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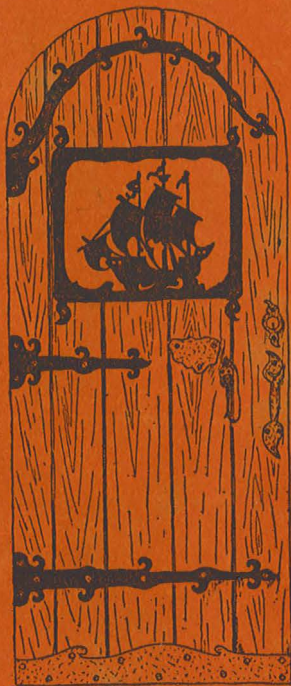
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Vol. 1, No. 3.

MAY, 1927

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THE FLAMINGO

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HAMILTON HOLT

Contributed to The Flamingo

THE FLAMINGO

A Literary Magazine of the Youngest Generation

VOL. I, No. 3

MAY, 1927

PRICE, 10 CENTS

RECOMPENSE

STELLA WESTON

I ASKED of Life but loving,
Yet in return gave naught.
You gladly gave to others—
Love came to you unsought.

And so, Life brought you riches,
And nothing you denied—
While I, I go on asking,
And die unsatisfied!

"FREE AND EQUAL"

LOUISE FERGUSON

MISS CORA BUTLER?" the Postman inquired. Cora nodded. He gave her the letter. She was happy as she turned from the window. Clasp ing the letter securely, she hurried past the group of expectant people. They too were waiting just as she had done for the past long week.

It was exactly a week and two days since she had found the advertisement in the magazine that kind Mrs. Duffy had given her. There in a rather unobtrusive corner of a back page she had seen the simple request:

"*Wanted*, a young lady correspondent. For further information write to Mr. Harry Schuler, Hillton, Indiana."

"Writing once won't do any harm," she had mused, as she sat in her little room on the third floor of Duffy House during a cold March Saturday afternoon, "and it might be fun. I've never had a real chum to write to." She had answered briefly that she had noticed the advertisement and was writing for further information as suggested.

A strong wind was blowing the light snow in spasmodic whirls up the road and onto the sidewalks into the faces of the passers-by. Cora did not mind the cold blasts. It was refreshing after the warm, musty post-office room. She hurried on down Main Street. It was growing dark. She read the address on her letter again. "Nice hand-writing," she thought, "a bit awkward and sprawly. If he isn't a farmer-boy I miss—"

She had reached Duffy House, and her reflections came abruptly to an end. Some of the boarders were leaving after their evening meal. Cora stood quietly to one side as they passed, for the path thru the snow was narrow. Some one bade her a pleasant "Good evening!" It was old Mr. Jackson, the hotel clerk. He often came up to Mrs. Duffy's for supper. Cora returned the greeting, and then went into the house and up to her room.

After she had lighted her lamp and thrown her hat and coat on the chair, she sat down on her cot to read the letter.

"Dear Miss Butler,

"Thanks very much for answering my ad. It was mighty kind of you. Well—I won't waste time beat-

ing about the bush trying to explain matters. I'm settled here alone in Hillton on a farm which my father's uncle owns and can't run because he is city-bred and too old. I promised Dad—he lives forty miles east on our farm and we were there alone ever since I can remember—I promised Dad, as I started to say, that I'd make good for him. I've been here for months. Talk about being lonesome! Nobody's in it with me. One day at Blinks store I saw an ad in a magazine for a correspondent, and it sort of came to me that letter-writing would be good company. Well—that's all. Please answer again and say you're willing to keep up the letters.

"Sincerely,

"Harry Schuler."

A queer sad smile crept over Cora's face. Her lips quivered. "Poor boy!" she thought, "he's been lonely, like me, and I've had months of it, too."

Six months before, Cora had come to Mrs. Duffy's from her Aunt Lola's home two miles from Urep. She had never been away from Aunt Lola, and her experience had been a severe trial. Every one had been kind to her. Her work was not hard, because Mrs. Duffy had another maid and the children were not unusually mischievous. Yet, somehow, Duffy House was not like Aunt Lola's bungalow home.

Now, the letter was to bring a new interest into Cora's life. She answered it that very evening. It was a pleasing bit of pastime to write to a sympathetic friend. She told him about her work and urged him to write all about his farm. The words seemed to flow from her pen; and before she realized it, the evening was over. It was almost midnight, when she had filled many pages. "But if he's lonely, he won't mind." She knew that she would not. She hoped that he would write long letters in return.

Frequently in the following months Cora enjoyed

this pleasant task. She looked forward to Tuesday evenings, because his letters usually came in on the four o'clock train from the North.

Then one Tuesday there was a change in the tenor of his letter. It was October now and the harvest was over. Couldn't he please come to see her? His message was very appealing. Cora felt dismayed. Perhaps she had been too enthusiastic. His letter sounded as tho friendship had ripened into love. What should she do? What could she do? Write to him telling him not to come, of course. The whole affair was absurd—falling in love with a letter-writer! And yet, she was secretly proud of her letters. He really loved the one who had written them.

She waited until the next day to answer. With the cool morning she could act sensibly. She awoke when the sun's first rays stole into her room. After she had dressed quickly and put her room in order, she sat down to write. It was fully an hour before any one in the household would stir. If she hurried, she could go out to mail her letter and be back by breakfast time.

She began the old salutation. She would write him not to come. Perhaps—she paused; she had better not write at all. That would stop everything. And then she yielded to vanity's urging. She did wish to see him just once. It was not far to Hillton, and the train fare was not terribly expensive, even for a fruitless, vain trip. She wrote to him telling him to come on the following Saturday. She would meet him at the station. She would wear a brown coat and a dark blue hat. He must have a straw flower in his lapel so she would not miss him.

Thursday, when she was at home in the afternoon with the children while Mrs. Duffy was at her club meeting, a message came.

"Awfully glad to get letter. Arrive Saturday four afternoon. Love.
"Harry."

Cora was bewildered for a minute, then conscience-stricken. He was terribly in earnest. She ought to wire back that she must leave town, for a sick relative was dying. Oh! anything—any excuse. But she did not. "Surely," she argued to herself, "one look won't hurt. I do want to see him. And he can go back early Sunday morning."

Saturday dawned bright and clear. Cora needed that sort of atmosphere. Her mind was clouded and gloomy with arguments and misgivings. When three o'clock came, she started for the station. Mrs. Duffy had always given her Saturday afternoons off, and she had enjoyed this short period of recreation and going where she pleased. As she drew near the station, she seemed excitedly happy. The romance had been fun, even tho the adventure was now about to end with reality.

It was almost four o'clock when she heard the train whistle. She walked quickly around the corner of the building, toward the freight entrance. If she stood in the doorway she could see the passengers alighting. Suddenly the train thundered in. Cora watched expectantly. The third passenger to leave the train was Harry.

Cora watched him. For fifteen minutes he waited, glancing up and down the station in nervous eagerness. Finally, when the place seemed entirely deserted, he decided to go on. He moved uncertainly in the direction of the business section of the town. Cora followed him cautiously. His eyes caught sight of the hotel sign; his pace quickened. He reached the entrance. Cora watched him enter and go up to the desk where

Mr. Jackson was standing, just ready to leave for his evening meal at Duffy House. The door of the hotel closed with a sickening thud. Cora turned away and walked slowly back to the House.

As she turned the last corner, she saw Mr. Jackson's antiquated Ford parked in the driveway. She continued slowly, up the walk, turned the knob of the door deliberately, and entered the House. She paused in the hall near the dining-room door.

Mrs. Duffy was in a complaining mood. "Cora's just like the rest of these colored folks. I've given her Saturday afternoons off, and now she takes her time about coming home. It's way past six! I'd like to know who's going to take care of the children tonight! I've a mind to get another girl and let Cora go."

"Well—" Mr. Jackson cleared his throat—"if you're going to let her go, she can step right into a new job. Mr. Schuler here was looking this afternoon for a girl by the name of Cora Butler."

Another voice began to speak.

"Miss Cora Butler," without waiting to hear the reply, climbed wearily up to her third floor room.

THE CLOUD

ALBERT NEWTON

TODAY I saw a big, black dragon
Rushing through the sky.
He gobbled up the fiery sun
With one tremendous, greedy bite,
And then because it burned him so,
He breathed out jagged streaks of flame
And roared so loud—
He shook my house a mile and more away.

"THE OTHER WAY"

CARTER BRADFORD

THEY WILL have roast beef, lumpy mashed potatoes and soggy corn pone for dinner, with the inevitable pitcher of sorghum in the center of the table," mused Harry Gardner as he sat on the porch of the Eldridge House. He lighted a fresh cigarette from a smouldering butt and watched with bored indulgence a large buzzard that was circling above the river.

The mid-day heat sapped all desire for activity of any kind, even for a latent contemplation of indolent sport. The beauty of the rugged limestone bluffs, the swirling green ribbon of river or the massive elms that grew along its banks, all were lost to "Slick" Gardner in his present frame of mind.

"This is one Hell of a place to spend a vacation," he went on muttering to himself. "The Ozarks—bah! Scenery and hill-billies. If I only had the money to go to some decent place—Atlantic City, for instance—"

Money—everything seemed to begin with money and to end with money. Of course, he might have taken a job for the early part of the summer, but why should a man go to college for four years if he was expected to do manual labor after it was over? His fraternity brothers had not referred to his hair when they dubbed him "Slick," for there was another definite reason for the sobriquet. Harry Gardner was noted for finding the easy, pleasant "other way" out of a difficulty.

Harry strolled down Main Street after dinner, having met and defeated the roast beef and corn pone in the mid-day encounter, mulling over that "other way" contingency in his mind. His steps led him to a one

story, aged brick building with large grimy plate glass windows having the gold lettered inscription, "Bank of Piney." In one corner it said, "Capital \$20,000, Surplus \$10,000," in the opposite corner, "E. Simms, President and Cashier."

Harry entered the bank and walked over to the wooden railing that surrounded a roll top desk bearing a glass sign, "President."

"Hello. How's things?" he said, draping himself over the railing.

"Pretty fair, Mr. Gardner. Come in and sit down," replied the president.

The corporation of Piney recognized Evangeline Simms as an efficient business woman. It was a necessary accomplishment, since old Adrian Simms had left his motherless daughter the controlling stock in the bank, which carried with it the presidency of the institution, and title to half the real estate on Main street. In all of her twenty-eight years Evangeline Simms had not used cosmetics nor tried to arrange her hair except in the conventional knot on the back of her head. Henry Sullivan, the bookkeeper who comprised the remainder of the bank's clerical and executive force, had once commented to his wife that he'd bet "Eva thought the word 'chemise' was a bit of French profanity."

Harry watched a green bottle fly crawl down the window pane to the "\$10,000 Surplus" point, in an effort to bring forth an inspiration that would keep the conversation going.

"Been making any loans lately?" he said at last.

"Not many, since the wheat harvest is pretty good hereabouts. The corn's laid by now, though it doesn't look as if we're goin' to have much of a market for it."

"They don't grow wheat on these rocky hills?" questioned Harry.

"Oh, no, in the bottoms, of course," answered Miss Simms.

A discussion of agriculture was not his strong point, Harry decided, as he determined to get to the object of his visit.

"Do you ever go out on the river, Miss Simms? he demanded.

"Oh, dear me, no. It's deep and treacherous. Why, only last summer a man was drowned——"

"Oh, they'll get drowned anywhere. What I was getting at is, would you—would you care to go canoeing tonight? The moon will be full."

"Go canoeing? Why Mr. Gardner, I never did!"

"Then you have a new experience to look forward to."

"No, really, I—I——"

"Oh, sure you'll go," countered Harry in the determined manner that had worked so well with co-eds.

"But we might turn over."

"Forget it. You'll be ready about eight?"

"I—I guess so," Evangeline meekly agreed.

Harry left the bank and wandered down to the boat house to engage the canoe for that evening. While he had suspected that the task was not going to be easy, now he was positive that it was going to require some clever headwork. If she only could have been young, or good looking, or clever, he thought. She was clever in a way—clever enough not to be a fool where money was concerned. What if he had to marry her to get it? It was an awful thought. No, he would die in poverty first!

At ten o'clock that night a canoe glided into the quiet waters of a little bay fringed with willow trees. The yellow July moon cast a phosphorescent haze over

the water and held all the sleeping landscape under its magic spell.

"Slick" Gardner looked at the girl who sat at his feet. She half turned to look up into his face. He hesitated, but this was duty, it seemed. He bent over and kissed her. Presently she murmured, "Haven't you something to tell me?"

"Why, no," he replied.

"You haven't?" There was a silence.

"Damn," he whispered. "Eva, I—I love you!"

"Such language. But I like to hear it—the last part. Say it again."

* * *

Harry Gardner mounted three steps of the hotel porch when he reached the decision that this town was no place for him, and the quicker he left it the better. Hurrying to his room, he crammed his clothes into two suitcases and returned to the street. The only means of conveyance in sight was an old touring car parked on a vacant lot adjoining the bank. It was his one chance, and while it might be theft, burglary, grand larceny or some such crime, he determined to take the risk. After all, the owner could have it back when he reached the railroad.

The village of Piney slumbered peacefully, unaware that it was about to lose one of its score of summer visitors. Perhaps none of the constituency, known as "substantial citizens," cared much, save for the landlady of the Eldridge House. The landlady was concerned to the extent of \$28.50, a two-weeks' board bill.

Harry found it necessary to push the car a few feet until it gained momentum sufficient to coast down the steep hill. Near the foot of the grade the antiquated engine roared and shook, a protest at the disturbance

of its night's rest, but finally chugged away.

Harry Gardner entered the village of Slabtown, ten miles away, the next morning on foot. He was greeted by a short, unshaven individual with an enormous cud of tobacco in one cheek and a silver star pinned on his vest.

"I reckon you're th' fellow," he told Harry. "Young man, ye're under arrest."

Harry's jaw sagged. "Is that so?" was the only impromptu reply he could think of.

"Yep. They 'phoned over from Piney and said you're headed this way in a car. Where's th' car?"

"Wrecked. Smashed. At the bottom of that big hill about two miles back. Brakes were no good."

"Hump," the constable snorted. "Now, wasn't that a fine thing to do. Well, I reckon I'd better be takin' you back to Piney."

In due time the constable and his prisoner arrived in Piney, where they were met by the Piney police force, both of them.

"He says he smashed the car," Harry's captor confided.

"Smashed it, huh? Then I allow as how we'd better take him over to th' bank and find out how much th' car was worth. And if yuh can't settle up, young man, yuh know what that means!"

"The bank?" Harry gasped. "Why the bank?"

"The bank owned it—had just foreclosed a mortgage on it yesterday."

At the bank of Piney the three officers and their prisoner were greeted by President Evangeline Simms, who smiled serenely at each of them.

"The bank had only two hundred dollars in the car," she said, "and we'll be satisfied if that amount is paid."

"But Eva—Miss Simms, I've got just fifty dollars to my name," Harry protested weakly.

"We'll take that for the present," was her reply.

Excusing herself, President Simms went into the teller's cage where she held a whispered conversation with the bank's other employee. In a few minutes she returned.

"Mr. Gardner," she said, "Mr. Sullivan is going to take a much needed vacation for two months. The salary is seventy-five dollars a month. By taking his place for this time, you will be able to discharge your obligation to the bank."

Harry Gardner did not leave Piney at the end of the two months, in fact, he's there yet, so they say.

JOY

VIRGINIA LAWRENCE

I LOVE to laugh as green leaves blow,
 I love to shiver in silver snow.
 I love to walk with a fresh brisk step
 And race with breezes on happiness bent.
 I love to see the slinking moss
 Drip on gray rough bark and toss
 Her silken form—a flowing floss.
 I love to see the pine tree's hair
 Bristle as it is combed with care
 By the wind's firm teeth. On a chilly night
 I love the fire that crackles bright,
 And the strong black wood that burns to gray
 Of filmy ashes that blow away.
 And oh,—as keen as a steeled knife,
 I love all beauty—
 I love all life!

I

BIG BASEMENTS

RUSS L. FULLER

THE GREAT Sawdust city bustled and jostled on its way to Ginger Ale Bay, for its Saturday afternoon holiday. The tall Sawdust skyscrapers seemed to rise further into the sky as their load of people emptied into the street. Maybe it was that the street sank farther down when all the Sawdust people came out upon it, and *that* made the buildings seem higher.

The last Sawdust car had left for Ginger Ale Bay and the last Newsboy had left for his game of Sawdust crap when Little Pig-Tail Pigeon closed up her typewriter and started home. The elevator boy had left, and poor Little Pig-Tail Pigeon had to walk down twenty flights of Stairs to reach the Sawdust street. As she slowly descended she began to wish that the great Whale-Faced Eagle would come with his pile driver and sink the building into the ground so she wouldn't have to go down the steps to reach the street. She wished harder and harder and suddenly she felt her stomach somersault, and she knew the Whale-Faced Eagle had heard her. The building sank and sank until the step she stood up on was even with the street!

As Little Pig-Tail Pigeon walked into the Sawdust street she heard the great Whale-Faced Eagle laugh and clap his hands. He seemed very pleased—like a boy who has drowned a kitten in a reservoir. Then she noticed that there were no more tall buildings—they all had sunk into the ground leaving only one or two floors above the street.

Then the Little Pig-Tail Pigeon knew what the great

Whale-Faced Eagle had been laughing at. The people wouldn't have to climb stairs any longer—they could go directly to their offices by subway! The Sawdust city seems smaller than it used to, but that is because most of the people live in the Big Basements.

II

THE LOST CITY OF HAMGRAVY

CARTER BRADFORD

FOUR FAT DWARFS of the Village of Sauerkraut traveled miles across the Great Western Desert in search of the Lost City of Hamgravy. Rays of the Great Yellow Sun beat down upon the Tiny Grains of Sand, and the Tiny Grains of Sand, not wishing to be roasted, hurled them back at the Sun.

Far out in these Great Open Spaces the Four Fat Dwarfs met Saucy, the Prairie Dog, perched on his hind legs and holding a Cactus Bud in his forepaws.

"Can you tell us the way to the Lost City of Hamgravy?" asked the Fat Dwarf who had the Biggest Feet, and was therefore entitled to speak first.

Saucy swallowed an extra large lump of the Cactus Bud and said, "Follow the Grease Stains on the Sand. Don't trust to your noses, for you must pass through the Valley of Garlic. The Grease Marked Trail will take you there safely."

The Four Fat Dwarfs said "Thank you" and went on their way, following the Grease Marked Trail, led by the Fat Dwarf with the Big Feet.

So it was that towards evening the Four Fat Dwarfs came in sight of the Lost City of Hamgravy, which appeared to them like a Warm Brown Spot on the Grey Platter of the Desert.

BROKEN PANES

BRENHAM MCKAY

MARGOT crept out of her little door—somewhere there in the dusk Pierre would be waiting for her—around the corner of the crooked street or behind a tall chestnut tree in the palace gardens.

Margot crept along the cobbled street close to the walls. Little glass lanterns hung by the closed doors. (Fairies of light in crystal cages, she thought.) Pierre was waiting for her.

She found the first star peeping out of the greyness. Pierre would kiss her eyelids—seal them against seeing anything else in the world but Pierre ever and ever again.

She crept close against the walls—she must see no one—no one before she saw Pierre—look on no other face—it would break the spell. The glittering points of the star dripped silver threads of rays down into the narrow street. The crazy eaves hid it now and now again—an evil sign! She shuddered and hurried across an alley. A cat like a shadow slunk before her, a cat with eyes as green as evil stars when it turned regarding her over a slack, sinuous back.

"Go—Go,—cat!"

It must go!—must go!—disappear into a cistern, lose itself in a dream; it might scream—yowl at any time now and Margot would have to go back or around. Pierre might tire of waiting—fade away into the night (There were so many stars!) if she were not there. (He would kiss her eyelids!)

Cat cowered low against the wall—twisting in upon itself. Wailed—low, like the dying of a violin.

Little threads broke in Margot's heart.

Tall Black Cape came around the bend of the cob-

bled street—like a crane from a cypress tree.

She must see no one else—no other face. She drew about herself—hiding her eyes to the wall.

Long White Face was peering over her; thin hands were on her shoulder—drawing her to look—Oh, Pierre—another face!—not Pierre's! She must not look on another face!

"Oh little fool—little fool—Pierre does not wait—you have not come—Pierre has forgotten."

"No—no—Pierre! No other face but Pierre's—Pierre will kiss my eyelids."

"Pierre has forgotten you. You have not come—Pierre has forgotten you"—Laughter hung over her shoulder. "Come and I will show you Pierre, forgotten Margot."

Black Cape folded upon her (she must not look on another Face!) Black Cape folded close about her eyes, cobbles passed beneath her feet.

There!—There! Pierre in the gardens of the palace. Beside a tall willow tree. Pierre was kissing the eyelids of the Princess—Pierre was faded into the night.

"Oh, Margot! Little Fool—Pierre forgets—there are so many stars—Tall Black Cape is here, holding you—"

Thin white hands held her—Long White Face she looked upon—long white bones beneath Black Cape—and Pierre was faded into the night.

Black eyes (Pierre's were blue, I think—) Blue eyes (Pierre's were black, I think—) Round face, pink face, face like a leaf, face like a flame, face like a stone, lost face—so many faces! Margot must look on no other face if she were to find Pierre—all faces must be looked on—if Pierre should pass again she could not miss him then.

Margot crushed a champagne glass; tore a spangled

ruffle from her skirt; bought four dry seeds and turned them into flowers in a pot; caught a star from a garret window—gave it to a man, because he wept; played with puppets, broke them all; rode a horse into the park; stuck a feather and a jewel in her hair; sprinkled shimmering bits of mirror in the rain; caught warm snow upon her breast; dressed in crimson silk; (Poor Margot! Little fool!) kicked the last note from a tune.

Margot slipped from her little door, crept along the cobbled street, clung against the walls, dodged the alleys—breathless, poor Margot—Pierre might go if she did not hurry— The last star faded in the grey. Oh, hurry—hurry! Pierre will go— The Princess is waiting, stamping her little foot to have her eyelids kissed— Hurry, Margot, oh, hurry!

The cat! creeping there before her, close against the wall, like an evil shadow, peering over slack, black back.

Tall Dark Cape coming down the street—like a crane from a cypress tree.

She must crouch beneath the wall, hide herself from eyes, all eyes but Pierre's! She must not look—no other face but Pierre's.

Thin white hands upon her—the kiss of fleshless teeth upon her lids—sealing up her eyes—never, never, never opening more, seeing Pierre's face always, always now, forever and ever more.

Poor Margot is dead.

FATE
STELLA WESTON

LOVE CALLED ME, and I answered not,
Thinking that Love could wait.
Alas! Love waited over long,
And then returned—too late!

THE TREASURE BOX

BEATRICE JONES

IN THE ruddy coffin
Of a dainty japanned box
The treasures of lost dreams
Lie close.

This string of tiny baby pearls
Broken and blindly rolling,
Gleams with the softness of a faded dawn
Long-forgotten.

Like the color of mayflower breath
Was this tea-rose petal
That rested on a filmy yoke
Above a heart once swelled in faith and cold in fear—
Long calmed.

This golden circle
Bound the waist of a dimpled baby finger
And rode on hands that beat the face and breast
Of an angel-mother—
And later the heart
Of his patient lover.

This silken lace
That falls in folds of cobweb grace,
Woven of sighs and prayers for happiness—
A bridal veil—
Tomorrow it will crown a living joy
Sweeping from tender curls of prisoned gold
Ruddy as my japanned treasure-box—
Her brooding eyes serene with pensive tear,
Her trembling lips that part with passing sigh

Fragrant as evening jasmine—
The patient, loving hands.

Child of loveliness,
Take the wedding veil,
And make come true
The dreams I've dreamed,
Trailing the filmy cloud
From the deep-amber glory
Of your fine, sweet curls
Ruddy as my japanned treasure-box.

HIGH PLACES

BEATRICE JONES

WE WHO HAVE known the high places—
We who have watched the anger of rolling
clouds
And heard the moaning of a tortured sea
Writhe green, white-lipped with agony,
And felt the sting of fine salt spray
And the bleak loneliness of cold rushing winds—
We who have seen stark winter come
Coating the brook and meadow with pale, tight ice,
Trimming the gray stone walls with glistening snow,
Freezing the hearts, chilling the blood of us—
We know the miracle of the coming Dawn after
Calvary.

We who have stood on the high, barren places,
We who have seen the Spring come—
We know the scourging mercy of Divine Wrath.

P I X Y

BEATRICE JONES

FIVE rosy kisses
Born of a sigh;
Lightly I blow them,
See how they fly—

One to the North
To the hills of snow;
One to the South,
Where tall palms blow.

One to the East
To the breaking dawn,
And one to the West
Where Time is gone.

Four kisses for beauty
All the world through —
One kiss of love,
Darling,—for you.

I F E E L

PAUL HILLIARD

I FEEL—the lure of countless stars,
The wet caress of night's warm dew,
A million sparkling moonbeams on the lake
I feel—and words are all too few.

I feel—the space beyond the place,
Where land and sky merge thus anew,
The night's enchanting moodiness
I feel—and words are all too few.

AND THEY SAY THERE IS NO HELL

A sketch in four planes for acting

BRENHAM MCKAY

TIME: Then (*Relative*)Now (*All Time*)Imagined (*Abstract*)Forever (*Enveloping*)

SETTING: *A room suggesting the period of 1840 in Salem or Boston. Above the floor of the stage there are three broad, low planes or steps. On the topmost of these against the back wall there is a Chinese chest or cabinet of dull green; on the second step there is a gate-leg table and two Windsor chairs, one at either end, the table is set with empty plates, cups, etc., and a tall silver coffee service; on the lowest step, facing left, there is a tall backed tapestry chair; the strip of the stage floor in front of the steps is quite bare. The lighting is dim—in the left wing there is a purple flood; in the right wing an orange.*

PERSONS: The Woman, Bethesda—*Imagined Reality*The Man, David—*Sensed Reality*The Sing Song—*Reality*The Moderns—*Unreality*

CURTAIN

DAVID SITS left in the chair on the first step. He wears smoothly fitting grey pants fastened under the arches of his feet by a little strap; a stiff silk dressing gown of gold-brown that reaches below his knees; and a black satin neck-cloth, above which project the two white points of a collar. He is tall, very sallow, with long narrow black eyes and brows. His straight black hair is slightly disarranged.

An extremely sensitive and neurotic type. He sits staring moodily off—Left. There gradually comes a faint music, exotic as a frail perfume or drifting almond petals; one is but half conscious of it. *The Man* tries, leaning forward, to catch it. He strains nervously until his very breath is tortured. The music grows too illusive—fading away imperceptibly. He sinks back in his chair, covering his ears with his hands, his eyes closed, and gasping slightly as if with pain.

The Woman Bethesda enters—Right, on the second step. She wears a dress of the year 1840, smoothly fitted to the hips; long full skirt, without hoops; and sleeves of wrist-length; her round lace collar is fastened by a painted brooch. Her hair is pulled down on either side of her head and is caught in a corded net on the nape of her neck. In her face there will be seen but three things—fear, a glittering excitement, and hatred. Her eyes are downcast as she enters, walking quietly towards the table. Seeing *David* she goes yearning toward him and stands, still on the second step, behind his chair with half extended hands.

The Man twists uncomfortably, shielding himself from some invisible thing with his hands. *Bethesda* sighs and turns away.

She crosses and seats herself at right of table.

Bethesda: David?

David: (*After a long pause*) Yes? (*He speaks with the tone of an echo*).

Bethesda: (*Brightly*) Shall we have breakfast?

David: Yes—Yes—(*He laughs a little, grimly but quietly and with no trace of mirth*) We shall I suppose.

Bethesda: (*Sits watching questioningly, half in fear, while he moves slowly up to the second step and takes the first chair at the table facing her. Then:*)

There are—there are new laid eggs—and toast, (*anxiously*) warm and lovely—and here—Sumatra coffee! Oh,—! But your ginger—(*Laughing, as though speaking to a child*) Your little chips of chrystalized ginger root! (*They have been making a show of eating, passing quite evidently empty plates, lifting bare forks to their lips, etc.*)

The Woman very much wrapped up in it all like a child playing at tea party. *The Man's* movements are the stiff gestures of a lifeless automaton. *The Woman* rises precipitately with her last words and runs up to the Chinese cabinet on the top step. She takes from it a queerly shaped little jar. Returning to the table she stands behind it offering it to *The Man* solicitously, holding it in both hands.

The Man nods seriously to her last words, still the automaton, and looks absently at the jar; reaches a hand towards it, then draws back hesitatingly—then he touches it again. *The Woman* grows anxious, placing one hand on her breast, turning the jar till one sees it is quite empty. Suddenly furious, as though awakening, *David* rises, brushing an empty cup from the table, it falls without a sound on the floor. He stands—center, with one foot on the first step and the other on the second as he speaks:)

David: (*Bitterly harsh*) Oh,—why keep up this fiasco?

Bethesda: But—(*She is very much afraid of this*) But—if we didn't—we—why what would we do?

David: (*With something of a sigh and a groan*) Food!—Food?—(*laughs shortly. Speaking more wildly*) But why food?—*Why we couldn't—!*

Bethesda: (*Firmly, primly; one would never guess that she is making as primitive and savage a fight for*

sanity as ever did Eve) Food is an excellent anchor for the mind. What would one think about a great deal of the time if it were not for food?

David: (Buries his face in his hands, drawing his breath in with a sharp little sighing sound. He stands swaying slightly).

Bethesda: (Very, very much afraid, she sets down the little jar and comes around the table down to the front of the second step—Speaks quickly, brightly, with the knowing of the serpent) Shall we go to a ball? Remember—Remember—my silver dress with lace—and rose buds in my hair—Remember?—It was a winter night with snow-bells on the harness;—and then all the candles and tall mirrors in the walls—Oh, I have it all—all here—(She places a hand above her heart—tremulous, smiling) My dress—! That night—They will all be back in a moment—Oh, if you will only remember with me! My dress—all silver! The snow, sleigh bells—the music—violins—candles—mirrors—! Try, David—Try!—(She is pleading).

(The lights have been growing gradually dimmer).

David: (Confusedly, brushes one hand across his forehead) Oh, yes—that night—the ball—that night—before—(Suddenly very erect and tense. Bethesda stands as though petrified, afraid to breathe. He steps away from her to the front of the first step). Before we died! (There is something of brutality in his voice. The Woman's body gives a convulsive twist as though touched by a high current of electricity. There is bare fear in her face. The Man continues, speaking in a low, half sardonic voice) When we were alive—life didn't mean much. It's only now that we look back on it from the memories of other people (those who believe that they are living now!) that we see life whole,

—the crazy jagged patterns of it—Oh!—And the big-ness of it is crushing us!—and you—you would close your eyes to even—! (He turns to The Woman as he speaks, seeing her he is touched with pity. He goes toward her until he stands as before, with one foot on either step. He speaks in a whisper—) Yes—Yes, Bethesda, I—remember that night—The lights and mirrors—and strangling—(He presses his hands to his throat, his eyes closed) Oh!—and cold—like the blades of knives—

Bethesda: (With a stifled cry) No—No—! Don't, David! (She rushes to him as though to throw her arms about him but there is some force that restrains her, only her hands cling to his shoulder.) Don't!—(A shuddering little cry as she hides her face against him).

David: (In a tense, hoarse whisper. The lights darken until there are only the purple and the orange lights on the front of the stage. In the action of the play The Woman always attempts to draw The Man into the field of the orange on the right—he naturally gravitates to the purple on the left.) I—I—That ball—Bethesda—you in silver—(He clings to her)—I was—yes, it was the last night. I was saying good-bye to you.

Bethesda: (Drawing away from him resentfully) You were going away—forever—the next day.

David: No—! (Bewildered a little) No—That's what I was trying to tell you that night, not forever—Only for a year! I—(He passes a hand across his forehead) I was going to—to—(He is trying desperately to remember. Then in a tone, faint and rather wondering, as though at the beauty of the word.) To—China! (There come again the very faint and

wandering music, with it there drifts into the room on the topmost step a willowy being in satin trousers and a long brocaded jacket—there is a mist of pale cherry petals about her sleek and silver bound hair. She weaves an exquisite fabric of shining white and rainbow silken mists about the room. She stands before the dull green chest in the center of the topmost step—thus *The Woman*, on the second step, is on her left; and *The Man*, on the first step, is on her right. She continues creating exquisite serpentine fabrics of the air.)

Bethesda: (There is something of hate now in her tone.) Huh, for a year! Do you think that you would have come back? Oh, don't you see?—I couldn't let you go—Even a year would have been too long. But you'd never have come back—It—it would have been too strong for you. You couldn't have fought it off. You with your chests and silks—and—and heathen gods! You'd never have come back!

David: (Murmuring) Oh!—If I could only remember—remember—

Bethesda: (Goes toward him with outstretched arms but the other presence has drifted down from beside the chest and stands beside him on the lowest step. *The Woman*—still on the second step—does not see her but is held in check by the slight wave of a delicate old-ivory hand.)

David: (Dream quality coming into the labourings of his mind while the *Sing Song* brocades exquisite things on her shining air fabric, enmeshing him in its folds) Shanghai—Shanghai—The little red lacquered doors in Shanghai—Curtained palanquins of the Manchu princesses—Flower boats on the night rivers—*The Sing Song* girls—

Bethesda: (Agonized, trying desperately to reach him) *David*! (*The Sing Song* girl smiles at her archly and then turns her almond eyes again to *The Man*.)

David: (He has not heard) Temples beside blue lakes on the cedared mountains.

Bethesda: *David*!—The—The silver dress—Do you remember? I had a little fan with cut sticks of pearl—(This is a desperate stroke.)

David: (His dream breaks; there is pain again in his face) Yes—Oh, yes,—Oh, there—was—(He places his hand to his throat as though he were strangling.)

Bethesda: Earlier—earlier, *David*, in the little room after the waltz—(Now there is fear on the face of the *Sing Song* and she crouches protectingly beside *The Man*.)

David: Yes—Y-e-s—we—I was telling you something—that I loved you—No!—You were telling me—(He looks at her—puzzled. *The Sing Song* gains in confidence again.)

Bethesda: (Brushing it aside) Oh, that doesn't matter. Remember—*David*—what you did—You? (This is momentous to *The Woman*; she hangs her whole being on the chance of his getting it right. There is fear again in the *Sing Song*.)

David: (Speaks slowly like a child reciting a hardly remembered lesson, marking the halting words with movements of his head.) I—I was—kissing—you—

Bethesda: (With all the lightness of relief) Oh,—oh, yes! (*The Sing Song* retreats slowly up to the top step, her hands lingering behind her as she goes. *The Woman* approaches *The Man* joyfully. He is puzzled—still remembering.)

David: I held you in my arms that night. (He steps up to the second step—her arms almost close

about him but he is too absorbed to take any notice) because I was going away—and you had asked me to—I—I felt sorry for you. (*The Woman retreats as though stung by a lash. The Man continues on up to the third step where he stands beside the Sing Song*).

Bethesda: (*Her voice quivering with an animal quality*) Yes—Remember—Remember! You!—Oh, remember—these hands—strangling! Poor hands—Little white hands of a woman killing a living man by pressing into his throat—! Oh!—(*She buries her face in her arms. The Sing Song smiles down on her exultingly.*)

David: (*Shuddering and passing a hand across his face, he suggests horror*) Oh,—Oh!

(*Faint music like the falling of tiny chimes in the wind and the frail songs of happiness leaves sing. The Sing Song draws her filmy webs about him once again enticing him with delicate gestures. He sees her only vaguely and starts off after her feeling his way.*)

Bethesda: (*Laughs*) You can't go.

David: (*There is a wonderful light in his face*) But—But—Yes!

Bethesda: (*Laughs shortly*) We are dead? You it was who said so. We are only living now in the memories of men. We have gone through our gestures, we can only do those things they know we did. Some day they'll forget us, then just like that—(*with a little futile gesture of her hand*)—we go out forever.

All three of these characters, the Sing Song and David on the topmost step Left, and Bethesda on the second step—Right, stand as though turned to waxen effigies as: A path of white light flashes across the front of the stage illuminating the strip of floor not covered by the steps. Two individuals like blandly

smiling dolls from a puppet show in sharply cut black suits and gleaming shirt bosoms stroll out from the right wing on this lowest level. They stop center and gaze up at the imaginary fourth wall. The blander of the two speaks, in the manner of a well wine young host showing off his establishment after a particularly satisfactorily concocted meal.

The Modern: (*He speaks with a broad bleating on the vowels*) Yes—that's the old geezer's picture. Reg'lar devil, came in on the crest of the Romantic wave—er—1840—took in China—the whole Orient—and that was when traveling meant something. (*And here the Sing Song goes on out into the purple light of the left wing—David follows her yearningly*). Got into some pretty narrow squeaks—Had a way of getting tangled up with the fems too frequent—(*Yeh, he was my great grandfather—see?—heh! heh!*) Well, but I started to tell you, there was some poor forgotten gal once nearly squeezed the breath out of him and then bounced herself off. (*Bethesda collapses upon the floor like an empty rag.*) All supposed to have happened right here in this very room. That was just before he went out to the Spiggoties. Seemed to form a sentimental interest for the place, came back, bought it—lived here—and so have we ever since. Well, that's him at fifty, and, so they say, he was the sheik of his day in America—Byronic—Gawd! What a few years can do to a man! (*He shudders.*) (*They wander off Left.*)

CURTAIN

THE FLAMINGO

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With this issue "The Flamingo" closes Volume I. Volume II will begin with the October number.

With a larger student body to draw upon and several new instructors in the English Department the issues of Volume II should set a distinctly higher standard.

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