

MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE



3 7010 00260736 0

DWS Keyner

Reflections

R

MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE

Number Three

Spring 1964

archives

N
832
R44

964
3

PROPERTY OF MURKELL LIBRARY
MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE
MARSHALL, MO 65340

SPONSORED BY

The English Department

DR. GRACE D. YERBURY Professor of English

MRS. MARGARET McANINCH, Assistant Professor of English
and Classics.

MR. JOHN McCALLUM Assistant Professor of English

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A BRIGHT BOY—Nanese Arnold.....	1
THE FEMININE ZENITH—Robert C. Sedlacek.....	2
BUDDY BOY—Hans Rettig.....	3
BALLAD OF YE BAIT—Author Unknown.....	7
LIKE A FAWN—Susan Moore.....	8
THE PLEDGE—David Perkins.....	9
PARSQUE EST MEMINISSE DOLORIS—Nancy Baxter.....	13
SONNET—Nancy Baxter.....	13
THREE POEMS—Jim Mueller.....	14
CAT CALL—Susan Moore.....	15
WAITING—Karen Tyler.....	16
THE ECLIPSE—Art Van Wart.....	17
HAIKU—Barbara Dritt.....	18
HAIKU—Judy Blatt.....	18
HAIKU—Teri Bock.....	18
GHOST LIGHT—Judy Blatt.....	19
QUEST—Henry Stecker.....	19
AS SIRENS WAIL—Barbara Dritt.....	19
“PERNE IN A GYRE”—Ron Fenton.....	20
BIG STEVE’S REQUIEM—David Scudder.....	20
AND THEN THERE WAS ONE—Richard Nelson.....	21
HELL ON EARTH—Susan Moore.....	25
RAIN—Richard Nelson.....	30
SERENADE—Henry Stecker.....	30
THE SAFETY PIN—David Scudder.....	31
SOMETHING BAD—Henry Stecker.....	35
WHERE EVERYTHING IS SWEET—Nancy Baxter.....	42
AS WILLY LAUGHED—Ron Brink.....	43

TECHNICAL DETAILS.....	Dr. Grace Yerbury assisted by Mr. John McCallum
COVER DESIGN.....	Mr. Vernon Nester

A BRIGHT BOY

By Nanese Arnold

"John is a bright boy." That's what they always told me. "John may swim in the creek, but you mustn't because you may drown." That was what they said because John was a bright boy. Maybe was sickly and Tod was too young, and Kemp was too old—that's what they said. Me, I was a girl and that was enough.

At first there was just Kemp, and then there was Maybe, and then there was John, and finally Tod. I was there, too—sometime. Nobody knows and nobody cares because I am just a girl and that is enough.

Then we were children, playing with our toys, all but Maybe because he was sickly. Kemp had a train and when you wound it up the spring would jerk and the train would race around the track and come back to where it had started, which was by the piney tree. Tod had no toys because he was too young, no toys but a teddybear without any eyes. John just played with books which he liked to read from cover to cover—but that was because he was so bright. And me, I had a dolly, but that didn't matter because I was a girl and that was enough.

When Kemp got as big as I am now, Papa bought him a horse, and we named him Charlie. Charlie was big, and strong, and sometimes mean. And then one day it rained and Charlie slipped in the mud and Kemp was dead. So there was only little Tod, and sickly Maybe, and John, who was Mama's "right arm," and Papa's "big man now" because he was so bright. I was there, too, but that didn't matter because I was only a girl and that was enough.

Once, in the winter, it snowed and snowed. The snow was so deep that it buried the skating pond and the corn crib. We wanted to go skating, but Mama said, "No, only John." Because he was a bright boy. That was the year that Maybe died. I didn't know why because I was just a girl and that was enough.

Tod grew and grew. Then John went away to school, far, far away. Tod grew too big for tag, and cricket, and pogo. He became a soldier and went away to fight for the South. The South didn't win and Tod didn't come home. No, never. But John did, because he was bright. I was home, too. Only nobody cared because I was only a girl and that was enough.

So there was just John. Mama's dear John. Papa's dear John. Home from school with books learned in his head; he read all the books all the time. That was our John. Then John went swimming and they brought him home in a blanket all wrapped up and still. Poor, bright John. Poor dear John. He was bright; he was dead. He was so good to everyone, everyone but me, because I was a girl and that was enough.

THE FEMININE ZENITH

The solemn sacred words
Of ancient magic ebb and flow
Beneath the triumph heights
Of Love and Beauty
On this day.

The chaotic frenzy
Of mixed emotion
Will not calm, should not calm.
All dizzying rapture
Of an erstwhile girlhood
Is wrought into peloric culmination
On this day.

No other hour,
In an entire life
Made up of hours,
Will ever be the same.
Ten thousand thrills
Of a life together
Will come; but they
May never hope to equal
One small particle
Of ecstasy felt
On this day.

Robert C. Sedlacek

BUDDY-BOY

By Hans Rettig

Allen was lying on the rustic bed of his Greenwich Village apartment, staring at the beloved art prints that decorated the walls. The bed began to sway, and the prints stared at him in a hideous fashion; even the five-dollar replica of the Buddha became a threat. Probably the most unbearable sight was seeing his parents' pictures hanging so arrogantly and defiantly next to Salvador Dali's "Vorahnung des Burgerkrieges," his pride and joy. The stark, stupid reality of his mother and father next to the sweeping beauty of Dali's truth in print made him for a fleeting second think that they were the sole reason for the nausea torturing his body. He had purposely placed his parents' pictures there to contrast his thoughts with theirs and maybe somehow obliterate the tormenting memory. Spinning, whirling, thrashing at an ever increasing pace, he gasped for breath, and then he heard a step outside the door.

From the light-footed and effortless movement, he guessed that it was his good friend Ernie coming to entertain him with some of his abstract ideas on the supremacy of the Negro in Africa, or perhaps the Negro's future in America. The conversation would start off at a slow, lighthearted pace until the wine was gone, when languor would be exchanged for vehemence. Just the thought of wine turned Allen's stomach. No more! Not at least for awhile.

Ernie walked in, took a quick glance around the room whose usual neatness had modulated to absolute mayhem. "Christ, Allen, what the hell gives with you?" His tone of voice was not altogether inquisitive but rather had an undertone of irritation.

"Feeling kind of sick, Ernie, probably the flu."

"Flu?" The answer irritated him; the condition of the room plus the overpowering smell of whisky warranted a better answer than the flu. But if Allen did not want to discuss the matter, it was perfectly all right with Ernie. "Listen, Allen," he said, drawing up a chair and seating himself by the bed, "why don't you straighten up a bit and come to the Johnsons' party with me? You know the last one was absolutely a sensation."

"I don't think it was."

Ernie felt compassion for this estranged, poor-rich guy. The obvious sadness and restlessness in his eyes were the primary reasons that drew him. After having gotten to know him better and learning the reasons for the sadness, Ernie had felt

obligated to guide him. And it amused Allen to think that Ernie, a Negro, should show him the correct way of dealing with society. But eventually, the seriousness of Ernie's determination had persuaded Allen that Ernie, if anybody, could "guide him."

The question of quitting college had long plagued Allen. He saw no purpose in attending, no reason except to satisfy his socially conscious parents. This did not seem to be reason enough to sacrifice four years to hard work, when one could be out seeing the world and satisfying one's inner urges. The beauty of nature plus the writings of Zen would be ample substitute for the monetary and social position that a college education might give him.

"The party, Allen, what about the party?" There was determination in Ernie's voice. It was high time to break Allen away from the reclusive world he was creating for himself.

"All right, for Christ sake! All right! Just don't rush me! That's what's the matter with people. They have to get everything done in a rush and when they finish they come to realize that they haven't accomplished anything."

"Might I remind you, Al, that at least these people you are speaking so harshly about are attempting to do something? Nothing spectacular, always, of course. But they are not living in a world of stagnation and idle dreams."

Allen did not reply. He was too wrapped up in his miseries to be able to give philosophical thoughts his usual sober attention. "Read that travelog on the beauty of the Himalayas, would you? I'll get ready."

Out of courtesy to his friend, Ernie did exactly that, but he continued to scan the untidy room. He felt a lump in his throat every time he looked up at the picture of Allen's parents next to Dali's painting. "Are you ready to leave, Allen?" he asked, seeing his friend reach into the closet for his overcoat.

The night was cold, with the usual dull, sluggish atmosphere of the city in winter. There was a slightly obnoxious fetor in the air, probably coming from an inadequate drainage system. They missed the express, and had to be satisfied with the local. It was a hectic ride, with forty anxious people all tightly crammed into one car.

When they arrived at the party, it was already in high gear. The couples were dancing to the rambunctious sound of a 6-piece band that the host had been fortunate enough to get on short notice. When Ernie and Allen walked in, they were greeted by Dave Johnson, a bubbling streak of fire, whom nobody but the biology professor could extinguish with his infamous unknowns.

"It's about time you guys made it! Everybody is here,

even Chuck Thomas. You remember him, Allen? He was the one that quit Hunter last year. I think he said something about going to California, didn't he?"

"Yes. He was looking for inspiration to complete his future. Thomas had the right idea. If you get bored to tears or sick of one situation, you have to move on to better grounds."

Johnson left the pair standing there, concentrating again on making himself conspicuous among the other guests. Allen began to be bored right away.

"Well, Ernie, you talked me into coming to this thing. How about finding us something to do?"

"Sure, let's walk around . . . Hey, there's Von Thaden!" They clumsily made their way between the dancing couples and half drunks who had been taking advantage of the free drinks that were being so generously handed out.

"Bob!"

"Ernie! Buddy-boy! How the hell are you?"

"Fine, just fine!"

"Say, Al, hear you're going to quit college to climb the ant hills of Africa. Or was it to discover the mating habits of the panda?"

Allen turned a crimson red. He had never been made a joke of before, nor had he ever been referred to as "buddy-boy."

"What's the matter, buddy-boy? That's the price you'll have to pay for being a non-conformist, or whatever in hell you're supposed to be. Is the correct word beatnick?"

Allen would have given him a defiant answer but there was no point in doing that. He knew they couldn't realize how he felt. Ernie noticed Allen's change of complexion; he did his best to suppress the booming laugh he was capable of producing.

They continued to walk among the guests, taking an occasional sip from their drinks. When Ernie found an old flame whom he had dropped several months ago, he apologized to Allen for having to leave him. The biological urge was stronger than the best of friendships, Allen knew. He stood near the liquor cabinet for several minutes, and watched the people go through their stupid twisting and shacking gyrations. He could not get over the feeling of loneliness and helplessness. Nobody seemed to be paying any attention to him. "Surely they don't condemn me for my intentions of quitting college," he

muttered to himself. Then he laughed. "I should give a damn what the hell they think." He purposely let out a belch to prove to himself that he could not care less what people thought of him. But he did care, and for once in his life, this utter isolation from peers that he had been with so long was taking its effect.

Ernie returned from his girl. Beads of sweat and the big smile on his face were evidence enough that he had thoroughly enjoyed himself. "Well, Allen, ready to leave?"

"Yes! Let's get out of here. I don't care for the company any more."

After making the customary gesticulations for departure, they started for their overcoats. To their amazement, they saw two legs projecting beneath several coats that had dropped to the floor. They stood for several moments watching the legs. Von Thaden came over and announced triumphantly that they were the legs of Chuck Thomas, two-bit music writer who had been aimlessly wandering in order to find what he called "inspiration."

"Ja, buddy-boy, that's Chuck Thomas! Doesn't he look pretty with those legs sticking out of holey shoes while he is eyeing us so arrogantly? He left for California, in case you didn't know it. Thought college was a drag his parents were dictating for him! Thought that school was thwarting the innate qualities he possessed. Look at the slob, buddy-boy. Isn't he a sight? Have fun with your pandas." Von Thaden walked off with the slow, conceited step he had perfected so well.

"Bastard!" Allen spat out the word, and stared as though hypnotized at those retreating shoes. "Bastard!" he repeated, and then Ernie was at his side.

"I guess it's about time for us to part company," Ernie suggested gently.

Allen did not hear a word. He picked up his coat and walked into the coolness of the night. Ernie followed more leisurely, taking the left turn at the corner and watching his friend turn right. He knew Allen had a lot to think about and he was glad of it. Perhaps when he got back to the apartment he would take those paintings off the wall.

BALLAD OF YE BAIT

My office is up with the relics and birds,
And nobody mounts so high,
Unless they are searching for bromides or snakes,
Or desire to climb to the sky.

The staircase is wooden, creaky, and wide,
And fossiles define the gloom;
Only test tubes refract the light,
To menace and with a doom.

Oh, never ask to meet who is there,
Or search for signs of a crowd,
Going too near can only mean
Contact with lint of a shroud.

Oh, it's way upstairs with the relics and birds;
Take care, it is hgh, so high!
There are pigeons and passions, formaldehyde, snakes,
And an English office! Oh, my!

—Author Unknown.

LIKE A FAWN

Like a fawn entering a new forest,
He came into my life.
At first my nostrils shrank from him
As at a hillside of sourweeds.
Then he showed me sweating boys who let wild gazes
Crawl toward me,
And I hugged him close.
As when a hot breeze
Comes mistakenly in February,
He came,
Tall,
Like a god,
Bronze-colored
Like a god, too.
He spoke in cello tones
His name.
I could not look up;
I dared not.
I stumbled and soared
Like a kite caught in a crazy current
Toward his heart.
Love is not joy
But fear!
Soon each morning became the stillbirth
Of an evening's toil.
Slowly,
Pink shame
Flecked my childish soul,
Until my misery for him
Was gone—
Gone as brittle posture
Leaves a relaxed fawn.

—Susan Moore.

THE PLEDGE

By David Perkins

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

SOSIPOLIS—An Ancient Hebraic Sage
APODIS—The Money Lender
THESEUS—The City's Leading Athlete
ARIADNE—Young Woman of Wealth
ARETHUSA—Young Man
GALATEA—Young Woman
PROMETHEUS—A Student

TIME: Any time related to
CA 200 B.C., Greece

PLACE: A deserted court-
yard showing the
cell of a money
lender, the medita-
tive seat of a sage,
and the gateway to
reality.

SOSIPOLIS: (from the middle of the stage)
How lonely this city full of people!
(looking off into the distance)
Is it nothing to you who pass by?
(Sosipolis turns and with his head bowed seats himself on the
bench to the left. Apodis enters from the left. He brushes by
Sosipolis.)
APODIS: (sarcastically)
So a new day begins, Sosipolis.
What? Nothing to say?
(He unlocks the gate to his cell at the right, and enters. He
brings out a small table and chair, and places them to the right
of the gateway.)
Into my quiet, dirty cell from the busy sunshine
of the street, men enter out of what they call
experience. My merchandise is tarnished, dirty
figurines, which no longer hold the luster of
life. I sit here quietly, the winner, always. I can
afford polite waiting.
(He gets up and walks to the gateway. Theseus and Ariadne walk
by. They glance toward him, but continue on their way.)
They never see me, never look.
Wrapped up in themselves!
I watch them enter my shop.
They offer me their security, morals, minds,
bodies, memories, hopes for the future . . .
for whatever I have here.
(He picks up a wax figurine and holds it for a
moment.)
This convenient little tablet—
It is a pass to fulfillment.
(He reaches out his hands, holding the figurine
before him)
Hold it carefully, or never reclaim the pawn!
(He turns musingly, hearing someone coming)
Come, Tantatalus and Sisyphus!
Bring the Danaides!

(Theseus and Ariadne enter at the right.)

SOSIPOLIS: (rising)

THESEUS: Go away! There is nothing here for you!
Ecclesiastes may be right,
But so is Omar!
Go back to your bench, old man,
and wait for those who have time for
such foolishness as yours.
(looking at the sign above the door)

ARIADNE: This is the place, Ariadne.
But that man! He is so old and dirty!

THESEUS: Forget the old man. He is crazy.
His name is Sosipolis.
Come, let us go in.

ARIADNE: Are you sure we will not be seen?

THESEUS: Of course. We came by the shop before.
Don't worry! No one will see us.

ARIADNE: What if someone looks in at the gate?
THESEUS: It's darker here than it is on the street.
Nobody could see in. Remember?
You're not trying to back out, are you?
You said you wanted to . . .

ARIADNE: I meant it.
It will be the greatest festival of the year.
The entire city will be there.

THESEUS: And your family would perish if you weren't
there.

ARIADNE: Especially if I weren't seen with the magnifi-
cent Theseus, mighty lord of the arena.

THESEUS: I don't mean to quarrel, Ariadne. It is important
only that you want to go with me.
That is why we're here, remember?
To exchange what we treasure
for the right to go to the celebration.

(As Theseus and Ariadne continue to talk, Apodis muses, un-
heard by them.)

APODIS: An athlete, a pretty young lady, a festival!
Eligibility, rules of training, forethought to the
game. What is the game?
The lovely lady mustn't go with the wrong
person. So—what is the game?

(Theseus and Ariadne go to the desk. Apodis hands them each a
figurine. They stand there, tablets in hand, and suddenly the
figurines burst. Theseus turns and enters the gate. Ariadne
pauses, then follows him.)

APODIS: (looking down stage as if he sees someone)
Oh, Prometheus!
Paramount of intellect,
so eager to run tomorrow, he scorns to walk
today! So scornful of today, he slides and

PROMETHEUS: smashes through the road-block of tomorrow!
(coming from the center of the stage, pausing)
Apodis, I seek advice.

Is it for me to take precautions
against a fortune that would destroy me?
If I study the right things. I may unknowingly
study the wrong things.
Isn't it better to make a sham of life
And be assured of getting right answers?
Getting them, even by deceit would assure
my position.

APODIS: Well, my young friend, you **should** survive.

PROMETHEUS: What of my masters?

APODIS: Think not of masters. If you have feelings of
guilt, there are the words of Omar:
"Shall he that made the vessel in pure love and
fancy in an after rage destroy? Look about
you .Did not the hand of that almighty
potter shake?"

PROMETHEUS: You are the Angel with the darker draught,
Apodis, and I will gladly drink of it.

APODIS: It is the cup of forgetfulness and joy

PROMETHEUS: (reaching for it)
(He takes the cup, quaffs and requaffs, finally finishing it. Then
he flings the cup down, and goes slowly into a wild, bacchanalian
dance. Finally he flings up his hands.)

WHOOPEE!! (He goes through the gate)

APODIS: I sit here. The day moves forward
toward twilight that neither rises nor sets.
Come, Adam! Come, Eve!
What is the texture of love?

(Arethusa and Galatea enter arm in arm. They pause in the
middle of the stage. The speeches of each are externalized
thought, to which the other pays no heed.)

ARETHUSA: If I am a man, I must prive I am a man,
demonstrating my virility to her
whom I profess to love.

GALATEA: If I am a woman, must I not be provocative to
him who professes to love me. But if I yield
and show myself a woman . . . ?

ARETHUSA: And what if we should have to marry?

GALATEA: I am a coward. It is not my conscience
that keeps me from the test.

SOSIPOLIS: (coming to stand beside them and musing apart)
Youth . . . like a candle,
burning an hour or two and gone.

(Arethusa grasps Galatea's hand. She speaks as though she
did not hear Sosipolis)

GALATEA: Arethusa, look at the world about us.
(She tears the belt from her dress and flings it into the air)

I shall go into the world
tearing the silken cord of my purse
and flinging its treasure into life's Garden.

(Sosipolis goes back to his bench. The couple move to the desk of Apodis. They take their figurines and join the hands that hold them. The wax of the figurines begins to melt and drip noisily to the floor)

(pointing)

ARETHUSA: Look!

GALATEA: Oooh . . . !

(As the last drop falls, she swoons. Arethusa picks her up bodily in his arms and carries her through the gate.)

APODIS: (rising and walking to center of stage)

The day is spent,
I profit greatly in this exchange
men call life.
They lose their idols,
their credit in others' eyes,
their reputations.
Then they wonder why honor
drowns in such a shallow cup.

(He takes his table and chair into the gate and comes back. As he prepares to lock the gate, he notices Sosioplis preparing to leave.)

Why such haste, Sosipolis?
Did you think I might ensnare you?
Together we might fare well.
There would be no loser, no winner.

(Sosipolis starts toward Apodis. Suddenly he clasps his heart and falls forward.)

APODIS: (running to Sosipolis and bending over him)

The hour has come, Sosipolis.
We part.

(Apodis drags him to his shop, opens the gate, and takes Sosipolis in. He comes out, but leaves the gate open. He walks to center stage and addresses the audience.)

He is gone.
But I live forever among you.
His threats of hell and hopes of paradise
are lies.
I alone have learned the answer:
"I MYSELF AM HEAVEN AND HELL!"

SONNET

For this I have kept faith with you so long,
Have watched and waited late so many nights,
Have borne your infidelity, the wrong
Of all your petty insults and your "rights";
For this I've loved you much too long, too well—
So well I cared not for my own small pride,
My longings, and my dreamings' empty shell,
So long that I forgot what was inside—
For this! For one brief word callously spoken,
A door ajar, a carpet full of rain,
A silence deeper than the ear could guess;
For this I gave my one heart to be broken;
For one short night of soul-deep, mortal pain,
And then ten thousand days of emptiness.

—Nancy Baxter

PARSQUE EST MEMINISSE DOLORIS

When people talk of tales
That might be told by winebottles
Or dusty mirrors
Or ancient cats or broken mandolins,
I always think
Of one faded blue ribbon—
Images
Of its storied satin life:
Yesterdays spent
Sashing the waists of china-headed dolls;
Binding pigtails,
Tempting the mischievous hands of little boys
Echoing blue of eyes
Beguiling over broad, indigo shoulders,
Its undulance in three-four time repeated;
Stirred by love's silken sighs,
Brushed by its kisses;
Embracing letters gold with sunless days
When a minute, exacting script held all
The universe—no less—for those blue eyes—
Tying the precious X's at the bottom,
The promises,
Securely to her soul, forever bound;
And finally
The tourniquet for a broken blue-eyed heart.

—Nancy Baxter

THREE POEMS

By Jim Mueller

Moonlight perfects
The deformity
Of broken timber
Cracked brick
Bent steel—
The hard beauty
Of a past building
Is realized

And on the once step
Smoothed by shuffling time
An only cat hears
The sound of falling silver,
Watches night walk by . . .

On an island of excited color
And carousel sound
Somewhere in the empty sea
The children are children
And it is here
That some parents
Would tag along behind
Though most remain seated
On provided benches of memory
Or else pass time
By going to the curved mirrors
To laugh at true reflections
Of themselves . . .

Leaves caught
By reaching hands
Of northwind
Lose
But find
In fire ash,
In colored pools
Where wind-faced
Children
Go wading—

That the cry is stopped,
That the wind is stronger
Than the life stem
Is unimportant
Next to the eternity
Of autumn smoke,
Of spring grass.

CAT CALL

By Susan Moore

I sposin' t'wuz 'bout th' time ma Grannie wuz 'bout six months outa th' womb, when thar wuz nothin' but trees, n' wild animals, n' one shabby log hut whar ma Great Grannie Waddle lived, that thar come 'bout a turrible mean sceer 'bout panthers.

Course I nary seen no such a thing, but I heard tell time h'n time again 'bout this one panther they'd named the' "Black Devil," n' how she'd jump any hosse (be he o' good or pore stock), n' grab rite holt o' th' hosse's juglar vein while a ridin' his back, n' dig her claws in sa deep as ta sceer that hosse so he's run hissself as tho' th' devil had holt o' him. That hosse t'would run so's it'd make his hart beat rite fast, n' then that "Black Devil" 'd suck at his throat till there'd be nothin' left o' that hosse, when it'd drop but bones n' flesh. N' then that panther'd high-tail it back ta th' wilderness.

Great Grannie Waddle wuz a pickin' up th' fork she'd dropped fer th' twenty-sivinth time that day (shore sign to her she's a gonna have a lady vistor), when she heard a kinda scream, and figgered t'wuz Aunt Mary Lee Porter hollerin' fer her. Aunt Mary Lee Porter and Porter Jewel homed a purty fur piece from th' hut, wit' nothin' but wilderness 'tween 'em. So's wheneary they needed help they'd let out wit' a rite good yell, n' t'other'd come a runnin'.

Well, purty soon Great Grannie heard 'nother scream, n' figgered she best step out on the' porch, cause she couldn't hear a word 'twere bein' hollered. 'Bout that time, ma Grannie come a scootin' over ta Great Grannie Waddle to be held. So's Great Grannie picked that young'n up in her arms n' walked out on th' porch. She lissen'd a minit—didn't heared nothin', so's hollered, "Are ya' a callin' me, Mary Lee?"

Th' words hardly got out when th' scream come again, n' afore Great Grannie had th' time to set th' young'n down, that "Black Devil" leaped rite up ta th' porch, a screamin' her matin' call.

Now Great Grannie t'were nary th' type ta be sceered, but she start'd a shakin' so a' th' site o' that black cat that she plum dropp'd ma Grannie, n' th' hole porch began a quiverin', n' purty soon all th' ground around th' hut' begin' a quiverin'. So's when that "Black Devil" leaped at 'em, th' porch t'wuz a quiverin' so's she couldn't keep a holt, an' th' "Black Devil"

fall'd back on th' ground. Now, th' ground t'wuz a quiverin' so by this time that when th' cat fell she couldn't git back up, n' laid thar n' shook herself plum weak, and fin'ly jus' give up n' died.

Now Great Grannie knewed that cat t'war daid, but she t'wuz too sceer'd ta move th' carcuss, so's she jus' left her thar. But ever' nite fer nearby a month, Great Grannie'd see that cat's spirit rise clear outa that cat n' stand thar a screamin' ta all her kind not ta come near thar, coz they'd be a shook ta death.

Well, some folks sez this ain't nothin' but a yarn. All we knows is thar ain't no t'other cat that has a come near our hut or inta th' wilderness since that time.

WAITING

Sticky, grey brick
Stems beneath a sweltering sun;
Tricycles tossed hither and yon
A sandbox piled with rusted toys.
Barefeet skim the burning walk;
Masked by grass, sand burrs crouch
Waiting silently
For the burning feet.
The doors swing wide,
In rushes the child.
A mother's scream, a father's yell
Pushes the child back into the hot thick air.
Barefeet run on the burning walk
Masked by grass sand burrs crouch,
Waiting silently,
For the burning feet.

—Karen Tyler.

THE ECLIPSE

By Art Van Wart

A total eclipse of the sun, the most impressive of all astronomical phenomena, an event which has terrified, inspired, and served man's purpose since before the dawn of recorded history, occurred on Saturday, July 20, 1963, shortly before quarter to six in the afternoon.

Sweeping out in a huge arc thousands of miles long and sixty miles wide, the moon's shadow raced from a black sunrise in Japan, to the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, when it ended at sunset. This deep shadow crossed the United States in Alaska and Maine, racing over Canada in between.

A total solar eclipse occurs when the sun, moon, and earth are in a direct line, with the moon coming between the earth and sun. During totality the entire body of the sun was covered by the moon, which appeared to be surrounded by a glow of the sun's outer atmosphere. The nearing shadow cone appears as a storm cloud, causing the temperature to drop. Minutes before the beginning of totality, ghostly shadows can be seen flitting across white surfaces and crescent images of the sun are seen inverted on the ground. Then as the sun disappeared into totality and as it reappeared, there occurred a phenomenon called the flash spectrum.

Then came a fleeting phase known as "Bailey's Beads," caused by the lost rays of the sun shining through valleys on the surface of the moon. Finally, the corona, the sun's giant pearly white halo, suddenly burst forth. It glowed with strange luminosity around the dark body of the moon. The corona was seen as a complete ring around the sun, not completely darkening the earth, but giving it about half the light of a full moon.

During totality all nature became hushed. Birds sought their roosts and brighter stars appeared. Automatic streetlights blinked on, the air became still, and crickets began chirping.

Slowly the moon moved away from the sun. Birds began chirping again, automatic streetlights blinked off, and movement on earth went on as usual as the darkness lifted. The eclipse had taken place.

HAIKU

1

A white-haired lady
 touches the newborn baby,
 and seems to grow young.

—Judy Blatt.

2

A butterfly flew
 into the black spider's web;
 it knew the cocoon.

—Barbara Dritt.

3

The pale, infant leaf,
 curling, swirling, furling out,
 prinks in ponds of sun.

—Teri Bock.

MINIM

We stand together.
 Burning memories lash our hearts;
 You hold my hand.
 What arbor my embrace?
 What nectar my flower?

—Judy Blatt.

GHOST LIGHT

By Judy Blatt

Ever' night ya c'n see it! Down in da gullies and up on dem hills, jumpin' all 'round like' it's a sufferin' fo' its sins. Dat ghos' light is up der' dern near ever' night. W'en it come out, de win' she stop an' da crickets don' sing. Ev'n ole bull frog shut up, an' not a sound' c'n be heard. It's evil, I tell you.

Why der wuz dis hyere white lady what sen' out her dorter to borree a spool o' thread fr'm dis neighbor lady what lived down da road a piece. Da chile n'er comed back. Den dat lady, she wen' out to fin' her. Da lady n'er comed back n'either. Some says it's robbers what got 'em. Other folks say dey jess up an' lef'. But no one c'n 'splain why da light sudd'nly started pearin'. It wuz bright as day an' de roosters crowed an' da farmers dey got up, an' den all o' er suddent it wuz dark ag'in.

Folks thought it wuz a 'clipse or somethin', but when it kep' on happen' dey begun ter won'ner. Is still hap'nin' to dis day, an' no one ever did fin' out why or what fo'.

'No' sumpin' else? No one has seed dat lady or her chile since!!

QUEST

For centuries now man has watched the stars,
 And wondered as if at druidic signs,
 What nameless deaths, or countless wars!
 For centuries now man has watched the stars.
 What sinless forms eternity mars,
 Beauty clasped in ethereal designs!
 For centuries now man has watched the stars,
 And wondered as if at druidic signs.

—Henry F. Stecker.

AS SIRENS WAIL

As sirens wail in the early morn,
 Their sad, sad cries awake the city.
 Maybe a child is about to be born,
 As sirens wail in the early morn.
 People wake, passive, some forlorn,
 Some may stir with aching pity,
 As sirens wail in the early morn.
 Their sad, sad cries awake the city.

—Barbara Dritt.

BIG STEVE'S REQUIEM

Big Steve smiled for the melody of birds and he
listened
to the music of their wings. These sounds were like
water and he washed
in the singing, then rinsed himself off in the drops
that still glistened
on the grass by the feet of his soul. A tree gently
pushed
by the wind's silent fingers dropped its leaves down
shivering to the ground,
where tumbling to him like lovers they fell. When
the day
and its colors were brightest, and the sky was bluest,
in the dark brown
and green of grass and trees he liked to stay.
Big Steve heard in the distance around him the noise
of a city awakening. He rose with the sound, left the
bed
to his warmth, and shuffled around in gray slippers.
"The boys,"
said his wife. "Be quiet!" He nodded and his soul
dripped red.
Big Steve made a poetry with his ears and his eyes,
but time
is no poet and felt nothing at the end of his beat and
his rhyme.

—David Scudder.

"PERNE IN A GYRE"

Pointed towers of Istanbul,
Bejeweled minarets,
And dromedaries, cool, cool!
Pointed towers of Istanbul!
O great, clean, good, mere epithets
Of choice, and taste, and cigarettes!
Pointed towers of Istanbul,
Bejeweled minarets!

—Ron Fenton.

AND THEN THERE WAS ONE

By Richard Nelson

Our small reconnaissance patrol had been marching for hours when at last we approached a small farm house built to take advantage of the shade of the huge oak trees which surrounded it. It was a small long farm house, typical of the poor white sharecroppers who lived in this area of Tennessee. The house had been burnt on one side and the split rail fence adjacent to it had been torn down in several places. A small cotton field in back of the house was burnt to the ground, and the place looked as if no one had lived there for some time.

The sergeant, a burly man with a short black beard and small gray eyes which seemed to show his hatred for anyone under his command, turned and with his bellowing voice shouted, "All right, take five! McKendrick, go scout that farm house and see if anyone's around and be sure to keep an eye out for rebs."

McKendrick, also a sergeant, resented taking orders, especially from someone of the same rank as he. He had lain down and was enjoying a brief rest, but when he heard the sergeant's words, he sat up and threw a hateful glance at him. There had always been friction between the two, and the sergeant harassed McKendrick every chance he got. The sergeant knew it didn't take much to set off McKendrick's uncontrollable temper, and he enjoyed riding him. McKendrick didn't take these incidents lightly however. Many times he boasted he was going to get even with the sergeant, and was just waiting for an opportunity.

"How come I've got to go, sergeant? I'm the same rank as you. Send someone else!" replied McKendrick, angrily.

"Look, McKendrick, I'm in charge of this outfit. I told you to scout out that farm house! Now get going!"

McKendrick sat staring at the sergeant, and his face turned red with anger.

"That's an order, McKendrick!"

McKendrick got up slowly, grabbed his rifle and started off towards the farmhouse, cursing inaudibly and saying something to the effect of "I'll get you, you dirty . . ."

Brown, the other member of the patrol, and I sat down beneath some small oak trees and watched McKendrick disappear in back of the farmhouse. Brown was from Iowa, and had been in the army for only three months. He was quiet and

timid, and had few friends. He had no use for war since his brother had died in a southern prison. He was terrified of the sergeant and didn't get along too well with him.

Suddenly an orange-colored leaf fluttered down near me, and for the first time I noticed that fall was coming and that the trees were of many different colors, typical of this time of year. I wondered what my folks were doing back in Ohio, since it had been two years since I had left them to join the army. I took a long drink from my canteen and laid my head against the trunk of the tree. The sun felt good on my face and I lay thinking what I would be doing if I were home.

Suddenly a shot rang out and I saw the sergeant crumple to the ground and lie still. As Brown and I scrambled for cover behind the tree, I caught a glimpse of a musket being withdrawn through the burlap curtains of a small window of the farm house. The first thing that entered my mind was "McKendrick."

I thought McKendrick had at last carried out his boasts and had shot the sergeant. There was no further movement from the house and Brown looked at me with his face full of terror and stammered, "What . . . what are we gonna do now?"

"I don't know," I replied, "but if that's McKendrick, he'll probably try to kill us too, and then go back and say the rebs got us. There wouldn't be any questions that way."

Blam!! Another shot rang out and we huddled behind the tree waiting for the impact of the bullet. We stayed behind the tree a long time not daring to expose ourselves lest we should wind up like the sergeant. The sun began to sink behind the trees and dusk was fast approaching. Brown and I made plans to run for it as soon as it got dark, and to head back to our company.

"Look! Look over there behind the house!" whispered Brown.

I saw a movement in the shadow of the house and we raised our muskets. The figure of a man was running for the woods next to the house. Brown and I fired at almost the same time, and the flash of the guns blinded us for a fraction of a second. However, we saw the figure twist and topple to the ground.

We remained still for several minutes. Then telling Brown to follow me, I jumped up and ran towards the farm house. We kicked the door open and rushed in. It was empty except for a table on which was lying a musket.

"That's not McKendrick's rifle," said Brown.

"Check out back," I replied, "but keep your eyes open."

Brown opened the back door and shouted, "It's McKendrick. He's been shot!"

McKendrick was lying face down on the ground. Beneath his left leg the ground was soaked with blood. We turned him over and blood coozed from a bullet hole in his thigh. McKendrick was in a state of semi-consciousness from the loss of blood, and he was moaning from the pain of the wound.

"Come on, Brown, let's go check that other body!"

The other figure was sprawled grotesquely on the ground and as we approached it, I immediately noticed the gray uniform of a confederate soldier.

"Is he dead?" asked Brown, as I turned the body over.

"Yeh, he's dead."

"Who is he?"

"I don't know. By the looks of him I'd say he was a deserter."

"You think we ought to bury him and the sergeant?"

"We haven't got time," I said. "We've got to get McKendrick back before he bleeds to death."

We went back to the house and put a bandana around McKendrick's leg to stop the bleeding the best we could.

"He's hurt awful bad," said Brown. "Do you think he'll live?"

"I don't know. But the more time we spend around here, the less chance he's got. Come on, let's move out."

Supporting McKendrick the best way we were able, we started back. We walked for about two hours but the burden of having to carry McKendrick soon exhausted our strength. The wound in his leg kept bleeding, no matter what we did to stop it and McKendrick's facial color became a ghastly white. It grew dark soon, and the brilliancy of the moon lit up the ground as if it were day.

"Hold it! Let's take a rest," I said.

We laid McKendrick on the ground and tried to make him as comfortable as possible.

"Here, have some water," I said, handing my canteen to Brown. "Don't drink too much though! There's not much left."

"Ya think we oughta leave him?" muttered Brown.

"What'd you say?"

"Well, he's gonna die anyway."

"Now wait a minute, Brown. If you got any idea about leaving McKendrick forget it, yuh hear?"

"But we could travel faster if we don't have to carry him. Besides we'll have a better chance if we run into any rebs."

"Never mind. We'll make it. C'mon, let's go!"

We continued onward for a little while longer, but soon became so weary that it was impossible to keep going.

"I . . . I . . . I can't go any further," gasped Brown.

"All right. We'll rest here till morning. Here, help me move McKendrick over under this tree."

I rewrapped the bandage on McKendrick's leg and told Brown to get some sleep, while I kept guard. I sat down but my efforts to stay awake proved futile, and I soon fell asleep. The next thing I remember was the crackling of dry leaves as though someone was walking lightly over them. I looked up slowly and saw Brown sneaking away.

"Hold it, Brown! Where do you think you're going?"

Brown stopped walking and seemed surprised by my voice, but he didn't turn around.

"I'm going back and I ain't carrying a half-dead man! He's gonna die anyway, and I'm not going to get caught by some reb patrol and wind up like my brother. Never did anything for me! I don't care if he lives or dies."

I raised my rifle and pointed it at Brown's back. "Brown, you take one more step and so help me I'll kill you!"

Brown said nothing for a moment, but stood contemplating me. "I'm going back and you ain't stopping me!" he screamed. He turned quickly and started to raise the rifle to fire.

"No, Brown," I shouted.

I pulled the trigger, and the shot shattered the stillness of the morning. Brown fell and I rushed over to him, but the shot had killed him instantly. I stood looking at his body for a moment, but I knew the shot might attract someone so I went over to McKendrick and started to lift him up. I grasped his hand, but it was cold and stiff and I immediately recognized the sign of death. I realized that he must have died sometime during the night.

I got up slowly and as I was leaving, I glanced at Brown's body and said to myself, "All for nothing, Brown. All for nothing! Dirty, filthy, stinking, . . . and all for and . . . now nothing." Still muttering, I headed in the direction of camp.

HELL ON EARTH

By Susan Moore

He stood by the bar sipping his whisky on the rocks and trying not to notice the knees of the girl at the nearby table. She sat sideways on her chair talking to the other girls, and her pink skirt was too short, her hair at the base of her neck too long. The combination gave her a sexy look; he noticed her knees.

"Disgusting!" he snorted to himself, inasmuch as he was without companion.

"Did you want something, sir?" inquired the bartender, pushing at a lock of his slicked, thinning hair, and creasing his corpulence against the counter. "Is it the maids?" he finished with what looked like a wink.

"If it were maid, I wouldn't mind," the man sputtered. "But look at them! Always on the make! Disgusting!"

"Yes, sir!" agreed the bartender as the girl rose, slinked to the counter and leaned to the left of the obvious woman-hater. She drew a cigarette ostentatiously from her gilt-lined container, and slid to the adjacent stool. The knees were covered now, but there was an alluring suggestiveness about the scent the girl's person emitted.

"So you hate us!" she remarked huskily, puffing at her cigarette which emerged from the further end of a rhinestone-studded holder. "Poor you! It keeps you so busy!"

"Were you invited here by someone?" he growled, looking in the opposite direction with a sneer.

"My, my! If you don't sound like a mean old grizzly bear after hibernation!" she said, as she slid from the bar stool, brushing against him as she slipped to the nearby table.

He watched her for a minute and then said to himself and half to the bartender, "That's the trouble with women! They are unduly inclined to freedom, or they are prudes or sadistic fiends who delight in kindling the fires of hell in a man's bosom, and then triumphantly describing his agonies to their friends. I say fires of hell—I wish they existed in reality, so these teasers might be sent there!"

The bartender leaned over close to his ear and whispered a bit nervously, "Try to keep down your objections, old chap. You seem to be gathering an audience."

The objector took a quick look around but noticed only

one man interested in his declarations. "That stranger over there? Why he looks like an investigator for some TV program taking a survey about what men discuss over their beer on Saturday nights."

With that he got up and went home. As he descended the stairs to his poor cellar apartment, greatly to his surprise, he found the watching stranger from the bar resting very much at ease on his sofa. "I find it hard to express," said the fiend, "my pleasure in meeting a man of such insight and intelligence as Oliver Guntzly."

After several short protests by Oliver, and much buttering up by the devil, Oliver found himself supping at a small cafe on Fallen Street. It must be admitted the fiend did know his wines.

"I was much interested in the view you expressed this evening concerning women," the fiend finally began. "You see, I find lately my domain is becoming more and more crowded and the residents are not content with merely on overseer, particularly one not as young as he used to be."

"Sorry to hear that," said Oliver.

"I could have handled the population boom," said the devil, "or the trouble-making law about woman's freedom in 1919, I think it was. But both! Hell help me! With only one or two possible exceptions all women alive now are damned."

"Excellent!" said Oliver.

"Yes, excellent indeed! But consider the needed space, and all the planning necessary."

"Squeeze 'em in!" cried Oliver.

"That would never do. First thing they would imagine themselves at some party. And they must have individual attention to assure their personal sufferings. A new site has been chosen and the building has begun. All arrangements are made, but I need a new superintendent."

Oliver leaned back, a bit wobbly from all the wine he had had. Assuming a very business like manner he said, "Before I reach any decision, I should like to know more about the salary, and er . . . er . . . possibilities."

"The salary," said the fiend, much inspired now, "is power. The possibilities are infinite."

"Well, the least I can do is examine the place."

With that the devil let out a most inhuman shriek and without even paying the check, the two of them sank into the bowels of the earth. "Here we are at home!" cried the fiend.

"My!" said Oliver, a little startled at their quick descent. "All this looks very familiar, much like De Boalvere, with row after row of houses."

"Yes! The final touch of misery! Each cell is designed with a modern housing project in mind. Follow me, I'll show you just what awaits each woman on earth."

Oliver carefully picked his way down the slope while the devil danced with shrieks of glee to the nearest cell-house. He was busily pointing out the imitation husband before Oliver had barely entered the door. "They can't talk or hear. They just sit here with their feet up and snore while the imps upstairs constantly scream for or about something. It's all so perfect!" the devil giggled. "Everything is planned for woman's complete discomfort. Well, what do you say, Oliver?"

"I'll do my best," said our hero, and they shook hands on the deal.

Oliver's lordship went quite smoothly for several months. He punished a multitude of film stars, unfaithful wives, disobedient daughters, wantons, careless waitresses, cruel charm-ers, naggers, dissatisfied sweethearts, over-protective mothers, non-caring mothers, unmarried mothers, in fact, all who could possibly ever be mothers. Then one day, while he was flying about Hell with his mask of invisibility on, he was paged to the main quarters of the devil's office. When he entered, the devil was rubbing his horns and pacing in front of the fireplace.

"What are you trying to do?" screamed the fiend, before Oliver could even find a place to sit. "Ruin all of Hell?"

"Of course not! I find the place quite to my liking so far," replied Oliver.

"Then why, pray tell," sneered the fiend, "have you admitted a (ugh) pure female, not legally dead? Do you want to spend the rest of eternity in a bottomless pit?"

"Well . . . I . . . er . . . what I mean is . . . uh . . . Don't you think it is getting a mite warm in here?"

"The temperature is nothing compared to that in the Pit, my friend. If you wish to be comfortable again, you will do something with this person immediately! I have had her sent to your office. Good-bye, Oliver."

With that our hero found himself ushered out of the fiend's office by two quite capable young imps. And sure enough, when Oliver arrived at his own office, his old friend Sarah Albert was waiting. She rose and in a very weepy voice, cried, "Please, sir, could you tell me where I am?"

"In Hell to be sure," he said with a hearty laugh.

"Oh, thank goodness! I was afraid I was on De Boalvere Strip."

"Most women do," he said, eyeing her closely, much pleased with not only her looks but with the live smell of her presence. "You are the first who ever showed any gratification in learning otherwise. But enough of this. Tell me, please, how you managed to smuggle your way into Hell. Anyone can see you are still very much alive!"

"Well, you see," said Sarah, beginning to feel a little more at home, "I work at Famous, a large department store. This afternoon, during my lunch hour, one of my companions gave me a shove because I was about to sit down in the chair she wanted. The shove scared me so my mouth fell open and my soul must have slipped out. Before I knew what was happening, I was here and there were women all around me shouting we were on De Boalvere Strip."

"That must have been a very nasty shove indeed," said our hero, beginning to soften to so much beauty. "But I shall see to it that the menace pays one-hundred fold when she is delivered into my hands."

"Oh, no! That would never do! She is really very nice and must have just stumbled over something."

"Do you realize," wailed Oliver, "we have no such thing as forgiveness down here in Hell?"

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry. It won't get you in trouble will it? I'll never use it again."

"That's okay, my dear. But please watch what you say around here, or I may end up burning in the pit for all eternity." Oliver let his eyes wander over Sarah's body for a brief moment. "But on to the business at hand. You are here, but not properly dead. What are we to do with you?"

"Couldn't you simply send me back to earth?"

"No woman has ever left this place alone," he cried in despair. "I dare not even attempt that."

"Don't take on so; I will stay. I couldn't bear to see an adorable man like you burning in anyone's pit for even a few minutes."

"My dear girl," said Oliver, giving her a pat or two, "then will you please just sign this sheet saying you are staying here at your own request, and it will be settled. Otherwise it will only be a temporary arrangement."

With that Oliver gave her a kick, and sent her off to one of the nicer cell houses.

It wasn't very long after this that the devil once again called Oliver to his office and this time the fiend had almost worn a spot bare on the carpet from continuous pacing up and down.

"What have you done to my Hell?" he screamed, as Oliver tried to slip in the door. "That woman has ruined the plans it took me thousands of years to create!"

"I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about," stammered Oliver.

"What I'm talking about? Do you realize since that . . . that . . . woman came here, when I go to survey my kingdom I am greeted only by smiling faces and laughter? It must be stopped. I will give you until tomorrow to change her into a more presentable hellian."

"But, what can I do?" cried Oliver.

"Tempt her, you fool! Have you never tempted a woman?"

"As far as I know, no," said Oliver.

"Well, do so now. I leave the matter entirely in your hands. If you fail, the Pit is waiting."

Oliver returned to his office and had Sarah sent for with much distress. He did not relish the thought of tempting this sweet girl. Yet when she arrived he had the apartment all ready. "Ah, my dear," he said, as she entered, "I have just been given an opportunity to make you the richest woman in the world. Tell me, have you ever thirsted after such a thing?"

"No, not at all," said she.

"Well, well, well!" said he and drew forth a diamond necklace. After one look at her face, he gently hung it around her neck as a gift. Sarah was pleased, not with the gift so much as with the manner in which it was offered. So she kissed Oliver.

That single kiss caused such love between them that even the walls of Hell could not withstand it. With one large crash the bowels of the earth opened and the pair found themselves replaced on the earth, in Oliver's one-room cellar apartment.

Of course none of Sarah's friends would believe the story of her say in Hell until it was too late. They had to learn it first hand from the Devil himself, and he constantly moaned of it from his flaming Pit of punishment.

SERENADE

The haunting strains first swell, then fade,
To listening ears a fusillade
Against the silence of the night,
And yet as I sit down to write,
Such plaintiveness I would evade.
The music surges; sounds dissuade
My mind, which finds itself betrayed
By somber thoughts which seem to blight
The haunting strains.
The climax comes, as flutes cascade
Their trills, as if to serenade
My lonely heart and to excite
Me to regain the lofty height
Of mirth. So, in my heart are laid
The haunting strains.

—Henry F. Stecker.

RAIN

I saw the sun, the sky, the parching land,
And hoped that rain was coming to us at last.
I waited for it with an outstretched hand,
Praying for moisture that seemed a thing of the past.
Then the clouds turned black and lightning and
thunder flashed,
And the rain began to fall in glistening drops,
Becoming bigger as to the ground they crashed,
Heading for safety and refuge in weeds and crops.
The downpour stopped, and the sun shone in the sky;
The arc of a rainbow touched the face of the earth,
As plants arose and birds left trees to fly,
For the magic of rain had restored all nature's worth.
Bringing new succulence to the things of the soil,
It gave me, as well, relief from my burdens and toil.

—Richard Nelson.

THE SAFETY PIN

By David Scudder

Saturday afternoon promised to be a pleasant day, not a disgustingly hot day as it had been all week and as it would probably be all next week, but a good day, a very good day for swimming and lying in the sun. Most of the two hundred or so people who were just now getting set up on the beach or playing in the clear water had been waiting in line for the fat lady in the ticket stand to open her window so they could pay their quarters and exhibit their white complexions and varying signs of affluence. Before the gate had been opened for the rush on to the beach, the regulars, the lifeguards and their friends who always got in for nothing, the two boys running the concession stand, and the season's ticket holders, who could be distinguished both by their perfect tans and the little red tags that they sewed on their swimming trunks, had been let in. Because they always were in first, they got the best spots, but then the tourists didn't mind because they didn't know which were the best spots.

Steve Lear, in white trunks that had the red tag on them—they had in fact several tags on them of blue, green, and purple from the summers past—walked in through the gate of the regulars. It was about five minutes past the twelve o'clock opening time of the beach, but he liked to be a little late. It gave him a chance to pick carefully the people with whom he would lie and talk on the sand. He walked slowly among the sitting people, trying carefully not to kick too much sand on them, but also trying to look gracefully tanned. He was, he knew, deliciously brown; he liked to tell his friends at school that he never lost his color, each year he'd just pick up where he'd left off the year before. "When I die," he told them, "if they look inside me, they'll find that the tan on my back and the tan on my stomach have just about reached one another. I doubt if even I'll live long enough for them to touch, though," he said. His eyes were bad, but it didn't matter, he had his prescription-ground, sun glasses on. They gave him a chance to avoid, without being recognized, or from a distance, people he didn't want to see and he was always glad that he'd bought them. When he saw the girl that he'd picked up at Pat's last weekend, he was really happy that he'd brought them.

The beach was a curved quarter-mile of sand and the friends with whom he planned to kill the afternoon were about in the middle of it, a little distance past the lifeguard's chair. The white bodies—slugs he called them to his friends—disgusted him with their litionny smell and their dirty little kids

on dirty little towels and he walked among them with disdain. They were so knotted up in groups that he had to abandon his straight line path and go out of his way around the back of the lifeguard's chair. "Hello, Bob, what's happening, anything?" he asked as he went by. The lifeguard looked at him, shrugged his shoulders and turned back to the lake.

When he got to his friends, they nodded a lethargic hello and he lowered himself onto the hot sand beside them. "Oh Jesus, this sand's hotter'n hell," he told them. They nodded again in unison, and he decided that they'd already known the sand was hot and didn't give a damn.

"How's the water?" he asked them.

One of them, Jim, shook his sun-bleached head and said, "Oh, it's not bad. A little cold, but then it always is." He lowered himself back into the fold of his arms and gave every appearance of sleep.

"See any broads I might'a missed on your way?" Bill asked him.

"Nothing," Steve answered him, "just the usual bunch of trolls." He looked around him. "See anything here?"

"Naah." Bill smiled, displaying disgustingly white teeth which both he and Steve knew were his best feature. Bill smiled a lot.

The whole group of five lay down on the sand, some on their stomachs with their heads on their arm and some on their backs with their eyes blinking or closed because of the sun's brightness.

After a few minutes of this, Steve looked up. "Think I'll get wet." He got up, brushed the sand from his stomach, shook his leg that had been cramped and ran the few feet to the water's edge. The water washed up over his toes and he decided that it wasn't that cold, so he jumped in. His head broke the water several feet from where two little girls were playing on a red and white rubber duck. With them in mind, he swam back to the beach and leaving wet footprints, walked back to his group. "Look what I did to my stomach," he told them, and displayed a red rash-like mark where he'd scraped the sandy bottom on his initial dive. Only one of them looked, and feeling hurt, Steve fell back down into the sand to let the sun dry him off.

More people had been coming to the beach and among these was a girl. Steve noticed her immediately and watched her as she moved down the beach toward him. He looked at her for several minutes while she spread a red beach towel on the sand thirty or so feet away from him. On her shoulders were

the beginnings of a sunburn and he saw the strap marks where she must have recently worn a different swimming suit. The one she had on was a light brown, and he liked that, particularly in the back where it looked like a continuation of her hair.

"Forget it, man," Bill said from his elbow. "She's a loser. I went over and talked to her yesterday and she's a loser." He smiled and lay back down.

"What's the matter with her? She's pretty enough!"

"Naah. I talked to her for a few minutes yesterday. Found out she's from Chi. Told her she had lovely skin. I don't know if that's true or not, but that's what I said. Then I touched her. Man, did she get blue! I thought she was gonna hit me so I backed down and left her alone." He turned over on his back and smiled at the sun.

Steve nodded and lay down with his chin on his arm so he could watch the girl. The usual daydream of the beach floated around him, but he kept watching the girl and sometimes he'd daydream about her. For an hour he lay there, sometimes on his back and sometimes on his stomach. From whatever position, he always made certain that with at least the corner of his eye he watched the girl.

She didn't move and to him it looked as if she had fallen asleep. What's she thinking about, he wondered. Finally, he got up.

"Where you goin'?" Bill asked him.

"She'll burn up with sunburn if someone doesn't wake her up."

She lay there in the sand with the red deepening, when Steve finally got to her. When he sat down beside her, she didn't move and he shook her arm.

"What?" she said, and looked at him. Her hair flowed down the front of her, past her shoulders.

"Thought I'd better wake you up. Nobody else'd do it, and you're getting' bad burn. You'd better get out of the sun."

She pulled the towel over her and disappeared under it. "Thanks," she said. "Thanks a lot."

"That's all right."

The other people were walking back and forth in front of him and he looked at them and then at her. All he could see was the towel and her feet that were sticking out from under it. "Better cover your feet, too." They disappeared under the

towel and nothing else was left but the sandy depression in which she'd been lying.

"Would you do me a favor?" she suddenly asked from under the towel. "I just broke a strap. Would you find me a safety pin?"

"Hey, Bob," he shouted over to the lifeguard. "Got a safety pin? Girl's got a broken strap." The lifeguard threw a pin to him, and it landed closer to his original group than to her. "Thanks," he said. Bill was watching him. "Hey, man, throw that here, would you?" he asked him.

Bill got up, walked the few feet to the safety pin and picked it up. It sparkled in the sun as he threw it up and down in his hand.

"Throw it here," Steve asked him again.

Bill turned suddenly and threw the pin out into the lake.

"What'd you do that for?" Steve asked him, "Why'd you throw it in the lake, man?"

"You didn't need it."

"Yeah, but she did." He moved closer and dropped his hands to his side. "What was that for?"

"I just felt like doing it." Bill returned to the sand and smiled at Steve. "She's nothing to you." He turned over on his stomach and rested his smile on his arms.

With a defeated look, Steve returned to the girl who had come from under the towel and watched the proceedings. "Don't worry," he told her, "I'll find another one. I don't know why he did that. I've always thought he was a pretty nice guy."

"Okay," she said. Then as if changing her mind, she threw her head and let her brown hair dance in the sunlight. "I don't think he's so nice. I don't think he's nice at all."

"I'll go see about that pin."

"That's all right," she said, as he moved out of the sand beside her. "I can't stay anyhow because of the sunburn. I'd better go before it gets any worse." She got up, wrapped the towel around herself and started for the beach gate. "You'd better go back to your friends," she said to him.

"Wasn't I right?" Bill told him, after he had rejoined his original setting. "She's a loser."

"Maybe so. But I wish you hadn't thrown that pin away. I might of gotten something going."

SOMETHING BAD

By Henry Stecker

The train pulled into the Monroe Street Station and Robert Schaeffer sat watching the people scurrying to get on or off. His attention fell upon one man in particular, and a chill ran down his back. He felt the mind contact and cringed from it. The man sat across the aisle from him, but did not look at him. The train started up and then began to slow down for the approach to the Washington Street Interchange. As the doors swung open, Robert bolted out of his seat and jostled his way to the stairs leading toward the State Street Subway. He ran along the corridor and up the stairs to the platform and boarded the Englewood train which had just pulled in. When the train had begun to move, he breathed a sigh of relief. He was free again.

"Does this train stop at Forty-seventh Street?" asked an elderly lady sitting next to him.

Robert jumped at the sound of her voice, and then regaining his composure somewhat, said, "Yes, ma'am, I believe so."

The train rolled on, made several more stops, and presently emerged from the subway tunnel onto the old elevated tracks. He overheard two men in the seat in front of him discussing their opinions on what the United States should or should not do in regards to Viet Nam.

"It doesn't make a damn bit of difference what the U. S. does!" Robert exclaimed.

One of the men turned to him and asked, "How do you figure that?"

"Because we're about to be invaded."

"Them Russians wouldn't dare," the other man said.

"It'd be better for us if it were the Russians," Robert continued.

"Who else'd have the power to?" stated the first man.

"The aliens from another planet."

The two men laughed at that statement, and finally one of them said, "So tell us all about it, Buck Rodgers."

Robert looked around him and noticed that most of the people were laughing or smiling. He realized that once again no one believed him, and that they were mocking him. He

noticed that the train was stopping at a station. He jumped up and ran out the door. He stood on the platform as the train pulled away. When it had left, he started for the stairs, but he felt another mind contact. His eyes darted around wildly until they came to rest on a man walking up the stairs he had intended to descend.

Robert headed for the edge of the platform and jumped onto the tracks. He crossed them, taking care to avoid the third rail, and climbed onto the adjacent platform. He saw the man start down the stairs and knew that he was going to cross over to his side. Robert prayed for the Howard Street elevated to come, but none was in sight. He stood there paralyzed with fright as the man approached him. He thrust his hands into his pockets and nervously fingered a pistol which was there, and wondered why he had not thought of using it when the other man had approached. His fingers tightened around the gun and he was about to pull it out and shoot the man when a blinding pain above his eyes became so intense that he lapsed into unconsciousness.

#

Erleth Gronnif stood looking down at the man who was lying on the bed. He was attentive to the description of the events that had transpired before they had been able to capture the man. The description was not a verbal one, however, but was projected to Erleth by the use of mental telepathy. Because of this fact, the account he received was far more vivid and detailed than language could ever have portrayed it.

As Erleth and Voorleth, the other man in the room, stood there in silence mentally communicating with each other, Robert Schaeffer groaned and opened his eyes. He noticed that the room in which he found himself was rather large and well furnished. His gaze then fell upon Erleth, whom he had never seen before, and upon Voorleth, whom he recognized as the one who had approached him on the elevated platform. Robert tried to sit up but discovered that he was restrained by straps across his chest and legs. His hands were similarly fastened down.

Robert turned to them, "What do you want with me?" he asked.

Erleth replied in English, "Come now, Shairleth, why don't you use the mind contact?"

"Don't call me by one of your alien names; I am Robert Schaeffer of Earth, and I prefer to speak rather than project. It's more human."

"Why did you run from us?" asked Erleth in an attempt to switch the subject so as to more successfully interrogate him.

"I knew you were after me because I've been warning my people about your plans to invade us."

"If you are not one of us, how did you come to receive the knowledge of our supposed invasion?"

"I am sensitive to your mental projections and happen to have sat down next to one of your agents on a public conveyance and read his thoughts."

"You deny then that you are one of us?"

"I do."

"Very well, Shairleth—"

"Robert!"

"Okay, Robert, I must leave you for awhile but I'll return and discuss this with you later."

Erleth and Voorleth turned away and then went into the next room.

Using the mind contact, Erleth began, "He's the fifteenth agent of ours who has claimed to be a native of this planet. His symptoms are identical to those of the others. His mind has suppressed all knowledge of his true identity, even to the point of refusing to communicate except by the use of an earth language."

"What perplexes me," Voorleth began, "is that he has completely twisted our motives for coming to this world."

"There also he is like the other fourteen. They, too, claimed and honestly believed, I might add, that we intend to invade this world."

"What happened to the others?" Voorleth asked suddenly.

"We couldn't snap them back to reality here, so we sent them to Leth. The scientists there have as yet been unable to cure them either. In fact two scientists were killed and three seriously wounded before they learned to take extra precautions."

"Isn't this putting a serious strain on the number of trained agents we have on reserve?"

"Very much so, Voorleth, in fact some of the Elders have been contemplating the withdrawal of all personnel from this planet. The only thing that's kept the issue from being put to a vote already is that some of the Elders have kept it in debate."

"What do you think are its chances of being passed?"

"I wouldn't even hazard a guess. There are too many different factors to consider."

They continued to communicate for awhile and then Erleth retired to his chambers, while Voorleth went back to the room where Robert lay in confinement. He sat down and looked at Robert who was a tall, slender fellow with blue eyes, light brown hair and a ruddy complexion.

"Do you have a girl here?" Voorleth finally asked him.

"What's it to you?"

"I've got one."

"How could an alien fall in love with an earth girl? You're not the same as us."

"Simple, she's pretty, has a nice figure, and is intelligent. Besides that she's not like most of these people. She's kind, considerate—"

"I've just received a dispatch from Leth," Erleth projected hurriedly as he entered the room. "It states that the council has voted to abandon all efforts on this planet."

Voorleth, detecting from Erleth's mind that he was serious and not joking, became sullen. "How soon before we have to leave?" he inquired.

"They expect to have everyone off within ten days."

"I want to bring an earth girl along."

"That'd be impossible."

"Then allow me to stay here, Erleth."

"You can't, Voorleth, this planet is doomed."

"I'm not so sure they'll have a nuclear war."

"That won't be what will destroy them. You see some of the Elders felt that homo sapiens is so incorrigibly evil that he ought to be destroyed outright. Another group of Elders argued that we haven't the right to destroy another race, no matter how evil they may be, or even if there's a good chance that they'll achieve interstellar space travel and will ultimately spill out into all the galaxy. So the two groups compromised and intend to set up a radiation detector at both of the earth's poles. The detectors will be in tune with a vast arsenal on the planet Mercury. When the radiation count in the earth's atmosphere reaches a certain predetermined level of concentration, the detectors will send an electronic signal to the arsenal, which will lift off Mercury and plunge sunward. When the arsenal reaches the sun, it will detonate and cause the sun to rupture and become a nova or possibly even a supernova."

"But what if cosmic rays or other stray radiation should touch off the detectors?" Voorleth asked.

"They're to be set for a level high enough that only a small nuclear war or continued nuclear testing in the atmosphere would be of sufficient strength to trigger them."

"What if the detectors are discovered?"

"The two detectors are in mutual contact, and if one or the other is tampered with or destroyed, the other will trigger the arsenal. Both would have to be destroyed simultaneously before the danger would be removed. It was decided to give them that one slim chance at survival; otherwise it would be a simple matter to set the arsenal to lift off if the detectors stop transmitting any data."

Robert, who had allowed his mind to contact theirs when he saw the intensity of their expressions, spoke suddenly, "That's murder, and I thought you people never killed."

Erleth turned and addressed Robert. "It is not murder. If they stop all atmospheric testing of nuclear devices, they'll continue to live; if not, then the galaxy will be purged of a menace."

"But it's not fair; The big powers have already decided to stop testing in the atmosphere. It's not our fault if France won't agree to it."

"Don't tell me, Robert; it was the council's decision; and as far as I'm concerned the decision is a just one."

"What about the Federation?" Voorleth began, "Won't they have some objections about our intentions?"

"No," Erleth stated, "they agreed that since homo sapiens is a humanoid race as are we, they properly come under our sole jurisdiction. We were given complete freedom to do with them as we see fit."

"Please reconsider about not letting me take the earth girl back with me," Voorleth pleaded.

"I'm sorry, but as I said before, that would be impossible; these people are unstable, and it's my guess that it's this instability which has caused fourteen of our agents to become unstable. Back on Leth those fourteen are safely locked up where they can do no harm to the stability of the populace, but your earth girl would be living among us and might cause untold chaos."

"Nonsense! What could one person do against an entire planet full of people, even if she wanted to?"

"It's not just one person, because if you bring back a native we must allow others to bring back natives, and we cannot have such a danger."

"Then I'm staying."

"Even knowing this planet is doomed?"

"Yes, and what's more, I'm releasing Shairleth. I'm sure he wants to stay."

"Don't do that! He's unstable I tell you."

Voorleth backed over to where Robert lay and, never taking his eyes off Erleth, reached behind him and unfastened the straps. Robert sat up and slowly walked to where his coat lay.

"You're free," Voorleth said to him.

"I know I am," Robert replied as he reached into his coat pocket and withdrew the pistol, firing it at Erleth and then Voorleth.

As they fell to the floor, Voorleth gasped, "But I set you free."

"So what? Your plan is to destroy us, and I intend to destroy you."

Robert stepped over Voorleth and left the room. As he opened the door facing on the hall, he saw two men approaching in his direction. He was about to level his gun at them when he felt that same blinding pain above his eyes and once again lapsed into unconsciousness.

In a short while Robert awoke and saw Erleth and Voorleth seated on chairs which were placed in such a way that they might be better able to watch him. He stared in disbelief of the fact that they could still be alive.

"The bullets caught me in the chest and Vooreth in the stomach," Erleth explained. "Luckily our medic was able to operate on us in time."

"What are you going to do with me?" Robert inquired after he had noticed that he was strapped down once again.

"Nothing, we're taking you home."

"To Chicago?"

"To Leth."

"I still wish to stay," Vooreth interjected.

"So you keep telling me," Erleth sighed. "Very well, I'll allow you to stay; however, we find it necessary to eradicate the knowledge of certain facts from your mind."

"I'm willing."

"You realize, of course, that we may accidentally erase too much, and you could possibly come out of the operation with the intelligence of a low grade idiot."

"I'll take the chance."

"The machine cannot be precisely controlled as yet, and it's entirely possible that you won't even remember this girl for whom you are giving up so much."

"Quit trying to change my mind, Erleth; I want to take the chance."

"I guess this is good-bye then, Voorleth; you won't remember me when it's over. I certainly hope she's worth all the trouble you're about to put yourself through."

"She is, Erleth, believe me."

#

Thomas Crawford walked up to the apartment door. He pressed the buzzer and a red-headed, blue-eyed woman opened the door. A smile broke across her face as she threw herself into his arms.

She kissed him and said, "Oh Tom, I was so worried about you. It's been over a week since I heard from you, and I had the strangest feeling that something bad was happening to you."

He pulled away from her and a frown creased his face. "Tom," he said aloud. "Once I had another name; at least I think I did. I can't seem to remember."

"Come in, Tom," she said, trying not to show her anxiety. "I was in the midst of cooking supper when you came. Why don't you sit down and watch TV while I finish?"

Thomas went into the living room and turned on the television set. The afternoon movie was just ending as he seated himself on the sofa.

"Have you eaten dinner?" she called from the kitchen.

"No I haven't," he answered distantly.

"Will chicken be okay?"

He replied that it would, and returned his attention to the television. The news report was coming on. He listened to it indifferently until the international news began and the announcer stated that France had just set off a nuclear device in the Sahara desert. Thomas broke into a cold sweat. He could not remember why, but as he thought of the radioactive particles being carried by the wind to all parts of the earth, he was struck by the fact that somehow this was a terrible thing. The nagging fear left him, however, when Sharon Davis re-entered the living room and sat down beside him.

WHERE EVERYTHING IS SWEET

There is a place where everything is sweet,
Where tomorrow is never today's crime;
And in it there is nothing incomplete;;
It lies beyond The Fact, outside The Time.
There souls encumbered with no pretty words
Or pseudo-Sickness of a world awry
Converse in trust—and kisses serve as verbs
For nouns that stand while lightless suns pass by.
There are no shadows here, there is no depth.
From now to now is measured every love.
No beauty is discarded; all is kept
To checkmate future sadness in one move.
But I cannot go there; too many ties
Have bound my soul in unhumility,
And an excess of intellect defies
Compassion's deepest dream, true sympathy.
I cannot get outside myself to find
The route whose starting-point lies in no mind.

—Nancy Baxter.

AS WILLY LAUGHED

By Ron Brink

"It's so ridiculous, Dee. I can't see any reason for it!" Willy sipped his drink and let his eyes roam aimlessly out of the room to the proud grey of November. "If he's tired all the time, a doctor ought to see him."

"Oh, Willy! You're always making something out of nothing. It's just a stage. I'm sure he'll grow out of it." Dee Wall's eyes were so large and dark they looked deep set. But her lips had the line of a cynical smile.

"You're always so damned sure. You've got to help Ernest yourself. You're closer to him than anyone else. He always goes to you when he's depressed. Care for another drink?"

"No, thanks. I don't feel very well." Dee sat nervously at the little cafe table and watched Willy go to the bar for his third scotch on the rocks.

As Willy paid for the drink even with his back toward his sister, he felt her get up and leave. "Probably gone to the rest room," he thought. He returned to his seat, sipped his drink and aimlessly watched the hard sleet descending on winter wayfarers. He lit one of Dee's cigarettes, a gratuity felt for the small belching gas heater on the floor to his left.

The cafe had been a favorite spot to the Wall children ever since childhood, probably the only common interest remaining. Dee was studying art at the university and Willy was an aspiring actor. The floor of the place was always dirty, but after awhile nobody noticed. The ceiling was just as the painters had left it sixty-five years ago. It had once been an apothecary shop, with high ceilings, ornate plaster work. Suddenly Willy took his eyes off its grease, dirt, and cobwebs, and stared at his sister's long, slender hands reaching for and lighting a cigarette. "Why don't you tell me about it?" she asked. "You called me, remember?"

"Well," drawled Willy, "we had a rehearsal last night, and Ernest didn't show up. He always shows. Makes the cast feel better the way he carries on. He's like a bird out of its cage. The cast laughs at him. Sometimes he's embarrassed, but the casts enjoys him. I guess that's the main thing."

"I guess."

"I went to Lucille's dressing room to see if he was there.

She sort of befriends him, you know. I found her in tears. She said Ernest had been acting strange the last couple of days, and had apparently decided to take one of his usual walks before rehearsal."

"Did you go out and look around?"

"Yes. To no avail. I couldn't sleep, so I called you."

"You expect him to show, just like that?"

"Well, sort of. But say, you look awfully pale. You all right?" Almost before the words were out of his mouth, Dee had disappeared toward the rest room.

Willy sat and cogitated. No one could run the lights like Ernest! The light board was placed in the rear center of the theater next to the ceiling at the top of the fourth balcony. The board itself was enclosed within a small space resembling a box with walls of meshed metal.

Ernest had no living relatives. A year ago, his pet dog was killed when it fell from the balcony of the theater. It was found the next night, with Ernest kneeling over it. Since then, late at night he would take walks or inconveniently disappear. He was fascinated by multicolored flats and scene pieces. Props! Props from any conceivable situation in life. Ernest found his world in these—a world of beauty and fantasy. Reality was like a glaring light, harsh, painful, and depressing. He was introverted.

As Dee retook her place in front of him, Willy almost gasped. "I believe you are ill. Would you like me to call a taxi?"

He paid the tab, maneuvered her to the street and deposited her in a cab. Then he turned down the street. A stabbing gust of wind threw a curtain of hail to the crackling, crusted earth. Willy hated the cold and sometimes he swore out loud at the wind. It did no good, but it often made him laugh. Again a gust swept him, forbidding him to take a breath till it subsided. Willy's lungs ached, but his eyes were keen. At a far turn of the street, he caught sight of the theater. It was ominously gutted with the darkness of the night.

Willy hurried through the sleet-pelting dark. A bright colored object caught his eye. It was a prop piece—a dog made of plaster and it lay shattered on the steps of the theater. "They've found him," Willy muttered. "He's back in his cage." And then, he roared, as the stagnant, deserted street trembled to the sound.