they no longer deal with the external outcome of the revolution and the civil war alone, but turn by preference to the events leading up to the revolution. More attention than before is devoted to the intelligent planning by Lenin for the coming revolution. Shchukin, the actor at the Vakhtangov who had created the title role in Gorki's *Yegor Bulichev,* has now enacted most sympathetically the role of Lenin in Pogodin's *The Man with the Gun* and also in the film called *Lenin in October. On the Bank of the Neva* at the Mali Theater and *The Truth* at the Theater of the Revolution also deal with Petrograd on the eve of the October revolution and were also produced during November 1937 in celebration of the twentieth anniversary.

These latest plays are not content with external realism: the photographic representation of fixed characters. They strive for socialist realism: the study of cause and effect on characters continually changing.

The evolution of Soviet drama, then, has passed from the initial five-year period of feverish experimentation with crude and exaggerated melodrama, through a second period of greater detachment and convincing dramatization, and through a third period devoted to the adaptation of humanity to socialist reconstruction, into a final period of exhilarating enthusiasm for man's power to change himself. The progress of the Soviet theater, then, through these twenty years has been marked, not only by the extraordinary growth in the number of theaters and moving picture houses and the ever increasing numbers of actors and of spectators, but also by the development of the drama itself into a more and more mellow and mature understanding of the individual and of the state and of the relations between them.

From Texas

By L. A. Lauer

"THEM new squatters are from Texas, paw."

"Yah?"

"Yeah."

"They don't look no better than Mexicans from here."

"They ain't Mexicans, paw."

"Well, what the hell they doin' nobbin' with those spicks; they got an outfit like they was spicks."

"They's no one else to talk to 'em, paw."

"You was talkin' to 'em."

"Jist their paw; the kids was gittin' water from the well up to Jeff's place. I didn't see their maw neither, but he tole me they's from Texas. He tole me he heerd we're from Texas, too. Someone in Roswell musta tole him, paw."

"Tole him what?"

"About us bein' from Texas."

"What else he say?"

"Wants to know if they kin camp here fer a few days; an' wants to know if they's work here. Oh, yeah, an' he wants to know kin he dig fer worms to go fishin'."

"Wants a hell of a lot, don't he. What's his name?"

"I dunno, paw."

"What was he doin'?"

"Unpackin' their duffle, I guess."

"Yah?"

"Yeah."

"Those Mexes move on yet? I said fer 'em to move fast offa this place."

"They're gone, paw. They went soon's I came up to those new squatters. I guess they tole these new people they could get water at Jeff's. I guess they'll camp at Jeff's theyselves tonight."

"Looks like Jeff has got soft in the head since he went broke. Time was he wouldn't fool with no spicks any more than I would; an' now, by Christ, when he ain't got nothin', he gives half of it away. . . . How do you know those spick bastards are goin' to sleep on his place?"

"I jist guessed it, paw."

"Yah?"

"Yeah."

"What kind of a rattle-trap those squatters got, kid?"

"It looked like a Chevvy truck, paw."

"Where was the old lady?"

"Dunno. I didn't see her. She musta been gittin' wood somewheres."

"Gittin' wood? Who the god damn hell says they could pick wood on this place? Did you tell 'em they could? 'Cause if ya did, I'll knock hell outa ya an' some sense. . . ."

"I ain't sure now, paw. I don't know if she was gittin' wood; I jist guessed maybe she was."

"Yah?"

"Yeah."

"Where was they last night?"

"Roswell. They been there fer a week he says. He says he cain't get no work there 'cause he tried. Before that I guess he came by way of Clovis. Says he ain't never been this way before."

"What else he say?"

"Not much. 'Cept he wants to know where my paw is an' if he kin see you. That was when he wants to know is they work here. He wants fer his kids to go to school when he gits work. I tole him about the school. Oh, yeah, an' then he asked me about the Bottomless Lakes an' if they's any fish in them an' if the Pecos ever gits any higher and is there any fish there."

"Cain't fish if he ain't got no license—leastways not on my property nor nowheres else."

"I guess maybe he knows that paw, but I didn't think of it."

"You didn't think of it? What the hell . . . you ain't supposed to think, kid, an' I'll tell ya that if it's the last damn thing I ever do tell ya. It's a goddamn pretty pass when a kid twelve years old talks about thinkin'. If that damn school teaches ya to think at yer age it's no good. I'll do all the thinkin' around here, kid, an' don't fergit it. . . . An' here's somethin' else: you was too damn friendly with those spicks today, get that? I was watchin' ya all the time an' ya ain't foolin' me. First thing ya know, we'll have all the spicks across county stoppin' off here if we lets 'em stay long enough to talk. I tells 'em to move, an' move quick, an' by Jesus Christ you talk to 'em. Next time . . ."

"Well, paw, one of the kids jist asked me somethin'. Gosh, I didn't say much."

"You listen to me, kid. It ain't what ya say, it's the way ya say it. Ya gotta talk, sure, but talk right. Don't let me catch you with a grin on yer face again when I'm talkin' turkey with those greasy bastards."

"All right, paw."

"You're damn right it'd better be all right. Now, as soon as his kids come back, I'm goin' down to see what that outfit looks like. How many kids he got?"

"Two, I guess."

"Two, eh? Well, if he's from Texas maybe they kin stay here a while an' he kin chop wood fer his rent."

"I don't think they got much to eat, paw."

"Well, what do ya want me to do about that? We ain't got any too much ourself, by Jesus, an' it's every man fer himself. We cain't feed four more people, you know that, or if ya don't ya sure as hell ought to."

"Well, paw, cain't they jist camp there under those cottonwoods without choppin' wood while their paw makes the rounds lookin' fer a job?"

"Well, I'll be damned. Kid, what's got into ya? They ain't nobody gits rent nor nothin' else free, an' if you don't know that, it's high time ya did. The kids kin chop wood anyways as long as it gits chopped."

"Look, paw, lookee; the kids are comin' back from Jeff's. They each got a pail of water. They's over on the left of the road by your fence line, paw."

"Yah, I see 'em."

"They're little kids, paw."

"Yah?"

"Yeah. They're lots littler than me."

"By Christ, there's the old woman comin' up along the dry creek, an' by Jesus, she's got wood. I'll sure as hell tell 'em off on that when I git down there."

"Maybe she got the wood from the other side, paw."

"Yah, an' maybe she didn't. By God, kid, she looks like a nigger from here—or a Mex."

"Yeah, she does look kinda dark."

"Say, those kids don't look right. Ya sure; say kid, ya sure ya ain't lyin' to me about him being from Texas?"

"No, paw. He says he's from Texas. An' I know what ye're thinkin'. Ye're thinkin' he's a Mex. Well, he ain't a Mex. You kin tell that from here easy."

"Well, he goddamn better not be, if he's from Texas. Say, kid, I'm lookin' at the woman, an' she sure as hell looks wrong to me."

"There goes their paw out to meet her, paw."

"Yah?"

"Yeah. An' their paw's got their blankets laid out, an' looks like he's got a sort of tent rolled up there, paw. Lookee, paw, won't it be swell if they's got a tent? Aw, maybe it's jist a tarp though, it's hardly big enough fer a tent."

"Yah?"

"Yeah. Look, paw; looks like they got a box of grub there back of the truck. We sure won't have to feed 'em. They kin stay if we don't have to feed 'em, eh, paw?"

"Any more of that an' I'll crack ya, kid. An' ya don't go to Jeff's place no more, ya hear me. He's got ya lookin' out of the back of yer head. He's worse'n the school teachers."

"I ain't said nothin' about Jeff."

"I know ya ain't, an' ya better not. But Jeff ain't gonna make no spick lover outa you nor any my brats. Now git the hell back to the house, an' I'll go down an' tell that renegade what I think of his goddamn half-breed outfit."

"Aw, let 'em stay, paw."

"Hell, no."

"Aw, please, paw, they won't hurt nothin'. I'll watch 'em. . . . Ouch, oh gee paw, ya hurt me."

"G'wan back to the house."

"Paw—let 'em stay."

"Git, goddamn ya. After I run those spick brats offa here, I'll tend to you an' maybe run you off too. Now git, git."

"I'll git, paw; but they's got a right to stay—on account they're citizens like the school teacher says. Ouch, paw; owww!"

"Goddamn spick lover. Git."

"I'll git. But they's got a right—a right to stay."

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Contributors

TED ALLAN has been the Federated Press correspondent in Spain. He was injured at the battle of Brunete when a tank collided with a car carrying wounded to a hospital, on which he was riding. He is at present staff writer for the Toronto *Daily Clarion.*

DOROTHY BREWSTER is an assistant professor in the Department of English at Columbia University. She has collected and edited several volumes of contemporary short stories, both European and American.

THOMAS WOLFE'S best known works are *Look Homeward, Angel* and *Of Time and the River.* "The Company" is part of a forthcoming novel.

RAFAEL ALBERTI is one of Spain's major contemporary poets. He is the author of several volumes of verse as well as of poetry criticism.

FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA'S *Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter and Other Poems* was published by Oxford University Press this fall. Lorca was killed by the fascists at Granada and his books burned in the public square. The five poems published in this issue are from his *Gypsy Ballads.*

LANGSTON HUGHES is the author of *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems, Not Without Laughter, Scottsboro Limited,* and *The Ways of White Folks.*

DOROTHY VAN GHENT, a native of Montana, is at present studying for her doctorate in English at the University of California.

SAUL LEVITT, until recently a civil service employee, has appeared in the *Magazine,* the NEW MASSES, and other magazines.

H. W. L. DANA, formerly professor of comparative literature at Columbia, is engaged on a full-length study of Russian drama.

DAVID WOLFF'S poems have appeared in *New Letters in America,* an anthology of present-day verse edited by Horace Gregory.

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NEW MASSES
Literary Section

EDITORS: MICHAEL GOLD, HORACE GREGORY, GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ

NEW MASSES, FEBRUARY 8, 1938, VOL. XXVI. NO. 7, NEW YORK, N. Y., IN TWO SECTIONS, OF WHICH THIS IS SECTION TWO

From a Japanese Prison

By Kensaku Shimaki

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE FURIYA

WITHIN the prison on the hilltop of this town where he had been brought not so long ago, Ota was awaiting the first midsummer of his sentence. It was early in July that he had been hurriedly brought here alone—for some reason known only to the authorities—from a prison in a city fronting the beauty of the Seto Inland Sea. It had been a small city, peaceful and quiet as if asleep, where both the heat and the cold had been always gentle to the flesh. Ota had changed from his yellowish-brown prison clothes into blue traveling garb and had been placed aboard a small ferry boat. After crossing the calm green of the Inland Sea that summer morning, he had been transferred to a train, and shaken for a half-day over the Tokai-do, bounced and rattled. It had been near the end of the day when he arrived at the recently built prison on a hilltop in the middle of a town neighboring a great metropolis.

When he was finally placed in his solitary cell after having been dragged about the enormous building, he had been unable to move for a while, so tiring had been the shock of his sudden contact with the outside world after such a long interval, and his wearisome train journey besides. For three days he had suffered from sleeplessness. One of the reasons for this, perhaps, was that his habitation had changed. However, it had been mostly because, both night and day, the cell wherein he was imprisoned seemed to sway and roll as if it were still his railway coach, and because his unexpected view of the landscape along the Tokai-do and the faces and the figures of the people he had seen in the train persistently danced before his eyes and refused to leave him. Even now he was unable to refrain from wetting his lips when he thought of the box lunch he had eaten in the train. He had been given the lunch upon reaching a small station a few moments after passing the city of S. Under the concentrated gaze of the other passengers he had devoured it ravenously.

A week later, however, all these impressions had sunk deep into his consciousness. The gray simplicity of his life had returned to him in all its actuality, and he had been able to experience once again a heart settled and sober, as he gazed at the confines of the cell into which he had been placed.

The window of his cell opened to the west. When Ota was finishing his noon meal, the sun began to pour its bright heat through the window. At two or three o'clock in the afternoon the rays struck fully the body of the man sitting in the exact middle of the cell, and gradually shifted, lengthening themselves out into harsh slashes of burning brightness. About the time the skies in the West began to burn red, the light threw its now weakened brilliance upon the other walls of the cell. The entire prison was built of red brick and concrete, and the heat burned itself into the bricks steadily all day, and was unleashed into the closeness of the cells during the night. It was not until dawn that the heat seemed to slacken—but it was no more than a feeling. There was no opening in the wall opposite the window, and no wind entered the cell through the steel bars.

Ota awoke, countless were the times, during the night. Each time he raised himself and applied his lips to the mouth of a small kettle, noisily swallowing the lukewarm water he had taken during the day out of his share of the water for washing. Immediately after drinking, however, the water oozed out of his pores and covered the surface of his skin with an oily perspiration. Near dawn, when he began to notice a slight drop in the temperature, his flesh would be rough beneath his touch and sanded with a fine saltiness.

It had been for only a short period that his hands and feet, shrunk with cold during the whole winter, swollen purple, frost-bitten until the flesh seemed split, had healed, leaving behind the stains of the winter. His skin had grown youthfully lustrous again with the reappearance of the thin film of oil. For the summer had soon come, and now sweat sores cankered his skin from his back to his chest down to his thighs, over his entire body. Constantly rubbed with a piece of cotton in order

to clear it of its sweat, Ota's flaccid skin soon became inflamed and formed pus. It looked as if he were suffering from an unwholesome skin disease.

The temperature within the cell often passed beyond the hundred mark. At the same time, the excrement in a corner fermented and loosed its unpleasant odor. Mingled with the odor of stale sweat, the air was almost unbearable at times, and Ota would often stop the rapid play of his hands and wonder how many unfortunate wretches like himself were in the building with him, their bodies rotting in its staleness and stench. Sighing, he would look up at the sky. Framed by the small, steel-barred window, the sky was always overflowing with the flame-like rays of the white sun and glittering so brilliantly that his weakened eyes could hardly bear it.

After a month had passed in the prison's monotony, Ota began to find delight in the world of sounds. Cell 65—Ota's cell—was situated near the middle of a long corridor on the second floor. Perhaps because of the prison's box-like construction, all the noises arising in the building waved hollowly against its four walls, producing echoes a little eerie, and flowing slowly back, to vanish gradually. The swishing of the sandals worn by the men passing down the corridor, the low murmur of two or three prisoners surreptitiously whispering to each other, the creaking of a conveyance being shoved along somewhere, the subdued footfalls, and the clanking of the swords dangling at the waists of the guards—in all these sounds did Ota find untiring delight. In the quiet of the prison, the pell-mell disorder of these noises resolved itself into an orderly sequence, music-like and pleasant to the ears.

This world was a world where speech among the inmates was strongly forbidden. The world of sounds possessed subtle nuances and an unimaginable complexity, since the quiet was so extreme that the least sound became vested with curious rhythms and tone-colors.

Rain gutters ran along the eaves and down the corners of the building, and a flock of sparrows nested in the space between the gutters and the eaves. In spring, the eggs of these birds were hatched and a number of little fledglings appeared. They soon learned to fly, and in midsummer the flight of these sparrows was a lovely sight. At dawn when the skies began to gray and at sundown when the skies began to burn, this tremendous flock of birds would cluster in the full-leaved branches of the tree in front of the window and sing noisily. Time and again, the voices of these sparrows brought a feeling of warmth and consolation even to Ota's heart, sealed though it was by a severe harshness, unlaughing and guarding a will burning red in its depths. It was, perhaps, because their voices were associated with vague remembrances of his childhood.

There were times when some unfledged bird would blunder out of its nest and fall down into one of the rain pipes. Then the janitors would come and try to push the trapped bird out of the pipe with bamboo poles while the parent birds zoomed about crazily, uttering wild, distracted cries—a scene Ota could often see from his window. Though it was only for an instant, a scene of this sort helped him forget the harshness of his existence. Five years are long and slow to pass, but as long as I have this world of sounds, Ota often thought, I shall have no need to worry about an insanity to come.

But the thing that most touched his heart, the thing that consoled him most and gave him most strength, was the voices of men, the voices of his comrades. And these voices—the voices of his imprisoned comrades—he was always able to hear twice a day, in the morning and at night.

In the morning, the prison siren blasted out its hoarse reveille. Almost as soon as Ota had finished washing his face, the roll would be called. Facing the wall, bony knees together, as always his unforgettable humiliation sending its slight tremor down the entire length of his body, he would call out at the top of his lungs the number branded on his heart. It was merely a number called, but it was really more than that: it was an exit through which something unbearably suppressed, something crying for expression in his heart found fierce vent. But would it be possible for the people hearing his voice to feel the undertone of emotion in it?

Just when it was he did not know, but Ota suddenly realized that he was able to distinguish the singularities and moods of each voice and to identify the individual. It was 193—, and the solitary confinement cells of this prison, located near the Orient's largest industrial city, were filled with men convicted under the same charges as Ota. Because of his sharpened sensitivity, Ota then understood that almost every cell was occupied by a comrade convicted as one of his fellow conspirators. The voices of some of these prisoners were youthful and ringing clear, while those of the others were deeply melancholy. It was possible to tell by the voices where their owners were and what they were doing. There were times when the familiar voice of a comrade would disappear. When the same voice was heard again two or three days later, coming unchanged from, say, a corner somewhere on the third floor, Ota was unable to repress the smile that sprang to his lips. However, there were also voices that disappeared, never to be heard again. Ota often wondered where their owners went.

Morning and night, twice a day, the pulsating emotions unloosed in the voices of the comrades roused the spirit lying dormant in the corners of the box-like prison to ripple throughout the building wave on wave until the emotions became one.

BEFORE long the days began to take on a tinge of warm yellowishness, and red dragonflies frequently slid down the beams of sunlight streaking through the steel bars, to dart and shimmer about in the cell, impressing upon Ota the imminence of fall. On the afternoon of one of these days, Ota was gathering the envelopes he had made into bundles of a hundred each. He had still a bit more to go to reach his daily output of three thousand. While his hands moved rapidly and skillfully at his work, with the brilliant impact of the post-summer sun full upon his entire body, he suddenly experienced a tickling sensation in the right side of his breast and at the same time felt a soft lump shoot up from the pit of his stomach. He raised his body. The soft lump began to zoom around crazily in

his breast, then spurted forcefully up through his throat, leaped out of his mouth onto the piled-up stacks of bundled envelopes, and propelled by its curious momentum, plopped down.

It was blood.

The large lump of blood dropped cleanly onto the middle of the top envelope, and a spray of light mist stained the air. He had had no need to cough. The soft fullness had merely found an exit and had slipped out. It had been extremely natural. But the next moment a violent fit of coughing seized him in its choking grasp, wracking his throat, blinding his eyes. Unconsciously and quickly he snatched up his wash basin and buried his face in it. The coughing continued, unrelaxed and hard, rapid, tortuous. Each cough brought a liquid lump of blood, coughed out in strangled spats, shot out of his mouth, bashed into his basin. Streams of blood clotted his nostrils and hampered his breathing, intensifying the wild fit.

A little later, when he raised his face from the basin and stared stupidly into it, the blood had covered the whole of the basin's bottom. Tiny bubbles formed and burst unceasingly on the surface of the blood. Ota stared curiously at the thick liquid, flowing in the secure warmth of his body a few moments ago. He was aware that he himself was quite calm, but his heart was pounding as if it would burst. His face, he thought, must be sheet white. Quietly rising, he pulled the cord to summon one of the jailers, then laid himself gently on the bed, rolling over on his back.

Footsteps came down the corridor and stopped before Ota's cell. The signal was replaced, and two eyes gleamed through the peep hole in the door.

"Well, what do you want?"

Ota did not reply.

"Hey, what do you want?"

The guard could not see the inside of the cell clearly, perhaps because of the light. He knocked several times on the door. Ota heard him muttering impatiently. A key grated in the lock, and the guard entered.

"Well, what do you want? Hey! Come on!"

Ota silently pointed to the basin. The other gazed into it for a minute, startled. Then he jerked out his handkerchief and wiped his mouth. Without a word, he went out and locked the door behind him. Ota heard his footsteps hurrying down the corridor.

A little later, the doctor came and examined him briefly.

"Do you think you can walk?" he said.

Ota nodded. The doctor stood up and left the cell, beckoning him to follow. On leaving the cell, Ota glanced at the basin. The blood was already clotting blackly in the white heat of the summer sun, and the smell of the stale blood flickered around his nostrils.

When he stepped outside, his sight darkened dizzily, and he almost collapsed. The red soil was burning, and its heat pierced the thin grass sandals against the soles of his feet. It was a long way to the sick ward. He passed between a number of identical buildings, cut through a spacious yard, entered another dark building, and passed out of it. As soon as he reached the sick ward, a bag of ice was placed on his chest and he was given strict orders to lie only on his back.

For seven days and nights Ota slept fitfully, continuing to cough up stale blood. He did not even try to think of the misfortune that had so suddenly befallen him. Perhaps it was still too close; it bewildered him, giving him no chance to focus his stupefied mind upon it. Far back in his consciousness, however, floated a foreboding of the wretched thoughts that would come with the return of clarity.

After seven days of nothing but rice gruel and pickled plums, Ota was able to raise himself and feel his body with his hands. Seven days, he thought. He was as lean as one who had been ill for a year. Rubbing the untidy stubble on his jaw, he experienced a strong desire to see his face. He managed to raise himself up to the window, but he could see only the reflection of the light. After a while he slid quietly off the bed and managed for the first time in seven days to use the ordinary toilet. It was in the clouded water of the bowl that he was finally able to see the reflection of his thin face.

On the eighth day an orderly came and carried away some of Ota's phlegm. Two days later, the door of his room opened noisily soon after he had finished his supper, and he was ordered to leave the room and take with him all his belongings. Since practically nobody had ever left his cell after supper was over, Ota looked uncertainly into the orderly's face.

"You're moving out—hurry up!" he said curtly and began to walk away. Quickly Ota picked up his belongings and followed, trying to steady his trembling legs.

The section of the prison he was led to, how dismal and lugubriously quiet it was! The entire prison was extremely quiet, but the quiet of this section was such that Ota wondered at the existence of such a forsaken place. It is true, he thought, that the interior of a prison is endless and endless, and that unexpected things are to be found in unexpected places. Now that he was himself here, he realized how truly a prison had been likened to a labyrinth of horrors. Since the autumn days were short, a gray mist was floating into the dimness of the corridor. The building was long and narrow and composed of two wings, north and south, with a corridor available to both sections stretching along its side. The walls on the outside were painted a strange white, giving the building an unearthly appearance. Ota was placed in a cell at the very end of the southern wing. Feeling that he must ask something about the place, he hurried to the locked door, but the sound of the guard's footsteps was already fading.

The interior of the cell was clean and neat. A wooden bed was placed to the right of the door. In one of the corners near the bed was the toilet. It was water-flushed. To test it, Ota turned the lever. The water gushed out forcefully and was sucked down a little later. The window was extremely large, and he could see outside from where he sat on the bed. It was almost three years that Ota had been imprisoned, and during that time he had changed cells many times, but never had he been placed in such a clean, well equipped one. But instead of making him happy, his good fortune dismayed him. Where have I been

brought to, Ota could not help thinking, what is this place?

It was very quiet all around. Were there no inmates in the other cells? Not a sound came from them. More than thirty minutes had passed since the guard had left him, but not even the footsteps of a patrol could be heard. The absence of a thing always present, Ota found, tended to result not in a feeling of liberty, but rather in uneasiness.

Ota rose from the bed and returned to the door. Forlorn, lonely, the core of his soul drained of all hope, he was unable to remain still. A pane of glass covered the opening in the door, and he could see the haze of the twilight crawling coldly over the surface of the yard.

Suddenly he was startled by signs of a human presence. The cell three doors away from his was a spacious one. Since more than half of it jutted into the corridor and its door window was very large, Ota was able to see part of its interior. By the dim light hanging from the high ceiling of the corridor, he made out a large man leaning against the window. The man was staring fixedly at him. Ota noticed that his face was horribly flat and twisted. The mere sight of him was enough to incite in Ota a feeling of cold antagonism, but he suppressed it and spoke.

"Good evening."

Without acknowledging the greeting by even a sign, the man let a moment pass, then spoke abruptly.

"What are you?' he said, *"in* or *out?"*

Ota did not understand.

The man spoke again. "You're here because you're sick, aren't you? Well, what is it?"

"Oh, I see. I think it's my lungs."

"Oh, tuberculosis."

The word was spat out—literally, for Ota heard him spit the next moment.

"Are you ill, too? What is it? And how long have you been here?" Aware of the other's disdain, aware, too, of the blandishment in his own voice, Ota nevertheless spoke eagerly.

"Me? I've been here five years."

"Five years?"

"Yeah, once you're here you don't go out unless you're ashes."

"You're ill, too, aren't you? What's your illness?"

The man did not reply. He turned his face and seemed to be talking with his cellmates. When he faced Ota again the latter noticed that his left sleeve was dangling loosely, apparently empty.

"What, mine?"

"Yes."

"Well, mine's—*le-pro-sy.*"

"What is it?"

"Leprosy!" the man shouted hoarsely, and disappeared, snickering gleefully as if to say, well, what do you think of that? Surprised, eh? And as if in answer to this ugly snicker, other voices burst out laughing and filling the lepers' cell. The laughter died away, but lively voices succeeded it. Shot with misery, Ota returned to his bed. His forehead and back were clammy with sweat. He placed his hand under his armpit. It was burning. He began to walk up and down the cell, but then he stopped, rinsed his towel in lukewarm water, and threw himself on his bed, placing the wet towel on his forehead. Until dawn of the next day he slept, fitfully dreaming. . . .

IN two weeks the red flecks in the phlegm that Ota ceaselessly spat out gradually thinned into a black-brown, until finally no color appeared, and Ota was able to go out for a little exercise in good weather. It was then that he began to grasp the entire significance of the new world into which they had brought him. He was able to understand the meaning of the words flung at him on the first day by the man in the common cell: *"in* or *out?"* Of the two wings composing this isolated sick ward, the north wing harbored tuberculars and the south, lepers. Ota was the only tubercular lodged in the lepers' ward, and he was placed alone in a cell located in the extreme east of the south wing.

This was a forgotten world, an isolated part of a prison that was itself set apart from all society. The convict brought here was looked upon with exceptional regard and received exceptional treatment. The patrol appeared but rarely, though he should have shown up every ten minutes or so. When he did, it was only to throw a careless glance from the entrance before hurrying away immediately. The sixty-year-old guard spent the greater part of his time basking his wobbly frame in the sun. It is not difficult to imagine how many breaches of prison rules occurred in the cells. But this extreme looseness of supervision was no humane leniency on the part of the authorities toward sick persons. The officers' words and actions showed that it was simply neglect inspired by contempt and hatred.

When the cord was pulled to summon the guard, it was a half-hour—and sometimes an hour—before he appeared, only to stand a few yards away from the cell and ask what was wanted. A request was never fulfilled until it had been made several times, though the guard went away each time nodding agreement.

There was the time when Ota asked the chaplain to lend him some books. Two or three Buddhist books, so tattered that they were almost illegible, were the only reading matter in his cell. When the chaplain had gone, after listening carefully to the request and promising to grant it, Number 30 approached Ota. Number 30 was in the corridor at the time doing the janitor's neglected work.

"Did you ask the chaplain for something?" he asked.

"Oh, merely for some books," Ota replied.

Number 30 snorted. "It's no use, Ota. Once a year they bring you some tattered books nobody else can read, but they haven't any besides those to give to a tubercular. In the first place, what can you ever get by asking the chaplain? You're a Communist, aren't you? If you've got to ask somebody, ask the warden. The warden. When the warden comes around, ask him. That's the surest way."

Number 30 was right: the books never came. When the chaplain came again, he pretended to have forgotten all about it. When Ota reminded him, he rubbed his green jaw carelessly and said, "Oh, yes. But, you see, I alone can't give you these books. So, well, I'm sorry, really, but. . . ."

Without a book to read, and with nothing to do, the sick convicts remained stupidly in their dark cells, blundering about on the verge of insanity.

The contempt of the healthy convicts toward the ill was an exaggeration of the officers' attitude. The janitor always found some pretext to keep away from the sick ward. His work had to be done by one of the comparatively healthy patients. Not once had the invalids been given a decent change of clothing, though they repeatedly asked for it. From prison garbs to towels, they got nothing but what couldn't be used elsewhere, and the patients were forced to walk around in old prison garbs, torn at the sleeves and ripped up the back. This discrimination was apparent even in their meals. Their pots were only half filled with soup, and there was not enough rice. It is a mistake to think that the ill never eat much. It is only that their appetites are very irregular. Sometimes they eat enormously, and sometimes not at all. Once one of the tuberculars had seized the handyman and complained of the food, but he had been answered by a crack on the skull with a ladle, and a bellow, *"What? For sleeping and doing nothing?"* The tubercular had had to remain in bed three days because of his wounded head; from that time, he only muttered to himself and never raised his voice again.

In wordless contempt, listening absent mindedly to the prisoners' requests, at times snorting derisively, the guard and the handyman would often look at each other and snicker in order to irritate the sick convicts' sharpened nerves. It was possible, however, to endure being despised and held in contempt. To be scorned was to be noticed, at least. But to become of no interest to others, to be forgotten like a stone by the roadside—that is not easily to be endured.

Every once in a while the prison paper was distributed among the patients. The paper contained news of various sorts: a radio has been installed in the prison for the sake of the convicts; the library is going to be enlarged; a movie will be shown, etc., etc. But such news had nothing to do with the convicts in the sick ward. It is the business of the sick to be confined, it was said; though they were criminals, they had nothing to do but sleep and absorb expensive medicines; how fortunate they were!

When a week passed without any mishaps, sugared dumplings were distributed to the prisoners, but somehow they were never passed out to the invalids. Once, when both the cook and the guard asserted that they had forgotten, a moody young man finally exploded. "Forgot!" he shouted. "Well, I'll make you remember!" Though he had been bedridden for the past two months in common cell 3, the young tubercular suddenly jumped up. Disregarding his surprised cellmates, he clenched his thin fists and began to break the window-panes. The fragments of glass flew away, raising a terrible din. Fearing the consequences of his violence, his cellmates tried to stop him, but he flung them off and continued to storm about as if insane until the guard and the handyman finally succeeded in pinning him down. Sharp fragments of glass sticking in his blood-stained fists, his hands corded behind him so tightly that his veins swelled, the young man was led away and did not return for three days. He did not escape punishment on account of being an invalid, though his punishment was a bit lighter. Returning, shaken and pale, he collapsed by his bedside as soon as he entered the cell. Always a silent man, he became more so and spent his days staring fixedly at the faces of his cellmates with a weak but stern look, until he died immediately after the cold set in.

As has been said before, Ota was the only tubercular housed with the lepers. Half from awe and half from curiosity, he began to watch the lives of these invalids. The moment they were let out for exercise, the four lepers in the common cell straggled out into the sunniest spots of the spacious yard. It was then that Ota was able to see their features clearly. Walking sluggishly in their faded garbs, at times breaking suddenly into a mincing run, bursting out into strained snickers as if something funny had just occurred to them, they were, in the heat of the late summer, an appalling sight. Of the four, two were still quite young, one was middle aged, and the other was past fifty. The two younger lepers possessed unnaturally brilliant complexions, and large, red sores bruised their cheeks and napes. They squinted as if dazzled when looking at anyone's face, and Ota could see that the blacks of their eyes were shifting off towards one side. Neither was more than twenty, surely, and probably their disease had appeared during boyhood. Not very conscious of the horror of their disease, they appeared to look but lightly upon life, and the sight of these two laughing joyfully with each other inevitably increased the pity of the onlooker.

The middle aged man was enormously large boned, a bull-like head with no eyebrows pushed into the top of his broad, thick torso. His large, popping eyes were like the eyes of a rotting fish, and streaks of red crossed the whites of his eyes vertically and horizontally. Though his body was well built, he had but one arm, and the bone of that arm was so twisted by disease that he could not even hold his chopsticks correctly. There were times when he would suddenly begin grunting and rise to his feet. Naked and shouting, swinging his arm, swinging his legs, he would begin to exercise. His appetite was enormous, and he never failed to clean up the remains of his cellmates' meals. From autumn until the end of winter, he would snatch his cellmates' food, so that another cause for suffering was added to the grievances of the other three when the first autumn breezes began to blow.

Every so often the man would ask the others which they would choose if the chance were offered to them—to eat the finest of delicacies or to sleep with a woman for a night. The old man would merely grin and would not reply, but one of the young men would consider the question seriously and reply after a few moments' thought, "Of course, I'd prefer the food." When the other youth assented, "Me, too," the man would suddenly bellow in a voice like a cracked bell, "What, you'd rather have the food! Why, you big liars! You can eat, see, three times a day, and sometimes get something special, but not so with women. You guys can talk about food, yeah, when you go around playing with your goddamit every night." Then he would sigh,

"Geeze, I want a woman," and, in spite of the others' laughter, continue to mutter beneath his breath.

The last of the four, the old man, was ordinarily very quiet. His face was wrinkled and dry, his eyes bleary, with tears constantly trickling down from them. The flesh on his toes was completely withered, so that his sandals had to be tied to his feet. His feet were probably nerveless, and the times he walked into the cell in muddy sandals were many. The scars of burns he had received in his youth while drowsing near the sunken fireplace of a farmer's house could still be seen, and the five toes of both feet were joined together.

He was twenty when his disease first broke out. After spending the greater part of his life in various prisons, the old man seemed entirely resigned to his fate. He spoke little, but looked as if he were grinning all the time. At times, however, something would generate an explosion in him, and his wrath would always direct itself upon his middle aged cellmate; then the two would wrangle away for hours.

These four men were all together three cells away from Ota, and he had thought at first that the next cell was empty, because it was so quiet. There was a prisoner in it, however. While passing by one day on his way to the yard for his exercise, Ota happened to glance in. When it was bright outdoors, it was difficult to discern anything in the dark cell. Ota edged very near to the door and was startled to see a pair of eyes shining from a closely cropped head and gazing steadily at him from the bed.

When Ota returned from his exercise the next day, the man was standing at his door and greeted him with a polite bow as he passed. It was then that Ota saw his face fully. He seemed to be still in his twenties. For the first time Ota saw distinctly the lion's face that, according to some book he had read, was characteristic of this disease. The man's eyes, his nose, his mouth, the features of his entire face were extremely enlarged and flattened, and his face did not seem to be the face of a man. Moreover, his eyelids were half turned out, and the color of the red flesh underneath could be seen plainly.

As soon as Ota entered his cell, he heard a tap on the wall, and a little later the man spoke to him, standing at his own door.

"Mr. Ota, Mr. Ota." He had probably overheard the guard mouthing Ota's name. "Would it trouble you very much if I spoke to you? I've been hesitating to do so until now for fear it would."

If it is true that a man's character can be perceived to a certain extent in the quality of his voice, then this man was an excellent person. His courtesy, though far out of keeping with this ungracious world, was natural and unaffected.

"No, no, not at all. It'll help me get over my boredom." Ota spoke cordially in order to put the other at his ease.

"You must have been surprised when you first came here. You're a political offender, aren't you, a Communist?"

"Why, yes. How did you know?"

"Oh, one can tell. Even though you're wearing a red prison garb, one can tell. When I first came here, there was quite a stir over you people, and besides it's the rule here that all tuberculars be placed in the other wing. Any tubercular put in this wing is sure to be a thought-offender. It's to prevent any contact with the others. You see, even the bigger authorities are aware of the laxness of the prison discipline. Did you know Kobayashi of the Guillotine Group? He was in your cell till about two years ago."

Ota knew the name, and it solved the puzzle of the fragment of the *Internationale* scratched with a broken nail on the back leaves of the tattered books in his cell.

"Oh, so Kobayashi was here, and what happened to him?"

"He died. Don't feel badly, but it was in your cell. You see, no one came for him. He died pounding his bed with a medicine bottle, singing the *Internationale*."

Ota's heart darkened for a moment as he thought of Kobayashi's dismal end. He felt that it was cruel to ask about his fellow convict's illness, that it was like the gouging of a painful sore, but since the man had found someone upon whom to unburden his woes, perhaps he would be able to console himself by talking; so Ota asked, "And you . . . when did you come here? When did you become ill?"

"I've been here three years now. I was a joiner in a cabinet factory until I became sick. My fingers and my toes began to lose their sense of feeling, and after that the disease seemed to sweep over me. I suppose it was already pretty bad before I became aware of it, but I didn't know until someone pointed out to me that the flesh at the root of my thumb—on my palm, that is—was drying up. I was twenty then. My face was far different, too, from the picture of myself as a child. I used to be such a cute little thing."

"There is such a thing as an erroneous diagnosis. Have you been examined carefully?"

"Yes, I had hopes that the diagnosis might be wrong when only my sense of feeling was lost, and even when my face began to swell. But it's no use now. Now . . . Mr. Ota, you've seen, haven't you. . . . ? Of course you have, and you must have been shocked—my eyes, my eyes are turning out, the way children's do when they make eyes at each other. Since then I've had no use for futile hopes. It's horrible, isn't it, this disease? The body actually rots away on you while you're still living. There seem to be two types. With some the flesh dries up and withers like the old man's in the common cell. Mine is the rotting type, I think. Nothing else is wrong with my body. My bowels are better than ever, and I can eat twice as much as the average man. I'm a hog, really a hog. I may have been fated for this, but. . . ."

Spoken as if under the pressure of some necessity until now, the words suddenly stopped. He seemed to be crying. Unable to utter the words of consolation on his lips, Ota stood where he was, feeling his heart rioting with an inexpressible perplexity. At that moment, footsteps sounded in the corridor and stopped before the leper's cell. The door was opened, and a voice said, "Visitor."

The leper went out. Ota wondered where the meeting would be held. Observing carefully, he found that there was no reception room in the sick ward. The

meeting was held in a secluded corner of the yard. The visitor was an old woman, bent at the waist, leaning on a cane. Throwing their shadows on the weakly sunlit ground, the pair stood facing each other. The old woman was wiping her eyes with a handkerchief and seemed to be repeating something over and over. Fifteen minutes passed, and the guard looked at his watch. He separated the two and led the old woman away. Ota's friend stood gazing at the departing woman, but he returned to his cell as soon as the guard beckoned him.

"Mr. Ota, Mr. Ota," he called falteringly when he was once more in his cell. "That was my grandmother. She always tells me to go back to her alive, even though my body is rotting away. I'll be waiting till then, she tells me, I'll die with you when the time comes, so please don't do anything rash. And she repeats this over and over and over again."

He raised his voice and began to cry. During the sporadic conversation that followed, Ota discovered that the man's name was Genkichi Murai, that his crime was attempted murder, and that his sentence was five years.

"What was the incident about?" Ota asked hestitatingly.

"Oh, it was only about a worthless woman and ended in blood," was all that Murai would say, and he did not go into the history of the incident. "Mr. Ota, I want to—I *want* to resign myself to my fate, but I can't. I'm hardly twenty-five yet. I've done absolutely nothing. I've had nothing, nothing. When I get out, I used to think, when I get out—but now. . . . Oh, I'm going to do as my grandmother wants me to. And when I get out, I'm going to do everything I want to do, raise hell for three or four days, and then throw myself under a street car or something and die. I'm not lying. I'm going to do it. I really mean it. I'm going to do it!"

Truly it must have come from the bottom of his heart. Something in his tearful voice began to push against Ota's heart. He felt cold, and he remained silently standing in front of his door.

THE winter passed, and a new year came. Spring, and then again it was summer. In the tuberculosis section of the sick ward, the invalids began to grow worse and worse. When one failed to appear during the exercise period and remained lying on his cot, the orderly could be seen entering the cell, carrying a pair of chopsticks dipped in liquid rice jelly with a knot of the jelly twisted around the ends. Seeing this, the other patients would sigh, "Ah, he too is licking jelly now, but it won't be for long."

In the dead of night, during the worst part of the season when one could hardly breathe because of the staleness of the hot cell air, a piercing voice would suddenly call the attendants. Then white-robed men would hurry down the corridor to the patient's cell. Near dawn on such a night there was sure to be a death. Whenever one of two men very seriously ill died, the other was sure to follow him soon. A prison death is not pleasant to the ears, and it was the custom of the prison officials to dispatch a telegram to the dying man's relatives. But perhaps in only one of ten cases did anyone come to take over the prisoner. Even if the prisoner was taken away, he usually died in the automobile carrying him from the prison.

The bodies of those dying in the prison were treated like so much excess baggage. Noses and mouths and ani stuffed with cotton, they were carted away to the hospital in town to be used as subjects for dissection.

Harassed by the heat of the summer, the tuberculars would invariably lose their appetites, and the garbage box in a corner of the yard would overflow with the remains of their meals, which rotted and filled the air with an unbearably disagreeable odor. Great clouds of flies, when disturbed, would leap into the air with a startling amount of noise. The duty of removing these remains fell to the janitor, who performed his task with bad grace, muttering, all the while, "T.b. shit and left-overs aren't even fit to be used as fertilizers." But the lepers in the common cell longingly eyed the garbage box overflowing with the left-over food. They licked their lips and grumbled about the ingratitude of those damned tuberculars who left the food given them—pot-bellied weaklings unable to eat a belly's worth of food. As soon as the jailers brought their meals the lepers began to plead for part of the tuberculars' food. Occasionally one of the tuberculars would announce a disinclination for food, and feeling pity, perhaps, the jailers would pass it on to the lepers. Smiles wreathing their faces, they would receive it joyfully and immediately begin scuffling over it. How happy they must have been! Taking advantage of the fact that there was no set hour for eating in the sick ward, the lepers would save the food and eat it an hour or so later. To listen to them smacking their lips near the window in the quiet was enough to make one shiver.

Although at first glance the lepers did not seem to have changed in the least, a slight difference in their faces was noticeable upon close inspection. An animal odor, peculiar to this illness and difficult for others to bear, diffused its unpleasantness throughout the cell during the summer, though they kept their windows wide open. Frequently the jailer on watch failed to open the door of their cell during the exercise period. The lepers, angered, aggrieved, would then stage a demonstration, stamping their feet noisily on the floor, uttering odd cries.

IN the middle of the night, Ota awoke suddenly. The time, he wondered. I must have slept at least a little. He looked up at the electric bulb dangling over his head. Perhaps it was the unquiet silence of the prison-celled night, but he felt that the bulb was swaying. He gazed at it curiously. A white moth, startlingly enormous and seemingly come from nowhere out of the midsummer night, had leeched itself against the cord. For no reason whatever, he felt nervous. Just as he turned to go to sleep again, a premonition of the coming of *that* suddenly needled his brain and swept down the entire length of his body, leaving him pale and trembling with fear. God, God, he thought, *it's* coming again. He raised himself and crouched, unmoving and resigned, cringing. Sure enough, *it* came.

As if a tidal wave were sweeping nearer and nearer

from a distant place, its noises began to roar deep within him, gradually, gradually growing riotously nearer and crazily louder until his heart seemed about to burst asunder with the madness of this chaotic rhythm. Soon the pulses of his body began to scream, and the blood battled within his arteries as it turned back upon itself, while its pounding echoes began to reverberate torturously against the twisting sides of his sensitized skull. Teeth gritted, frozen, enduring, his eyes beginning to grow dark and blank, it was evident even to himself that his consciousness was becoming numb and gradually slipping away. . . :

When he came to again, feeling as if he had awakened from some horrible sleep, the disordered violence of his heart's beating had become somewhat more quiet. An unutterable loneliness and a vague uncertainty seized him, however, as he began to grow calmer, and he became obsessed with the fear that perhaps he was losing his mind. Unable to remain motionless for another moment, he slid quickly off his bed and began to pace wildly about his cell, wanting to scream away his terror.

Twenty minutes passed before he fully regained his composure. A deep sense of relief and a profound tiredness pervaded his being. Dazed and spent, he eased himself against the window and breathed deeply. He felt the pureness of the fresh night air flowing down into his chest and cooling his lungs. He could not see the moon from the window, but the night was beautiful with stars.

In the summer of that year Ota began to suffer from this abnormal acceleration of the heart. It was one of the symptoms of a severe case of neurasthenia, he had heard. Once a week during the night it came. Or else once in ten days. But come it did. It was certain to come. At his wits' end, Ota desperately indulged in futile attempts to escape these fits by gymnastic exercises or by sitting in a trance. Naturally, however, he was unable to escape them.

Ota was unable to ascribe the reasons for this nervous state to the physical and spiritual debility caused by illness and confinement. Although he was not aware of all of them, however, he was aware of one of the strongest of these reasons. He was quite aware that his fits had first begun to grow upon him when he began to suffer from the uneasy agitations caused by the curious shadow creeping into his Communist heart and growing larger and darker.

What was this vague uneasiness, this vague agitation? If the word "agitation" were to be defined as something in the nature of an antagonistic school of thought coming into conflict with that school to which he adhered, and defeating it—then it would be possible to say definitely that this was not the nature of the shadow. The agitation in Ota's heart was a thing which sprang up as naturally as a cloud in the summer sky, which came of living as he did in this sick ward among lepers and tuberculars as one of their sort, seeing their daily lives vividly before his very eyes. It was of the nature of something which could not quite be grasped, and yet it was just there that its strength lay. In other words, Ota had succumbed to the pressure of an unfeeling actuality.

As a Communist, Ota was young and no more than a mere intellectual. He was not of the stuff of those who had tasted the sweat and the blood of actual life and had erected the foundations of their faith upon a ground cleared by their endurance and courage. Under ordinary circumstances, that would have been enough. But let the young intellectual once encounter that side of life at once bitter and complex and cold beyond imagination, then he finds his beliefs useless and is aware only of being crushed by an overpowering actuality.

Losing even his will to battle in the face of this cruel actuality, he begins to realize clearly that the belief, the faith to which he has adhered is not of his flesh and blood, but has been merely skin deep. To reach this conclusion is a horrible thing, and what an unhappy individual is he who reaches it. To firmly believe as always in the logic of his faith's logic, to be aware of his inability to move according to this logic's demands, to realize his inability to do anything about this awareness—would it not make a man think of suicide?

Cruel, severe, harsh, juggling human lives like colored balls—this was the true picture of the thing called actuality, Ota thought, observing the world of actuality now holding him in its grasp. And was it not the first duty of a Communist to force this actuality under a fixed law man had forged out of his suffering, to discipline its violence, to curb its wild determination, to assert its blind will? And had he not come fighting for this purpose? Yes, but all the time his brain whispered to him of duty, his heart shunned the battle and sought for nothing but an escape from actuality.

Without the least desire to lead an active life, losing his interest in all affairs, merely despising all reality, he reached the state where he whiled his days away stupidly, leaving only the vague dreaminess of his hermit-like existence lightly impressed on his mind.

There were times, however, when the passion of his past would rise within him and run hurricane-like and rioting across the surface of his mind. At these times, Ota would become wildly, exuberantly excited, clenching his fists, feeling the hotness of his cheeks. The next moment, however, a spiteful voice would seep through his exuberance, destroying it, whispering, what is this to you, to you who are dying? And then he would return again to his usual state, as cold as the ashes of the dead.

In contrast with Ota's apathy, how vigorous was the vitality of the rotting lepers! Their appetites were enormous, several times that of average men. Their sexual appetites, too, were apparently strong and hard to suppress. Once on a summer night the four lepers in the common cell had been enthusiastically engaged in vividly pornographic talk, when suddenly one of them fell to the floor on his hands and knees and began to imitate the actions of an animal at a certain period, laughing gleefully all the while. Unconsciously Ota raised his voice in a cry, strongly struck by this exhibition of the brute-like blindness of the impulses governing the lives of men. Resenting these impulses, he had shuddered at the horror of living.

That same summer, a sixty-year-old man, who had been ill for nearly three years, died at daybreak in the

tuberculosis section of the sick ward. After the corpse had been carried away, it was discovered that the grass mat on the old man's bed was half rotten. A thick layer of white mildew was found between the mat and the bedsheet, and his blankets were stiff with dried excrement. At the time these revolting discoveries were being made, the old man's fellow prisoners were battling for his left-over rice jelly. How pitiful humanity was!

Feeling dark, without consolation, Ota passed his days. Aside from physical suffering, he felt that if he kept on living in this drab monotony, the day would come when the mere thought of continuing to live would be painful. There was no misconception in this presentiment, he knew. When he thought of that day, he was unable to keep from shuddering.

A man frequently encounters those things not even thought of, and he is made to feel the presence of—what is it?—destiny? fate? It was when Ota had fallen into the mire of uncertainty and was trying desperately to pull himself out of its viscuousness that he unexpectedly came face to face with his former comrade, Ryozo Okada.

THE sound of the door of a distant cell opening penetrated Ota's stupor. Other sounds, too: of human footsteps, and mingled with this the sound of something being dragged in. Somewhat feverish for no particular reason, Ota awoke into the daylight and began to think hazily, dreamily, listening to the sounds as if still asleep, wondering, that is Cell 1, the common cell, the empty cell, that must be a new patient.

"A new patient, Ota. There's a new patient in Cell 1." Murai's voice was a bit hoarse and tight, as if he were trying to strangle his excitement. Passing their days in the drabbest monotony, the arrival of another patient was more stimulating to the prisoners than anything else. That was why Ota waited so anxiously to catch a glimpse of the newcomer during the exercise period the next day, his eyes glistening brightly with interest, so impatiently, so wonderingly.

Not satiated interest, however, caused the slight turmoil in his breast the moment he caught a glimpse of the stranger, and caused him to catch his breath. It was a lovely autumn day, and the flowers and the grass the prisoners had cultivated in the yard adjoining the sick ward were beautiful. The small path weaving its way through the garden was allotted to the prisoners for walking, but the figures of the walkers could not be seen very clearly from Ota's cell because of the reflection of the sun's dazzling brilliance upon the glass of the corridor door opening into the yard. Besides, the pane in Ota's cell door was small, and its range of vision was very limited. The walkers vanished the moment after they entered its narrowness, so that Ota could only catch a glimpse of the figure of the new patient, but that glimpse was enough to bring a chaotic turmoil into his heart.

Needless to say, the stranger was a leper. Moreover, judged by his exterior, his was an advanced case. Changed as his features were by the ravages of the disease, it was difficult to state his age exactly, but the youthful swinging of his arms and the spring in his walk were enough to pronounce him still young. His face was swollen a dark purple, and the swelling extended as far as the nape of his neck. His hair was already very sparse, and it was difficult to distinguish his eyebrows from a distance. He was a large man, heavily built. Ota remained motionless at the opening of his cell during the leper's exercise, watching him, trying to quell the storm within his breast. Even after the man had gone back to his cell, he could not quiet down for a long time.

From that day on, Ota began to watch the movements of the stranger with singularly concentrated studiousness. He was convinced that he had seen the stranger somewhere before. Each time Ota glimpsed the stranger's face, something stirred in the bottom of his heart. But what that something was, Ota could not fathom. As the days passed by, the face of the leper gradually burned deeper into Ota's being. Each twisted line of the disease ravaged face was sharply etched on his mind, and appeared even more clearly when he closed his eyes, and now the face seemed to close in upon his heart, imbued with something threatening.

It was night, and Ota was seated in a room with four or five men. It was one of those tearooms, perhaps, lining the well lit streets of Osaka. Was it after some meeting? The men were talking loudly, arguing vehemently, and there seemed to be no immediate possibility of the argument coming to a close.

Again, Ota was striding through the darkness along a street on the outskirts of a city, shoulder to shoulder with four or five men. A foul-smelling canal flowed viscuously along one side of the road. At the bend in the canal, the huge chimney of the factory toward which they were headed loomed serenely before them. Each of the men had handbills hidden in his pockets. Suppressing his excitement, speaking little, each stalked steadily forward, taking long, determined steps, shoulder to shoulder, solid, one.

Scenes from a life now lost to him, they arose in Ota's mind of a sudden. And somewhere in these scenes, it seemed, the face of the stranger appeared from time to time. Though it was like the elusive shadow of a bird passing swiftly over the ground, Ota would firmly grasp one of these scenes out of his past. With this as a lead, he would begin to grope backward and forward along the tangled lines of his memory, as if trying desperately to unravel a badly knotted skein. But strained as it was by his illness, his brain was not able to endure the arduousness of prolonged thinking, and he would soon tire himself out. Wearied and despairing, Ota would let go his hold on the key line and lie down on his back to fall into a tortured sleep soon after.

There were times when he awoke suddenly in the middle of the night. The moment he opened his eyes and the dim light of the bulb struck them, a feeling that he had come upon something would seize him. Or perhaps he had only been dreaming. At times, the features of the many comrades of his past would appear successively before his eyes, and it seemed to him that one among them coincided precisely with those of the stranger. However, it did not go beyond being but a transient flutter of the heart. Feeling as keenly disappointed as if he had lost something he had grasped in his hand, Ota was then unable to close his eyes until the next day had dawned.

The behavior of the new leper was often unaccountable. From his first day in the ward, he had worn an air of imperturbable indifference, and Ota found himself unable to read the expression of his cold pokerface. The ward patients had always taken special interest in a new entry, wondering what his crime was and how many times he had been jailed before, and now they carefully watched the movements of the new prisoner through the steel bars. They had whispered to each other softly, sniffing as if with great significance, indulging in various wild speculations, one, perhaps, mumbling that he thought he had seen the man in some factory or some shop somewhere. And to all the unutterable greetings the new patient responded with a smile. If someone chanced to speak to him, he would often take advantage of the moment and pour out the whole history of his crime and his illness, chanting it and satiating the curiosity of the old prisoners.

The behavior of the new patient, however, was wholly unprecedented. He always preserved an air of calmness not in keeping with the prison world, and it was his habit during his exercises to walk quickly around and around the garden, glancing neither to the left nor the right, as if he had already traversed the same road many times. Disappointment was the lot of those prisoners who expected the stranger to show an attitude of concern and to look about questioningly, uncertain and uneasy, as if he had been brought to some awesome place. They began to feel something like an introverted sulkiness in the indifferent attitude of the new patient, quiet and apart, and finally ended up by classifying him as one of those guys who were too good. They watched him guardedly and with interest, however, white eyes shining, yet with a slight antagonism.

Quiet the man was, but his quietness was of no ordinary degree. If it were not for the daily exercise or the infrequent baths, the inmates of the ward would have forgotten his existence. What did he do, what did he think of all day, alone in the barren largeness of his common cell? Books he had not, nor anything to console the eye and the ear. What did he think of as he sat face to face with the disease which daily crept nearer the core of his soul and body? The horror of passing day after day with nothing to do but sit with arms crossed is such that there would be only insanity to look forward to if it were not for the opportunity of stealing a few words with the prisoners in the adjoining cells. The new prisoner, however, spoke not a word. And was he satisfied with everything given him? Not once did he pull the signal cord for the guard in order to ask him for something new. Although his disease continued to ravage his face, he did not seem to be deeply concerned over it, and he carried himself as lightly and youthfully as ever during his exercise.

It struck Ota as odd that the new inmate was alone in his enormous common cell. The common cell lodging the four lepers was large enough for eight men, and it would have been usual to put him there. Was the nature of his crime such that he had to be placed in solitary? If so, then it was possible to transfer Murai into the large cell with the four and place the newcomer in Murai's solitary cell. Murai's crime was not such as to necessitate solitary confinement.

Reasoning thus, the thought which had sprouted in Ota's mind the moment he had seen the newcomer's face, that feeling of having seen him before, returned to him. And though he had tried hard to suppress it, he was struck by its new clarity. The man who was but two cells away from him, the man whose crime made the prison authorities isolate him, was a man imprisoned under the same charges as Ota. The new leper was undoubtedly a comrade. His must be the changed figure of a comrade Ota had known somewhere!

Ota tried many times to abandon the thought that the leper was one of his friends. He tried to dismiss the figure of the man from his mind by unearthing all of the dubious points about him. He tried to put his mind at ease. Ota could not bear to think of the suffering sure to be his when the sorry figure of the leper proved to be a comrade. But he was forced to recognize the stronger positiveness of the points proving the stranger to be one. After a few days, Ota was completely spent by the battles these two groups of thoughts fought in his mind. The newcomer appeared daily in the yard all during this period, and Ota daily saw the face he almost remembered but could not quite remember.

The question was solved one day, however. One afternoon, a month after the newcomer's arrival, Murai left his cell to write a letter. He returned to his cell a little later and began whispering excitedly to Ota.

"Ota, Ota, are you awake?"

"Yes, I'm awake. What is it?"

"Well, the man in Cell 1—I know his name."

"What! you know his name!" Unconsciously, Ota stretched forward. "How did you find out? and what is it?"

"Okada, Ryozo Okada. I saw it on one of his postcards."

"What! Ryozo Okada!"

Because of the fact that the newcomer was a leper, the mail clerk had stuck the postcard on a board and put it out in the sun to be sterilized. Murai had seen the name there.

Murai was struck by the way Ota had repeated the name.

"What's the matter, Ota?" he quickly asked. "Do you know him?"

"No, no, I just thought I'd heard it before," Ota answered weakly and turned back into his cell. His eyes swam and his feet wobbled as if he had been struck a sharp blow on the head. He leaned against his bed and stood silently for a few moments. Then he threw himself sideways on his bed. He stared at the familiar stain on the ceiling, feeling himself growing calmer, repeating the name Ryozo Okada over and over to himself. So that pathetic leper was Ryozo Okada captured.

As the chaos in his head gradually returned to order, Ota's thoughts took him back five years into the past. Ota had then been a secretary at the headquarters of the Farmers' Union. One day as he was preparing to go home, Nakamura of the Laborers' Union sauntered up to him. "I want to have a talk with you," he said. The two walked out of the office together and began strolling toward Ota's rented rooms in Shikan-jima.

"One of our comrades returned from abroad re-

cently," Nakamura began. "You see, when he left three years ago, he was involved in a big incident, and the police are still on the watch for him. Naturally, he won't be able to stand in the front lines for awhile yet. I want to put him where he'll be safe until he learns more about the movement here in Japan. You can see that it would be very inconvenient to put him in the home of a member of the Laborers' Union. You belong to the Farmers' Union, and you're supposed to be living at the headquarters, aren't you? It isn't so widely known that you live in your rooms at Shikan-jima. I wonder if you would put him up for about a month."

Ota had assented, and Nakamura led him to a tea-room where he was to meet the new comrade. The man was about the age of Ota. He advanced smilingly toward them and replied courteously to Nakamura's introduction. His name was Masao Yamamoto. During the course of the conversation, Ota noticed a slight northeastern accent in his speech and was struck by the honest simplicity of his character. Much later, Ota discovered that Masao Yamamoto was in reality Ryozo Okada.

Ota was then living in two rooms rented in the home of a distant relative. They were on the second story, and Ota turned the larger one over to Okada. Though they had adjoining rooms, the two lived without much intimacy, since Ota did not have much chance to talk to Okada, leaving as he did early in the morning and returning late at night. There were times when Okada was asleep when Ota returned, but there were also times when he was writing by the light of his dim lamp.

One cold day in November, about a month later, Okada left the house and did not return. Circumstances, of course, Ota thought. But he recalled that that very morning Okada had entered his room as if for a talk, but had retired with a startled cry upon seeing Ota rolled up in a single, thin blanket. Perhaps, Ota thought, Okada is too gentle and must have felt that he was giving me too much trouble. Ota had given one of his two blankets to Okada when it became cold.

Still he was worried, and a few days later he looked Nakamura up. "Oh, it's all right now. The truth is I was thinking of seeing you today. He's settled where he wants to be now, I think. Thanks for tolerating him for so long," Nakamura said, thus easing Ota's anxiety.

In November 192— the Japanese Communist Party began to move into action, and Ryozo Okada, alias Masao Yamamoto, went into hiding to take his place among the party's outstanding leaders. Soon after Ota left Osaka to work in the provincial districts. In the spring of that year a financial panic had seized the country, and its reverberations were gradually seeping into the provinces. After leading a number of large and small struggles, Ota had become a full-fledged Communist. He now began to lead the complex and difficult agrarian movement, constantly bombarding the headquarters of the party with various opinions concerning the policies of the movement. Each time he received a reply to his views, he was startled. What penetrating logic, what experience, what practicality! When the opinions he had forged in the heat of his heart until they seemed fool-proof were shattered thoroughly and hurled back at him, Ota's self-confidence was destroyed, and he felt something akin to resentment. But always, Ota found that his unknown critic's viewpoints were right, and he was almost chagrined at the dullness of his own mind. What a man has been born to Japan, Ota often thought. And he would feel the dauntless spirit of his critic pulsing somewhere in the streets of Osaka, where the soot constantly soiled the air. Feeling this, Ota would feel a new determination springing up within him. Later Ota discovered from the investigations carried on during his trial that the name of his critic was Ryozo Okada.

Since Okada's face was not so vividly impressed in Ota's mind and since Okada had managed to slip through the dragnet laid after the 3.15 incident, it was natural that Ota should have failed to recognize Okada in the leper's distorted features. After the shock given him by the discovery of the leper's identity had quieted down, various questions galloped crazily around in Ota's muddled brain. When was he caught? When did he become ill? Does he know who I am? How shall I approach him? Should I approach him?

Anxiously awaiting the exercise period the next day, Ota looked at the leper with something like fear. His glances were stolen and surreptitious at first, but gradually his gaze became more steady until he fixed it unfalteringly upon Okada's face. Yes, now he saw that it was Okada. But even one who had lived with him every day for years and had seen his face constantly would have had to look twice before recognizing him as he now was. Little of Okada's former appearance could be found in the wide, jutting forehead and the narrowed eyes and indistinct eyebrows that were now his. The wide prominent forehead with its lock of long hair dangling down over it had at once impressed one with the intellectual excellence of the brain behind it, but now the thinned hair and sparse eyebrows gave it an idiotic air. The purpurescent swollen face had an eerie luster, and one eye was almost closed and very small. And the much-faded, many-patched prison garb and the tattered sandals added to the shabbiness of his appearance. Watching Okada stepping briskly along the path, sometimes breaking into a little trot, sometimes walking slowly, shoulders hunched now that the cold winds of mid-autumn had begun to blow, Ota could not help but cry: ah, is this the man Okada? Unable to continue looking at his changed figure, he tore himself from his window and threw himself on the bed. Though he was able to suppress them for a while, large tears soon began to stream copiously down his cheeks.

Innumerable and various misfortunes had befallen the lives of imprisoned Communists before. Ota remembered the ruin of a comrade who had been shocked horribly when the woman who was his comrade and wife had deserted their child and their beliefs and bolted with a man who might be said to belong to the enemy class. Ota remembered others, too—comrades separated from their parents or wives or children or sweethearts by death. Many others. But in these cases, time inevitably healed their wounds. There was always the end of their sentences, and the thought of this was enough to make their hearts dance. But not so with Okada. All was ended for him.

How was Okada passing his days? Knowing himself

to be the cripple he was, how did he feel? Having lived in the joy of being a Communist, how did he take it? Did he retain his burning faith in his beliefs? Or had he succumbed before religion? Did he ever think of suicide? Ota quivered with curiosity and excitement as he thought of the answers to these questions, unanswerable at present.

After thinking it over carefully, Ota decided to speak to Okada. Although he did not relish the unfeeling cruelty of having to speak to the comrade now so transformed, still it was not possible, he thought, to spend the long years before them under the same roof without recognizing each other. But when he thought of the moment of their meeting, Ota turned pale.

OTA realized that it was best to take advantage of his exercise period to speak to Okada, since he passed below the window of Okada's cell during his exercise. The opportunity, however, did not come so easily. Since Ota was alone, he was not subjected to very strict surveillance during his exercise period, and the old guard spent most of the time in the yard puttering around among the potted plants there or in the garden of the ordinary sick ward gathering odd branches of various flowers. No attempts were made to observe the time limit of Ota's exercise period, and everything was carried on in a loose manner; but the sought for opportunity did not come very easily.

One day, however, soon after transplanting had begun of the autumn chrysanthemums blooming gorgeously in the yard of the ordinary sick ward, several handymen carried a number of plant pots into the yard during Ota's exercise period, and the flower-loving guard ambled off to watch them. The long awaited opportunity had come at last. Fortunately, Okada was standing at the window of his cell. Summoning up his courage and looking neither to the right nor to the left, Ota advanced straight towards the window and stopped underneath it. The moment the eyes of the two men met, Ota forced himself to smile, experiencing an odd crumbling of his set face.

"Okada!" All emotions were vested in his voice as Ota spoke Okada's name, and remained silent for a few moments afterwards. "I'm Ota. Jiro Ota. Of *S* prefecture. Do you remember me?"

Although Ota had imagined the meeting many times and had carefully prepared the words he would mouth on the occasion, he found that he was terribly confused and unable to speak so glibly now that the time had really come. Okada replied with a smile, revealing a perfect set of white teeth. Only his teeth were unchanged, and they served only to impress Ota with a sense of discordance.

"Of course, I remember. It's a queer place to meet again, isn't it?" It was a calm voice, quiet and vibrant. "It's been a long time, hasn't it?" he continued. "Well met! I knew you were here the day after I was brought here, but I hesitated to recognize you. After all, my body is as you can see, and I thought there was no need to startle you needlessly."

Hearing Okada's words, Ota felt relieved. The doubt in his heart was cleared away the moment Okada spoke. So it is Okada, he thought, it is Okada.

"When were you caught? You escaped the 3.15 . . ."

"In August of the same year—less than six months later. My freedom was short-lived."

Okada spoke with extreme lightness. Ota was startled by the fact that there was no change in his speech. Contrasted to the horrible change in his features, this changelessness served only to strike Ota to the quick.

"And your illness," Ota began, but he stammered and hesitated. Bluntly, however, he continued: "And when did you become ill?"

"Well, the first symptoms began to show a few months after my capture—in the spring. But somehow they disappeared almost immediately. I didn't worry much about it at the time, but they came out again during my trial. By that time it was perfectly clear that I was afflicted, and a doctor had already pronounced me a leper."

"The movement outside seems to have changed greatly, doesn't it?" Afraid to hear more about Okada's disease, Ota awaited a break in his comrade's flow of words, and suddenly thrust in with a few irrelevant words. He spoke of a number of rumors about the party's activities that he had heard since coming to prison. But it is cruel, he reflected, to talk so to Okada. Okada is not the same Okada of the past. I talk of a world he cannot hope to attain again. It is cruel. Ota fell into silence.

"Are there any books in your cell?" he asked a moment later.

"No, none at all."

"What do you do every day?"

"Oh, nothing much. I sit around, but that's all." Again, Okada's smile revealed his teeth. "You can't sleep nights, can you? It may be due to your illness, perhaps, but you should try to put your mind more at ease. Of course, it depends a lot on the nature of the person, but . . ."

Advice, Ota thought; he's probably heard me asking the doctor for those sleeping powders.

"I have a marvelous appetite," Okada continued, "and I can sleep like a log. Perhaps you think too much. Of course, you can't help but begin to think when you come to a place like this, but you can't rely on a single idea you cook up here. You think that you've come across a splendid idea, but the moment you get out you realize that it's no go. You see, this world is dead, while the world outside is living. I know there's no need to tell you all this, but it's something I found out when I was imprisoned for a year a long time ago."

At this moment, Ota heard the guard returning and reluctantly began to draw away from the window. But he remembered that he had forgotten to ask an important question.

"And how long is your sentence?"

"Seven years."

Astonished by the words "seven years," Ota returned to his cell. A sentence of seven years spoke of the fact that Okada had not rejected his beliefs or succumbed before his enemies. According to his words, he had been more or less definitely pronounced a leper when his appeal trial had started. It was evident, however, that his stand during the trial had not changed in the least

because of his disease. Ota was unable to fall asleep that night for remembering Okada's words and perceiving the Okada of the past in them, especially in his advice and his last words.

From that day on, Ota became lively and enthusiastic. He began to look forward to the morning's reveille. The fact that he lived under the same roof with Okada seemed to give him strength. Okada, on the other hand, did not appear to have changed at all. He remained as quiet as ever, showing no particular desire to contact Ota again—far, aloof, and restrained. But he never failed to return Ota's smiles whenever they exchanged glances during the exercise period, smiles replete with the emotions of an ineffable nature, smiles sharing the comradeliness of a common faith.

It was clear, however, that Okada's attitude was not that of a man perplexed and wandering. Rather, his was an attitude strangely calm, as if he were penetrating through to the deepest depths of man's destiny. But what was the reason for Okada's calmness? Ota found that he could no more answer that question after the interview than before. Perhaps the question was to remain unanswered forever.

Although it was only for a few moments, Ota was able to speak to Okada again two or three times, and he found that they had both recaptured the intimacy of former days.

"Tell me, Okada, how do you feel about things now?" he once asked, unable to express what he meant to say more clearly.

"How do I feel?" Okada smiled. "Well, even I can't say exactly how I feel without plumbing more deeply into myself. Besides, there's no way of letting you know, and I doubt if I could express myself very clearly." He paused thoughtfully for a moment and continued, "I can tell you this much definitely, though. Even though my body is half rotten, I haven't deserted my beliefs. It isn't bravado that makes me say this, nor am I forcing myself to say it. A rotten mess of a body flaunting a staunch bravado would cut a sorry figure, wouldn't it? My stand comes naturally, Ota, extremely so. You ought to know that I wouldn't be able to live another day if it weren't so. I haven't cast aside my beliefs, Ota, I have *not* cast aside my beliefs. Another thing, too: no matter what happens, I won't kill myself here. As long as I can keep on, I intend to go on living."

Thus Okada spoke at the time, his voice vibrant and very low.

One afternoon about a week later, four men paid a sudden visit to Okada's cell. They entered Okada's cell and conversed noisily for a while. Finally someone said, "It's warmer and brighter outside. Perhaps it would be better there."

A moment later, Okada and the other men straggled out into the yard. There Okada was stripped of his clothes. Naked, except for his loin-cloth, he stood in the sunniest corner of the yard directly before the leprosy section. Ota found that he was able to observe the men from his window by stretching a little, and he watched them a bit nervously.

The men were evidently doctors, and with them was the head doctor of the prison. The oldest of the doctors stared thoughtfully at Okada's body from the top of his head to the tips of his toes. Okada was given a curt command, and he changed his position. Ota started when he saw Okada's raw back, entirely covered with a cruel flowering of scarlet sores, peony-like and outlined brilliantly against the whiteness of his naked body.

Again Okada was given a command, and he closed his eyes.

"You must speak truthfully," one of the doctors said. "Can you understand?"

Okada nodded. The doctor spoke again. Okada raised both his arms, and the doctor began to tickle the ends of his fingers with a fine hairbrush to test his sense of feeling.

"Can you feel it?" the doctor asked. Okada's head moved almost imperceptibly—from the left to the right, from the left to the right.

"Relax, relax," the doctor continued and began to test Okada's arms and legs carefully. Evidently he was feeling Okada's lymphatic glands. The doctor continued to speak at irregular intervals, and each time he spoke, Okada nodded or shook his head.

After examining Okada's eyes, his mouth, after going over his entire body carefully for about a half-hour, the doctors left. When Ota spoke to Okada for the last time a few days later, he mentioned the examination.

"What happened? Did they think they'd made a mistake and come to reëxamine you?" he asked, but it was more than a question. Ota believed and believed profoundly that this had been the cause of the reëxamination, although he felt that it was really nothing more than an empty hope, to which he clung for straw-like self-consolation.

Okada did not appear at all impressed by the incident. "A reëxamination, yes. But it was only to bolster the final decree, I think, because there'd been no doubts before. Two of them were specialists from a sanatorium near Osaka. They've decided completely against me, Ota. It's something like a death sentence."

They parted, and Ota did not find another opportunity to speak to Okada.

HOW long was this life going to continue—this life like a stagnant mire, like a monotonous blotch of a single gray, unbroken and unrelieved? Another year dawned, another spring, and another season of rains came. Within the sick ward, the number of bedridden prisoners grew enormously. Although this happened every year during the rainy season, it never failed to darken the hearts of the convicts.

One bright mid-afternoon, when the rain had cleared away into a stark, burning brilliance, a Korean prisoner's strained sanity suddenly snapped into raving madness. Screaming at the top of his voice, butting his head smash into the glass of his window, violently, with complete abandon, he began to rage and storm about his cell, blood streaming from his head, his voice needled to a piercing edge. Wrists corded tightly and cruelly until the thin ropes ate into his flesh, his tattered garment torn and almost stripped off his back by the guard's hands, he was dragged off, screaming with his madness and his fear and his pain. Four years of the

Korean's five-year sentence had been spent here.

From that night on, the voice of a man screaming at the top of his voice until it seemed as if his throat must split began to be heard from the madhouse near the isolated sick ward. It was the Korean's voice. At first screaming, *"Aigo!* Save me! Help! Help!" the voice gradually began to change until it soon resembled the moaning howl of some animal. On such a night, bitterns could be heard crying and winging their way across the sky. The shadows of the flock moved across the ground on a beautifully moonlit night.

Soon after the rains had set in, Ota joined the ranks of the bedridden. The rains lifted, and it was summer, intense, burning, hot. A high fever leeched itself upon Ota's weakened frame, warping his nerves, distorting his senses, and Ota felt that he could hear the tuberculus bacilli flowing into his veins with every pound of his pulse. At the same time he began to vomit frequently. The vomiting continued for a week and continued for a half-month—and when a month had passed by and the vomiting still continued, Ota realized that it was not caused by an ordinary stomach disorder, but by the fact that his intestines now were being attacked by the disease. A doctor came to examine him, but he left without a word, shaking his head thoughtfully.

About this time Ota began to feel the dark shadow of death enfolding him in its embrace. His eyes would darken, and he would become dizzy if he raised himself on his bed even for a moment. He began to suffer frequently from hallucinations. By gazing steadily at the peeling stucco on the walls, he could see bug-like shadows zooming across his line of vision. If he allowed his eyes to follow them, the shadows would become one and exorbitantly enormous, spreading out over the walls like a horrible monster. Suppressing his fear, he would stare at the shadow, watching it split into two, into three, into four parts, gradually changing into the face of his mother or his brother. Then suddenly, as if he were abruptly awakening from a dream, he would return to the world of actuality.

In his dreams, everything he had experienced over a long period of time flashed before him in a brief moment, and he would open his eyes, awakened by the sound of his voice moaning in anguish.

Thus face to face with the shadow of death, Ota found it strange that he did not care very much. He discovered that a prison death, now that it was an actuality, cruelly narrowing down upon him, did not have the drama and romance it had possessed in the novels he had read. Besides the rash inevitability of his disease, there was the stifling pressure of a capitalist state crushing him beneath its sordid heaviness.

Ah, am I fated merely to die off like this? Ota often thought, melting upon his tongue the sweetness of the rice jelly licked by the dying. His heart was unexpectedly calm and resigned, a heart devoid of the excitement his beliefs had stirred up within him once, a heart living stagnantly without the least desire to live. We are destined to a prison death, anyway, either through illness or through violence, he would add unemotionally. Whence this feeling came, he himself was unable to tell. Though it was a long time since he had last seen him, the face of Okada constantly reappeared in his dreams. Perhaps it was because he clearly realized that he received a spiritual bolstering from Okada, inexplicable, intangible, that he had been impressed with a deep strength through Okada.

A man of unshakable staunchness, afflicted though he was by an unutterably harsh destiny, Ryozo Okada was a person to be looked upon with respect and awe. So Ota thought, but he found that his lost freedom prevented him from fathoming the true depths of the suffering leper's heart. Ota had no alternative other than to accept a lonely relinquishment and resignation.

"I have not cast aside my beliefs." Okada's words seemed to explain all. But nothing was explained if it came to the question of how he had reached his decision, through what torturous roads he had reached it, through what battles fought in his heart. "I have not cast aside my beliefs. . . ." Ota did not doubt for a moment Okada's assertion that his words were unfettered and unforced, for he knew that Okada's faiths were in his blood and one with his life; and Ota envied Okada his stand. If Okada guarded his beliefs through pressure, if he could not rest securely in his conscience until he had forced his heart to accept them, then it would clearly signify Okada's defeat. But as long as this was not so, Okada would remain the supreme victor, even though his body rotted away into a roadside mess. Ota respected Okada and envied him; for he knew that Okada had won, while he himself had lost. Okada's world was to remain for Ota a distant desire, which he was never to attain. In this, too, Ota felt a lonely resignation.

It was said that the presence of Ota and Okada under the same roof was one of the more important issues discussed at each meeting of the prison board of directors. Rumors of this sort came floating into the ears of the prisoners from nowhere. One of the patrols had once seen the two comrades talking to each other and had warned the guard about it. It was said that a suitable method of separating the two was being considered. Such plans, however, soon became unnecessary, for Ota's illness became worse.

One afternoon, about a week after it became impossible for Ota to swallow even the thinnest of gruels, the head doctor suddenly opened the door of Ota's cell. Without a word and with expressionless faces, two orderlies helped Ota take off his prison garb and slipped his arms through the sleeves of a new kimono. Deep in the bottom of his numbed instincts, Ota felt the fragrance of his old mother emanate from the kimono.

As soon as Ota was transferred to the stretcher which was waiting for him, the orderlies carried him smoothly and quickly out of the sick ward. The fat head doctor followed, his eyes fixed steadily on the ground. Near the gate at the end of the yard stood the warden, watching the procession, probably waiting with a writ suspending Ota's sentence.

When Ota lifted his head slightly from the swaying stretcher and looked in the direction of the sick ward for the last time, it seemed to him that he saw the swollen lion's-face of Comrade Ryozo Okada pressed against the steel bars of his window, seeing him off, but his declining consciousness became numb again, and finally slipped into the oblivion of a dark, deep coma. . . .

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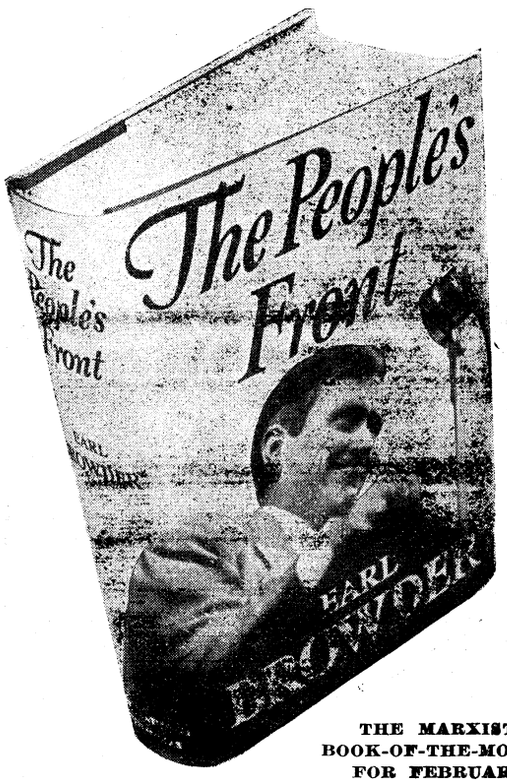

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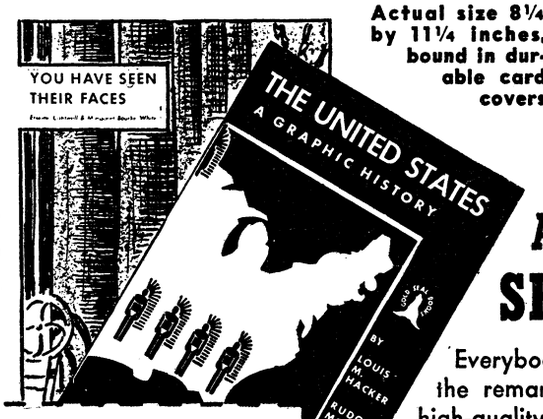

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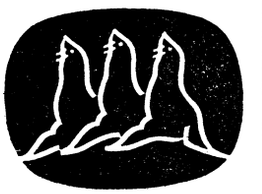

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NEW MASSES, APRIL 12, 1938, VOL. XXVII, NO. 3. NEW YORK, N. Y., IN TWO SECTIONS, OF WHICH THIS IS SECTION TWO

Edmund Wilson's Globe of Glass

By Joseph Freeman

"Where is the world?" cries Young, at *eighty*—"Where
The world in which a man was born?" Alas!
Where is the world of *eight* years past? *'Twas there*—
I look for it—'tis gone, a globe of glass!

—*Byron.*

READING Edmund Wilson's current book * you will be tempted to think of *Axel's Castle,* his first collection of literary essays, published in 1931. That was the most impressive appreciation by an American critic of Yeats, Valery, Eliot, Proust, Joyce, and Gertrude Stein, and it raised basic issues. The Symbolists had withdrawn from the life of their times and Wilson knew the reason why. In the utilitarian society produced by the industrial revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie the poet seemed to have no place. Already for Gautier's generation the bourgeois had become the enemy, and one took a lively satisfaction in fighting him. By the end of the century, the bourgeois world was going so strong that, from the viewpoint of the poet, it had come to seem hopeless to oppose it, so the poet retired to Axel's dream castle, seductively described by Villiers de l'Isle Adam, or fled to Africa like Rimbaud.

Through the leading figures of the Symbolist school, Wilson managed, almost wholly in literary terms, to state the dilemma of the modern bourgeois writer. He argued that the writer who is unable to interest himself in contemporary society either by studying it scientifically, by attempting to reform it, or by satirizing it has only two alternative courses to follow—Axel's or Rimbaud's. If you choose Axel's way, you shut yourself up in your private world, cultivate your private fantasies, encourage your private manias, and ultimately mistake your chimeras for realities. If you choose Rimbaud's way, you try to leave the twentieth century behind to find the good life in some country where modern manufacturing methods and modern democratic institutions do not present any problems to the artist because they have not yet arrived.

Wilson's own choice was to reject both Axel and Rimbaud. He was convinced that the writers who had largely dominated the literary world of the decade 1920-30, "though we shall continue to admire them as masters," will no longer serve us as guides. He saw the effects of the war upon Europe and saw, too, that American complacency was giving way to a sudden disquiet, and that both Europeans and Americans were becoming "more and more conscious of Russia, a country where a central social-political idealism had been able to use and to inspire the artist as well as the engineer." Wilson's studies in Symbolist literature thus led him to raise the old question "as to whether it is possible to make a practical success of human society, and whether, if we continue to fail, a few masterpieces, however profound or noble, will be able to make life worth living even for the few people in a position to enjoy them."

This attitude was very much in the American air when Wilson's first book of essays appeared. The economic crisis had predisposed our writers to revalue everything; old beliefs had collapsed with prosperity, and among the debris you could find fragments of the ivory tower, Axel's castle, and maps to far-off exotic countries. The Marxists also applauded Wilson's book; they appreciated his belated performance and were glad that after his own fashion he had arrived at some of their own cherished beliefs.

At the same time they observed that in discussing the Romantics and the Symbolists Wilson had taken into account neither the French Revolution, nor the class struggles following it, nor the Socialist movement they produced, nor the literature inspired by Socialism. Long before the war and the Russian Revolution, Marxian writers of every country, including America, had repudiated the Symbolists and their exotic dreams. For them Shaw, Wells, Sinclair, London, and Gorky had long ago demolished the ivory tower and Axel's castle. Their guides in society were neither Valery nor Proust, but Marx and Lenin. They supported the October Revolution from the start because they believed in its aspirations, and did not have to wait for the collapse of capitalist economy and the success of

* THE TRIPLE THINKERS: Ten Essays on Literature: by Edmund Wilson. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.75.

the Five Year Plan to reassure them they were backing the right horse. Out of this attitude they developed Socialist theories of literature.

Marxian criticism of this period had the advantage of describing the setting of the most important *social* conditions which shaped men's ideas and imaginings; its disadvantage lay in making history overshadow literature; it deduced the literary result from the historical setting. Wilson's book followed the method of induction; he moved from literature to history. The Marxian critics started with an indictment of capitalism and pointed to the great contemporary writers as examples of its decay. Wilson began with a detailed literary analysis of the great modern writers and in this way showed their inadequacy as guides for the stormy period opened by the Thirties. The advantage of his literary method lay in its emphasis on the most important *literary* conditions which shaped the ideas and imaginings of writers he discussed.

In 1930-31 the economic crisis was destroying the barriers between the small literary sect which had grown up around the Communist movement and the middle-class writers who lived or week-ended in Axel's castle. Many of these now went to Harlan, defended political prisoners, supported strikes, and filled their writings with references to the social conflict, the decay of capitalism, and the promises of Socialism. Thereby the literary left ceased to be a small sect and became a force in national letters, art, drama, the film, and literary journalism. Wilson became a member of this new movement. Rejecting Proust's cork-lined room, he plunged into the United States, describing strikes, breadlines, senatorial investigations, political gatherings; he got to know the American Jitters first hand and also the new promise of American life. He was beginning to see the world with the eyes of a writer studying Marx, though not as assiduously as he had once studied Joyce.

Yet he already evinced in print a curious trait. Like the English princess who thought sex far too good for the common people, Wilson thought Communism was too good for the Communists. Here, he said in effect, was a wonderful idea in the hands of inferior men; let us take Communism away from the Communists.

Subsequently he was impressed by his contacts with active Communists in the industrial areas, the "new kind of man in the radical labor movements" who belonged to the younger generation. In January 1932 he published a very moving declaration of faith in which he tried to explain why he accepted Communism. He was now giving specific shape to the general conclusion he had reached in his first book of essays, and he did so with remarkable candor. He stated frankly that he was a bourgeois and still lived in and depended on the bourgeois world, but had certain interests in common with the proletarian Communists: "I, too, admire the Russian Communist leaders, because they are men of superior brains who have triumphed over the ignorance, the stupidity, and the shortsighted selfishness of the mass, who have imposed on them better methods and ideas than they could ever have arrived at by themselves." He was thus enthusiastic not about a people's revolution, but about a leader's revolution imposed from above on the dumb people. As a writer, he said, he had a special interest in the success of the "intellectual" kind of brains as opposed to the acquisitive kind; his satisfaction in the spectacle of the whole world fairly and sensibly run as Russia was now run, would more than compensate him for any losses that he might incur in the process. Needless to say, his temporary enthusiasm never led him to join the Communist Party.

The literary left, which as a rule does not read the writings of converts carefully enough, was so pleased with this declaration of faith that it ignored the obvious seeds of disaffection it contained. However, the *New Masses* at that time did criticize Wilson for underestimating the creative power of the masses: "He conceives of the Soviet system as something imposed on selfish, ignorant louts by a few superior 'intellectual' brains. He forgets that while the Bolsheviks have led and directed the revolution, they have done so as the advance guard of the working class." What was most important at that moment, however, "was the positive element in Wilson's declaration; it revealed that under the pressure of the economic crisis certain honest intellectuals have begun to see the true relationships of capitalist society, and the correct way out; it now remains for them to translate their faith into works."

Through 1932 and most of 1933, Wilson followed those intellectuals who moved leftward. By the end of the latter year certain renegades from Communism opened their campaign against left writers, and Wilson fell under their influence. He reverted, perhaps, to his first snobbish feelings; Communism was a wonderful idea in the hands of inferior people; there were "superior brains" ready to take it away from them, men once more able to triumph over "the ignorance, the stupidity, and the shortsighted selfishness of the mass." These superior brains were led by Leon Trotzky; that was why the inferior Communists attacked him.

It was partly in this frame of mind that Wilson went to the Soviet Union. As a young man, embittered by the war, he had felt himself a bourgeois outside bourgeois society. Now, confused by a great historic struggle, he began to act like a "Marxist" outside Socialist society. For a time his political writing had been devoted to attacking capitalism; now its attacks were concentrated on the Soviet Union. For a time his literary essays had sided with writers inspired by Socialism; now they fell more and more into deliberate Red-baiting. In January 1937, for example, he published an article in the *New Republic* complaining that left criticism was "dominated by the quarrels of Russian factional politics"; the literary criticism "of the Stalinist press had become . . . diverted from its proper objects to playing the role of special pleader for Stalin." At that time Marxian critics pointed out that Wilson's alleged defense of literary standards was primarily an attack on Communism; his assault on the left was not literary criticism at all, but out and out political propaganda for Trotzky's views.

THE TRIPLE THINKERS reveals important alterations in Edmund Wilson's viewpoint since his first collection of literary essays appeared seven years

ago. In style, this book is an advance over the first; it is more compact, more subtle, and more positive. *Axel's Castle* analyzed the Symbolist writers whom Wilson was ready to repudiate as guides; it was a sustained and effective rebuttal. In the current book Wilson is not liberating himself from the past; he categorically affirms attitudes and prejudices. The structure of the book as a whole is looser, however. We no longer have a connected series of essays moving toward a single conclusion; we have separate essays expressing various conclusions about various things.

What holds them together is Wilson's present "dominant passion." In the first book, the focal point was literature; in this one it is politics. There are to be sure purely literary essays, of considerable merit. But the weight of the book, it seems, lies in the three essays which alone have a single idea to unite them. One of these, dealing with Marxism and literature, opens with certain truisms stated time and again by various Marxian critics during the past fifteen years. But Wilson gives neither the American Marxists nor *International Literature* credit for the many sensible things he learned from them; he quotes them only when they have said something which strikes him as ridiculous. His own contribution this time lies in the fields of history and politics. He believes that Lenin, Trotsky, Lunacharsky and Gorky "worked sincerely to keep literature free, but they had at the same time, from the years of the Tsardom, a keen sense of the possibility of art as an instrument of propaganda." The situation was not so bad when Lenin was alive, that was why the first Soviet films were masterpieces of implication, as the pre-revolutionary novels and plays had been. But Lenin and Lunacharsky died, and Trotsky was exiled, and "the administration of Stalin, unliterary and uncultivated himself, slipped into depending more and more on literature as a means of manipulating a population of whom, before the Revolution, 70 or 80 percent had been illiterate and who could hardly be expected to be critical of what they had read."

Wilson is ready to admit that the best contemporary foreign writing and the classics are now open to the Russian people, but this cannot "under the dictatorship of Stalin either stimulate or release a living literature," therefore the Soviet theater and film are both degenerating, Shostakovitch's music is damned because the commissars cannot hum it, and the Soviet Union is becoming "corrupt in every department of intellectual life, till the serious, the humane, and the clear-seeing must simply, if they can, remain silent."

Here Wilson eagerly repeats every canard spread by the professional anti-Soviet propaganda. He also does in reverse exactly what he accused the literary left of doing last year. Is not his criticism, when it touches the left, "dominated by the quarrels of Russian factional politics"? Is it not diverted from its "proper objects" to play the role of "special pleader" against the Soviet Union? His specific charges are neither new nor original and have been answered abundantly in the *New Masses;* here we might examine one basic preconception upon which the Wilsons proceed.

Wilson went to Russia assuming he was a Communist. He returned disillusioned and consoles himself with a myth. When Lenin was alive, he says, everything was wonderful; under Stalin everything is corrupt. You cannot help wondering why intellectuals of this type failed to understand Lenin when he was alive, why they repudiated him when he was at the height of his powers and achievements. H. G. Wells then thought that "Lenin is a little beast; he just wants power. . . . He and the Kaiser ought to be killed by some moral sanitary authority."

The inhabitants of Axel's castle and the hunters after Utopia catch up with historical reality slowly. While the October Revolution was new, they recoiled from its rude impact; only later, in retrospect, could they grasp its tremendous achievements; only long after Lenin's death was Wilson able to perceive that "the mind of Lenin was one of the sharpest lenses through which human thought has ever looked, and the rays which it concentrated are now penetrating bourgeois culture as the latter grows more flaccid and porous." Perhaps such detachment in time is inevitable for poets nurtured in the conservative Romantic and Symbolist traditions. Wordsworth said poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity; it may be that graduates of Axel's castle can understand revolution only when they recollect it in tranquillity. We may have to wait another decade, when fascism shall have been completely wiped off the face of the earth, for those writers who live on the fringes of contemporary history, to grasp the full creative significance of Soviet Russia today.

One must not get the impression, however, that Wilson is wholly pessimistic about Marxism and literature. His complaints deal with the past. He sees that Marxism is something new in the world but that already the human imagination has come to conceive of the possibility of recreating human society. How can we doubt that, as it acquires the power, it must emerge from what will seem by comparison the revolutionary "underground" of art as we have known it up to now and deal with the materials of actual life in ways which we cannot now even foresee? This of course is a matter of "centuries, of ages," but Wilson is not entirely discouraged even about the present. He expresses his hopes in paragraphs introducing his translation of Pushkin's "Bronze Horseman" in his current book.

This poem, he tells us, was suppressed by the censorship and not published till after Pushkin's death, and Wilson wonders, in reading it today, what repercussions it may have in Soviet Russia: "After all, the construction of the White Sea Canal has been accomplished by forced labor not much different from the forced labor with which Peter the Great built St. Petersburg; and, after all, Peter the Great is the figure to whom the laureates of Stalin most willingly compare him and to whom he is said to be most willingly compared. The dissident and irreverent, like Evgeni, hear behind them a horseman, not of course bronze but of steel, and no matter where they go, they cannot escape him; he drives them into prisons of the G.P.U. just as surely as he drove Evgeni into the Gulf of Finland; and just as Evgeni took off his hat and slunk aside where he had formerly hissed his threat, so the guilt of simple opposition puts them ultimately at the mercy of the 'Idol' and compels them to confess to crimes which

they have unquestionably never committed. Between the power that builds the state and the Idol that represents it, on the one hand, and the ordinary man, on the other, the distance is still very great."

This, naturally, is "literature"; you do not have to prove any of it. We have known for a long time that proofs in favor of the Soviet Union (like the monumental Webb book) constitute propaganda; while mere assertions against it, uttered by an irresponsible man of letters, constitute literature. An established literary critic does not have to prove that the White Sea Canal was built with the same kind of forced labor as St. Petersburg, or explain why men should confess to crimes they had never committed. But if these "ordinary" men "unquestionably never" wanted to overthrow the Soviet government, Wilson at any rate leaves us in no doubt as to his own feelings on the subject. Having constructed a fable in which the general secretary of the Communist Party is identified with the Czar, and "simple opposition" with Evgeni, our critic draws the moral: "It is also well to remember that Pushkin makes Evgeni's defiance take place in Senate Square, the scene of the Decembrist revolt, which occurred a year after the flood; and that, however discouraged the poet may have been by the suppression of the revolt and by his own eclipse, that defiance was ultimately made good—in November 1917." This, again, is to speak in terms of ages; but Wilson, unlike Pushkin, is not discouraged; if the horseman of bronze can be overthrown, why not the horseman of steel?

SOON Wilson's "return from the U.S.S.R." takes him even further. This time the hero of his literary-political fable is Gustave Flaubert, the link between Axel's castle and the artist's preoccupation with politics. Flaubert has figured for decades as the great glorifier and practitioner of literary art at the expense of human affairs both public and personal; but he was also concerned with the large questions of human destiny. Wilson's essay shows us Flaubert as the man of distrust and despair, the man who said, "Today I even believe that a thinker (and what is the artist if he is not a triple thinker?) should have neither religion nor fatherland nor even any social conviction. It seems to me that absolute doubt is now indicated so clearly that it would be almost an absurdity to want to formulate it."

Flaubert hated the Socialists, but, according to Wilson, he had more in common and had perhaps been influenced more by the Socialist thought of his day than he would ever have allowed himself to confess; in the *Education Sentimentale* his account of society comes closest to Socialist theory. "Indeed," Wilson assures us, "his presentation here of the Revolution of 1848 parallels in so striking a manner Marx's analysis of the same events in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* that it is worth while to bring together into the same focus the diverse figures of Flaubert and Marx in order to see how two great minds of the last century, pursuing courses so apparently divergent, arrived at identical interpretations of the happenings of their own time."

Wilson thinks Marx and Flaubert started from very similar assumptions and were actuated by moral aims almost equally uncompromising. Both implacably hated the bourgeois, and both were resolved at any cost of worldly success to keep outside the bourgeois system. Karl Marx's comment on his time was the *Communist Manifesto.* What is the burden of Flaubert's great social novel? Frédéric Moreau, the hero of the *Education Sentimental,* is a sensitive and intelligent young man with an income, but he has no stability of purpose and is capable of no emotional integrity. He is the more refined as well as the more incompetent side of middle-class mediocrity, of which the promoter—whose wife Frédéric loves—is the more flashy and active side. In the other characters of the novel—journalists, artists, playwrights, politicians of various factions, and remnants of the old nobility—Frédéric finds the same shoddiness and lack of principle which are gradually revealed in himself.

Further analyzing this great novel, Wilson says: "Bourgeois socialism gets a very Marxist treatment—*save in one respect which we shall note in a moment*—in the character of Sénécal, who is eternally making himself unpleasant about communism and the welfare of the masses, for which he is ready to fight to the last barricade. When Sénécal, however, gets a job as foreman of a pottery factory, he turns out to be an inexorable little tyrant; and when it begins to appear after the putting down of the June riots, that the reaction is sure to triumph, he begins to decide, *like our fascists today,* that the strong centralization of the government is already itself a kind of *communism* and that authority is itself a great thing." (Italics mine.—J. F.)

On the other hand, there is the clerk Dussardier, a "strapping and stupid" fellow and one of the few honest characters in the book. His last appearance is at the climax of the story and this appearance, according to Wilson, "constitutes indeed the climax." Dussardier turns up in a proletarian street riot (a "stupid" fellow naturally would) and is killed by a policeman. Who is that policeman? The "socialist Sénécal."

Ralph Fox has given us, in *The Novel and the People,* a portrait of Flaubert which shows that giant as something more than a misanthrope. The energy engendered by the French Revolution and its heroic aftermath had died out by the advent by Flaubert's generation. The bitter struggle of classes and the real predatory character of capitalist society had become so clear that they aroused only disgust. The democratic and Jacobin ideals of 1793 had become intolerable and monstrous platitudes in the mouths of the nineteenth-century liberal politicians. And Socialism, known to Flaubert only in its *Utopian* form, seemed to him as stupid and unreal as the worst extravagances of the liberal politicians who daily, in word and deed, betrayed their great ancestors of the French Revolution.

Flaubert considered these ancestors his ancestors. "Marat is my man," he wrote, picking on the most advanced and the most uncompromising of the early Jacobins.

The *Education Sentimentale* was profoundly influenced by 1848. "Who after that bitter experience," Fox asks, "would ever again believe that fine words could butter parsnips? The June days, in which the

Paris workers took the spinners of phrases at their word and fought in arms for liberty, equality and fraternity, were the writing on the wall. Flaubert was a novelist, not a student of the social history and economic machinery of mankind, and to him the June days merely proved that flirting with empty slogans roused dark forces who were a threat to the very existence of civilized society. The dictatorship of the blackguard Louis Napoleon which followed was just a dictatorship of blackguards, the apotheosis of the bourgeois, and all that could be expected of the bourgeois, and all that could be expected from the follies of preceding years. So the *Education Sentimentale* is a bitter and mercilessly ironical picture of the end of all the fine illusions of the liberal bourgeois, illusions which the red flag and rifle shots of June 1848 shattered forever. After that the vulgarity of the Empire. Nothing would be the same again and one could resign oneself to the long process of social decay and destruction of civilization by this stupid and miserly bourgeoisie, with its wars, its narrow nationalism and its bestial greed." Hence life in Flaubert's novels becomes frozen and static; he is a great writer faced with the problem of giving a true picture of a social order, the very premises of which were rapidly becoming a repudiation of the standards of humanism once looked upon as our common heritage.

But Flaubert's hatred of the bourgeoisie was so deep that already in the nineteenth century there were critics who, like Wilson, attempted to compare Marx's method with Flaubert's. To these Paul Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law and himself a keen student of literature, replied that Marx saw not merely the surface of things; he penetrated beneath, examining the component and mutual interactions. He did not see before him a separate thing-in-itself, having no connections with its environment, but a whole complicated and eternally moving world. Marx represented the life of that world in its various and constantly changing actions and reactions. The writers of the school of Flaubert, said Lafargue, complain of the artist's difficulties in trying to reproduce what he sees; but they only try to represent the surface, only the impression they receive. Their literary work is child's play in comparison with that of Marx. An unusual strength of mind was called for in order to understand reality so profoundly and the art required to transmit what Marx saw and wanted to say was no less profound.

It is not true, as Wilson thinks, that Flaubert and Marx "started from very similar assumptions" or that "they arrived at *identical* interpretations of the happenings of their own time." Flaubert and Marx both saw the bad sides of capitalism. But Flaubert saw primarily its bad *moral* sides. Marx, on the other hand, studied this society as a historian, an economist, a dialectician, and a revolutionary proletarian leader. He therefore saw not only more deeply into the bad sides of capitalism, but also perceived something to which Flaubert was wholly blind. He realized that capitalism was a social form necessary to develop society's productive forces to a level which would make possible an equal development, worthy of human beings, for *all* members of society. Earlier forms of society were economically too poor for this; capitalism for the first time created the wealth and the productive forces necessary for it. And Marx saw further still: *he realized that capitalism creates in the mass of the oppressed workers that social class which is more and more compelled to claim the utilization of this wealth and these productive forces for the whole of society.*

Flaubert's comment on the period around 1848 was the *Education Sentimentale;* its conclusion was the bitter reflection of the hero that the best time he ever had in his life was a youthful escapade in a whorehouse. This may be only, as Wilson thinks, a criticism of Frédéric Moreau; but the fact remains that the novel ends on a note of utter hopelessness. Marx's comment on the same period was the *Communist Manifesto,* which ended with a rousing cry to hope and action: "workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains, you have a world to gain!" Flaubert's limited insight led to *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* an inchoate, monumental lament on the stupidity of all mankind. Marx's profound insight led to the founding of the international Socialist movement and the triumph of Socialism over one-sixth of the earth. If one seeks to make the viewpoints of Flaubert and Marx *identical,* it is most likely because one wants to reconcile the two and does not know how; one no longer understands Flaubert in the light of Axel's castle and has not yet learned to understand him in the light of Marx.

There may be other reasons for the attempt, indicated by the "climax" of Flaubert's novel, which so intrigues Wilson and to which we now return. The clerk Dussardier is killed in a proletarian uprising by a policeman, and the policeman turns out to be the "socialist" Sénécal. How are we to understand this transformation of a "socialist" into a policeman? Here Wilson finds that Flaubert *diverges* from Marx; indeed, it is the *one* respect in which the two giants do diverge. For Marx, we are told, the evolution of the "socialist" into a policeman would have been due to the bourgeois in Sénécal; for Flaubert, *"it is the natural development of socialism";* for him Sénécal, "given his bourgeois hypocrisy, was still carrying out a socialist principle—or rather his behavior as a policeman and his yearnings toward socialist control were both derived from his impulse toward tyranny."

This is presumably Flaubert's attitude. What is Wilson's own? With his usual candor he tells us: "Today we must recognize that Flaubert had observed something of which Marx was not aware. We have had the opportunity to see how even a socialism which has come to power as the result of a proletarian revolution has bred a political police of almost unprecedented ruthlessness and all-persuasiveness—how the *socialism of Marx himself, with its emphasis on dictatorship rather than the democratic processes, has contributed to produce this disaster.* Here Flaubert, who believed that the artist should aim to be without social conviction, has been able to judge the tendencies of political doctrines as the greatest of doctrinaires could not; and here *the role of Flaubert is justified."* [Italics mine. J. F.]

Flaubert may have aimed to be without social conviction, but you cannot live in society and avoid it. He began with hating the Socialists as much as the bour-

geoisie, but since no man can maintain that kind of equilibrium long, and since Flaubert was himself a bourgeois, he ended with hating the Socialists more. By the time the Paris Commune came around he was yelling furiously for the blood of the communards. He did not deeply understand the real historic course of the nineteenth century; what he did understand were certain types of character. He gave us a keen portrait of Sénécal, but if you are going to blame Marx for Sénécal, you might as well blame Jesus for Judas, Danton for Dumouriez, Washington for Burr, and Lenin for Zinoviev. Wilson may fancy that great social changes are brought about by "superior intellectual brains" imposing a new order upon the stupid mass, and that these superior people select only angels to fight in the revolutionary ranks. Marx and Engels knew better; they knew that all kinds of men take part in great social movements and for all kinds of motives, and that no great cause since the dawn of history has been without its opportunists and apostates. They also knew that in the long run the Sénécals are either exposed, or their work is nullified by the "stupid" mass.

From the psychological viewpoint, Sénécal becomes a policeman *because he was never a Socialist to begin with.* Anyone with the slightest notion of what a Socialist is can see that long before the "climax" of Flaubert's novel. From the historic viewpoint, the exercise of authority by a Socialist republic hardly argues that Socialism springs from an impulse toward tyranny. In every epoch of great social change you have only the choice between the organization and authority of the reactionary force and that of the progressive force; without organization and authority major social action at this stage of human development is utterly impossible.

In Wilson's case we see once more a familiar pattern run its full course. In the spring of 1920, under the distant influence of the October Revolution, Bertrand Russell hastened to declare himself a Communist. In the fall of the same year, he returned from the U.S.S.R. declaring that Lenin's regime was a tyranny supported by the equivalent of the Czarist police, in the shadow of whose menace ordinary mortals lived in terror; a regime which in time would come to resemble any "Asiatic despotism." He felt more at home in England, where he belonged to the privileged classes; so he naturally discovered that since 1688—that is, since the revolution in which the landed nobility and the bourgeoisie reached a compromise very pleasant and profitable to both—English life had been based on "kindliness and tolerance," which were worth all the creeds in the world.

In 1932, under the impact of the economic crisis, Wilson hastened to declare himself a Communist on the fantastic assumption that the October Revolution was the triumph of superior "intellectual brains" over the stupid mass. Then he turned to Trotzky, for the time had come when intellectuals "disillusioned" with the U.S.S.R. could attack it only in the name of "Marxism." Now he repudiates the "socialism of Marx himself" because he fancies it springs from the "same impulse toward tyranny" which animates the policeman. The upshot would seem to be that Utopians of the type of Russell and Wilson simply do not like Socialism or rather that they like the fruits of Socialism but do not like the historic process by which it is achieved. They want the good end without any of the painful means, and they always incline to be elated or depressed by the momentary aspect rather than steadied by a vision of the whole vast movement toward a magnificent and necessary goal.

Was Marx, then, really inferior to Flaubert as a psychologist? It was Marx, after all, in his "comment on 1848," who described the petit-bourgeois Socialist, the man who can brilliantly dissect the jitters of capitalism, but cannot find the real way out of it; and finally, when stubborn historical facts disperse the intoxicating effect of "socialist" self-deception, he ends in a "miserable fit of the blues."

All this may be "trying to measure works of literature by tests which have no validity in that field." But was it not Wilson himself who dragged the White Sea Canal and the G.P.U. into his essays along with the Mithraic bull whose "throat and balls" are threatened? Was it not he who converted Flaubert's novel attacking the shoddiness of bourgeois society into an attack on the Socialism of Marx? To be sure, Wilson is a skillful artist; like Yeats he knows the value of parable; like Proust he knows how to make his important statements parenthetically. But he makes these exclusively against the U.S.S.R., unable, presumably, to find a German or Italian writer (Mann or Pirandello) through whom to attack fascism parenthetically.

Where, then, has the road from Axel's castle led after eight years? The castle lies in ruins and Rimbaud's road is closed forever. What now? Are private fantasies and chimeras to be replaced by political fantasies and chimeras? Is the poet to lament the betrayal of his unreal social Utopias as he once lamented the frustration of his unreal sexual expectations? Will he continue to have nightmares in which he is Evgeni pursued by the "Idol" and close his ears to the Führer's hoofs clattering across Europe? Will he cry a plague on all your houses, attempt like Flaubert to be without social conviction, and wind up perhaps calling for the blood of the communards? Or will he perhaps in 1942 issue a new declaration of faith in the Socialism of Marx, recollecting in pleasant tranquillity the real significance of the present decade, by that time beyond recall?

Wilson has answered these questions himself in last week's *New Republic.* He is once more back in Axel's castle where reality itself is fiction, and the whole vast Soviet world which has so haunted his thoughts is only a book, like M. Teste's speculations. The book has begun to bore him. What if Japan does attack the U.S.S.R.? It suits Wilson, who is in a hurry to "shut up that Soviet novel." But there is a difference. Ten years ago the inhabitants of Axel's castle ignored reality. Now they lean out of the casements hurling impotent curses on Socialism in literary essays which have no room for a single line against fascism.

Fortunately, however, most of this country's progressive writers think in other ways. Whether or not they accept the Socialism of Marx, they adhere

today to the one country which practices it, knowing that more than any other on the face of the earth it will defend civilization against the new barbarians who threaten to engulf it. These writers understand that history never really repeats itself, therefore they avoid childish historical analogies and subjective historical fables. They perceive that the proletarian revolution which began in 1917 is neither the bourgeois revolution of 1789, nor the Consulate of 1800, nor the Bronze Horseman's realm of 1825, nor the June days of 1848. Marxism is indeed "something new in the world." But in so far as one may learn from the past, they are anxious to avoid the tragic blunder of certain writers at the beginning of the last century. These, confused by surfaces which they judged wholly by the fluid standards of ethics, reflected the second phase of the great, liberating French Revolution; they cheered the defeat of France at Waterloo, and woke up to face the Holy Alliance and the frightful reaction it imposed upon Europe for thirty-three years.

Stranglers of the Thunder

By Carl Carmer

FIGURES born out of the folk-imagination people the arts of many European countries. Folklore has inspired many poems, paintings, and statues. Sometimes art creations have been so direct as to be actually folk art itself—as in the case of cathedral gargoyles; more often they have been the results of an artist's conscious laboring with folk materials. The countries of Europe are so small, however, in comparison with the United States, and the centuries have given their folk stories so many years in which to accumulate, that few of their artists, no matter what their medium, could grow to man's estate without being at least aware of the heritage of picturesque legend with which they were surrounded.

In America, however, the vastness of the nation and its short history have combined with circumstance to separate the artist from this stimulating material. Native folklore has had but little time to grow. The American artist, in the past too greatly influenced by classics and contemporaries, has not, as a rule, been of a social class familiar with the naïve products of the popular fancy, existing only through word of mouth, passed down through centuries by narrators whose only literature they were.

Despite the country's comparative youth America has a folklore, and that quite aside from the legends already in existence among the Indians before the white men came. Some of it was brought to the new land from countries across the seas and has been preserved much as it was, by people geographically isolated, like the descendants of the Scotch Highlanders of Elizabethan times, who have lived many generations in the Appalachians and still sing of "Bonny Barbara Allen" in a wailing ballad whose origins are lost far back in the dim mists of early English history. In Louisiana the Acadians sing songs and tell stories that were first heard beside the hearth-fires of eighteenth-century France, clinging to them with an affection that has outlasted both a voluntary and an involuntary exile. In the Dakotas the blond Swedish-American is dancing to the tunes to which his fathers jigged in the fields of Scandinavia. And in the central states in many a community of German complexion the fantasies of the fatherland, though translated into English and ever changing in the telling, still attract groups of enchanted children.

To the question of America's rightful claim to this treasure of other lands, it may be answered that once a people adopts a folklore, it makes it completely and peculiarly its own. With no printed page to discipline the itinerant narrator, a story grows and changes while it is told. It is translated not only into the prevailing language but also into familiar and commonly visual terminology. Thus the "Ballad of Lord Randal," old Scottish song still echoing among the North Carolina mountains, has become, through generations of singers who never saw a nobleman, the simple tragic story of Johnnie Randall who killed his sweetheart. And the Johnnie Randall of that story is an American mountain boy whose lank figure might well be painted or molded, whose fate might be subject for play or opera or poem.

But it is not merely in the borrowed folklores of other lands that America has enriching material to offer her native artists. America has an authentic, autochthonous folklore of her own. Wherever American people have tarried long enough to have the feeling of belonging to the land, the roots of their imaginations have crept down into the soil. And the harvest, as might be expected from a young and sturdy folk, has been strong and hardy. A gusty, exaggerated, sometimes sardonic humor has been the keynote of much of our native folklore, regardless of its place of origin —from Texas to Maine. Perhaps Benjamin Franklin set the pace when, disgusted with the inaccurate accounts of the country of his birth contributed to the London papers by Britishers who had been only short-time visitors, he wrote of the American sheep whose tails were so heavy with wool that it was necessary to rest them on little carts trundled behind, and of the American cod fisheries in the Great Lakes, the salt water fish having been driven up the Niagara River into Lake Erie by hungry whales. "But let them know, sir," he continues, "that the grand leap of the whale in the chase up the falls of Niagara is esteemed by all

who have seen it as one of the finest spectacles in nature."

While it is doubtful if this early American whopper became so generously known as to give story-tellers a mark to shoot at, it is unquestioned that it is a typical American attitude of mind and that the products of the American communal imagination have for the most part been grotesquely exaggerative. In the days when communication was more difficult and books and journals were less numerous, the good story-teller was a proud figure. There were even contests in the sort of imaginative fiction which, for want of a better term, was called lying. My father has told me with pride in his voice that my great-grandfather was boasted by his relatives to be the "biggest liar in Tompkins County." They cited as proof of the contention his tale of snowdrifts so deep in the vicinity of Ithaca, N. Y., one winter that they did not melt through the summer. He was cutting hay in a meadow one hot July day, he said, when a big buck jumped the fence and got caught in a snowdrift so inextricably that he was able to kill it by cutting its throat with his scythe. Were the picture which this anecdote conjures up to be painted, I can imagine its being bitterly attacked by conservative academicians as but another example of the undisciplined, inexplicable, and indefensible juxtaposition of unrelated objects with which modernists insult intelligence—rather than recognized as representative of the imaginative quality of the average American farmer before the Civil War.

A few of America's writers in the past have caught the spirit of this folk humor—Josh Billings, Artemus Ward, and especially Mark Twain. But most of the country's creative workers were too politely striving toward European culture to recognize the artistic values that lay in the imagination of the people. They were unable to see any analogy between the figures of the saints, painted by the artists of the Renaissance from the conceptions that people had come to have of them, and the fantastic latter-day miracle-workers of American mythology. In an ancient Jewish folk tale of a lad who killed a giant with his sling-shot Michael Angelo found the subject of a statue. What sculptor will carve us Strap Buckner, who "rassled with the devil" out in the Dakotas? Who will supplant the Lorelei with the maid of the Pascagonla, whose song from the summit of a hill of waters lured the Biloxi Indians to their sea-games off the coast of Mississippi? Who will turn from Ruth, the sower, to the sturdy figure of Johnnie Appleseed swinging westward with the ballet of the swirling blossoms springing behind him?

The English nursery tale of Jack and the Beanstalk has already been used as material for an opera by an American composer, an opera in which a cow proves an amusing and important character. But no American stage has yet seen Paul Bunyan and his big blue ox who measured "twenty-eight axe-handles and a plug of chewing tobacco" between tips of his magnificent horns. While one of America's most distinguished poets, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and one of her best known musicians, Deems Taylor, have collaborated on an opera which turned out to be a conventional affair, its verse based on Anglo-Saxon rhythms, its music far from distinctive, the giant shoulders of John Henry lift his nine-pound hammer high in the air; Negro work-songs give him the beat, and the old tragedy of the battle of man against the machine is reënacted.

The native American artist has been busying himself with creating statues entitled *Civic Virtue, The Christian Student, Goose Girl,* hoping as all artists hope, to speak for the age in which he lives, to allow the imagination of the people to speak through him. While he chips at his stone, the imagination of America is articulate, and he cannot hear it. Pecos Bill is riding a twister down in Texas, his star-spurs bite into the flanks of the whirlwind. Kemp Morgan towers above the Oklahoma hills, driving oil wells single-handed. Railroad Bill, hard pressed by the sheriff, turns from a black Alabamian son of sin into a scuttling red fox (here is a more fascinating problem than ever a Daphne becoming a bay tree). In Gajun, Louisiana, the talking bulldog, returning from college, takes the bayou steamer for the old home he is destined never to see. Down the Mississippi Mike Fink, half horse and half alligator and part snapping turtle, guides his keel-boat. Along the Atlantic coast Old Stormalong stands on the bridge of his clipper while below his sailors, mounted on horses, ride the long watches. Casey Jones opens the throttle of one of the "two locomotives that are goin' to bump." Willie the Weeper dreams of the generous lady who gave him a pretty Ford automobile "with diamond headlights and a silver steering wheel." Tony Beaver turns the Eel River back on its course through West Virginia. The Gambler, twenty-dollar gold pieces on his eyes, leaves old Joe's barroom for the last time, drawn by sixteen coal-black horses, cheered by the music of a jazz band perched on the top of his hearse, speeded along the cemetery road by a dozen crap-shootin' pall-bearers raisin' hell.

There should be an American mythology for study in our schools. I believe this with such sincerity that I have tried to write such a book in *The Hurricane's Children,* which was offered to the public in December 1937. In trying to describe this book when I first talked about doing it, I said it was a group of American fairy stories. When it was done, I found that there are no fairies in it. Instead I find a lot of giants proudly roaring that a hurricane was their father and an earthquake was their mother.

The people of almost every nation in the world except the United States have liked to make up stories about "the little people." Even the American Indians made up some beautiful tales about them. But Americans have been so busy doing big jobs that they have never taken time off to let their minds play with the tiny folks who have magic powers. At the end of a hard day's work the American cowboys or miners or lumberjacks or apple-pickers have had their fun out of making up stories about men who could do jobs that just could not be done, and in an impossibly short time with one hand tied behind them. And so I have discovered that this is not an American fairy-story book at all, but an American giant book.

If these stories had existed hundreds of years ago in another land, we would probably be calling them

myths today and reading of Pecos Bill and Tony Beaver and Annis Christmas as we read of Mercury and Mars and Juno, or of Thor and Loki and Freya. The stories in this book are the products of our grandfathers' fancies, our fathers', our own. They are the imagination that Americans inherit, and I hope many Americans are going to be proud of it.

If mythological figures are to be allowed a place in art then, and God forbid that they should be barred, let the American artist remember his own immediate heritage. His background may enable him to give to his work something truer than he would give to Hercules or Persephone. Let him remember, too, that much of the appreciation of any art lies in the esthetic pleasure derived from recognition. The people of a locality will be happier to see in the art works adorning their public buildings, for instance, figures they know and are fond of rather than works representing abstract virtues or the gods of Greece and Rome. It is time that artists recognize in the figments of American dream the opportunity for the expression of that beauty which is distinctively a part of the land and its people.

The suggestions I am making here to American artists are not meant as arguments for "literary" art as opposed to representations of "abstract" beauty. The subjects I recommend allow more freedom of individual expression, certainly, than those art products which the "abstractionists" are inclined to scorn as mere illustrations. They permit as many treatments as there are artists to present them. Their essence is imaginative liberty. They are representative not of a single narrator's creativeness but of the free soaring fancy of the workers of America, thousands of them in communal search for release from the monotony of the real. They should be welcomed by the artists of the more liberal persuasions, for, like the manifestations of the subconscious which have found expression in the work of Dadaists and Surrealists, they introduce, as Wilenski expresses it, "the incredible proportions and juxtapositions that occur to us in dreams." Indeed they surpass in mad fancy most of the imaginative work of today.

Even to the conservative academician these figures present a challenge, the oldest known to art. For John Henry is any Negro, and Pecos Bill is any cowboy. Rippling muscles of man and straining horse offer their problems as they have since the days of Hellas. But America's worker-created giants should be most heartily received by that already great group of American artists who believe that art should have social significance. They depict the triumph of the laborer over his environment. They are the day dreams of the worker who sees himself embodied in the champion his mind creates. In them defeatism is wiped out by invincible action.

Bread Upon the Waters

By Michael Bruen

MR. ALLARDYCE tugged the door open, tonight as always, just enough to allow him to scurry through sideways, and disappeared with a brief flirt of his Chesterfield and a bounce of the curl in his derby.

The new girl, looking after him, laughed and turned to Ethel at the switchboard.

"How is he? All right?"

Ethel made a delicate, familiar gesture of wiping her nose with her naked fingers.

"He parts his hair in the middle," she said flatly.

"Oh," said the new girl. "But he smokes a pipe," she suggested hopefully.

"How else can he prove that his lips aren't his nostrils," Ethel explained.

"You've got something there," agreed the new girl. "I noticed the droopy schnozzola. Then I suppose he's the kind gives a raise every Leap Year of his own free will?"

"A gold star for catching on quick," said Ethel.

Mr. Allardyce fidgeted sixty-three floors' worth in the elevator. Stocks went down today, stocks went down today, he said to himself sincerely. I really believe stocks went down today. That was the way Mr. Allardyce dealt with life and illusions. He felt that if he really and truly believed that the market went down, it would go up, because things never happened the way you really wanted them to. So he always hoped things by opposites. But he genuinely had to feel that way or it didn't work.

"Good night," Mr. Allardyce said civilly to the elevator man. The elevator man, who remembered last Christmas very clearly, put his hands behind his back, and first ground, then tossed, his hips at Mr. Allardyce's back. "Jerk," he said, indicating, to the starter. The starter, with whom gifts were pooled, agreed.

Mr. Allardyce had his three cents ready at the newsstand. Down, down, down, I know it, I feel it, he prayed as he rustled the pages and walked blindly on. He guided himself through the swinging doors and ran his eyes down the quotations. He did not look at United Peruvian until he had seen the trend. The trend was down. Mr. Allardyce raised his eyes to heaven. United Peruvian was rarely indomitable and ascending in the face of the trend. But Mr. Allardyce peeked hopefully because he felt so pessimistic. But United Peruvian was quite down. Mr. Allardyce saw that the fault lay with him. He had not really believed. He

had allowed his conscious to deceive himself and his subconscious. He could feel his heart sinking and growing larger and heavier like a snowball rolling down a hill.

Two more points down, and I'll have to cover, he thought in tremendous despair. What had happened? Everything had been going so beautifully in the market before he had put his two cents in. Two cents? Ten thousand dollars! And he had United Peruvian on margin. He had jinxed the market, that was what he had done. He had sent it down as surely as though he were the law of gravity. With what dash and in what exultant spirits he had made his investment! He had not said a word to Geraldine at first, he had not even breathed of the hot, impressive tip. He had hardly doubted a quick rise and a neat profit. He had seen himself with his thumbs snapping his suspenders, awing Geraldine with his acumen. Geraldine could always be impressed with more money. Of course he had told her the very next day when it had gone down a point; he could not have a thing like that on his conscience when it was going down, and besides she would have to give him the money if he had to cover. She would give him the money because she would not see the ten thousand thrown away, but how she would lash out at him with her long, long tongue. Oh, why hadn't he bought less outright? Outright or nothing, he had always said, so sanely, and he had speculated, and very likely he was getting what he deserved.

The February night was forbidding. It was darker and more frightening than usual, it seemed to Mr. Allardyce. He felt quite depressed.

Ordinarily Mr. Allardyce would have seen the touch coming half a block away. He would have crossed the street, or almost run, or turned his head. But tonight he walked right into it. Someone said, close up against him, "Could you please let me have something for a bite to eat, mister? I'm terribly hungry."

Mr. Allardyce started. He looked at the touch, who was a man, quite a young and tall man, and said quickly, "Sorry." He hurried. But the man walked along with him.

"Please," he said in an importunate tone that was quite distasteful to Mr. Allardyce, who loathed a display of emotion. "Please let me have something." He sounded as though he were going to cry, and he was a tall young man.

Bum, thought Mr. Allardyce irritably. Mr. Allardyce knew exactly what kind of racket this was. People who stopped other people in the street this way were shiftless bums and only wanted money for liquor. Frankly, they were depraved. Mr. Allardyce had discussed the very situation sanely and at length over the bridge table. Very fairly. "Assuming some of them are really hungry," he had said, "it's logical to believe, and I'll bet statistics show, that the average will be one in fifty. Now, since there is no way of telling which of the few are really needy and since the chances are fifty to one that you are being approached by a professional beggar, who has a larger income than your own, or a drunkard, it is always wiser from a sociological and economic viewpoint to refuse. And anyway there's relief, and we pay taxes."

So Mr. Allardyce felt very strongly and informed about it. People never gave *him* anything for nothing. Quite the contrary. He particularly disliked being approached tonight when he had so much trouble, and although the fellow was undoubtedly putting on a good act, he said, not really sharply, because you never knew what these fellows might take it into their heads to do, and this one was big, but firmly, "I'm very sorry. I have no change."

The man stopped short. Mr. Allardyce, relieved, walked quickly on toward the station.

"Of course," the man said loudly in noisy, conspicuous words. "No, of course you haven't." His voice cracked, but carried ragingly, "I only hope you go hungry some day."

The words came running breathlessly after Mr. Allardyce. They caught up with him and hissed at him, and his susceptible heart began to tremble. The night had grown blacker still, he was sure. It was quiet and meaningful. The words beat against his ears like an angry and ominous curse, even as he walked on. They crept inside him. It *was* a curse. He felt frightened, threatened. Life pressed him. Stocks were down, business was not good, he had not been charitable. God Himself might be sending this omen. Perhaps he should have been kinder. Mr. Allardyce found himself, impossibly, unaccountably, turning around and walking back. He would miss the 6:47. He would be late for dinner. Geraldine would be raging. The financial page would be looming enormously and not by coincidence between the salt and pepper shakers. But he had been cursed.

The fellow was still standing there, looking at him. A chill wind whistled around Mr. Allardyce as he noticed the yellowed gray jacket and the gaping sweater. He was a young man, without a coat. His eyes were very blue. His ears were a painful red. He was looking almost angrily at Mr. Allardyce, who was quite cold.

"Very well," said Mr. Allardyce, though he tried to be friendly, "if you really are hungry, I shall take you into a cafeteria and buy you some food. If you really are hungry." I'll bet he just wants the money, said Mr. Allardyce assuredly to himself, he just wants the money for drink, look at his red nose.

"Thank you," said the man, low, "I'm very hungry all right."

But he hadn't said he was sorry for the terrible thing he had said, thought Mr. Allardyce, leading the way into the cafeteria and pulling two checks from the machine. He can see that I'm a kind man, well meaning, now that I know he really is hungry. He should have said he was sorry, that he didn't mean it, that they were only words spoken in anger.

Mr. Allardyce bought his companion a ham and Swiss cheese sandwich, a piece of apple pie, and a cup of coffee, and bent to watch him eat. The young man ate without looking at him. He did not say anything and did not eat too fast, but it was plain he was hungry. He chewed each mouthful with love almost.

But although he liked the food very much, he did not yet show any proper gratitude to Mr. Allardyce, who sat wondering if he realized what an awful thing he had said. Here he was being well fed. He must be sorry. He must be grateful. He must take it back.

Mr. Allardyce was determined to get it straightened out. He could not afford to have a curse hovering over him like that. He did not want it.

"You can't give away money to everyone who asks for it, after all," he said to the young man, tentatively. He was really only a tall boy, he noticed, but he had a tired face.

"No," said the boy eating, and still not looking at Mr. Allardyce, "don't apologize."

Apologize! Mr. Allardyce kept his temper.

"There are a lot of these . . . uh. . . ."

"Moochers," suggested the boy, looking at him now.

"All kinds of bums too," agreed Mr. Allardyce. "You never can tell."

"Yes," said the boy.

Mr. Allardyce looked at his watch. The boy was eating the pie. Maybe he'd have liked it *à la mode*, thought Mr. Allardyce sardonically. But he said:

"And you're a strong, healthy fellow. You ought to get a job. You can't tell me a young man who's willing can't get a job. The depression's over. Where do you see a breadline now?"

The boy raised his eyes again and looked very tired.

"When I was a young fellow," insisted Mr. Allardyce, "I had to struggle too, I can tell you. I didn't have anything. I worked myself up without asking anyone's help. There's no valid reason why you shouldn't get a job. Not a reason." He felt that he was quite right, there was no excuse. He was even a little angry.

"Have you got a job?" asked the boy, staring at him.

Mr. Allardyce allowed himself a small smile at the naïve question.

"Job?" he said, imagining as he often did when he felt a little scornful, that he was raising an eyebrow, "I'm a businessman. I'm an employer. I have my own staff."

"Will you give me a job?"

"Me?" said Mr. Allardyce in sharp surprise. What a hell of a, and unprecedented, nerve. Just whom was the fellow trying to impress? As if he would take a job if it were handed to him on a platter! He was just trying to excuse himself.

"I want a job," said the boy, rather monotonously Mr. Allardyce thought. "I can work."

"Well, I'm hardly the one. . . . I'm afraid you'll have to go to the proper places . . . an agency . . . something. Surely there are authorities that could place. . . . Everybody can be taken care of. . . . I don't have that sort of. . . ." Mr. Allardyce stopped. This was going far enough and was completely apart from the point.

"All right," said the boy, "everybody can be taken care of."

"Is your family on relief?" asked Mr. Allardyce.

"I don't know," the boy said. "Maybe."

Very smart, thought Mr. Allardyce. "I don't know. Maybe." Whatever that means. Very clever, I suppose he thinks he is.

"Well, don't you live with them?"

"I don't live with anybody."

"Where do you stay?"

"I don't know where I'm going to stay tonight."

"Haven't you got a home?"

"I'm carrying the banner."

Mr. Allardyce's mouth dropped open a little to indicate that he did not quite follow.

"I haven't any money for a room," explained the young man so that Mr. Allardyce could understand.

"Oh," said Mr. Allardyce. "Well, you can't be trying terribly hard," he added. "Anyone with an ounce of ambition and pride. . . ."

"Listen," said the young man abruptly, "thanks for this. I was hungrier than you could ever think of anyone being. But stop talking. What the hell are you talking about anyway? My clothes are torn, my shirt has no sleeves, I don't know whether I'll ever be able to shave my face again, or smell like something clean. So, all right, I haven't any ambition. So I know you'd starve first before you asked anybody for anything. All right, thanks, but shut up."

Mr. Allardyce was very, very angry, but he controlled himself beautifully.

"That's certainly not my fault," he said, "and I'm sure I'm sorry. But that's no reason why you should tell me that you hope I'll go hungry some day. After all, I've never done anything to you."

The young man looked up with slow eyelids. Then his eyes crinkled and he almost smiled. He searched Mr. Allardyce's face very thoroughly.

"Sure," he said, "why should I wish you any hard luck?"

A weight was lifting from Mr. Allardyce's depressed shoulders. He felt almost glad of this encounter. The young man did not wish him any ill fortune.

"That's the way," he said. They got up. Mr. Allardyce paid the cashier. At the door, he said jovially, "Wait." He took a dollar bill from his wallet, he looked at it with satisfaction and appreciation and bestowed it on the moocher. He said, "There you are. I hope that'll give you a little start." Mr. Allardyce's tone was modest. He knew how big a bill must look to a tramp.

"Thanks," said the boy.

"It's all right," acknowledged Mr. Allardyce, starting away. He took a deep breath. He felt that stars must have come out, but before he could see, he thought he heard a call.

"Thanks for nothing."

Mr. Allardyce looked around in amazement. The boy was gone. Had he said "Thanks for nothing"? But he couldn't have, not after the way he'd been treated. Yet it was not the sort of thing Mr. Allardyce could just imagine someone saying. He must have heard it. But why? Mr. Allardyce took his pipe out and bit it nervously. Hadn't the curse been taken back? Hadn't he said he didn't wish Mr. Allardyce any hard luck? His very words were, "Why should I wish you any hard luck?" That could mean anything. Hadn't the curse on his head been lifted? But he had been more than generous. He had done more than was expected. It wasn't fair, it really wasn't playing fair.

After all, there were no stars out. The remembrance of the stocks came back to Mr. Allardyce. He thought of Geraldine. He felt the wind and heard it whisper. Rain was beginning, a fat drop spattered on his hat. It was a bad night, and he was cursed. He walked on, feeling miserable and beaten and doomed.

Revolution In Bohemia

By Granville Hicks

I

IN 1923 young Halstead Weeks,
The product and the pride of Saint Tim's school,
Denounced in ringing tones the Bolsheviks
And proved that Bob LaFollette was their tool.
His mother felt the tears run down her cheeks,
His banker-papa growled, "The boy's no fool."
Young Halstead got a watch for graduation
And old Saint Tim's a sizeable donation.

II

At Yale he learned from Phelps that *V.V.'s Eyes*
And *Peter Pan* were modern works of art;
From Keller that the man of enterprise
Serves God and country in the busy mart;
From good Dean Brown that one should not tell lies
Nor masturbate nor scorn the pure at heart.
And if he'd made a single freshman team
He'd have fulfilled his father's every dream.

III

But even Yale had students in those years
Who laughed at Phelps, and Halstead got the habit.
Not only did he imitate their sneers
But when they praised a book was quick to grab it.
He read *This Side of Paradise* with tears
And turned to *Jurgen, Sister Carrie, Babbitt.*
He read the prefaced plays of Bernard Shaw
And grew ashamed of his pot-bellied Paw.

IV

He read *Of Human Bondage, Dorian Gray,*
Three Soldiers, In Our Time, The Enormous Room,
Ulysses, Rainbow, Mrs. Dalloway,
Remembrance of Things Past, In Nero's Tomb,
The Magic Mountain, Tamar, Antic Hay,
The Dial, Transatlantic, Exile, Broom.
Now where could youth with such distinguished taste land
Except among the lovers of *The Wasteland?*

V

He wrote an essay, keenly analytic,
But possibly a little bit obscure,
Entitling Eliot the perfect critic
And just as pure as poet could be pure,
Insisting that he was not parasitic,
Although he borrowed widely to be sure.
The Lit had snubbed him, so he snubbed *The Lit,*
And tried *The Bark & Blare,* which published it.

VI

So Halstead Weeks emerged with his diploma,
A published essay, and a great ambition.
But papa had not missed the strong aroma
Of art and uncommercial erudition.
Commencement night he woke Hal from his coma
And let him see the world of competition,
In which, he said, the boy could take his place
Or else—alternatives Hal could not face.

VII

And, lo, the brave new world of Silent Cal,
Where Jesus was in business and in Rotary,
Where Socialists derided *Capital,*
Where Ford was prophet and Filene his votary,
Where high-hat Hoover fought brown-derby Al,
Where Babbitt had his cult and More his coterie—
It welcomed Halstead to its busy breast.
It gave him work, in short—at Pa's request.

VIII

The little cash that Pa had one time sunk
In Biggs and Boggs now justified his hopes.
To gild the cabbage and perfume the skunk
Was their concern, and they taught Hal the ropes.
He thought them boors, they counted him a lunk
But set him writing ads for lesser soaps.
He cursed his lot and damned the silly stuff,
But—give him credit—wrote it well enough.

IX

When Halstead took the job he planned to spend
His lonely nights composing stern critiques,
In which he would expound, condemn, defend
The modern poets and their new techniques,
But somehow found it easier to lend
His presence at the better Village speaks.
When he sat down to write the spirit balked,
But galloped like a racehorse when he talked.

X

A year went by. His bosses were impressed
By what he'd written; friends by what he'd not.
In many Village hangouts they confessed
That Halstead's bolt and Halstead both were shot.
But he could speak as glibly as the best
Of syntax, values, cadences, and plot.
And he had found a girl and was impassioned—
A circumstance that some friends called old-fashioned.

XI

The time has come when we must talk of sex—
A lively subject if there's lots of data.
But Hal's affair was not at all complex,
Although he spouted Freudian dogmata.
The truth's so simple it is bound to vex:
He liked to sleep with his inamorata.
And she, somewhat experienced, found Hal
Quite adequate though not phenomenal.

XII

He pleased his pa, his boss, his lady fair,
But still he knew that there was something wrong.
And then one night he met young Clifton Hare,
Who scorned superbly all the vulgar throng,
Who, by request, had left *The Bark & Blare,*
Who talked with soft insistence all night long,
Who said at last, "We could, we might, I mean—
My friend, why don't we start a magazine?"

XIII

The seed was sown and promptly was manured
By Halstead's father, who was riding high
And, feeling Halstead must by now be cured,
Was not averse to giving him a try.
The magazine's existence was assured
By adding to the board Erasmus Bly,
A Harvard lad whom Clifton recommended—
His insight faulty but his income splendid.

XIV

Their secret nightly meetings brought them fame;
The Village wondered; Hal's Elaine grew pale.
They chose an office, tried to choose a name.
Hal, wanting *Icarus,* could not prevail;
Hare urged *Return,* and Bly proposed *The Flame.*
They argued till their arguments grew stale.
"In the beginning," Halstead said. . . . He halted
In wild amaze. "The word!" they cried, exalted.

XV

The Word it was—a name at least prophetic
As Hal and his confreres abruptly found.
The bare announcement served as an emetic,
Producing both the fury and the sound.
Dick Blackmur wrote on mysteries esthetic.
A dozen letters came from Ezra Pound
(You know the endless way that Ezra runs on)
And manifestoes streamed from Gorham Munson.

XVI

They got from Waldo Frank some little gems,
Incomprehensible but truly great;
From Gertrude Stein some scrambled apothegms;
Confederate laments from Allen Tate.
Hal wrote on e. e. cummings' roots and stems,
And Clifton barked and blared a hymn of hate.
Chicago's tough guy reached into his barrel
And let them have an early James T. Farrell.

XVII

In one short year *The Word* became the voice
Of D. H. Lawrence and the vibrant male,
Of polylingual antics a la Joyce,
Of Herman Melville and the great White Whale,
Of Irving Babbitt and the human choice,
Of Oswald Spengler and the dismal wail.
And at the end the issue that was seething
Was Buchmanism versus Gurdjieff breathing.

XVIII

I say the end. Our epic's reached the day
When Wall Street crashed and Halstead's Pa crashed too.
Then Biggs and Boggs reduced employees' pay,
And little Bly announced that he was through.
Next Hal's Elaine went home to Troy to stay,
Discharged from Constable's without ado.
Thus died *The Word* that dark and fateful winter,
And no one minded much except the printer.

XIX

But Biggs and Boggs somehow survived the storm,
And Hal survived it too, with paychecks shrinking.
His solitary life resumed the norm
Of noisy talk and not so quiet drinking.
He had some new ideas on style and form,
And loved to tell his friends what he was thinking.
But they, he found, were less than fascinated.
In fact, they told him frankly he was dated.

XX

Do not suppose that Hal submitted tamely
To all the current talk of politics.
He struggled to defend his thesis, namely
That art and economics do not mix.
But though he marshaled all his reasons gamely,
It did no good to kick against the pricks.
We are but human, and you must not ask us
Why we see visions going to Damascus.

XXI

Conversion's dangers are an ancient story,
And Hal's was not a stable constitution.
He felt the working class was full of glory,
And hated all the ruling-class pollution.
The reckoning, he ventured, would be gory;
He hoped to see the day of retribution.
He found the works of Sidney Hook sublime,
And planned to read Karl Marx when he had time.

XXII

He nearly signed a Foster proclamation
And did say Norman Thomas was a dub;
He almost joined the Harlan delegation
And gave the Hunger Marchers dimes for grub;
He wrote some letters full of indignation;
He visited at times the John Reed Club;
And, as he said to some insulting smarty,
Was practically a member of the Party.

XXIII

He'd gladly join—in this he would insist—
But that the leadership was so naïve.
The opportunities the Party missed
Were bound to make a thoughtful Marxist grieve.
He did not like to seem a dogmatist,
But there were errors one could scarce conceive.
How can a party grow if it disdains
The wisdom of the nation's finest brains?

XXIV

And after all his field was literary,
And one must work wherever one is able.
No task, perhaps, was quite so necessary
As purifying that Augean stable,
That realm of vulgar thought and crude vagary,
That vast confusion like the storied Babel,
That gloomy sink, that bottomless abysm
Which sometimes passed for Marxian criticism.

XXV

Now Dr. Krutch—long may his tribe decrease—
Had likewise felt the Marxists needed purging,
And meeting Hal one night proposed a piece,
A task to which Hal needed little urging.
He sat him down and let his soul release
The bitter, bitter truths that came a-surging.
Esthetic ruin faced the working classes
But for Hal's brave exposure of the MASSES.

XXVI

The day the piece appeared Hal got a note
From Calverton, whose praises knew no measure.
He asked if Hal would kindly let him quote
A certain passage that he called a treasure.
To publish the next essay that Hal wrote
Would give him, furthermore, the greatest pleasure.
The *Modern Monthly* craved a contribution
From such a loyal friend of revolution.

XXVII

Hal wrote the piece and made a date for lunch.
V. F. brought friends and there was conversation.
Hal soon was meeting weekly with the bunch,
And taking pleasure in their commendation,
Since he and they most dearly loved to crunch
Upon a ripe and juicy reputation.
They praised no one but Trotsky, that great mind,
For whom they wrote petitions, which Hal signed.

XXVIII

The MASSES staff had viewed with some tranquillity
Hal's literary gestures of defiance,
But it announced its utter inability
To overlook his Trotskyist alliance.
It pointed out the touch of imbecility
In Calverton's demands and his compliance.
The MASSES said in simple white and black
His friends were knaves and he was just a jack.

XXIX

Hal might have been dismayed, but noble Max,
With many shakings of his great white mane,
Convinced him Stalin paid for these attacks.
(And had not Eastman once seen Trotsky plain?)
Hal answered with the gang supplying cracks.
(It was the same old Trotskyist refrain.)
He signed his name upon the dotted line,
And thought the document extremely fine.

XXX

His ego had enough to feed upon,
And skillful flattery had turned his head,
But bad was bound to turn to worse anon,
For he had got a girl, a super-Red,
Who used "amalgam," even "epigone,"
And other words that she had learned in bed.
(She had, as folks say, lived, and spent her nights
With half the city's leading Trotskyites.)

XXXI

With her to help his Marxian passions flare,
He called, at home, at work, for blood to flow.
But Biggs and Boggs, he found, did not much care
So long as he denounced the C.I.O.
Nor were his words too much for Pa to bear
Since he called Roosevelt a so-and-so.
And Catholics rejoiced when he'd explain
How Stalin had betrayed The Cause in Spain.

XXXII

The magazines discovered he existed,
Books, Common Sense, the *Saturday Review.*
Paul Palmer, double-faced if not two-fisted,
Presided at his *Mercury* debut.
Amazingly the *Forum's* Leach enlisted
In this crusade to save the world anew.
Hal wrote "I Left the Party in the Lurch"
For *Harper's,* though he'd always loathed research.

XXXIII

He mingled with the city's cognoscenti,
Was mentioned more than once by I.M.P.,
Had drinks with Sinclair Lewis, and had plenty,
Was introduced to Lippmann at a tea.
The boy went places and where'er he went he
Said Communism served the bourgeoisie.
And cocktail drinkers up and down the city
Agreed with him the sell-out was a pity.

XXXIV

But renegades have never been a rarity
And Halstead's little boom was not to last.
He soon perceived the growing popularity
Of Eugene Lyons, knew his day was past.
His girl perceived it too, with perfect clarity
And wrote a note that left poor Hal aghast.
Poor Hal, indeed, in view of his ambitions:
He'd nothing left to do but sign petitions.

XXXV

In time he could not quiet the conviction
That even Trotskyites might be a bore,
And though steadfastly vaunting his addiction
To revolution, wondered more and more
If Marx's teachings were not all a fiction
And human nature rotten at the core.
He'd gladly die upon the barricades,
But proletarians were pampered jades.

XXXVI

Increasingly he felt his noble soul
In books alone could find its rightful place.
Let others struggle toward a social goal
And seek to save the worthless human race.
He'd watch the tide of angry passion roll
While he communed with wisdom face to face.
He wrote a piece, describing his decision
As if the gods had granted him a vision.

XXXVII

The article appeared in the *Atlantic,*
For Sedgwick liked it, as one might suppose.
Had he not made a pilgrimage romantic,
Toured rebel Spain in spats, defied its foes?
Had he not told with raptures corybantic
How Franco saved the Spaniards from their woes?
Of course he felt with Hal that art must be
From taint of propaganda ever free.

XXXVIII

Our story's wandered to its sad conclusion.
No need to chronicle Hal's small success;
No need to tear away each fond illusion;
No need to note his growing snobbishness;
No need to castigate his vast confusion:
We know too well how such affairs progress.
The time would come for haughty jeers at pickets
And voting straight reactionary tickets.

XXXIX

The Lippmanns and the Thompsons and the Lyons,
They have their brief if somewhat gaudy day.
The Eastmans and their literary scions
Proceed to find and fatten on their prey.
The Franks seek vainly for Spinozan Zions,
Nor lose their little egoes by the way.
And men like Halstead lapse predictably
Into pretentious mediocrity.

XL

In '38 an older Halstead Weeks,
Alumni orator at Saint Tim's School,
Denounced in ringing tones the Bolsheviks,
And proved that John L. Lewis was their tool.
He also said nice things about the Greeks.
(The students thought the speech was so much drool.)
His honorarium was slight, I fear,
But trustees hinted at a job next year.

Words I Did Not Speak

By Edward Wall

OUR Guild contract with the *Morning Globe* contains the clause: No By-Lines on Hooey Stories. This is Paragraph 6, Section XIX, if I remember rightly: No expression of the paper's policy or opinion, whether or not it be conveyed in the guise of news, shall be published under the name of any employee without the employee's knowledge and consent.

I crusaded for that clause, though quite alone. In the city room, down at Marty's on the corner; fighting for a cause, a clause. I'm new on the staff of the *Morning Globe;* perhaps I'm a little bit fervent. My fellow Guildsmen were apathetic, even antagonistic. Had I been a lesser zealot, had I dared turn my back, the opposition bloc would have stricken the clause from the contract. It stayed though. And the publisher accepted it.

Opposition jeers hid a malignant vanity. I know, of course. Too many reporters would be grateful for a weekly by-line in lieu of a five-dollar wage boost. Too many of them succumb to giddiness at the sight of their own names in print, no matter how inconsequential the story; even if it were something oozing from one of the paper's ears: The Weather, Overcast with Variable Winds, by Malcolm McGooch, High Tide 8:09 a.m.

On the old *Post-Herald,* I remember, they used to plaster reporters' names all over the paper. Little boys scrawling things with chalk. You found yourself named as the author of fabulous stories; stories in eight or ten-point caps you never heard of before. You were constantly amazed, if you read the paper, at your own folly, your erudite bitterness, your falsity.

The *Post-Herald* isn't in business today; the world, I'm certain, is a happier place. I was there when the paper died a few months ago. It strangled, shouting, trying to alter the pattern of stripes in the flag; trying to shield the Whites from contaminating proximity with the Reds. We were profoundly Right, and all else was radical. We thought a great deal of a man named Hoover; though never, in the *Herald-Tribune* manner, as Mister. Mister Hoover nodded at this, hinted at that. Mister, to us, never quite expressed the proper warmth of approbation. We thought of him as Dearie.

On the *Post-Herald* I covered the Tecumseh Street station and receiving hospital, the busiest police beat in town. At night everything came to Tecumseh Street, except for a few odds and ends picked up by the dicks out of headquarters. It was an easeful place to spend your nights. Nightly routine of drunks, disorderly and —physicians said further examination would be necessary to determine whether or not the bullet can be removed from O'Reilly's skull without dislodging the brain. Still, pleasant as it was, I rarely went near Tecumseh Street during those final weeks, just before the paper crumpled. I kept in touch by telephone from afar. We knew the end was coming. And who cared? I had other interests.

I was working with Dave Kirchlander, trying to organize the bleachery and dye-house workers at the Chesunticook Mills. I wrote pamphlets, dodgers, letters, everything; now and again I made an incidental speech.

Dave was brilliant, vigorous, genuinely sympathetic; he was the leader of the organizational drive. He had been assailed and pounded on a dozen labor fronts. *Post-Herald* words: radical, agitator, anarchist, monster, Red menace. Dave was a thorough Marxist, never wavering in his philosophy. To unsympathetic ears he could be cryptic, sometimes deceptive; sometimes, in reciting his social catechism, his blazing faith appeared to be dimmed in mocking restraint. The rousing significance was often hidden in the apparently glib, facile phrases he affected.

To *Post-Herald* readers, the solid people, Dave was a menace as yet unseen. They hadn't met him face to face. They knew him only as a frightening name, a challenge, a threat.

We were together, Dave and I, one night in Roger Williams Park. A workers' meeting was over, breaking up in orderly, enthusiastic burst of song; it was the first public demonstration of workers' increasing strength. A group of French-Canadians stood on the edge of the park, singing a song in French. The singers waved to us as we walked across the street to Dave's car. Dave was going to Boston that night; he would drop me off at Tecumseh Street.

We drove along Arundel Avenue, slowly. Men in a smaller group were struggling in the street. We heard them shouting. They were knotted together in close-in fighting; fists were swinging, slugging furiously. Then another group came tearing in. These last I recognized; they were company police, special deputies in plain clothes.

Most infrequent occasion in my career as a police reporter: I was present when a story was in the process of happening. In the center of the crowd the deputies fired; four shots or five, I couldn't tell. Dave stopped the car right in the middle of the street, and we ran up to the crowd. One of the workers was dead; three were wounded, bleeding, groaning. The city cops came in swinging clubs, mauling, tearing the crowd apart. Men were lying on the pavement; I saw them kicked, trampled. I raised my arms to shield my head; I broke free, somehow, from the surging mob. There was no sight of Dave; I saw a couple of uniformed cops pushing his car toward the curb, clearing the avenue.

I helped pick up two of the injured men. I rode with them in an ambulance, back to Tecumseh Street.

From the press room I called the city desk; then to a rewrite man I gave names, ages, addresses. "All mill workers. The meeting was over. These guys were walking down from the park; they yelled at two of the company stoolies and called them a bad name, a name never properly used except to identify the readers of our paper. One of the stoolies took a sock at this guy Vitulla. Then the whole gang mixed in. The company deputies ran up to join the battle. They were all tangled up together. Then the deputies' guns began popping. Vitulla was killed; these other guys wounded, not bad. The cops have arrested six more guys; six, so far; all mill workers; names, ages, addresses. No charges against them yet; just held for investigation. That's all I have right now; I'll call you back."

Hennessey, on the city desk, couldn't wait. He called me. He told me, "Cawlfield, over at headquarters, says the dicks are bringing in a guy now, one of the gunmen."

"All right," I said. "What the hell do I care?"

Hennessey asked, "Have the cops at Tecumseh Street made out a report involving the company gunmen?" "No, they're not doing a damned thing."

"How do you know, then, that they were company men?" "I was there, I saw them; that's the way I cover things."

"Did you see the start of the riot?" "Riot! There wasn't any riot; it was like a lawn party breaking up, singing songs in French."

"Then how about the workers who fired at the cops?" "No worker fired a shot; hell, are you trying to discredit my testimony? I gave you the story; that's all there is to it."

Hennessey hung up, swearing. He called me a vile name; he said I was a reader of the paper. To hell with Hennessey.

I went out and drank 392 glasses of beer. No loyalty to the paper? Loyalty, royalty. Loyalties seldom pay royalties. Dorothy Parker in the beer: Men seldom make passes at loyalties, seldom pay royalties. To hell with Dorothy Parker's beer. I dreamed of Jeanie with the light-brown hair. The *Post-Herald* expects that every man this night shall have two more Jeanies with the nut-brown ale. The *Post-Herald* is first with the news; clear, concise, comprehensive, fact, fact, fake.

And Jeanie with the light-blue-oo eyes. Eight thousand glasses of beer, clear beer; concise sizes five cents, comprehensive for a dime. The *Post-Herald* slogan: It's not news, no-no-no, until it has first appeared in three other newspapers. One more beer and Jeanie with the light-blue hair; she dreams of letting the paper go to Hennessey, go to hell. I thought of going to Boston to join Dave. I went to Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford, Lawrence, Lowell. Last anyone heard I was smuggling coolies from Council Bluffs to Omaha. Doing well, too. I went out, home, somewhere.

Next day I was back at Tecumseh Street in the early afternoon. Hines of the *Journal* greeted me. "Swell story you had this morning." Hell, I thought, he's a reader. "What story?" "What story?" he mocked; "as if you didn't know."

"Them Reds is bad things," said Harrington, the sergeant. Harrington was reading, as he always did, a whole magazineful of Doc Savage, wonder man. No bad things, I thought, where the Doc is. He just presses a button. The morning *Post-Herald*. Harrington reads it, then throws it aside; goes on to something better. *Post-Herald* pre-requisite to Doc Savage. Press a button and the *Post-Herald* disintegrates. The good doctor.

Lying on Harrington's desk was a copy of the *Post-Herald,* excited, yelling: RADICAL AGITATOR SLAIN BY OWN GANG; POLICE QUELL RED ONSLAUGHT, ARREST 7. . . . *By Thomas Gilligan. . . . Blazing guns in the* . . . who's this Gilligan? The name is familiar, vaguely. *Blazing guns in* . . . hell, it's me! I'm Gilligan. Thomas Gilligan. No wonder. Probably ran through all editions; no make-over, no replate. They don't dare. When the Gilligan by-line appears on a story it's "must." Let it go! Don't want old Tommy Gilligan getting mad at you, do you? Respect the Gilligan by-line. Gilligan is clear, he's concise, he's first with the news with the light-brown *blazing guns in the hands of Red terrorists brought instant death last night to. . . . Vitulla, leader of the Red riot, was shot accidentally by his own gunmen who directed a frenzied volley of shots into the ranks of advancing police* . . . By Thomas Gilligan . . . *David Kirchlander, 29, said by police* . . . By Thomas Gilligan . . . *to be a Moscow agent, was tentatively identified as the actual slayer. Police said that. . . .*

There was a two-column picture of Dave, standing between two dicks, under the caption: *Killer Suspect.*

"It's for you," Harrington said, "and tell your friends not to be calling on my phone; what do we have a press room for?" Harrington handed me his desk phone.

"Hello," by Thomas Gilligan; this is Thomas Gilligan, tentatively identified as the actual. . . .

"Mr. Gilligan? Mr. Gilligan of the *Post-Herald?* This is Eric Bundette, president of the Kiwanis Club. Fine piece you wrote in the paper this morning, graphic. I've been trying to reach you. Like to have you speak at our Kiwanis meeting Thursday night. Our scheduled speaker won't be able to come. Like to have you tell us the inside story of the Red menace, the anarchists; how they act when they're arrested, the troubles they give police. Our club is vitally interested in eradicating this menace. Yes, vitally. Thursday night, 6:30, at the John and Priscilla Hotel."

I called the city desk: "I'm here, nothing breaking; I'll be here from now on." Then I hung up. I left Tecumseh Street immediately and hurried over to headquarters.

Cunningham, the lieutenant, was evasive. He said, "No, nobody's seeing Kirchlander. D.A.'s orders. He's up on the third floor, isolation."

"Isolation? Has he got measles?"

"He'll have worse than measles. We've got the gun. The ballistics men say it's the gun fired the bullet that killed Vitulla."

Cunningham stalled. Finally he said, "You can go up now; but for five minutes only."

Cunningham was a liar: "Nobody's seeing Kirch-

lander!" When I walked down the cell block, I saw one of Cunningham's stoolies, playing the part of a visitor. He was talking to a make-believe prisoner in a cell two doors away from Dave's. Words resounded in that steely place. I changed my mind, stifling the things I had come to say.

Dave sat on a steel bunk. He held a rubber band between his fingers, stretching it, snapping at anything that crawled. He winked when he saw me.

I said to him, "Hello, killer."

Dave answered casually, "How are you, Tommy? Any good Red menaces around this afternoon?" Dave nodded toward the stool-pigeons: "Good Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are with us."

"Here's a deck of morphine with a dash of cherry; here's a saw, two guns, and a bomb; and here's your street-car fare," I recited. I handed him, one by one, four or five packs of cigarettes.

Dave looked at me, wondering. The stoolie was watching, listening. "It's all right," I said, waving. "I'm working for the Kiwanis Club. I'm a menace eradicator. The cigarettes are poisoned."

Dave asked me, "Have they dusted off any of the quaint exhibits, the museum pieces?"

I nodded. "I learned, just a moment ago, about a miniature fowling piece; the curator said it was a thing of great value, but I thought it commonplace."

"It has its historical value," Dave said. "It keeps bobbing up over and over again. Other collectors swore they found one like it in the pockets of men at the Haymarket, at Homestead, Ludlow, South Chicago. It's the same old thing. They said Emma Goldman had it in her handbag when they accused her of bumping off Wynken, Blynken, and Nod. It's been handed down from menace to menace. We menaces, you know, we have our traditions."

Suddenly I became a reporter. I flourished pencil and copy paper. "My name is Appleby W. Littleby. I represent the thirty-five-cent Merchants' Blue Plate Special and *Daily Courier.*"

Dave looked at me, this time intently. "I ain't saying nothing to nobody. You'll have to see my attorney. Go to the receiving hospital and wait; that's the best way. When an ambulance arrives, my attorney will be right behind it, puffing, breathless maybe."

I went back to Tecumseh Street. I asked Hines, "Anything doing, any calls?" He said, "Some guy named Bergson or Schoenfelt phoned; he wants you to call him back. And your man Hennessey; he wants you to send him a postcard."

Again I phoned the city desk: "I'm here, nothing breaking; I'll be here from now on." Then I hung up. I called Schonenberg, the lawyer. Dave was quite right. Schonenberg said he wanted to see me right away. I said to him, "Come on down to Tecumseh Street."

We stood in a corridor near the bulletin board. Schonenberg, talking, became buoyant. "I'll have Dave out of jail by Tuesday night. The D.A.'s all right. And the cops, too. I feel sorry for them. It's the old heat from overhead, trying to discredit us with the workers. The killing charge won't be pressed. It's crazy; they know it: you know it."

"I wasn't there," I said. "Dave and I were down at Nantasket Beach."

Schonenberg took a quick look down the corridor. Hines came out of the press room and called to me, "Couple of monkeys scalded down at the bleachery. They're bringing them in now; not expected to last long."

Schonenberg asked me, "Who is he?" I told him, "Hines of the *Journal.*" Schonenberg watched him down the hall, "Suppose I could get him to make that goddam *Journal* spell my name right?"

I walked away, back to the press room. I called Cawlfield at headquarters and told him to ask the district attorney to give me a ring. For two days I wavered back and forth between union headquarters and Tecumseh Street. I tried to do Dave's work and mine. I did a little of both, badly.

Dave came out Thursday afternoon. I went over to his room in the Plymouth-Puritan. Schonenberg kept bouncing in and out, rattling papers, smiling, talking. When no one would answer, he talked on the telephone. Dave took a series of slow baths, singing, while I read: *David Kirchlander, 29 . . . released under $10,000 bond . . . conspiracy to incite riot . . . but denied motion to* . . . I tossed the paper aside. How the hell does Schonenberg know if they spell his name wrong or right? He's a reader. Kiwanis, 6:30, by Thomas Gilligan. Dave and I talked about the meeting. I suggested Boston, finnan haddie, and beer.

Dave began to declaim: "Kiwanis calls. I'll go with you. You can use a good menace; you can use me to point at."

I looked at him; I was thinking: Don't do anything, gentlemen, until you hear from Gilligan. Reds, Anarchists, Kiwanians, Menaces with the light-brown Gilligans, by Thomas Menaces.

Dave and I walked up to the mezzanine, Priscilla and John Hotel, Banquet Room B. I saw a black ribbon fluttering from a pair of nose glasses. I spoke to it: "I'm Gilligan of the *Post-Herald.* This is McGonigle; he's here to cover your meeting."

The black ribbon fluttered more: "Fine-fine-fine, glad to have you boys with us. Sorry, Mr. Bundette can't be here; but make yourselves at home. Number of guests with us tonight. While we're waiting for dinner, go on up to 1408-and-10. You'll find everything there."

Everything was spread on a long table. I mixed tinkling drinks for Dave and me. We sat in a corner, all by ourselves, and watched. Nobody was there from the other papers. They wouldn't touch the story; strictly a *Post-Herald* promotion, strictly Gilligan. Dave and I watched, tinkling.

Every now and again someone came over and said he was Jillson of New England Products Co. We shook hands. I said I was Tompkins, Dave was Atterbury, both of the Shawmut Avenue Congress Gaiter Co., out of the high-rent district.

The third Jillson looked at Dave. "Haven't I seen you somewhere, your picture maybe?"

Dave smiled. "The paper runs my picture occasionally; I write a sports column, all about lacrosse."

Jillson slapped Dave's back. "Knew I'd seen you somewhere; never forget a face!"

Jillson was genial; he laughed, pleased. He said it was a pretty rough game, lacrosse; he wouldn't want to be mixed up in none of it. Dave had only one drink. I had two or three, maybe five. Four, I think.

We rode down in an elevator, back to the mezzanine, the dining room. We sat, Dave and I, near the center of a table which formed the cross-piece in a T-arrangement.

Everybody sang, standing, then sitting. A man pounded with a gavel on a bell-shaped gong. He said, "Old Chuck Elligutt, stand up! Spudgy Kimbalston has filed a complaint against you; he says you met him down in the lobby a moment ago and you called him Mister instead of Spudgy. Violation of club rules, you know. You are hereby fined twenty cents."

Chuck Elligutt came over, grinning, to pay the fine. He laid down the exact change. Everybody hooted. Dave and I joined in the hooting: "Shame, shame on old Chuck Elligutt."

The chairman pounded again with the gavel. "And now we'll hear a report from the sub-committee on social welfare and civic betterment."

The sub-committee spokesman rose and exclaimed, "Give a thought to the little kiddies in Middlesex Orphanage."

Everybody gave thoughts. The club would send a staff of barbers to the orphanage Sunday afternoon. The committee had arranged everything; free haircuts, the man announced, they wouldn't cost the kids a penny. The barbers would work for nothing and the club would sponsor them—all free.

I looked at Dave. He was covering the meeting; he was jotting things on copy paper. I tried to think of a menace. No menace can touch you, gentlemen, while Gilligan is here. Gilligan hates the menaces, the Reds; Gilligan despises them, he eradicates them. Gilligan menaces the menaces. Gilligan himself is a menace. Gilligan the Red, with the light-brown hair.

Everything was so right, so soothing. No one was speaking now; the room was quiet, save for eating noises. Dave went on with his notes, writing down what everything thought or ate. I tried to think of a menace.

The Kiwanian chairman began: ". . . the very foundation of our democratic system . . . that we, as public spirited citizens, must unite to crush these threatening radical agitators. . . ."

I heard the name of Gilligan; I was being introduced. No menacing thought would come to me. I rose and stood there groping, Gilligan the Red, with the light-brown mind. I tried to say: "Gentlemen of Kiwanis. . . ."

Dave tugged at my arm and drew me back to my seat. He said to me, for all to hear, "I'll take care of these mugs."

Dave was standing, talking, "I bring you a report, gentlemen, of the sub-committee on social welfare, civic betterment, and workers' organization."

I looked around the T-tables into faces intent, instantly responsive. Dave went on: "In spite of your lying opposition, gentlemen, we are definitely going ahead with the drive to organize workers in the Chesunticook Mills. The results are amazing, really."

The chairman whanged the gong. Spudgy Kimbalston clamored, waving his arms. Other Kiwanians joined in the yammering, but Dave outyelled them: "Twelve thousand men are employed in the mills. More than nine thousand of these have joined our union. And we've only begun!"

"Radicals," Spudgy Kimbalston shouted. "God damned radical sonsabitches!"

Dave waited for the shouting to subside. "Radicals," he said quietly, "radicals fighting off the toryish ills that Kiwanianism helps to spread. Agitators leading the way to a new form of life, the freedom and beauty of life; radicals, if you will, in the manner of old Sam Adams, Hancock, Jefferson, Doctor Franklin."

"God damned radical sonsabitches," Spudgy shouted.

"Keep your seats!" Dave cried out to the rising Kiwanians. "It is my duty to inform you, gentlemen, that bombs are attached to your chairs. We're trying a new scheme tonight; individual bombs, one to each chair."

The chairman pounded the gong-gong-gong-gong-gong.

Dave held his left arm before him; he began an elaborate study of his wrist-watch. He yelled again, "Quiet, everybody; with all this racket going on, you're making it very difficult for me. I can't hear the fuses sputtering."

The yammering went on, louder. The chairman made frantic motions. He waved the gavel in the air; he shook his fist at Dave, at me, at everyone. More motions, in frenzied pantomime; he pointed to Dave, and then to the door. I was thinking: Why am I so silent? I am the one they asked to talk. I'm the featured speaker. I leaped to my feet and shouted, "Any member who doesn't like tonight's speech is hereby fined twenty cents!"

"The fine goes double for Spudgy Kimbalston," Dave proclaimed. "Forty cents for Spudgy! Spudgy gets a double fine because he snitched on old Chuck Elligutt, his fellow member."

Kimbalston raced around the table-end. Charging, swinging blindly, he landed one blow at the back of Dave's neck, a brutal, crazy wallop. I knocked a chair aside. I smashed a left into Kimbalston's face. Kimbalston rebounded, flailing; he clipped me on the mouth. He came in plunging, chin foremost. I landed squarely, twice, three times. Kimbalston spun; I hit him again. He reeled backward; he sprawled on the table, scattering coffee cups and Kiwanians, spattering the juices from tumbled sherbet glasses.

Dave held his watch-arm aloft for all the members to see; with his other hand he pointed: Only seventeen seconds, gentlemen, before the blow-off!

I kicked a cup that lay at my feet. Dave grabbed me by one arm. Together we started for the door. We walked, ninety-two thousand miles we walked, through roaring Kiwanis members. I could barely restrain myself. I wanted to flee. I feared a horde of Kiwanians closing in, crushing Dave and me. We walked that

long, long way to the door; no one molested us, no one followed us.

A waiter and two bus boys stood watching at the door. Dave said to them, "We're sorry the dishes were spilled." The waiter grinned. The bus boys waved a mock salute.

We went out to the mezzanine and down to the lobby. We kept on going, out to Dave's car. Down at Marty's bar we stopped. I ordered a scalding Tom and Jerry. The bartender said to Dave, "Two?" Dave nodded.

My lower lip was cut, inside. I ran my tongue along my teeth, taking inventory. I counted and counted, first the uppers, then lowers; once I counted forty-four, another time only nineteen. Spudgy smacked me on the mouth. Lamentable defense, by Thomas Gilligan. Gilligan cops decision, though staggered by Kiwanian. Gilligan scorns external force; he staggers from within, quite unaided. No, thank you, gentlemen; the self-staggering Gilligan needs no Kiwanian impetus.

"I can't take you anywhere," Dave berated. "You're always mixed up in a brawl."

"It's the Kiwanians, the menaces," I said. "They rouse me to fury; it's the music, the flares against the night sky, the mad abandon of the dance."

"Maybe we ought to go back to the meeting," Dave said to me. "How in hell are we to know if the treasurer collects all the fines we levied?"

I flicked a speck of nutmeg from the foamy top of my drink. I went back to my counting, uppers, lowers. This time I counted fifty-three.

I said to Dave, "Tomorrow night, I hope, I'll be back at Tecumseh Street. Killers, filling-station bandits, guys who were picked up in raids, only a few Kiwanians. I'll be happier there."

Dave tried to appear uneasy. He said, "I'm worried about the Kiwanian treasurer, trying to collect all the fines we imposed. You know how treacherous these Kiwanians are. Some of the members might try to sneak out without paying."

The Heroes

By William Rose Benét

How thunderous their firm defiance!
Their shadows on the sky are giants.

Their mouths are craters, they disgorge
Hot lead, and make the world their forge.

Their eyeballs glare. Their millions stand
With stiff and horizontal hand.

Hailing such heroes from the stars—
Who always ride in armored cars.

Now we behold in every place
The massive, the congested face,

The swollen throat, the wild declaim—
And people cowed, and people tame,

And people drilled, and people dumb,
And armament's millenium.

Guards! Lest one deathly man alone
Stand up to call his soul his own.

Oh guards! And edicts! And arrests!
What? Men have hearts within their breasts?

They shall be stock, they shall be stone.
Mow with machine guns—keep them mown!

You heard that laughter in the air?
Pivot the guns—swing here, swing there,

Blast the blue skies, search every tree,
Dynamite the insurgent sea!

Those stars! They sparkle on the night.
Eliminate their laughing light!

Endorse this treaty of the powers
Against the gay and traitorous flowers!

Instruct the army of your spies
Till all the world be lurking eyes;

Sentry the birds, stockade the herds;
Arrest those Words! Arrest those Words!

And now, oh gather, loudly raise
Your thunderous anthem in our praise,

Cry "Holy! Holy! Hail great power!
Before you all the earth shall cower,

Before you all the earth shall be
One prison camp, one sanguine sea,

And every heart as steel made hard!" . . .
That Voice again?
Turn out the Guard!

Longfellow on Spain

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana

How much of my young heart, O Spain,
Went out to thee in days of yore!
—*Longfellow.*

OVER a hundred years ago, a young American poet, twenty years old and full of poetic and romantic enthusiasm, traveled the length and breadth of Spain. Irun, Burgos, Segovia, Escorial, Madrid, Pardillo, Toledo, Cordova, Seville, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malaga: he visited many of the cities and towns whose names have been made freshly familiar to us in connection with the struggle that is focusing the eyes of the world on Spain today. For nine months, this young American poet reveled in the romance of the glories of past Spanish history and legend. Yet in the terrible conditions of that dark period of Spain a hundred years ago, his heart was touched by "the challenge of the poverty-stricken millions," the contrast of rich and poor, "the cruel and overbearing spirit of the municipal laws," "the gentlemen of respectability washing their crimes away in a little Holy Water," "the rags and religion," and the pride and warm sentiment of the common people that would ultimately resist this oppression—in other words the very forces a century ago that are in the background of the present conflict.

On first entering Spain on March 6, 1827, this young American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was at once struck by the poverty and desolation. He wrote in his journal:

One of the first things which attract the attention of the traveler on entering the northern province of Spain is the poverty-stricken appearance of everything around him. The country seems deserted. . . . The villages are half depopulated, the cottages ruinous and falling away piecemeal, whilst the people have nothing left them but rags and religion. . . . The country lies waste and open to the sun; you see the traces of former tillage; and here and there a ruined village, deserted by its inhabitants, presents the melancholy picture of falling roofs and moldering walls. The country looks stripped and barren—and you can everywhere trace the steps of desolation passing over the vestiges of former prosperity. (Longfellow's manuscript journal for 1827.)

This desolation of the common people of Spain in contrast to the prosperity of the rich made a profound impression upon Longfellow. In a poem called "The Challenge" dealing with Spain he wrote:

The poverty-stricken millions
Who challenge our wine and bread,
And impeach us all as traitors,
Both the living and the dead.

And hollow and haggard faces
Look into the lighted hall,
And wasted hands are extended
To catch the crumbs that fall.

For within there is light and plenty,
And odors fill the air;
But without there is cold and darkness,
And hunger and despair.

What struck Longfellow most was the contrast that he found in Spain between the dream of past grandeur and the misery of the present squalor, the contrast between the aristocratic few that he saw riding in the Prado at Madrid at sunset and the masses of toiling workers. Here is one of the pictures that he gives:

Here comes the gay gallant, with white kid gloves, and eyeglass, a black cane with a white ivory pommel, and a little hat cocked partly on one side of his head. He is an exquisite fop and a great lady's man. . . . What a contrast between this personage and the sallow, emaciated being who is now crossing the street! (Longfellow's manuscript journal for 1827.)

Again Longfellow comments on the childish idleness of the Spanish nobles of that day:

I have seen a whole room full of the "high-born Spanish noblemen" and daughters of dons and cavaliers engaged in such games that in our country belong only to children.

In all this Longfellow realized how far Spain was behind the times. He wrote:

Indeed it is like going back two centuries in this old world, this visit to Spain. There is so little change in the Spanish character, that you find everything as it is said to have been two hundred years ago.

George Borrow in his famous book *The Bible in Spain* goes still farther, attributing to Spain a lag of six hundred years instead of two hundred years and saying "the great body of the Spanish nation, speak, think, and live precisely as their forefathers did six centuries ago."

WHAT WERE THE REASONS for this inequality and backwardness in the Spain of that period? A dozen years or so before Longfellow's coming to Spain there had been the invasion of Spain by the French under Napoleon. This invasion had still left its traces everywhere and Longfellow wrote:

It is at present a poor, poverty-stricken country. Everywhere in the roofless cottage and ruined wall you trace the footsteps of the old peninsular war. A lapse of ten years has not changed the scene! You occasionally see by the roadside the melancholy wreck of a posthouse within which a band of desperate peasantry made an unavailing resistance against their invaders and perished in their last stronghold. In the shattered window and blackened wall—it seems a deed of yesterday! The entrance of every village, too, presents you a similar picture. As you approach the wretched inhabitations of the peasantry, a troup of half-starved children, some absolutely naked, others with but a fragment of a shirt or a tattered jacket, will come shouting forth, lifting up their hands most pitifully and begging a mouthful of bread. (Longfellow's manuscript journal for 1827.)

If the foreign invaders tended to depopulate the native Spanish citizens, they also lingered long enough in Spain to leave illegitimate children of their own. It is to this Longfellow makes allusion in a passage in his manuscript diary which was later carefully stricken out, but is still readable:

The French, who almost depopulated the country in the war of Napoleon, are now doing miracles to make reparations.

After the invaders had been driven out in guerrilla warfare by the radicals under Francisco Espoz y Mina, a liberal constitution was for a moment set up and there was great rejoicing among the common people. Longfellow refers to this in connection with a fountain in Malaga, which in celebration of the constitution was supplied with wine instead of water. He writes:

On one occasion of merry-making—some great day of jubilee during the time of the constitution—the water pipes of the fountain were stopped—and it was made to spout wine! (Longfellow's *Brother Jonathan in Spain.* M.S.)

Two years later, however, the monarchy was restored under Ferdinand VII, who immediately revoked the constitution, annulled the acts of the Cortes, and began a ferocious persecution of the "Liberales." With the overthrow of the Spanish constitution, even those who had fought against the French invaders and saved Spain, such as Espoz y Mina and his guerrilla warriors, were hounded to death, exiled from the country, or forced to hide in the mountains. Longfellow, while in the Guadarrama Mountains, writes of seeing one of Mina's followers, when he appeared for a moment out of hiding, still biding his time to overthrow the monarchy and reëstablish the constitution:

Whilst at supper a tall veteran-looking man entered the hall. He was dressed in the common garb of the country village and wore the little round hat of the peasantry. I was informed that he had known better days. He had been one of Mina's guerrillas—one of the bravest—had been hiding among the mountains since the overthrow of the Spanish constitution—and for years had followed the humble occupation of a shepherd. His whole conversation runs upon the return of better days and he is panting to hear again the tocsin of war sounding to the echoes of these hills and summoning the peasants from the plow and pruning hook to the iron harvest of battle. (Longfellow's manuscript journal for June 1, 1827.)

The frequent uprisings of the liberals against the absolutists were put down by the King and his ministers with brutality, yet there was the constant tension of a possible outbreak of a civil war. The young Longfellow writes to his father:

There are rumors of war and we hear almost daily that the king will immediately march off his troops to Portugal. Then a royal guard marches up the street and then marches down again. (Longfellow's manuscript letter of March 20, 1827.)

Under such circumstances it is no wonder that there was a tinge of sadness in the atmosphere of suppression which pervaded Spain during this black period of "national nightmare." Personal liberty was a dead letter. The Spaniards seemed to be the only people in Europe who were denied any voice in the management of their own affairs, either national or local. Longfellow wrote:

The voice of a peasant, singing amid the silence and solitude of the mountains, falls upon the ear like a funeral chant. Even a Spanish holiday wears a look of sadness, a circumstance which some writers attribute to the cruel and overbearing spirit of the municipal laws. (Longfellow's *Outre-Mer,* p. 141.)

To add to the horror, the poor peasants lived in constant fear of marauding bands of robbers. Longfellow speaks of "the dark fiendish countenances which peep at him from the folds of the Spanish cloak in every town and village" and of "the little black crosses which one comes upon at almost every step, standing by the roadside in commemoration of a murder or other violent death which had taken place upon the spot." He speaks of having heard "tales of all that is wild and wonderful in bloody murder and highway robbery." He makes it clear, however, that these crimes were not committed by revolutionists, workers, or peasants, but by gentlemen in the odor of sanctity. He writes:

These are not organized bands, but "gentlemen of respectability" who assemble from neighboring villages, commit robbery on the highway—murder if necessary—and then disperse to the bosom of their families and wash their crimes away in a little Holy Water. (Longfellow's manuscript letter to his father, March 20, 1827.)

This curious linking of acts of violence with religious zeal was at all times characteristic of Spain, as it is of the fascist forces of Franco's rebels today. Longfellow speaks of the prominent traits of the Spanish *hidalgos* of his day as being a "generous pride of birth" and a "superstitious devotion to the dogmas of the church." King Ferdinand VII had not only revoked the constitution, but had restored the Inquisition. The Catholic Church was extremely powerful and dreaded any revolutionary movement, even a liberal one. Longfellow speaks of the "religious ceremonies of the Catholic Church, which in Spain are still celebrated with all the pomp and circumstance of darker ages," and adds:

The Spaniards, in their faith, are the most obedient people in the world. They will believe anything the priest tells them to, without asking why or wherefore; but at the same time, as you may readily infer from this, they have as little pure religion as can be found upon the face of the earth. (Longfellow's manuscript letter to his father, July 16, 1827.)

He proceeds to describe the external display of pious reverence that the Spanish showed at the passage of the Host or "consecrated wafer," even turning in the midst of festivities to kneel and cross themselves and then renew the festivities again as though nothing had happened. Longfellow wrote:

I was at the opera and, in the midst of the scene, the tap of the drum at the door and the sound of the friar's bell announced the approach of the Host. In an instant the music ceased—a hush ran through the house—the actors and actresses on the stage with their brilliant dresses kneeled and bowed their

heads—and the whole audience turned toward the street and threw themselves upon their knees. (Longfellow's manuscript letter to his father, July 16, 1827.)

In a country where there was a greater discrepancy than anywhere else between the magnificence of the Spanish monarch and the raggedness of the Spanish beggar, Longfellow watched in amazement the empty and ironic gesture of the base and brutal King Ferdinand VII going through the religious rigmarole, performed once a year, of pretending to wash the feet of twelve barefoot beggars. He was equally appalled by the hollow mockery of "a dinner given to twelve poor women at which the queen served as domestic." He writes:

Each of the poor women had twenty different dishes allotted her, and these were placed successively before her by the queen, who received them one after the other from the hands of her maids, and placing them for an instant upon the table to receive the refusal of the poor women, who sat like so many female Tantali, passed them into the hands of the priest and thus they were stowed away under the table in twelve great baskets. (Longfellow's manuscript letter to his father, July 16, 1827.)

No wonder Longfellow said: "The people have nothing left them but rags and religion. Of these, such as they are, they have enough."

Of the queen who performed this mock ceremony, Mr. Longfellow writes: "The queen is eaten up by a most gloomy and melancholy religious frenzy—and writes poetry."

This "gloomy and melancholy religious frenzy" of the Spanish nobility seems to have haunted Mr. Longfellow all his life. Long afterward he wrote a poem about a Spanish legend, which he himself called "a dismal story of fanaticism." It was about "an old Hidalgo proud and taciturn" whose only joy was in seeing heretics and Jews burned to death or killed:

When Jews were burned or banished from the land,
Then stirred within him a tumultuous joy;
The demon whose delight is to destroy
Shook him, and shouted with a trumpet tone:
"Kill! kill! and let the Lord find out his own!"
—Longfellow's *Torquemada.*

This religious fanatic was represented as spying on his own daughters until he began to suspect them of some heresy. He denounced them before the Grand Inquisitor of Spain, Torquemada. When his daughters were condemned by Torquemada to be burned at the stake, the mad father insisted on bringing the firewood himself and lighting the faggots with his own torch, still muttering: "Kill! kill! and let the Lord find out his own!"

Longfellow found that just because he did not attend mass in Spain, some of the Spanish fanatics looked upon him as a heretic or a Jew. He writes in his journal for Sunday, June 3, 1927: "As usual was absent from mass —the villagers think me a Jew!" For the Spanish Jews, Mr. Longfellow himself seems to have had the highest respect. In his *Tales of a Wayside Inn,* he represents a Spanish Jew as one of the most charming of the six guests, who are gathered there with the landlord to tell their stories. Longfellow imagines no less than four of the most beautiful of the tales as being told by this Spanish Jew.

A Spanish Jew from Alicant
With aspect grand and grave was there. . . .
Well versed was he in Hebrew books,
Talmud and Targum, and the lore
Of Kabala; and evermore
There was a mystery in his looks;
His eyes seemed gazing far away,
As if in vision or in trance.

To be sure, the presence of this dreamy and learned Spanish Jew in the midst of the gentiles gathered together at the Wayside Inn offers a little embarrassment to the present owner of the Wayside Inn and his literary editor.

LONGFELLOW, then, in his attitude toward Spain showed clearly his sympathy with "the poverty-stricken millions," with the poor peasants being made a mockery of by the king and queen, and with the victims of the Inquisition. He saw all the grandeur and the glory of the romance and dream of Spain. Yet he could not forget the shadow that haunted the country:

Yet, something somber and severe
O'er the enchanted landscape reigned;
A terror in the atmosphere
As if King Phillip listened near,
Or Torquemada, the austere,
His ghostly sway maintained.
—Longfellow's *Castle in Spain.*

Yet Longfellow had faith in the common people of Spain, in the very dignity of the poor Spanish worker or struggling Spanish peasant. He writes:

A beggar wraps his tattered cloak around him with all the dignity of a Roman senator, and a muleteer bestrides his beast of burden with the air of a grandee. (Longfellow's *Outre-Mer.*)

Underneath this pride that is to be found even in the common people of Spain, Longfellow recognized the splendid qualities of unflinching courage and genuine worth which would one day enable them to come into their own. He writes:

The outside of the Spanish character is proud and on that account at first a little forbidding. But there is a warm current of noble sentiment flowing round the heart. (Longfellow's manuscript letter to his sister Elizabeth, May 15, 1827.)

This warm current flowing from the heart is the life blood of the Spanish people today. The quotations that have been given here make it clear that if Longfellow were now alive, his heart would be beating in sympathy with the heart of the Spanish people, besieged as they are by reactionary forces of predatory wealth, fanatical frenzy, and foreign invasion. He would cry out once more:

How much of my young heart, O Spain,
Went out to thee in days of yore!

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NEW MASSES
Literary Section

EDITORS: MICHAEL GOLD, HORACE GREGORY, GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ

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Bright and Morning Star

By Richard Wright

SHE stood with her black face some six inches from the moist windowpane and wondered when on earth would it ever stop raining. It might keep up like this all week, she thought. She heard rain droning upon the roof and high up in the wet sky her eyes followed the silent rush of a bright shaft of yellow that swung from the airplane beacon in far off Memphis. Momently she could see it cutting through the rainy dark; it would hover a second like a gleaming sword above her head, then vanish. She sighed, troubling, Johnny-Boys been trampin in this slop all day wid no decent shoes on his feet. . . . Through the window she could see the rich black earth sprawling outside in the night. There was more rain than the clay could soak up; pools stood everywhere. She yawned and mumbled: "Rains good n bad. It kin make seeds bus up thu the groun, er it kin bog things down lika watah-soaked coffin." Her hands were folded loosely over her stomach and the hot air of the kitchen traced a filmy veil of sweat on her forehead. From the cook stove came the soft singing of burning wood and now and then a throaty bubble rose from a pot of simmering greens.

"Shucks, Johnny-Boy coulda let somebody else do all tha runnin in the rain. Theres others bettah fixed fer it than he is. But, naw! Johnny-Boy ain the one t trust nobody t do nothin. Hes gotta do it *all* hissef. . . ."

She glanced at a pile of damp clothes in a zinc tub. Waal, Ah bettah git to work. She turned, lifted a smoothing iron with a thick pad of cloth, touched a spit-wet finger to it with a quick, jerking motion: *smiiitz!* Yeah; its hot! Stooping, she took a blue work-shirt from the tub and shook it out. With a deft twist of her shoulder she caught the iron in her right hand; the fingers of her left hand took a piece of wax from a tin box and a frying sizzle came as she smeared the bottom. She was thinking of nothing now; her hands followed a life-long ritual of toil. Spreading a sleeve, she ran the hot iron to and fro until the wet cloth became stiff. She was deep in the midst of her work when a song rose out of the far off days of her childhood and broke through half-parted lips:

Hes the Lily of the Valley, the
Bright n Mawnin Star
Hes the Fairest of Ten Thousan
t mah soul . . .

A gust of wind dashed rain against the window. Johnny-Boy oughta c mon home n eat his suppah. Aw Lawd! Itd be fine ef Sug could eat wid us tonight! Itd be like ol times! Mabbe aftah all it wont be long fo he'll be back. Tha lettah Ah got from im las week said *Don give up hope.* . . . Yeah; we gotta live in hope. Then both of her sons, Sug and Johnny-Boy, would be back with her.

With an involuntary nervous gesture, she stopped and stood still, listening. But the only sound was the

Federal Writers' Issue

GUEST EDITORS:

S. Funaroff and Willard Maas

WE ARE devoting this month's literary section to the work of writers on the Federal Arts Projects. The joint Federal Arts Bill (S. 3296 and H.R. 9102) proposes to establish a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts, which would support and make possible the functioning of writers and artists throughout the United States. The distinguished contributions made by the Federal Theater, Music, Art, and Dance projects are already well known to the public. The creative writing presented here indicates the high degree of literary talent on the Federal Writers' Project and emphasizes the need for government support of the arts.—The Editors.

lulling fall of rain. Shucks, ain no usa me ackin this way, she thought. Ever time they gits ready to hol them meetings Ah gits jumpity. Ah been a lil scared ever since Sug went t jail. She heard the clock ticking and looked. Johnny-Boys a *hour* late! He sho mus be havin a time doin all tha trampin, trampin thu the mud. . . . But her fear was a quiet one; it was more like an intense brooding than a fear; it was a sort of hugging of hated facts so closely that she could feel their grain, like letting cold water run over her hand from a faucet on a winter morning.

She ironed again, faster now, as if the more she engaged her body in work the less she would think. But how could she forget Johnny-Boy out there on those wet fields rounding up white and black Communists for a meeting tomorrow? And that was just what Sug had been doing when the sheriff had caught him, beat him, and tried to make him tell who and where his comrades were. Po Sug! They sho musta beat tha boy something awful! But, thank Gawd, he didnt talk! He ain no weaklin' Sug ain! Hes been lion-hearted all his life long.

That had happened a year ago. And now each time those meetings came around the old terror surged back. While shoving the iron a cluster of toiling days returned; days of washing and ironing to feed Johnny-Boy and Sug so they could do party work; days of carrying a hundred pounds of white folks' clothes upon her head across fields sometimes wet and sometimes dry. But in those days a hundred pounds was nothing to carry carefully balanced upon her head while stepping by instinct over the corn and cotton rows. The only time it had seemed heavy was when she had heard of Sug's arrest. She had been coming home one morning with a bundle upon her head, her hands swinging idly by her sides, walking slowly with her eyes in front of her, when Bob, Johnny-Boy's pal, had called from across the fields and had come and told her that the sheriff had got Sug. That morning the bundle had become heavier than she could ever remember.

And with each passing week now, though she spoke of it to no one, things were becoming heavier. The tubs of water and the smoothing iron and the bundle of clothes were becoming harder to lift, her with her back aching so, and her work was taking longer, all because Sug was gone and she didn't know just when Johnny-Boy would be taken too. To ease the ache of anxiety that was swelling her heart, she hummed, then sang softly:

> He walks wid me, He talks wid me
> He tells me Ahm His own. . . .

Guiltily, she stopped and smiled. Looks like Ah jus cant seem t fergit them ol songs, no mattah how hard Ah tries. . . . She had learned them when she was a little girl living and working on a farm. Every Monday morning from the corn and cotton fields the slow strains had floated from her mother's lips, lonely and haunting; and later, as the years had filled with gall, she had learned their deep meaning. Long hours of scrubbing floors for a few cents a day had taught her who Jesus was, what a great boon it was to cling to Him, to be like Him and suffer without a mumbling word. She had poured the yearning of her life into the songs, feeling buoyed with a faith beyond this world. The figure of the Man nailed in agony to the Cross, His burial in a cold grave, His transfigured Resurrection, His being breath and clay, God and Man—all had focused her feelings upon an imagery which had swept her life into a wondrous vision.

But as she had grown older, a cold white mountain, the white folks and their laws, had swum into her vision and shattered her songs and their spell of peace. To her that white mountain was temptation, something to lure her from her Lord, a part of the world God had made in order that she might endure it and come through all the stronger, just as Christ had risen with greater glory from the tomb. The days crowded with trouble had enhanced her faith and she had grown to love hardship with a bitter pride; she had obeyed the laws of the white folks with a soft smile of secret knowing.

After her mother had been snatched up to heaven in a chariot of fire, the years had brought her a rough workingman and two black babies, Sug and Johnny-Boy, all three of whom she had wrapped in the charm and magic of her vision. Then she was tested by no less than God; her man died, a trial which she bore with the strength shed by the grace of her vision; finally even the memory of her man faded into the vision itself, leaving her with two black boys growing tall, slowly into manhood.

Then one day grief had come to her heart when Johnny-Boy and Sug had walked forth demanding their lives. She had sought to fill their eyes with her vision, but they would have none of it. And she had wept when they began to boast of the strength shed by a new and terrible vision.

But she had loved them, even as she loved them now; bleeding, her heart had followed them. She could have done no less, being an old woman in a strange world. And day by day her sons had ripped from her startled eyes her old vision; and image by image had given her a new one, different, but great and strong enough to fling her into the light of another grace. The wrongs and sufferings of black men had taken the place of Him nailed to the Cross; the meager beginnings of the party had become another Resurrection; and the hate of those who would destroy her new faith had quickened in her a hunger to feel how deeply her strength went.

"Lawd, Johnny-Boy," she would sometimes say, "Ah jus wan them white folks t try t make me tell *who* is *in* the party n who *ain!* Ah jus wan em t try, n Ahll show em something they never thought a black woman could have!"

But sometimes like tonight, while lost in the forgetfulness of work, the past and the present would become mixed in her; while toiling under a strange star for a new freedom the old songs would slip from her lips with their beguiling sweetness.

The iron was getting cold. She put more wood into the fire, stood again at the window and watched the yellow blade of light cut through the wet darkness. Johnny-Boy ain here yit. . . . Then, before she was aware of it,

she was still, listening for sounds. Under the drone of rain she heard the slosh of feet in mud. Tha ain Johnny-Boy. She knew his long, heavy footsteps in a million. She heard feet come on the porch. Some woman. . . . She heard bare knuckles knock three times, then once. Thas some of them comrades! She unbarred the door, cracked it a few inches, and flinched from the cold rush of damp wind.

"Whos tha?"

"Its me!"

"Who?"

"Me, Reva!"

She flung the door open.

"Lawd, chile, c mon in!"

She stepped to one side and a thin, blond-haired white girl ran through the door; as she slid the bolt she heard the girl gasping and shaking her wet clothes. Somethings wrong! Reva wouldna walked a mile t mah house in all this slop fer nothin! Tha gals stuck onto Johnny-Boy; Ah wondah ef anything happened t im?

"Git on inter the kitchen, Reva, where its warm."

"Lawd, Ah sho is wet!"

"How yuh reckon yuhd be, in all tha rain?"

"Johnny-Boy ain here *yit?*" asked Reva.

"Naw! N ain no usa yuh worryin bout im. Jus yuh git them shoes off! Yuh wanna ketch yo deatha col?" She stood looking absently. Yeah; its something bout the party er Johnny-Boy thas gone wrong. Lawd, Ah wondah ef her pa knows how she feels bout Johnny-Boy? "Honey, yuh hadnt oughta come out in sloppy weather like this."

"Ah had t come, An Sue."

She led Reva to the kitchen.

"Git them shoes off n git close t the stove so yuhll git dry!"

"An Sue, Ah got something t tell yuh . . ."

The words made her hold her breath. Ah bet its something bout Johnny-Boy!

"Whut, honey?"

"The sheriff wuz by our house tonight. He come t see pa."

"Yeah?"

"He done got word from somewheres bout tha meetin tomorrow."

"Is it Johnny-Boy, Reva?"

"Aw, naw, An Sue! Ah ain hearda word bout im. Ain yuh seen im tonight?"

"He ain come home t eat yit."

"Where kin he be?"

"Lawd knows, chile."

"Somebodys gotta tell them comrades tha meetings off," said Reva. "The sheriffs got men watchin our house. Ah had t slip out t git here widout em followin me."

"Reva?"

"Hunh?"

"Ahma ol woman n Ah wans yuh t tell me the truth."

"Whut, An Sue?"

"Yuh ain tryin t fool me, is yuh?"

"*Fool* yuh?"

"Bout Johnny-Boy?"

"Lawd, naw, An Sue!"

"Ef theres anything wrong jus tell me, chile. Ah kin stan it."

She stood by the ironing board, her hands as usual folded loosely over her stomach, watching Reva pull off her water-clogged shoes. She was feeling that Johnny-Boy was already lost to her; she was feeling the pain that would come when she knew it for certain; and she was feeling that she would have to be brave and bear it. She was like a person caught in a swift current of water and knew where the water was sweeping her and did not want to go on but had to go on to the end.

"It ain nothin bout Johnny-Boy, An Sue," said Reva. "But we gotta do something er we'll all git inter trouble."

"How the sheriff know bout tha meetin?"

"Thas whut pa wans t know."

"Somebody done turned Judas."

"Sho looks like it."

"Ah bet it wuz some of them new ones," she said.

"Its hard t tell," said Reva.

"Lissen, Reva, yuh oughta stay here n git dry, but yuh bettah git back n tell yo pa Johnny-Boy ain here n Ah don know when hes gonna show up. *Some*bodys gotta tell them comrades t stay erway from yo pa's house."

She stood with her back to the window, looking at Reva's wide, blue eyes. Po critter! Gotta go back thu all tha slop! Though she felt sorry for Reva, not once did she think that it would not have to be done. Being a woman, Reva was not suspect; she would have to go. It was just as natural for Reva to go back through the cold rain as it was for her to iron night and day, or for Sug to be in jail. Right now, Johnny-Boy was out there on those dark fields trying to get home. Lawd, don let em git im tonight! In spite of herself her feelings became torn. She loved her son and, loving him, she loved what he was trying to do. Johnny-Boy was happiest when he was working for the party, and her love for him was for his happiness. She frowned, trying hard to fit something together in her feelings: for her to try to stop Johnny-Boy was to admit that all the toil of years meant nothing; and to let him go meant that sometime or other he would be caught, like Sug. In facing it this way she felt a little stunned, as though she had come suddenly upon a blank wall in the dark. But outside in the rain were people, white and black, whom she had known all her life. Those people depended upon Johnny-Boy, loved him and looked to him as a man and leader. Yeah; hes gotta keep on; he cant stop now. . . . She looked at Reva; she was crying and pulling her shoes back on with reluctant fingers.

"Whut yuh carryin on tha way fer, chile?"

"Yuh done los Sug, now yuh sendin Johnny-Boy . . ."

"Ah got t, honey."

She was glad she could say that. Reva believed in black folks and not for anything in the world would she falter before her. In Reva's trust and acceptance of her she had found her first feelings of humanity; Reva's love was her refuge from shame and degradation. If in the early days of her life the white mountain had driven her back from the earth, then in her last days Reva's love was drawing her toward it, like the beacon that

(*Continued on page 116*)

The Brown Coat

By Alexander Godin

THE first time we tried to cross the border into Poland, we were arrested on the Russian side. This was in 1921, at the close of the summer. One of our wagoners had betrayed us; and afterwards we were led back on foot, Siberian style, through the parched Ukranian steppe. The blazing sun scorched our backs during the day, we staggered from thirst, and knelt on all fours to drink from those stinking pools of water which the sun had not yet dried up.

At night, we slept in makeshift jails, upon pale-yellow straw stamped into shreds from much use; this straw swarmed with vermin like a clear pond with fish. The sentry who accompanied us slept in a sitting posture in the doorway; his eyes were open like a dead man's, and his trigger-finger rested on his battered rifle.

Sometimes a passing wagon picked us up; wagons were scarce, however. They had been requisitioned so often by the armies which had contended for the Ukraine, the peasants had finally driven their horses into the woods. But a week later we were back in Zhitomir, from which we had set out on our desperate and foolhardy journey to America.

After that, we stayed in the local Cheka. When given food, we ate, and listened to the dull clicking of the typewriters overhead. All around us we heard the stubborn cries of a dying world. The life around us burned itself out quickly, hemmed in by death as by a raging sea. It was into this life from which, panic-stricken, we had fled, that we were again thrust, my older sister and I.

WHEN MOTHER was transferred to a women's prison outside the city, we were put in the custody of a relative.

There was not enough food in the house of our relative, however. They were starving in that house also, and while my sister remained, I wandered homelessly over Zhitomir. I went in search of shelter and food, trying to outstrip that death which was surely overtaking all the living; I returned to the Ribnaya market, which swarmed with other homeless boys.

In the middle of the square the Ribnaya porters stood on the cobbles with bare feet, rope coiled about their waists like the snakes of Indian fakirs. Their shoulders were wide and bent like shovels. They had nothing to do here now; but they had stood on this spot for years, and continued to stand in the stifling heat. They smoked fruit-leaves rolled in thick wrapping-paper, and the homeless boys imitated them.

Afterwards my eyes were fixed on the ground in a desperate search for applecores; all the homeless and hungry of the city walked with intent faces and bent heads. When I found a core, I would swallow it at once, fearing to be deprived of my find by those who were stronger than I.

For, instead of being made more savage by hunger, I grew weaker from day to day. The world was too much for me and my twelve years, and I felt my life burning itself out hopelessly; I felt the wretchedness of our lives and my own boyish terror rise up in my throat, my head would grow large and empty with despair, and I would sink into a coma.

I began to fear the long, stifling days, through which walked ghosts; and to dread the nights, when I would lie down in some abandoned house beside other homeless ones. The threads of my days seemed endless; but these threads were in danger of breaking at any time, and I was more afraid of dying than of anything. For I had seen my brother die, I had witnessed the struggle he had put up before the rigidity of death had finally conquered him, and I did not want to die.

SOMETIMES I WOULD FLEE these thoughts, however, and run off to the prison where mother was kept; but whenever I reached its gates, I was refused admittance.

Afterwards, when I succeeded in entering the prison-yard, the sentry began to drive me back. I had crawled under the creaking body of a commissary-wagon on its way in; inside, standing at a barred window, was mother.

She prevailed upon the sentry to leave me a while; and sobbing wordlessly, all the bitter days welled up in me, and I wanted to complain, to keep on complaining. The nature of the place, however, the ghastly walls of the prison, and the eyes of the other women upon me, forced me to silence.

When mother handed me a bit of her prison-bread, a mixture of chaff and chopped straw, I became oblivious of everything else; leaving her at the window, I ran, eating the bread and starting at every sound.

This life could not go on indefinitely, however; I needed something to shield me from the world, or I would perish like so many others. This should be of such a nature, at least, as to make the utter senselessness of my existence bearable. Then a new coat arrived for me from America, some clothing for the others, and a little food.

The market-square on that day, for some reason almost deserted, became filled with porters and homeless boys when the huge crates, loaded on flat wagons, arrived from the station. They surrounded the wagons quickly, talking with unusual animation; I pushed myself forward with difficulty.

The wooden crates were bound with flat strips of metal; outlandish characters were stenciled in black on their sides, and from the damaged corners of one crate, as it was being unloaded, driblets of rice poured out. The porters fought the homeless boys for this rice, they

picked the grains from the ground as if they were golden, and wrapped them in rags torn from their shirts.

When I saw these crates, I believed they were surely from America. For the image of America and what it meant for us, as food, was forever before my eyes.

AFTER SHE WAS RELEASED from prison, mother investigated the matter; a week later a parcel of food was delivered to the house of our relative, and a sack containing clothing. We crowded around the food, for some reason eating the chocolate in the parcel first.

When the sack was opened, however, I saw my new coat, brown and with black buttons. This coat was too wide for me, it was too long and trailed on the ground, collecting dust. But it was new, the odor of dye was still on its cloth, which was smooth to the touch. When I tried it on, I felt as if my sores were at last hidden from the world. . . . As before, the vermin continued to crawl beneath the fine cloth and the black buttons, however; as before, too, I was still troubled by them, but now they seemed insignificant, they seemed not to matter now. I don't know why, but it seemed to me that the coat would shield me from many ills; and a new dignity came into my life.

The second time we left Zhitomir by a new route. The ceaseless movement of the wagon frequently closed our eyes, and when we opened them again, the wagon seemed to stand still; our heads turned, and the earth whirled quickly and dizzily. The horses kicked up a curtain of dust around us, and the driver sat stonily in the seat up front. Sometimes dogs barked, then the earth seemed to whirl even more quickly.

At night, we froze in the bitter chill of approaching autumn, our teeth chattered, and more than once we wondered if it would not have been better had we stayed home. For we were fugitives, the hand of every man was now raised against us, and we could not endure another reverse. We had no home now, however, and had to go on.

Then, for a while after we had crossed the border, we hid in the forest, awaiting an opportunity to move on. The birds shrilled stridently, at night the full moon looked down upon us like a disdainful foe, and the immense trees stood over us like sentries. The rustling of their leaves seemed to us like the voice of betrayal, which formerly had had such a bitter taste.

At the same time, however, I felt that sense of security I had never known in my childhood. The limits of the real world had grown nebulous to me the moment I had put on my coat; presently they had almost ceased to exist; and a new world took the place of the old.

SOME DISTANCE beyond the border it began to rain. Then the wide road turned liquid, and the wheels of our wagon sank to the hub. The horses panted, their drenched hides steamed; and the driver, a sack over his head, constantly whipped them up. The mist was heavy, like smoke, and the others crouched miserably in their seats.

And all this time I sat in my corner of the wagon as if it were a world unlike the one the others inhabited. The disharmony existing in nature was like balm to me, for now I could ignore it as never before. For my coat shielded me from the bitter rain, and in the unreal world I had created for myself, I felt it might yet ward off death itself.

Then there was an accident: I had to relieve myself, I was too shy to ask the driver to stop, and jumped off the wagon, instead. I jumped over the side, and the skirts of my coat caught in the spokes of the hind wheels. I was flung under the wagon as by an invisible hand, and into the liquid mud. The hind wheels barely missed going over me.

This should have sobered me, it should have awakened me to the peril of my new existence and given me cause for thought. I continued to live as in a waking dream, however; I was like a man drunk with happiness, and felt it could never end.

From that moment, a curious song threaded my mind in my waking moments, and wound itself through my dreams. Often this song was made by the wheels of the trains on which we subsequently rode; and I, my legs crossed under me on the hard bench on which I sat, would smile blissfully, I would smile as an idiot smiles, as one whose mind no life had ever touched.

Sometimes this elation would become too painful to bear, however, and I sobbed incoherently.

THE LIMITS of the real world, which had grown nebulous to me the moment I had put on my coat, finally caught me up, however. I had rejected them in my need, but they asserted themselves with a vengeful pitilessness.

We got to the city of Antwerp about two months after we had left Zhitomir, and awaited the medical examinations which would determine our fitness to proceed to the New World. The waiting was tedious, and we walked all day about the city. The autumnal sky was gray, a thick fog rose like a curtain from the sea, and the street-lamps were not put out.

The sea was turbulent, it seemed to stretch out hands with which to draw us into itself. At night, the dismal wind swept through the streets of the Belgian city, it brought images of drowning into our dreams, and rattled everything that was loose. I had brushed the dried mud from my coat till it again seemed new; now it stilled in me the fears aroused by the sea and by the unknown which lay ahead.

But on the eve of the medical examinations, we were taken suddenly to an immense bathhouse. We had often thought of this time with dread, yet now, as we were told to undress, we did so unprotestingly. We were asked to put our clothes into bags furnished us for that purpose, then they were taken away for fumigation; I put my coat in the sack with the other clothes, though I learned afterwards I should have left it outside.

Then, enveloped in clouds of steam through which the bodies of men and boys glistened dully, I kept slipping on the wet stone floor; the liquid soap which I used on my hair ran over into my eyes. The bathhouse turned into a scalding abyss with sharp and treacherous

edges, the pain cut my eyes like a knife, and I feared the loss of my sight.

I forgot my coat, then, and prayed wordlessly I should not be stricken in this way; I argued with a malignant destiny that I was too young, and pointed to my life in the past. But when my eyes became clear and my clothes were brought to me, I did not feel grateful. For the sleeves of my coat had shrunk to the elbows, and the coat itself had shriveled up.

The lights in the bathhouse, dimmed by the stream, blurred. The people around me were like shadows whose mouths opened and shut ceaselessly. I put the ruined coat on my bare shoulders and began madly to dance. This I continued for some time, feeling no shame, hampered by no restraint. The heart pounded with fierce unforgiveness against my ribs, and I felt my life burning itself out hopelessly.

I was again thrown into the senseless life I had known, and I felt an illness coming over me. I was not ill, however; nor did I wear my coat again. I understood at last why I had used the coat as a shield against a chaotic and needlessly brutal existence. It was a bitter moment when that realization came to me; but with that ended my childhood.

Medicine

By Oscar Saul, Alfred Hayes, and H. R. Hays

THE following excerpt is from the script of the forthcoming Living Newspaper production, *Medicine,* now in preparation by the Federal Theatre Project in New York City.—THE EDITORS.

(A drop represents an arcade. Six puny, wrinkled, baldish figures (before) support one side, the other is held up by the muscular man in the lion skin (after) familiar to readers of the pulp magazine. Mr. Green stands looking at the figures. Suddenly he is surrounded by a chorus of patent medicines costumed in well-known brands. They sing enticingly.)

CHORUS

Do you suffer from sterility,
Impotence or debility?
Are you losing your virility?
Don't despair!
You can still be sex-appealing,
You can lose that run-down feeling
And the dandruff that's revealing
Falling hair!
Falling hair!
Run, don't walk to the nearest store,
Buy a bottle of Squirk.
It doesn't matter what it's for,
It's always sure to work.
Take it when the weather's cold,
Take it when it's hot.
Take it if you're young or old
But always take a lot.
Then—
When the movies want a he-man
Or the government a G-man
Or the girls a Tarzan, tree-man,
You'll be there!
Don't despair,
You'll be there!

GREEN *(Hopefully)*

Can you make me big and muscular?

CHORUS

Red-blooded and corpuscular!

GREEN

Can you cure appendicitis?

CHORUS *(Very rapidly)*

Falling arches and neuritis
And arthritis
And bronchitis
And gastritis
And colitis
Dermatitis,
Tonsilitis,
Laryngitis,
All the ills that flesh is heir to,
Even some that are not there, too,
We can cure 'em all!

GREEN

That's fine,
Here's my dime.

CHORUS *(Indignant)*

A dime!

GREEN

Don't holler.

CHORUS

A dollar!
And lay it on the line!

GREEN

One minute!
What's in it?

CHORUS *(Sternly)*

Read the label
If you're able.
(Green studies it to no avail)
Don't stop to think,
Drink,
Drink,
Drink!
(He drinks. There is a terrific crash. He falls flat. Blackout)

LOUDSPEAKER

Is there a chemist here today?
What has the chemist got to say?
(Burst of smoke, chemist appears. He reads off the

constituents of a number of patent medicines ending with Slimotto. Fanfare of music, enter a very fat man with a bottle of Slimotto.)*

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

I represent Slimotto
And I speak for its producer.
It's a guaranteed reducer.

CHEMIST

But it burns the tissues too, Sir.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

(Puts the bottle down on the stage. It has a string attached which he holds in his hand)

Says who?

(Postman enters)

POSTMAN.

By order of the postal board,
Seized for trying to defraud.
It's got to be withdrawn from sale.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

(Yanks bottle away with string)

I won't send it through the mail.

POSTMAN

Out of my jurisdiction.

(He exits. Representative of Food and Drug Administration enters)

FOOD AND DRUG ADMN.

There's still protection for the nation.
The Food and Drug Administration.
We'll fine you, throw you in the jug.

(Grabs for bottle)

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

(Jerks bottle away)

Who says Slimotto is a drug?

FOOD AND DRUG ADMN.

Out of my jurisdiction.

(Exits as two representatives of the Federal Trade Commission enter)

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

Here come two more master minds.

F. T. C.

The Federal Trade Commission finds
Your blurbs and labels need revising.
You're guilty of false advertising.

(One takes the bottle and puts it in his pocket)

CHEMIST

Now, at last, Slimotto's caught.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

Not me, I'll take the case to court.

(Supreme Court judge enters)

JUDGE

It's true the advertising's spurious.
It's also true the drug's injurious.
However . . . harmful advertising claims
Can do no wrong, the court affirms,
Unless they harm competing firms.

(He exits)

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

(Yanks bottle out of F. T. C.'s pocket with string)

As long as profits keep on growing,
We'll find a way to keep it going.

(Kisses bottle. A huge manuscript rolled up and tied with a ribbon lands on the stage with a thud)

CHEMIST

What's that?

REPRESENTATIVE OF SLIMOTTO CO.

My God, a bill!

(Blows a police whistle. Roll of drums. Representatives of drug companies, periodicals, a couple of senators rush on. They unroll the bill and examine it as they talk)

GROUP

A bill!
A bill!
A bill, my friends,
Would kill the till!
Aud bring the profits down to nil!

LOUDSPEAKER

The National Association of Radio Broadcasters.
The National Association of Periodical Publishers.
The National Editorial Association.
Assisted by Senator Bailey and Senator Vandenberg.

ALL

We all agree this bill of Mr. Tugwell's
Would make a fine addition to the laws,
Provided you pay heed to our suggestion,
And eliminate a simple little clause.
And eliminate a simple little clause!

(They tear out a piece of the bill)

While we feel that bottles shouldn't be mislabeled
And we read the section on this with applause,
Still we must remember we are all in business,
So—let's just eliminate that little clause.

ALL

So—let's just eliminate that little clause!

(They tear out another piece)

The restrictions that you put on advertising,
Though on the whole they're good, have certain flaws.
When they begin to hurt the advertiser,
Then we simply must eliminate that clause,
Yes, we simply must eliminate that clause!

(They tear the whole bill to pieces and throw the pieces up in the air with a whoop. The patent medicines come on and all sing while Representative of Slimotto Co. dances, holding up the bottle)

Run, don't walk, to the nearest store,
Buy a bottle of Squirk.
It doesn't matter what it's for,
It's always sure to work.
Take it when the weather's cold,
Take it when it's hot.
Take it if you're young or old,
But always take a lot.
Then—
When the movies want a he-man,
Or the government a G-man,
Or the girls a Tarzan tree-man,
You'll be there!
Don't despair,
You'll be there!

(Chorus swells to grand finale and blackout)

* The name of the patent medicine has been changed here for obvious reasons but will be revealed at the time of production.

A Tall, Dark Man

By Saul Levitt

"—and a tall dark man will enter your life—"

FOR this feeling now, this feeling of doublecrossers around him—a drink! To wipe the taste out of your mouth. He bought a paper at the stand. Chiang Kai-shek on horseback with drawn sword and the caption below: China will resist Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

A moocher at his elbow—"go to hell!"—that was what he said harshly, only to turn back and spin a dime through the air.

That speak off Third Avenue: the little flight of steps going down. He wanted a soft hour, he wanted to think about the words, the words heard tonight, today, the words with Stein, and then later at the club—words—and, yes, attitudes too, the voices—troubling.

A double rye and a beer chaser. The same old speak; he felt better. Of a sudden he dropped suspicions, thoughts, he took flight—faster than the coast plane to Miami. Down there with Min in the sun! The beach at Miami! White beach and that sun. God, the sun, that ocean. He returned. The trouble you could have with women, the way some situations can get balled up. He mused.

"A double rye," he mused darkly. And in the back, through the half-open backdoor of the speak, falling on a tin can—rain. Making a tinkle, a three-note tinkle, one, two, three, and down the scale again—tum, tum, tum—dee, dee, dee.

He listened, musing. Oh, Dixie!

Into the troubled thinking, that tall, dark man on the other side of him, talking. That voice. Listening to it, listening to himself being addressed, something new added. He found himself being addressed, and he hated it. He had been pulled out of his thoughts into listening, and the voice pointing gradually, pointing deeply, significantly, at him. Reasons for anger. He stared at that tall man, tall and thin and with a finely thin neck, the back of it thin as an eggshell. He felt he could crush it between thumb and forefinger.

"Just like I was telling you," said the man. "When I say that the West will come riding in I know what I'm talking about. They'll come riding in. They'll clean it up something sweet! They'll clean up the country."

The bartender put on the radio. Dance music.

And the voice through the dance music, with Heller's hands itching sadly for that neck.

"This town, it controls everything, this town. Heh! It stinks. Not fit for a man to live in. I wouldn't live here for a million. Can you imagine raising kids here," said the tall, thin man, lifting his head over the bar toward the bartender like a rooster crowing.

"You got customers," said Heller cynically at last, looking at the bartender.

"I certainly got 'em," said the bartender philosophically. "Don't mind Mike. He's crazy. He lives around the corner downstairs. This stuff about the West. I've been hearing it for the last five years. Arizona and the Northwest. If it ain't one it's the other. He knows 'em backwards and forwards. He must read books, heh-heh."

The tall, thin man nodded. He looked at Heller, he pointed his finger, he smiled at Heller in a fixed, cold, little smile, the mouth thin. "I don't know," he said, "I don't know. When a man has a chance to pull his head back and pull that air in"—he breathed deeply and noisily—"when a man has a chance to breathe it in full of pine needles he's more fit. Well, that's why. You got air out there. Not a Jew in a carload out there," he said amiably, "except maybe a general store. I know if they——"

"Why, lissen now, Mike," cried the bartender fiercely, "we don't tolerate that stuff around here. We don't have any prejudice or any of that stuff around here!"

"Me, prejudiced!" cried the tall man honestly. He fell back. He looked at himself in the mirror back of the bar to make sure. "Me, prejudiced!"

"We don't tolerate that stuff around here!" said the bartender, looking at Heller.

The rain tinkled softly on the tin can outside the backdoor. Tum, tum, tum—dee, dee, dee. Over the short dark man's face there spread a faint glow. He fed his beer chaser with salt.

"I've got a right to my opinions," said the tall man. "Out in California now. California!" he said reverently. "They showed the Japs. They showed them whose country it was. They burned the orchards. They put them in their places. . . . We've got a right! They'll come riding in——"

"Can it," said Heller. "Close up." He hunched over the bar, considering the woodwork, tapping his fingers softly.

"There it is," said the tall man with conviction. "There it is!" He turned in a wide circle, gesturing to the empty speak. "Just what I mean! Interfering. Butting in. Mr. Buttinsky—ski—Levinski. You go riding on a train, you're hanging onto a strap when somebody comes up and hangs onto the strap with you or leaning all over you and you look down and it's a little peewee of a Jew. In your pockets one way or the other. In your pockets."

The beer foamed under the salt. He drank it down. "Same," he said. "And listen, George." Heller bent over the bar. He said softly, "Clean up this place some time, George. You know what I mean George. Use the flit. I'm gonna use the flit in a minute, George, if you don't. You know what I mean, George."

"Hah-hah," said the bartender with an effort, turning the radio higher.

The tall man's eyes twinkled kindly. "A guy gets

sore," he said kindly, "because he can't take it. He thinks I'm prejudiced. No one can help it if he's born that way. I don't blame a nigger for being a nigger. His father and his mother. His grandfather and his grandmother. All the way back to Africa. Naturally. You can't blame a man for that. I don't blame you, mister," he said to Heller kindly.

The broad little man turned in a swift movement. He grabbed the tall, thin man at the back of his neck, at the point where it was most pathetically fragile and childish, like an undernourished boy's. He held it between thumb and forefinger, bending the tall man over, who was made speechless, his eyes dark and sad. Like an ant dragging a leafy splinter, the husky man pulled him to the backdoor, chucked him into the alley.

He glowed silently at the bar. The bartender stared at him, turned to polish a counter. From the radio, a soprano voice soaring through "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life."

A new perplexity welled up in him now, made out of the voice, the words of the tall man. He felt suddenly an obscure need for self-defense. He leaned on the bar, somehow like a heavy, anguished animal without a voice, he played with the bow-tie.

"I believe in this country one hundred percent," he said dully. "I wouldn't live in Europe if they paid me. I'm an American right down to my toes. I was born here."

The bartender stared at him, rubbing a bald spot on the top of his skull tenderly.

"A dinge! He compared me! I was born here, where did he get that stuff? Don't I speak the language?

"When we had the war I was all lined up to go just when it ended. Two more months and I'd've been with the boys over there. If there's anybody I hate it's a slacker. I can't stand a slacker and a doublecrosser. But how about those guys in the Market? How about those guys who were dumping stock two years ago and selling the U. S. A. down the river? Everything going to hell. Yellow! They ought to put them on one of these garbage boats and dump them out at sea. They don't belong here."

He looked up at the small American flag behind the bartender, with despair flooding his face.

"I'm an American right down to my toes. Where do they get that stuff? I was born here. . . . Doublecrossers," he said. "You don't know who is and who ain't doing you dirty these days——"

He went out. Why didn't he kill that tall bastard, he should've cut his heart out and bounced it against a wall. Oh, the doublecrossers, the goddam, reneging, dirty, lousy doublecrossers in this world!

Third Avenue dark in the shadow of the Elevated, a tiny little girl, with one stocking torn, twisting in and out of the "L" pillars in a secret game of her own. In an upstairs window, a spot of light, a woman's face. Queen Marie maybe. A signboard facing him, showing a blue-shirted workman with hands outstretched: The American Family Is in Danger! The blue workman ran bluish in the rain.

Oh, Dixie!

My Grandfather

By Arnold Manoff

RAZOR, shmazor—my grandfather, Laizer, never took a shave in his life. His beard crawls, dirty white, down to his belly button, and if he did not trim it now and then, it would be sweeping the floor like his pants. And the pants—he likes them that way, big and roomy, like potato sacks. Better than buying his own are these he wears, hand-me-downs from his sons who are all a foot taller than he. And as he never learned a word of English during his thirty years in America, so too he never sees the loops for the belt and the buttons for the fly. Like petals from a flower the tops of the pants fold back over the belt, and believe him, what does he need a belt for altogether when a rope would do just as well. His jackets—well, never mind his jackets. What are jackets for anyway but to hide soiled shirts and to keep him warm like an extra blanket while he takes a sweet little afternoon snooze.

Now it happened one Friday that he came home from work as usual some two hours before sunset so that he would have time to prepare for the Sabbath. Apparently, everything was as it should be. In one glance, in one sniff, he absorbed the household to his complete satisfaction. The candlesticks shining bright, the furniture polished and smelling of lemon oil, the old woman busy in the kitchen from which streamed the mingled odors of freshly baked *chaleh,* fish, *tsimas.* Nothing to do but change his shirt and skull cap and lie down until the lighting of the candles. And of course, a little snifter of whiskey could well be used to warm up that old soul of his for some extra-heavy meditation. He gulped easily, one . . . two . . . three, and several more. He smacked his lips, wiped his beard, and lowered himself with a sigh onto the couch. Soon it was all mellow and he was floating in a warm liquid sort of space that closely resembled Paradise.

"Laizer! Laizer! Get up! The house is burning!" his old woman suddenly screamed.

Thirty years in America, ask him what street he lives on. Ask him who is the President. The street, he'll say, is a street like all streets. No? So why worry about its name. And the President. Well, seventeen years ago was a Mr. Tannenbaum, a fine man if ever was one. But because his old woman got sick and . . . and . . . and now is the president of the synagogue, a Mr. Feinstein, not so ay ay ay, but good enough.

"Where?" he queried, seeing and smelling only the smoke which was curling in through the door. "It's only smoke," he assured her. "Open wide the windows and it will go out." And so saying, he turned his back to the frantic woman and sought to resume his interrupted snooze.

In a moment there were screechings in the hallways, distinct, electrifying. Fire! Fire! The old woman, distracted, did not know what to do first. She pulled him. She ran to the door. Back to the kitchen. The smoke was pouring in heavier now.

My grandfather Laizer growled disgustedly and rose from the bed to see for himself why such a commotion.

Buildings grow to towers, horses vanish for motors, out of a city emerges a great metropolis; the world breathes fire and energy, and my grandfather Laizer steps sedately into a traffic-roaring avenue, his head high to heaven, his beard tucked safely in his vest, and strolls across while the world waits and curses. And he hears them like he hears the Devil.

"Come outside! Laizer! It's a fire! Hear everybody! Come on!" the old woman implored.

If, until he was seventy-one, he never missed a work day as a cabinet maker, 'twas only a common incident like breathing. His lungs breathe for him. Right or not? So please understand that his hands likewise worked for him. Witness how absorbed he is in everyday phenomena, that when he had to travel to work the first day in America, his son described for him how many subway stations to count off and from then on for thirty years it was simply a question of waiting out five stops and then proceeding after the right side of his nose for two blocks.

"Nonsense, where do you see fire? I see smoke, not fire. Smoke does not mean fire. Smoke can mean a kettle boiling. Look how she stands there shaking. What are you shaking for? Do you see fire? I don't." And having bawled her out for her misconceptions, he proceeded to investigate the cause. Opening the door he was staggered by a rush of heavy yellow smoke. He slammed it shut and with a little more speed walked to the windows and flung them wide open. There, below, he saw a mass of people gathering and gaping almost directly at him, and mingled with their cries was the approaching wail of a siren and clanging bells.

He stared for a while and then sat slowly down near the window to think it over. The old woman had run out into the hallway, and he got up and shut the door after her.

Of matters universal, of fire and water, of the sun and the moon, of God and the universe, of the carnate and incarnate—ask him, ask Laizer Koptzen, by God's grace seventy-eight years alive; seventy years a student in the words of God, and the Talmudists, father of eight, grandfather to twenty-one, and watch his eyes light with pride. And sit down to listen while he deliberates in soft even tones with expression owl-wise and cocksure, naïvely positive as only a living anachronism can be.

For quite a while my grandfather Laizer couldn't make up his mind. In the meantime the engines had arrived, and the clamor from the hallway had ceased, and all the noise now came from the street. Yet he could see no fire, only smoke so dense now that his eyes were tearing and his lungs stinging with every inhalation.

Until the flames finally ate their way into the house so he could see them and feel sure they were flames as are flames, he sat and pondered, and then as if he had known all the time that he would have to leave, he quickly gathered up his best silk skull cap, his long shawl, his philacteries, three of his books, and made for the door where he was met by two charging firemen. They grabbed him. He closed his eyes, stopped breathing, and for a time it seemed as if he were being carried through hell itself. So hot it was. He didn't dare look. Not, please understand, that he was frightened. No. Just taken by surprise.

That's how it is with him. Viewing the material from the spiritual pinnacle, my grandfather Laizer fears nothing of matter in any of its forms, man-conceived or nature-fashioned. And for such elemental trivialities as temperature, time, language, location, speed, height, and taking baths, he has an indifferent shrug.

"He who trusts in God and awaits with true faith," he says, "the coming of the Messiah, has of worldly fears, none."

Now he was sitting, the motion ending. Cool, a pleasure. He opened his eyes and beheld with mild concern a burning building, and a mass of people all around him, shouting, laughing, gesticulating. He thought of his Sabbath being so crudely interrupted but like a true philosopher sighed it away, rose to his feet, and walked to the edge of the crowd. There he found a box, and adjusting his skull cap he sat down, and glancing once at the sky to see how far the sun had gone down, he opened one of the books and began to intone softly, detaching himself from earthly things as only he could.

But the immediate world around him was fully enjoying a rare treat. The roof of the building was ablaze like the head of a match stick, and the firemen were putting on a great show of ladders, hatchets, and spouting hoses. More engines arrived and now a newsphotographer. Reporters, too, were running about, their press cards in hat ribbons. The story of how the old man was carried out by two firemen went the rounds and soon died out with each new excitement, each new fireman's helmet. Someone sugested finding him. A reporter was interested. But no one bothered to look.

An hour later, the fire was spent, the crowd's interest flickering, exhausted. And in the sky the sun was just beyond the horizon. Engines, spectators began to depart one by one. But one more incident occurred. A giant hook-and-ladder was swinging into the street on its way back, picking up speed, its bell clanging fiercely. Huge, powerful, it charged along, a gleaming red juggernaut, when suddenly with a tremendous grinding squeal it stopped short, the driver, the firemen all cursing a blue streak, their eyes on . . . yes. My grandfather Laizer is crossing in front, his beard in his vest, skull cap shining, his gait slow and untroubled, his eyes toward the darkening sky.

The world waits and swears. My grandfather Laizer, understand me, is well on his way to synagogue.

Home

By Sam Ross

NICK did not know why his father went away, and without saying a word to him. Of late his father sat around the house without ever talking. He looked like a blownup crumpled paper bag waiting to be banged out of usefulness. The only time he seemed to grow alive was when he coughed. Then his whole body trembled and jerked with what seemed like chains rattling through him. He had gone off one day, his back stooped and round. And he had not returned. Nick had heard him talking to his mother before he had left.

"I'm a dead man," he said.

"You should never have taken that job in the sewer, with your weak chest."

"I had to."

"Every day you worked I saw you getting a hemorrhage in your lungs, and you were gone. It wasn't worth it."

"That was life."

"What do you mean: was?"

"I can't hold out any longer. You'll get some insurance money soon. I took care of that on my last job."

Nick's mother began to cry. Nick was only seven years old and he could not understand why she cried. She had cried a lot lately, and each time he felt himself swimming through her tears, boiling and choking in them.

Nick knew only that his father had a cold. That was why his father always kept him at a distance. But having a cold was nothing to bawl about. Nick had had many. It was practically nothing.

When his father did not return after a week, his mother seemed to wait around the house for something to happen. Whenever there was a knocking on the door she ran to it quickly. If it was a neighbor or a salesman or a bill collector, her eyes lost their expectation and became filmy.

Then his mother began to curse his father when she thought Nick could not hear. It seemed she had been cheated out of something. Nick did not know what.

When the kids on the street asked him about his father he felt bewildered, not knowing what to answer. Finally he said, "He wenna buy me a pony. He wen' far away fum yere for it."

"Jesus!" the kids said. "You got a real ol' man."

He had said that and almost believed in it, he had told the story so many times. But when he had asked his mother, she had yelled, "Don't bother me! Get away and don't bother me!"

And he thought she was going to hit him. He had to stop asking her, because when he did she no longer looked like his mother. She would stop looking big and soft and warm. But he could not help wondering. He wished he was big and knew everything.

One day, not long after his father went away, Nick was hungry. He had not eaten the day before, except for a couple of apples he had hooked from a fruit stand. He was so hungry he sat at the kitchen table waiting. His mother walked restlessly back and forth from the empty pantry. Nick had said he was hungry, and watched her move silently in her sprawling bare feet. Her heavy black hair was uncombed. She looked very big and fleshy in her apron. There was a wrinkled expression on her forehead, like crying, but she wasn't. She sat down at the kitchen table and her eyes gazed upon him without seeing. Finally she stood up and put on a pair of worn, bulging shoes.

"I'm going to get something to eat," she said.

"I'm hungry, ma."

He followed her into the dank stairway. Creaking down the hollow dampened wood, Nick inhaled deeply the faint lingering smells of cooked food.

"It hurts in my belly, ma."

"Soon it won't hurt, I hope."

Outside the sun glazed the dusty street and the trolley rails looked like rippling cellophane ribbons. Niggy and Tony, both a couple of years older than Nick, sat on the curbstone. They were what Nick called the big guys.

"You play with them."

"Awright, ma."

"I'll be back soon. So don't go away."

Nick walked slowly to the curbstone and picked up a rain-soaked stick on the way. He sat down beside them, with his feet in the gutter.

"Where'd yuh ma go?" Tony asked.

"She wenna ged somepin to eat."

"Why doan she go to duh corner grocery like my ma goes?"

"She doan havva do evvyt'ing like your ma."

"Where's she go den?"

"I dunno."

"You're a dumsock. You dunno nuddin'."

"Yuh pa home yet?" Niggy asked.

"No."

"My ma said to my pa he wen' away an' left you," Niggy said.

"He wen' far away fum yere." Nick said. "It takes a year to go up an' back."

"Go on," Tony said. "No place is a year away fum yere."

"Yeah?" Nick said. "What about heaven? Dat's more'n a year."

"Dat's bushwa," Tony said. "Ain' it, Niggy?"

"Sure. 'Cause now you kin go by airplane an' you go like sixty."

"So where'd yuh pa go a year away?" Tony asked.

"In duh West, see. He's a cowboy dere an' when he comes home he's gonna bring me a pony fum dat hoss he got dere."

"I dunno," Niggy said. " 'Cause in my house my ma looks at my pa an' she begins trowin' her fist aroun' an' she says: doan ever lemme catch you tryin' to leave. An' my pa says: doan go givin' me idees. Yeah? my ma says."

"Your ma an' pa muzz be nuts," Nick said.

"I'll kill yuh, yuh say dat again," Niggy said.

"Yuh can't hit a baby like dat," Tony said.

"He gotta take back what he said."

"Go on," Tony said. "Do it."

Niggy was standing and his knuckles were white and from under his baseball cap his eyes glowered.

"I take it back," Nick said.

"Yuh better," Niggy said. His body relaxed and he sat down again.

An automobile whizzed by and Nick was glad. Tony was excited and said it was a Packard. He could tell by the radiator frame which shone like a diamond in the sun, and by the red spinning square on the hub cap. Niggy thought, how could Tony know? He had never seen one before. But Tony said Vince Venuti, the best wheelman in the world which no cop-car can catch, drove one. Niggy said that was right, and bragged how he saw Vince turn corners on two wheels with the cops right behind him. Nick was awed, hearing about Vince Venuti and about seeing a Packard for the first time. Niggy and Tony decided to see who was a better guesser of automobiles. Niggy and Tony bet thousands of dollars guessing, and Nick envied them.

When they tired of their game they took Nick's stick and threw it on the trolley tracks. Niggy said maybe the stick would make the car fall over. Jesus, what fun that would be! Nick was grateful for being allowed to get in the game, but was soon sorry when the trolley-car wheels splintered his stick to pieces. Niggy and Tony were a couple of dirty guys. Go on, punk, they said yuh ought to be lucky we let you hang around.

As they were urging Nick to find them a big board or a brick, his mother came down the street with a few bags of groceries pressed against her big breasts. There was a splotch upon her dress.

"Here comes your ma," Niggy said.

"Hey, Nick, what'd yer ol' lady do?"

"Where, Tony?"

"Dere, Niggy. Dere. See."

"Yeah, Nick, what'd she do?"

Niggy and Tony jigged up and down, laughing and pointing at Nick's mother.

"Jesus, it looks like, ho, ha, ha!"

"Haw, ha."

"Oh, what'd yer ol' lady do?"

"Nicky," she called. "Come here."

Nick was bewildered. Niggy and Tony were embracing their bellies, singing, taunting, "Shame on Nicky's mudder, shame on Nicky's mudder."

"Come here, Nicky!"

He walked to her side. Up the stairs she kept muttering, "Little snots, little snots."

In the house she became silent and busied herself in the kitchen. Nick kept looking at her dress as she moved about. He wanted to ask her what was there but was afraid she would not look like his mother. But the food was good and he forgot about everything and his mother was big and soft and warm. He jumped on her lap and felt her breast soften under his head, and when he looked up her eyes were watery and he felt himself strained through her tears and flowing within her breasts.

That night he went to sleep on the couch in the living-room, which was next to the bedroom and off the kitchen. He was suddenly awakened by loud knocks on the door. He saw his mother's naked body bulge from the darkness.

"Who's there?" she whispered.

"It's Mike!"

"Please go away. It's too late."

"Lemme in!"

Nick thought the door was going to whang to the floor, such hard knocking followed. She ran to the couch and he squeezed his eyes tight. He was afraid to breathe. Then as he lay there stiff and tense against the bulgy cushions, he could hear his mother saying shhh, and her feet hissing across the bare floor, and the man saying, "Whatsa matter? You don't like to eat no more?"

He heard the door to his mother's room close, then talk, then no more words, just heavy groaning and breathing, and he fell asleep in the hush that followed. He awoke feeling a smile on his cheeks after dreaming his father was back, who was also his big brother, and he ran into his mother's room. And it was his father there, he was so happy, until he heard the voice.

"What's the kid doin' here? Beat it."

Nick stood there in the darkness.

"Go back to sleep, Nicky," his mother said quietly.

He walked out and dressed and ran outside and walked in the yellow-orbed streets and finally slumped into a store entrance. He was awakened by a policeman lifting him to his feet.

"What you doin' here, sonny?"

Nick did not answer. He rubbed his eyes with his dirty hands. His eyes looked feverish and frightened.

"What's the matter, boy, you dumb?"

Nick nodded.

"You lost?"

Nick shook his head.

"Where do you live?"

"Home."

"Where's home?"

"Dunno."

"You ain't got a home, sonny. Tell me."

"Hones' I got one."

"If I don't take you home, I got to take you to jail."

"I kin go myse'f home."

"I'll take you."

The policeman followed him. Nick did not want to go home. He saw Niggy and Tony, and he could not go back. He did not want the cop to go up to his house. Somebody was going to get in trouble. Then he forgot where he lived. No matter what the policeman asked, Nick did not know anything. When Nick began to cry the policeman said he shouldn't be afraid of being lost. He wanted to help Nick. Nick felt tears on his cheeks, and tasted them. When the squad car came, Nick got in.

Street Songs of Children

Collected by Fred Rolland

AMERICAN folklore of cities, villages, and farms finds vivid and often delightful utterance in the rhymes of their children. Those rhymes, enriched by contributions of an endless line of immigrants, have been remodeled by succeeding generations of youngsters, and we find them today an entertaining and revealing mixture of tradition and modernization. Language to a child is synonymous with action. These are rhymes which require dramatic explanation through game, dance, or burlesque. The child's naïve representation of the conventions and actions of his elders often produces a rollicking, if unconscious, satire.

All poetry, to live, must be not only universal in content but also a repercussion of the age in which it was created. These rhymes of childhood have passed a stern test in being accepted by succeeding generations. They have been modified, of course, and therein lies much of their interest. We find innumerable versions of any one rhyme, and, in tracing its changes, we discover an authentic comment upon the changes in our society. The twentieth-century child who proclaims that he "won't go to Macy's any more, more, more" is already voicing his protest, superficial but indicative.

These jingles are a product of group fraternization, amended, adapted, and accepted by collective approval. They come from sidewalks, back alleys, playgrounds, and playstreets, the folklore of the children of America.—F. R.

Down in the meadow where the green grass grows,
There sat Glory along the road,
She sang, and she sang, and she sang so sweet,
Along came a fellow and kissed her on the cheek,
  Oh Glory, oh Glory, you ought to be ashamed
  To marry a fellow without a name!
  When you are sick, he'll put you to bed,
  Call for the doctor before you are dead!
    In comes the doctor
    In comes the nurse
    In comes the priest
    With a high, high hat.
      Out goes the doctor
      Out goes the nurse
      Out goes the priest
      With the high, high hat.

Old Aunt Marie, she jumped into the fire.
The fire was so hot, she jumped into the pot.
The pot was so black, she jumped into the crack.
The crack was so narrow, she jumped into the marrow.
The marrow was so rotten, she jumped into the cotton.
The cotton was so white, she stayed there all night.

Minnie and a Minnie and a hot-cha-cha!
Minnie kissed a fellow in a Broadway car.
I'll tell Ma, you'll tell Pa
Minnie and a hot-cha-cha!

Eeny, meeny, mony, mike,
New York subway strike.
Have it, frost it
Ack-awack a-wee woe wack!

Nine o'clock is striking
Mother may I go out?
The butcher boy is waiting
For to take me out.
  I'd rather kiss the butcher boy
  On the second floor
  Than kiss the ice man
  Behind the kitchen door.

Kiss me cute
Kiss me cunning
Kiss me quick
My mommie's coming!

Brass shines, so does tin;
The way I love you is a sin.

The Brooklyn girls are tough
The Brooklyn girls are smart,
But it takes a New York girl
To break a fellow's heart!

House to let
Inquire within.
A lady got put out
For drinking gin.
If she promises to drink no more
Here's the key to Mary's door!

F and K is out on strike,
We will picket and we'll shout
Don't buy! Don't buy!
  Don't believe the bosses' lies!
  Don't buy scab merchandise!
Scabbing is an awful sin
Help us fight and we will win!

I won't go to Macy's any more, more, more!
I won't go to Macy's any more, more, more!
There's a big fat policeman at the door, door, door!
He will squeeze me like a lemon
Achalachke zol em nehmen,
I won't go to Macy's any more, more, more!

My mother, your mother live across the way
514 East Broadway.
Every night they have a fight
And this is what they say:
  Your old man is a dirty old man;
  He washes his face with the frying pan;
  He combs his hair with the leg of a chair;
  Your old man is a dirty old man!

Gypsy, gypsy lives in a tent!
Gypsy, gypsy couldn't pay rent!
She borrowed one.
She borrowed two.
And out goes Y-O-U!

One, two, three, four
Charlie Chaplin went to war.
When the war began to fight,
Charlie Chaplin said, "Good night!"

Oi sweet mamma! Oi sweet mamma!
I'd like to see your nightie, next to my pajama.
Now don't get excited, don't get red;
I mean on the clothes-line and not in bed.

She Snaps Back Into Harness

By Ruth Widén

MRS. PENDEXTER watched thousands of snowflakes a minute going down, down, down. One more doesn't make any difference, I suppose. Do they know they're going down and that it's inevitable, or are they unconscious? They look happy about it, somehow. Suppose just one of the snowflakes had feelings and consciousness and knew what was happening, and all the others didn't know; how would that be? One being able to see and feel and know what was happening, in the middle of a crowd of flakes that didn't know, couldn't see. They surround you and you can't tell them anything; they cover up everything with smooth platitudes and then you are alone and nobody understands. You are supposed not to be suffering. To be doing everything gladly. If you admitted you were doing it under protest, because it had to be done but you didn't like it, if you screamed aloud or even complained a little, it wouldn't be . . . what's the word? *What* would be wrong with it? Well anyway it would be wrong. If some stranger messes up your life you have a claim against him. If your own people, those closest to you, mess up your life . . .

Mrs. Pendexter smiled. When she gave birth to Henry he nearly killed her. That was different, somehow. If Henry had killed her she'd have forgiven him, he couldn't help it. It was part of the game, she even liked him a little better for it. When she lay in bed in the hospital, as Calvin was lying in the hospital now, hardly conscious, Calvin had bent over her with his lips pressed tight together and promised everything she wanted. Not too much money. When they got a certain amount they'd begin to use it to enjoy themselves. Travel around the world, never mind about piling up more. *That* would have been something, wouldn't it? Instead of salting all the money away in real estate, so that life was just one procession of mortgages coming due. Well, it's what all the rest of them do, it's the accepted conservative theory of what to do with your money. There was Calvin bright-eyed and cocksure, lecturing her: You see Mrs. Pendexter, I am taking care of your future; I am seeing to it that you will have an income in your old age, after I am gone, if I should go first. Well, he had the backing of accepted conservative theory so what could she say? Tie up your money where nobody can get at it (where you can't even get at it yourself). Then there's the feminine feeling that a man must be right. Should have put up a bigger fight, maybe, but what can you do?

It's too late now, said Mrs. Pendexter. Of course a man who's that hard with himself expects others to be just as ascetic as he is. He wasn't ascetic, though; he liked work and he didn't like leisure, that was the whole size of it. When he did go to Europe he made work out of it. Didn't see anything that wasn't in the guide book. It was really a great bore to him, going to Europe, he was thinking about his business all the time. But all his life he used to go around to the auction rooms, that was his recreation, that was his hobby. Defended it on the ground that he was really investing money, but it was his hobby all the same. Then he couldn't see that other people might have different hobbies, Henry, for instance. The boy hadn't ever had any interest in working long hours in the office. Calvin thought his oldest son had to go through the same course that he did. All right if his course had worked out right for him, but you see now . . . At any rate it hadn't worked out well for Henry, even at the beginning. And yet even when the doctor had said it was a nervous breakdown, his father had insisted it wasn't. The boy just doesn't want to work, that's all. I'll show him. . . . She *did* step in there, showing she could fight for her son's rights even if not her own. Took Henry away for a year. You can do things for your children and people sympathize, but not if you're doing it for yourself. But what about these women you read about, who get jewels and dresses and squander their husbands' money? Oh well, you have to be beautiful for that, and have a shape that looks like oo-la-la, not like an old flour sack tied in the middle.

When Calvin was forty he said very loudly, we're middle-aged now. Insisted on wearing glasses. Nothing whatever wrong with his eyes, but he put the glasses on just the same and made his eyes like it. He said, well, mother, we're too old for sex now. Thought I'd beg and plead, I suppose. We're too old for such nonsense, mother. All right, it suits me, you can do as you like (I've been sleeping with a log of wood anyway for twenty-two years, in case anyone should ask you). He'd do as he liked anyway and a lot I'd have to say about it. Always that assumption that I had no sense and needed to be directed, by *him*. He knew what was best for me. Well, this is the way it's turned out. I followed the thing out to the end and this is the end, this. This.

Mrs. Pendexter, he'd say, very oracularly, you ought to be grateful you have everything so easy here. Suppose you had to go out into the world and earn your own living, what would you do? That made me mad. Why suppose *he* had to go out into the employment market and hire a cook and a nurse and a housekeeper and all the rest of it? But he was always throwing that up to me. I've earned my own living, I've earned it over and over and over again. Suppose you had to go out into the world, Mrs. Pendexter, against the competition of younger women, and make your way. . . . Oh, well.

Mrs. Pendexter turned away from the window. It was too dark now even to see the snow coming down. The room was brightly lighted and the Chinese rug on the wall cast a warm blue glow. The rug was bought in China. The scarf on the other wall in India. Wonderful how much trouble they go to when they're mak-

ing something beautiful. The chairs were Louis XV. The plate was Spode. Books of old lithographs in the bookcase. Mrs. Pendexter sank into a *chaise longue,* easing her feet. A comfortable blankness settled around her mind. If.

Must take brown dress to the cleaner's, it's a disgrace. Can't wear it again. If.

Think about something pleasant. . . . When I went to China that time I wanted to stay, wanted to look into things. Sampans. Queer houses. Smell of fried fish in the bazaars, oh, those bazaars. People and people and people. Like to know more about them, maybe they have a better way of doing things than we have, who knows? Even if they do look so poor. If.

Think about something pleasant—to live just in a hut in the woods somewhere and not have to think about anything. Could do it all right, the children are all grown up now and don't need me, nobody needs me except. . . .

Calvin. In the hospital his face was as white as his hair. He didn't know anything was the matter with him, tried to get up while I was there. Very angry at being restrained. If he got up and started for New York again he'd never get there, they say. They get that way, optimistic, think everything's fine, they're sitting on top of the world; and all the time they're—disintegrating.

He never told me about it. It must have been ten or fifteen years ago. Was it that time when he was going regularly to Dr. Galt for . . . anæmia, I think he told me? Mary was having her first baby and I didn't think very much about him at the time. He must have started in before that. Started in. He used to twit me with being jealous. I can see lots of things now. Trouble is, I wasn't jealous enough. We're too old for that nonsense now, mother. He kept on being attractive right along, his skin like a baby's even if his hair and mustache were white.

Trouble is I took the whole thing seriously, duty and all that. He was always preaching it to me. I could have . . .

Oh well. What's over is over. Mulling over the past this way won't help me to face the future. Better get a male nurse in case he might get violent, a woman wouldn't be able to handle him. Forty-five dollars a week and board for a nurse. I am taking care of your future, Mrs. Pendexter. I am seeing to it that when I pass away . . .

Think of something cheerful. Once there was a white moonlight in a garden and the younger people were dancing inside, where it was hot and sticky, but outside it was cool and there was the smell of many flowers, and then suddenly he took my face in his hands and said . . .

But I took things too seriously in those days. I told him I wouldn't stand for any such thing. I told him I was a married woman and had time only for my husband and children. And his face was white in the silver moonlight and he looked, oh, so disappointed. And I went back into the garden on another night but he wasn't there and it didn't seem the same.

Wonder if Calvin felt the same with the woman who . . .

But really it was terribly stupid of me not to smell some kind of a rat when he wouldn't permit me to go back into my own New York apartment after spending the whole summer away. And this woman must have been there all the time. Sleeping in my bed. Using the chinaware Mary gave me for Christmas. When they asked her for the rent she said, as brazen as brass, Mr. Pendexter always paid her rent for her. Henry told her, I don't know anything about that, madam, I'm here as the representative of the Pendexter Realty Corporation and I'm here to collect a month's rent. Then she had the nerve to ask to be put into touch with him. . . .

That was after the breakdown. He went to the hospital the day after. Getting him back here was the real job, after he'd been down in New York doing all those wild and crazy things. Then it all came out. But the first I knew about it was when Henry telephoned from New York. I took the first train. . . .

Oh well, pity yourself, do. Sitting here whining like an old woman. Threescore years and ten. Nine years more. Everybody has troubles. Mrs. Johnson and her drunken husband. Calvin didn't drink. I've had good health all my lifetime. What do other people do when life up and smacks them? Nice to believe in a rosy pink heaven full of cherubs and such, where you're going when you die. Or that your sacrifices are pleasing to God, or to Jesus, or to somebody—that somebody sees them, anyway. Wonder if it's true? If there's a God around anywhere, why does he let things like this happen? Maybe he likes to see us suffer. If there's a God, he's always right—always right. And we're always in the wrong. He likes that, and says, you ought to be

Most of the good things that have been done for us grateful, Mrs. Pendexter. . .
have been done by science. Of course they can't do anything about the degeneration that's already taken place, but they put a stop to it so there won't be any more. If they couldn't do that, Calvin would hardly live a year longer. As it is, he may live ten years, even fifteen, the doctor said. Of course I was glad. When you get to be old, of course it's problematical how much longer you've got to live, but of course we must all live as long as we can. I might not live much longer than that myself. Science is very wonderful.

Nine years . . . threescore years and ten. Have to take care of all our properties so as to pass them on to the children. They're grown up—why can't they manage the properties themselves and I can just take out enough to live on? I don't need much. Forty-five dollars a week and board for a nurse. I'll take the forty-five dollars and let the board go. A little house somewhere, and peace and quiet. For nine years, or whatever. If. If Calvin. If Calvin would . . .

The doctor was a young man and when he told me about Calvin he was smiling. You'll be glad to know, Mrs. Pendexter, that we can save your husband. We can arrest the degeneration. Recent discovery. Even five years ago, we couldn't. He'd have had a year to live at the most. Nice handsome young doctor, some mother's proud of him somewhere. You'll be glad to know, Mrs. Pendexter.

Well, I *am* glad.

Mrs. Pendexter rose from the *chaise longue,* turned out the lights and went to bed.

A FEDERAL POETRY ANTHOLOGY

And Now: The Moon—

(For Lynette and Teall Messer)

Where buzzard's curve rinds the circuited earth with death,
and snag-tooth buzzard's pines stand gauntly shriven of
their worth; where buzzard's shadow was
on twilit earth and buzzards' beaks were

at the sprawling flanks of sickened deer, it is not
shadow of the night that weighs the heart;
the night is lifted by the stars, but not
the news of war that is heart's agony and thorny wreath.

Where feet step live on earth that hangs in time
leaflike in rising din of wind, the sickness of the flesh
is dying, steps mortally on mortal earth,
immortally toward death.

Now up from pines, now up above the buzzard's perch,
bear-cave, the lion's lair and news of war:
the moon!
who rises from rocks and bristling, blackened pines

as one who rises from the stone, the lash, and
martyrs' rack, for love.
Ah, moon—engentler of sleep
of gentle birds, ah moon, why risest thou?

The hot air whirs with fleshless wings.
The hot air whirs though buzzards sleep: the heart of man
swarms like a cloud of locusts toward the war.
Why heal the night with whiteness? with sleep

the lion's cave,—as since
were healed the graves of war, with fields
for other wars?
—Ah, moon: why risest thou?

RAYMOND E. F. LARSSON.

New Objectives, New Cadres

Grown for fear and fattened into groaning,
the clawed eyelid or the crushed flower stalk
or the undeviating lockstep,
the inert incurious onanist,
the rubicund practical prankster,
we wake never in this dispensation,
for them or their inchoate brethren.
We watch imaginary just men,
nude as rose petals, discussing a purer logic
in bright functionalist future gymnasia
high in the snows of Mt. Lenin
beside a collectivist ocean.
But see around the corner in the bare bulblight,
in a desquamate bedroom,
he who sits in his socks reading shockers,
skinning cigarette butts and rerolling them in toilet paper.
His red eyes never leave the blotted print and pulp paper.
He rose too late to distribute the leaflets.
In the midst of mussed bedding have mercy
upon him, this is history.
Or see the arch dialectic satyriast,
miners' wives and social workers
rapt in a bated circle about him,
drawing pointless incisive diagrams
on a blackboard, barking
ominously with a winey timbre,
clarifying constant and variable capital,
his subconscious painfully threading its way
through future slippery assignations.
We do not need his confessions.
The future is more fecund than Marian Bloom.
The problem is to control history,
We already understand it.

KENNETH REXROTH.

You

This day is radiant with light
and as clear. Listen, this day
is *you* and makes love to me.
My lips fanned by chromatic winds
released from clashing poplars;
so amorous this kiss,
my lungs are big with it.
This ardent scent of leaves
is of *your* hair and my lips on it.
And almost do I fear to tread
the ground soft as the earth
in whose deep body I am lost.
And I saw the clear love of your eyes:
the white poise of gulls
in the light of the lake,
the sky, stone blue, falling on it.
This day disturbs my blood
with subtle fury;
and all my hunger's song
is vocal; and that is *you* again.

WILLIAM PILLIN.

Multiple River

(For Hart Crane)

But span us closer, O intrusive seeker
whose course in definition floods the phrase.
Moments caressing rock foretell your passage.
The alluvial heart is gullied to your praise.

For we have been happiest creating a wide river
beyond all harbors and the seaward tomb,
bearing the spirit's traffic like a message
through time emergent from a timeless womb.

Between the stranger man, our stranger eyes,
flowing in ample love through outstretched shores,

your ineluctable, swift, inundate courage
in silence rolls to strength, in thunder roars.

And if the sound swell perilous in his ear
let him spew forth what he has cupped of splendor,
such tidings as consign his love to clay.
He is impoverished of a great surrender.

But we who freight such cargoes as are borne
to destinations spacious with our yearning
forthbless our mutual currents to discharge
eternal voyage, proud and unreturning.

LOLA PERGAMENT.

Your Move

It comes to this
to this and no other crisis or deadlock at the unforseen hour
no longer disguised, with none above the
hazards, nor anywhere away

Comes to this
as armies march and cities burn
perhaps as checkerboards of light rise quietly, here,
to the evening sky

That every hazard comes, at last, to an end
and it comes to this: the scalpel or the grave
rags, or music, or an unforeseen change to this
unforeseen life and no other life

One gone mad in the sunlit park
one in a private chamber of horrors unmoved and another
untouched in a world of wolves
here, as the tissues have been displaced, the
feelings changed, the beliefs revised
then those who conform to the seasons
and survive the office clock
and the few who do not eat
and sleep and breathe to
stay alive

And it comes to this
this, the return
this, the reward
this in exchange for the much or little
or little so often and so
carefully planned

Lock the windows, it comes to this
it comes to this, impound the lies and foreclose upon the truth
subpoena the future, sublet the living and sue the
dead, it comes to this

As time, time, time still slips between the fingers and flows along the veins
time after time it comes to this
comes to this, it is a question of time

Time after time
this
this and no other unforeseen way.

KENNETH FEARING.

Parade

Thinking of May Day when
Continents rush together
And there is only one sky. . . .

I give you leaflets,
Winged
Tickets to
Some future date.

Big value here,
Cash them
In your strength,
Workers!

Thinking of May Day,
Of parades
Moving like history,
Those in back
Must run to keep up——

The vanguard
Marches in Moscow.

All day long
Workers with monstrous mustaches,
Passes in their hands
To ride seven miles,
Smiling.

Thinking of May Day and
"The most beautiful subway
In the world."

H. R. HAYS.

Evening Land

Appropriate that the setting should be Gothic,
the last, by the gray cathedral there, the winter
river concordant and the cruel wind—yes,
cruel with time as well as season, purposive.

Another day, and that dead, the decor more innocent,
a backdrop sylvan, waterfall, enduring mountains,
the wind again, brighter, and the dissembled earth
outspread, man and his tremoring unseen.

Observe these courses germinal, you in your valley,
cushioned and fertile, giving what you have gotten,
returning what you took, and the fat product
of the graceful lazy years your garlanding.

Ordained that the difference would accrue,
the date given, the performance going on,
scheduled, the actors emerging in perfect mask,
knowing step, gesture, and each word by rote.

Yes, lines and business written, movement
directed, improvisation forbidden, props

supplied, the mystery only in the matter
of which character is minor to a major role.

Remember the mummies in the crypt, charmed
beyond expectation, their pious hands folded,
their surprise and, preserved wonderfully
among the withered whole, their savage lips?

CHARLES HUDEBERG.

While Love as Ancient as the Bird

For those who conjured colored hills,
Rock-ore and crystal, bird-loud air,
Night-moth, sea-thud, wave-bells
Framed delicate for lovers' ears,

Lockets lost and perfume spilled,
The whiskey drunk, the evening spent
In carousal, lovers felled
Before death's violent argument,

The freezing night unfolds the year,
And Christopher and Edward part,
Scrap-iron loaded at the pier,
Death-rays lay waste the living heart.

Struck from the blood, burned from thought,
Fern-shudder and the neon moon,
The phosphorous clock, the wire light
That set the fire to the tune,

And foreign sparrows in the park
Sing no more like nightingales.
Before the falling snow and dark
Yachtsmen fold the summer sails.

The water snake, the leaf's small sound,
The swift desire of the tongue,
Locked in sky and winter ground
Where all lovely things belong.

Bury deep, trample hard,
Be acid on the cheek and mouth,
While love as ancient as the bird
Seeks arctics now beyond the south.

WILLARD MAAS.

Non stanno sanza guerra

It was on the second floor, once part of a bedroom
of a Portinari, frugal, but retentive
of six centuries of brains and emotions
overlooking Florence: it was October, clear
edge of the visible in weighted air,
cool stone tempering the heat.
And the Marchese stood
pointing at Africa across the graveled garden
as if it were a lion
and he in Africa and Africa a dead lion
defeated, to be dismembered, to be divided.
He had a bald Hapsburg lip he used for an index
in these matters. And spent the afternoon
at Bastianini's, Piazza Donatello,
sketching a nude with beads, and Bastianini
sketching the Marchesa, Piazza Independenza.

A lira for the washwoman
would buy her baby an orange,
but the Widow Schwaner says
that this corrupts the servants
and disrupts neighborly feelings,
as she closes all the shutters
and pulls down all the blinds
to keep the sun from the intaglio
and the dust from the putto.

DOROTHY VAN GHENT.

Musical Praise of Preparations

Fine food in Arabia
Can be used while trains are near
And a camel sleeps. This food can be eaten
At a time when people clothed in white
And girt with black belts
Walk rather close to trees
This food has red in it,
And a touch of yellow:
But is mostly dark—
Something like black.
Possibilities of Arabia,
Be sung; let this possibility and that
Be furiously hymned;
Be acclaimed with great, luxurious, pleasing melody.
Tremendously fine and delighting notes,
Be employed in greeting musically
Products of Arabia,
Commodities to be eaten there.
Shall I say: More music in Arabia
For the purpose of praising by sound,
Growths, preparations there.

ELI SIEGEL.

The Literary Front

A Fragment

More power, you young Isaiahs who have come . . .
to sing the crash of systems and the song
of girders rising out of lost débris.

For a poem is either the man within a man,
the life within the living or it is
like any corpse, like every corpse,
alone.

More power to you, O word workers! Sing to us now
and even in desperate days we shall never lose
the rhythms, primed like high-pressured pumps
with the health, the jargon, gesture, and the laugh
of useful people in their industry . . .
make us remember even in picnic times
the homeless and the jobless and the lynched.

A. T. ROSEN.

In a Home Relief Bureau

So it has come to this
In spite of everything it has come to this
This that did not figure in your dreams
This that had no place within your pride
Or when you labored to perfect your private schemes
A morning now like this when you would stand
A morning now like this public and ashamed
In the broken sunlight of a children's grammar school
Trying so hard to understand
Trying to grasp how it could happen to you
Trying to understand how this that could not happen
And seemed somehow always less than true
Has happened now at last to you.

That virgin's face before you
That face that shifts and tames its cold distaste
That thin nose saddled with distrustful glasses
Which invent smells, decays, dirt
That charity which is careful of its tweed skirt
Its polished hands, its manners, its uptown grace,
It does not recognize, accept, pity, or distinguish
Between these faces here and your face
Between their beggary and yours
Between their humiliated eyes and yours.
Neither this virgin's face soured over slums
Nor the faces of the guards who guard the doors
Nor that face glimpsed beyond the hall
Which waits for a scream, a shouted word, the spit of hate,
Which is alert to call
The riot wagons we are all aware of, wait.

And the minutes. And the hours.
But you have time to wait
Now there is nothing left you have but time.
What you were when you were not this
What you were before time brought you down to this
(Before the last policy was cashed
Before the last ring was pawned)
Now you have time enough to recall.
Think now of the profit and the pride
The ambition fed in furnished rooms
The nails kept clean against the imagined day.
The pressed suit, the manner honest and assured,
The undeceitful face,
Survives for this that once was not to be endured,
This charity, this disgrace.

To be signed. To be filed away.
To be referred to later by a girl or clerk.
To be remembered every day
To be remembered with the potatoes and the meat
With the canned milk and the landlord's knock
By that Italian combing his graying hair
By the aproned housewife with the kid in her arms
By the tired Jew in the interviewer's chair.
Age. Religion. Weight. Experience. Sex.
What once we were, what we have been is there
For the virgin to paw, for the faces frozen in smiles,
For a senator's speech, for a caught vote
To quiet the children when they scream
To keep the bones from breaking through the skin
To nourish what is left to us of life
This or the streets
This or the gas
This or a rope
This or a knife.

ALFRED HAYES.

Mister Fredricks

The slowly sifting rain disturbs
Mister Fredricks' business smile,
and near the cars that line the curb
pickets march in single file.

Mister Fredricks twists his lips
listening to a striker shout;
he turns to watch a woman's hips,
and goes to sell his partner out.

WELDON KEES.

Journey Home

Their bicycle tires sing
along soft wet road
whirling around curves
lingering beneath trees.

. . . the smell . . . the smell
of greening bark, and
small rain in the grass . . .

Intimately the houses
spill yellow light at nightfall,
across the narrow road
on wet and shining clay.

. . . so quiet . . .

Hurrying now!
These two and the rain.

OPAL SHANNON.

Feminist

She was a freckled bloomer-girl, she cried
That corsets, bustles, petticoats were weird.
Her mother swooned and thought of suicide.
Her father shrank into a pensive beard.
Old friends predicted ruin when she smoked
In public, roller-skated through the town.
She married a young poet who provoked
Laughter by walking in a Grecian gown.

Grandmother now she watches, with soft manners,
A young grand-daughter, ribboned and sedate,
Handing out leaflets, marching under banners
Proclaiming "Down with Fascist War and Hate."
And turning to her husband, worn and grave,
She cries: "All that *we* did was *misbehave*."

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

Bright and Morning Star

(*Continued from page 99*)

swung through the night outside. She heard Reva sobbing.

"Hush, honey!"

"Mah brothers in jail too! Ma cries ever day . . . "

"Ah know, honey."

She helped Reva with her coat; her fingers felt the scant flesh of the girl's shoulders. She don git ernuff t eat, she thought. She slipped her arms around Reva's waist and held her close for a moment.

"Now, yuh stop tha cryin."

"A-a-ah c-c-cant hep it. . . ."

"Everythingll be awright; Johnny-Boyll be back."

"Yuh think so?"

"Sho, chile. Cos he will."

Neither of them spoke again until they stood in the doorway. Outside they could hear water washing through the ruts of the street.

"Be sho n send Johnny-Boy t tell the folks t stay erway from pas house," said Reva.

"Ahll tell im. Don yuh worry."

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

Leaning against the door jamb, she shook her head slowly and watched Reva vanish through the falling rain.

II

SHE was back at her board, ironing, when she heard feet sucking in the mud of the back yard; feet she knew from long years of listening were Johnny-Boy's. But tonight with all the rain and fear his coming was like a leaving, was almost more than she could bear. Tears welled to her eyes and she blinked them away. She felt that he was coming so that she could give him up; to see him now was to say good-bye. But it was a good-bye she knew she could never say; they were not that way toward each other. All day long they could sit in the same room and not speak; she was his mother and he was her son; most of the time a nod or a grunt would carry all the meaning that she wanted to say to him, or he to her.

She did not even turn her head when she heard him come stomping into the kitchen. She heard him pull up a chair, sit, sigh, and draw off his muddy shoes; they fell to the floor with heavy thuds. Soon the kitchen was full of the scent of his drying socks and his burning pipe. Tha boys hongry! She paused and looked at him over her shoulder; he was puffing at his pipe with his head tilted back and his feet propped up on the edge of the stove; his eyelids drooped and his wet clothes steamed from the heat of the fire. Lawd, tha boy gits mo like his pa ever day he lives, she mused, her lips breaking in a faint smile. Hols tha pipe in his mouth jus like his pa usta hol his. Wondah how they woulda got erlong ef his pa hada lived? They oughta liked each other, they so mucha like. She wished there could have been other children besides Sug, so Johnny-Boy would not have to be so much alone. A man needs a woman by his side. . . . She thought of Reva; she liked Reva; the brightest glow her heart had ever known was when she had learned that Reva loved Johnny-Boy. But beyond Reva were cold white faces. Ef theys caught it means *death*. . . . She jerked around when she heard Johnny-Boy's pipe clatter to the floor. She saw him pick it up, smile sheepishly at her, and wag his head.

"Gawd, Ahm sleepy," he mumbled.

She got a pillow from her room and gave it to him.

"Here," she said.

"Hunh," he said, putting the pillow between his head and the back of the chair.

They were silent again. Yes, she would have to tell him to go back out into the cold rain and slop; maybe to get caught; maybe for the last time; she didn't know. But she would let him eat and get dry before telling him that the sheriff knew of the meeting to be held at Lem's tomorrow. And she would make him take a big dose of soda before he went out; soda always helped to stave off a cold. She looked at the clock. It was eleven. Theres time yit. Spreading a newspaper on the apron of the stove, she placed a heaping plate of greens upon it, a knife, a fork, a cup of coffee, a slab of cornbread, and a dish of peach cobbler.

"Yo suppahs ready," she said.

"Yeah," he said.

He did not move. She ironed again. Presently, she heard him eating. When she could no longer hear his knife tinkling against the edge of the plate, she knew he was through. It was almost twelve now. She would let him rest a little while longer before she told him. Till one er'clock, mabbe. Hes so tired. . . . She finished her ironing, put away the board, and stacked the clothes in her dresser drawer. She poured herself a cup of coffee, drew up a chair, sat, and drank.

"Yuh almos dry," she said, not looking around.

"Yeah," he said, turning sharply to her.

The tone of voice in which she had spoken let him know that more was coming. She drained her cup and waited a moment longer.

"Reva wuz here."

"Yeah?"

"She lef bout a hour ergo."

"Whut she say?"

"She said ol man Lem hada visit from the sheriff today."

"Bout the meetin?"

"Yeah."

She saw him stare at the coals glowing red through the crevices of the stove and run his fingers nervously through his hair. She knew he was wondering how the sheriff had found out. In the silence he would ask a wordless question and in the silence she would answer wordlessly. Johnny-Boys too trustin, she thought. Hes tryin t make the party big n hes takin in folks fastern he kin git t know em. You cant trust ever white man yuh meet. . . .

"Yuh know, Johnny-Boy, yuh been takin in a lotta them white folks lately . . ."

"Aw, ma!"

"But, Johnny-Boy . . ."

"Please, don talk t me bout tha now, ma."

"Yuh ain t ol t lissen n learn, son," she said.

"Ah know whut yuh gonna say, ma. N yuh wrong. Yuh cant judge folks jus by how yuh feel bout em n by how long yuh done knowed em. Ef we start tha we wouldnt have *no*body in the party. When folks pledge they word t be with us, then we gotta take em in. Wes too weak t be choosy."

He rose abruptly, rammed his hands into his pockets, and stood facing the window; she looked at his back in a long silence. She knew his faith; it was deep. He had always said that black men could not fight the rich bosses alone; a man could not fight with every hand against him. But he believes so hard hes blind, she thought. At odd times they had had these arguments before; always she would be pitting her feelings against the hard necessity of his thinking, and always she would lose. She shook her head. Po Johnny-Boy; he don know . . .

"But ain nona our folks tol, Johnny-Boy," she said.

"How yuh know?" he asked. His voice came low and with a tinge of anger. He still faced the window and now and then the yellow blade of light flicked across the sharp outline of his black face.

"Cause Ah know em," she said.

"*Any*body mighta tol," he said.

"It wuznt nona *our* folks," she said again.

She saw his hand sweep in a swift arc of disgust.

"*Our* folks! Ma, who in Gawds name is *our* folks?"

"The folks we wuz born n raised wid, son. The folks we *know!*"

"We cant make the party grow tha way, ma."

"It mighta been Booker," she said.

"Yuh don know."

". . . er Blattberg . . ."

"Fer Chrissakes!"

". . . er any of the fo-five others whut joined las week."

"Ma, yuh jus don wan me t go out tonight," he said.

"Yo ol ma wans yuh t be careful, son."

"Ma, when yuh start doubtin folks in the party, then there ain no end."

"Son, Ah knows ever black man n woman in this parta the county," she said, standing too. "Ah watched em grow up; Ah even heped birth n nurse some of em; Ah knows em *all* from way back. There ain none of em tha *coulda* tol! The folks Ah know jus don open they dos n ast death t walk in! Son, it wuz some of them white folks! Yuh jus mark mah word!"

"Why is it gotta be *white* folks?" he asked. "Ef they tol, then theys jus Judases, thas all."

"Son, look at whuts befo yuh."

He shook his head and sighed.

"Ma, Ah done tol yuh a hundred times Ah cant see white n Ah cant see black," he said. "Ah sees rich men n Ah sees po men."

She picked up his dirty dishes and piled them in a pan. Out of the corners of her eyes she saw him sit and pull on his wet shoes. Hes goin! When she put the last dish away he was standing fully dressed, warming his hands over the stove. Just a few mo minutes now n he'll be gone, like Sug, mabbe. Her throat swelled. This black mans fight takes *ever*thing! Looks like Gawd put us in this worl jus t beat us down!

"Keep this, ma," he said.

She saw a crumpled wad of money in his outstretched fingers.

"Naw; yuh keep it. Yuh might need it."

"It ain mine, ma. It berlongs t the party."

"But, Johnny-Boy, yuh might hafta go erway!"

"Ah kin make out."

"Don fergit yosef too much, son."

"Ef Ah don come back theyll need it."

He was looking at her face and she was looking at the money.

"Yuh keep tha," she said slowly. "Ahll give em the money."

"From where?"

"Ah got some."

"Where yuh git it from?"

She sighed.

"Ah been savin a dollah a week fer Sug ever since hes been in jail."

"Lawd, ma!"

She saw the look of puzzled love and wonder in his eyes. Clumsily, he put the money back into his pocket.

"Ahm gone," he said.

"Here; drink this glass of soda watah."

She watched him drink, then put the glass away.

"Waal," he said.

"Take the stuff outta yo pockets!"

She lifted the lid of the stove and he dumped all the papers from his pocket into the hole. She followed him to the door and made him turn round.

"Lawd, yuh tryin to maka revolution n yuh cant even keep yo coat buttoned." Her nimble fingers fastened his collar high around his throat. "There!"

He pulled the brim of his hat low over his eyes. She opened the door and with the suddenness of the cold gust of wind that struck her face, he was gone. She watched the black fields and the rain take him, her eyes burning. When the last faint footstep could no longer be heard, she closed the door, went to her bed, lay down, and pulled the cover over her while fully dressed. Her feelings coursed with the rhythm of the rain: Hes gone! Lawd, Ah *know* hes gone! Her blood felt cold.

III

SHE was floating in a grey void somewhere between sleeping and dreaming and then suddenly she was wide awake, hearing and feeling in the same instant the thunder of the door crashing in and a cold wind filling the room. It was pitch black and she stared, resting on her elbows, her mouth open, not breathing, her ears full of the sound of tramping feet and booming voices. She knew at once: They lookin fer im! Then, filled with her will, she was on her feet, rigid, waiting, listening.

"The lamps burnin!"

"Yuh see her?"

"Naw!"

"Look in the kitchen!"

"Gee, this place smells like niggers!"

"Say, somebodys here er been here!"

"Yeah; theres fire in the stove!"

"Mabbe hes been here n gone?"

"Boy, look at these jars of jam!"

"Niggers make good jam!"

"Git some bread!"

"Heres some cornbread!"

"Say, lemme git some!"

"Take it easy! Theres plenty here!"

"Ahma take some of this stuff home!"

"Look, heres a pota greens!"

"N some hot cawffee!"

"Say, yuh guys! C mon! Cut it out! We didnt come here fer a feas!"

She walked slowly down the hall. They lookin fer im, but they ain got im yit! She stopped in the doorway, her gnarled, black hands as always folded over her stomach, but tight now, so tightly the veins bulged. The kitchen was crowded with white men in glistening raincoats. Though the lamp burned, their flashlights still glowed in red fists. Across her floor she saw the muddy tracks of their boots.

"Yuh white folks git outta mah house!"

There was quick silence; every face turned toward her. She saw a sudden movement, but did not know what it meant until something hot and wet slammed her squarely in the face. She gasped, but did not move. Calmly, she wiped the warm, greasy liquor of greens from her eyes with her left hand. One of the white men had thrown a handful of greens out of the pot at her.

"How they taste, ol bitch?"

"Ah ast yuh t git outta mah house!"

She saw the sheriff detach himself from the crowd and walk toward her.

"Now, Anty . . ."

"White man, don yuh *Anty* me!"

"Yuh ain got the right sperit!"

"Sperit hell! Yuh git these men outta mah house!"

"Yuh ack like yuh don like it!"

"Naw, Ah don like it, n yuh knows dam waal Ah don!"

"Whut yuh gonna do bout it?"

"Ahm tellin yuh t git outta mah house!"

"Gittin sassy?"

"Ef tellin yuh t git outta mah house is sass, then Ahm sassy!"

Her words came in a tense whisper; but beyond, back of them, she was watching, thinking, and judging the men.

"Listen, Anty," the sheriff's voice came soft and low. "Ahm here t hep yuh. How come yuh wanna ack this way?"

"Yuh ain never heped yo *own* sef since yuh been born," she flared. "How kin the likes of yuh hep me?"

One of the white men came forward and stood directly in front of her.

"Lissen, nigger woman, yuh talkin t *white* men!"

"Ah don care who Ahm talkin t!"
"Yuhll wish some day yuh did!"
"Not t the likes of yuh!"
"Yuh need somebody t teach yuh how t be a good nigger!"
"*Yuh* cant teach it t me!"
"Yuh gonna change yo tune."
"Not longs mah bloods warm!"
"Don git smart now!"
"Yuh git outta mah house!"
"Spose we don go?" the sheriff asked.

They were crowded around her. She had not moved since she had taken her place in the doorway. She was thinking only of Johnny-Boy as she stood there giving and taking words; and she knew that they, too, were thinking of Johnny-Boy. She knew they wanted him, and her heart was daring them to take him from her.

"Spose we don go?" the sheriff asked again.
"Twenty of yuh runnin over one ol woman! Now, ain yuh white men glad yuh so brave?"
The sheriff grabbed her arm.
"C mon, now! Yuh done did ernuff sass fer one night. Wheres tha nigger son of yos?"
"Don yuh wished yuh knowed?"
"Yuh wanna git slapped?"
"Ah ain never seen one of yo kind tha wuznt too low fer . . ."

The sheriff slapped her straight across her face with his open palm. She fell back against a wall and sank to her knees.

"Is tha whut white men do t nigger women?"

She rose slowly and stood again, not even touching the place that ached from his blow, her hands folded over her stomach.

"Ah ain never seen one of yo kind tha wuznt too low fer . . ."

He slapped her again; she reeled backward several feet and fell on her side.

"Is tha whut we too low t do?"

She stood before him again, dry-eyed, as though she had not been struck. Her lips were numb and her chin was wet with blood.

"Aw, let her go! Its the nigger we wan!" said one.
"Wheres that nigger son of yos?" the sheriff asked.
"Find im," she said.
"By Gawd, ef we hafta find im we'll kill im!"
"He wont be the only nigger yuh ever killed," she said.

She was consumed with a bitter pride. There was nothing on this earth, she felt then, that they could not do to her but that she could take. She stood on a narrow plot of ground from which she would die before she was pushed. And then it was, while standing there feeling warm blood seeping down her throat, that she gave up Johnny-Boy, gave him up to the white folks. She gave him up because they had come tramping into her heart demanding him, thinking they could get him by beating her, thinking they could scare her into making her tell where he was. She gave him up because she wanted them to know that they could not get what they wanted by bluffing and killing.

"Wheres this meetin gonna be?" the sheriff asked.
"Don yuh wish yuh knowed?"
"Ain there gonna be a meetin?"
"How come yuh astin me?"
"There *is* gonna be a meetin," said the sheriff.
"Is it?"
"Ah gotta great mind t choke it outta yuh!"
"Yuh so smart," she said.
"We ain playin wid yuh!"
"Did Ah say yuh wuz?"
"Tha nigger son of yos is erroun here somewheres n we aim t find im," said the sheriff. "Ef yuh tell us where he is n ef he talks, mabbe he'll git off easy. But ef we hafta find im, we'll kill im! Ef we hafta find im, then yuh git a sheet t put over im in the mawnin, see? Git yuh a sheet, cause hes gonna be dead!"
"He wont be the only nigger yuh ever killed," she said again.

The sheriff walked past her. The others followed. Yuh didnt git whut yuh wanted! she thought exultingly. N yuh ain gonna *never* git it! Hotly something ached in her to make them feel the intensity of her pride and freedom; her heart groped to turn the bitter hours of her life into words of a kind that would make them feel that she had taken all they had done to her in her stride and could still take more. Her faith surged so strongly in her she was all but blinded. She walked behind them to the door, knotting and twisting her fingers. She saw them step to the muddy ground. Each whirl of the yellow beacon revealed glimpses of slanting rain. Her lips moved, then she shouted:

"Yuh didn't git whut yuh wanted! N yuh ain gonna nevah git it!"

The sheriff stopped and turned; his voice came low and hard.

"Now, by Gawd, thas ernuff outta yuh!"
"Ah know when Ah done said ernuff!"
"Aw, naw, yuh don!" he said. "Yuh don know when yuh done said ernuff, but Ahma teach yuh ternight!"

He was up the steps and across the porch with one bound. She backed into the hall, her eyes full on his face.

"Tell me when yuh gonna stop talkin!" he said, swinging his fist.

The blow caught her high on the cheek; her eyes went blank; she fell flat on her face. She felt the hard heel of his wet shoes coming into her temple and stomach.

"Lemme hear yuh talk some mo!"

She wanted to, but could not; pain numbed and choked her. She lay still and somewhere out of the grey void of unconsciousness she heard someone say: *aw fer chrissakes leave her erlone its the nigger we wan. . . .*

IV

SHE never knew how long she had lain huddled in the dark hallway. Her first returning feeling was of a nameless fear crowding the inside of her, then a deep pain spreading from her temple downward over her body. Her ears were filled with the drone of rain and she shuddered from the cold wind blowing through the door. She opened her eyes and at first saw nothing. As if she were imagining it, she knew she was half-lying and half-sitting in a corner against a wall. With difficulty she twisted her neck and what she saw made her hold her breath—a vast white blur was suspended directly above her. For a moment she could not tell if her fear was from the blur or if the blur was from her fear. Gradually the blur resolved itself into a huge white face that slowly filled her vision. She was stone still, conscious really of the effort to breathe, feeling somehow that she existed only by the mercy of that white face. She had seen it before; its fear had gripped her many times; it had for her the fear of all the white faces she had ever seen in her life. *Sue* . . . As from a great distance, she heard her name being called. She was regaining consciousness now, but the fear was coming with her. She looked into the face of a white man, wanting to scream out for him to go; yet accepting his presence because she felt she had to. Though some remote part of her mind was active, her limbs were powerless. It was as if an invisible knife had split her in two, leaving one half of her lying there helpless, while the other half shrank in dread from a forgotten but familiar enemy. *Sue its me Sue its me* . . . Then all at once the voice came clearly.

"Sue, its me! Its Booker!"

And she heard an answering voice speaking inside of her, Yeah, its Booker . . . The one whut jus joined . . . She roused herself, struggling for full consciousness; and as she did so she

transferred to the person of Booker the nameless fear she felt. It seemed that Booker towered above her as a challenge to her right to exist upon the earth.

"Yuh awright?"

She did not answer; she started violently to her feet and fell.

"Sue, yuh hurt!"

"Yeah," she breathed.

"Where they hit yuh?"

"Its mah head," she whispered.

She was speaking even though she did not want to; the fear that had hold of her compelled her.

"They beat yuh?"

"Yeah."

"Them bastards! Them Gawddam bastards!"

She heard him saying it over and over; then she felt herself being lifted.

"Naw!" she gasped.

"Ahma take yuh t the kitchen!"

"Put me down!"

"But yuh cant stay here like this!"

She shrank in his arms and pushed her hands against his body; when she was in the kitchen she freed herself, sank into a chair, and held tightly to its back. She looked wonderingly at Booker; there was nothing about him that should frighten her so; but even that did not ease her tension. She saw him go to the water bucket, wet his handkerchief, wring it, and offer it to her. Distrustfully, she stared at the damp cloth.

"Here; put this on yo fohead . . ."

"Naw!"

"C mon; itll make yuh feel bettah!"

She hesitated in confusion; what right had she to be afraid when someone was acting as kindly as this toward her? Reluctantly, she leaned forward and pressed the damp cloth to her head. It helped. With each passing minute she was catching hold of herself, yet wondering why she felt as she did.

"Whut happened?"

"Ah don know."

"Yuh feel bettah?"

"Yeah."

"Who all wuz here?"

"Ah don know," she said again.

"Yo head still hurt?"

"Yeah."

"Gee, Ahm sorry."

"Ahm awright," she sighed and buried her face in her hands.

She felt him touch her shoulder.

"Sue, Ah got some bad news fer yuh . . ."

She knew; she stiffened and grew cold. It had happened; she stared dry-eyed with compressed lips.

"Its mah Johnny-Boy," she said.

"Yeah; Ahm awful sorry t hafta tell yuh this way. But Ah thought yuh oughta know . . ."

Her tension eased and a vacant place opened up inside of her. A voice whispered, Jesus, hep me!

"W-w-where is he?"

"They got im out t Foleys Woods tryin t make im tell who the others is."

"He ain gonna tell," she said. "They just as waal kill im, cause he ain gonna nevah tell."

"Ah hope he don," said Booker. "But he didnt hava chance t tell the others. They grabbed im jus as he got t the woods."

Then all the horror of it flashed upon her; she saw flung out over the rainy countryside an array of shacks where white and black comrades were sleeping; in the morning they would be rising and going to Lem's; then they would be caught. And that meant terror, prison, and death. The comrades would have to be told; she would have to tell them; she could not entrust Johnny-Boy's work to another, and especially not to Booker as long as she felt toward him as she did. Gripping the bottom of the chair with both hands, she tried to rise; the room blurred and she swayed. She found herself resting in Booker's arms.

"Lemme go!"

"Sue, yuh too weak t walk!"

"Ah gotta tell em!" she said.

"Set down, Sue! Yuh hurt; yuh sick!"

When seated she looked at him helplessly.

"Sue, lissen! Johnny-Boys caught. Ahm here. Yuh tell me who they is n Ahll tell em."

She stared at the floor and did not answer. Yes; she was too weak to go. There was no way for her to tramp all those miles through the rain tonight. But should she tell Booker? If only she had somebody like Reva to talk to. She did not want to decide alone; she must make no mistake about this. She felt Booker's fingers pressing on her arm and it was as though the white mountain was pushing her to the edge of a sheer height; she again exclaimed inwardly, Jesus, hep me! Booker's white face was at her side, waiting. Would she be doing right to tell him? Suppose she did not tell and then the comrades were caught? She could not ever forgive herself for doing a thing like that. But maybe she was wrong; maybe her fear was what Johnny-Boy had always called "jus foolishness." She remembered his saying, Ma we cant make the party ef we start doubtin everbody. . . .

"Tell me who they is, Sue, n Ahll tell em. Ah just joined n Ah don know who they is."

"Ah don know who they is," she said.

"Yuh *gotta* tell me who they is, Sue!"

"Ah tol yuh Ah don know!"

"Yuh *do* know! C mon! Set up n talk!"

"Naw!"

"Yuh wan em all t git *killed?*"

She shook her head and swallowed. Lawd, Ah don blieve in this man!

"Lissen, Ahll call the names n yuh tell me which ones is in the party n which ones ain, see?"

"Naw!"

"Please, Sue!"

"Ah don know," she said.

"Sue, yuh ain doin right by em. Johnny-Boy wouldnt wan yuh t be this way. Hes out there holdin up his end. Les hol up ours . . ."

"Lawd, Ah don know . . ."

"Is yuh scareda me cause Ahm *white?* Johnny-Boy ain like tha. Don let all the work we done go fer nothin."

She gave up and bowed her head in her hands.

"Is it Johnson? Tell me, Sue?"

"Yeah," she whispered in horror; a mounting horror of feeling herself being undone.

"Is it Green?"

"Yeah."

"Murphy?"

"Lawd, Ah don know!"

"Yuh gotta tell me, Sue!"

"Mistah Booker, please leave me erlone . . ."

"Is it Murphy?"

She answered yes to the names of Johnny-Boy's comrades; she answered until he asked her no more. Then she thought, How he know the sheriffs men is watchin Lems house? She stood up and held onto her chair, feeling something sure and firm within her.

"How yuh know bout Lem?"

"Why . . . How Ah know?"

"Whut yuh doin here this tima night? How yuh know the sheriff got Johnny-Boy?"

"Sue, don yuh blieve in me?"

She did not, but she could not answer. She stared at him until her lips hung open; she was searching deep within herself for certainty.

"You meet Reva?" she asked.

"Reva?"

"Yeah; Lems gal?"

"Oh, yeah. Sho, Ah met Reva."

"She tell yuh?"

She asked the question more of herself than of him; she longed to believe.

"Yeah," he said softly. "Ah reckon Ah oughta be goin t tell em now."

"Who?" she asked. "Tell *who?*"

The muscles of her body were stiff as she waited for his answer; she felt as though life depended upon it.

"The comrades," he said.

"Yeah," she sighed.

She did not know when he left; she was not looking or listening. She just suddenly saw the room empty and from her the thing that had made her fearful was gone.

V

FOR a space of time that seemed to her as long as she had been upon the earth, she sat huddled over the cold stove. One minute she would say to herself, They both gone now; Johnny-Boy n Sug . . . Mabbe Ahll never see em ergin. Then a surge of guilt would blot out her longing. "Lawd, Ah shouldna tol!" she mumbled. "But no man kin be so low-down as t do a thing like tha . . ." Several times she had an impulse to try to tell the comrades herself; she was feeling a little better now. But what good would that do? She had told Booker the names. He just couldnt be a Judas t po folks like us . . . He *couldnt!*

"An Sue!"

Thas Reva! Her heart leaped with an anxious gladness. She rose without answering and limped down the dark hallway. Through the open door, against the background of rain, she saw Reva's face lit now and then to whiteness by the whirling beams of the beacon. She was about to call, but a thought checked her. Jesus, hep me! Ah gotta tell her bout Johnny-Boy . . . Lawd, Ah cant!

"An Sue, yuh there?"

"C mon in, chile!"

She caught Reva and held her close for a moment without speaking.

"Lawd, Ahm sho glad yuh here," she said at last.

"Ah thought something had happened t yuh," said Reva, pulling away. "Ah saw the do open . . . Pa tol me to come back n stay wid yuh tonight . . . " Reva paused and stared. "W-w-whuts the mattah?"

She was so full of having Reva with her that she did not understand what the question meant.

"Hunh?"

"Yo neck . . ."

"Aw, it ain nothin, chile. C mon in the kitchen."

"But theres blood on yo neck!"

"The sheriff wuz here . . ."

"Them fools! Whut they wanna bother yuh fer? Ah could kill em! So hep me Gawd, Ah could!"

"It ain nothin," she said.

She was wondering how to tell Reva about Johnny-Boy and Booker. Ahll wait a lil while longer, she thought. Now that Reva was here, her fear did not seem as awful as before.

"C mon, lemme fix yo head, An Sue. Yuh hurt."

They went to the kitchen. She sat silent while Reva dressed her scalp. She was feeling better now; in just a little while she would tell Reva. She felt the girl's finger pressing gently upon her head.

"Tha hurt?"

"A lil, chile."

"Yuh po thing."

"It ain nothin."

"Did Johnny-Boy come?"

She hesitated.

"Yeah."

"He done gone t tell the others?"

Reva's voice sounded so clear and confident that it mocked her. Lawd, Ah cant tell this chile . . .

"Yuh tol im, didnt yuh, An Sue?"

"Y-y-yeah . . ."

"Gee! Thas good! Ah tol pa he didn't hafta worry ef Johnny-Boy got the news. Mabbe thingsll come out awright."

"Ah hope . . ."

She could not go on; she had gone as far as she could; for the first time that night she began to cry.

"Hush, An Sue! Yuh awways been brave. Itll be awright!"

"Ain nothin awright, chile. The worls just too much fer us, Ah reckon."

"Ef yuh cry that way itll make me cry."

She forced herself to stop. Naw; Ah cant carry on this way in fronta Reva . . . Right now she had a deep need for Reva to believe in her. She watched the girl get pine-knots from behind the stove, rekindle the fire, and put on the coffee pot.

"Yuh wan some cawffee?" Reva asked.

"Naw, honey."

"Aw, c mon, An Sue."

"Jusa lil, honey."

"Thas the way t be. Oh, say, Ah fergot," said Reva, measuring out spoonfuls of coffee. "Pa tol me t tell yuh t watch out fer tha Booker man. Hes a stool."

She showed not one sign of outward movement or expression, but as the words fell from Reva's lips she went limp inside.

"Pa tol me soon as Ah got back home. He got word from town . . ."

She stopped listening. She felt as though she had been slapped to the extreme outer edge of life, into a cold darkness. She knew now what she had felt when she had looked up out of her fog of pain and had seen Booker. It was the image of all the white folks, and the fear that went with them, that she had seen and felt during her lifetime. And again, for the second time that night, something she had felt had come true. All she could say to herself was, Ah didnt like im! Gawd knows, Ah didnt! Ah tol Johnny-Boy it wuz some of them white folks . . .

"Here; drink yo cawffee . . ."

She took the cup; her fingers trembled, and the steaming liquid spilt onto her dress and leg.

"Ahm sorry, An Sue!"

Her leg was scalded, but the pain did not bother her.

"Its awright," she said.

"Wait; lemme put something on tha burn!"

"It don hurt."

"Yuh worried bout something."

"Naw, honey."

"Lemme fix yuh so mo cawffee."

"Ah don wan nothin now, Reva."

"Waal, buck up. Don be tha way . . ."

They were silent. She heard Reva drinking. No; she would not tell Reva; Reva was all she had left. But she had to do something, some way, somehow. She was undone too much as it was; and to tell Reva about Booker or Johnny-Boy was more than she was equal to; it would be too coldly shameful. She wanted to be alone and fight this thing out with herself.

"Go t bed, honey. Yuh tired."

"Naw; Ahm awright, An Sue."

She heard the bottom of Reva's empty cup clank against the

top of the stove. Ah *got* t make her go t bed! Yes; Booker would tell the names of the comrades to the sheriff. If she could only stop him some way! That was the answer, the point, the star that grew bright in the morning of new hope. Soon, maybe half an hour from now, Booker would reach Foley's Woods. Hes boun t go the long way, cause he don know no short cut, she thought. Ah could wade the creek n beat im there. . . . But what would she do after that?

"Reva, honey, go t bed. Ahm awright. Yuh need res."

"Ah ain sleepy, An Sue."

"Ah knows whuts bes fer yuh, chile. Yuh tired n wet."

"Ah wanna stay up wid yuh."

She forced a smile and said:

"Ah don think they gonna hurt Johnny-Boy . . ."

"Fer *real,* An Sue?"

"Sho, honey."

"But Ah wanna wait up wid yuh."

"Thas mah job, honey. Thas whut a mas fer, t wait up fer her chullun."

"Good night, An Sue."

"Good night, honey."

She watched Reva pull up and leave the kitchen; presently she heard the shucks in the mattress whispering, and she knew that Reva had gone to bed. She was alone. Through the cracks of the stove she saw the fire dying to grey ashes; the room was growing cold again. The yellow beacon continued to flit past the window and the rain still drummed. Yes; she was alone; she had done this awful thing alone; she must find some way out, alone. Like touching a festering sore, she put her finger upon that moment when she had shouted her defiance to the sheriff, when she had shouted to feel her strength. She had lost Sug to save others; she had let Johnny-Boy go to save others; and then in a moment of weakness that came from too much strength she had lost all. If she had not shouted to the sheriff, she would have been strong enough to have resisted Booker; she would have been able to tell the comrades herself. Something tightened in her as she remembered and understood the fit of fear she had felt on coming to herself in the dark hallway. A part of her life she thought she had done away with forever had had hold of her then. She had thought the soft, warm past was over; she had thought that it did not mean much when now she sang: "Hes the Lily of the Valley, the Bright n Mawnin Star." . . . The days when she had sung that song were the days when she had not hoped for anything on this earth, the days when the cold mountain had driven her into the arms of Jesus. She had thought that Sug and Johnny-Boy had taught her to forget Him, to fix her hope upon the fight of black men for freedom. Through the gradual years she had believed and worked with them, had felt strength shed from the grace of their terrible vision. That grace had been upon her when she had let the sheriff slap her down; it had been upon her when she had risen time and again from the floor and faced him. But she had trapped herself with her own hunger; to water the long dry thirst of her faith her pride had made a bargain which her flesh could not keep. Her having told the names of Johnny-Boy's comrades was but an incident in a deeper horror. She stood up and looked at the floor while call and counter-call, loyalty and counter-loyalty struggled in her soul. Mired she was between two abandoned worlds, living, dying without the strength of the grace that either gave. The clearer she felt it the fuller did something well up from the depths of her for release; the more urgent did she feel the need to fling into her black sky another star, another hope, one more terrible vision to give her the strength to live and act. Softly and restlessly she walked about the kitchen, feeling herself naked against night, the rain, the world; and shamed whenever the thought of Reva's love crossed her mind. She lifted her empty hands and looked at her writhing fingers. Lawd, whut kin Ah do now? She could still wade the creek and get to Foley's Woods before Booker. And then what? How could she manage to see Johnny-Boy or Booker? Again she heard the sheriff's threatening voice: Git yuh a sheet, cause hes gonna be dead! The sheet! Thas it, the sheet! Her whole being leaped with will; the long years of her life bent toward a moment of focus, a point. Ah kin go wid mah sheet! Ahll be doin whut he said! Lawd Gawd in Heaven, Ahma go lika nigger woman wid mah windin sheet t git mah dead son! But then what? She stood straight and smiled grimly; she had in her heart the whole meaning of her life; her entire personality was poised on the brink of a total act. Ah know! Ah know! She thought of Johnny-Boy's gun in the dresser drawer. Ahll hide the gun in the sheet n go aftah Johnny-Boys body. . . . She tiptoed to her room, eased out the dresser drawer, and got a sheet. Reva was sleeping; the darkness was filled with her quiet breathing. She groped in the drawer and found the gun. She wound the gun in the sheet and held them both under her apron. Then she stole to the bedside and watched Reva. Lawd, hep her! But mabbe shes bettah off. This had t happen sometimes . . . She n Johnny-Boy couldna been together in this here South . . . N Ah couldnt tell her bout Booker. Itll come out awright n she wont nevah know. Reva's trust would never be shaken. She caught her breath as the shucks in the mattress rustled dryly; then all was quiet and she breathed easily again. She tiptoed to the door, down the hall, and stood on the porch. Above her the yellow beacon whirled through the rain. She went over muddy ground, mounted a slope, stopped and looked back at her house. The lamp glowed in her window, and the yellow beacon that swung every few seconds seemed to feed it with light. She turned and started across the fields, holding the gun and sheet tightly, thinking, Po Reva . . . Po critter . . . Shes fas ersleep . . .

VI

FOR the most part she walked with her eyes half shut, her lips tightly compressed, leaning her body against the wind and the slanting rain, feeling the pistol in the sheet sagging cold and heavy in her fingers. Already she was getting wet; it seemed that her feet found every puddle of water that stood between the corn rows.

She came to the edge of the creek and paused, wondering at what point was it low. Taking the sheet from under her apron, she wrapped the gun in it so that her finger could be upon the trigger. Ahll cross here, she thought. At first she did not feel the water; her feet were already wet. But the water grew cold as it came up to her knees; she gasped when it reached her waist. Lawd, this creeks high! When she had passed the middle, she knew that she was out of danger. She came out of the water, climbed a grassy hill, walked on, turned a bend and saw the lights of autos gleaming ahead. Yeah; theys still there! She hurried with her head down. Wondah did Ah beat im here? Lawd, Ah hope so! A vivid image of Booker's white face hovered a moment before her eyes and a driving will surged up in her so hard and strong that it vanished. She was among the autos now. From nearby came the hoarse voices of the men.

"Hey, yuh!"

She stopped, nervously clutching the sheet. Two white men with shotguns came toward her.

"Whut in hell yuh doin out here?"

She did not answer.

"Didnt yuh hear somebody speak t yuh?"

"Ahm comin aftah mah son," she said humbly.

"Yo *son?*"

"Yessuh."

"Whut yo son doin out here?"

"The sheriffs got im."

"Holy Scott! Jim, its the niggers ma!"
"Whut yuh got there?" asked one.
"A sheet."
"A *sheet?*"
"Yessuh."
"Fer whut?"
"The sheriff tol me t bring a sheet t git his body."
"Waal, waal . . ."
"Now, ain tha something?"
The white men looked at each other.
"These niggers sho love one ernother," said one.
"N tha ain no lie," said the other.
"Take me t the sheriff," she begged.
"Yuh ain givin us *orders,* is yuh?"
"Nawsuh."
"We'll take yuh when wes good n ready."
"Yessuh."
"So yuh wan his body?"
"Yessuh."
"Waal, he ain dead yit."
"They gonna kill im," she said.
"Ef he talks they wont."
"He ain gonna talk," she said.
"How yuh know?"
"Cause he ain."
"We got ways of makin niggers talk."
"Yuh ain got no way fer im."
"Yuh thinka lot of tha black Red, don yuh?"
"Hes mah son."
"Why don yuh teach im some sense?"
"Hes mah son," she said again.
"Lissen, ol nigger woman, yuh stan there wid yo hair white. Yuh got bettah sense than t blieve tha niggers kin make a revolution . . ."
"A black republic," said the other one, laughing.
"Take me t the sheriff," she begged.
"Yuh his ma," said one. "Yuh kin make im talk n tell whos in this thing wid im."
"He ain gonna talk," she said.
"Don yuh wan im t live?"
She did not answer.
"C mon, les take her t Bradley."
They grabbed her arms and she clutched hard at the sheet and gun; they led her toward the crowd in the woods. Her feelings were simple; Booker would not tell; she was there with the gun to see to that. The louder became the voices of the men the deeper became her feeling of wanting to right the mistake she had made; of wanting to fight her way back to solid ground. She would stall for time until Booker showed up. Oh, ef theyll only lemme git close t Johnny-Boy! As they led her near the crowd she saw white faces turning and looking at her and heard a rising clamor of voices.
"Whos tha?"
"A nigger woman!"
"Whut she doin out here?"
"This is his ma!" called one of the man.
"Whut she wans?"
"She brought a sheet t cover his body!"
"He ain dead yit!"
"They tryin t make im talk!"
"But he will be dead soon ef he don open up!"
"Say, look! The niggers ma brought a sheet t cover up his body!"
"Now, ain tha sweet?"
"Mabbe she wans t hol a prayer meetin!"
"Did she git a preacher?"
"Say, go git Bradley!"
"O.K.!"

The crowd grew quiet. They looked at her curiously; she felt their cold eyes trying to detect some weakness in her. Humbly, she stood with the sheet covering the gun. She had already accepted all that they could do to her.
The sheriff came.
"So yuh brought yo sheet, hunh?"
"Yessuh," she whispered.
"Looks like them slaps we gave yuh learned yuh some sense, didnt they?"
She did not answer.
"Yuh don need tha sheet. Yo son ain dead yit," he said, reaching.
She backed away, her eyes wide.
"Naw!"
"Now, lissen, Anty!" he said. "There ain no use in yuh ackin a fool! Go in there n tell tha nigger son of yos t tell us whos in this wid im, see? Ah promise we wont kill im ef he talks. We'll let im git outta town."
"There ain nothin Ah kin tell im," she said.
"Yuh wan us t kill im?"
She did not answer. She saw someone lean toward the sheriff and whisper.
"Bring her erlong," the sheriff said.
They led her to a muddy clearing. The rain streamed down through the ghostly glare of the flashlights. As the men formed a semi-circle she saw Johnny-Boy lying in a trough of mud. He was tied with rope; he lay hunched, one side of his face resting in a pool of black water. His eyes were staring questioningly at her.
"Speak t im," said the sheriff.
If she could only tell him why she was there! But that was impossible; she was close to what she wanted and she stared straight before her with compressed lips.
"Say, nigger!" called the sheriff, kicking Johnny-Boy. "Here's yo ma!"
Johnny-Boy did not move or speak. The sheriff faced her again.
"Lissen, Anty," he said. "Yuh got mo say wid im than anybody. Tell im t talk n hava chance. Whut he wanna pertect the other niggers n white folks fer?"
She slid her finger about the trigger of the gun and looked stonily at the mud.
"Go t him," said the sheriff.
She did not move. Her heart was crying out to answer the amazed question in Johnny-Boy's eyes. But there was no way now.
"Waal, yuhre astin fer it. By Gawd, we gotta way to *make* yuh talk t im," he said, turning away. "Say, Tim, git one of them logs n turn tha nigger upsidedown n put his legs on it!"
A murmur of assent ran through the crowd. She bit her lips; she knew what that meant.
"Yuh wan yo nigger son crippled?" she heard the sheriff ask.
She did not answer. She saw them roll the log up; they lifted Johnny-Boy and laid him on his face and stomach, then they pulled his legs over the log. His knee-caps rested on the sheer top of the log's back, the toes of his shoes pointing groundward. So absorbed was she in watching that she felt that it was she that was being lifted and made ready for torture.
"Git a crowbar!" said the sheriff.
A tall, lank man got a crowbar from a nearby auto and stood over the log. His jaws worked slowly on a wad of tobacco.
"Now, its up t yuh, Anty," the sheriff said. "Tell the man whut t do!"
She looked into the rain. The sheriff turned.
"Mabbe she think wes playin. Ef she don say nothin, then break em at the knee-caps!"
"O.K., Sheriff!"

She stood waiting for Booker. Her legs felt weak; she wondered if she would be able to wait much longer. Over and over she said to herself, Ef he came now Ahd kill em both!

"She ain sayin nothin, Sheriff!"

"Waal, Gawddammit, let im have it!"

The crowbar came down and Johnny-Boy's body lunged in the mud and water. There was a scream. She swayed, holding tight to the gun and sheet.

"Hol im! Git the other leg!"

The crowbar fell again. There was another scream.

"Yuh break em?" asked the sheriff.

The tall man lifted Johnny-Boy's legs and let them drop limply again, dropping rearward from the knee-caps. Johnny-Boy's body lay still. His head had rolled to one side and she could not see his face.

"Jus lika broke sparrow wing," said the man, laughing softly.

Then Johnny-Boy's face turned to her; he screamed.

"Go way, ma! Go way!"

It was the first time she had heard his voice since she had come out to the woods; she all but lost control of herself. She started violently forward, but the sheriff's arm checked her.

"Aw, naw! Yuh had yo chance!" He turned to Johnny-Boy. "She kin go ef yuh talk."

"Mistah, he ain gonna talk," she said.

"Go way, ma!" said Johnny-Boy.

"Shoot im! Don make im suffah so," she begged.

"He'll either talk or he'll never hear yuh ergin," the sheriff said. "Theres other things we kin do t im."

She said nothing.

"Whut yuh come here fer, ma?" Johnny-Boy sobbed.

"Ahm gonna split his eardrums," the sheriff said. "Ef yuh got anything t say t im yuh bettah say it *now!*"

She closed her eyes. She heard the sheriff's feet sucking in mud. Ah could save im! She opened her eyes; there were shouts of eagerness from the crowd as it pushed in closer.

"Bus em, Sheriff!"

"Fix im so he cant hear!"

"He knows how t do it, too!"

"He busted a Jew boy tha way once!"

She saw the sheriff stoop over Johnny-Boy, place his flat palm over one ear and strike his fist against it with all his might. He placed his palm over the other ear and struck again. Johnny-Boy moaned, his head rolling from side to side, his eyes showing white amazement in a world without sound.

"Yuh wouldn't talk t im when yuh had the chance," said the sheriff. "Try n talk now."

She felt warm tears on her cheeks. She longed to shoot Johnny-Boy and let him go. But if she did that they would take the gun from her, and Booker would tell who the others were. Lawd, hep me! The men were talking loudly now, as though the main business was over. It seemed ages that she stood there watching Johnny-Boy roll and whimper in his world of silence.

"Say, Sheriff, heres somebody lookin fer yuh!"

"Who is it?"

"Ah don know!"

"Bring em in!"

She stiffened and looked around wildly, holding the gun tight. Is tha Booker? Then she held still, feeling that her excitement might betray her. Mabbe Ah kin shoot em both! Mabbe Ah kin shoot twice! The sheriff stood in front of her, waiting. The crowd parted and she saw Booker hurrying forward.

"Ah know em all, Sheriff!" he called.

He came full into the muddy clearing where Johnny-Boy lay.

"Yuh mean yuh got the names?"

"Sho! The ol nigger . . ."

She saw his lips hang open and silent when he saw her. She stepped forward and raised the sheet.

"Whut . . ."

She fired, once; then, without pausing, she turned, hearing them yell. She aimed at Johnny-Boy, but they had their arms around her, bearing her to the ground, clawing at the sheet in her hand. She glimpsed Booker lying sprawled in the mud, on his face, his hands stretched out before him; then a cluster of yelling men blotted him out. She lay without struggling, looking upward through the rain at the white faces above her. And she was suddenly at peace; they were not a white mountain now; they were not pushing her any longer to the edge of life. Its awright . . .

"She shot Booker!"

"She hada gun in the sheet!"

"She shot im right thu the head!"

"Whut she shoot im fer?"

"Kill the bitch!"

"Ah *thought* something wuz wrong bout her!"

"Ah wuz fer givin it t her from the firs!"

"Thas whut yuh git fer treatin a nigger nice!"

"Say, Bookers dead!"

She stopped looking into the white faces, stopped listening. She waited, giving up her life before they took it from her; she had done what she wanted. Ef only Johnny-Boy . . . She looked at him; he lay looking at her with tired eyes. Ef she could only tell im!

"Whut yuh kill im fer, hunh?"

It was the sheriff's voice; she did not answer.

"Mabbe she wuz shootin at yuh, Sheriff?"

"Whut yuh kill im fer?"

She felt the sheriff's foot come into her side; she closed her eyes.

"Yuh black bitch!"

"Let her have it!"

"Yuh reckon she foun out bout Booker?"

"She mighta."

"Jesus Christ, whut yuh dummies *waitin* on!"

"Yeah; kill her!"

"Kill em *both!*"

"Let her know her nigger sons dead firs!"

She turned her head toward Johnny-Boy; he lay looking puzzled in a world beyond the reach of voices. At leas he cant hear, she thought.

"C mon, let im have it!"

She listened to hear what Johnny-Boy could not. They came, two of them, one right behind the other; so close together that they sounded like one shot. She did not look at Johnny-Boy now; she looked at the white faces of the men, hard and wet in the glare of the flashlights.

"Yuh hear tha, nigger woman?"

"Did tha surprise im? Hes in hell now wonderin whut hit im!"

"C mon! Give it t her, Sheriff!"

"Lemme shoot her, Sheriff! It wuz mah pal she shot!"

"Awright, Pete! Thas fair ernuff!"

She gave up as much of her life as she could before they took it from her. But the sound of the shot and the streak of fire that tore its way through her chest forced her to live again, intensely. She had not moved, save for the slight jarring impact of the bullet. She felt the heat of her own blood warming her cold, wet back. She yearned suddenly to talk. "Yuh didnt git whut yuh wanted! N yuh ain gonna nevah git it! Yuh didnt kill me; Ah come here my mahsef . . ." She felt rain falling into her wide-open, dimming eyes and heard faint voices. Her lips moved soundlessly. *Yuh didnt git yuh didnt yuh didnt* . . . Focused and pointed she was, buried in the depths of her star, swallowed in its peace and strength; and not feeling her flesh growing cold, cold as the rain that fell from the invisible sky upon the doomed living and the dead that never dies.

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In Conclusion

THESE are the talented people of the depression. They are the literary class of '29. The majority of them came to maturity during the crisis years. They found little opportunity to establish their work upon a firm foundation, to display their abilities and assure themselves an income or position which would enable them to continue work in their craft. They were too young to "arrive" in the little magazines.

The years of the depression marked the disappearance of the little magazine, one of the significant factors contributing toward the development of modern American literature. In the Teens and Twenties it was the little magazine which, through strife and compromise among its various coteries and through conflict with the standard magazines, defined, redefined, and directed American literature towards its maturity.

The little magazines were individual enterprises flourishing under the conditions of a free market during America's era of expansion. With the economic crash of '29 this market became severely impoverished. A large number of literary *entrepreneurs,* bohemians who had been operating on a slight margin of profit, on the bounties of angels, the toleration of friends, through awards and the occasional sales of manuscripts, were starved out of their hideouts. In this literary drought and social catastrophe the bohemians and other *littérateurs* and artists heard the cries of a new generation and discovered with them a common interest and bond.

What of this new generation, the literary generation of the depression, the young talents reared to maturity amid economic catastrophe? As usual the new generation sought an outlet for their ideas in the little magazines. But the environment of the little magazines had changed. Their premises were different, although their relations to the standard magazines remained the same. The new magazines functioned in a proletarian environment, as mediums of a proletarian literature. They were sponsored not by wealthy individuals, but by labor groups and affiliated organizations; or they were published by the collective efforts of young writers who pooled small sums of money from their wages in order to finance a magazine in which their work could appear. Their writing began to receive attention, and the value of the Marxian critical theories they advanced were recognized. But the magazines, financed in a meager and haphazard manner, could not maintain themselves for long, and what began as a new movement in literature and the arts, founded upon a scientific sociological approach to the problems of the artist and the community, apparently reached a period of stagnation.

The reasons for this lull in literary activity were many and complex. The younger writers were passing through a transitional period during which they had to make quick personal adjustments to a series of swiftly moving, world-shaking social and political changes. They became dissatisfied with the limited means of communication the little magazines offered in influencing public opinion concerning these events. They questioned the effectiveness of literature in resolving individual and social problems and sought for other and more direct means of communication and influence. A number of them turned to the theater and film. Others adapted their abilities toward the organization of labor. They felt the urgency of promoting progressive and radical causes against reactionary forces menacing their liberties. Many writers, impelled by the crucial issues at stake, volunteered as soldiers in Spain. Those who continued to write rarely found places of publication.

The demise of their journals indicated not only a lack of finances, but a cultural impasse due to the absence of conditions proper for the continued development of our literature: the lack of economic security, the unsettled state of the times reflected in the individual instability of the writer, the negligible encouragement and publication of new talent, and a philistine, utilitarian attitude towards the function of art in society.

As the so-called responsibilities of private industry for its individual workman proved extremely inadequate in a period of crisis, so, at a critical moment, private patronage and enterprise failed the literary workingman and proved very inadequate for his needs. The meager resources of the labor movement could not for long sustain literary labors. As a public-works program financed by the government was necessary to rescue the country from the deprivations of private enterprise, so a public endowment of the arts was necessary to rescue the artist from privation and permit the free development of our literature and art. With the formation of the Federal Art Projects the United States began to assume responsibility for its artists and its national cultural heritage.

For those writers who had suffered semi-privation and relief the Federal Writers' Project offered temporary security. This was only a partial solution, however, and could not solve the problem of the proper function of the creative writer under government sponsorship. Although the playwrights, painters, actors, musicians on the projects were permitted to utilize their talents in their own particular crafts, the writers lacked the opportunity to work creatively in their own medium. The emergency-relief character of the Federal Arts Project threatened to eliminate suddenly the advances made in the cultural field since the inauguration of the projects.

To prevent such a debacle, Representative Coffee and Senator Pepper presented the Federal Fine Arts Bill to Congress. This bill proposes to reorganize the five arts projects under a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts. If passed, it will provide an immeasurable stimulus, unhampered by relief provisions, to the writers and artists of the nation and officially usher in a new era of public arts and letters. The trend from individual patronage to public subsidy will be completed. The transition from the eclectic art of coteries and private enterprise, represented by the little magazines and the egocentric figure of the bohemian outcast, to an art serving the public need and represented by the artist of the republic will be resolved. The new generation will come of age. The relationship between the American public and its writers whom it subsidizes through governmental agencies will find expression in a people's literature.

S. FUNAROFF.

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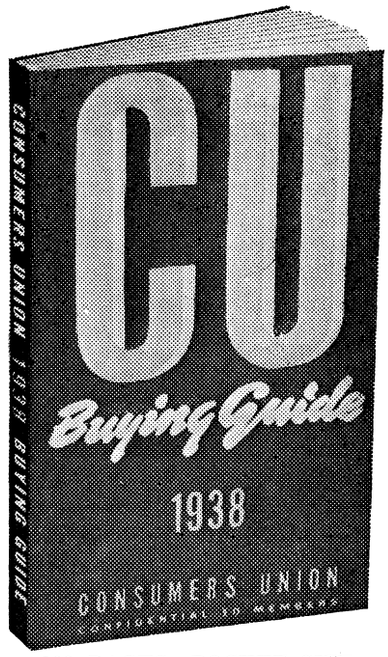

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NEW MASSES
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Walt Whitman's Democracy

Philip Stevenson

I accept Reality and dare not question it. . . .
(This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant republics.)
—"Song of Myself."

THE revival of interest in Walt Whitman is largely due to the recognition that he is America's most powerful and inspired democratic poet. It is therefore particularly important for us to understand more clearly what Whitman meant by the democracy he praised so ardently in *Leaves of Grass*. Did he accept as his idea of democracy the nineteenth-century laissez-faire society in which he lived? What did he understand by individualism? Was he simply an idealist and romantic? How did he reconcile the "aggregate" and the "separate"? The answer to such questions should provide the clue to a more profound interpretation of Whitman's significance for our day.

Like all major poets, Whitman chose to let the intent of his communication remain implicit in his verse. In his prose works, however, he attempted a more logical and schematic presentation of his ideas. It is useful to reexamine Whitman's various prefaces, his notes, lectures, and essays—particularly *Democratic Vistas*. We must not rely on a quoted phrase or two to define and clarify Whitman's position, but let him speak for himself as fully as limited space will permit.

Before taking up his definition of and program for democracy, it will be well for us to consider to what degree and in what sense Whitman was an "individualist," an "egoist," a "romantic."

The most casual glance at Whitman's work will dismiss the notion that "individualism" or "egoism" meant to him anything like selfishness or irresponsibility, self-preoccupation, or a ruthless will to power. He repeatedly used these words in contexts in which we should today employ *individuality* or *personality*, meaning the ripest and sanest development of a person in relation to his community. Explicitly and often he rejected the narrow meaning of these terms and insisted that the individual counted for nothing apart from the mass. To him it was "the common ambition" that "strains for elevations, to become some privileged exclusive"; whereas "the master sees greatness and health in being part of the mass; nothing will do as well as common ground. . . . The great word Solidarity has arisen." The meaning is unmistakable. Whitman's great individual, "the master," would resemble Abraham Lincoln rather than any square-jawed "rugged individualist" or any beetle-browed roaring dictator. True individuality, in other words, was a dialectical unity of opposites.

> The origin-idea of the singleness of man, individualism, will be found cropping forth even from opposite ideas. But the mass, or lump character, for imperative reasons, is ever to be weighed, borne in mind, and provided for. *Only from it . . . comes the other, comes the chance of individualism. The two are contradictory, but our task is to reconcile them.* (Italics mine—P. S.)

Lest this be thought an isolated instance of Whitman's dialectical approach to the problem of the relation of the one to the many, consider the following:

> The last, best dependence [of democracy] is to be upon humanity itself, and its own inherent, normal, full-grown qualities, *without any superstitious support whatever. The idea of perfect individualism it is, indeed, that deepest tinges and gives character to the idea of the aggregate.* (Italics mine—P. S.)

Or this:

> For to democracy, the leveler, the unyielding principle of the average, is surely join'd another principle, equally unyielding, closely tracking the first, indispensable to it, opposite (as the sexes are opposite) . . . confronting and ever modifying the other, often clashing, paradoxical, yet neither of highest avail without the other. . . . This second principle is individuality . . . identity—personalism.

It is emphatically no accident that the very first two lines of the very first poem of his democratic epic, *Leaves of Grass,* are:

> One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
> Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Indeed, he tells us, in the "1872 Preface," that *Leaves of Grass*

> . . . is, in its intentions, the song of a great composite *democratic individual,* male or female. And following on and amplifying the same purpose, I suppose I have in mind to run through the chants of this volume (if ever completed) the thread-voice, more or less audible, of an aggregated, inseparable, unprecedented, vast, composite, electric *democratic nationality.* (Whitman's italics—P. S.)

The dialectical unity of the individual and the mass is the core of his whole communication. Not only his book as a whole, but such individual poems as, for example, the "Song of Myself," will be (has been!) completely misunderstood and misinterpreted unless we recognize his belief in egoism as the full flowering of the democratic individual, rooted in and indissolubly a part of the democratic aggregate, not antagonistic to but, on the contrary, triumphantly expressing the aspirations of the masses. "I contain multitudes" can only be understood as implying also, "Multitudes contain me—or express themselves through me."

Labeling Whitman a nineteenth-century egoistic individualist would be fantastic enough; but it is even sillier to place him among the nineteenth-century romantic poets. Here again reference to his prose will be helpful. The hall-mark of Rousseauesque romanticism is belief in the uniqueness and self-sufficiency of the individual human soul, in the absolute freedom of the individual will. Your true romantic cannot admit to any limitations. Man, to him, being godlike in essence, is only prevented from expressing his perfection by the "unnatural" conditions of a civilized environment. Whence it follows that the individual is the natural and implacable enemy of society, which, however, he is able to dominate or "rise above" by an act of will.

So much for theory. In practice what happens to the romantic is this. His uniqueness and the absolute freedom of his will are daily contradicted by objective conditions, and in order to preserve his illusions he retreats from the objective world and builds a private subjective world of his own. In the decline of romanticism we find him a despairing pessimist, hating men for their imperfections or hugging his vision in hermetic isolation or touched with paranoiac superman delusions—in any case blindly fighting the social forces that would root out social evils, because they at the same time threaten to dispel his illusions.

Only by distorting the romantic premises, or by grossly misinterpreting Whitman's message, could an attempt be made to fit Whitman into the frame of pure romanticism. We have seen that, to him, individuality was not an absolute but a dialectical unity. His "perfect" individual was completely identified with mass character and mass aspiration. More cheerfully than almost any other mortal, he admitted his own human imperfections. No poet was ever farther from superman delusions. None sang so eloquently of "the common," "the concrete," "the normal." In a thousand variations he asserted that "the average man of a land at last only is important." He never tired of advocating the cause of the masses of "working-men and working-women," "the farmers and mechanics" of America, or of exposing the evils of economic exploitation. He loved the people, both in the mass and as individuals, as did no other American of his day with the possible exception of his cherished hero, Lincoln.

He inspired and applauded rebels and revolutionists against feudalism and reaction at all times and in all countries. As for the thorny question of free will and necessity, we shall find him much closer to the dialectical views of Engels on this point than to the absolutism of Rousseau. Whitman wrote:

> Strange as it may seem, we only attain to freedom by a knowledge of, and implicit obedience to, Law. . . . The shallow . . . consider liberty a release from all law, from every constraint. The wise see in it, on the contrary, the potent Law of Laws, namely, the fusion and combination of the conscious will, or partial individual law, with those universal, eternal, unconscious ones, which run through all Time, pervade history, prove immortality, give moral purpose to the entire objective world, and the last dignity to human life.

While Engels expressed it this way in *Anti-Dühring:*

> Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence of natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work toward definite ends.

True, Whitman wrote in a period of literary romanticism and was influenced by it. He often employed its language in qualifying, modifying, or contradicting its concepts. You may plausibly contend that he seems, like Hegel, to stand the dialectic on its head. Admittedly, the democracy he praised so fulsomely in his poems was never more than a rosy dream. But he himself was wholly aware of this! "The fruition of democracy, on aught like a grand scale, resides altogether in the future." In America, "Not an ordinary one is the issue. The United States are destined either to surmount the gorgeous history of feudalism, or else prove the most tremendous failure of time." What he exalted and magnified in *Leaves of Grass* were the signs, the portents, the human materials of the future full-grown democracy.

> Our America today I consider in many respects as but indeed a vast seething mass of *materials,* ampler, better (worse also) than previously known—eligible to be used to carry toward its crowning stage, and build for good, the great ideal nationality of the future. . . .

By no means were his eyes closed to the gross evils of nineteenth-century laissez-faire or to the "hollowness at heart" of the American ruling class:

> The spectacle is appalling. . . . The depravity of the business classes of our country is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. The official services . . . except the judiciary, are saturated in corruption, bribery, falsehood, maladministration; and the judiciary is tainted. The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism. . . . In business (this all-devouring modern word, business), the one sole object is, by any means, pecuniary gain.

In spite of the profligacy of the rulers, however, he felt justified in his oft-chanted optimism; for,

> . . . behind this fantastic farce, enacted on the visible stage of society, solid things and stupendous labors are to be discover'd, existing crudely and going on in the background, to advance and tell themselves in time.

In other words,

> the morbid facts of American politics and society everywhere are but passing incidents . . . weeds, annuals, of the rank, rich soil—not central, enduring, perennial things. . . .

A young democracy, he insisted, could not be judged in the samples of its temporary chieftains and spokesmen:

> The genius of the United States is not best or most in its executives or legislatures, nor in its ambassadors or authors, or colleges or churches or parlors, nor even in its newspapers or inventors—but always most in the common people, south, north, west, east, in all its states, through all its mighty amplitude.

He had noticed, he said, how for the time being "the millions of sturdy farmers and mechanics" were "the helpless supplejacks of comparatively few politicians. . . ."

> Sad, serious, deep truths. Yet there are other, still deeper, amply confronting, dominating truths. Over those politicians and great and little rings, and over all their insolence and wiles, and over the powerfulest parties, looms a power, too sluggish maybe, but ever holding decisions and decrees in hand, ready, with stern process, to execute them as soon as plainly needed. . . .

Decidedly, democratic society was in its adolescence, its true character as yet undefined. It could not be credited with having attained maturity until it had

> . . . fashion'd, systematized, and triumphantly finish'd and carried out, *in its own interest,* and with unparallel'd success, a new earth and a new man. (Italics mine.—P. S.)

Whitman had more than a crude notion of the process of historical evolution. For him democracy was not an abstract and eternal good but a finite human growth, a culmination of "all the developments of history." He recognized the usefulness and inevitability, for their historic periods, of other social forms.

> America does not repel the past, or what the past has produced under its forms, or amid other politics, or the idea of castes, or the old religions —accepts the lesson with calmness [that] the life which served its requirements has passed into the life of the new forms . . . that it was fittest for its days—that its action has descended to the stalwart and well-shaped heir who approaches—and that he [i.e., democracy] shall be fittest for his days.

He was aware that democracy had developed, and would continue to develop not only "by all the moral forces," but also "by trade, finance, machinery, intercommunications." He accepted the theory that

> the only real foundation-walls and bases—and also *sine qua non* afterward—of true and full civilization, is the eligibility and certainty of boundless products for feeding, clothing, sheltering everybody . . . and that then the esthetic and mental business will take care of itself.

The "stern process" of social development could "no more be stopp'd than the tides, or the earth in its orbit." And once democracy had attained maturity, its purpose would be "to illustrate, at all hazards, this doctrine . . .

> that man, properly train'd in sanest, highest freedom may and must become a law, and series of laws, unto himself, surrounding and providing for not only his personal control, but all his relations to other individuals, and to the State; and that, while other theories, as in the past histories of nations, have proved wise enough, and indispensable perhaps for their conditions, *this,* as matters now stand in our civilized world, is the only scheme worth working from, as warranting results like those of Nature's laws, reliable, when once establish'd, to carry on themselves.

In this passage we see both Whitman's essential realism and his residue of romantic idealism. To say that man may become a law unto himself is to rule out the romantic axiom that he is a unique free soul who is already a law unto himself. It is to accept human limitations and urge human perfectibility—not pro-

claim it as a premise—in the ultimate democratic mass-individual. Man will reach after perfection "in his own interest" and in accordance with, not in willful opposition to, natural laws. Yet note that this scheme is one to work *from* rather than *toward*. This is an example of Whitman's Hegelian thought-process. He starts from the ultimate aim and criticizes objective conditions according to the degree to which they fall short of the final stage; whereas Marx, who placed the dialectic on its material feet, began by a scientific observation of objective conditions past and present ("The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"), and worked by induction toward the ultimate aim. Marx's emphasis is constantly on the objective situation and our immediate tasks; while Whitman, secure in his faith concerning what we are to become, is content to speak vaguely of a "stern process," "stupendous labors," and sluggish powers looming in the background with unspecific decrees in hand.

To the extent that he stressed the necessarily ideal future at the expense of present concrete tasks, Whitman can properly be called romantic and idealistic. But having said this about him we have scarcely touched his true importance. What matters is that he speaks to us with a sincerity so ringing that we are inspired to act in a way that no merely accurate scientific statement of the truth could possibly inspire.

We must not ask the poet to play the political economist. Science and poetry speak in different tongues, albeit their truth is the same. As a matter of fact, Whitman insisted upon the political significance of his work. *Leaves of Grass* as a whole, he says explicitly, is to be construed as a "radical utterance," while "the special meaning of the 'Calamus' cluster . . . mainly resides in its political significance." If a man can give us the emotional inspiration for social change, shall we require him also to detail the particular mechanism by which the change is to be wrought? Is it not enough that in becoming the greatest poet of democracy Whitman came within an ace of being at the same time the first great poet of Socialism?

The complete history of democracy, Whitman believed, would exhibit three main stages.

> The First Stage was the planning and putting on record the political foundation rights of immense masses of people—indeed, all people . . . not for classes, but for universal man, and is embodied in the compacts of the Declaration of Independence, and, as it began and has now grown, with its amendments, the Federal Constitution—and in the state governments, with all their interiors, and with general suffrage; those having the sense not only of what is in themselves, but that their certain several things started, planted, hundreds of others in the same direction duly arise and follow.

The political acuity displayed in this statement is astonishing. Whitman claims no more than that these foundation rights of democracy have been "planned," "put on record," "started," "planted." There must be "hundreds of others in the same direction" before we have anything like a full-fledged democracy. Note, too, his unqualified acceptance of the Declaration of Independence and his careful qualification of the Constitution to include the amendments. We are justified in suspecting that he would not have accepted it without the Bill of Rights or the anti-slavery amendments.

Whitman considered that this stage, the enunciation of basic principles, was virtually complete by the end of the Civil War, with the abolition of slavery and the guarantees of personal freedom from bondage—though, to be sure, there were to be many elaborations and amplifications.

> The Second Stage relates to material prosperity, wealth, produce, labor-saving machines, iron, cotton, local, state, and continental railways, intercommunication and trade with all lands, steamships, mining, general employment, organization of great cities, cheap appliances for comfort, numberless technical schools, books, newspapers, a currency for money circulation, etc.

In this, the economic field, Whitman believed that the existing democracy was well on the way to maturity. "Not the least doubtful am I on any prospects of . . . material success." In his day the relative prosperity of the American masses could be more sharply contrasted with the poverty of Europe than it can today; and he felt that all that was needed was "a more universal ownership of property, general homesteads, general comfort—a vast, intertwining reticulation of wealth." He failed to see that mass production had already invalidated the Jeffersonian ideal of private ownership by the masses of the means of wealth production. He insisted that:

> As Sismondi pointed out, the true prosperity of a nation is not in the great wealth of a special class, but is only to be really attain'd in having the bulk of the people provided with homes or land in fee simple. This may not be the best show, but it is the best reality.

He was by no means unaware of the rise of a wealthy privileged class in America. He had warned that:

> Of all dangers to a nation, as things exist in our day, there can be no greater one than having certain portions of the people set off from the rest by a line drawn—they not privileged as others, but degraded, humiliated, made of no account.

As time went on, the existence of this class bothered him to such a point that he finally began to question whether, after all, the tendency in America, as in the foreign "feudal" societies, was not toward a greater social inequality and unbalance. Calling attention to "the wealth of the civilized world, as contrasted with its poverty," he exclaimed:

> A rich person ought to have a strong stomach. As in Europe the wealth of today mainly results from, and represents, the rapine, murder, outrages, treachery, hoggishness, of hundreds of years ago, and onward, later, so in America, after the same token—(not yet so bad, perhaps, or at any rate not so palpable—we have not existed long enough—but we seem to be doing our best to make it up).

He had the utmost contempt for "the toss and pallor of years of money-making" with its "shameful stuffing while others starve." He burst out against the policy of tariff "protection," *not* merely on principle (and this is important, for it is an instance of his practical realism), but because of the concrete observable *fact* that the resulting "plunder" was divided among "a few score select persons," "a vulgar aristocracy" of bankers and political favorites, instead of among "the masses" of "workmen and workwomen."

His notes on this question were written in the age of the robber barons. Labor struggles had become intensified to such a point that no observer of the democratic scene could ignore them, least of all Whitman who had editorialized on the subject, and always on the side of the workers, ever since his early days on the Brooklyn *Eagle*. Now, however, the language of the labor movement began to color the prose in which he expressed his growing doubts of the "unparallel'd success" of democracy in the economic field.

> The American Revolution of 1776 was simply a great strike, successful for its immediate object—but whether a real success . . . yet remains to be settled. The French Revolution was absolutely a strike, and a very terrible and relentless one, against ages of bad pay, unjust division of wealth-products, and the hoggish monopoly of a few, rolling in superfluity, against the vast bulk of the work-people, living in squalor.
>
> If the United States, like the countries of the Old World, are also to grow vast crops of poor, desperate, dissatisfied, nomadic, miserably-waged populations, such as we see looming upon us of late years . . . then our republican experiment, notwithstanding all its surface-successes, is at heart an unhealthy failure.

Possibly the existing republic was not the fittest form for democracy. Still there could be no question, in Whitman's mind, of going back, of retreat, of reaction to outworn social orders. We must press forward. The question was not whether to "monarchize" or "democratize." World conditions clearly called for "the wider democratization of institutions," and the only questions worth considering were "*how,* and in what degree and part, most prudently to democratize." Apparently he did not realize, until Traubel taught him late in life, that the "wider democratization of institutions" meant in the end their socialization. Still,

without "studying up in political economy," he could see two classes in contrast and in conflict, and he passionately embraced the side of hope and health and progress.

The third and final stage in the maturation of democracy (Whitman's dearest concern) was, more or less concurrently: (1) the unification of the whole world within a democratic brotherhood of nations; (2) the evolution of a race of fully developed democratic individuals; (3) the appearance of a "native expression-spirit" in literature, art, and science, equal to the grandeur of the democracy it would portray. In his mind these seemed but three aspects of a single fruition. Mature democratic individuals, secure in the inseparability of their welfare from the welfare of the mass, could not produce other than "orbic" creations of the democratic spirit which, by its irrefutable superiority over older social forms, must inevitably extend to enfold the world in one vast democratic fraternity—"that dazzling, pensive dream of ages!"

> Topping democracy, this most alluring record, that it alone can bind all nations, all men, of however various and distant lands, into a brotherhood, a family. It is the old, yet ever-modern dream of earth, out of her eldest and her youngest, her fond philosophers and poets . . . making the races comrades, and fraternizing all.

Although expressed in his own terms, it is clear that the ends of Whitman's democracy—"a new earth and a new man"—were those of modern international Socialism.

As might be expected, it is from Whitman's cultural program that American writers have still the most to learn. There we see him most closely identified with our own objectives and point of view. For he demanded

> . . . a program of culture, drawn out, not for a single class alone, or for the parlors or lecture-rooms, but with an eye to practical life, the West, the working-men, the facts of farms and jack-planes and engineers . . . and *not* restricted by conditions ineligible to the masses.

He was the implacable foe of art-for-art's-sake, the ivory tower, and "that modern esthetic contagion a queer friend of mine calls the *beauty disease*." The poetry of democracy should aim "to arouse and initiate, more than to define and finish." "A great poem is no finish to a man or woman, but rather a beginning. . . . The touch of [the great poet], like Nature, tells in action."

> The efforts of the true poets, founders, religions, literatures, all ages, have been, and ever will be, our time and times to come, essentially the same—to bring people back from their persistent strayings and sickly abstractions, to the costless average, divine, original concrete.

The "new and greater literatus order," he said, would produce "superber tableaux and growths of language, songs, operas, orations, lectures, architecture"—by no means for art's sake but for "reconstructing, democratizing society." Works of art should be tested first, perhaps, by their technical competence; then, if they passed that test and claimed admission as "first-class works," they were to be "strictly and sternly tried by their foundation in, and radiation, in the highest sense, and always indirectly, of the ethic principles, and eligibility to free, arouse, dilate." Therefore in his own work he had been more anxious "to suggest the songs of vital endeavor and manly evolution, and furnish something for races of outdoor athletes, than to make perfect rhymes, or reign in the parlors."

Mature democratic poetry would comprise not "the smooth walks, trimm'd hedges, posies and nightingales" of the English poets, but "the whole orb, with its geologic history, the cosmos, carrying fire and snow, that rolls through the illimitable areas." It would exclude no aspect of life or knowledge. "Exact science and its practical movements are no checks on the greatest poet, but always his encouragement and support." The poetry of the future must "inspire itself with science and the modern," and confront "the voiceless but ever erect and active, pervading underlying will and typic aspiration of the [democratic] land in a spirit kindred to itself." It must be on the grandest possible heroic scale, clearly overtopping the merely feudal grandeurs of the Elizabethans.

By comparison with this vision, contemporary literature was upsetting to contemplate. Education, manners, literature, said Whitman, were still permeated by "feudalism, caste, the ecclesiastical traditions." Of poets "of a certain sort" there were "indeed plenty . . . many elegant, many learn'd, all complacent." But they were mostly "dandies and ennuyees" piping their "thin sentiments of parlors, parasols . . . or whimpering and crying about something, chasing one aborted conceit after another, and forever occupied in dyspeptic amours with dyspeptic women." In short, they were precisely the romantic type, and the depth of Whitman's scorn measures the gulf between him and the romantic tradition.

In the field of imaginative American literature Whitman could find "not a single first-class work, not a single great literatus." This sometimes made him lose his temper.

> Do you call those genteel little creatures American poets? Do you term that perpetual, pistareen, paste-pot work, American art, American drama, taste, verse? I think I hear, echoed as from some mountain-top afar in the West, the scornful laugh of the Genius of these States.

What he really heard, of course, was himself. He had said again and again that democratic art must overtop the gorgeous flowers of feudalism. Yet no democratic Shakespeare loomed in America, no "greater literatus order." Very well, then, he would be its forerunner.

Whitman never claimed to be a full-statured "orbic bard" of the future society. He was merely the first—not a finished product to be slavishly copied, but a trail-blazer—a "Beginner," to use his term, and surely the most prolific of suggestions in all literary history.

Although he wrote in a romantic and idealistic age, he transcended the limitations of romanticism and idealism. When his healthy, steady gaze revealed the shoddiness of contemporary society, by contrast with his dazzling ideal, he did not become melancholic, or immure himself in ivory, or turn cynic and hate mankind for its humaneness. On the contrary, he listened courteously to Traubel's talk of scientific Socialism.

Alas, it was too late. By this time he was aged and semi-paralyzed. His major work was done. Simply, where the new doctrine coincided with his lifelong sympathies and intuitions, it pointed and clarified his expression:

> America is . . . for the great mass of people—the vast, surging, hopeful army of workers.
>
> The crowd of the grave working-men of our world—they are the hope, the sole hope, the sufficient hope of our democracy.

At Traubel's prompting, he verbally accepted Marxism. "Sometimes I think, I feel almost sure, Socialism is the next thing coming." And yet: "I shrink from it in some ways . . . sometimes I don't like to think of it."

His reluctance is so understandable! For Whitman to accept the indivisible whole of scientific Socialism meant invalidating the ideal tone and expression of too large a body of his work. He was old. It was too late to begin again. To face "the facts of farms and jack-planes" with the old heartiness, to make the tragic admission that his "practical fraternity . . . over the whole globe," his classless international democracy, could not be born without another, a final death-grapple with "feudalism," was too great a strain on his waning strength. He didn't like to think of it.

Once Traubel asked him directly if he thought the class that had expropriated the workers could ever be persuaded to return the loot. Whitman replied, "I'm afraid not. I'm afraid the people will have to fight for what they get"—words of reluctant resignation rather than simple recognition of inevitability. Traubel tried to cheer him up—called him, flatteringly, "a pretty good revolutionist after all!" And Whitman was pleased—but not really fooled. Whether because of unfamiliarity with theory, or lack of direct contact with the Marxist movement of his day, Whitman was never a thoroughgoing Socialist, and he knew it.

What he was, explicitly, was simply *the most important example of, and spokesman for, the transition in American literary*

tradition between the idealism of our revolutionary middle-class democracy and the materialism of our coming revolutionary working-class democracy. His ideas might be still couched in the language of the first; but his sympathies and purpose were already stoutly on the side of the second.

This is his claim and his right to our most serious reconsideration. Millions of Americans are still faced with the need of making, in themselves, the same transition. With Walt Whitman, comprehended and clarified, they are privileged to travel the entire journey in the company of our greatest poet. And when they reach the end, they will not be, like him, old and tired and sick. The final realistic truths which he could only accept with his head and mumble with withered lips, they can believe with their bowels and fight for with their fists.

Spanish Diary

James Neugass

January 13.

Drove down the canyon river-bottom of the Alfambra Valley and arrived at Tortojada, six miles from Teruel and one from the front lines, in time to scramble down a gulley and dive into one of the very good caves in its side. The sky is as blue as it can only be when there is snow on the ground. The few thin clouds that the wind drives from peak to peak, whiter than anti-aircraft puffs, interfere neither with their aim nor ours.

At the bottom of the narrow valley run our road and the Alfambra River edged by lines of dry, bare poplars which for miles are the only firewood but for beams from destroyed houses, and the new Zaragossa-Teruel railway, complete with stations and tunnels, but without rails. Stream, road, and railway are beautifully protected from artillery fire by the ridge, just beyond which are the trenches. The town, on the far side of the road and a half mile from it, is a steep, crooked mess of scrambled mud and rubble houses, one-fourth in ruins. Because we are out of range of their artillery and machine-guns, because it is very cold, and because we are so near the fighting, Tortojada is an excellent place for a classification post. The recently dug cave in which we have installed supplies of sterile gauze, adhesive tape, bandages, stretchers and blankets, morphine, caffeine, adrenalin, and camphor; a field telephone connected with the positions on the hill; and bread, coffee, beans, canned beef, milk, and jam, is already half full of freshly dressed wounded waiting for evacuation. The rest is up to the boys dug in on the hill.

January 14.

Plenty of time to write. It is 1:45 p.m. and there have been very few cars on the roads today. The weather is perfect, except for artificial man-made clouds on the brown crest of the hill, a mile across the valley. Shells break white and raise pillars of stone-dust. We aren't so far from their artillery as we had thought.

I had finished shaving by nine a.m. and was just about to go down to the river to brush my teeth when the men first ran to the *refugios*. I had been hearing the average explosions and idly watching shells break under the long hillcrest, and had not noticed the sound of the first planes.

That was about five hours ago. Leaning out of the opening of a dugout like a groundhog looking for the February sun, I have seen the same two-motored, three-motored, four- and twenty-motored squadrons of bombers, pursuit and attack planes pass by tens of times. Never counted more than eighty-four fascist planes overhead at any one time, but of course I couldn't see the other side of the hill. One mile away by bullet flight lies a long, low gap in the hills which the Thaelmann Battalion is defending. That is the point at which they are trying to break through.

The main kinds of noises are: (1) constant, increasing, rising, and falling hum of great and small plane-motors everywhere; (2) shells exploding on the hills; (3) the machine-gunning of the infantry attacks and counter-attacks; (4) the drilling roar of planes diving on the town underneath which I sit; and (5) the backwards, gasping stutter of the machine-gun bullets they throw at us, peppered by hand-grenades. Of course there have been other sights and sounds, such as the white-burning glare of incendiary shells, some below the ridge and some on the road, and the twittering of birds in the riverside trees.

The air in these rat-holes, dug in the precipitous bank of the river, shakes and pounds. A bit of paper shudders on the floor. A dog has been wandering about the far bank of the river all morning. There are other little mongrels in the cave with us. Those birds in the dry, gray trees wrangled all morning. I have never before heard such a disgusting noise except in cities at nightfall, when whole ivy walls of sparrows chatter before going to sleep. The birds are now gone. I wonder where.

The boys are saying that this is worse than Brunete last July. Brunete was supposed to be worse than anything else.

At one time, their Pavos ("turkeys" are what Aragon peasants call the German trimotors) and whole squadrons of other planes did all sorts of fancy sky-writing in white, just like advertising back in the States. At first, we thought that the lines of white smoke coming out of their exhaust-pipes were gas. Then somebody thought he saw a fascist emblem being traced out. Soon the sky was full of the Phalangist emblem—gigantic sheaves of arrows bound by a yoke. The display was supposed to constitute some sort of fancy psychological trick, I suppose, as if the planes were saying, "Here we are; this is our proud emblem; come and get us." Their artillery had been throwing incendiary shells against our hillside for the same pseudo-psychological purposes, since the only inflammable things on these desert hillsides are low thorn-bushes. No ambulances could live on these roads. We will have to wait until nightfall.

I thought it best to get my car ready. Its radiator was empty. All cooling systems are kept drained, since they would freeze in an hour if left full, and there is no garage capable of making repairs for a hundred miles.

I went down to the river with three pitchers, filled them, then walked back up the hill. There was no one to be seen anywhere in the valley, no cars, no movement but for the smoke of the shells. Finally I was able to make out three cavalrymen winding up the hill to the pass through which the enemy is trying to break. I felt, well, as if I wanted to get the job done. So long as you don't run, you aren't afraid.

Now I am back in our underground classification-post, waiting for orders, and feeling better. I should have hated to have been sent on the road and caught with no water in my radiator.

I am worried (1) that the fascists will come through the pass, cut the road and bottle us up in the town with all our equipment and ambulances; (2) that the boys up on the hill are taking a lot of punishment. We are at the apex of the shock-center of the fascist attack. The fall of Teruel was a slap on their cheek which was heard all around the world. They are spending a lot of fancy dough on explosives to get it back. So far as this town is concerned, their gunners hit nothing but Mussolini's bankroll.

Well, the fireworks have let up slightly. Maybe their aviators went home for lunch. I am going to look for some myself, right now.

January 15.

The fascist aviators must really have gone to lunch yesterday, for about half an hour. When they should have been eating their dessert, clouds had begun to drift across the Cerro Rojo, or Red Ridge, across the valley. The brilliance of the morning had dissolved into drifting mist and haze. I thought that we were safe. Very soon, the air again filled with motors. During all the cloudless morning, we had at least been able to see the planes coming.

Things kept getting hotter and hotter. But there was no artillery fire. I learned from the wounded I carried that night that there had been no "zero hours" and "over-the-tops." The fascist infantry had attacked all afternoon. The two armies were so closely interlocked that cannon-fire was impossible.

The air tactics of the enemy had now changed. Their planes were now traveling below the clouds. Whirlwinds of twenty attack-biplanes appeared at two or three places at once, diving, machine-gunning, rising, and whirling back.

Then our planes came. I knew that they were ours—because of black anti-aircraft puffs (ours are white), because of the sudden wheel of flame and black smoke on the lower slope of the ridge, where theirs had unloaded all at once, in flight, and because of the sounds of dog-fighting. In half an hour the air was clean. We lost one plane, and they three. This we counted a defeat. Tonight their commander will telegraph Hitler, and in twenty-four hours their three lost planes will be replaced with six brand new ones. That night I looted the ignition diagram from the dashboard of a Fiat we had knocked down. All the writing on it was in Italian.

Night started to fall. We wandered back to our outdoor kitchen, where pots were boiling. Again and still again there were alarms. This time I found a cavalrymen's dugout. We were machine-gunned until the light failed, and it was comfortably dark. Their planes seem to have orders to bring no ammunition home. Whatever they have left, at the end of the day, they empty on us—bombs of odd weights, grenades, machine-gun chambers. They have ammunition to waste, and they waste it. I did not know how low their planes were coming. When they dive that low, you don't look. You sit with your back to what openings in the wall there may be, and wait. I thought at first that a machine-gun right outside the cellar window where I sat was firing on the *avions*. Then I decided that the machine-gun sound must be the starting of a motorcycle. But because the sputter invariably came simultaneously with the diving of the planes, I realized that what I was hearing was the sound of explosive machine-gun bullets, striking the street outside the window. Later, I saw the scars they had made, strings of craters a foot across and two to four inches deep in the frozen road. Hand-grenades had also fallen.

The results of the day's attack on the town were hardly apparent. New-bombed houses are hard to tell from old-bombed houses, and the blood of those who had been killed and wounded in them had soaked into the plaster-dust in which the ruins floated. Four new-wrecked houses and eight dead, I should say. Their aim is bad. They hit only one out of ten, but they come back ten and a hundred times. Every day, the towns of the Alfambra Valley become lower to the ground and dirtier. Our faces and hands and the skin beneath our clothing become dirtier and dirtier. The dead are the dirtiest of all, not so much with blood and dust and mud, but with the grayness that so soon darkens their faces and fingernails.

The lines on the ridge had held. After dark, life in Tortojada began where it had been broken off by the sound of the planes that morning. Horses were watered, sheep moved through the twisted streets down to the river, fires were again lit, and smells of cooking mixed with the fumes of burning damp bandages and gasoline, which are the nasal trademarks of this neighborhood and of war. Women who had spent the day with their children in the fields or in the caves of the mountains back of us came back to their houses, or to what had been their houses.

The first wounded arrived soon after dark. Some of them had been carried down the mountainside to the road, where they had been picked up by the first munitions trucks to come out after dark. Light-wounded walked in from the lines. A great jam of ambulances, loaded and empty, developed on the lip of the gully into whose side our post is cut, in the soft, chalky, tan clay of this region, the clay which streaked the crowns and rims of our hats, our elbows and knees, and the seats of our trousers.

Mules were packed with flat crates of cartridges and square boxes of grenades, and left for the ridge. Field-telephone wiremen went out to check their lines. A fortifications brigade rose out of the earth, and the cavalrymen led their horses out of concealed stables.

Since, for a reason I did not yet understand, I had not been sent out to pick up a load, I helped in the cave. By candlelight, stretcher after stretcher was carried down a ramp in one side of the gully and across the frozen stream in its bottom. My job was to cut off clothing. This must be done because of the danger of infection and because we must find out very quickly all the places where a man has been hit. Very few of the wounded I saw last night or at any other time were hit in only one place. Modern shrapnel breaks into fine metal spray that spreads as efficiently as water over an expensively groomed lawn back in the States. The modern machine-gun fires so fast that it seldom hits a man in a single place. You can't pull off a man's clothing, because this motion, however careful and slight, would grind the broken ends of his bones into his muscle. We carried the clothing out of the cave to a pit. Cartridge belt, rifle, bayonet, sidearms, and shoes are dumped beside the cave's mouth. Many a man got a good pair of shoes or a revolver from a classification post, not to speak of knapsacks, mess-tins, and spoons.

After the clothing comes off, and an inspection is made by the evacuation doctor, fresh gauze and adhesive are applied, and the case gets his anti-tetanus and gas-gangrene. He is given stimulants or sedatives, a card with his name, rank, brigade, and a description of injuries and medication, and then waits on a stretcher, under as many blankets as we can give him, until an ambulance pulls out for the rear. The sick are also evacuated from classification posts, and sometimes are given a night of sleep or a day of rest with us. Many frozen feet and ears were coming in.

As soon as the sun had gone down, I was ordered out to Kilometer 2½, just outside of Teruel, to the English Battalion. Without lights, of course, I drove for a few miles through troops, tanks, armored cars, mules, light artillery, until I came to a railroad bridge. The brigade, which was dug in behind the bridge and the embankments on both sides of it, removed sandbags from the road so that I could pass. I had an unpleasant feeling that the sandbags were being replaced after I left.

The other side of the bridge, traffic of all kinds had ceased. There were no sounds, in the light of the half-full moon, but for intermittent, nervous, single rifle-shots. If rifles are psychopaths, machine-guns are maniacs.

I began to wish I could see someone or hear a voice. There is no silence like that of red-hot spent bullets as they streak across the road at night. Tracers pass with a white light, like racing, supercharged fireflies, but I did not see many of these.

I got to the old anti-aircraft pit in which the English were and had set up their first-aid post. I was given a load of light-wounded. The heavy-wounded had left in a truck that afternoon. Dead lay stretched out like sausages on a griddle next to the road waiting for the *camion* which handles them.

I was told to go to a receiving hospital, twenty miles back over the mountains. The first five miles had to be done without lights, watching for old and new shell-holes. This road must be under fire during daylight. I climbed and climbed. Just as soon as I was able to turn on my lights, I was again driving blind, because I had run into the snow-fog which rises on the mountains of Aragon after a day of sunlight.

I got home, at five a.m. perhaps, to find my mattress gone. I picked out two feet of space on the floor of the ruined house where we slept, took off my shoes, and immediately went to sleep.

"The Pseudo-Suicide"

A FRAGMENT

A. T. Rosen

Torches spurtled up. And from the sea
a searchlight sprang to the skyline and was botched
on wet resisting fog—when folded back
it broomed up flavors from the waterfront
and graced the Vigilantes' tilted heads
with essences of coffee, spice, and oil.

"Christian Americans!"

From poolrooms, bars,
and licensed agencies for crime, the mob
massed bristling like some hulking animal
that waits the trainer's signal to perform.

Among the listeners an old man stood
islanded in lone identity.
He was of that contemporary breed
who keep inskulled as if in quarantine
the prowling sickness which drives men to lean
over the very roof-edge of despair;
yet these are the ones who never jump, but stay
steady as any lounger on the sidewalk.
For they are pseudo-suicides who dream
that death is proxy to their will—dream
and find it better to dream than die.

He watched, as if in fever or hypnosis,
the face, rough as a chapped fist, jabbing
at the quick-eyed crowd to punctuate
a rattle of rhetoric; heard, like the rush
of coal down a tin chute, the patriot words
Law and Order, God, America,
encored by the mob and megaphoned
"to Nigger and Kike and gutless Government."

"Freedom don't mean anarchy"—

Instinct
came alive in the old man. His protest
screeched like an unoiled saw, "Mr. Speaker,
and Democracy—?"
"Democracy, my friend,"
(the face with stone-vacant headlights seemed to speed
unerringly toward him) "Democracy's
either gonna be streamlined or wind up
an ex-champ like yourself, old, on the bum."

The cynic eye-grin. The irascible stance
of a pit bull-terrier. He should have dared them both.
Old men who wait before the last exit,
the next in line to go—they should not wince
at slapping words.

". . . ours be a nation of youth."
Yet what was left of all his world but words?
He should have yelled, "You can't set traffic lights
on Age. Why even as you talk your time
is roaring in like a train ahead of schedule."

"New techniques, new ideas—"

He should have cried,
"Freedom, Opportunity, Love of Truth,
are these the old ones or is Hatred old,
is Prejudice, Poverty, Panic, Ignorance old?
And what's their worth, your old-new infamies?
You'll find them far less practical to your need
than luckcharms thick in cobweb of the past."
He should have shouted, "Stop that man!
Stop all such men—"

"Niggers, Reds, and Wops,
they've ganged up on us, made hell of our harbors;
Cargoes of cotton, iron, beef, oil, grain,
to feed and clothe and arm America
lie stalled in the hatches—"

He should have cried,
"In times when in the place of man-sized wheat
a parched earth sends up only runt-like sprouts,
when gradually the gates of Nightmare rise
around cities where the mind is a dark sky
full of electric, in times like these
such men are criminal, and worse—"
or else,
"It's not this simple strike he aims against
but at Society itself. He speaks
for chronic wretchedness, defeat, and death,
the privileged death after the last-lived shame."
The old man stood, a slouched shadow, vexed
by the guilt of wisdom gagged in him;
he knew the consequence when demagogues
juggle their dynamite among such mobs.
Yet kept still, not from fear of self,
but fear that free opinion be impinged.

"Strike out the strikers!"
Then the pipelines snapped,
the reservoirs caved in—out of the mob
ten thousand years of skirling savagery
broke loose.
Like an old silent man
Liberalism ran before the flood,
taking a last look at the face, galvanic,
that seemed to have no body but the dark.

Cowards of Us All

Ernest Brace

ELLEN sat rigidly erect. Arthur's temper had always seemed such a normal, healthy one—a temper which broke loose with gusto, raged lustily around its tormentor—usually imagined—and then returned calmly, sometimes smilingly, to its cage. It was not like that now. It had not been like that, Ellen realized, for a long time. It was venomous and the venom did not spurt freely, rather it seemed to be squeezed out with hysterical frenzy. Though she could hear every word Arthur spoke, she got up and tiptoed to the edge of the stone veranda to listen.

"Well, what the hell did you think I meant? That I wanted you to cry on them a little? God knows that would kill the bugs—and probably the flowers, too. . . . You didn't understand?" Arthur's voice was almost falsetto in his effort to make his words bitter. "Well, last month when you asked for a raise and you didn't understand what I said, you damn well said so. You better go back to Hungary or wherever the hell it is you came from if you can't learn English. Do you know what 'fired' means? It means get the hell out of here! You're no damn good and I don't want you around!"

Ellen turned quickly and went into the house. She crossed the cool, dim hall and ran lightly up the stairs. She disliked this feeling of running away, but she disliked even more the certainty that she could not escape from the thoughts and fears which had been growing so rank in her troubled mind recently. She stepped into the bathroom and closed the door. She leaned with her back against it, staring into the mirror opposite, feeling the cool surface of the one behind her.

She heard Arthur climbing the stairs. She remembered how he used to go up them two at a time, and she wondered how long ago he had stopped doing that. She had not noticed at the time. There were so many things she had not noticed at the time, things now suspended in the soft, pink haze of memory. She heard his bathroom door close. Silence settled like dust about her. Was he standing as she was, staring at his mirror? The two mirrors were back to back. She tried to imagine his face, square and somber, with a jaw and mouth that gave the impression of a heavily sagging mass rather than massiveness; the eyes were gray and resentfully stern. She could see the features, but the face as a living expression she could not imagine. She knew him too well and not at all. What could be the matter? What horrible menace could be driving him to such frenzy?

She pursed her thin lips, as she always did when she made up her mind to be sensible, and stepped up to the basin to wash her hands, though she had washed them only a half hour ago. She powdered her nose, which was thin and aquiline with flaring, almost translucent nostrils. She looked for a moment steadily and severely into her own blue eyes and quite leisurely went downstairs again. She stepped out on the veranda, picked up the magazine she had been looking at, and sat down in a broad wicker armchair.

As soon as she heard his step on the stairs she felt her whole body grow swiftly tense. She took a deep breath and tried to relax. She didn't want to quarrel. She didn't want to hear about the gardener. Arthur came out, lighting a cigarette.

"Hot today in the city," he said, snapping his lighter shut.

"It must have been awful. It was bad enough here."

He sat down with a deep sigh.

"I just fired Nick," he observed, sighing again.

"Why?" she asked, pretending surprise.

"I told him last week to spray the roses and he forgot it. I told him again yesterday, and tonight he tried to tell me he hadn't understood what I said. I guess he understands me now."

"That's too bad."

"What do you mean?"

She sensed that he had turned with sudden belligerency to stare at her.

"Just what I say. It's too bad he wasn't more satisfactory. We've had so many gardeners lately."

"And all of them expensive and worthless."

So he was worrying about money again. She said nothing, heeding the usual storm warnings.

"We'll get somebody by the day when we need work done. There's no sense having a man all the time, anyway."

"But you tried that and decided it was unsatisfactory."

"Well, plenty of other people seem to manage and I don't see why we can't. One thing we've got to do is to get out of this habit of spending money whether we can afford it or not."

"Are things really getting so bad again?"

"I don't know how things are—nobody does. But if I can help it I'm not going to get caught again with debts and responsibilities I can't afford. One week you make a little money, and the next you find the government has thought up a new tax to take away two or three times as much as you've made—and just to feed a lot of worthless people like Nick. God knows what's likely to happen to anything or anybody these days." He threw away his cigarette in exasperation and smoothed back his graying hair. His eyes were restlessly bitter. "And Willie wants to get married—on $22.50 a week. My God, I can't get over that! Even if he is young he's got eyes. He ought to be able to see what's happening all around him."

"I wouldn't worry about that—now. I shouldn't be surprised if he changed his mind. I happened to hear him talking over the telephone with her last night, and if any young man was ever irritated, he was—not angry or jealous or indignant—just irritated."

"Well, I hope you're right."

"I think your telling him flatly that under no circumstances, sickness, babies, anything, could they come to live here impressed him. I guess he was afraid you might really mean it."

"I did."

"I know, but of course parents don't let their children starve if they can help it—at least our kind don't."

Arthur frowned but he did not deny her assertion.

"I wish we could sell this place," he said at length.

"Oh dear, is it as bad as that? You know we can't—not without losing a great deal—and we've got to live somewhere."

"I know, but I'm tired of the whole set-up. I'm tired of houses and gardens and servants. I'm getting so I hate every tree and bush on the place. You buy yourself a home like this and kid yourself into thinking that no matter what happens you'll always have a place to live. But we've seen enough of our friends go broke to know that a roof over your head is worse than a stone around your neck if you have to move fast."

"But what can we do? What do you want to do?"

"It doesn't make any difference what I want to do. The engineer driving the Twentieth Century might just as well decide he'd like to take a short cut across the fields as for me to talk about the things I'd like to do."

Was this, Ellen wondered, the beginning of that vague horror called a nervous breakdown? Was Arthur likely to brood himself into desperation? What had happened, really? If his business had survived the years of acute depression it didn't seem likely that it should be in real danger now. She could remember when Arthur had smiled scornfully at the timid, henlike flutterings of so many men. But in the end the epidemic of fear and

worry had reached him too, not that he had lost any money or that his business had been more than moderately slackened. For two distressing years they had economized erratically and, as it seemed now, senselessly. They had discharged Martin, the gardener who had been with them for a dozen years, ever since they had first bought the place. They had cut down Willie's allowance at college, and they had done a lot of other things like going around turning off lights and buying fewer clothes and fewer table delicacies. Actually she had not suffered, but the whole experience had been distasteful. If Arthur's panic had seemed like a delayed echo of the general scream, like an echo it showed every sign of rounding out the final lingering note of fear.

Cocktails, as usual, somewhat revived Arthur's spirits. At dinner, which they ate alone, he discussed almost affably the approaching breakup of a neighborhood family they had known for some years. It was not until she mentioned quite casually the futility of doing anything drastic about the dissatisfactions of middle age that she noticed any return of his irritability. And then, as always, before she could do anything about it or even make up her mind as to the direction from which it was coming, the storm broke.

"You talk as though everybody who reached the age of forty-five or so suddenly got fed up," he said.

"Not everybody, of course. But you must admit that a great many of our friends have had trouble. There were the Pattens and the Oldens and the Camboys and—"

"Are you?"

"Am I what?"

"Fed up."

"Don't be silly."

"God knows you act as if you were."

"I! I like that when I seem to be the only one who makes the slightest effort to keep the peace."

"I didn't realize I was so difficult to live with."

"Oh, please let's not quarrel about nothing. Can't we even mention other people's troubles without increasing our own?"

They eyed each other through the distorting confusion of distrust, wonder, despair, and all the blind emotions that twenty-odd years of married life can conjure from the most commonplace phrases. They were very close to each other—their bickering was proof of that—and at the same time they were thousands of miles apart. It was as if a commuter approaching Manhattan by ferry should suddenly discover that he must go the other way around the world to get there. The great circle of their relationship embraced vast seas and continents of experience and emotion.

"Well, damn it, I'm fed up with your complete lack of sympathy," he shouted, desperately bolstering up his irritation.

"Sympathy with what? Every day I beg you to tell me what's wrong, why you seem so nervous and worried all the time. You won't let me be sympathetic. You won't let me get anywhere near you."

"There's no answer to such logic, I guess." He stood up and threw down his napkin as if it were a torpedo he was trying to explode. "No answer but feeling, and you don't seem to have much of that. You take me, as well as everything else in your life, for granted, and when I show any feelings or worries, you're upset and annoyed, the way you are when the icebox stops running or something goes wrong with the furnace. You seem to think the world is something installed for your personal use with a lifetime guarantee and when it doesn't work to suit you all you have to do is complain. Every time I mention economy you look like a Christian martyr. I don't blame you for worrying about my health when I stop to think about what it means to you."

Her face paled and she pressed her lips tightly together. When he saw that she was not going to reply, Arthur turned and walked out of the dining-room.

Ellen sat for a long time staring tensely, pallidly into her coffee cup. Occasionally she took a deep breath which seemed more a fierce hunger for air than a sigh. The bitter fierceness of Arthur's personal resentment had never before been so clear. He had no reason to accuse her of being fed up, but he wanted to believe that she was. He wanted some focus for his own groping dissatisfaction with the entire pattern of his life. He had no definite worry, but he had discovered that everything was wrong, from the gardener's understanding of English to her own casual wifeliness. If his business went to pieces now it would be wholly because he was losing his nerve. In his state anything might happen. He might become religious. If some—almost any—woman decided she wanted him he would be as helpless as an adolescent. He might—no, things hadn't got that bad yet—she hoped. Where was he now?

Sudden dread prodded her from her seat. She walked through the downstairs rooms. They were all silent, almost dark. She went out on the front porch and stood listening. A whippoorwill broke through the heavy silence. She turned and went back through the house to the living-room veranda. In the doorway she halted abruptly. She saw, barely perceptible in the dusk, a little white ball roll across the lawn. She almost laughed. She hoped that life would always treat her as playfully, that whenever she looked for tragedy she would find nothing more distressing than Arthur trying to improve his putting.

The next morning at breakfast she felt quite confident that she would be able somehow to divert Arthur's attention from his imaginary worries. And they were imaginary, otherwise he must certainly have let slip some definite hint. He wouldn't have been able to satisfy any real distress by merely accusing her of being fed up. As she sipped her coffee and turned away from the jittery headlines to the book page she felt pleasantly civilized and serene. She at least would keep her dignity and her sense of worldly balance while others kicked and screamed—against conditions, against the heat, against fate, against all the disjointed circumstances which attended the business of living. Some people imagined that everything could be made to fit neatly together, like a jigsaw puzzle. The trouble was that all the pieces came from different puzzles; they might all fit something, but not together. She felt quite pleased with her impromptu metaphor. She found her attitude of aristocratic aloofness exciting. She was almost startled when she realized that Winnie had come in and was waiting respectfully for her attention.

"There's a man out back, ma'am, says his name is Martin Honner. He says you'd know who he was and could he speak to you."

"Martin! Why, of course. Tell him to wait in the greenhouse. I'll be right out."

Things certainly were looking brighter this morning. She laid aside her napkin and stood up. Certainly Arthur would give up his silly idea about an occasional gardener if it were possible to get Martin back. Firing him had been one of the most disheartening of their measures of economy. Not since they had found their cat Chippie run over and not quite dead out in the main road had the family been so upset about anything. The early morning creaking of the wheelbarrow in Martin's hands had always been pleasant assurance that all was right with the world and the hardy perennials, not a warning that something was about to be done wrong. But how had Martin happened to turn up? He had left the village, and, the last she heard, was on a farm somewhere.

Ellen started to hurry across the lawn; then, remembering her dignity and the fact that it was nearly four years since she had seen Martin, she slowed her gait and joked herself into a more casual attitude by remarking that she was not, after all, Lady Chatterley.

Martin pulled off his cap and nodded as she neared the doorway where he was standing. She could have wished that his smile seemed more direct, more reminiscent.

"Well, Martin, I'm glad to see you again. We've all wondered what had become of you."

"I've been back in town a week or so. I came to look around

—to see if there was anything—any work, I mean. And last night I happened to hear you'd fired—that you didn't have—a gardener, so I thought I'd come around and see if—well, if you wanted one."

Martin didn't look well, she decided. Anyway, he didn't smile the way he used to. His gentian-blue eyes that briefly glanced at her from time to time seemed to be guarding his own thoughts rather than observing her. She had expected with real pleasure to slip back into an old and comfortable relationship; instead she felt almost ill at ease. The old relationship seemed in some strange way to make things more, rather than less, difficult.

"Have you been out of work long?" she asked.

"I haven't had any steady job since I left here."

"Times certainly have been hard—with everybody. How are Mildred and the children?"

"Mildred's not very well. She keeps being sick off and on. Henry—that's the oldest boy—went out West some place. I haven't heard from him in quite some time now. Emma got a job this summer waiting on table at a boarding house upstate where we've been living. That's helped us some. The others are all right, I guess, except the baby that was born a year ago. She don't seem to grow and get strong the way the others did."

The idea of people like that having a baby in these times! Ellen felt deeply, exaggeratedly indignant. The feeling helped greatly to distract her sympathies from Martin's mournful story. It almost enabled her to ignore the disturbing restiveness of his eyes and the gaunt line of his bony jaw.

"After I tried for a while to find work around here we moved back upstate where I came from. I owned a little piece of property up there and I figured we could get along somehow. But things didn't work out so well. I finally lost the property and had to go on relief. I got a chance to get a ride down here last week, so I thought—" He glanced at Ellen and looked quickly away.

"Well, of course, I can't say anything definite without talking it over with Mr. Amber. He was saying last night that he thought he'd try to get along hiring someone by the day."

But she wasn't thinking about Arthur's ideas. She wasn't sure now that she wanted Martin back. He *had* changed. An inefficient gardener might be far less disturbing to her peace of mind than one who made the sympathetic demands of an established and almost personal relationship. The idea of their having a baby!

". . . and of course I'd want to be sure it was a steady job," he was saying. "I couldn't afford to move the family down for something that wasn't steady."

"Well, I'll talk with Mr. Amber when he gets home this evening. Of course, in these times he probably won't feel he can pay you quite as much—anyway, if you'll come back after he gets home you can talk with him."

"Well"—he stared bleakly off across the broad lawn— "I don't see how I could get along on much less. I still have a family to support—even in these times."

"Naturally, I realize that," she said, stiffening. "However, I should think it might be easier to support a family on less than on nothing." She smiled to cover her resentment. "After all, there are very few people who don't have to get along on less these days."

He said nothing. She had no reason to believe that he even contemplated making any reply, and yet she was suddenly afraid that he might argue the point, that she might be drawn into an undignified discussion. As abruptly as if she had heard someone calling her, she turned.

"Well, I'll tell Mr. Amber you were here, Martin. It was nice seeing you again, anyway."

She went quickly—and only she realized how breathlessly—back to the house. For a moment she stood in the hall; then she frowned impatiently and hurried to the kitchen. While she was going through her brief morning routine it occurred to her that there were several errands she had been meaning to do in the village. She hurried upstairs and dressed. Her need for movement, for purposeful activity, was imperative. She got the roadster out of the garage and drove to town.

She filled her day with movement. She had lunch at the beach club and went for a swim. After that she played bridge with three other restless women until it was time for her to pay the calls she intended getting off her conscience that day. Her calls were brief but they were filled to overflowing with rather pointless conversation. At length, as she turned the car toward home, she realized that Arthur would probably be there when she got back. She sighed her relief. Irritation, even bad news, would be better than sitting alone with nothing to do.

Each time the incident with Martin slipped through her determination to forget about it, she felt more bitter. She had been cheated and she could not endure being cheated. She had been so elated at his return, so sure that this bit of the pleasant past would make her old contentment real and imminent. And then . . . She forced herself to consider how one of her bridge hands might have been better played. But Martin was behind her, his dogged eyes looking over the cards at the broad lawn and the pleasant sunlight. The idea of people like that having another baby!

She saw Arthur in the rose garden as she came up the drive. He waved. Perhaps he was in a better mood tonight. She was sure he was when she saw him ambling toward the garage to meet her. Poor Arthur. Probably experiences like hers were a daily occurrence with him. No wonder he was irritable and worried. A gush of sympathy almost brought tears to her eyes. She must show him her understanding, make her allegiance more apparent.

"Where you been?" he asked, kissing her and smiling amiably.

She told him briefly, wondering what could have happened to change his mood so completely.

"Well, this has been one of those days you hope for but don't really expect," he said when she had finished.

"Tell me about it."

"In the first place, I want to say that I'm sorry about last night." He put his hand on her shoulder. "Things have been getting on my nerves lately and—well, I got so I had to shout at somebody—anybody."

"I think I understand."

He looked at her, surprised by her earnestness, but at the moment he was only eager to tell her his good news.

"Anyway, I finally wound up a deal today that will make more money for me—us—than I've made in ten years. It was partly this deal hanging fire that made me so jumpy lately. But it's all sewed up now—signed on the dotted line."

"Why, Arthur, that's wonderful. It seems like old times to hear you talk like that." She smiled, but as the phrase "old times" slipped out her smile withered.

"Wait! That's not all. I had lunch with our son. You were right last night. There's been a big bust-up. No wedding bells are going to ring out on $22.50 nuptials. He was in a bad way—tragic, somber, cynical. I almost felt ashamed at being so pleased. From a few things he said I have a feeling that her change of heart, mind, and body had something to do with my ultimatum that I'd never let the old homestead become a love nest."

"I'm so glad."

"You ought to be. You ought to be a lot gladder than you seem. Anything wrong? Don't tell me you're going to match my good news with bad and put us in the red again."

"No, I haven't any bad news—really." They had reached the veranda. Ellen sat down in one of the wicker chairs and Arthur, watching her, sat on the stone wall. She lit a cigarette. "I had a visitor this morning—Martin."

"Martin!"

"It seems he'd just got back to town after all these years and happened to hear that you'd fired the gardener. He wanted his old job back."

"But why are you so upset about that? It would be a big relief to have Martin back. It would be like old times again."

Ellen smiled pallidly.

"That's what I thought—until I talked with him. He's changed. It's almost impossible for me to tell you how he's changed. I was so enthusiastic when Winnie told me he was here and wanted to see me. Then almost the minute I saw him I was disappointed. He seemed so—well, sort of resentful—almost insolent. He didn't really say anything that wasn't polite, but I felt all the time that his thoughts must be vicious. He's been very hard up. He was on relief, but that didn't stop Mildred from having another baby last year."

"That's too bad. I'd have liked to have Martin back."

"Well, I told him he could come and talk to you this evening if he wanted to. And I told him—I hadn't, of course, heard your good news then—that we couldn't afford to pay him his old wages in these times. He replied that he had a family to support—even in these times. Somehow he really did manage to upset me terribly. Martin always seemed so much a part of things that finding him changed was like discovering that all the trees around the house were diseased and would have to be cut down."

"Forget about it. There are plenty of gardeners. As a matter of fact, it's just as well not to let yourself get too attached to people who work for you. Think how hard it was firing him. We might have to do it again some time, and if we just have some Wop or somebody it makes it a lot simpler. I tell you what let's do; let's get in the car and go get us an expensive dinner somewhere. We ought to celebrate and forget Martin."

"But dinner must be almost ready."

"We can afford to leave lots of dinners almost ready tonight. Come on. You need to snap out of it."

"Well, I really would like to."

"That's the spirit." He grinned and went over and perched on the arm of her chair. "Cheer up," he said. "The old man's still able to keep you out of the poorhouse." He reached down and took her hand in his.

Ellen gazed off across the lawn. It was entirely Martin's own fault. If he had behaved halfway decently he would have had his old job back—and at his old salary, too. Arthur was always generous, even lavish, at times like this. By tomorrow she would have forgotten all about it—or next week, anyway. And Willie—what a relief that was. She felt Arthur's hand pressing hers affectionately. She ought to return the pressure. It was her duty to. She willed her fingers to clench his tightly. They did not move. It was all she could do to leave them entwined in the soft warmth of his. Each one seemed a living organism stifling for air and freedom. She jumped up.

"Well, I'll go and dress," she said brightly. "And I must let Clara know that we are going out for dinner."

Without looking at him she hurried into the house, yet she knew that he had frowned.

"Orthodoxy"

To My Taunting Friends

who are
my masters
in orthodoxy?

children in suburbs
twitching to any whirring sound;
women dropping in Pyrenean snow
(better wolves than Moors),
haunted windows of the City Hall of Prague
waiting to be splintered . . .

is it wrong to think "straight"
in the typhoon of germs
dropt in bottles of hate
over Yunnan plains? . . .

The "line," you say, the "line"!

bees flying to sweetness make their line
and their honey roomed on plan;
the diver for the pearls
tracks the line of air;
I have seen the loggers floating down
their herd of warring trees
(the river waiting, waiting for a slip),
have heard their cry, exact
and rich in turns as the swirling river.
Do you blame the frost-evading birds
their "ordered line"?

Stonecutters seek the seam:
are we less?
In Eurasia
they have traced our line in blood!

"Moscow orders . . ."

when I awaken from a dream that my child has been snatched
from me
and see my father in dream hanging from a swastika
and in dream see my mother's tomb desecrated—
dreams fed in day in day out the mulberry leaves of
our time—
and I rush screaming into my child's room
and frighten father at midnight by phoning
and relive mother's death in a million shames of agony

is it Moscow orders?

O whirling dervishes
you rebuke our line
and bid me walk your pontoon
of mist and treachery . . .

I glory in the "straight,"
the "line,"
Man's orders.

Taunt, all you would
who were once my friends.

Esthetes, you love flowers;
handfuls I will put on your bulleted graves,
who were once my friends:
To the memory of men who loved
the intellect's iridescent bends. . . .

THOMAS OREAN.

With Apologies

J. M. Wilkoff

NOTE: The strange military tactics of those countries now engaged in war might very well influence future wars to such an extent that a typical war office of any nation engaged in the next war might indeed present such instances as we are about to show.

The scene shows a portion of any war office of any country during the next war. It is the apology department. There is a large desk holding center stage. Behind it are numberless shelves pigeonholed extensively and bearing various identifying placards carrying such legends as INFORMAL APOLOGIES, FORMAL APOLOGIES, SPECIFIC APOLOGIES, APOLOGY BLANKS, LETTERS OF APOLOGIES, APOLOGIES FOR FACTORIES, ETC. *To the left of this desk is a large easel bearing a chart such as is used in doctors' offices for demonstration purposes. To the right of the desk is a safe marked* DECLARATIONS OF WAR. *Behind the desk are several clerks engaged in writing, filing, working teletype machines, phones, etc. Sitting unobtrusively to the side is an aviator. His head hangs dejectedly and he has no interest in the scene. The clerks work with a military precision, and chant as they work.*

CLERKS: We're a military nation,
We're engaged in war and strife;
We've a bomb for every battleship,
A bullet for each life.
But there are some amenities
We try hard to observe—
For every "boom" our guns make
There's an apology in reserve. *(Gesture.)*

Alexander or Napoleon,
All warriors of yore,
Would have scoffed at such politeness,
At this letter-writing war.
But they were all barbarians
And knew not of decorum—
When they brought down an enemy
They had no pardons for 'im.

But we have found enlightenment
And though we do atrocities,
We've a note for every incident,
We've regrets and reciprocities.
We like to kill, but then again
We stick to the punctilio
With apologies for statesmen
From Rumania to Chile. Oh

Apologies are all the rage,
We'd never do without them.
Regrets and retributions—
Let us tell you all about them.

(Turning to the various pigeonholes and indicating them as they sing.)
Formal here, informal there
Are just what you would think them;
Civilians here, factories there,
(With glee)
Battleships when you sink them.
In this small drawer we like to keep
Apologies specific
For sinking ships in either
The Atlantic or Pacific.
Here are *letters* of apology,
Here notes, here forms, there blanks.
There apologies for governments,
Apologies for banks.

So while our medaled generals
All walk in paths of glory,
We work out the sweetest way
Of saying, "Gee, we're sorry."

(As the clerks finish their chant, a group of aviators march in with a presiding officer who marches immediately to the chart, in front of which the fliers arrange themselves. As this group enters, it, too, chants.)

AVIATORS: To us is entrusted
Each bomb that is busted
On the hapless heads of those who crawl below.
We've got to keep our vision
Working with precision.
We've come to have our eyes examined. . . .

OFFICER: *(Throwing back the initial page of the chart to reveal a large black sheet)* . . . Go!
AVIATORS: White!
OFFICER: Right. *(Turns page. A red sheet.)*
AVIATORS: Blue!
OFFICER: True! *(The next page shows an unmistakable oil derrick.)*
AVIATORS: Mine!
OFFICER: Fine. *(A map of the British Isles.)*
AVIATORS: China!
(The officer shakes his head in disagreement.)
Not China?
(Same business with head-shaking.)
Asia Minor.
(Again the officer agrees and reveals the next page—a map of the United States.)
Russia.
(Agrees. Next page, a Soviet hammer and sickle.)
Prussia.
(Agrees. The last page shows a cross-section of the digestive tract.)
Canal!
OFFICER: Yes, but where?
AVIATOR 1: What difference does that make?
OFFICER: Who said that?
AVIATOR 2: Our chief of staff.
OFFICER: Splendid.

(A few indistinct military orders, and the company marches out as it entered, singing.)

AVIATORS: We're beloved by all the land,
Our uniforms are grand,
We've *such* a *picnic* flying through the air.
On house, on boat, on steeple,
On soldiers, and on people
We drop things . . . *(Over their shoulders as they exit)*
. . . and they fall we know not where.

(As they leave the clerks take up the refrain.)

CLERKS: But for every child or sailor,
Battleship or whaler,
Tank or truck or train or British lorry
That these boys do some dirt to
We're very much alert to
Have a mannered note to say we're sorry.

(A young aviator, not one of the recent group, enters and approaches the desk. He is hesitant and timid.)

YOUNG AVIATOR: Is this the apology bureau?
CLERK 1: It is.
YOUNG AVIATOR: My name is . . .
CLERK 1: Not interested in names. What's your number?
YOUNG AVIATOR: Y. A. 789.
CLERK 1: *(Going through some files.)* Oh yes, you're here to be punished for . . .
YOUNG AVIATOR: Informal Apology No. 652.
CLERK 1: Exactly . . . and what do you have to say?
YOUNG AVIATOR: I didn't know my bomb chamber was loaded.
CLERK 1: *(Impatiently.)* Yes, yes, of course. We know that. I mean, what do you have to say about your punishment?
YOUNG AVIATOR: If it wouldn't be asking too much . . . I was thinking that suicide . . .
CLERK 1: *(Incredulous.)* What?
YOUNG AVIATOR: I only thought . . .
CLERK 1: *(Leaning over the desk in a confidential manner.)* Do you know what the news dispatches, and the apology too, for that matter, said about your fate? *(The young aviator shakes his head.)* You were summarily shot at sunrise yesterday . . . without trial.
YOUNG AVIATOR: *(Plaintively.)* But can't I commit suicide?
CLERK 1: Don't be absurd . . . for one gunboat?
YOUNG AVIATOR: But . . .
CLERK 1: Now there's a fellow . . . *(Indicates the dejected aviator, who perks up at what the clerk has to say.)* . . . *He* will be permitted to commit suicide . . . but he has a right to . . .
YOUNG AVIATOR: Why?
CLERK 1: Because he, with one load of bombs, got the Bulgarian consulate, an attaché, two battleships, and three civilians . . .
YOUNG AVIATOR: But I got . . .
CLERK 1: *(As an afterthought.)* . . . All belonging to countries with which we are not at war. *(The young aviator looks with awe at his colleague, who now struts and basks in glory.)*
YOUNG AVIATOR: And he . . . ?
CLERK 1: Will be allowed to commit suicide. *(As though to a child.)* But after all, my dear boy, *his* action necessitated an informal, two formal, and three specific apologies, a letter from the dictator and a trans-Pacific telephone call before the incident was considered closed. *(Disparagingly.)* And you want to be permitted to commit suicide over a measly gunboat, one simple informal apology. *(As he rings a bell.)* And handled by an underling at that.

(This harangue has completely shattered the young aviator's spirit. He hangs his head and goes with the attendant who has responded to the clerk's bell. The clerk says to the attendant:)

Young Aviator 789 to be shot.

(As the young aviator leaves, he steals a surreptitious glance at the other aviator as he passes him. The other is quite pleased with himself and big with pride. He follows the other two out like a peacock. Just as they are about to leave, the clerk calls out to the attendant:)

That's to be "summarily" shot . . . we must follow the etiquette.

(He turns to his colleagues for approval and commendation as the others go out. At this point a general, accompanied by several aides, rushes into the office. Angry and distraught, he shouts:)

GENERAL: Who, who, I repeat, who sent Apology 475?
CLERK: I did, sir.
GENERAL: You, you blockhead. Do you know what you've done?
CLERK: I apologized for something or another.
GENERAL: Yes, but to a country we didn't offend, idiot!
AIDE: We had nothing to apologize for . . .
GENERAL: *(To his aide.)* Quiet! If they had seen you, we'd have plenty to apologize for. *(To clerk.)* But you, you blundering fool, you've disgraced us. The idea . . . what are we to do . . . sending an apology when we haven't brought about the merest hint of an incident.
AIDE: Not even a window broken in the consulate.
CLERK: I'm sorry, sir. There are so many apologies. Mistakes can happen.
GENERAL: In war there are no such things as mistakes.
CLERK: To whom did we apologize?
GENERAL: How do I know?
CLERK: What did we apologize for?
(The General is at a loss. His aide comes to his assistance.)
AIDE: Killing an ambassador. *(At this the clerk goes through his files hurriedly.)* Sir, I have a suggestion.
GENERAL: Well?
AIDE: Why not go out and kill the ambassador? Then the apology will be valid.
GENERAL: *(Storming.)* What do you take me for—an idiot, a moron, a savage? *(Letting his voice drop.)* That occurred to me immediately. *(They all wait for an explanation.)* But when the ambassador heard of the apology he fled to the hills.
CLERK: *(Still searching.)* Was it a specific apology, sir?
GENERAL: Why?
CLERK: There are several ships in the harbor. We could bomb them. One of them *must* belong to the country to whom we sent the apology.
GENERAL: It won't do, the apology was specific. *(This from coaching from the aide.)*
AIDE: Specifically for killing an ambassador.
(There is a moment of worry for all concerned.)
I've got it . . . just the thing . . . oh, why didn't I think of it before?
GENERAL: Because you can't think. Well, what is it?
AIDE: Declare war on the country. Then there'll be no need for apologies.
(The apology clerks give him dirty looks for this, but the general looks wistfully at the large safe marked DECLARATIONS OF WAR.)
GENERAL: That *would* be a good idea . . . but there's no use . . . the combination to that safe has been lost ever since the last election.
CLERK: There wouldn't be any time for that, anyway. I'm sure we can think of something.
CLERK 2: *(Approaching the others.)* Pardon me, gentlemen. I have been working on something to take care of just such an emergency.
CLERK: *(To the others.)* He's our expert . . . best man in the department.
GENERAL: Indeed?
CLERK: Oh yes. He perfected the apology for an insult to a flag. You know . . . the one that begins, "Oops, so sorry."
GENERAL: *(Adequately impressed.)* Well, come, my good man, what is it . . . what solution have you?
CLERK 2: *(Consulting a paper in his hand.)* Well, it's . . .
GENERAL: Come, come, out with it . . . *(Lifts him up to the top of the desk.)*
CLERK 2: *(The position brings out the dramatic in him and he poses on the desk, flourishing a paper.)* The solution, an apology apologizing for an apology.

FINIS

Four Poems

Sidney Alexander

Buddha

Fat Buddha sat upon a shelf
and held his belly in his hands,
his squatting, involuted self
lay heavily upon the lands.

The lamas in procession wound
up rocky Tibet's temple hill,
and spun the prayer wheels round and round
and thus appeased fat Buddha's will.

Ascetic monks, their yellow skins
drawn taut about a withered jaw,
beat drums, ate straw, and slept on pins
and thus fulfilled fat Buddha's law.

They clanged the bronzen temple gongs,
they stood upon their shaven heads,
they warmed the chilly air with songs
of supplication to the dead.

Fat Buddha clapped his fourteen arms
(the symbol of fertility)
Ten thousand monks spun round their charms,
and starved of excess piety.

Philosophers of Buddha's haunch
sniffed incense rising from the bowl,
and traced in wrinkles of his paunch
the implications of the soul . . .

And then one day the angry poor
dismayed the metaphysic wits . . .
Fat Buddha hit the temple floor
and smashed his fourteen arms to bits!

Fat Buddha, Oh fat Buddha!
you are dead dead dead . . .
and Tse-Tsin with a polished hoe
is reaping corn instead. . . .

A Letter to My Wife

Loving in these times
is planting seeds upon the hillsides of volcanoes.

Have you not wakened at names
in sleep? mutilated shapes of heroes?

Does he lie coiled in caves
of your brain? war the sharer of your bed?

the prophecy of knives
you saw? the horrible dream of the greenish dead?

Suddenly at the kiss: laughter
over the coffee: pervading our privatest marrow:

up like a spar on water
remote from all but us: invading with sorrow—

the world plunges in fog:
no panic, darling, precariously cling.

Our rose is blooming at
the brink of imminent lava: yet petals sing.

The Egoist

Harmonia of stars and beat of bells
cannot impinge upon him—for he dwells
within the bubble of his ego: green
and bulbous microcosmos in a storm.

He sees the sprawling world through concave walls
distorted to an image of himself . . .
What? begging hands are pressing at the pane?
He readjusts his bloated purple tie.

What if they press? . . . He is secure, ensconced
against that meager froth and foam. Thus in
a temple he himself has blown, he sips
salvation with his cigarette and tea—

drops a fitful eucharist of ash,
mourns the pennies he has paid for sin,
blows some smoke against the rounded glass
to stain away the poor who peer within—

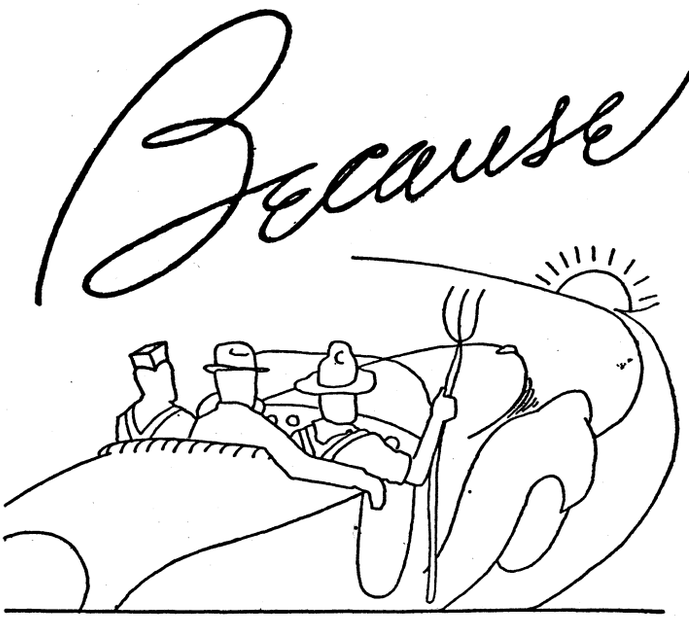
Wall Street—Dusk

The flawless sweeps of such white buildings
to the sun, congeal a logic
one with pueblos and with pyramids.

Labor long ago piled brick on brick—
like us, populated empty skies—
like us, swarmed up to the sun—and fell.

I think of Anselm with his dusty hair,
and see emerge above brown Trinity
the timeless syllogisms of the stars.

Yet, all your Ultimates are impotent to stay
the logic that shall burst these moneyed stones
and clamor for a sun that never was.



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I LIKE AMERICA, *by* **GRANVILLE HICKS,** *page 122*

BECAUSE WE LIKE AMERICA, New Masses will continue to help the members of the awakening middle class "examine candidly" their own position.

(As we did recently in *Liberal Arts and the Marginal Life*, by Motier Harris Fisher; *Who Is the Little Business Man?* by A. B. Magil.)

● We will continue to keep you informed of "the transformation that is now going on."

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NEW MASSES
Literary Section
EDITORS: MICHAEL GOLD, GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, RICHARD WRIGHT
NEW MASSES, JULY 12, 1938, VOL. XXVIII, NO. 3. NEW YORK, N. Y., IN TWO SECTIONS, OF WHICH THIS IS SECTION TWO

In Defense of a Term

Joshua Kunitz

NEW MASSES has received from the poet, Walter Lowenfels, the following letter, which raises problems and reflects attitudes of peculiar importance to the left-wing literary movement.

May I suggest that the term "proletarian literature" be laid on the table for a while and the term "people's literature" be used instead? The fact is that a good part of what is called "proletarian verse" has in practice no working-class audience or basic working-class appeal.

On examination we find a class of writers (Auden, Spender, Rukeyser, MacLeish, etc.) who represent the people's struggles for an audience whose base is the middle class, particularly in the intellectual and literary fields. To this a class of critical writing corresponds. Is it not necessary to state that such literature, as a class, has not yet extended its *base* to a people's *front* where it has a fundamental appeal to workers as well as to the middle class? Naturally, all progressives welcome writers whose audience is essentially middle class. Their literature competes favorably with that of Eliot, Cummings, and others for middle-class readers and is of great value in this respect. The competition still takes place, however, in a field where few workers tread. It is not to underestimate the important role the middle class plays to state that this role, to succeed, is based fundamentally on a working-class lead. In this respect, we do have in Hughes, Gold, Sinclair, and the class of writers they represent, a welding of social content into contemporary forms which is directed, basically, to workers, is priced for them, and—as with several recent books—is published for them. Such literature tends to have a middle-class following, too.

Despite the difficulty of following Mr. Lowenfels' reasoning (the formulations are somewhat inexact and confusing), his central idea is clear: Since a good part of what is called "proletarian literature" has in practice "no working-class audience or working-class appeal," let us banish (temporarily) from the critic's lexicon the term "proletarian literature" and substitute instead the term "people's literature." The examples adduced are rather unfortunate. For even if poets like Auden, Spender, Rukeyser, and MacLeish were ever unqualifiedly placed in the proletarian category (which I doubt), it would simply illustrate the misapplication of a term, not its inadequacy. Furthermore, by the author's own admission, these poets constitute only a "good part." But how about the rest, the part that does have a working-class audience and appeal—Langston Hughes, Michael Gold, Upton Sinclair, *et al.*? Well, says Lowenfels, in addition to their working-class audience, these writers are also read by the middle class, hence they can very well fall under the general heading of "people's literature."

Mr. Lowenfels' suggestion is, I believe, symptomatic of an incipient tendency which merits examination. I do not doubt his motives —they are excellent, a turning away from sectarianism. But his argument stems, it seems, from a fundamental misconception not only of the nature and function of the term "proletarian literature," but also of the meaning and purpose of the "democratic front."

First, as to "proletarian literature." It must be remembered that in all disciplines, including, of course, literary history and criticism, terms are adopted as aids toward observing, describing, classifying, and comprehending actual phenomena. The more nearly a term corresponds to reality the more useful it is as an instrument of knowledge. The question therefore is: Does the term "proletarian literature"—which posits the existence in this country of a proletariat, a proletarian attitude, and proletarian writers to express that attitude—describe a real phenomenon, or is it merely a product of the wishful thinking of a few leftist doctrinaires?

The facts are too obvious to need much elaboration. There certainly is in this country a class which, because of its distinctive origin, experience, and historical perspective—can be properly described as the proletariat. Its origin is contemporaneous with the birth of capitalism. Its experience includes collective work for wages in capitalistically owned plants, stark exploitation, fear of unemployment and actual unemployment, attempts at organization, winning and losing of strikes, poverty, hunger, lockouts, stool pigeons, picket lines, labor leaders and labor racketeers, etc. Its historical perspective is leadership in emancipating America from the throes of a decaying capitalism and the building in its stead of a cooperative Socialist commonwealth. That much most people on the left would agree on.

Unquestionably, too, this class, owing to its distinctive origin, experience, and historical perspective, is possessed of a distinctive, peculiarly working-class psychology and viewpoint. These, however, are rarely revealed in their fullest purity, except in periods of intensified class conflict. One reason is that the workers, in addition to being members of their class, are also many other things—they are, for instance, part of the animal kingdom, members of the human race, citizens of their country; and their psychology, therefore, is the resultant of many experiential elements of various degrees of universality. Another reason is that the workers, despite their unique class experience, are to a considerable extent under the psychological sway of social groups which are alien and even inimical to them, but which are in direct or indirect control of such agencies as the school, the press, the church, the theater, the cinema, the radio.

Still—and this is the point to remember in this connection—while proletarian psychology is the resultant of countless experiences and influences, sometimes conflicting and mutually exclusive, the distinctive proletarian character, the peculiar proletarian quality of the resultant is determined by the special experiences which are distinctive and peculiar to the working class. In the process of its development, through organization and struggle, the proletariat achieves ever greater psychological and ideological homogeneity within its ranks, and exerts increasing gravitational force on the progressive elements in other related classes—the impoverished farmers, the professionals, and the little-business men.

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The proletariat is thus the backbone of what we call the "democratic" front.

We are now coming to the crux of the matter. Marxists have always held that writers express the moods, attitudes, ideas, and aspirations of definite classes, generally and most effectively of those classes from which they spring or with which they have been associated for a long time. *A priori,* one would say that the American working class, like the working class in other countries, has produced its exponents in the realm of literature. Our labor unions, the early Socialist movement, the IWW, and now the Communist Party have all had their songsters, fictionists, and dramatists. It was not an accident that as early as 1901, the *Comrade,* a Socialist publication, used the phrase "proletarian poet" to describe working-class writers of verse. Floyd Dell and Mike Gold, in the old *Masses,* continued the tradition. And by 1935, Joseph Freeman, in introducing the anthology *Proletarian Literature in the United States,* could maintain without fear of serious contradiction that "In the past five years, American proletarian literature has made striking progress. The arguments against it are dying down in the fact of actual creative achievement. Life itself has settled the dispute for the most progressive minds of America."

In a sense, and rather contradictorily, Mr. Lowenfels himself admits all this when he refers to Hughes, Gold, Sinclair as "welding of new social content into contemporary forms which are directed, basically, to workers, is priced for them, and—as with several recent books—is published for them." One could mention dozens of American poets, novelists, dramatists, and short-story writers who, not less clearly than the authors mentioned by Mr. Lowenfels, charge their works with *specific* proletarian content. One might go all the way back to Jack London, Arturo Giovannitti, and John Reed. Moreover, as Freeman has pointed out, "the ideas and attitudes reflected in proletarian literature have already had a profound influence on American letters. The theater, the novel, poetry, and criticism have felt the impact of these invigorating ideas; even those writers who do not agree with us have abandoned the ivory tower and begun to grapple with basic American reality, with the social scene."

Obviously, then, the idea of applying the adjective "proletarian" to a special kind of literature arose not in response to a ukase from some extra-literary authority, but spontaneously, in the sphere of literature itself, in response to a keenly felt but not always clearly comprehended new creative trend. Some confusion, especially at first, was inevitable. The term was used loosely and indiscriminately. Some critics insisted that it applied only to such writing as dealt with the life of the working class. Others argued that this was too inclusive, for, conceivably, a novel about the working class might be written by someone from an inimical class with an inimical point of view—such a novel would not be expressing the attitude, experience, and aspiration of the working class—it would not be a proletarian novel. Though the subject matter would be the working class, the novel, properly speaking, would be the expression of the class to which the writer belonged or whose point of view he adopted. This led other critics to maintain that subject matter did not really count, that it was the point of view that was the ultimate criterion. A proletarian writer, it came generally to be accepted, was not restricted in his choice of subject matter: he might write about the workers, to be sure—indeed, he most likely would do just that—but he might also write about the bourgeoisie, or about the sixty families, or about love, or about the moon, or about anything at all in this vast universe. So long as he saw, felt, and treated those things as one whose ideology was proletarian and whose responses were of a proletarian conditioning, he was creating proletarian works.

But whichever view the reader takes, there is certainly no denying the fact that the term "proletarian literature" does describe a real phenomenon in contemporary American letters; that it does help the critic and literary scholar in their work of analysis, classification, and illumination; that it is consequently, from the point of view of the critics' needs, as useful and exact as literary terms can be, and that there is no good reason for its being discarded.

The argument that proletarian literature has a small working-class audience holds no water. The Bolshevik Party in old Russia had at the beginning of this century a very small following among the Russian workers. That did not mean that it was not the vanguard of the workers and that it did not express the yearning of the more class-conscious elements among them. It was the nucleus around which, when the time came, the entire working class and all the allied classes gathered to struggle for a better world. That large sections of the working class in this country are still backward and subject to alien influences is admitted. But that is all the more reason for holding the fort.

The critic who is also a Marxist should be especially insistent on preserving the term "proletarian literature"; *for his purpose is not only to know and describe the world, but also to change it.* The class which is in the vanguard of those who are working for such a change, the class actually destined to lead in effecting that change is—in the light of Marxist science—the proletariat. This change, however, is contingent on the growth of proletarian class-consciousness, on the development of the proletariat from a class "by itself" into a class "for itself." In this development, proletarian literature and art have played and will continue to play an increasingly important role.

Ideology not only reflects the external world, but also affects and modifies it. In the proletariat's striving toward self-definition and self-assertion, the ideological disciplines, including *all* the arts, have a direct function to perform—the heightening and intensification of proletarian class consciousness. Even such a term as "proletarian literature" used in our critical writing, by accentuating proletarian qualities and values, contributes considerably toward proletarian self-definition and self-assertion. It organizes, molds, and directs proletarian consciousness toward the struggle for Socialism.

Mr. Lowenfels' suggestion to substitute the term "people's literature" for "proletarian literature" may be traced to a misconceived notion as to what is meant by the *democratic front.* Now, if there is one thing the democratic front does not mean, it is the surrender of any of the ideological positions the proletariat has won in many years of struggle. It took years of bitter controversy for the concept and term "proletarian literature" to win acceptance in literary discussion. And now that even reviewers in the capitalist press have learned to employ that term, along comes this liquidationist proposal. Does the author of this letter for a moment imagine that the proletariat, by calling for a democratic front, intends to dissolve itself in that democratic front? If he does, he is laboring under a grave misapprehension. Indeed, it is just at the very moment when the proletariat emerges from its political torpor and draws to itself other economic and social strata interested in preserving and extending the people's democratic rights that the proletariat must exercise the greatest care to maintain the purity of its revolutionary ideals and Socialist aims.

When, for example, the Communist Party which is in the van of the proletariat, proffers its cooperation to the Catholic masses in the common struggle for democracy and against fascism, it does so not by surrendering Marxist materialism and its well established attitude to religion and the church, but by emphasizing those objectives which all the popular masses, be they Catholic, Jewish, Communist, Republican, or whatnot, have in common. Marxist materialism is and will remain the foundation of Communist ideology. And the closer the contact and collaboration with non-Marxists, the greater the need within the Communist ranks and in Communist theoretical writing for Marxian emphases. The fact that the Communist Party has so far only 75,000 members, and those not all workers, does not alter the fact that ideologically it expresses the urge of the most advanced workers toward a social order which would be of

benefit to all. Would Mr. Lowenfels suggest that the Communist Party, because of its present relative numerical weakness, give up its claim to being the party of the proletariat? He positively would not. Why then does he deem the present numerical weakness of the working-class audience for its own writers as sufficient reason for liquidating its literature altogether? Proletarian literature is the expression of the proletarian vanguard on the cultural front. It should be cherished and fostered. This does not mean that a term like "people's literature," or democratic literature, or progressive literature, has nothing to recommend it. On the contrary, there is a definite need for some such broad, inclusive term, which would be the literary analogue of the political people's front or democratic front. It would take in as wide a variety of progressive authors as is represented, say, in the League of American Writers. But the adoption of the broader designation does not in any way entail the rejection of the more specific one. The working class should relinquish nothing it has already won. To the broad stream of an American "people's" literature, the proletariat, openly and undisguisedly, will no doubt contribute a great and growing share of good works.

Pant Like a Dog

Harry Kapustin

"TOMORROW after work, positively," said Mike, "I'm going to see the doctor. These veins under my knees are swollen to beat the band."

"Have him look you all over," said Ada.

"What, pay him two bucks?"

"Certainly," said Ada.

"Holy mackerel," said Mike.

As soon as he got out he hurried over to the subway. The doctor certainly was funny, living up there around the hosiery and knitting mills. But he was a good doctor. None of those suckers. Mike used to see him once in a while when he came over to treat Ada's old lady for her practically permanent cough.

When Mike walked into the doctor's office, he saw three women sitting there.

"Boy," he thought, "three women, three hours." He picked up an old copy of the *Post,* looked at the ads, and threw it on the floor. His face got red and he put it back on the table. He hoped the women hadn't seen him making a fool of himself. A girl came out of the room and the three women went in at one crack. The doc took a peep out and saw Mike.

"You must be dying," he said, and closed the door.

About a half-hour later, the women came out. The one in the middle was crying.

After they were outside Mike thought he'd get even with the doctor. "What's the idea of hittin' a woman?" he said.

The doc didn't think he was funny.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

"Plenty," said Mike. "I got varicose veins." He started to roll up his pants leg.

"Never mind just yet," said the doc. "I'll give you a good once-over."

The doc put his head on Mike's chest and listened. He wrapped a sheet of rubber around Mike's arm and looked at the height of a fluid in a tube. He took a long look at Mike's throat.

"Your tonsils are diseased," he told Mike. "Let's see your legs now. Take off your pants."

Mike did. The doc looked.

"Stand on your feet much?" he asked.

"Nine hours a day," said Mike.

"Sit down once in a while," said the doc. "But that won't fix them. They need injections to close them up. But they can wait up to a year's time. The tonsils must come out."

"I don't like sitting on the floor," said Mike. But the doc wasn't listening.

"Shall I make an appointment for you with a good surgeon?" asked the doc.

"What's it gonna cost?" said Mike.

"Thirty-three to thirty-six dollars as far as I can make out."

"Goodby my suit and Ada's coat," said Mike.

"Well, you can have it done at a clinic for about six or seven dollars," said the doc, "but that would have to be on Wednesday only and I can make this for this or next Saturday so you'll have Sunday to rest over in."

"Yeh," said Mike. "Yeh."

"This looks like they broke down the walls between a lot of old houses and made a hospital of it," said Mike.

"Don't worry about that," said Ada as they went in.

"I'm Mike Phillips," said Mike to the girl at the desk.

"Who is your surgeon?" asked the girl.

"Snyder," said Mike.

"Well," said the girl, "I'll take you up to the room."

She took them up to the second floor and left them in a little room. Mike couldn't help giggling. Ada wanted to slap his face.

A nurse came in and said to Mike: "Take off your clothes." She came back in a few minutes and threw a pair of pajamas on the bed.

"They'll never fit me," said Mike. "I'm a big guy."

"Try them on," said the nurse.

Mike tried pulling the trousers on and they ripped. The nurse looked mad as hell. She brought him a slightly larger pair of pajamas.

"Be careful with these."

Mike slid them on gingerly. "How about bedroom slippers and a bathrobe?"

"We don't provide those," said the nurse.

"The doc told me not to bring anything," said Mike. He put his shoes on his bare feet. "Boy O Boy, the runaround is starting," he muttered.

"The doctor said to rest the hour before the operation is to begin," said Ada.

"Look," said Mike, "suppose you go home."

"No," said Ada.

"I feel like bustin' somebody in the nose."

"Forget it," said Ada.

"Well, will you go?" asked Mike.

Ada put on her coat. "Try to sleep a little," she said. She went out.

"I had to go to the doctor," muttered Mike. He soon fell asleep.

Somebody was shaking him. It was the doc.

"Ready?" asked the doc.

"No," said Mike, slipping into his shoes. "I feel like a cone of ice cream that fell down the sewer."

"Don't worry," said the doc. "You'll feel worse."

"Denks," said Mike. "Denks a lot. Glad to have met you."

Another doctor came in. He shook hands with Mike's doctor and they both washed their hands in the sink. Mike walked between them down the hall to a tiled room. He felt weak in the knees. Those damn varicose veins.

They sat him down in a chair that looked like a barber's chair. The other doctor sat down on a little stool in front of him and jammed his knees between Mike's. The nurse stuck a clamp on his mouth and it stayed open.

The surgeon stuck a hypodermic down each side of his throat. "Tell me when it starts to tingle," he said. Then he started telling Mike's doc about his good luck in renting his third floor, about his new car, and how his ten shares of Pennsy were doing.

Mike touched his sleeve. The surgeon looked at his watch and said, "I guess we're ready, aren't we?" He put a little lasso of wire down one side and turned it. Everything broke off. The surgeon put a tonsil in a pan. "Pant like a dog," he said. "It'll help you breathe." He put some cotton on the end of a stick and touched inside. He looked at the cotton. It was faintly pink. "Good," said the doc.

He then repeated on the other side. The nurse held the pan under Mike's mouth and the surgeon dropped the other tonsil in. Mike felt dizzy.

"Can you walk?" they asked.

Mike nodded. They walked him back to his room. Ada was sitting on the bed, crying. She jumped up when she saw him. Mike socked her softly under the chin and she started to laugh and cry at the same time. The nurse chased her out then.

The surgeon came in and took a look at his throat.

"Pant like a dog," thought Mike. "Holy mackerel, yes. It ain't the first time." He thought of those guys he saw sometimes on his way home from work in the summer making speeches on street corners. He wanted to get up and make that kind of speech too, that minute, but holy mackerel, he was in a hospital room, and he couldn't say a word and there wasn't anybody to hear him.

The nurse came around and put a rubber collar filled with ice around his neck. It felt good.

"Don't cough under any circumstances," she said. "That's the only dangerous part about the operation."

She put a pan beside the bed. "If you have to spit," she said, "lean over the side of the bed and drool into the pan." She went away.

Mike had a terrific desire to cough a great cough. He passed his hand over his forehead and sighed. He leaned over the side of the bed and let a fine trickle of spittle run down into the pan. Then all of a sudden, for no reason at all, he felt that big cockeyed muscle in his right arm.

Food for Americans

Jo Sinclair

When Arturo played his violin, his two hands built the music into a room in which he stood fulfilled among a thousand soft colors and sweet sensations. When Arturo played the violin, he was in life or in death, he knew not which, nor did he know anything with his body but the music upon it, and within it.

He had begun playing when he was seven, and now he was forty-five, and music was the same to him, the violin was the same precious thing to hold and to cajole, to listen to and be intolerably happy, listening. Then he had been in Italy, now he was in America, both lands the same to him, a room which had been made of colors and sounds, and he standing within the room, drawing the bow across the strings.

"Mister Castelli," Rosa said to him, "have you a fiddle, or have you a wife and two sons?" But her laughter was tender as she spoke, and he went on playing, the songs scurrying through the rooms, he standing, his simple, dark face withdrawn as it bent secretively over his moving hands.

One thing he possessed, and one thing he knew, and that was his music. For the rest, he was a simple man. At times he felt how stupid he was about things that men knew and liked, politics, news of all kinds, sports. But to make these things good to himself, he told himself that he was a simple man. In America, he had gone to the only thing he knew, and had got a job playing the violin in a cafe. He had no friends. He had no relations. He had a violin, and wanted no more.

"Mis-ter Castelli," Rosa said, laughing, "will you come to the table? Perhaps the fiddle is hungry now. A little spaghetti, and it will play so well!"

He had married. One day he had looked up from the violin in the cafe, and a smiling, plump woman had looked back. And she was merry and gay and lovely, the music like laughter in her eyes, and the laughter like music. And she was a mature woman, her body beautiful and ripe, her face smooth, and he was a mature man. She had been Italian, she had been Rosa, and they had fallen in love, and married. He had been a stranger, only his violin between him and the eyes of strangers; and she had smiled to him.

Rosa was another kind of violin to caress. She gave him two sons, and he named them Anthony and Carmello. They grew to the sound of a violin, and danced through the house to eternal music. He loved them passionately, but only when the violin was in his hands could he tell them how he loved, like music, with words of music.

For eighteen years Arturo Castelli lived in peace. He spoke English haltingly, and wrote a little, stumbling script, for he needed neither to play his violin. He read an Italian newspaper and puzzled through one of the American ones. For a living, he played his violin in cafes and in moving-picture houses, and at Italian weddings. For pleasure, he played his violin in the evenings, or he played chess with Rosa. She was a bad player, and he won invariably, at which they would laugh until they were breathless. Then Anthony and Carmello would go to bed, and he and Rosa would drink coffee in the kitchen. They did not talk a lot. Between them was a certain complete silence, which meant love.

He was a simple man. Gradually, slowly, his living was taken from him. He played as beautifully as ever, his violin was as tender, or fierce, or gay, but gradually each job was taken from him. One day the movie houses needed no music. One day this cafe closed its doors, and that cafe needed no music. One day, all Italian weddings were without music, and the brides and grooms walked silently to and from the altar.

Arturo was a simple man. He came home to Rosa and said, "I do not know what is wrong. No one wants music now."

"No one wants music?" She was shocked. "How can that be?"

"I do not know," he said, putting the violin down. "All I know is I can find no work with music."

He went into the city the next day, for the first time without his case swinging in one hand. He spoke with men, who thought him mad. "I will do anything," he told them. "I have not experience, but I am willing. I will labor with anyone."

There is nothing, they told him, and they looked at him as if he were mad.

At home, Rosa was silent. There was still food, skillfully cooked. The four of them ate, Arturo silent with his puzzlement. Still he played his violin in the evenings, and still the touch of it upon his hands was more than anything he knew.

Carmello and Anthony went to bed. Arturo sat with the newspapers, and read them closely. They would perhaps answer.

"Rosa," he said finally, "it seems the entire world is in a state of poverty. There is not enough work for men. You understand?"

She nodded her head. "That is why there is no music wanted now," she said.

"Yes," Arturo said. "In all the world there are people like us, who cannot work with the things they know best. So they have now what they call relief. The government lends money to the people until they can find work again."

"Yes," she said. "I have heard of relief. The women talk of it at the butcher's and at the grocery store. Many of them are already in it. Some are ashamed. Some are quarrelsome."

"Rosa," he said gravely, "we will have to borrow from the government until music is wanted again. You will not be ashamed?"

"If you are not ashamed," she said, "then I am not ashamed." He knew best always. He was the man. He was simple, and so he felt shame as he looked at her in the quiet kitchen. When a man had sons he should be able to get money for them with his own hands.

For a few months they were on relief. Then Arturo read aloud joyously of a new government thing called WPA. "Imagine," he said to Rosa, "a man will work at what he knows. The government will hire him. Imagine it."

"You will play your violin," she said. They looked at each other, breathless.

"Perhaps," he said. "I will do as they tell me. I will work, Rosa."

When finally he was given a WPA job, he was grateful to the point of coming home to an empty room in his house and weeping. No one had known what the relief checks had meant to him. Without naming it, he possessed a pride that shamed him continually before his violin and before his children. Before Rosa he was never ashamed.

He worked on the Musicians' Project in WPA. All day he copied old and obscure musical scores from books onto fresh, white paper.

"Why?" Rosa said.

"It is what they call historical value and research," he said. He was a little bewildered. "I work in the library with twenty other men. They, too, were musicians once. They are old now, and they talk of what was once, when they played."

"Why do you not join together and play music, all of you?"

"Perhaps that will come," he said. "Now we must follow instructions. There is a Miss Wilson, who tells us what to do. She is nice, but how can I tell her about playing? You know I do not speak the good English. She says to us all the time a job is a job."

"Well," Rosa said, "a job is a job. I will cook supper."

Arturo left her in the kitchen, and went into the front room. He took up his violin and began to play. He played of his fear, and of his disappointment. He played the twenty old musicians in the WPA, and he old among them, their hands scribbling notes onto paper, their hearts in past days. He played and played, the strings throbbing throughout the house until Rosa, in the kitchen, listening, put her hand upon the pain in her breast.

He was a simple man, and each day he rode in the trolley car to the library downtown. He checked in with the timekeeper, then went to the room and began, where he had left off the day before, to do the close, straining work. He listened to the talk among the men. He listened to talk of WPA, of politics and sports, of countries and Congress.

At five o'clock he checked out with the timekeeper and rode home in the trolley car. At home Rosa's kitchen smelled good, and Anthony was there, and Carmello was at a football game. Twice a month, the check from the government came in the mail. Rosa carefully bought food and clothes, and paid the rent.

Arturo played the violin. He stooped more over it. His eyes would strain and close as the first music came. The evening settled down to the tones under his hands, and Rosa sewing, the boys quiet somewhere. The evenings were as always, with music in the house along with his love for the three of them who listened. He sighed, and grew older, but he was not unhappy. If he was not permitted to play for his living, then he would play in the night. And if one day the world was ready for violins again, he would bring his violin. Meanwhile there was food and a house.

There came the morning when Miss Wilson, at the library, called him into her office.

He sat smiling nervously, his hands uneasy in his lap. "Now, Mr. Castelli," she said, "are you a citizen?"

He blinked, and thought hard. "Citizen?" he said.

"Yes. Have you your citizenship papers?"

Bewildered, he said, "Papers? What you mean? I live in America eighteen years. What are the papers?"

She explained. She told him that he was not an American because he had not taken out papers.

Arturo sat watching her, his mind slow and in pain over her words. He wanted to tell her that he was a simple man. He did not know about this citizenship. He knew music, and he knew how to work. He had lived here for so many years, he wanted to tell her. In this country had he married, and his sons had been born here. He had not known or thought of papers. He did not talk so good, he wanted to say, but in this country he was at home, in peace, and what more could a man do in any country to be a man?

"Haven't you even your first papers?" Miss Wilson said.

"No," he said, and sat hunched.

"I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Castelli," she said. "We have orders from Washington that only citizens will work on WPA. You see, we must give work to Americans first, and thus safeguard them. Aliens must look out for themselves, Mr. Castelli."

"I am American," he tried to tell her, but he was silent then, not knowing what else to say.

He walked home that day. The first terror had confused him, and he thought he would save the trolley fare. He staggered into the bright kitchen. "And so I am taken from work," he said. "The WPA has no room for Italians, they say. They say I do not belong in the country. It seems I have not a right paper, therefore I am not a citizen. How is this, Rosa? Do papers make a different man of one, so that he is of a country? What did I know of papers or politics? I was a musician."

"Hush, my dear one," she said. She fed him his supper, and poured him a glassful of wine. "Eat, my dearest one," she said. "You will know what to do."

Later, they sat in the kitchen and looked at each other. "Where are the boys?" he said.

"They are at a party, a school party in honor of the football team," she said.

He nodded his head, but she waited, tense in her chair. "What have we in the bank, Rosa?"

"Ten dollars," she said. "It is not a lot."

They sat silently in the almost dark kitchen. They could not see each other's eyes. At last she said, "We will go to the relief tomorrow, dear one?"

"Yes," he said. He thought he would play the violin, but it

seemed too much this evening. "Let us go for a walk," he said. They walked slowly and heavily through the streets. They were still with each other, their silence so gentle that Arturo wanted to weep, yet did not dare for fear of frightening her. He could think only of that day in the cafe when he had looked up and had suddenly seen her smile for the first time, and so young, so gay.

Their thickened, heavy bodies seemed deathly tired to them, and they turned toward home, still silent.

He went alone to the relief office. The man asked him so many questions Arturo felt dizzy. He tried to answer carefully, until the man said: "Oh, by the way, are you a citizen?"

Arturo felt a drum begin in his breast. "No," he said.

"No first papers?" the man said.

Arturo felt a violin begin to sob, the drum steady and ominous beneath it. "No papers," he said.

The man talked and talked. "You see," he said, "we haven't a great deal of money. It's fair this way, you understand. We must take care of our own citizens first. Desperately short of money. Awfully sorry. Citizens of America first, you know."

Arturo went home. He was not even afraid now. He was simply ashamed. "For relief, too, I need papers," he said.

Rosa made coffee. "Papers, to eat?" she said. "How is that?"

"It is the government says so," he told her. "We do not belong here. You are not worried? I will find work, Rosa. I am a strong man. The children will eat."

"I am not worried," she said softly. "Come, drink the coffee."

They both drank the coffee, then he went, still wordlessly, into the other room to play. He could not quite understand. He knew all was the same, and she was in the kitchen, listening, but it was not to be understood.

My poor, my Rosa, he thought. Why does she have to know a grief like this? But why? For what reason? Such shame as this I have never felt. But why? The boys have such a father. A brainless one!

Touching the violin, he felt a kind of pain he had never known. What was it, wrong or right? He had known that he must have this music, and that was all he had ever known. How had he made the mistake? My poor ones, he had to repeat to himself.

Yet the same power throbbed in his fingers as they lay upon the violin. The same love rose like a furious river in him, and the hum began in his breast.

There was this pain, new and anguished. There was this knowledge that he had failed as a husband and as a father. Yes, he had failed as a man. He knew that. Yet his fingers ached, and it was the same, the violin with him, and the knowledge, the music, the love, the same.

My poor, my poor, he grieved; and he played until Rosa felt, in her kitchen, that he would die under his burden of love.

For two weeks they ate sparingly, but enough. Each day Arturo went into the streets to look for work. There was none to be had. The faces of people began to seem the same to him, and he would come home to the faces of Carmello and Anthony, strangers both of them, their faces the same pale, dead flesh he met in the streets. Rosa was always the same, her face as familiar to him as the wood of the violin. They spoke less and less these days. Sometimes he would hear the boys talking with Rosa, and he would strain to hear those three voices, so strange to him now.

He was a simple man, and he knew what he had to do. For the two weeks, he searched quite blindly for work and for money. Each evening he would play the violin. He played with a kind of splendid fury, so that the boys and Rosa looked at each other in fear. He played for hours, growing stronger with the hours, and then he would go to bed. In the night, awake or in a dream, it seemed that his arms and hands moved; and it seemed to him that his flesh pulsed and throbbed all the night through, that his flesh was plucked by his own hands, and that it made that music he had always known.

But it was a temporary madness. One day he took the violin to a pawnshop, for he was a simple man and he knew he must feed the other three. It was a day of death for him, yet he came walking back calmly, and gave the money to Rosa.

He could not understand why Anthony and Carmello were weeping, and yet he could understand that he must not weep. Rosa was pale. "Come to the store with me," she begged, as if afraid.

He went with her, and carried back the meat and spaghetti and canned tomatoes and flour. He knew that she did not understand his renewed shame. He felt a shame so intense that he could hardly breathe. The violin, the music, his own hands; all of them he had betrayed because he was a simple man; and he had betrayed these three, who would be in a silent house now.

"Let us make supper," he called gaily, and Rosa baked the great loaves of bread. He himself cooked the spaghetti, and made the sauce carefully. Now and again he would lift his head quickly and nervously as if straining to hear some elusive sound. Then he would see Rosa's pale and anxious smile, he would see Carmello and Anthony staring at him. Then he would look down again to the sauce.

He knew that in a few weeks there would be no money again. The food would grow less and less in dishes on the table. Rosa would be whitefaced, her hands shaking a little. Carmello and Anthony would eat the little food silently, and go to bed. He himself would sit in a dark room, his hands gestured and shaped to the want of that one graceful form. Rosa would sit with him. They would wait, though there was nothing for which to wait. They would be silent, and gentle with each other, but they too would be hungry, and afraid. A few more days would go by. Then they would begin to starve, all of them. Now only he was starving, his hands shaped round the empty form, the silent and ghostly instrument. They would hunger. They would sicken. First Rosa, then the sons of his pride, then at last he himself, the strong and the proud and the musician; they would starve to death.

"Come," he called gently, "it is time. Let us eat."

* * *

Marginal

I margin twenty years between the moon's
Invading tide,
One sudden space within a chemist's glass,
A mirage wide.

Memorial snows drift fevers there beyond
An arctic brain,
Show, at touch of spring, long-limbed promises
Tactfully slain.

Though the undersurface mind pursue
Its weedy way,
The regenerate heart must ride to shore
Some surging day

And flower into faith, trekking no world
Its fathers made,
Having topped surrealist sands to gain
A barricade.

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN.

The Underground God

Murray Godwin

WHAT Loki may signify as a psychoanalytic symbol is not known to me. I should guess, though, that he might represent a tendency to be malicious, cunning, secretive, immature, ingenious, and irresponsible; an unconscious urge to retreat from the world into the womb, from the shelter of which one might work havoc with the designs of mature and mortal men. Socio-psychologically, I guess, he means something else again. Anyway, I have always liked the mean little crip.

The gods first came to my notice in Hawthorne's *Twice-told Tales,* but myths dealing with them did not interest me until, in a version of the Siegfried legend, I read how that hero had been undone by the craft and malice of Loki, the shunned, untiring, deformed little god who toiled at his forge under the hill. A few years ago I discovered that my sympathies were not with Siegfried, the hero, but with Loki, who wrought his mischief with the patience, keenness, and cunning of a changeling child. The gods of the Greeks and Romans seemed alabaster monuments to me, and Siegfried an antipathetic giant of alien muscle, prescribed emotions, and pompous brass. But I liked Loki, the hunchbacked smith who forged the javelin by which Siegfried was dispatched to a region more in keeping with his character, Valhalla.

As life has gone on, the figure of Loki has recurred to me in various connections. The biography of Charles Proteus Steinmetz is titled with Loki's name, and the choice, save in one respect, seems a right one. The subject was a hunchback who toiled and thought in the bowels of electrical science, amid the rolling smoke from his furnace of a cigar. He changed by his labors the system of electrical generation and distribution, leaving it to the Edisons to achieve surface triumphs in the electrical gadget field.

But Loki is universal, and not merely a handy figure for authors and artists. In fact, artists seem to avoid him, as though they were at one with the gods who shunned him or with the bards who imagined him shunned, at least, shut away in shadow, and condemned to toil. But in the folk legends of the Irish, Loki is multiplied, made a class of, in the leprechauns. I think he must be similarly dealt with in Teutonic legends of the same sort, for it is from this source that Disney's Seven Dwarfs are drawn. And here is the odd, maybe the crucial, point in all this: the dwarfs and leprechauns of folk legends are not malignant, but benign, just as Steinmetz was, differing sharply in this respect from the Loki of heroic legend.

Like Loki the leprechauns dwell below ground and toil there, among their oakroots, though at cobbling rather than at smithing; like him they are dwarfed—though (and this may be important) they are not deformed; they are dwarfed, perhaps, to fit their underground ways; and like him they are full of magic and mischief. Nonetheless, they are not malicious. They love to play their tricks on dowagers, shrews, and policemen, or on anyone who needs to be taken in a reef or two to make him less arrogant toward ordinary folk. But they are never malevolent, never aimlessly cruel or mean.

Probably it is not strange but it is a remarkable thing—a thing worth remark, one means—how one dwells in a world of one's symbols, whether chosen or imposed, or, more likely, both. The time came when I thought how much like Loki was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, who had toiled underground so many years, lighting the darkness of his oppressed homeland with the *Spark,* forging the weapons by which the vain masters under the crystal chandeliers of the empire were undone and overthrown. He was a little man, restless, patient, with an understanding of the world left unplumbed even by the light of his own acute analyses of what it was and was becoming, untiring, undeformed—undeformed, as though he were a folk figure of the Loki line. He was mischievous, too. Gamaliel Bradford found unfeeling malice in his laugh. But his laughter derived from a depth too deep for honest Bradford ever to sense its existence; and if he sensed it, he would not believe it, or would never have admitted it; no, his honesty would have cracked. The mischief that welled up in Lenin derived from his knowledge of the farcical disparity between capitalistic pretense and capitalistic performance. Many of us are aware of this disparity, it is true, but Vladimir Ilych had understood and absorbed so well his knowledge of it that, where one of us would write an editorial or article on a given example of it, he could not for the life of him do anything but chuckle, and then offer a prescription based on acceptance of the pretense—like Litvinov's suggestion, at the disarmament conference, that the nations disarm; and after that he was malicious enough to enjoy watching the pretenders perform—that is to say, jump, howl, and issue columns of vituperation against whoever had taken them at their word.

I came to think of Lenin as Loki. It was confusing. "Art," Nietzsche said, "is the metaphysical activity of man." Edwin Muir inquired in response: "But, in that case, what is metaphysics?" And, seeing my identification of the man Lenin with the smith god Loki, I had to say to myself: "*Life* is the metaphysical activity of man." But Lenin, to the Oyrots, Tajiks, Kazaks, Kirghiz, Turkomans, and other peoples—so long as they were people who worked for a living—was benign, as well as undeformed, like the leprechauns of Irish folk legend.

One day in a publisher's office, waiting for someone, I began curiously to inspect Lewis Mumford's *Technics and Civilization.* The author's caption on a picture of an early locomotive, which was bound with staves to aid insulation, to the effect that the engine represented had a wooden boiler, and his carefully developed theory to the effect that the key to capitalistic production was clocktime, and that it derived from the monastic practice of ringing bells to call the personnel to matins, nones, and vespers—these notions seemed merely ignorant and queer, respectively. But further on in the text the author set forth the theory that all the most repulsive features of our industrialism were devised underground. Our chief industrial ills, according to his belief, were conceived and born in what I think he called the "carboniferous" era. A notable example of the material sort was the steam engine, which had been applied first as a prime mover for a pump to keep coal mines clear of water. But Mr. Mumford went on, as I remember it, to disqualify the Soviet Union because it had gone in for building subways in Moscow. What hit me was the author's apparent revulsion toward the subsurface. It was almost as inclusive in its way as Mr. Girdler's antagonism toward the CIO. I didn't know what to think of my impressions. Here, it seemed to me, was another example of hatred toward Loki, the smith god, toiling, patient, cunning, underground, without motive, but by instinct undoing the heroes of the world of the gods—and going back to work. I had met with miners, briefly, on the job, at that time, and knew the perils of their work after a fashion (I did not know, I mean, of the blasts by one of which Jack Conroy's father was killed; but I knew slatefalls and cave-ins and the chance of TB or similar afflictions). I had chowed with them in a portable boarding house chocked on slopes of rust-red earth, too, and had

not met one of them, during a hasty inspection in the line of duty, whom I would not rather have been found dead with than with Mr. Mumford. That may seem like gratuitous viciousness, but it is true. I do not know any better yet.

Through the years these things accumulated with me, and, with the figure of Loki as a center, sapped and mined their way, radially, into my conception of the world.

My tendency to identify men with mythical figures, and to follow the trend of their thought into the region of myth, troubled me and sometimes distressed me. Yet it would not down. A couple of years ago I renewed acquaintance with a former officer in the Air Corps, who, I presently discovered, was quite as much attracted to myth as I was, and who understood the reason for it much more clearly. I fancy there was something of Loki in him, too. Once, spotting for an artillery brigade, he had ranged all the guns in the outfit on an enemy headquarters, soared patiently until the place disappeared in one beautiful blast of high-explosive hellfire, and then with a sigh of relief invited the hardworking leatherarses, by radio of course, in for a drink. When he landed, he found about half the brigade had lined up for liquor. Of course it didn't matter, to speak of, because its opponents were too busy hunting up a new complement of staff officers to bother serving their guns. He did not get court-martialed for this, but it seems that it was something not considered in good taste, and was not supposed to be done. He was also profoundly cunning of mind and hand. And it seems to me that whether he flew, drew, or built, he came always to a crisis where the Loki in him emerged from his cave to bomb some headquarters of pomposity out of existence. Then, relieved, he would laugh.

I got around, sooner or later, to Loki, in my conversations with him, and brought up the subject of the disparity between the malign character of the Siegfried legend and the benignity of the Irish dwarfs. Then there was the matter of deformity, too. My friend grew hilarious over my confusion.

"Hell!" he said. "Don't you know why Loki is deformed, shunned, and made to look like a congenital sonofabitch? It's because he represents the working class. All the aristocratic legends picture the ironworkers in the same way—Vulcan is lame, you remember. The predatory raiding and conquering tribes would knock off a peasant as soon as look at him, to intimidate the rest, and they despised in general people who worked for a living. But the ironworkers baffled them. They didn't dare to waste any of *them*. The ironworkers were their armorers, and their craft was taught in secret and was difficult to learn. The aristocracy hated them, feared them, and needed them at the same time. They couldn't get along without them, yet they couldn't 'take them into the family,' so to speak. The situation was unsolvable. It got under the hide of the masters and irritated them continually. They tried to compensate their fear and hatred in their myths. That is why they credit Loki with supernatural powers and craft, and at the same time segregate him and make him hateful and deformed. But of course the people's myths picture the Loki type differently. The Loki of the people is full of magic and mischief, true enough, but he is neither malignant nor crippled. The people appreciated him. The ironworker toiled for a living, you see, like all common folk, but the character of his craft made him perhaps the one worker whose rights the masters had to respect."

This explanation seemed to clear things up a good deal for me. I remembered reading somewhere that the great conquering peoples of Africa attached ironworkers to them, regarded them as a race apart, and blamed them for every wound made by the weapons they forged for the warriors. Presently a news story was published to the effect that native African officers in the Italian army, then invading Ethiopia, had to have their horses shod by Italian smiths, since none of their own people could work in iron. Further, they dealt with the smiths gingerly and remotely, quite evidently fearing that they might be enmeshed in the ironworkers' malicious, magic toils.

These are the notions that have clustered around Loki since my first reading of the Siegfried legend, in my own mind. They may be fragmentary, yet I think there is something of a clue in them that might lead to a rich vein, if one felt urged to mine for it, in the class interpretation of myth and folklore. I hope someone does.

Quiet and Safe

Len Zinberg

He went into a coffee pot and had two cups of coffee. He wanted a drink, but he knew that would only make him more nervous. He tried to read a paper, but couldn't get interested in it, and he just sat there and watched the clock. When it was eight-twenty he got up and took a cab. It would be all right now, the coppers would be there by this time. Those small-time punks wouldn't start nothing.

He stopped the cab on the far corner and looked down the block. The four pickets were there, but he didn't see the others, the ones that lounged against the wall. And still there was no cops! Those dirty bastards waiting to slug him, and there was no cops. Those saps, just hoping to smack him one, and they would hit him. He could feel the dull smacking sound of a fist on a jaw, on a soft eye, on a nose, on a soft stomach; a lot of fists landing on his face. You see the punch coming and you can't duck it and it comes, the fist getting larger and larger and you scream and it hits you and you don't pass out and more fists hit you and hit you.

As he wiped the sweat from his thin oval face, he saw the door of the building open and a cop came out. The scab thought, the sonofabitch must have been smoking in the hallway, not even looking out for me. Well, it was okay now, the bull was there. Only there was a half a block between him and the cop, and those other bastards might be in one of the doorways, waiting for him. They could beat the hell out of him before the cop could reach them. Cops never got anywheres fast. They could slug him ten or twenty times before the copper would even see him. And they would hit him! They wouldn't bother arguing with him again, they knew now he was a professional strikebreaker. They knew now all right. By God, it was a wonder the boss didn't send him some protection on the job. A couple of yeggs to handle the boys. But that would cost more, and his cut would be less. Fifteen bucks a day was all right. If he'd handle this job okay, the boss might make him a noble, even if it was a small job. But these saps, these damn fourteen-buck-a-week slobs, they were sore; the strike was on too long. How they'd like to slug him! The bastards, and they were all husky kids too.

He could ride up in the cab, that would burn the punks up; it was a good way of getting over that half a block. But when he turned to speak to the cabby, the driver was staring at him and he didn't like the way the driver looked. These damn cabbies, they were all tough babies and union men; this bastard might get

out of the car and haul him out and let him have it. He looked tough and he could slug him before anybody saw them; the cabby could beat hell out of him before the cop could come up, if he saw them.

The scab got out quickly and said lightly, "I guess it's time for my appointment. I got a business date up the block." But his voice shook and the cabby looked at him. He gave the cabby half a buck and told him to keep the change, and the cabby still looked at him and the scab began to tremble and he thought, here's where I get it! This bastard is going to hit me. I know it; he's going to slug me; but the driver just sneered and suddenly drove on.

He felt helpless and unprotected as the cab went away, there was nothing in front of him, nothing to hide behind. There was no one in sight except a couple of factory girls and a mailman. No sense walking with the factory kids, they would think he was on the make and the cop might pick him up. The mailman looked like a nice guy; heavy-set and middle-aged and a plain face. He was walking slowly down the street, stopping at each store to shove a few letters under the door. The scab thought, the postman is like an official, like a copper, they won't do nothing if I'm with him. They won't hit me. Not with an official around.

He sprinted across the street and walked rapidly till he was alongside the mailman. He said something about it being a nice day, and the postman nodded and stopped to put a letter in a door slot. The scab waited, watching the pickets and the cop ahead, and walked to the next doorway with the postman. The scab made some crack about the mail must go through and the mailman laughed and made a wisecrack, and the scab felt better. This guy was real friendly, he wouldn't let those bastards slug him. This guy was all right, he didn't know anything about him, he thought he was just a slob going to work.

They walked a few hundred feet down the block, and then the pickets saw him, but they didn't walk toward him. The cop wasn't even looking his way. He cursed the cop under his breath, and waited while the carrier shoved a letter under a door. They went on for another ten feet, and then one of the pickets, a beefy kid, left the line and started for him.

The scab yelled, "Copper!" and stood still, legs ready to run. The cop turned, saw him, and ran up and pushed the picket into the street. For a second he thought the picket was going to swing on the cop. The mailman was staring at the scab, his mouth open with surprise.

The scab ran over to the cop. "Don't let those bastards hit me! Watch them!" His voice was a little shrill with fright, his shirt was wet with cold sweat.

The cop said: "Nobody is going to hit you. Come on."

They walked slowly toward the door, the cop holding his stick firmly. The scab, without looking at them, could feel the pickets staring at him, could feel their hatred and hear their muttered curses.

Once inside the door he felt easier. The hell with these punks, he was getting more in one day than they hoped to get in a week. The saps, striking for fourteen a week, for pin money. Well, it was all over now, it would be all over till five o'clock. But it would be all right then, the boss always saw to it that there was a cop around when he left. Now he had nothing to do but read the papers and once in a while stack and unstack the boxes by the window—so the slobs would think the joint was running. And then that five and the ten at the end of the day; a couple of more weeks and he'd have a bank roll and then he'd hit south and play the horses.

The elevator finally came and they went in. A skinny young fellow ran the car, and he looked at the strikebreaker and didn't try to hide the hatred and contempt he felt. The scab saw the elevator boy open and shut his fist, and he thought: This slob belongs to a union, he'd crack me if he got the chance. He's thin, but he may be wiry and these strong thin guys pack a stiff punch. He'd slug me, but not with the cop here. I'm safe now. Nobody will slug me.

When they got to his floor, the elevator operator said, "The place is locked. The boss ain't here yet." His voice was cold and hard.

The cop and the scab got out and the scab said, "You wait here, with me."

"You giving me orders?"

"You ain't going to leave me here alone? Those bastards will sneak up the stairs and beat hell out of me. They'll hit me! I tell you, they'll slug me!"

The cop said, "Yeah?" and looked at him, as if he enjoyed watching him squirm. "Stop your damn crying. Nobody will touch you. I got to go down and phone in."

"Don't leave me!"

"Shut up. Nobody can come up without me seeing them downstairs. I got to phone in or the sarge will think I'm in a coffee pot. I'll be right back."

"They'll slug me!"

"Aw, shut up! They're just kids. And I'll be right back."

"They'll beat me!"

He tried to grab the cop as he stepped into the car, but the cop pushed him away and said, "Let go of me, you yellow crumb, or I'll break this damn club over your nut!"

"Listen," the scab began . . . and the elevator door slammed shut and he could hear them laughing as the car went down.

The scab pressed himself flat against the wall, and stood there and sweated. For a long time he stood like that, never moved, stood flat against the wall and sweated and listened.

But the stillness of the hall was comforting, and after a while he calmed down, somewhat. It was all right, it was quiet here, quiet and safe, and that bitch of a cop was downstairs. The punks were scared of the cop, but not too scared. And that stinking boss had to take his time getting here. But it was all right, the copper would be back any second now; nobody would slug him. Nobody would . . . the elevator was coming up again. It must be the copper. But it might be that sap driving the car, or he might have let a couple of the strikers up . . . they were coming up to beat him! There was no place to run, they would beat hell out of. . . . The car went by his floor and he could hear girls laughing. He let out his breath and sighed with relief. Nothing to get the jitters about. Just some factory dames that worked upstairs. Damn it, he was sweating like a pig—he should have taken a gun on the job. That would fix those punks. That would . . .

The stairway door at the end of the hall slowly swung open, the squeaking of the door cutting the thick silence of the hall. The scab froze against the wall, his body shaking, his heart beating loudly.

The door swung open all the way, and the mailman stepped out. The scab relaxed and went limp. It was okay, he was safe.

The postman came down the hall slowly, not seeing him, dropping his mail in front of the various doors.

The scab smiled and thought, hell of a noble I'll make. My first job alone and I'm nervous as a damn cat. And nothing to worry about—nobody has slugged me, nobody will. The copper will be up any second and the mailman is near me. Jesus, the way I'm always thinking about getting my nose busted, always thinking about getting socked. This was a cinch, these slobs won't touch me. I just got to act tough. They won't touch me. Fifteen a day for reading the papers.

The mailman was passing him and the scab grinned and said, "Hello, *pal*. Kind of . . . "

The postman swung from his knees as he turned, a heavy roundhouse blow that sent the scab crashing against the wall; then he slipped to the floor.

The mailman walked back to the door and down to the next floor. It was very still in the hallway. The scab lay there quietly, a slim trickle of blood running out of the side of his mouth and down over his broken jaw.

Fragments for America

Norman Rosten

Following are six cantos of a book-length poem dealing with the revolutionary tradition in American history, entitled *Fragments for America.*

XXXIII

WE TRAVELED so fast
we met ourselves coming back
we grew so fast that the real-estate agent put out
a sign: I rent sky space, best locations
available.
the inventor said: It's not invented yet but I'll
take your order now.
we talked big and flashed the big dollar everywhere,
stuck our e pluribus unum in capital letters
on everything that left the country
and at night everybody prayed: Dear God thank you
for the stock market, keep it high as long
as the stock market stays up we can go on
forever and bless U. S. Steel won't you God?
Amen.
we were in a great hurry to get there:
where that place was nobody knew.
we built the set-up so quick and high
she got top-heavy and started to wobble:
and the engineer yelled from the 99th floor: Run!
don't worry about me, I got a parachute—
and he came down in a petition of bankruptcy.
the architect on the 98th floor telegraphed: Run!
don't worry about me, I got an autogyro—
and he flew away to Havana liquidation.
the watchmen, in chorus from the roof: Run! don't worry
about us, we've got our million salted away—
and they floated down in safe-deposit boxes.

Run: not to the bank: it's closed!
not to the house: it's foreclosed!
not back to the job: you're fired!
not in the street: there are too many
to ask you why!

Run: north south east west
this is what's called a depression
we get them every once in a while
they say overproduction, sunspots, hell
we don't know why—
young man: listen to us, don't lose faith!
don't get scared, this is your big chance
find new frontiers!

XXXIV

go west young man westward into glory
into farthest meridians of these possessions
follow your ancestor signs along the road
follow his trail in white curved concrete
and make notes of the many remaining marvels.

O table-land rising into the Rockies!
I shall solemnly cross your colored plains:
I am Balboa discovering the Pacific again!
(my brother said:
watch the jails marching through Kansas
don't give your right name
smear the fingerprint if you're caught
better stay at home . . .)
The garage man in Chicago told me:
The West begins when you cross the Mississippi;
but I knew it when the nights were cleaner
where field changed color with the wind's turn
and rising at a bend
to the curved Dakota hill: eye's retina
holds a hundred miles in its landscape
with sky's blue tile over which surface
are engraved clouds, and the sudden bird!
(Into this scenic peace only silent trespassers
may enter; mail plane is poised high,
hardly disturbing ancient current of air.)

The sky of my fathers was the same
but not their earth! I thought westward
was purity, keeper of a pioneer wonder:
not these strange markers over field, over
the once heroic trails
Coca Cola
Watch the Fords go by
Chesterfields satisfy
Double feature
cities where commerce is neon in the night;
I fled each bruised town, searching for a
still untouched land, a risen Atlantis—
but always the colored neon met me,
flashed its terror across lonely plains!
Areas of beauty were already claimed
Keep off
Private property
O but the sky was forever the same,
the earth still real, dignity of people,
at evening there were forums in public squares;
always men with the common speech
using a language I remembered
in what ancient year . . .
Often I would see a face that reminded me . . .
followed me backward
backward into Time's memory
"Pardon me, mister, is your name . . . Boone?"
"No, you got the wrong guy, mister . . ."
I began to hear voices from the sky . . .
songs . . . I knew those songs . . .
One night Tom Paine came to me in sleep:
then I knew!

XXXV

I am immortal in Cheyenne!
My signature listed for the ages:
on the white sheet my fingerprints
are filed away in century ledgers!

(charge was vagrancy: the jail was cold)
and on the morning I checked out
I put my fingerprints with great care
on the offered record, talking loudly
my name address place of birth
Keep goin' west, buddy, stay out
of Wyoming . . .
and Utah
and Oregon
and California
In the space for religion I wrote:
American. And the jailer told me
"That ain't no religion,
what the hell are you anyway?"
I said "I'm a mixture—"
"Listen," he said, "stay out of Wyoming . . ."

I shall be found among ancient statistics:
my signature next to Balboa, shellacked,
preserved in city hall, cased in glass . . .
(I am never alone.
I have many ancestors.
I will survive with them.)

XLIII

we made the first train after midnight.
Joe said I could sleep this night and the night
after the next day, that's how I feel now: dead.

Joe slept. The others tried to play cards.
Branny pulled two mixed deals in a row, they argued.
Sitting at the window counting half-hours, I think:
time is swift in sleep: night makes it swift
wheels tick like a clock riding us into morning
rail by rail I am perhaps a representative
of the first continental congress with credential
having traveled very far for this vote . . .
Joe Joe wake up
Baltimore is past us long ago and the sun
is on the car window since 5:00. Washington is next—
Joe we got to set up the floats
it's a cold day, the sky is cold; it will take longer
and the parade starts at 9:00, 10:00 the latest;
all the congressmen will be there to see us march
they'll know what a WPA job means in winter.
We have plenty of songs ready . . .
this is the day we vote by voice . . .
like the Greeks used to do . . .
like they did in Boston long ago . . .
Joe I said wake up
it's morning
there's work to be done.

XLVIII

Those of the purer origin (with records to prove it!)
rage at infiltration: they prepare a percentage:
deport the aliens send them back
where they came from search the records . . .
All right, let's search the records!
Who are the pureblood Americans?
Who are these census-takers of stock?
Stand up, let the untainted show themselves!

No one dares come forward

This is the land of proud bastardry:
(O my fathers of mixed bloods here is
reverence!) What past is more holy
than our inter-hemisphere parentage!
Irish, Pole, Scotch, German, Jew,
after each: American: the linked vein:
their mark deep in our bone's center,
our growth from illegitimate names!

Bloods have been matched before our time
and I say this is the one impurity
will make us stronger!
Let us breed
love alone and loyalty in common danger,
devotion of courage to the spirit's waver
in a different land, whose body we are!
Lafayette, Pulaski: our first transfusion
shattering race! Through this we are
purer in eyesight, nerve, affection.
The meaning these names stand for
is ingredient in us: children receive
internationalism through the blind plasm.

and in Spain of this century
my brother returns from a strange land,
unhurt, and the family buys fresh wine.
"Sing us a Spanish song, talk in Spanish,"
answering, "I cannot sing very many words;
we spoke not by word but by belief,"
smiling at our bright questions:
"Tell me
about the United States, the CIO, and
President Roosevelt, tell me everything
for I am now part Spain returning home
and the Spaniard part in me naturally
wishes to know about the company he's in . . ."
Then we all laughed
and drank the wine. But at night, alone,
he showed me above the elbow, short scar,
"I am three pints Spanish blood. I carry
a people in my veins. I carry a blood
called democracy, given by an old miner.
It matches me well: the doc said corpuscles
but I know it is because of something deeper"
We sat and talked until midnight.
He told me simple stories of bravery:
(peasant who tried to stop an enemy plane
rising; ran cursing into the swift propeller
to stop it with his hands: the plane
rising with his blood spinning on propeller
the sun shining on the stained steel . . .)

I dreamed of this Asturian miner
whose blood my brother carried in his heart,
(in my dream the peasant's huge arm
patrolling his coastline, smashing propellers)
dreaming of transfusion to heroic dead
frozen on Himalayas or decayed in California valley . . .

We are not pure in blood
we are pure in the long deed
of history: the record of freedom

LII

Men of that private and lost generation
who prepared secretly their ways to die,
walking in darkness through this dream
breaking the skin to test for pain
you found no real blood in your wound!
You, Hart Crane, poet, wanderer

Who were the men of your long myth,
what real words did they speak, shall I
ever meet them alive on your Bridge?
Like lost swimmer you rose upward into
a land where people were strange to you:
the road of their history never cut your feet,
you never walked with their brave armies
nor suffered death in an actual victory.
What song did you carry in your mouth?
What serious hope did you write for men
in their tongue out of their suffering
for their children to praise and follow?

Men with blood too thin for hope,
rich only for the evening's love
facing no firing squad nor does the
ancestor voice come out of the sky
meeting you in death: I remember you
Hart Crane, lonely in the historic need
sinking in merciful level water
without fury or knowledge of disaster,
returned into sea's undefined unity,
dropped from the Bridge without war!
Annulled in death the individual dream
O weep for Adonais
he is dead
but I have survived!
O land your history is the good harvest
in my blood, my heart's strong nutrition:
your men spoke a language I knew, always
there were men to speak to, and songs!
O land I have traveled your high era
and these immigrant dead are real to me:
my immediate parents, once superb fighters,
solid marble of my faith, star of guidance!
(tell me where to go! I'll die!)
Prometheus
Samuel Adams
Paul Revere
Tom Paine
bringers of fire
I have seen them alive again!
I report these men as living!
Tom Paine writing pamphlets in Detroit, alive!
Jefferson jailed in California, but he is alive!
Paul Revere with the Dakota farmers—alive!
John Brown is reported in Arkansas—alive!
Daniel Shays once more in the Green Corn,
Sam Adams hunted in Southern cellars,
Ben Franklin in Pittsburgh foundries
all alive!
(tell me where to go! I'll die!)
freedom liberty
What are these words you take as a gift?
Where did the meaning come from?
How was it earned?
remember
you fought for it!
you ran on iron for it!
you dropped blood on the grass for it!
not wishing it but *WILL* for it!
I was there
and men from other lands were there too,
pullers of cannon, they stopped British blade
with their hand, their bodies our barricade!
these are the men who have walked across seas
our brothers of the great belief they are men
who meet death, as love, in the simple encounter.
Jail the traitors! I mean today's
non-fighters who rest on laurels
they never won, standing pat on a
world's fate, these hoarders of faith!
Mr. Congress, I want to introduce a bill
to take away a man's citizenship if
he doesn't pay for his background!
I don't want it if I can't earn it!
where must I go, Sam Adams, tell me:
Spain . . .
O my American snob
my comrade of the museum tradition
be very proud of your democracy,
parade it only on a finest holiday—
I say
if it's real and still works, then
let's see it work under fire, under
a man's hand and the heart's courage!
Christ but I'm tired of my national anthem
perfectly memorized for indoor recitation:
I want to chant it, march with it, alive
beneath its flag, sharing the meaning
in foreign translation: it's a world we're in!
(Our children under bombs our childbirth!)

Listen, you smooth lying diplomat
16-cylinder propaganda machine
the foreign policy purely of murder
plans for the holy roman empire
and that brownshirted murderer
all of you interlocking latitudes
imperialism like a crazy network
f.o.b. you got the world tied up
but
THIS IS ONE MARKET YOU DON'T CORNER!
we the people
we the people of town nation world
grip hands over mountain, relay the voice
fly shipments of courage over long seas
send short-wave testimonials of faith
through stratosphere, imperishable prayer
from our lips: O defend the body's waver
in a different land whose spirit we are!
Bunker Hill is now Madrid
Lincoln's name flies over new people
(repay the European debt remember
De Kalb, Pulaski, LaFayette remember
our suffering our blood in the snow)
David White, Bill Schultz, Irv Goff. . . .
the new men from our shores who
carry flame, clarity, in Time's profile
they march with belief in their eyes
walking into line of cannon lyrically
with poem shining on fixed bayonet
advancing in sunlight man's dream
Freedom
is no word: it is a movement of men,
their dying and the new men taking
the distance, staking advancement
by love knowledge unity,
O prophecy of my distant parents,
men of the single-shot rifle,
real at my side, your hand real:
see the myth walks across your land
across dangerous waters: there is
no death in history, time alone
does not erase a precious flag!
father, founder of life
give me the torch:
I pledge
ascend Bridge from dream into reality
with organized hope love's vision ahead
I climb
holding the lifeline!

Feathers Blowing

Hamlen Hunt

"ELL'RY," she said, softly. "I'm *so* thirsty. Will you go get me a drink of water, Ell'ry, please?"

"Sure, honey," he said. He sat on the edge of the bed and explored for his straw slippers. "Be right back."

She heard him go downstairs to the kitchen and open the ice-box where they kept bottles of water cooling all summer. He took so long, she fell asleep and woke, startled, to listen for some sound in the house to tell her where he was. Everything was quiet.

"Ell'ry!" she whispered.

Then she remembered. He had gone to get her a drink. How silly she was! In another second she would hear the ice-box door shut, and Ellery would be on his way back to her.

It seemed only an instant later that she was awake again. She thought there had been some noise outside, cars going by, or something else that should not have been heard at that hour in that place. She turned her pillow for coolness and wished Ellery would hurry. It seemed hours since he had gone downstairs. She moved over a little nearer Ellery's side of the bed and was almost asleep by the time he fastened her fingers around the cold glass.

The next thing Helen heard was the baby hitting the iron bars of her crib with her empty feeding-bottle. She sometimes varied this noise by adding a terrific wheezy sigh, sighing for all the neglected babies through the centuries. Helen got out of bed without waking her husband. He slept on his face, and every few minutes an inner spring seemed to expand, jerking out his arms and legs. Just as she got to the bedroom door, he jerked with extra violence and sat up.

"Jesus!" he cried. "Want to wake the whole town?"

"Why, Ell'ry!" Helen answered. "You've been dreamin', I guess. I'm just goin' in to take the baby up, is all."

She shivered a little in her dotted-swiss nightgown, and the soft curls swept across her shoulders suddenly.

"Guess so," Ellery said. He looked so absurd, his light hair tousled over his thin, brown face, his gray eyes staring ahead as he tried to remember the dream. Helen went over and sat beside him for a minute. "Bad dream," he said. Then he looked at her and smiled, it seemed deliberately. "Pretty lookin'" he said.

"What took you so long last night?" Helen asked, and his hand fastened hard on her shoulder.

"What you mean, honey?" he asked. His voice was very quiet, but she was conscious of his bitter grip on her shoulder.

"Gettin' me my drink. Seemed like hours before you came back."

Ellery laughed. "I wasn't gone two minutes. Just took a look out the door to see if I could see a star or maybe a raincloud and came right on upstairs."

"I guess it just seems long when you're off anywhere," Helen said and was glad his hand let go her shoulder and slid down her arm. "Better come back for a minute after you fix Janey," he said in her ear. "Better come back soon."

Because he wanted her back soon she turned to smile at him from the doorway. But he was lying with his face looking lean and grim against the whiteness of the bed, and his eyes were closed. Not as if he were sleeping.

It was just six-thirty by the time Janey was dried and fed and put into her play-pen with her menagerie of calico animals. That meant there was almost an hour and a half before they had to dress and go down to the shady back porch. Pomona always set out their breakfast table there, with the paper folded on Ellery's plate and the coffee pot set beside Helen's.

An hour and a half! she thought happily, closing the bedroom door, stopping to look out of the window. The morning-glories had sprung out already and their leaves barely stirred. The sky was cloudless and its pale blue would deepen all day long. It was going to be hot.

Ellery lay on his face again with his arms encircling the pillow, and his legs flared out. Helen waited for a few minutes before she slid her hand up under his loose pajama coat. Her hand was cooler, then as warm as, his back and she counted, "Rich man, poor man" down his spine. Still he slept, or did not wish to be wakened, so Helen got up and dressed in one of the linen dresses Pomona had ironed before she went home last night. Helen remembered her standing at the ironing-board, rubbing back and forth over the contrary linen pleats of half a dozen dresses, with sweat dripping down her pale yellow face. She kept looking at the clock, Helen remembered, though she had no fixed time for being through her work. When everything was done, she went home. That was the basis on which all the colored girls in town did housework.

"Got a date, Pomona?" Helen had asked gaily. "Somebody waitin' to walk you home?"

Pomona had smiled. She had small white teeth with spaces between so that her smile had a childish quality. But the oval of her face was not childish, nor the sudden depth of her gray-green eyes.

She had answered, "I got to meet my ma when I gets th'ough. She's down seein' my brother Henry."

Helen had said, "Is he still in jail for that trouble down at the mill?"

Henry had been in jail for a couple of weeks over some fight he had got into. He'd always been a big, quiet boy, but of course there was probably good reason for his being kept in jail.

The linen dress made a pleasant, cool sound as she went downstairs. Pomona was a slight girl, but she did as good work as any laundress Helen had ever had.

She stood on the porch for a minute, watching the last little patches of dampness left by the dew vanish from the boards. She glanced across the grass and laughed to see Janey bounce on her fat rump in greeting. Breakfast was still quite a long way off. She'd better get a bite to eat before her head began to ache. There were fresh figs in the ice-box, peaches, a bowl of strawberries left from yesterday's shortcake. It was hard to choose, but finally Helen bit into a big peach, feeling cool juice squirt between her teeth. Contentedly she closed the ice-box door, but as she turned to leave the pantry she saw a streak of blackness on the linoleum's green and yellow checks. It looked like India ink, or dye. No dirt was that black. Scraping at the dark streak which seemed indelible, she thought she must speak to Pomoña about going home when the floor wasn't clean.

She took a bowlful of bread crumbs for the chickens and a basket and shears for gathering flowers. This was something she loved to do early in the morning, walking slowly up and down the dirt paths, cutting a pale yellow rose, feeling for a long stem before she snipped, laying canterbury-bells beside roses in her basket, thinking how she would mix yellow and blue and

perhaps a little white in a deep blue bowl for the living-room table.

She dawdled over the flowers until she heard Pomona slapping the covers of the coal range into place, then went down to the chickens. She had no more to do with them than feed them now and again, so she was rather fond of them because they were white and had a false air of cleanliness. Their coop needed cleaning again; feathers were blowing through the wire fence and over the lawn. Thinking she would leave the empty feed-bowl in Ellery's tool shed, Helen tried the door, but it was locked. That wasn't unusual. Ellery's tools were valuable. Through the window she saw crumpled sheets on the worktable and thought Ellery should have spread them out if he wanted to keep dust off anything. She shook the door once more, impatiently, then left the bowl in the grass and went back to put the basket of flowers in the pantry until after breakfast.

"Good mornin', Pomona," she said pleasantly.

"Mornin'," Pomona answered shortly, and Helen looked at her, surprised that she should be sulky so early in the day. Usually she arrived all smiles and shiny clean gingham and it was not until late afternoon that gingham and smiles wilted silently.

"Somethin' wrong?" Helen asked. "Maybe you better get yourself a cup of coffee before you finish gettin' breakfas'. I had a peach myself."

"Thank you, Miz Reynolds," Pomona answered. "I don' want no coffee."

Helen glanced at her again. Pomona's pale yellow face had black patches of fatigue under her eyes, and her mouth looked swollen, as if she had bitten or bumped it. There were tiny marks under her lower lip and every few minutes a tear would fall down each cheek, slowly, as if it were the last of many and had no need to hurry.

"Why, Pomona!" Helen cried. "Somethin' *is* wrong!"

Pomona answered, "I got to hurry to get breakfas' on the table by eight."

"I'm sorry," Helen said. She was. She could not remember Pomona ever crying before, not even when she lost four dollars, her salary for the whole week. She laid her hand kindly on Pomona's thin shoulder, but Pomona twitched it off, pretending she must move the coffee that very minute.

"Well, anyway, Pomona," Helen said, a little sharply. "I wish you'd get at the pantry floor first thing. It's all over some black stuff."

Pomona wiped her hands on her sides as she walked toward the pantry.

"See those streaks?"

Pomona's bones seemed to stick out through the skin of her face and body, as if all the soft flesh were drawn inward in disgust. She stood looking down, licking the bloody places under her lip. Her tears stopped.

"I see 'em," she said.

"You'll have to scrub hard," Helen said. "It's awful thick stuff, whatever it is."

"Take more than scrubbin' to clean up *that*," Pomona said. "That's tar, Miz Reynolds."

"Oh, I suppose Mr. Reynolds must have carried it in from the car or somewhere," Helen said. "Maybe it wasn't there yesterday."

"It wa'n't there when I went home las' night," Pomona said. She looked at Helen with a queer brightness in her eyes that was almost like rage. Then she turned and slammed down the skillet for the bacon.

Breakfast was perfect, as usual—the melon cold and pink, the coffee dark and hot, the bacon brittle and melting.

"I don' know what's the matter with Pomona this mornin'," Helen told Ellery. "She came to work cryin' an' she seems all out of sorts."

"She ain't sassy, is she?" Ellery demanded. "'Cause if she is——"

"Ell'ry!" Helen said, scandalized. "You talk like you had a whip handy."

Ellery's mouth straightened out and his lean face seemed carved of distaste. "Her brother Henry got dragged out of jail las' night," he said. "Maybe that's on her mind."

He laid his spoon beside his unscarred melon and unfolded the paper so Helen saw the headlines.

"NEW KU KLUX DEFENDS LAW AND ORDER," said the headline. In smaller type it added, "Henry Jackson, Negro, Taken from Jail Last Night . . ."

"What did Henry *do* so bad?" Helen cried. "I thought it was jus' some fight."

"More than jus' plain fight," Ellery explained. "He was mixed up in all that strike business. Plenty of people are pretty sore, and las' night Henry got himself run out of town. Lucky. He might have got worse."

He passed his cup, his lean fingers flat across the delicate gold handle. "Coffee, honey," he said. "Don' you worry none—Henry got what was comin' to him an' a lot of other uppity niggers. He got a little tar an' feathers, an' kep' makin' so much noise they had to beat him up a little. He won't be 'round here for a while."

"Sh," Helen said. "Pomona's comin' out."

Ellery left the table before hot bacon arrived. "Don' wan' no more to eat," he said. "Got some business in Centerville—want to come along?"

"No, honey, thanks," Helen said. "Too hot."

After he had gone, she picked up the paper and folded the headlines out of sight. When she went indoors, the kitchen was very quiet. Butterflies slept on the air over the garden; little Janey lay and sucked her thumb in the shade. When Pomona came in from the porch with the dishes, Helen decided it would be better to say something right off and have it out of the way.

"I'm sorry about Henry," Helen said. "You mus' be feelin' real bad."

"Henry was my oldes' brother," Pomona said. "It don' look like he's gonna live much longer—maybe not even today."

She looked at Helen and again her eyes had that brightness like rage, though her voice was quiet enough.

"Guess some folks is feelin' right proud of they work this mornin'," she said.

She squatted down by the streaks on the pantry floor, and scrubbed at them with turpentine on a rag.

"No law-abidin', no *decent* folks," Helen said, "hold with doin' like las' night—some no-account fellers maybe got mad at Henry——"

Pomona stood up. "Yeah," she said, but the agreement had all the quality of an insult. Helen thought Ellery had better speak to Pomona. When the girl closed the ice-box with a familiar click, Helen suddenly found herself thinking about the night, with Ellery gone so long getting her a drink of cold water. She remembered his saying he had looked outdoors for a minute, and then, curiously, remembered black streaks on the floor and chicken feathers blowing over the lawn.

She lifted the flowers out of the basket, pushing their stems down into water. She wished she had the aluminum feed-bowl back so she could set the flowers in it for a while, but it was way down by the tool shed. The tool shed that was locked to keep anyone from disturbing tools only half covered with bunched-up sheets.

Pomona banged something else into the ice-box, and at the click of the door, Helen dropped her shears onto the floor with a clatter loud enough to kill the first sound. She didn't want to hear it again. It kept reminding her of Ellery and something wrong about last night that she didn't want to understand. There were half a dozen things whirling in her mind and she must keep them from touching, whirling into a pattern she could understand. Cars in the night, and chicken feathers and—but not Ellery! It couldn't be Ellery!

"Pomona!" she cried suddenly. "You mus' be wanted home today. Why don' you leave right after lunch, or as soon as your ironin's done. I can manage supper and putting the baby to bed this once, I guess."

Pomona looked at her so queerly, Helen wished she would get out of the house, get out of her sight before something about Pomona's smile made her understand something she must not know.

"Thank you, Miz Reynolds," Pomona said, still smiling. Helen had the feeling that she must do more to bribe understanding away from her mind. Pomona wouldn't accept the day off, her understanding wouldn't let that be enough to make her forget about the feathers blowing over the lawn. Something else must be done! Something for Henry.

"An' take some flowers home with you," Helen said, wildly, almost pleadingly. "Take all you want, Pomona."

"Thanks," Pomona said, not moving. "I guess we don' need none of your flowers, Miz Reynolds."

* * *

Mr. Wilson in Agony

What shall a man believe in?
Said Mr. Wilson.
We are not young and have responsibilities
We have gone to bed with Life
And Life sometimes exacts from its lovers harsh penalties:
Cruelty, injustice, misrepresentation, slander.
Now when the hatreds of men smoke the turning world
When Justice goes outlawed, stripped to her skin, and blind
When the certain risks are balanced only by the uncertain good
More than ever must we keep that shining instrument
Efficient as a surgeon's tool.
I refer, said Mr. Wilson,
To the trained and sceptical mind.

It is no longer a question of blind faith
Said Mr. Wilson.
Flags are fine for fools and they follow drums
But truth is far from the paid orator in the square
We have seen ourselves surrounded by factions and intrigues
We have seen corruption climbing everywhere
How shall we know the false from what is true?
How shall the shot answer their accusations from the grave?
Do not confuse the ideal with the ambition
Nor assume that what has happened to them cannot happen to you
Power is dangerous although in friendly hands,
Said Mr. Wilson,
Friendship is dangerous when friendship commands.
To shut the mind up in a voluntary cell
Said Mr. Wilson,
To accept the verdict when it speaks with guns,
I am convinced only the world waltzes with destruction,
The popularity of murder and how the will corrupts.
The fathers dream back on a world of horses
But can we be certain we can depend on the sons?
I am no peasant though I sometimes envy that stolid mind
I am no ditch-digger though I might have been a happier man
I am what unfortunately I am
Said Mr. Wilson,
A man who writes and makes his living as he can.

This then is our world and the men we are
Said Mr. Wilson.
If I shave there in the mirror is the unreal face
Who fathered us and made us what we are?
I think sometimes we are a doomed and outlived race
A people that has seen its glory and waits to die
Strangely sick with something out of time.
Perhaps we are too much part of the evil that has been done,
Too guilty of the past, too implicated in the crime.
But when what's been done begins to be undone
Begins to be undone and as it changes seems
Not what we imagined in our private calculations and our dreams
Then if I survive or if I change it will be as one
Said Mr. Wilson
Who has seen one life end, another life begun.

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