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TOWERS

The Towers

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SIGMA TAU DELTA

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Foreword

Each spring the members of Sigma Tau Delta, the national honorary English fraternity, present the students and friends of Northern Illinois Teachers College with another issue of TOWERS. On its fifteenth birthday Xi Delta chapter is happy to bring out this volume.

Through this publication the students of Northern Illinois find an outlet for their creative work. From the wealth of manuscripts turned in, the members of the fraternity select the materials that will be published. As writers, the students are obligated to give to the editors their best and most sincere efforts. As editors, we are obliged to be selective in order to present you, the reader, with the best possible material.

This spring of 1953 we are happy to present to you this year's issue of TOWERS. We hope that you will receive as much pleasure from the reading of it as we did in the process of editing it.

*Here's a toast to bright Spring,
Here's a toast to our TOWERS;
May you read it with joy
Through the glad springtime hours.*

HELEN LICKING,
Editor-in-chief

PATRICIA MILLER,
Business Manager

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Symbol

*Words—sharp,
twisting like an
azure flame.*

*Words—icy,
brittle phrases
without aim.*

*Words—soft,
moistly coiling in
mind's fen.*

*Words—sweetly
dripping acid from
a pen.*

*Words—faded,
lost in yellow
tattered pages.*

*Words—strange,
faint signs from
secret ages.*

—Leif Ayen, '55

The Price of Life

The coins fell into my hand with a cheerful, jingling sound. "Twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine There you are, Judas," he told me. "Thirty pieces of silver."

I bowed my head low, slowly and gracefully.

"Tonight?" he asked with a hopeful look in his eyes. "You think maybe tonight we could . . ."

I interrupted him with a cold, definite tone. "Tonight, when the moon is high and the sky cloudless. You will know it is He when I kiss Him."

I glanced at the door with a yearning look. "Go," he said. "I trust you, Judas. You wouldn't dare betray us both." He looked straight into my eyes. A faint smile played at the corners of his wicked lips.

Slowly, step by step, I backed out of the room. I didn't even bother to put the coins away, but held them cupped in my two hands. As I backed through the doorway, the three robed figures gave me a low bow.

I turned and ran down the temple steps, pressing the pieces of silver to my heart. "Thirty pieces of silver! More than I had expected, more than I had hoped for. Thirty pieces of silver!"

The hours went quickly, and soon it was evening. I found myself wandering away from the supper and heading for the temple in the pale moonlight. The trees, the shrubs, and even the grass were covered with an eerie, gray glow.

They were all there waiting, just as they had said they would. As I walked up to them, no one said a word. Turning my head, I closely scrutinized twenty grim, determined

faces. The chief priest nodded. Hands reached down and picked up swords, clubs, and stones. That was all I needed to see. I turned and led the way.

It wasn't far. We got there all too soon. Suddenly I stopped. Through the leaves of the big palm tree, I could see the Master talking to Peter, James, and John. I didn't move. I just stood there thinking. I felt as if I wanted to say, "None of them is Jesus." And yet . . . thirty pieces of silver.

The armed men crowded around me mumbling to themselves.

"Which one, Judas?" The voice behind me was unexcited but firm. I reached down to my waist and caressed the bag of coins. "That is He," I said.

I walked quietly forward, reached up and kissed his bearded cheek. "Hail, Rabbi," I greeted, not daring to look up at Him.

"Hail, friend," He answered. And as He said that, they rushed up and seized Him. I turned my head and slid away.

That night, time dragged on and on and on. My curiosity begged to know what was happening. Finally, I could stand it no longer, and I started for the temple.

As I approached, I could hear the bitter yells and roars of the crowd. I stood with my back to the gate and watched. Jesus, His hands tied behind Him, rested, leaning on the post beside Him. His body was scourged, and His face was spat upon. On his back hung the cloak of a fool. A robed figure crept up behind and kicked Him, and the crowd laughed. A tall, heavy set man stepped towards Him. He struck Him on the face with the palm of his hand, say-

ing "Prophecy unto us, O Christ.
Who is he that struck Thee?"

I buried my head in my hands.
"What have I done? What have I
done?"

But the voices of the crowd drown-
ed out my sobs. "Let Him be cruci-
fied! Let Him be crucified!"

I turned and ran for I don't know
how long. All I know is that I sud-
denly found myself face to face with
the chief priests.

Breathing heavily, I stopped and
gazed at them. "Take back your
silver," I cried. "I don't want it.
It is the price of blood."

The smile slid from the face of the
chief priest. He stared at me, his
eyes full of contempt.

"Now," he said. "Now you want
to return them. Thirty pieces of sil-
ver, covered with a friend's blood.
Now you want to return them, after

you have traded them for a man's
life. Go, you contemptible dog, be-
fore the very air becomes foul with
the stench of your deed. Take your
filthy silver. You valued it more
than love and friendship and kind-
ness. You have made my job easy
for me, too easy. So take the ransom
which your greed has earned and go
to a place where you can eternally
count your pieces of silver as drops
of blood. Go, for even I hate a
traitor."

I pulled the bag from around my
waist and tightened my fingers around
it. "No," I cried, casting the silver
down at them. "No . . . no . . . NO!"

The halter was now tightening
around my neck. All I could see were
pieces of silver and drops of blood
falling around me. "Oh, God, I have
betrayed You. God, Jesus, forgive
the friend who . . ."

—Ted Bacino, '56

Life

*A child tripped along and ran up the steps;
In fascination descended them.
Up and down each side, and then the middle,
And across the width of each the child walked.
Exhausting all ways of scaling them,
The child left as he had come.
In the wake of the child came the man.
He stopped, sighed, labored up the ten,
And walked on in weariness.*

—Darlene Liles, '55

Saga

Now here is a good short story,
As short as any you've heard,
Some of you may not believe it
But there's truth in every word.
It was at the Durham plantation
In the year of seventy-one,
In Kentucky it was springtime
And the planting had just begun.
The war had long been over
And their land was peaceful again.
Some colored folk stayed with Master,
Fearing new lives to begin.
It was dusk and the sun was amber,
Jim Durham, in one of the sheds
Surrounded by faithful servants,
Was counting plants for tobacco beds.
Catherine his winsome beauty
Was setting the dining place,
Near a blazing, crackling fire,
Adorning table with silver and lace.
Then suddenly out of the west
In the dust of a drought-bitten road,
Came a band of mask-covered riders
On steeds of grey and gold.
Straight they drove to the yard,
Jim Durham greeted them all.
One man asked, as the leader,
Food for his men, and his horses—a stall.
Their faces, bitten by hunger,
Appeared dirty, tired and thin.
Each wore a loaded gun belt
Well worn by many a sin.
They sat at Catherine's table,
Her table of silver and lace,
And one man smiled a wicked smile
Into Catherine's lovely face.
The leader spoke in an instant,
"Keep your eyes on your food," he whined.
"Sorry, ma'am," he added,
"Bob ain't used to the likes of you kind."
The darkies, huddled in a corner,
Had eyes round and white,
The room was quiet and tomb-like
While fast came the darkness of night.
They rose when they finished their eating,
And the leader turned to say,
"I hope we ain't bothered you none,
And now, ma'am, we'll be on our way."
Each left a golden dollar
In a high and neat stacked pile.
Each filed by Jim and Catherine,

*As the leader bowed with a gentleman's style.
 Out of the west they came,
 And into the west they returned,
 But the household stayed up late that night
 Until many a log had been burned.
 Morning was crowned with sunshine;
 With the birds' sweet songs in the trees
 When into the yard a rider came
 With ruffled hair from the new day's breeze.
 "Oh, Jim," he called in a high loud voice,
 "I've exciting news to unfold
 Of the robbery that happened late last night
 Fifty-thousand they took in dollars of gold.
 Greensburg was their mark.
 At the bank they took their stand,
 And this dirty work was done
 By the great Jesse James and his cut-throat band."*

—Joyce Hill, '54

The North Woods

Turn off the straight ribbon-like highway onto the Wisconsin black-top and enter the heart of the North Woods. The route, no longer shiny and modern, becomes a black, winding way that passes scattered mail-boxes guarding alluring lanes.

Pick one of these lanes appearing from among the birches and bump along a hard sand road between great stands of pine. The warning "honks" at each hill and each curve die off meaninglessly.

Try, now, that old logging road. The sand has washed away here and there, exposing immense roots. Grass grows high between the tire tracks and purrs beneath the car as it bounces over the ruts. Wild oats brush

high on the fenders.

Round the last curve and roll down to the lake — large and quiet now that dusk has settled the waves and whitecaps. Wash from a vanished outboard and the rise of a single fish are the only movements on the lake. Over to the left the lake is a mass of shadows, highlights, and reflections. To the right it is black as the sun sinks behind the hill of pine.

Feel that certain quiet and calmness of nature?

Soak up the quiet and the calmness, for nowhere else will you find such peace and contentment.

—Faith Riley, '54

The Search

Just like every other normally frustrated human creature in this day and age, I have a problem. However, my mental anguish does not concern the price of beef or the recent presidential election. My dilemma is simply this: was I born too early or too late? It really isn't the most important problem in my life, but I just sometimes dream of living in a different era.

Through no planning on my part, I arrived in this big wide world in the year of our Lord, 1932, and I shall not lament the fact that I have to live in it. But recent trends have started me wondering what it would have been like to have lived in that great era of the "charleston."

Let us reverse the march of time and look in on the "Roaring '20's." Prohibition would have been one of the "evils" to endure; however, it was no doubt more exciting to saunter very shadily up to a disguised "speak-easy" and ask for "Joe" than to walk glibly into a cocktail lounge and be on the "look-out" only for a stray professor rather than a cop.

How could Campus Clara keep from laughing when Joe College came to the dorm in his "convertible"—this sense of the word meaning topless car day and night, summer or winter. Perhaps after the first few dates she could distinguish his fog-horn from those of the other models, but did she honestly admire his flat-top hat, horn rim glasses and racoon coat?

Joe could have indulged in a hardy roar also when Clara came out to meet him in her new pleated skirt that didn't reach quite far enough to cover her painted knees. She was probably late since those forehead

spit curls were not the easiest coiffures with which to tangle.

Oh, to be able to charleston like a true flapper! The proverbial "right arm" would be my contribution for that talent!

Yet, did those flappers with their racoon-clad boyfriends have the secret of the riddle we call "living" tucked inside their rolled stockings?

But now let us push aside the veil of tomorrow and take a quick peek into 1980. This is an age of private helicopters. The jet-propelled automobile has faded into the dim past known as history.

One now orders a hydrogenated atomic highball rather than a cocktail. "Moscow mules" and vodka have been outlawed. And for that "morning after" breath-pleaser, one must purchase — not sen sen, but chlorophyll ammoniated jujubes.

The latest fad in dancing is called the "mars masher." The monicker is very apropos because the step was introduced to this country by several men from Mars.

I fear the women of this age must adhere very strictly to a starvation diet; how else could they squeeze into the exotically styled form-fitting garments? And that little green monster called Envy must pop into the path of every woman who does not possess an atomic-weave coat. Paris is still the fashion center of the world, but it takes so little time to call Rene, transatlantic distance, and have your selection in the next morning's mail.

The old saying about people throwing stones at glass houses has turned into reality, but there is no danger of breakage with the invention of metallic glass.

Again I ask, will these future people unearth the secret humanity is searching? I wonder . . .

Enough day dreaming! Soon after the riotous living of the '20's came the tragedy of the depression; perhaps the mechanistic tomorrow will bring with it untold catastrophes.

Coming right down to it, my problem isn't a problem after all. This is 1953. There is no time like the present; pardon me while I slip into my worn-out jeans and saddle shoes and really live!

—Marilyn Seidelmann, '54

A Seasonal Portrait

*Trees lay aside their crisp, cool-looking green garb
For new creations of rich, glowing tones of sun-bright
yellow, golden amber, burnished copper, and deep
fiery scarlet . . .*

*Azure-blue skies ostentatiously display billows of
spotlessly white clouds.*

*So light and fluffy that disillusioned children reach
for them with outstretched arms*

*As if reaching for cotton candy from a post-season
street carnival vender . . .*

*A silvery harvest moon glides across a swatch of
diamond-studded jet velvet —*

*Brisk winds hustle to transport milkweed and tumble-
weed down to new destinations —*

*Air, choked by the smoke of bonfires, settles down
on the countryside*

*Like smog descends upon the unsightly landscape
adjacent to a steel production center —*

And autumn, as she takes one final fling,

Leaves a memory to which I cling tenaciously

As Nature's villain, Winter, makes its unwelcome debut.

—Patricia Miller, '54

I Am the Mill

*I am the mill,
And this is my song.
I have eaten my fill,
And have done my wrong.*

I am the sawmill at Marine Mills, which is actually the oldest civilian settlement in Minnesota. The first white men here were Lewis S. Judd and David Hone, who on May 8, 1838, came up the St. Croix from the Mississippi on the steamer "Palmyra" and founded the Marine Lumber Company. They named the settlement for a village in Illinois that had been founded by several sea captains from the East. They made me with their own hands, and I started operations in 1839. In 1875 I was in my glory on the bountiful St. Croix, forty miles north of the present location of the Twin Cities.

In the cold winters husky loggers would cut the towering virgin pine on the upper St. Croix and Kettle Rivers. The blizzards cut them off from all traces of civilization during the cutting season, but then spring would come, and with it the log drives. At High Banks and at Yellow Banks the logs thundered down the steep embankments, plunged into the surging river, and reeled and shattered as they started the long journey to me, the mill. At Marine the logs would cover the surface of the river as far as I could see, waiting their turn to be cut into planks by my powerful steel jaws.

I was as solid and as mighty as the men who built me. Five-hundred pound sandstone blocks, cut from the river bank, made my foundation. My water wheel was made of solid wood, six feet in diameter. Its axle was shaped by the lumberjacks themselves from a sturdy oak. Above my

blocks of stone, which were planted firmly in the earth, was the very heart of me. An unpainted frame structure, I extended out over the river for at least twenty feet and perhaps another forty feet onto the land. The large swift trout stream was straightened and planked to form a millrace. I was a picture of power and advancement—a giant of the lumbering saga.

On the hills at my back rose my town of nine hundred inhabitants: Marine Mills. The colonial mansions of the Judds and the Hones towered over the loggers' small frame houses which hovered on the hills. Two frame hotels, the blacksmith shop, the flour mill, the general store, and a couple of rowdy taverns were on the main street. A white frame town hall was right behind me, and up in the hills one found a church and a stone jail, which, in those days of violence, were both often used.

My people were busy and bustling on the crowded dirt streets. The bars and hotels were filled with rough, coarse-bearded lumberjacks, wild-eyed young men, and busy fur traders. Indians and half-breeds mingled on the streets; women scurried from home to store and back again. Dirty, blond-haired little children were always under foot—fighting, laughing, crying. Men of distinction came to visit my town, too. On the hotel register are the names of General Grant and John Jacob Astor, who have looked on my mighty being with praise and admiration.

Don't get the idea that my men were dour and earnest. It was an untrammelled existence that my loggers lived. There were scandals, too, for never did desire flourish more dra-

matically than under the pines. They were free to live as they pleased, and they knew it, and they showed it.

In 1889 I was shut down. My bulging muscles ceased their flexing. Why? My greedy fingers had bared all the earth in my grasp, and my great teeth had no more timber to devour. I had won. The trees were gone! All of them!

Now even the last of my mighty lumberjacks is dead. Oh yes, there are still a few who remember when my great saws were stopped, but nobody is really left from those days of violence and splendor.

On the hills at my back lies a peaceful, tree-shaded village of two hundred and ninety inhabitants: Marine-on-St. Croix. The blacksmith shop, the flour mill, the hotels—they're gone. They have built a new church. The stone jail is still there, but the boy scouts use it for a meeting place. The town hall houses a fire department and a small rental library. Several gas stations face the road of shiny tar and stone.

Now, Marine-on-St. Croix is loved and known by only two types of people. First are the friendly and peaceful villagers, most of them over forty, who still remember my glory from the tales of the past. The majority of them are farmers, some work in Stillwater or the Twin Cities, and some are children. Then there are the rich summer folk, who have built beautiful homes along the

river. Their homes surpass by far the old mansions. These summer dwellers still brood with a mixture of antiquarian and merely malicious satisfaction at my days of fury and scandal.

I'm still here, too, but you don't know how I have aged. Behind the town hall a steep, overgrown trail of eroded sandstone shelves leads down to the river bank. The tall trees make it dark down there and almost hide me from your sight. You hear the bubbling and the gay laughter of the trout stream as it bounces into the muddy river. It is not far to jump, and you soon find yourself across it and in my humbled presence.

You can see giant blocks of sandstone which resemble a once sturdy foundation. But there is moss growing in clusters on them, and some are crumbled. You can see how part of me has melted into the rocky outcroppings of the bluff over which I once towered. Above my foundation is nothing. All of my timbers and walls and saws and my very magnitude are gone. By the stream my rotting water wheel leans precariously against a remnant of a sandstone wall. The trees, which I had once overpowered, loom over me; I am damp and dark and cold. For me the sun is gone, and I am lonely. I am all that is left. I am alone. I am destroyed by my own greed.

—John J. Magnuson, '56

To Be

To be
is;
Is
is to be.
I am me, and thou art thee.
Birds sing;
Trees grow;
Spring comes;
Farmers sow.
We recognize
a smile,
a nod;
But tell me, please—
What is God?

—Frances Eickstead, '54

Authority

The man who carries a gun does so because
the man behind him carries authority
as if it were one.
Authority by itself is a rock balanced on
a marble.
A scarecrow with a tuxedo is still a
scarecrow;
And after a while even the crows don't
get frightened.
The smiling man who gets serious makes us
wonder,
But when the serious man rolls on the floor,
you lose respect.
When a man climbs down to your level, you
hold him in contempt.
We must be awfully careful about how we
treat our gods.
I'm sorry, but that's how it is.

—Erwin Zipse, '54

China Gods

*Endings are like stair landings: They
usually lead to something else*

*"We must be awfully careful about the
way we treat our gods."*

*Our gods are like the good china people
keep; only for special uses, you
know.*

*Part of the value of both lies in the
fact alone that they are fragile;
they can easily be broken.*

*We pride ourselves in the way we keep them
sheltered; we call that faith.*

*We save them for special uses, like company
or distress.*

*And even if they aren't too practical, we
enjoy looking at them and telling
others we own such things.*

*When they're broken, we sigh, and either
do without them or find something
to replace them with.*

—Erwin Zipse, '54

One Bird

*One bird
Is perched on a rooftop
All too ready
To take wing into madness.*

*One bird
Looks down to the earth
And he thinks that he
Is better than you.*

*One bird
Is struck by truth
And sees the crowd
Soaring above him.*

—Joan Kasten, '54

The Cars

Someday—someday soon. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe even today. But there had been so many todays, so many heart-breaks. It was better to think of tomorrow, for tomorrow is always fresh and new and alive. One could never be hurt in tomorrow; it was today that brought new grief.

Another car was coming. A blue car. He had gone away in a blue car! But he wouldn't necessarily come back in the same one. Still, she hurried to the curb and watched it come up to her. There was a man with grey hair and glasses and a woman who looked at her strangely. He might be hiding in the back seat, trying to fool her as he liked to do. She stood on tiptoe to look into the floor of the back seat. It was empty.

The warmth and hope that had welled up in her like a tide died out, and her smile faded like sunset into dusk.

She went back and sat down on the bench, waiting for another car. A squirrel scampered across the street and ran up a tree directly in front of her. She clucked at it and smiled; it stopped an instant before dashing into the foliage and out of sight.

As she sat there, she examined her hands, which were folded peacefully in her lap. They were getting a little wrinkled now, but they were still very soft and delicate. She remembered how those very hands had held him when he was a baby, and comforted when he was frightened, and soothed him when he was sick. She remembered, too, how those very hands had waved goodbye to him as he drove off to the railway station in the blue car.

He had been gone a long time now; almost eight years. He had written often of all the places he had been, and she had felt as though she were seeing the world through his eyes.

He had sent her a grass skirt from Hawaii, and she had sent him cookies every week. On his birthday she had baked a cake, and put it in a box, then filled the box with popcorn as protection for the cake, and sent it off.

Then she got the telegram. It shocked her at first, till she realized he was just playing a trick on her, trying to fool her. The cake came back. It didn't matter, she'd bake a huge cake when he came home—devils' food—he did so love devils' food cake with white icing.

He had promised he would come back and so now she waited for the cars, watching each one come up, knowing that one time a car would come, and he would be in it.

A leaf blew from the tree above and fell on her hands; a bright red-and-gold maple leaf. She realized that winter was coming—another winter - - -.

A car was coming. She got up and almost ran to the curb. The sun's rays mirrored from the car's windshield, so that she could not see who was driving. It was a man—a young man! Her heart leaped into her throat as she stepped off the curb into the street. The car slowed down! He was going to stop! It was he! It was - - -. But the car did not stop; it merely swung wide to avoid hitting her, and went on.

The molten beams of the sun splashed their colors over the sky, soaking the clouds with rich hues.

The watchman closed and locked the gates as she walked back to the large, bleak building, the leaves dancing gaily about her in the chill wind, as if taunting her.

Someday—someday soon. Maybe tomorrow.

—Roger Margason, '56

My Garden

Long have I sought
Along the neatly bordered paths
 of my high-walled garden
For that which I hoped to find.
Not content, I, with the first bright bloom
 that met my eye;
They taught me to look for a sturdy stem
 and well-matched leaves of purest green.
You will know it by its fragrance,
 they would say, as you draw near.
There's no mistaking, no, no doubt or fear.
Yet, in my garden there are none like this;
Outside, perhaps,
 but the wall is high, and the thorns
 will tear my tender flesh,
And I am afraid.
Here the barren soil distorts, somewhat,
 the first young shoots;
And thus perfection loses sway to truth.
And yet, there is a trace of perfume in the air—
Perhaps, if I bent down and pressed my face
 against the coolness of the petals
 I could find its home.
But no, how silly, they would say;
She wears a faded flower in her hair
 and does not know its petals droop!
And so I walk along the path,
Gaze at the still blooms in all their color,
And when it grows dark
I go inside
 and shut the door.

—Frances Eickstead, '54

The Christmas Angel

Miss Warner, teacher of Big Woods Country School, and her students were busily painting the sets for their annual Christmas program. They were singing Christmas carols, and brushes slap-slapped against the cardboard props in time to the music. Everyone was excitedly looking forward to the night of the performance.

They had just finished a rousing chorus of "Jingle Bells" when Peter Dirks stood up. "M. J., sing us your song!" All eyes looked toward Mary Jane Parkins. "Yes, Mary Jane, do sing it again for us," agreed Miss Warner. "Yes, sing, M. J." chorused the painters.

Mary Jane shyly smiled the pretty smile that showed her dimples. She never had to be coaxed to sing. "All right, but you kids better keep on painting while I sing 'cause we've got to get these done." She began to sing in the sweet, natural voice that always found its way into every heart that heard it. They had promised to continue working, but it was almost impossible to keep one's mind on anything else when Mary Jane sang. Her voice held them spellbound as its clear highness floated over the room.

Everyone liked to hear Mary Jane sing, and her voice was in demand on all occasions. She had never had a singing lesson, but her voice had an inborn quality that stirred every ear. She had sung in the Christmas play since she was in second grade, and this, her sixth year at Big Woods, would be her last opportunity to sing as the angel.

The song ended, and the now silent room still held the imaginary echo of its beauty. Paint brushes fell

unheeded as all hands applauded Mary Jane. Peter Dirks, always spokesman for the group, simply expressed its great appreciation. "Gee, that was swell, M. J." Sylvia Herrick picked up her paint brush.

"It was nice, M. J., but my singing teacher says . . ."

Peter rushed to Mary Jane's defense. "M. J. never had no screwy singing teacher yet and she'll never need one." Mary Jane, the peacemaker, did not want any arguments especially about her.

"Come on, kids. These sets have to be done. Let's see how much we can get through with today!"

Painting resumed and everyone worked diligently for a few minutes. Suddenly Miss Warner felt aware of someone watching her. She turned toward the door. It framed the distinguished looking figure of the superintendent of schools. "Good afternoon, Mr. Herrick. We're just finishing up the sets for the program."

"Hello, Miss Warner." He glanced dutifully at the painters. "Very nice, uh—Miss Warner, I'd like to talk to you—alone." As there was only one room in the little school, he obviously wanted her to dismiss the children. She looked up to tell him that they needed every spare minute to paint the sets, but his small bead-like eyes stared down at her with that "I'm your boss, remember" look. She sighed to herself.

"All right. O.K., kids. That's all for today. We'll finish up tomorrow." Peter turned and looked at her with raised eyebrows. "But Miss Warner . . ."

"We'll finish tomorrow, Peter."

The children had left, and she was alone with Mr. Herrick. He cleared

his throat almost nervously and began, "I know, Miss Warner, that your Christmas program is always very well prepared and given."

"Thank you. We do our best."

"But I have a suggestion for an improvement this year. My niece, Sylvia, has had singing lessons for five years and has a superior voice. She would make even a better angel than Mary Jane Parkins. I want her to have the part."

Miss Warner's whole body tensed at the thought of Sylvia Herrick as the angel. Sylvia, an only child, had been sheltered and molded by adoring grown-ups for so long that she had never had time to develop a personality or mind of her own. She had been sent to the best voice teacher in Chicago to learn to sing. She was taught how each note should be formed and how it should always sound. Sylvia's singing came from her brain while Mary Jane's came from her heart.

"But, Mr. Herrick, I . . ."

"A voice developed by the best training must not be wasted. I . . ." Miss Warner did not hear anything else he said. She was thinking of how disappointed Mary Jane would be. She wanted to argue with him, but a Big Woods teacher did not argue with Mr. Herrick and keep her job.

Mr. Herrick got up to leave. "You will make the change then? I'm sure you will find it a great improvement for your program. Good day, Miss Warner." She did not have time to say goodbye before he was gone.

The following day during lunch hour while the children were outside building snowmen, Miss Warner called Mary Jane into the building. She burst into the room, her bright cheeks almost as red as her jacket.

"Gee, Miss Warner, is it nice out! The snow looks just like hundreds of little diamonds. Oh yes, my mother told me to ask you—should I wear a white choir robe to sing in?"

Miss Warner caught her breath. "Mary Jane, sit down, dear. I have something to tell you." Mary Jane bounced into a front seat and looked intently at her teacher. "Yes, Miss Warner."

The teacher had rehearsed this little speech a dozen different ways, but now all she could do was say it briefly and bluntly. "Mary Jane, Sylvia is going to sing as the angel this year. Mr. Herrick and I feel sure that with her training she will be able to do a better job." Mary Jane's eyes seemed to be staring holes through her. Then they slowly filled with tears. She got up from the chair and started toward the door. Miss Warner started to follow her. "Mary Jane, I . . ."

Mary Jane choked back a sob. "She's his niece, isn't she?" She ran out the door to the playground. The other children led by Peter saw her tears and rushed over to her. She was evidently telling them the news, for their young faces wore startled frowns. Then they all picked up snow balls and threw them mercilessly at poor Sylvia. Mary Jane soon stopped the bombardment, and they all went behind the snow fort and Miss Warner could no longer see them.

The week until the program was not a happy one for Miss Warner. She could see the resentment in the children's eyes, all, of course, but Sylvia's. She had shown absolutely no feeling about getting the part whatever.

At last the big night arrived. The single room of the school was aglow

with the sparkle of Christmas decorations and the smell of pine needles. The desks had been moved back, and the room was separated into two parts by a huge cheesecloth curtain. On one side of the curtain excited children were frantically trying to remember lines. On the other side proud parents were anxiously hoping and praying that lines would not be forgotten.

Miss Warner sighed as she stepped through the curtain to announce the fourth annual Christmas program. In previous years this had been one of her happiest moments, but this year, of course, was different. Glancing over the audience, she began the announcement. Every face bore a contented look of apprehension, for this Christmas program was much loved and long awaited by all who had ever seen it. But the part of the program that everyone especially liked was when Mary Jane sang.

All these things clouded Miss Warner's mind as she finished the announcing. She knew that they had all come to hear Mary Jane. She was also uneasily aware of the fact that they were to be disappointed. She could see Mr. Herrick sitting with head held high, in the front row. At that moment she almost hated him.

The announcing was over. It was time for the program to begin. Miss Warner stepped back behind the curtain and signaled the children in the first scene. The curtain was pulled and the program was underway. The audience noted that the set was different this year. There was a piano on stage because Sylvia could not sing without accompaniment.

The program went along very well. Jimmy Brown, the first shepherd, tripped over his robe; but then, he always did. The time for Sylvia

to sing was drawing near. Miss Warner told her to get ready and asked her where Susan was. Sylvia didn't know. Miss Warner felt as if her heart had dropped to her shoes. Susan Drew, Sylvia's accompanist, was nowhere to be found. No one else who was there could play, and Sylvia could not sing unless someone played.

"Sylvia, you'll have to sing without the piano, dear."

"But, Miss Warner, I can't, you know I can't. My singing teacher says . . ."

Miss Warner looked out at the stage. It was time for the angel to sing. She pushed the unwilling Sylvia onto the stage. As the new angel walked toward the center of the stage there was but one thought in every mind of the audience. "Where is Mary Jane? Why is Sylvia the angel?" A buzz of whispers and a feeling of uneasiness filled the room. There was one smile of contentment, though, on the upturned face of Mr. Herrick.

Sylvia began to sing. The whispers and uneasiness became more intense. She struggled through the first few lines and then became thoroughly lost with no piano to help her. Her face grew crimson and wet with tears. She turned and started to run off the stage. But from backstage came a loud whisper, "Stay there Sylvia." Sylvia was not one to think for herself, so she stayed. From behind the cheesecloth backdrop came the strains of the high lilting voice that all had been waiting to hear. The whispers and uneasiness died out completely. Everyone was enthralled by the angelic song of this little girl who sang because her heart had something to say. The room was alive with the song until its end. Then the curtain

closed. Complete silence for a brief minute followed, and then the room thundered with applause.

Miss Warner was sure that Mr. Herrick was not applauding. She knew him well enough to realize that

he would be angry with her for not keeping track of the pianist. But she didn't care. The important thing, at that moment, was Christmas and that the angel's song had been heard.

—Judy Tomisek, '56

In a Minor Key

*We sang an unusual minor song
Softly as we walked down the street.
It was a haunting tune, rarely heard
And the first two lines were all we recalled.*

*"Spirit in the wood of a hollow tree,"
"Echo in the afterglow"—these were the lines,
So trite now, that appealed to our youthfulness then.
We were very good friends during that time
With nothing to tell us it could not last.*

*My friend was blue-eyed, graceful and tall;
Though disliked by some, she was always sincere
As we walked on down to the lakeside cafe
At noon in the warm spring days.
Those hours will return in future years.*

*She loved to sing, always in a minor key.
And she taught me that tune as we walked;
To us it seemed mystic and far removed
From the sleepy small town and rural school.
It was welcome escape from daily routine.*

*Our companionship ended at the close of the year;
As the school year ends, so do shortlived friendships.
An occasional letter, and on one winter day
She sent several photos from a Florida beach.
Once or twice we met, and again last spring.*

*She excitedly spoke of wedding plans,
And seemed her old self, serenely gay.
At work one rainy summer morning
I heard two women feverishly gossip:
"Yes—an overdose—she died last night!"*

—Joan Kasten, '54

Colors

Colors.

They suggest nothing.

They exist only because we see.

They do nothing for us.

They merely are.

Then why not exist in shades of grey?

No stark white

No throbbing red

No misty blue

No sunny yellow

No youthful green

No dead brown

No sharp black

Why not?

Because—

White is a cloud strafed by sun rays

... the socks bouncing on a clothes line

... the crisp kernels of popped corn

... the window frames on a brown shingled house

Red is a slash of lipstick across a pale face

... the blood on the street after the accident

... the coals in the belly of the old locomotive

... the long lacquered fingernails of the "26" girl

Blue is the soft fuzzy blanket in the baby's crib

... the pale letter devoured anxiously by the lover

... the guest towels arranged neatly on the shelf

... the fathomless depths of the ocean

Yellow is the clean, bright kitchen

... the lonely buttercup on the hillside

... the candle in the window of the old farm house

... the field of grain undulating in the wind

Green is the dark forest in late afternoon

... the first buds seen each spring

... the few blades of grass cherished in the slums

... the broad pasture lands of the mid-west in summer

Brown is the winding path cut by horses through the thicket

... the rustic fence that runs along the highway

... the ground covered with dead leaves before the first snow

... the naked branches swaying in the winter blasts

*Black is the shiny pair of shoes on the store counter
... the big car and its chauffeur outside the theater
... the sheen of a velvet drape moving slowly
... the silhouette of a bird against the setting sun*

And grey?

*Grey is only
a mist
a haze
a fog.*

Grey is nondescript.

Grey creates no feelings.

*Grey is
the world we cannot know.*

Grey is death.

—Helen Licking, '54

Stars

*A million glistening diamonds
On ethereal velvet black,
A heavenly guide to dreams of home
And longings to be back,
Garlands of five-petaled blossoms
On a summer sea of blue,
A beckon for the broken heart
To try its plea anew,
The gems of a Muse's necklace
Broken and scattered on high,
A signal that a tranquil day
Like man too soon must die,
Each the tip of a fairy's wand
To an imaginative, wide-eyed child,
And for on whose youth has long since passed
A memory recalled on a mid-night mild,
Mother Nature's oldest portrait
Sketched and painted with care,
Or the mystic study of science
To the man who says he will dare,
God's glorious vigil on mankind
Spraying the earth with light,
A God-given gift of beauty
To brighten your path in the night.*

—Joyce Hill, '54

Safe or Sorry

Young Alec Winslow III wiped the drops of sweat from his brow, fished a nickel from the pocket of his immaculately tailored slacks and dropped it into the coke machine. With a flip of his wrist he uncapped the frosty bottle after which he took a long, cool swallow.

"Going to be a scorcher today, huh?" he remarked to the filling station attendant who was pumping ethyl into the tank of Alec's long blue Cadillac convertible.

"Always is hotter than blazes here during the day," the old fellow answered. "It's more than I can see why the tourists are so anxious to get to Las Vegas this time of year anyway. If I had my choice, I'd stay as far away from this dang stretch of desert as I could get."

"What's keeping you?" Alec inquired.

"Why somebody's gotta stay out here to take care of you fellas travelin' through." The man grinned through tobacco-stained teeth. "I'm not sayin' there isn't money in it."

The screen door of the lunchroom banged shut, and the two men glanced up. Coming toward them was a small, well-shaped girl. The blue linen suit she was wearing perfectly accentuated her red-gold hair.

"Are you through with the grease job?" the girl asked the station attendant hardly favoring Alec with a glance, although it was impossible to entirely ignore his openly admiring stare.

"All through, Miss," he said. "She's ready to go anytime." His hand made a sweeping gesture toward her car, a rather battered-looking '38 Ford.

Alec's mouth involuntarily opened, and before he could stop himself, "You don't plan on making it to Las Vegas in that heap?" slipped out.

Momentarily a stormy look appeared in the girl's blue-violet eyes. But in a second she completely regained composure and said, "Well, I don't see that it's any business of yours, but I've made it this far and I have complete confidence that the rest of the trip shall be as successful."

"But I don't see how you can undertake such a thing. It's absolutely ridiculous to think of a little thing like you all alone out in this hellish expanse of waste in that heap of junk. I'd be glad to give you a lift to Vegas," Alec renewed his argument.

The little blonde bit her lip to hold back any more angry retorts and opening her purse asked the attendant how much she owed him. She paid the old man without even a glance at Alec, who opened the Ford's door for her. Settling herself under the wheel she started the car and pulled off, leaving Alec standing in a cloud of dust.

Alec shrugged, went into the lunchroom, ordered and enjoyed a leisurely meal. Less than an hour later he was ready to start on the next leg of his journey. He stepped into the Cadillac, started the motor and sat for a moment listening to its beautiful rhythmical purring under the hood. The Cadillac lapped up the miles easily, and a little over half an hour later Alec saw what he had been looking for. Moving along the silver ribbon of the road far ahead of him a small black speck was visible. Surely it must be the girl's old '38 Ford. He stepped up his speed and the speck grew perceptibly closer.

Now he was close enough to see the glint of red-gold hair. He pulled up directly alongside, but failing to get any response he gave a long melodious blast on the horn and put on a burst of speed, leaving the Ford as if it had been standing still.

For some reason Alec felt rather deflated and took out his ill feeling in increased speed. Flashing toward him were the concrete abutments of a culvert which spanned an arroyo.

All at once there was a loud report. A tire had blown out. The car started wobbling all over the road and went out of control. The car's speed was slackening, but before Alec could gain complete control, crash! The grill and one fender smashed into the concrete abutment with the shriek of rending steel, and a jolt which sent Alec sprawling over the steering wheel.

After a moment though, Alec pulled himself out of the car rather shaken up but not hurt at all. "Damn," he said, "of all the places for a thing like this to happen." He walked around to get a better view of the damage. The side where he had struck was so bent in that the wheels wouldn't turn. Alec kicked the good front tire with a look of disgust and then slumped down dejectedly in the shade the car afforded, head in his hands. Sometime later he heard the unmistakable throbbing of a Ford motor approaching. He gave a whoop of joy, ran to the side of the road and, shading his eyes from the sun's intense glare, watched its approach. As it neared, he began to wave frantically. The car slowed down but then, to his dismay, put

on speed and the girl passed him without even a glance.

"Why that heartless little devil!" Alec sputtered, and stood for a moment, his mouth open with surprise until the seriousness of his situation overwhelmed him. "What will I do now?" Then a sudden desperate inspiration hit him. He swayed dizzily and then slumped over, lying in the road. Sure enough the girl had been watching in the car's rear view mirror to note his reaction. The car began to slow down and then finally to back up. Alec never lifted his head or moved a muscle until the girl was kneeling beside him. "Oh, please, you aren't dead, are you?" she asked and gingerly touched his shoulders.

Alec cautiously lifted himself on his elbows and let out a low moan, "Oh, I think I need a doctor." He groaned and let her help him up and over to the car, leaning heavily on her shoulder until she had helped him into the car.

After a minute or so, the girl asked Alec, who was leaning his head back against the seat, if he was feeling better.

"Quite a bit better," said Alec, "but will you tell me something? Would you really have left me out here in such a condition if I hadn't been injured?"

"Well, honestly, I did intend to come back anyway, but I thought you deserved a little scare after speaking about my car in such an insulting manner." She looked over at him and for the first time favored him with an impish smile.

—Jacqueline Logan, '56

Time Taps

*a hushed tap,
a muffled sigh;
then silence.*

*out of this peace
comes a melodious, weird tune,
a lament to a sorrowful mind.*

*a hushed tap,
a mournful tear;
then silence.*

*thoughts pass,
and time taps wearily on.*

*suddenly, tiny trickles
of distant laughter
grow louder, louder till
everything interfuses
making a horrible thunder.*

*laughter changes;
minute sadness takes place.*

*all is quiet again and the
hushed taps are resumed.*

—Janet O'May, '56

How Does It Feel

*How does it feel when the whine overhead
begins to get louder; when the rumble
doesn't turn away and stop?*

*Does the creeping red along the bandaged arm
look like the setting sun upon the summer
clouds? Or like a rose?*

*How does it feel when you've got to run at the
fellow who's running at you? And you wonder
whose arm is the longest?*

*Does it still feel the same when the flag goes
by? The band isn't there any more.*

*"But mother, it's not time to go to bed; . . .
... go to bed . . .
... bed . . ."*

—Erwin Zipse, '54

An Emerald (Rondeau)

*An emerald divinely set
Upon her plaited coronet
Aspires to the commonplace
Beside the ornamental grace
And comeliness of the coquette.
Anon the Shadow casts his net;
Idolatry becomes regret
For the pallid fingers that embrace
An emerald.
And now Time's messengers beset
Her tomb. Decay and dust forget
A Venus garbed in Spanish lace,
An exquisitely sculptured face.
But glorious, green, and glimmering yet—
An emerald.*

—Marjorie Knop, '54

Harbor Scene

*Rain-shined pavement under the street lights,
Down by the mist-smothered river,
Echoes the steps of a solitary traveler
Wending his lonely way.
A muted trumpet from an all-night bar
Murmurs a plaintive sigh
And the footsteps waver, hesitate,
As its gentle voice says "Wait . . ."
The fog drifts in as foghorns moan
And the footsteps pace their empty way, alone . . .
Shadows flicker on walls ahead:
Only shadows, silent, black and dead . . .
The river whispers a restless cry
Beating the pier with an angry hand,
Disquieted by the solitude
Of darkness, fog and sand.*

—Carol Gardner, '53

Confusion in Modern Life

If to look truth in the face and not resent it when it's unpalatable, and take human nature as you find it, ... is to be cynical, then I suppose I'm a cynic.

— W. Somerset Maugham,
The Back of Beyond.

As Maugham implies, the line of distinction between so-called cynicism and down-to-earth realism is extremely tenuous. *Cynic* is sometimes a term of reproach hurled by the proponents of the doctrine that black is white at those who refuse to admit that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly, that everything is good, especially the bad, and that everything is right that is wrong.

The term is also used as a self-compliment by those who fancy that it is the height of sophistication to disparage everything that most people enjoy. At all times there exists a minority which considers it fashionable to be cynical — in this form it is what George Meredith referred to as "intellectual dandyism."

However, there also exists at all times a certain group—perhaps they are the disillusioned idealists—which, after contemplating the minute progress of the human race through the thousands of years of its existence, is forced to the conclusion that this life is a vale of tears to be made the best of while we are subjected to it, without expecting it to improve and hoping that it will not become worse within that period.

Moral issues aside, whatever appellation one may wish to confer upon these people, it must be admitted that they have a strong case on their side. Even in Matthew Arnold's time society had reached such a state that he referred to "This strange disease of modern life, with its sick hurry, its divided aims," and his contemporary, Oscar Wilde, remarked that "Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing." It is probably trite to point out how much more true are both of the ob-

servations today than they were when they were written.

The state of the world today and current events offer little prospect of hope to those who retain some faith in the improvability of man. The problems that complicate peaceful existence are extremely chaotic, involving economic situations that are of utmost importance to human life. There is also a seemingly insurmountable degree of lack of understanding and prejudice connected with national, economic, cultural and other interests.

Many people, on being confronted with the maze of confusing phenomena and realizing that world events are caused by a tremendous complexity of factors which are beyond their control, can only conclude that life is short at best and that the only sensible thing to do is to try to get as much out of it as possible without hurting others.

Most of us go all through life thinking of all the things we would like to do and the places we would like to see without ever really doing or seeing any of them. The only way to escape from this mad rat-race is to decide firmly not to be run by our mechanistic society. It is extremely difficult to escape from it but the blow for freedom must be struck suddenly and firmly. He who wishes to be free must rebel against all the forces which try to drag him down, and with firm determination he must embark upon the life that he desires. If he is in any position to do so and if the tide of circumstance does not run too heavily against him, he may partially succeed.

—Ellouise Ford, '53

War !

*Here's a roundelay in blood
for the lackbrained ass called man.
I saw the rape of a million towns
and a million-million dead
marching to their graves.
(Sing your hellsong, all you fiends!)*

*Here's a roundelay in blood
for morons to make merry with.
I saw a man die today,
his face a crimson mask
and chest a scarlet gore.
(Sing your hellsong, all you fiends!)*

*Here's a roundelay in blood
for the gibbering ape called man.
Strike away your chains?
Fools! You've been bound from
birth to death and know it not.*

*(Filth-besmirched and tattered
ride Four Mad Horsemen
seeking what all men seek—
the emptiness of nothing.)*

—Leif Ayen, '55

The Yard

a thin veil of snow, grey snow

*A jackknife bridge and four lift bridges and muffled steam-
ship stacks and blind pilothouses and towering grain
elevators rim the horizon of the yard.*

*A low concrete oil house enclosed by stained oil drums and
rusting springs and scraps of side sheet metal and
rows, neat rows of ready freight cars occupy the yard.*

*A once honored home is now an angular 'shanty' for stencils
and paints and tools and a winter-warm potbellied stove
and sweated work clothes, the always sweated work clothes
of the men of the yard.*

*Men live and men die in the yard.
When in the corner bar they talk of it.
When retired they die for the lack of it.
They have inherited it, and they try to defeat it,
And they fight to defeat it, but they never defeat it—the yard.*

—Don Hedl, '54

Chicago

I love to walk in your front yard

And listen

To the murmur of your voice,

*Its soft whisper lulled in lengths of lake and
grass*

Pierced by sparkling boulevards.

And listen

*To the ripple of your laughter in the mystery of
the waves,*

*Its fleeting music echoed in the clean and holy
wind.*

I love to peek into your alley

Your dull and drab dark alley

And listen

To the solemn sounding of its song . . .

To feel the heaviness of the air

And the discouragement of the people

To hear the silence that is loud

And oppressive to the ear.

A dull and hopeless alley

Too tired to hurry or to care:

Too ugly, too dirty, too plain

To even be reformed.

I love to wander in your back yard,

The center and the heart of you

And here my love boils into furious passion

*In harmony with the beat of the pulse of your
activity:*

The noise, the confusion, the excitement.

I love your monuments in concrete,

Your monuments in flesh.

I love every part of you

From the ugly gutters of your street

*To the blue mantel you unroll until it touches
the friends*

That are like you, yet so different.

*I open my arms to embrace you,
But you must be submissive
Without touching me.
I love you,
But I am not part of you.
I walk through your streets
And look at you,
But as I enter, I leave.
I am a lover not a product of you,
And when you try to claim me
My love turns to disgust and fear
And I hate you.*

—Mary Huesman, '55

Springtime in August

As I sit here idly turning the pages of a book, I come upon a small branch of sagebrush pressed between the pages. This brown dry twig brings to my mind the picture of the plains of Colorado as they were one scorching August day five years ago.

Once again I see the endless expanse of sagebrush and sand, sand and sagebrush. Once again I feel the hot sun beating down from a brilliant blue sky. Can that haze in the west be clouds? As we come nearer, we see that it is the sun shining upon the high, snow-covered summits of the Rocky Mountains.

As we leave the plains behind and begin the ascent into Rocky Mountain National Park, we seem also to leave the summer behind us. As we climb higher and higher, the air grows cooler and cooler until once again we seem to find ourselves in the spring season. Beside the road are patches of melting snow and beneath the trees bloom wild flowers of every color — red, blue, yellow, orange, white, pink. Here in late August we find the deep blue of the

forget-me-not and the brilliant red of the columbine, both of which have long since ceased to bloom on the plains below.

That night we sleep with the music of a swiftly running mountain stream singing in our ears. We awake in the morning and, shivering in the cold clear air, climb into the car to continue our westward journey. For a short time, as we drive through the forest of pines, spruces, and other evergreens mingled with a few hardwoods, we again see the brilliant-hued spring flowers blooming beside patches of clean, white snow.

Soon, however, we leave the pass and descend once more to the vast desert with its endless expanse of sagebrush and sand, sand and sagebrush broken only by the colorful sandstone buttes which seem always to hover in the distance. Once again the hot sun beats down from a brilliant blue sky, and it is again a scorching August day. The springtime of the Rockies is left behind.

—Pat Kessler, '56

Day Came

The night was restless, but not half so restless as I. The season was spring, and nature, with her gusts of breath, seemed to be blowing away all the traces of winter that had crept out of the reach of the spring sun. My mood matched that restlessness. I had pondered long over problems—mistakes of the past and events of the future. Finally in desperation I went out-of-doors and wandered up to my favorite spot in the acres which lay behind our home. This beloved spot was on top of a high hill.

Even here I sat with bowed head. I wondered what tomorrow would bring. Still, soft breezes blew through my hair and darkness surrounded me. I must have slept then.

When I awoke, I found that the new day was here. I looked down from my point on the hill towards a city which I knew would soon be awakening. After a little, though,

my eyes left the city and rested on the green carpet of Mother Nature. Her design was an intricate one. She had been generous with sunny dandelions, and they polka-dotted the beautiful carpet. Then I realized what an artistic genius Mother Nature really is. My eyes found a tree. As I followed the powerful branches, I could not help thinking how much they looked like muscled arms reaching for the sky. Higher and higher I looked. The newly-awakened sunbeams were dancing around the fleecy-white clouds. "Awake. Come play!" they were saying. I smiled as I compared them to lambs playing in a meadow.

As I looked further into the sky, day emerged from night. I heard my God say "Believe," and I believed.

—Lenna Bond, '56

Geography

How strange it is to find that something as concrete as mathematical statements can acquire emotional connotations. The physical miles separating lovers can be told accurately, in a brief phrase, but behind these words lie the tenderest feelings that would shatter if an effort were made to reveal them verbally.

The miles parting us were many, and increased as the days passed by.

The letters we feverishly wrote in a vain attempt to shorten the distance served only to lengthen it.

Now when I see a globe of the world, it is bloated and distorted, and I weakly accept the fact that it will never return to its comparative symmetry for me.

—Joan Andresen, '53

The Bridge

A few feet in front of the old bridge was a small sign: "Load Limit 10 Ton." It was a landmark; it had been there for years and no one paid any attention to it. Trucks and buses had to use the bridge; it was the only way into town.

The day I remember the bridge best was just another summer day. The sun melted and slid along the steel beams just as it had done so many times before. The bridge was not any wider or longer, no uglier or prettier. It was all just the same, taken as much for granted as the sign in front of it. It was just the bridge — the same bridge that was the bus stop, the by-the-drive-in bridge, the meet-you-at-the-bridge bridge, the same bridge the circus elephants paraded across, and the same bridge the V.F.W. marched across on Memorial Day. It was no different this day; no different than it had been for many days and many, many years.

On this day Father and I were going to Marion to shop. The trip would not take long. We had promised Mother we would be back in time for dinner.

As we came down the hill, we could see the skeleton of the bridge outlined against the summer sky. It looked as if it were made of iron lace. As we started across, the bridge gave no shiver or groan to warn us. Instead, it waited until we were in the middle — and it dropped. It slammed its heavy undersides down on the defenseless water. That was all there was to it; it dropped. It dropped as evenly as if a razor-sharp knife had sliced it free at both ends. It dropped in one solid piece, and then it crumbled. It is surprising how little noise the tons of falling steel made and how quickly it was all over. I do not remember any rumbles or prolonged eruption. I remem-

ber only a jar, a falling sensation, a limpness, the loudness of the silence after the crash, and then darkness — black merciful darkness. I was not hurt really; I suffered no broken bones or serious cuts. I was saved from a trip through the windshield by the dash-board. My major injury was shock, but Father did not come home for dinner that night, or will he ever again.

Three days later I went back to the bridge. Everything was still the way it was after the crash. The bridge looked as if some Paul Bunyan-like hand had mistaken it for paper and had crumpled and wadded it up. The car was still there, pinned under only one girder that had fallen so carefully across the left corner of the car as if a hand had placed it there. The back window was bent nearly in half, and yet it had not cracked or broken. The car was all shiny, and the white walls blinked from under steel rails. Daddy had very carefully polished the car the day before. He had joked that now it would rain, but it didn't - - - No, it didn't rain after all.

The new bridge is all finished now. It is a stable and solid-cement structure, no steel beams or girders, but a work of art, simple and plain and beautiful and strong. It gleams and sparkles in the summer sun as if it knows it is the life line of my town. There's no sign to be taken for granted. All of the reminders of that ordinary summer day three years ago have been erased.

I can almost cross the bridge without holding my breath and shutting my eyes, but still I see, and shall always see, a grotesque crumple of steel, lying on the river bed with a shiny car clamped in its teeth.

—Constance Sprague, '55

Salome (Triolet)

*I would like to know the answer—
Did she drop the seventh veil,
Or was she a modest dancer?
I would like to know the answer.
If you've read of the entrancer
In the Writ or Oscar's tale,
I would like to know the answer.
Did she drop the seventh veil?*

—Marjorie Knop, '54

A Poet's Crime

*To me, a vexing poet's crime
is something called "apparent rhyme."
Must be I've no poetic mind;
I just can't see "a gust of wind."
This change in the pronunciation
creates a puzzling situation.
If words won't rhyme, don't make it worse;
Perhaps you'd better try blank verse.*

—Caryl Turner, '53

Riddle for a Summer Day

*Large and puffed
with a shiny brightness,
Forming fairy figures
of airy lightness.
Reflecting the sun
with a friendly glow,
High peaks seemingly
covered with snow.
Simple silent beauty
on a background of blue.
Summer clouds !!
You knew! didn't you?*

—Josephine Wieshuber, '55

Itchin'

*I'm itchin' to go fishing;
There's nibbles to be watched.
There's lines to be unfastened,
And poles, be-slicked and notched!
There's sun and rain and shadow
To be enjoyed and felt and seen;
I'm itchin' to take the crooked path
That leads to glades serene—
To see the ripples widen
When the cork is bobbing clear;
To see the breaking water
And the fish that disappear!
Oh, yes, I'm fairly itchin'
To get that can of bait,
And sit beside some grassy bank,
And wait, and Wait, and WAIT!*

—Pearle R. Olthoff, '53

Freedom

*Pistachio nut in a machine —
He looks so lonely, dank, and lean
Imprisoned in a double hell
Encased by glass, and too, a shell.
This small red nut I pity so,
I even get an afterglow;
When from the drugstore I take leave
Conscience tugs upon my sleeve.
"Go back, go back, you cruel beast,
This bastioned nut need be released."
Then back inside I quickly trèt
To thrust a penny in the slot.
I turn the crank, "You're free, you're free!
I've just emancipated thee."*

—Lee Pederson, '54

Unbalanced

"I have to sit down! I have to sit down!" That one sentence ran through Marg's mind continuously. "I have to sit down!" On she walked, conscious of the faces she met, conscious of the buildings towering over her, conscious, too, of the many, many horns and street noises. Conscious of them, yes, but not aware of the meaning behind them.

"I have to sit down! Why won't that stop and why won't my heart stop beating so loudly — it pounds so it hurts. I have to sit down! Yes! Maybe if I do sit down I'll get over this sensation. Maybe my mind will clear.

"Funny," she thought as she eased onto the soot-covered stair, "an hour ago I was on top of the world. First day out in the area, my first call from the caseload!"

She had knocked on the door in that horrible neighborhood. Ugh! She had hated it! "Hello, is Mrs. Woods in?" Marg had asked. The woman had snapped the chain and opened the door wider so that Marg could enter. "My, how gloomy," she had thought.

Marg had jerked around when the woman had closed the door and redrawn the chain through the bolt. To the right of the small entry, the woman had closed another door. Rickety stairs stood directly before Marg, leading up to semi-darkness. "Relax, relax!" she had told herself. She'd had butterflies in her stomach then; now she had that everlasting pounding.

Marg looked down at her lap — purse — gloves — folder. Her hands looked strange . . . unreal . . . detached from her.

That pounding had begun when she had heard a scream through the open door to the left. As Marg had

jumped, the woman had reentered the hall and locked the door behind her. An exit on each of the four walls and each locked, except for those dangerous looking stairs upward. Marg's hands had begun to sweat then.

"Just what had followed?" Marg questioned herself. First, the woman had motioned Marg to a chair. Secondly, she had seated herself opposite Marg. Then Marg's eyes had fixed on the long, slim, shiny blade of the butcher knife!

"Oh, that pounding in my head. It is worse just thinking about that," Marg whispered.

The woman had sat there singing, "ting-a-ling, ting-a-ling," while rhythmically hitting the palm of her hand with the knife blade. Marg's head pounded in that rhythm.

Marg looked around her now at the unfamiliar neighborhood. She couldn't remember leaving the house, only the walking. Walking! Yes! She had walked and where was she now? Marg jumped up and squinted at the number over the stairs — 131.

"It can't be." Marg's mind raced forward again. Mrs. Woods lived at 131, and this was a different house. Checking her list, Marg walked unsteadily to the corner. "Sure enough, Stafford Avenue. East Stafford. East! Why, she had been West!"

Relief surged through her and Marg straightened her shoulders on a once more beautiful day. "After all," she rationalized, "the woman did not threaten me with the knife. But that scream. What of that? A child? Perhaps." Marg laughed a little as she thought of the picture she must have created — scurrying to leave a house because a woman

had not wanted to leave her children alone with a knife, or was that it?"

Marg knocked on the door. "Hello, is Mrs. Woods in?" The woman snapped the chain and opened the door wider so that Marg could enter.

"I'm Marg Kennedy from the Agency. You've no doubt been expecting me. Before we start, may I borrow your phone? I have to call the police."

—Faith Riley, '54

And out of the Earth Shall Others Grow

Overhead, motionless clouds hung in long, loosely-wrung rolls of pearl gray, suspended diagonally across the sky. A few brave stars hesitantly appeared, remote and self-conscious. A full moon guarded the cloudy legion, and dutifully bathed the countryside in a cold lusterless glare.

The rigid black branches of a tree stood flat against the sky, like a pressed figure, retaining form but not contour; and each minute branch narrowed to a brittle fragility which, lifeless, had lost all power to reach upward, and stood breathless and suspended and stifled.

He had just said that we would Always Be Friends; and suddenly it occurred to me, in the silence that smothered the wind and pressed dry fingers to our lips, that one could fall in love with nothing.

As I watched the headlights force more pavement into view, I raced my mind, like a smooth, worn sheet, backwards and backwards, on and on, until the white line disappeared and the roadbed fell from sight, and I dissolved into a vision of blazed humanity and broken crucifixes and smooth white hands with no wrinkles on them, and felt that within me were stored all the tears of humankind, and all the unfulfilled exoduses.

But I was not comforted, for my own grief would not join with ageless suffering. It stood proudly apart, jealously guarding its own brick-dust

heart and waterless eyes. I could not feel humbled by Alexander's tears, or Cleopatra's suicide, or Napoleon's exile; nor soothed by Keats' poetry or Ravel's music, for they were not I.

They were not I, who was not loved, and who, having raced through this night in search of understanding, had found only infinite woe and the dry leaves of a lost paradise. This sadness, born in a void of sincere, yet undirected energies, had been the result of a restless effort to unburden the mind, but in doing so, engulfed the heart in a form of overwhelming magnitude, where it slowly assumed a relationship to the other forms which were the broken toys and pulse-less hearts of the past.

I could never be certain of the shape this accumulated sadness would take, but tonight, seeking my sympathy in the folds of inanimate nature, I felt it warmly and gratefully flow into the dark-pressed tree, flat against the deep gray moonlit sky. I tried to convince myself, as I traced the pattern of its pencil line thin tips, that a new day may reveal its contours, and new moons may cause new leaves to cast strange shadows.

Yet, terrified by these fresh unexpectedancies, I felt another mood inundate the old, and I left the black tree standing outstretched before the Goddess, begging for peace.

—Corinne Johnson, '51

Bronco-Buster Georgie

To his parents, Georgie was a freckle-faced little boy whose rate of growth was astounding and whose boundless energy and capacity for food were beyond all imagination. To the boys and girls of his new neighborhood, he was the center of attention; in fact, he was the man of the hour. His popularity could be traced to two things: his house came complete with a playhouse that was tumbled down enough to allow the dignity of young cowhands to use it for a club-house; more important, he was an honest-to-goodness bronco buster!

Indeed, Georgie had spent the ten previous years of his life in the horsey state of Oklahoma. What the neighborhood gang didn't know was that its new member lived in an apartment in Tulsa instead of on a ranch. The only time he sat on a horse was the time his parents let him be led around on a pony at a carnival. Thus it was that Georgie, the self-made cow-hand, was very much dismayed when John Franklin Carter (better known as Slim) burst into the club house and divulged the most exciting news since Paul Peterson's dog had eleven puppies.

"Georgie! Georgie!" he gasped. "You'd never guess! You're going to demonstrate for us tomorrow at the Royal Oak Stables."

From Georgie's glassy stare and open mouth it was evident that a more clear explanation was needed.

"Listen," demanded Slim. "Paul's dad gave him five whole dollars for giving away all the pups. Paul says we can use seventy-five cents of it to watch you ride a horse like you used to when you lived on a ranch in Oklahoma and we can watch and,

well—" At this Slim paused for a breath and waited for Georgie's face to brighten with anticipation.

After a pause of about three minutes, during which Georgie's face remained the color of a dirty shirt, Slim came to the conclusion that the Oklahoma cowboy was overwhelmed with such marvelous news, to the point of speechlessness.

"Well," he prompted, "I bet you just can't wait."

Georgie suddenly came to life. This clearly was a time for fast thinking. "Gee, I sure thank you all for wanting to spend money and see me," he drawled, "but I'm afraid it'll be a kind of waste."

"A waste to see a real horse buster?" asked Slim incredulously.

"Well, after all, Slim, a tame ol' stable horse . . ." (These last words were spoken with the disdain of a real cowboy.)

"Oh, don't worry, Georgie, We'll get the wildest one they have," came the reassuring reply.

Saturday broke with the beauty that can be seen only on a sunshiny morning in June. The world was bright and pleasantly warm, and the birds sang in appreciation of all beauty. It was a day to raise the spirits of all living things, and truly, all those in the little assemblage at Royal Oaks Stable were bubbling with happiness. All, that is, except the center of attention, whose lean form was covered with levis, plaid shirt, and cowboy boots. His freckled face was rather pale, and if one looked closely, his knees were knocking rather than bowed.

The horse which had been chosen by the instructor, who was a bit dubious about Georgie's skill, was

weathered into gentleness by extreme age and use. To Georgie, however, she was huge and spirited, and he was beset by such a fear that the distance he had to walk between him and the mare seemed endless. With a sickly grin he left his companions, and with the assistance of the instructor he mounted his formidable enemy, the mare.

Once mounted and secure in the saddle, the horseman took the reins, uttered a quiet "giddap" to his mount and remained in the same spot. Once more a "giddap." Once more, nothing. Finally, with another weak grin at his friends, Georgie succeeded in kicking the old nag into a slow plod, which, although not spectacular, was something better than immobility.

This pace was very satisfying to Georgie. He began to feel like a proud general on his faithful steed, gazing down at the awed troops. The boys in the group were becoming not just a little impatient for some action, and the finger of fame again began to jab Georgie between his skinny shoulder-blades.

Obscurity might well have been Georgie's fate, had not the presence of a boy hidden in the bushes made itself known to the mare by the sting of two well-placed stones. To the

joy and complete captivation of Georgie's companions and to the shock and wild dismay of Georgie and the instructor, the mare assumed a liveliness she had forgotten she ever had. She galloped off as if she had just seen a series of Western movies and wished to imitate her more youthful cousins. Her rider clenched his teeth, shut his eyes, and did his best to hang on.

The instructor soon forgot his amazement at the rejuvenation of the "old grey mare" and rushed off to save both horse and rider. Fortunately the mare was soon halted, and the ride came to an end welcomed by all except the fascinated onlookers.

A trembling and shaken Georgie was overwhelmed to find himself an even greater hero in the eyes of his chums. The walk back home was comparable to a triumphal march, with Georgie glowing more from relief than pride. Under his breath he was asking forgiveness for his prevarications, which he vowed would never happen again. And, as an afterthought, he asked that Paul's dog would please not have any more puppies.

—Dorothy Nichols, '56

The Blade

*Passion is one half of life,
Prudence is the rest;
Lack of either's like a knife
Which is half honed at best.*

—Lee Pederson, '54

A Blush and a Smile

"That'll be all for tonight, Tom," Anna called to the delivery boy as she closed and locked the door after the last customer. It wasn't quite closing time but Anna didn't care. It had been a busy day, and she had to get up early the next morning to go to the city. "Christmas shopping," Anna mumbled to herself. "Why do we have to make so much over Christmas?"

Because tomorrow was Saturday, Nancy, who worked part time after school, had promised Anna she would come and help Jake all day. Tom could do all the delivering by himself; so there wasn't a thing to worry about. They could get along fine without her for one day.

Anna and Jake had bought their grocery store right after they were married eight years ago from old Mr. Olson, who was too old to run the store. They had a thriving business now. Most of the people from the north side of town purchased their groceries from this neighborhood store. The couple lived above the store. Jake had made the four rooms up there into a comfortable apartment for them. Anna could hear him moving around upstairs now and hoped that he was setting the table for dinner.

Anna always closed the store herself. It wasn't that she didn't trust Jake, but he was inclined to be rather absent-minded. One morning she had come down, after he had supposedly "locked up" the night before, and found the front door unlocked and two lights burning in the store room.

Anna always insisted on removing all the cash from the register before she went upstairs. Jake didn't think this was necessary but, if Anna wanted to do it, it was all right with him.

Anna looked around the store now. Tom had swept the floor before he left; the door was locked and everything seemed to be in order for the next day. She put the money from the cash register into a canvas bag; but, before she placed the bag in the safe, she took out five ten-dollar bills for her shopping the next day. Rolling the money into a wad, she tucked it into her apron pocket and went upstairs.

"Everything okay?" Jake called from the living room where he was reading the evening paper. "Did you remember to get some money for tomorrow?"

"Yes to both questions," Anna answered him as she started preparing supper.

Shortly after the dishes were washed, Anna went to bed. She got up early the next morning. During the night snow had fallen from the then steel-grey sky, leaving the ground blanketed in a covering of soft white. It was too early to wake Jake; so she reset the alarm clock and tiptoed out of the bedroom. She ate a hasty breakfast and scribbled a note to Jake about the cold meat loaf that was in the refrigerator for his lunch.

Anna remembered the money she had put in her apron pocket the night before. She felt uneasy about carrying all that money with her to the city; so instead of placing it in her purse, she slipped it into her coin purse and put the coin purse in her coat pocket.

"I must remember to keep my hand in my pocket to make sure the money is still there," Anna thought to herself.

The train station was only a few minutes' walk from the store. Anna walked slowly through the newly

fallen snow, taking deep breaths of the clear, cold air. At the station she boarded the 7:37 train for the city and took a seat in the middle of one of the end cars. The train had made only a few stops when Anna's attention was turned to a man who apparently had just gotten on the train. He was a tall, handsome young man with a very dainty mustache. Anna thought to herself that he looked just like the heroes that were written so much about in children's story books — or did he resemble more the villains of those stories? Anna could not quite decide which it was. Was he going to sit close to her? Close to her? Why, he sat right down in the seat with her!

The train suddenly roared through a tunnel. Anna felt the movement of the man's hand! Her money! She thrust her hand downward and held tightly to his. He did not budge, nor did she. The train rushed from the darkness into daylight as suddenly as from daylight into the tunnel's darkness. Anna looked at the man and —

No wonder the maiden blushed,
No wonder the villain smiled,
For her hand had been in his
pocket all the while.

—Barbara Allison, '56

Nature's Sonata

The pine needles and my blanket made me warm and content as I lay down on the soft forest floor. The wind blew gently, just enough to stir the whispering pine boughs. In the cool night air the fragrant aroma of the fallen pine needles drifted quietly around me; a few feet away the river swirled toward the Mississippi, gurgling like a peaceful baby, to be disturbed only by a beaver or muskrat, cutting the rippling surface,

or by an occasional splash of a feeding fish. The crickets, the owls, and other night adventurers played an evening lullaby. I looked up. The sparkling eyes of the night silhouetted the swaying pines against the starry sky. I watched them swing back and forth and listened to the music of Nature's sonata as I slowly drifted into the quiescence of sleep.

—John J. Magnuson, '56

Thank God for These

Cold was the day and the man. Snow fell all around him, and the temperature of his heart matched the temperature of the icicle that hung from the window-box under the window at which he sat. As he looked onto the street below, his eyes were hard. Hard too was the snow that lingered in the alley across from his window. Once it had been soft and fluffy, but now, after days of being trampled under the feet of hurried, grumpy people, it was crusty and gray. Even with a sense of joy, he predicted the appearance and texture of the snow that was now descending. Only a few hours on this cold, unfriendly earth, and you will be indistinguishable from your predecessor there in the alley, he thought. His eyes had a temporary glint as he saw the steam which had collected on the big window of the corner drug-store. No sort of luster was on the huge expanse of glass now. The moisture seemed to cheapen the store by making it seem as if it had something evil to hide behind this screen which winter so generously provided.

His cold eyes moved carefully in their continued search for some more of winter's evil; they moved as carefully, in fact, as did the cars on the icy street below. A neighbor in the alley was tugging furiously at the lid which covered the garbage can she had acquired when she rented the cold-water flat. Had he looked beyond the mound of snow on the top of the can and the ice on the handle, he might have seen the dent which was responsible for the stubbornness of that cover. Instead he saw only winter binding the two parts together and prolonging the woman's stay in the cold. He felt

no compassion for her, however. Didn't the winter bind him to this vantage point for long months at a time? The click of an icicle as it detached itself from the window-box brought him back to his own level. Snow covered this rectangle of a box, too. The purity of the snow was gone; it was generously dotted with soot from the chimneys of the surrounding area. He almost smiled as he considered winter's attempt to cover the evils of "God's children" with snow. Only slightly in vain, he thought. He shivered. "Cold," he muttered. "Everything and every-body is cold."

Peaceful was the day and the man. The noises of the people on the street below came up to him, borne by the breezes of the new spring day. His mood matched the gayety of the bright flowers that smiled at him from the window-box beneath his hand. Carefully he proportioned out the ration of water for the day to the eager blossoms. "They need lots of this," he thought as he added a small stream to their usual supply. "That is, if they are to grow and produce green shoots of their own." He heard a whistle in the alley across from his window. When he looked down, he saw a small boy replacing a dented old garbage pail with a new one. Everything seemed new today. Farther down the street, on the corner, the sun glanced off the newly-polished glass window of the drug-store. He chuckled as he remembered hearing the proprietor of the store sing and swing the washing-broom in time with that song. How hard he had labored to put a luster on the wide expanse of glass! Spring must

labor like that trying to get everything new and green by the time the robin chirps his song in the largest amphitheater of all — the great out-of-doors.

Then he heard a step behind his chair. He smiled expectantly as he waited for the usual question. Would he like to go outside and sit on the front stoop? "Ah," he thought,

"Life is good." Before God had taken his sight, God had provided him with memories of the street below, whether that street be covered with winter snow, swept clean by the spring breeze, washed by the summer rain, or cluttered with the bright leaves of fall. "Yes," he reflected, "life is good."

—Lenna Bond, '56

Surprise Packages

*Lustreless eyes
Shift from here to there
In rhythm with the motion
Of the eternal pendulum.
 Their lives are parceled out
 In neat little bundles,
 Sixty minutes to the package,
 The lot wrapped and tagged
 "One Lifetime."
Each package is tied
With golden cord
From the spool
Of those three sisters,
The length of the cord
Precisely measuring
The span of life
To the final second.
 To this extent are the living protected;
 Foresight would bring insanity,
 So they, the living, wait and wonder
 "Is this the final package?"*

—Carol Gardner, '53

Earth

Count
The stitches
time makes
in its
patchwork quilt
Of Earth.

Note
The patches
time tears out
recon-
verting the
Old Earth.

Mark
These changes
time has
brought this
patchwork quilt
Of Earth.

—Mary Jane Olsen, '55

Life

I have but an inch
In these endless
Miles of time,
And this I must share
With the millions.
This little now
Is not very long,
And it speeds
As the wind,
Its companion.
I can not hold it,
I do not try,
This little now
That I share
With the millions.

Mary Jane Olsen, '55

Autumn Interlude

The branches of the trees on both sides of the street arched inward, meeting in the center. This and the leaves colored with a million indescribable hues and shades created the appearance of a deep-tone rainbow stretching endlessly down the street. The whole street was vibrantly alive in a whirl of autumn color. The bright leaves crackled under my feet. Some of these leaves had been swept into piles, and were crackling merrily as the orange-yellow flames devoured them. Others were smouldering quietly, listlessly. A few triumphant leaves were liberated by the breeze, and went whispering and dancing over the lawns. The houses in the background seemed still and lifeless compared to the activity of the street. The air was cold and sharp, and perfumed with the acrid smell of smoke.

I walked slowly, not wanting to get home. I had the feeling that this scene had been created especially for me. Somehow, I felt pleasantly lonely.

Suddenly a dishevelled little dog raced from between two of the still houses. His one front leg was shorter than the other, and his limp gave him the curious affect of being pidgeon-toed. He was a sand-colored

cocker spaniel. Leaves and burrs stuck to his long floppy ears and ragged green sweater.

At that moment he was chasing a big red leaf. He caught it and vigorously shook it back and forth, pausing only to slap at it with his shaggy little paws. He tired of this when he spotted a fresh pile of leaves. He gleefully tumbled into them, partially burying himself. Then he scampered hither and thither chasing a leaf, an insect, or his own tail. Suddenly he decided that perhaps I might be worthy of his attention. He bounded toward me and skidded to a halt at my feet. He quizzically cocked his head to one side, wondering how I was going to add to his entertainment. I stooped down and patted his head. He immediately lay down and waited to be scratched. I scratched his ears and pulled the burrs from his fur. He gratefully licked my hand and chewed my fingers. And then out of the corner of his eye he apparently saw something that must be caught, for he bolted off to the direction from which he had come.

The comic little dog was gone. The street seemed lonely again. I went home.

—Barbara Butler, '56

I Face Reality

*The wings of my heart lie broken
on the altar of my desire, and
the thread of my life is shaken
on the loom of lust.*

*The question of "why" burns deeply,
as I seek blindly to inquire;
and the reason of life speeds swiftly
as the dream is but dust.*

—Jack Plimpton

Revelation

I saw God today.

The snow was falling silently and lazily to the earth, blanketing its dismal, dead appearance with a garment of soft white fur. I looked upon the scene with a feeling of peace in my heart. Somehow, that picture was a portrait of God blessing the earth with His gift of beauty. However, winter isn't the only time in which God reveals His beauty.

Another portrait is framed in my mind when I recall a picture of the fresh, verdant greenness of the newborn springtime, the brook with its early thawing waters bubbling and tumbling over the rocks, eager to be on its way to the mighty ocean. Yes, I saw God's beauty then, too.

I saw God today.

The harsh, howling wind was creating strange twists in the tree-tops. The brief, sharp streaks of lightning were warning that a storm was inevitably on its way. The weird color in the sky cast an eerie glow on the

earth. Indeed, God must have been very angry; even the birds fluttered to find shelter from this outburst of His rage.

I saw God today.

I saw the miracle of miracles — a human creature. Who could successfully argue that the strange mystery of life is merely human and not divine. The perfection of the functioning of a human life is visible proof of the Almighty Power of that Divine Being—God. Since He has the power to create that life, He alone has the power to take it away. Thus, in death, too, God reveals His greatness.

No, I cannot tell you the color of God's hair or eyes. Neither can I describe the outline of His face. I cannot tell you how tall He is or how much He weighs. But, if you want to see His Beauty, His Power, or His Rage, just open your eyes and look around, for I saw God today.

—Marilyn Seidelmann, '54

Love

And what is love?

One fleeting moment of bliss,

A kiss,

A touch of the hand,

A caress,

A heart bursting with excited joy,

A soul content because of what God has heaped upon it—

*And then suddenly, like a deer fleeing from the
path of the hunter,*

*Love has fled—a fugitive which no man-created
law can bring to justice—*

The bursting heart is broken

And only tears remain.

—Patricia Miller, '54

The City

*Men scorn me for my grime,
Men scorn me for my noise,
Men scorn me for my crime
And intemperate, earthly joys.*

*I am just the city,
Am I to blame?*

*Men smear my face with grime,
Men fill me with noise,
Men commit my crime
And revel in my joys.*

—Edgar Palm, '56

Quartet

Through a low hanging cloud of grey smoke I gazed across the level green plain at my assorted friends. They seemed unreal as I saw them under the strain of competition, and in their eyes I detected a faint presence of hate. The gentleman to my right was about to start our escapade and as he sorted his wares I became aware of the tense air of suspense that surrounded us all. My starboard friend honored all of us with a concealed gift. I hastily uncovered my own and, to my surprise, discovered a beautiful woman clothed in a bright red gown. Quickly, that same man on my right returned to action. Within seconds another lass appeared before me. She wore a cloak of black and in her hand she held a flower. I was delighted with my two ravishing beauties and I quickly proved it to my competitors with silver.

While every man scanned his own purchases, I suddenly was aware of a new face among my ladies. This one, who was adorned in a sea of diamonds, was equal in beauty to those preceding her. She made me feel quite happy as it had been many hours

since I had enjoyed this calibre of company. Those around me, both young and old, began to take notice of my newly-acquired harem. When I substituted bills for the silver before me, two of them turned their backs and faded into the shadows. The next offering that came my way was a shining red bullet. Its sparkle matched the one in my eyes and another worthy man left for eternity. I closed my eyes to clear them of the smog that dwelt there and when they opened they peered upon another striking image. Before me stood a dark-haired Venus armed with a golden sword. Her smile opened my pores and caused my hands to tremble as I held tightly those four royal damsels. Those who had doubted my judgment in investing my limited wealth in these women dropped their mouths in distress and fled when I displayed my female treasures.

As I stacked my sizable winnings before me, I wondered how long it had been since I had held four queens and an ace in Stud Poker.

—Harry Greenwood, '54

A Recipe

Under usual circumstances it seems that women are more interested in acquiring new recipes than are men, but this recipe is one that can be used by both. The ingredients are easily obtained, the directions simple to follow, and the results well appreciated.

The items needed include:

- 1 ½ cups of understanding
- 3 cups of sympathy
- 1 teaspoon of laughter
- 2 tablespoons of tolerance

- a dash of a smile
- 2 drops of tears
- a large supply of kind words
- a bit of humor

The ingredients should be added all together and mixed until well blended. Serve generously and replenish when needed. Your result—a true friend, “as to be a friend is like being lifted a little closer to heaven each day.”

—Helen Budzian, '54

Little Flights of Thought

*little flights of thought
take their steps,
sliding, fleeting, across a bit
of nothing,
piercing, momentarily, the present
vacuum.
with short pauses, they stop
awhile on bits of doubt.
a note shrilly sounds—
the flights resume
their insane dancing
till all is rocking, rolling,
thundering with the true sound—
the meaning runs on,
all is forgotten
in its tangent of melancholy joking.*

—Janet O'May, '56

The Bottle

The woman rocked back and forth. Back and forth with the pendulum of life—life that had squeezed beauty and youth from her soul, leaving only the core of existence.

The room was grey and cold except where a ray of sunlight dared to enter and pirouette on the old furniture. It danced on the top of the black stove, tip-toed over the round table, and kissed the delicate bottle on the mantle. The woman watched the thin streak of light and shut her eyes to the sparkle of the bottle.

The bottle was still transparent enough to embrace hope and beauty. In it she had placed all the happiness and poignancy of youth, sealing it tightly to prevent evaporation. The visor of life had twisted her soul, but it could never penetrate the core hidden in the bottle.

She had received the bottle when she was a young girl, full of the transient joy of youth. It was a simple vial of perfume which she had decided to put aside until the moment she found love. Once she had broken the seal: once she had breathed the beauty of love. But then she had replaced the top forever.

The door opened, and a girl entered. The woman stopped rocking at the appearance of her niece. There was a murmur of a smile in the girl's hello, causing the woman to wonder at the unnatural tone of happiness. The girl's sharp face seemed softened and the peculiarities of her appearance dissolved in a mist of joy.

The reason crept softly from the girl's lips as she told her aunt that she was finally going out with a young man at work. Joy bubbled

in the woman's heart and boiled over in excited expressions of delight. At last her niece would experience love. The woman had waited a long time for this. This was the time and the cause for the existence of the bottle—for the existence of her heart. All her dreams and memories she would present to the girl in that bottle of perfume, and the girl would break its seal completely. She would not wait until it was too late—until the scent had faded. The woman rose from her rocker to get the bottle.

It was the time. In a few minutes the doorbell would ring, and the girl would become a girl. But first she must open the bottle of perfume. The woman handed it to the girl, who was puzzled and pleased with the gift. The woman watched her slowly undo the seal.

A bell rang. But it was the ring of the telephone—an interruption of the moment that the woman knew would be an eternity. She knew without listening what it was. The girl returned from the phone and her dull words thudded against the woman's heart—he couldn't come because of a previous engagement.

The girl looked plain and tired as she stared at the bottle in her hand. Then with a cry she handed it to the woman and left the room.

The woman continued her rocking—slowly, mechanically. There was no longer reason for existence. Life had evaporated when she first undid the seal. The bottle was empty.

—Mary Huesman, '55

The College

We walked through the asphalt cavern, the red staccatos of our cigarettes somewhat relieving the darkness. Ahead of us, a yellow light blinked hesitantly over a small entrance way — no sign, nothing to indicate that this was our destination. Pete stopped before the scaling wooden door and reached for the knob.

"Why didn't you tell me we were going to The College?" I asked, using the old building's nickname.

His face was compounded with disappointment and surprise. "You've been here before?"

"It's not extraordinary, Pete. We all go through that stage—the young radicals pleading with a static world, the crusaders of Truth, the fledgling idealists who . . ."

"All right, Sophocles." Pete laughed and opened the door.

Five years had left the place unchanged. Naked lightbulbs swung down from the lofty ceiling and bathed the room in a glaring white brilliance. Shattered glass and enamel parings had been swept aside at random. The College would always be just a warehouse masquerading as an assembly hall.

I steered Pete towards the make-shift bar that lined the north wall. A row of freshly-opened beerbottles stood like sentinels on the hardwood surface. We chose our labels, deposited some coins, and withdrew to the benches. Pete briefly scanned the mimeographed program.

"Good speaker tonight," he said.

"You mean not as bad as usual." The lectures were likely to be negative and impractical. Every soapbox

orator on Harrison Street earned his Ph.D. at The College.

"No, he's really good," Pete protested, dropping the leaflet. "I've heard him."

I retrieved the discarded program. "We have the honor of presenting the eminent sociologist, Dr. Claude L. Brinker," I read aloud, "who has entitled his speech 'Reflection of the New Era.' The typical enigmatic heading, Pete."

My companion shrugged. "Titles."

The hall was fast becoming occupied. Several well-dressed young men took seats in front of us. They bore the stamp of intellectuals, and I immediately linked them with the University of Chicago. Occasionally a bum wandered in to enjoy the inexpensive beer or to nap undisturbed on one of the rear benches. When the crowd had situated itself, Sergeant O'Brien retired to his post near the door. He was there, I suppose, to supervise the "freedom of assembly," but he had never yet been called upon to make an arrest or quell a riot.

The buzzing of voices came to an abrupt halt. Dr. Brinker took the rostrum. He was a paternal-looking old gentleman, dressed tastefully in navy blue.

"Good evening," he began with quiet elegance. "The title of my discourse has undoubtedly left a question mark in your minds. 'Reflections of the New Era' — The New Era is, of course, the future generations, their accomplishments and failures. Reflections are the images of that era which are mirrored in our own troubled times . . ."

Pete nudged my elbow, and I nodded. Dr. Brinker *was* a good speaker. He possessed a gentle voice that invited respect, a persuasive voice marked by restrained intensity.

"Society today is nourishing a gigantic octopus whose tentacles reach into our everyday lives, a cold monster that controls us through its depraved representatives — crime syndicates, insatiable appetites of warmongers, oppressive governments, ideals that are taken too lightly, ideals that are taken too seriously. Children of tomorrow, (he said 'children' in a way that suggested worldly wisdom,) is this monster a reflection of the New Era?"

Someone shouted, "No, by God!" There was a sprinkling of laughter, and a faint smile crossed Dr. Brinker's face.

He continued gravely, "You are right, young man. The New Era is not based upon the standards of the Old. *Your* thoughts, *your* actions are the reflections of the New Era. Foundations of outmoded . . ."

The caressing voice conjured up a savant's paradise — a transcendental state of being where men ruled themselves through their knowledge of the ultimate verities, where the sole beauty worshipped was that of human reason. The New Era was not an opium dream. Under Dr. Brinker's magic wand, it was a reality to be attained by perseverance and sincerity. I rubbed the stardust from my eyes. This was The College, I assured myself. This was not a school at all. Why was I taking mental notes and future assignments from an assembly hall sorcerer? I listened to him with a calculating ear. The man was building up to something. It

was good oratorical strategy — creation of a mood, flattery, repetition.

" . . . by many forces, by super-numerary restrictions. Nietzsche, in his most profound moment, said to us, 'He who cannot command himself shall obey.' " Dr. Brinker looked intently at the audience, as if measuring the consequence of his words. "Shall we obey? Shall we obey the precepts of governments that stifle our natural propensities, that wrest our earnings from us, governments that submit us to futile warfare, governments that . . ."

A noetic vision clouded, or perhaps I should say, cleared my mind. I conceived at once that the heart of national survival rests in a vast number of people united by common interests and loyalties. It is not subversive propagandists, but the Dr. Brinkers all over the world, who are destroying that vital unity. I glanced at Pete and at the others. Their eyes were welded to the stage in a glazed automaton stare. They were the ones who bellowed, "You can't fool us!" But tonight a silvery-haired little lecturer had served them a chocolate-covered grenade.

"Accept the challenge of the wise German philosopher, 'O my brethren, break up, break up for me the old tables!'"

Dr. Brinker stepped down and was enveloped by cheering approbation. The spontaneous applause alone, the idealism alone, the buoyant speaker alone — or all these together — was *this* a reflection of the New Era? "Please, God — no," I murmured, reaching the door. I looked back at The College for the last time. We had indeed named it well.

—Marjorie Knop, '54

The Return

*My room,
My bed.
How soon,
I said,
Shall I
Be there?
To lie,
Where
In my
Childhood
Days, I
Would
So hate
To go at night.
Now I wait
Until I might.*

—Janice Voltz, '56

Swen Parson

*The sturdy temple, edifice in stone
With his broad shoulders booming thick and wide,
Corded, sinewed with volumes side by side,
Built by man, employed by man alone.*

*Not like the temple built on martyred bone,
In a truly living God we here confide
To strengthen, deepen thoughts which never died;
For the mind of Man will never be full-grown.*

*Aquinis, Dewey, More, and Ingersoll
Are standing quiet here, all in a row
To serve as preachers at our beck and call.*

*"This fountain of knowledge through books will flow."
We find this inscribed on his inner wall,
"To kindle another, himself must glow."*

—Lee Pederson, '54

The Critics

*And there they sit
Without a thought,
Gaping into infinity
With the same vague expression
As a satiated cat
Viewing the bones of a recent meal.
A faint sneer here,
Or a lofty yawn there:
The only expressions
Of a state of boredom
Too deep to be-disturbed
By the anguished wails
Resounding from the stage.
And you, poor artist,
If such, indeed, you are,
Endure their shafts of scorn
With a spiritual unrest
Which is echoed in the sighs
Of your throbbing violin
As you think of tomorrow's reviews.*

—Carol Gardner, '53

