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APRIL, 1930

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THE FLAMINGO

THE CONTENTS

- FIDELIA (*Poem*) PHYRNE SQUIER
SUN, RAIN, FLOWER, AND STONE (*Poem*),
DOROTHY EMERSON
A CERTAIN STAGE (*A play to be read*),
PHYRNE SQUIER
THE MUSICIAN IMPROVISES (*poem*),
YULA POWERS
THE COZIES (*A Whimsy*) CAROLYN HEINE
POETRY SECTION STELLA WESTON
THE POOR RELATION
THE GRANDMOTHER
THE ECCENTRIC
THE TRAVELER
AN ANACHRONISM (*A Play*) MYRABETH REECE
WHITE SPAR (*story*) CHARLES MILLS
DRAGONS IN THE SNOW . . . MARY LEE KORNS

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F I D E L I A

LISTLESS beneath a spring-greened oak,
Wistful of death Fidelia spoke:
"Things will go on when I am dead
The same as always before," she said.
"Sunlight, fragrance, flowering tree,
Will never pause because of me.
"Nature will never cease for a breath
Because my life has changed to death."

*Here on the hill where shade is thin,
We made a rift to lay her in.
Here on the hill that faces south;
Ungiven body, unknissed mouth.
Less virginal these flowering trees
Whose buds are yet unfound by bees.
Things move the same now she is dead—
Hawthorne blooms white, acacia red.*

PHYRNE SQUIER

*This poem won the recent Ponce de Leon prize
of \$100. offered by the Poetry Society of Florida.*

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SUN, RAIN, FLOWER, AND STONE

DOROTHY EMERSON

BE NOT boastful of the sun.
Speak modestly of rain.
Here have dropping waters run.
Here the light has lain.
Though a seed reward the air
With a flower grown,
Praise charily the tender care;
Stone remains stone.

A CERTAIN STAGE

PHYRNE SQUIER

A PLAY TO BE READ

THE SCENE is a well-furnished dormitory hall.
There is an outside door and through a window
can be seen a snow-covered landscape.
There is, at the right of the stage, a staircase. A long
mirror hangs on the wall at left. In the center of the
back wall is a fireplace before which five girls are sitting
in comfortable chairs in various attitudes of relaxation;
some with books. The time is sunset.

The girls are Ruth, Marilyn, Estelle and Betty, and
another who is dressed for going out.

The outside door opens and a girl comes in. She
has on a bright blue beret perched cockily upon extremely
red hair. She has heavily penciled eyebrows and a great
deal of lipstick. She is dressed in sport

clothes. Under her arm are some books. She crosses the room to the fireplace and stands with her back toward it. The girl in outdoor clothes rises and goes toward the door. You can have my chair, Leone, I'm going.

Leone: No thanks. Can't. I'm going out to tea at the Pink Dragon.

Marilyn: Whee-e-e! With whom?

Leone: You'd be surprised. (*She capers about gayly for a minute.*)

Estelle: (*Closing her book and looking up at Leone.*) I wondered who had my beret.

Leone: I borrowed it.

Estelle: So I perceive.

Leone: That makes me think. (*She crosses over to Ruth, a girl who has been sitting slightly apart and who has a sweet, rather detached expression upon her face, one elbow resting upon her chair arm propping her chin. She has previously been paying no attention to the girls about her. Leone sits down on her lap and puts an arm about her shoulders, resting her cheek on Ruth's hair.*) Let me wear your new green chiffon, Ruth? (*She speaks with a whining note in her voice.*)

Ruth: (*Smiling up at her*) You're perfectly welcome. You may take my jade earrings too, if you like. They match beautifully.

Leone: You're sure you don't mind? I'm wearing Gertrude's big black hat and Vi's coat. It ought to make a stunning outfit, don't you think? I never tried them together before.

Ruth: There's a hook off the dress. How long before you're going? I'll run up and fix it now.

Leone: Oh, I'm going right away. I have to be down town at six. Can't I pin it, or something?

Ruth: I'd rather you wouldn't. It won't take a second. I'll sew it on while you're dressing.

Leone: So sorry to bother you.

Ruth: That's all right. I have to fix it sometime. (*She rises and the two girls go up the stairs together.*)

Marilyn: Isn't she the sweetest thing?

Estelle: Whom? (*Her voice shows disgust.*)

Marilyn: Ruth, of course.

Estelle: Oh, I thought you meant her!

Marilyn: Why do people always have to hug you when they want something?

Estelle: Why do people of that type always have to whine?

Marilyn: Gee, and Ruth is so decent to her. I wish she wouldn't be.

Estelle: She sure needs squelching. But Ruth is that way to all the girls.

Marilyn: Don't you think she's changed an awful lot since last year? She seems so—so—different, if you know what I mean.

Estelle: It's being in love and being loved.

Marilyn: Do you think so? Gee! I'd like to try it. (*She sighs and leans back in her chair. Her hands fall to her lap.*)

Presently the two girls come down stairs together. Leone looks very sophisticated in a black coat with a rich fur collar. She wears the coat tightly wrapped about her. The hat has a wide and curving brim which droops. Below her coat there are hanging points of green chiffon. She wears dangling green earrings, and her feet are dressed in high heeled black slippers and chiffon hose. She walks toward the door and pauses to readjust her coat. Ruth, who is dressed also for outdoors but in a scarlet beret and leather coat,

with skates and hockey stick on her arm stands at the foot of the stairs and looks admiringly at Leone: Doesn't she look sweet?

Marilyn: (Turning in her chair and looking Leone up and down.) I wish you'd tell me whom you're going with. I'm all curious.

Leone: (Winking at her, an exaggerated wink. She turns to Ruth.) Are my seams straight? *(Ruth nods. Leone goes out pulling on her gloves.)*

Estelle: I wonder to whom the gloves belong. Don't tell me she has some of her own.

Marilyn: I can't stand these girls who are always borrowing—borrowing. I'd like to have her come to me for something.

Ruth: (Comes toward the group. She kicks the fire with her toe and stands for a minute looking into the flames.) I don't think she is half bad. She's really awfully good hearted.

Estelle: (Sarcastically.) You would say that.

Ruth: And you must admit that she looks like a million dollars when properly dressed. Her figure is wonderful.

Marilyn: Yes, with your clothes on. You're a fool to loan them to her. You've never worn that dress but once. She'll probably wreck it.

Ruth: I don't mind. That shade was never becoming to me. My coloring is too indefinite for green. I don't know why I bought it.

Marilyn: I bet it's Webster Hallet again.

Estelle: (In so sharp a tone that they all start.) Webster Hallet is a fool!

Betty: (Who has previously not spoken, rises in her chair and closes her book.) Why?

Estelle: Because anybody is a fool who would

spend the price of a dinner at the Pink Dragon on that—that—creature! She's a leech, my dear, a blood sucking leech, and Webster Hallett is capable of better things.

Betty: (Shaking her head.) I don't know him, I guess.

Estelle: What! You've been on this campus *two whole weeks* and don't know who Webster Hallet is? Child, child, where *have* you been dreaming?

Marilyn: You've wasted half your life.

Betty: He rates then?

Estelle: He sure does. He's my S. P., and the sheik of the campus. There isn't a girl here who wouldn't cast her heart at his feet, and for that matter most of them have. And to think that he's taking such a pain in the neck as Leone out for the *second time* within a *week!* She's absolutely impossible!

Marilyn: You should have heard her the other day in class. When Miss Douglas asked her what she was most interested in she said, 'I'm only interested in one thing and that wouldn't interest you.'

Betty: What was it?

Marilyn: Oh, Innocence! Men, of course. You *have* been asleep. And Webster Hallett of all men! Still she's the type that decent men invariably are taken in by.

Ruth: I think you're silly to make so much of who takes her out. You all know that Webster Hallett's attentions don't mean a thing toward anyone.

Estelle: That's just it. Gee! *(She slumps down further in her chair limp with feigned discouragement.)*

Marilyn: (Going over to Estelle and stroking her hair.) Poor Baby, she's certainly been stood up for fair. *(Soothingly.)*

Ruth walks toward the door with an amused smile.

Estelle: (Speaking to Ruth.) You'd feel differently about it if it were you. Wait until she sneaks up on Ross.

Ruth laughs aloud and goes out.

Marilyn: Can you imagine it?

Estelle: What?

Marilyn: Ross leaving Ruth.

Estelle: (With feeling.) I can imagine any man leaving any woman when another one of the right type comes along, especially one with the what-you-may-call-it in her eye that Leone has.

Betty: Am I supposed to know Ross, too?

Marilyn: I don't see how you could have missed him. He's the best looking thing on the landscape, and the clothes, My dear!—And the car! !

Estelle: (Reviving.) The best looking thing with one exception.

Marilyn: Oh You! Forget Webster Hallet a minute!

Estelle: I wish I could. *(She subsides again and puts her head in her arms.)*

Betty: Tell me about Ross and Ruth.

Marilyn: (Going back to her chair and sitting down comfortably, leaning slightly forward with her elbows on her knees and her hands clasped before her.) Well, you know Ruth, and Ross is, as I said, a prize beyond the hope of your heart. They're the one case I've ever known where the right two people found each other.

Estelle: (Rousing again.) And she was the one who waked up to the fact last of all.

Marilyn: That's true. Every other girl on the campus threw herself at his head from the time he came—

they're still doing it, but it doesn't do them any good.

Betty: (With increased interest.) He's devoted, then?

Marilyn: Devoted! Devoted is a weak word. I guess that it was such a novelty to have one girl not pursue him in the customary manner that he was quite swept off his feet by the shock! He started playing up to her the night of the costume ball and he's never let down once since. Gee, it took our breath away, the way he swept down on her!

Betty: Somehow she doesn't look the type that would rate with men.

Estelle: My dear, no man ever sees in a girl what another girl sees.

Marilyn: Well, she didn't rate so well last year. She never went out with men.

Estelle: I think she could have, though. I always thought Dick Pearsall was crazy about her. He was another of my secret sorrows.

Marilyn: I think men are afraid of her.

Betty: Afraid!

Estelle: She's got too darned many brains. Men never want anything *inside* a girl's head.

Betty: But she fell for him and he for her! How perfectly thrilling!

Marilyn: My dear, he just *crashed*, and though it took a long time to undermine her, she eventually toppled, and she'll never get back to the same heights again.

Estelle: I do wish you could have seen it, Infant. The descent was the most complete thing you ever experienced seeing. Wasn't it beautiful? *(She turns to Marilyn for affirmation.)*

Marilyn: Gradual but thorough.

Estelle: He brought her roses, perfectly huge things, and she dealt them out to us all over the dorm; one at every door like Post Toastie samples. He brought her just tons of narcissus and she said she hated sweet flowers and put them down here on the mantle. He brought sweet peas and violets and lillies of the valley, and while we were all thrilled about it, she said she didn't consider him to be a bit original, that people had given her such things before, and that she thought he seemed to be a person with more sense than to expect anybody to fall for *such* bait . . .

Marilyn: (Interrupting.) And after that it was lilies. Don't forget them Estelle.

Estelle: Oh yes, Easter lilies. Enough to fill a bath tub. Gee, we were all petrified, for she wholly ignored him after that. Honestly, we just *knew* she'd lose him, and still he hung on like a bull dog and wouldn't be pried loose. Everybody was betting on how the thing was coming out.

Betty: And what happened then? This is just awfully exciting.

Marilyn—Estelle: (Speaking together.) She fell!

Estelle: And over the *funniest* thing.

Both Estelle and Marilyn laugh.

Betty: What was it?

Estelle: A thing folks have fallen over before, I'll admit, but in a different way.

Betty: Do tell me!

Marilyn: A blackberry vine.

Estelle: And a piece of moss!

Betty: (Sitting up in her chair and looking bewildered.) What!

Estelle: Well, it's the truth. One day she had been walking all by herself as she always did till they got

this way, you know, and when she came back she was shining all over like seventeen first magnitude stars. We asked her what Midas had touched her and she burst out that she had met Ross. Well really, nobody could speak for a minute. We all just stared at her, for his society hadn't previously been affecting her that way, and such exuberance at meeting him simply didn't register. Then she began fumbling in the pocket of that leather coat, and finally fished out this funny mess of junk and held it out with the most delighted expression on her face—and here we were all leaning over it to see what she'd got and when we saw it, we thought more than ever that she'd gone crazy.

Betty: Do tell me.

Estelle: Well, it was just an ordinary little blackberry bramble that had turned red like every other dumb little blackberry turns red in the fall, and the *tackiest* looking piece of moss. Oh yes, and there was a twig with some little wispy yellow fringe stuck to it which she said was witch-hazel blossoms—those did smell sort of good—and when somebody asked where she got them, she gurgled, 'Why Ross found them out in the woods and brought them all the way home to me! I knew he had it in him, I knew he had it in him, I *knew* it!' And she just went cavorting all over the place, almost dancing a jig and sniffing at her witch-hazel twig like a cat with catnip, and we could only stand there looking at each other with question marks shooting up from our heads like those the animated cartoons have in the movies, *you* know, and from that time on, they have just beaten any little love birds you ever saw.

Betty: I think that's positively *romantic*.

Marilyn: And it's lasted six months that way.

Estelle: And that's the main thing about it. Let me tell you; my brother knew him at prep school and he gave me a lot of dope on him. He said that there Ross would have the biggest time rushing some girl, then all of a sudden just drop her without any warning whatever and give somebody else a break. There was a girl who was so far gone on him that she took poison or something—though it didn't kill her—when she lost him. But he never went with anybody as long as he has Ruth.

Betty: I think that's utterly thrilling! Does Ruth know?

Marilyn: Sure she knows, but it didn't worry her at first before she was interested, and of course she's sure of him now.

Estelle: My dear, no girl is ever sure of a man! How often is it necessary to repeat it to you?

Marilyn: I think in this case—well say, just think what would happen to Ruth if he should drop her now! No, they must be set for good and all, I think. I've always felt that when an affair of this sort gets past a certain stage, you know,—well, that it just goes on, if you know what I mean, like passing the crisis in a fever or—or—something—. (*She waves her hand vaguely.*)

Estelle: I love your simile.

Marilyn: Well, there's a certain stage, you know, that one reaches in a thing of this sort, a certain stage, if you get my idea,—(*She throws out her hands helplessly.*)

Estelle: Perfectly clear, Darling. You mean that there's a certain stage, and that one either gets past it or they don't get past it. How interesting! And what you are trying to impress upon us is that Ruth and Ross have gotten past it.

Marilyn: Exactly.

Estelle: Well, I'm sure glad you have it all nicely settled for us.

Marilyn: (*Looking at her watch.*) Come on, children. It's time to dress for dinner.

Estelle: And at this identical moment I suppose that Webster Hallet and that Serpent of the Nile are eating broiled turtle doves on the half shell. (*She gives a shriek of mock despair. Marilyn pats her on the back and supports her drooping figure up the stairway. Betty follows.*)

The door opens and Ruth comes in. She appears to be relieved at finding the room empty. She goes to mirror and taking a compact from her pocket, applies makeup, paying particular attention to obliterating the signs of recent tears. She listens at the foot of the stairs for a second, then goes up them as though extremely weary.

SCENE TWO

Same place and hour one week later. Estelle and Marilyn before the fire.

Marilyn: What did Poly assign us for tomorrow? I cut class to go skating.

Estelle: Tomorrow's a test on the last three chapters.

Marilyn: (*Shrieking*) What! Don't tell me! I haven't even read them!

Estelle: Get busy, Baby, get busy.

Marilyn: Ruth flunked her trig to-day.

Estelle: Ruth! No. You can't mean it!

Marilyn: (*Gloomily*) I wish I didn't mean it.

Estelle: Why, she was the best of anybody in the class.

Marilyn: Was is correct. Not so any more. It

really was pitiful. She worked,—or tried to work,—awfully hard at it for some time, and I, watching her, could see that she was just going wild over it. Finally she put her books in the desk, stood up and walked out. That was the end of it. Boynton just looked at her as she went by him, but neither one of them said anything. Do you notice—somehow, nobody can say anything to her any more?

Estelle: How can they when she looks that way?

Marilyn: I'm so sorry for her, but you can't talk to her about it. I tried to that first night when we found out what had happened, but no use. She doesn't even blame Leone. Just as sweet to her as she ever was, but the contemptible little beast does keep clear of her most of the time.

Estelle: I could just strangle her with my bare hands every time I meet her in the hall. And to borrow Ruth's dress on that night of all nights!

Marilyn: I know it. That's just what gripes worst of all, isn't it? Gee!

Estelle: I admire Ruth particularly for one thing—not running after him, trying to draw him back. Most girls would.

Marilyn: Ruth isn't most girls. Can you imagine her running after anybody for anything? I can't.

Estelle: I'd have to. I just couldn't stand it. I'd tell him what I thought of him, at any rate.

Marilyn: You'd be a fool to do it. It's as Ruth says; if a man decides that he doesn't want you any longer, there isn't a thing to be done about it. I think she's darned sensible, myself.

Estelle: What can he feel like inside? He must see her face. It gives *me* cold chills.

Marilyn: No. They haven't come directly face to

face once. She told me so for I asked her, and she just pulls herself together in a magnificent way when he is in sight of her at all. Poor child, she's sure putting up a good fight not to show what she feels like inside. Gee, what a cad he is!

Estelle: I know. I hope that sometime he'll be let down himself so hard that he'll crack in pieces. I almost wish,—I do wish, that it *had* been Webster Hal-let.

The door bell rings. Both girls sit up straight in their chairs.

Marilyn: I'll go. (*She walks over to the door and opens it. A man can be seen standing there.*) He asks: Do you know whether Ruth Berkeley is in?

Estelle: I think so. Won't you come in? (*She opens the door and the man steps into the room. He is very handsome and is dressed nicely in well fitting clothes. He stands close inside the door where he is not noticeable from the stairs, while Marilyn goes up in quest of Ruth. Estelle rises and follows Marilyn.*)

Ruth descends the stairs. She halts just before she reaches the lower steps and stands there waiting. She is extremely pale and her eyes show dark circles. Her voice is quite emotionless as she asks: You wished to see me?

Ross: Ruth! (*He goes over to her and holds out his hands but she does not offer hers. After a minute he lets his fall.*)

Ruth: Is it anything important? Ross, I'm sorry but I have to dress for dinner. (*She looks at her wrist watch.*)

Ross: Ruth!

Ruth: (*Rather impatiently.*) Yes?

Ross: I've come back.

Ruth: So I see.

Ross: I'm a sneaking hound, Ruth.

Ruth: You don't flatter yourself.

Ross: How could I?

Ruth: Most people do. Perhaps you have an inferiority complex.

Ross: Don't try to be clever, Ruth.

Ruth: I don't try to be.

Ross: You are naturally.

Ruth: Trivial compliments always bore me. Tell me just why you came.

Ross: To square things up.

Ruth: There is no reason for it. I'm sorry you bothered.

Ross: Don't say things like that to me. Can't you help me? Ruth, when you look at me like that, my bones turn to water. I want to thrash things out and you *must* help me,—you've got to help me! Why don't you say something?

Ruth: There is nothing to say. I may seem uncordial, but I really must dress for dinner.

Ross: Damn dinner! (*He seizes her wrist and draws her over to the fire.*) Sit down, Ruth. You've got to give me five minutes. There are things I have to say to you, and I'm going to say them if I have to hold you there. (*He pushes her into a chair. She crosses one knee over the other and sits there quite indifferently looking into the fire. Ross stands directly before her, facing her.*)

Ross: I want to start over again.

Ruth: Really?

Ross: I want to confess to you that I know what a fool I've been, but I have my senses back now. I'm wholly sure of myself once more.

Ruth: What? So soon?

Ross: What do you mean?

Ruth: That your latest affair has been rather more brief than is usual, even with you. Within a week a person can hardly be sure of himself regarding any new matter, unless possibly long practice produces adeptness. I really should not judge, myself.

Ross: You hurt me, Ruth.

Ruth: We are all wounded occasionally.

Ross: Thank heavens, wounds can be healed.

Ruth: Not always, and if they do heal they disfigure, particularly if they are deep.

Ross: How deep was this one? (*He leans over her as he asks this but she turns her head away and tries to rise. He pushes her gently back into place and straightens.*) I'm trying to get at things. I want to show you I'm sorry. Ruth, don't you know how hard you're making it for me? Maybe I do deserve it, but you might be human about it, for I am sorry. Do you hear me? I'm sorry. I want to come back to you, I want to start over again just where we left off. You don't know how I'm suffering, Ruth. You can't know. (*His voice rises with passion.*)

(*Ruth looks at him now and laughs suddenly.*) You are funny, Ross, I've always thought so, more or less, but now I'm convinced of it. Absolutely so. (*Her voice loses its coldness now and gains expressiveness.*) You shadow my footsteps for six months, and I am fool enough to fall in love with you and to let you know it, though that is a thing a woman should never do if she wants to hold a man. I was too easy; I tried not to be but for once I couldn't help myself. I'd never blame any girl for anything in which you had a hand. I've found by experience precisely what you do to

them. Then after six months along comes someone else who pleases you more. You go with her for a week, find out she doesn't attract you and then come back to me, and say that *I* have no idea how *you've* suffered. You've always had a sense of humor. What have you done with it, that you can't see the funny side of this? (*She laughs coldly.*)

Ross: (*Humbly.*) She swept me off my feet, Ruth. You know how I admire beauty in all things. You would be the last one to blame me for that, and if only you could have seen her in the green gown she wore the first night I took her out—

Ruth smiles but says nothing.

Ross: But it's all over now, Ruth. I'm sane again. Say you'll let me start over, Ruth. You love me, you just admitted that. I know that there's no punishment too great for me, but I'll make it up to you. I love you and for that, if nothing else, you must show me mercy.

Ruth: You never told me that before, Ross. Don't let the heat of your argument influence you to exaggeration.

Ross: There was never any need to say it before, Ruth. You knew it.

Ruth: No, Ross, I didn't know it. I just took it for granted, as women are always taking things for granted until they learn better. If you don't mind, we'll just leave the word love out of this.

Ross: But I do.

Ruth: I'm sorry if you think so, but you know quite as well as I do, that things can't go back and be the same. Nothing in life does that. Besides, I am told that it's a way of yours to pass on from one to another this way. No, everything is definitely over with,

there isn't another word to be said. (*She rises and walks very stately toward the staircase, brushing aside his hands as he tries to stay her. He follows after her and holds her by the hand.*)

Ross: Who told you I've done it before? It's a lie. (*Ruth does not answer. Ross stands looking up at her face for a moment, then continues in a hurried and excited tone:*) No, it isn't either. I'll admit that every word you say is true, but I meant no harm by it. I've always been fascinated by different types of girls, but it's God's truth that I've never been serious with one before. They've all been harmless little flirtations. After a little while, I'd find out that they didn't interest me any longer—

Ruth: And then you just chucked them without warning, as you did me.

Ross: Perhaps I should have thought about that; somehow I don't think of it from the girl's point of view. (*Thoughtfully.*) Maybe I should have.

Ruth: Not at all. Their feelings couldn't have possibly mattered in such a trivial incident.

Ross: I'll admit that there's something illogical about the workings of my mind. I guess that it's the truth that I get a big kick out of having girls come around and get on their knees to me. When you didn't do it, it gave me a shock. I expect it's been good medicine for me. I've been taught something I'd never learned before, but now, as I've said, I'm wholly sure of myself. You'd never need to be afraid of anything of the sort happening again. I never want to see another girl except you.

Ruth: (*Pulling her hand from his, and for the first time showing anger.*) Your story is a flop in every respect, if I must tell you so. I've submitted to your

demands and listened. I ask now that you submit to mine, and never mention this to me again. Good-bye, Ross. (*She turns and begins to mount the stairway. He pursues her and stands before her, blocking her way.*)

Ross: Ruth, there's one thing more. You've got to listen to just one more word. I was out on the Barclay flats this afternoon. It was just at sunset. You know what it is like there at that time of the day, with the sun red on the snow and the woods dyed with it till the birch trunks are pink and gold?

Ruth: (*Looking away from him, lets the set lines of her facial expression soften, and she nods slightly.*)

Ross: Well, I stopped the car and got out to walk to the top of the hill and stood there by an old stone wall. I happened to look down and there—. (*He stops to search in the pockets of his coat. Ruth moves a step nearer to him and looks to see what he will produce.*)

Ruth: What was it?

Ross: Bittersweet vine, thick with berries, yards and yards of it. It ran all over the wall and it climbed up in an old tree. In the sunset light it fairly blazed with color. I was sure I had a piece, but I guess it's out in the car.

Ruth: (*She is looking at him now with a rapt expression*) I haven't seen any bittersweet for years and years. (*Ross takes her two hands and she makes no effort to draw them away from him.*)

Ross: Listen to me, Ruth, right then was when I knew that there wasn't anything that could keep us apart from then on. Funny, isn't it, what a little thing like a sunset or a bittersweet vine can mean at a certain time? But that's how I felt, and I got in the car and drove as fast as I could to get to you. Come, Ruth, and we'll go back and look at it together. (*He puts*

his arms about her and reluctantly she lets him draw her down step by step.)

Ruth: But it's dark now. We couldn't find it.

Ross: Never mind. Yes, we can. There'll be a moon. In fact there must be one now everything seems so light. (*He draws her face toward him with his two hands.*) Maybe, though, it's just your eyes.

Ruth: You silly, silly thing.

Ross: Will you come.

Ruth: Will you wait until I get my coat? *She is about to go up for it when a voice from upstairs calls:* Ruth! Ruth! Are you down there?

Ruth: What is it, Leone? (*Leone appears and comes half way down, sees Ross, starts, then comes on the rest of the way.*)

Leone: Oh, Hello, Rossie. (*Ross nods slightly.*)

Ruth: Did you want me?

Leone: I'm really awfully sorry to bother you, but you're always so sweet about those things. Can I borrow your dress again? That green one, you know? And those earrings? I simply have to have them or I wouldn't think of asking you.

Ross: (*To Ruth*) That green dress? *Your* green dress? Ruth, was that dress yours?

Ruth: (*Ignoring Ross.*) Certainly, Leone. You know where I keep it, and would you mind throwing down my leather coat? I think I left it on the window seat upstairs.

Leone: Not at all. (*She runs upstairs.*)

Ross: That green dress? Ruth, was that *your* dress?

Ruth: Yes, what of it? Hush! (*As Leone descends the stairs.*) Just throw it down. Thanks, Leone.

(*Leone comes part way down and tosses the coat to Ruth.*) Thanks, Ruth, you are a dear to let me take it.

(She smirks at Ross, who pays no attention to her.)

Ruth: You're perfectly welcome. Take it any time you choose. It doesn't become me.

Ross: No, I don't want you ever to wear it again. Make her a present of it, Ruth.

Leone: Gee, Ross, You're generous, giving away other people's things.

Ross: It isn't long before we're going to be just one person and all our possessions one.

Leone: Well, really? Thanks for the dress. *(She hurries back up the stairs.)*

The two go out of the door arm in arm. Estelle and Marilyn who have been slowly descending the stairs stand watching them go out and then turn to one another.

Marilyn: Made up!

Estelle: What did I tell you? After a thing of that sort reaches a certain stage—

CURTAIN.

THE MUSICIAN IMPROVISES

YULA POWERS

It is night;
It is cool.

The sky is deeper than many seas,
Deeper than sleep, deeper than death. . . .

There are only the stars and the night,
And the sea of darkness rising and falling,
Surging and falling throughout all space.

The stars glint in the billowing dark,
In the waves of the infinite sea that surges and falls,

Without shore, without end,

Myriad worlds ride on the waves,
Myriad stars are drowned in the depths;
Wave beating on wave, rising and breaking,
Wave following wave,
Forever. . . .

But listen—

It is only the sea,
The sea beside you,
With the light of the moon sliding over its waves
As it slips over the beach;
Wave after wave slipping over the sand,
With the gleam of the stars glinting in the ripples.
Wave after wave lapping the rocks,
Softly. . . . softly.

The sound sinks to a murmur,
A drowsy murmur heard in a dream;
The sound of a stream in a meadow
Where cattle are resting beneath the trees,
The sound of a wind brushing the grass,
And the rustling of myriad stems,
The rustling of myriad leaves,
Whispering, "Hush. Hush.
Be still. Be still and sleep."

THE COZIES

A WHIMSY

CAROLYN HEINE

POP!" went a noise in the fireplace. Out of the
Noise came the blue tail of the Oldest and
Wisest Cozy. The blue tail drew a few crazy
circles and tipsy triangles in the darkness and ended in
a wiggly spiral. Then the Oldest and Wisest Cozy

himself jumped right through the circles and triangles and spiral and pulling his tail through after him, landed on the hearth. He peered cautiously about for a few seconds. Then curling his tail for a spring, he bounced back into the Noise and snapped his toes as a signal to the young Cozies that everything was all right. So they all came spiralling out onto the hearth.

"Is it quite safe?" whispered one.

"Of course, there's nobody about except the old grandfather asleep there in his chair. Now that we're all here, what shall we do first?"

"Oh, the dizzy dance, the dizzy dance!" they shouted, for that was the dance they liked best to do.

So they all made their blue tails into sashes and tied them around their little, fat, green bodies so as not to trip over them. Then, joining hands, they began the dizzy dance. First they circled round and round as fast as ever they could in one direction, and then they turned and circled round and round as fast as they could in the other direction. Next they stood on their heads, top side down, and did it all over again, only faster this time. Last they dropped down on their little, fat, green tummies, each catching hold of the Cozy just ahead of him and ending the dance with a step they called the glow-worm glide.

"And now what shall we do?" they demanded of the Oldest and Wisest Cozy.

"Let's try a game of tag with the flames," he suggested.

"Yes, let's," they seconded, and after winding up their tails very tightly they bounced right into the fire. The flames did not stop their dancing but merely called to the Cozies to come and join them. This the Cozies did and soon the quick, slender flames were

leading them a merry chase back and forth. So nimble were the darting flames that no matter how hard they tried, the chubby little Cozies were not able to catch them. Finally they gave up the chase and went back to the hearth.

But it was still too soon to go to bed, so they all put their backs together in order to think up something else to do.

"I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm going exploring," said one.

At these words the Cozies began to go timidly out into the Unknown beyond the borders of the rug, but presently they grew more bold. Some crawled under the edge of the rug, others dared creep into the blackest corners of the room. Still others trapezed on the curtains, but it was too breezy for them there, so they soon came down.

It did not take them long to discover that the best places to snuggle and cozy were in the big armchairs. They tobogganed down the backs and sides to tumble into the warm, fat cushions. The nicest chair of all was the one in which the grandfather was snoozing.

"Let's see what it's like," whispered the Venturesome One to his little brother, and up they scrambled to investigate. They went into all of grandfather's pockets. Then they came out again and perched on his watch chain to look about.

It was so very late then that even the flames had gone in. So the Venturesome One and his little brother sprang down to the hearth, calling to the other Cozies to come too. Then they all spread out their tails for blankets and rolling over in the soft, warm ashes, fell fast asleep.

FURTHER DAGUERREOTYPES

By

STELLA WESTON

THE POOR RELATION

SHE LIVED from house to house with relatives
 Who deprecated her reduced estate
 And offered her a modest livelihood
 Magnificent in their own estimate.
 And she assumed a mute humility
 Which elevated roofs and flattered food,
 While her acceptance of each simple gift
 Pronounced a satisfying gratitude.

And so they took exaggerated pride
 In lessening the burden she had borne
 And grew increasingly oblivious
 Of her amused and condescending scorn.

THE GRANDMOTHER

HER WORDS were low and singing syllables
 That slipped across a silence easily
 And made one scarcely certain they were said
 Before they gave their place to reverie.
 And like her words, her tiny bird-like hands
 Would flutter on a mound of colored stuff
 And fashion there exquisite little things
 As long as babies are and wide enough.

And only when the silence of her room
 Grew stretched and still before the summer rains,
 Would her dry fingers crack like broken birds
 Within the nest of tangled worsted skeins.

THE ECCENTRIC

HER BRIDAL veil was antiquated stuff
 Voluminous in folds of ruined lace
 And like the draperies about a saint,
 It half concealed her old, ecstatic face.
 She would arrange it proudly when she went
 To seek the new-built houses of the town
 And would ignore the taunting boys who jeered
 At her dilapidated wedding gown.

Yet when she saw a new foundation laid,
 With workmen busy at some homely task,
 She'd interrupt them eagerly; then stop
 As though she'd lost the question she would ask.

THE TRAVELER

HE USED to balance on a shady bench
 Beside the rusted fountain in the park
 And illustrate in foreign syllables
 The wonders of the Taj Mahal at dark.
 And he would scrupulously reconstruct
 A score of Londons and a thousand Romes
 And hypnotize his listeners with tales
 Of ancient tombs and dusty catacombs.

And when they splintered his unyielding door
 To interrupt his first and final rest,
 They found the Holy Bible on the floor
 While Baedeker lay open on his breast.

AN ANACHRONISM

MYRABETH REECE

CHARACTERS:
Salome
The Hero..

PLACE: *Salome's Boudoir.*

Enter the Hero.

Salome: (Running her fingers wildly through the Hero's hair) My darling, thy hair is like unto burnt honey with a faint tinge of amber. Jokanaan's locks were not as thine.

Hero: Um.

Salome: Why art so unresponsive, light of my existence? Is not my beauty enough for you? Answer me, my beautiful one!

Hero: Um.

Salome: (Tearing her hair) Alas! I look in vain for lights of love in thy silent eyes. Poignant eyes thou hast, my loquacious one! Speak to me only with thine eyes! I pine for thy love-laden glances.

Hero: Um.

Salome: (Flinging herself on the ground before the hero and kissing his feet ardently) Beloved, look! Salome, the most beautiful dancer in all Israel, prostrates herself before thee! Art satisfied? Must I further debase myself? Ah, for but one kiss I would dance for thee the Dance of the Grinning Skull which never hast living man seen! 'Tis flaming with passion, all-consuming with the fiery lightnings of love, one mad whirl of crimson and fire. For thee alone would I dance, sweet vintage of the vine of life! My lips are scorched, in imagination, from thy mouth. I am amorous of thy mouth, loved one! Essence of nectar, why wilt not look at me, thy humble slave?

Hero: Um.

Salome: I love thee. My heart is sick with longing for thee. I have everything to offer thee—gold, palaces jewels, fine raiment, slaves—everything, including my love, sought after throughout all Israel. Answer! Now! I command thee! Wilt or wilt not? Take thy choice between my embrace and instant leave of this palace. Answer!

Hero:..Um.

Salome: Go, then! Go at once! I wilt not be despised, spurned! Go, or I shall call Herodias! Go! I command it!

Hero: I do not choose to run.

CURTAIN

WHITE SPAR

CHARLES MILLS

It was always dark at the home of the Tullys'; the little frame house, swung low to the ground, was almost choked by the trees. Even the vines that tried to climb the rails on the warped front porch felt the depth of the shade and sent pale green arms out to find the sun—arms that grew pale and more green and weakly fell back to the ground. At night sad little lanterns would wink and blink in brave effort to scare away the dark, but they only succeeded in making it light enough to see the shadows that played on the floors and flared on the walls.

At night Wane, the Tullys' sick son, watched the shadows as he lay in his bed. He watched them because he was afraid. He watched his parents because he was afraid. Once, when the dark was so thick he could scarce draw his breath, he heard his mother and old Tully talking. His mother was crying and he heard

her whisper *the city* and then *operation*. He had clutched at the cover and lay still all the night; for a week he was more pale than the vines that fell from the fence. He trembled when his parents came near him and was afraid when they were gone. All the blood from his whole little body must have rushed to his head and whirled there and boiled there until his vision was blurred. He kept his two little hands on his side and thought of nothing but blood. He thought of the great mowing scythe and his little dog Bon; and of all the fine trees that were being "bled down"—the gaunt lowland pines dripping buckets of blood, and the high-flung proud chestnuts "white-chipped" at the ground. He thought of the milkweed and muscadine vines and of the damp leaves below them at sap time in spring. He thought of these things, and the great pounding heart of the Spar mine close by pulsed wildly to the beat of his own.

As Wane grew more restless and pale the old folks became more bewildered and puzzled. An interne from one of the wards had been out and, seeing Wane's condition, had said, "Build him up before you bring him in; I can't operate on a skeleton."

Wane's mother was pathetically helpless. She realized half stupidly that Wane would be "low like" until after an operation and that "he was too weak as yit t' git shet o' the pizen."

She sent old Tully on long tramps for deep river leaves and crushed seeds of holly and complained bitterly when they failed in a cure.

"They ain't no strength about 'em," she said, "they is poorly and weak in face of the pizen."

Old Tully was more helpless than she. He had always left sick children to women. He felt a subcon-

scious resentment against her for her helplessness, and tried unsuccessfully to forget his own, in the great poundings and crushings of his work at the mine. Had it not been for Wane's crying out in the night the two of them would probably have gone on worrying indefinitely and not doing anything. But Wane, more because of his mental unrest than his physical discomfort, began to call out in the dark. The shadows were no longer dull blotches that flowed slowly from the walls to red pools on the floor, but were innumerable quick, sleek weasels brushing thirstily across his throat. His parents, because he was afraid of them when they tried to calm his fears, became afraid of him.

"He must be out'n his head," they said; and fearfully they made plans for an immediate trip to the city. Wane instinctively felt the tenseness that came from their decision, and he lay still in his bed till the shadows died down and his parents were sleeping.

Then the little boy crept out into the night; with his arms held out, he ran till he found the fence. He leaned against it and smiled as the rough pales, still warm from the heat of the sun, pressed gently against his hands and his cold little face. He looked ahead where the great square funnel filled with white crushed spar reared itself, like a giant in the night. The wagons, waiting to be filled, were below it in a straight dark line and the release rope swung like a long silver snake in the wind. He stood there and half smiled. Then as the rope swung in, he moved slowly over and caught the frazzled end. It grew taut as he strained.

There was a sprinkling of spar like the first drops of rain. Then a crushing white stream that piled up like sand.

Then there was nothing but a long silver snake that swung in the wind.

DRAGONS IN THE SNOW

MARY LEE KORNS

THE squeak of Wang Erh's wheelbarrow became more strident.

"I might buy some oil for this cart, but, after all, it isn't necessary. My empty stomach makes me think foolishly," he ruminated. "The noise is cheaper than oil."

Wang Erh carefully guided his wheelbarrow along the snowy path bordering the ice-covered canal. The taut muscles of his body never relaxed, and his hands were quite numb from cold. Once Wang Erh looked up and saw his tile-roofed hut in the distance. He also noticed that the sun had disappeared.

"Tomorrow is the first day of the first moon which marks the New Year. Then, too, it is our birthday. My son, Hung Yuen, has not even a firecracker to shoot in celebration. I think I shall deliver this coal to Liu *hsiensheng* now and get something to take Hung Yuen—a beaded drum, a firecracker, or a dragon—"

A coal ball rolled off one of the baskets piled with others on either ledge of the barrow, divided by the wheel. Wang Erh slipped the wide strap from his shoulder and propped the wheelbarrow with a stick he carried for that purpose. He picked the black ball out of the snow and replaced it. After balancing the cart, he mused:

"Perhaps that is a warning to me not to have such extravagant thoughts. But thoughts of that kind can do no harm, and besides," he remembered, "I have no money with me. It is lucky that I did not take along my pay for pushing this load. The money would have been eaten long before this," and Wang Erh

smiled. "Now it is almost two days since I have put food in my mouth. I do not feel hungry, in spite of the extra forty-five *li* I had to go. I will go home first and then to the village where I shall deliver the baskets to Liu and get a dragon for Hung Yuen."

Wang Erh left his wheelbarrow on the protected side of the spirit wall and entered the hut. He found Hung Yuen inside with his mother, who squatted at the door of the brick oven, pushing into it stalks of *kao liang*, grass and straws. Hung Yuen was gazing at the brilliant picture of the Kitchen God above the oven.

"Have you eaten rice?" was his wife's greeting. "You are frozen," she added.

"No, I have not eaten. Where is the money I left here yesterday?"

"Do not buy any food. I have rice here."

"I am not going to buy food because I am not hungry and I wish to use the money for another purpose. Hung Yuen, bring the bag to me."

"Where are you going, father?" cried Hung Yuen. "Aren't we going to burn the Kitchen God tonight?"

"Yes, we will have the ceremony of the burning," said Wang Erh's wife. "My husband, your mother, the *lao tai-tai*, will insist upon that, and she will smear his lips with honey."

"Why will she do that, mother?"

"In order that when his soul goes to heaven it will be able to tell only the sweet things. Where are you going, my husband?"

"I must deliver the coal tonight. I shall eat when I return."

"If you must go, I hope you cross the canal here instead of going down to the bridge."

"Let me go with you, father. I want to see the

green dragons and hear the cymbals. I want to listen to the story-teller at the inn."

"If you stay here, perhaps I will bring you a New Year's cake," said Wang Erh, although he was thinking of the dragon.

"You should eat now," urged his wife. "You will feel much stronger and more able to stand the cold. It will snow tonight."

"The rice will wait, and Liu *hsiensheng* will not," declared Wang Erh, going out.

He fastened a lighted horn lantern on his wheelbarrow and made the rough descent to the canal.

"I wish I owned a *pi tze* upon which I might pile my baskets. On ice it is easier to travel on a sledge by the aid of a spear than to push an unwieldy wheelbarrow."

He soon reached the opposite bank and before long the street of the village. The clangor of drums and cymbals issued from behind shops boarded up for the night. Light from bright red lanterns filled the road with a colored glow. A small boy with a hideous, false, devil face ran by, shrieking.

When Wang Erh arrived at Liu's house he found what he had expected. Nine creditors with lighted tapers and flimsy bills waited to receive payments from Liu.

"How long have you been waiting?" he asked. "Your tapers are getting low although you shield them carefully from the wind. Do you think Liu will meet his obligations or will he suffer the loss of face?"

"If he does not come out soon, we will try another method," said one man whose taper was just then extinguished by the wind. He sneaked away to have it relit.

Wang Erh beat upon the door and called out his reason for coming. Unexpectedly it was opened at once by Liu himself.

"*Tung hsi!* Why did you not come sooner?" he shouted. "I believe I shall force you to give back the money I gave you yesterday for this job. I did not bargain for the coal a day late. You traveled that eighty *li* too slowly. Bring in the baskets."

The creditors pressed forward, all clamoring for attention, but he paid no heed.

"I am late," Wang Erh acknowledged. "I had to go a hundred and twenty-five *li* instead of only eighty *li*."

"Liar! Son of filth! What story is this? Do you think you will get more money? Go, go, *tzo pe*, before I kick you out. I hope the *feng shui*, demons of wind and water, and the fox maiden will dog your footsteps all the rest of your life!"

To avoid trouble Wang Erh left in silence, and went further down the road to the one store that was open. He was tempted to buy a glass horn for Hung Yuen, or a false face. There were many things in the store which he might have bought for a few cash. He finally purchased two green dragons, very intricate in design.

Quite satisfied, Wang Erh proceeded on his way home. His load was light now: two dragons, only. He began to think of himself.

"How fortunate I am to have my family. In many places whole villages have been wiped out by famine. During the last famine we had to give away our daughter, but this time good fortune has been with us."

Wang Erh jerkily descended the slope to the canal. "The cart is heavy," he panted. "I am tired for the

first time today. The wind goes through to my bones. Perhaps my wife was right when she urged me to eat."

The thick, steel-braced wheel struck a rock, and the barrow tilted violently. He could no longer hold it upright and yet could not unclasp his hands from the handles. He slipped and fell.

Wang Erh did not struggle to raise himself, for he did not feel cold and had no desire to move. His hands were locked in a frozen grasp. Large flakes of snow drifted down.

Wang Erh felt it growing light—not the red light of dawn, but a flaming, warm green. He thought:

"The fiery breath of the dragons gives light and warmth. Wingless they rise above me. Do they know the secrets of my life? It is very light—"

The two green dragons lay in the snow.

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