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# THE FLAMINGO

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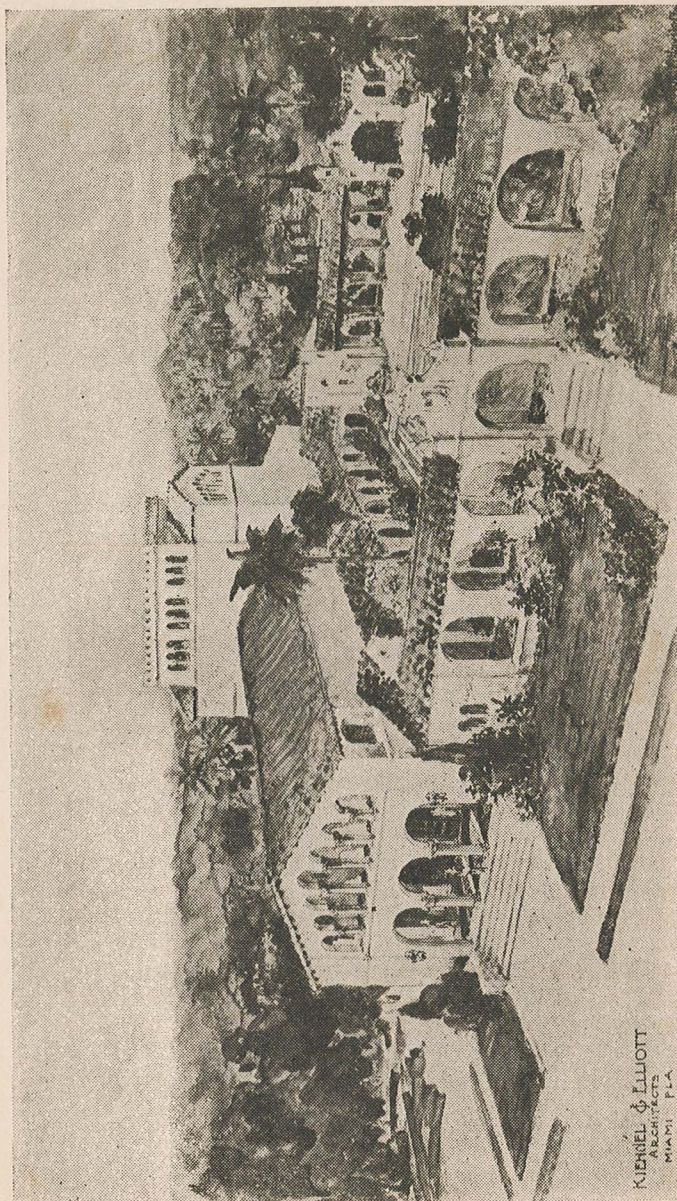
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# THE FLAMINGO

VOL. VI, No. 1      DECEMBER, 1931      Price, 25 Cents

## POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON

MARY KINSER

**P**OMEGRANATE on a bough,  
A closed book on its shelf.  
I've broke and read in it;  
I've broke and fed myself.  
Concise, irregular,  
Small, clear, and granular,  
Holding a nucleus.  
Thus  
Persephone  
Tasted and like to me  
Savored Eternity.

## THE OLD CHURCH

JOHN KELSEY

**A**ND so, when old Mrs. Parker died, he kinda went crazy. It seems that she wuz a singer, and he played the pianer for her, and, when she got sô old her voice warn't good any more, he ups and marries her. Well, he built that old church to bury her in an' then one day—he disappears!"

Seth pushed back his chair from the stove and relit his battered corncob. He looked at his three cronies. They knew the story as well as he did, but they always let him tell it. Course, it was his store, and that made him the host. He looked about with pride. The shelves were well-stocked, and everything was neat and clean. He opened the draft in the stove, and it grinned at him with red teeth. He picked up a deck of worn cards and pushed forward an old soap



box. Pinochle was a great game, and he always won. He knew the boys wanted him to, because it was his custom to celebrate with a jug of cider, but he pretended he didn't.

"But did they ever find him?"

Seth looked up with a twinkle in his blue eyes. He hadn't forgotten the person who asked this question so impatiently, but he had learned that the success of a story depended on the listener's attitude at the climax. This Nick was a jumpy sort of person, anyway; couldn't sit still a minute. Ever since he had started coming to the store with his brand of canned goods, Seth had never seen him sit down for any length of time. He was leaning against the counter now, smoking a cigarette, listening to the four old men. His smooth black hair and dark skin had placed him in their minds as an "Eyetalian."

"Nope. Never saw hide nor hair of him again. But we got our idees, ain't we?" He winked solemnly at his three cronies. "Yes sirree, we got our idees. Come over here and take a seat, Nick boy, an' I'll tell you sumpthin' that nobody but us four knows... My father was sexton of that old church which didn't ever have any congregation, and he used to tell me about Old Man Parker. Said that he'd come in there and play the organ for hours at a time. Well, one day my father was comin' through the woods that leads to Hade's Grove—that's where it is—an' he heard the organ playing. But, before he had got to the church, it stopped, and, when he went in, Old Man Parker wasn't there! My father never was afraid of anything, and he went up to the organ to take a look. Well, lemme tell you what he saw. On one side of the organ was an opening in the wall; there had

been a panel there, but it was really a secret door. He looked in and there was nothing but stairs that went down into the darkness, and away down below he heard a moanin' sound! You can bet he didn't stay there long! Well, next day Old Man Parker was down town, so my father didn't say anything about it. An' it warn't long before he got pneumonia and died, and just about that time Old Man Parker disappeared."

Nick grinned sympathetically and reached for his matches. "Well, didn't any of you ever look where those stairs went to?"

"Not many folks know about 'em, and they wouldn't dare to go there if they did. That old place is hanted now! Besides I guess I'm the only one who knows how to get that panel thing open."

"What do you mean it's haunted?"

"Well, lots of folks have heard the organ playin' at night, and one night Jake Tillor's hired man and his girl wuz goin' through the Grove, and they saw a light inside."

"Say, you guys really believe in ghosts, don't you? You ought to come to the city once in a while and see a good show instead of hanging around here doing nothing. Guess I'll take a little walk and have a look at your haunted church."

"I bet you three cases of canned beans you dassent go tonight at twelve o'clock."

Nick hesitated. He preferred bright lights and a crowd to a lonely ruin of a church at night, but he couldn't let them think he was yellow. "It's a bet."

Seth removed the corn cob and scratched his nose. "You're a better man than I thought you wuz... You go straight up the Talport Center road for half a mile and then turn off on a little path. That'll



take you straight through the woods to the Grove. But listen, I'll tell you how to get that secret panel open. In the upper row of keys, the upper row, mindye, there's one key that will open it. You can take my flashlight, and be sure to bring sumptin' back to prove you bin there."

Nick threw his cigarette on the floor and ground it with his heel. "Uh-huh," he said.

\* \* \*

The birches swayed in the breeze. The moon looked down cold and motionless. Nick waded through a stream of dead leaves ankle-deep in the path. He pulled his loose top-coat about him and buttoned the top button. His hands went into the pockets. One closed about the flashlight; the other grasped the bowie knife he had taken from the store. They gave him a feeling of security. With a knife he could defend himself against anything human, and if—of course, there wasn't—but if there should be anything else, well . . .

Suddenly he saw the old church in front of him, a squat, stone building with two spires. Nick hurried across the open space and hesitated at the massive doors. Was he going to be yellow? The hell he was! The huge door scraped open. His heels clicked as he went down the aisle. The moonlight streamed in through broken gaps in the windows; no need of the flashlight. There was the organ. He slid onto the bench and pressed a key gingerly. No noise! Of course, it wasn't hooked up. He began to poke a noiseless scale with one finger.

There was a click. Sliding off the bench, he saw a small opening yawning at him. He glanced back into the church. Through the door he had left open a ray of light streamed. Silver beams flowed from the brok-

en panes. Nick shuddered, grasped his flashlight, and stepped into the dark hole.

The light revealed stairs that circled downward. The stone felt cold under his feet; way down below he heard water dripping. Slowly and cautiously he started down. He had counted twelve steps when there was a sharp report from above. The panel had closed! A cold sweat broke out all over him, and his heart pounded wildly. Why the hell had he done this! Why! But he was going on if it killed him. Down he went. Down. Down. He had forgotten to count the steps, so he had no idea how far he had gone. It seemed miles. The dripping was very close now. He stopped and flashed the light down. The end of the steps! There was a low doorway. Keeping his light on it, he started down hurriedly. All at once everything seemed to give way beneath him. A step missing! Down he went, the sharp edges of the stairs cutting and bruising him. In a moment it was over, and he lay almost stunned gasping for breath.

Suddenly he thought of his flashlight. Where was it? He began to feel about for it frantically on his hands and knees. Blackness. How black it was! It was stifling him. He sobbed with fear and despair. Jumping to his feet in a sudden panic, he clutched the bowie and took a step forward. He bumped something. Putting his hand down, he felt nothing. Whatever it was, it came about to his knees. He groped with his left hand and felt something. Oh God, what—Hair! He felt his knees giving way. As he went down, he plunged the knife wildly. It stuck. Get away! Get away! The stairs! He started to crawl. A jerk! Something was holding him by the coat! He went flat, shuddered, and lay still.



\* \* \*

The store was buzzing with excitement. Tom, the oldest crony, was having his day. He was in charge, and moreover, he knew what was going on. Seth and the others with some village men had just gone out to the old church to look for a young city fellow who had gone there the night before and hadn't come back. Seth was wild and said that it was his fault. Tom told and retold his story.

A little later Seth returned. He had a stunned look. They had brought back Nick's body. Yes, he was dead. Heart failure, the doctor said. They had found him beside a moss covered bier, pinned to it by his own knife which was stuck through the tail of his coat. In another part of the crypt they had found a skeleton. Seth was tired. He sat down and reached for his pipe and the deck of cards.

## LILAC SPRAY

MARY LOUISE PAUL

I SHALL not stand and weep beside your grave,  
 Though you may never know another dawn  
 Nor other loves like that which recklessly  
 We built upon the dust of fallen stars;  
 No, I shall laugh and strangely feel the scent  
 Of lilacs ling'ring rain—sweet on the dusk—  
 And grieve instead because one single spray  
 Has died before the flowering of its bloom  
 And lingers on the gnarled and twisted bough,  
 A small, curled ashen leaf among the rest,  
 To symbolize the fate of love that builds  
 Upon an April dawn in early spring.

## THREE SKETCHES

KITTY DAVIS

*Night Off*

MISS Jenson snapped the brass "Hart and Son" behind her. Then with her customary efficiency she clicked down the broad steps in her crepe-sole shoes. She paused at the street door to straighten her glasses and get a better hold on the green umbrella. Although the rain had stopped, bits of tattered fog had settled along the avenue. The street lamps still dripped in golden circles upon the pavement. On her way to the corner she stopped at the bakery and bought a few rolls. She wouldn't get supper at the cafe tonight. The blue-stamped china and rounded cones of potatoes were too precise. A night like this called for great heaps of yellow omelet and golden-brown squares of cinnamon toast.

The tram was crowded. Miss Jenson's hat got twisted. Somehow she liked the evening rush. There was something sociable about it—tired business men burdened with long strips of oil-papered bread, pretty young clerks hurrying home to crinkle their hair for eight o'clock dates, the strain of a rainy business day over and a long cozy evening ahead. Some rosy-faced children smiled from the colored posters. Miss Jenson thought she would like a child or two, something to sew little pink things for, something warm and cuddly to tuck in bed at night.

She pushed the bell two blocks before Cherry Street. Walking in the damp air would raise her appetite. Slowly she passed the cottages on Elm. Their bright lights made the fog an ugly amber. Sometimes a bit of firelight tore the darkness. If she ever had a home, she, too, would have an evening fire, with just a few



soft lamps about to show the comfy chairs and tall book shelves. The acrid smell of coffee made her press the rolls in their paper sack. She wished there were a can of Baker's Cocoa on the shelf with her tooth paste and aspirins. Hot chocolate and marshmallows would taste good tonight. At the corner of Cherry 77's porchlight was blandly staring at her. She wondered if the pleasant-looking young man across the hall had come in yet. It would be nice to have him to drink tea with her. He came out of the clumsy door just as she reached the steps. His hair was combed evenly, and he carried a hat in his hand.

"Good evening, Miss Jenson. Bad night, isn't it?"

"Rather, Mr. Brown, but you know it makes one—" He wasn't listening. A polite smile slightly curled his lips. "Good night, Mr. Brown," and she briskly crossed the front porch.

Miss Jenson fumbled in the dark for the light bulb. When finally she twisted its knob, the red roses on the wall paper beamed down at her. Somehow she wasn't hungry anymore. The rolls looked flat and cold. Her feet were tired, too. She undressed quickly and slipped between the sticky sheets. In the dark again she forgot the red roses. She listened to the radio next door. A girl was shrieking in a celluloid voice about sugar daddies.

7:45 a. m.

**P**ost, Mister? Five cents a copy! All about the Smyth murder trial!" Jules' thin voice trailed across the station.

A shadowy kid with stringy legs was squirting water, smudging the fountain as he played. Sometimes it blotted the dark mirror crossed with lipstick, but more often it hit the pale child on the other side of the

cooler. Both children reminded Jules of the charcoal sketches the teacher did at school, chalk faces, shaded in the middle for eyes.

"Smyth admits affair with woman!"

A crumpled man was brushing cigar stubs and green-striped Wiggly covers across the dirty cement. Jules watched him carefully push them into a corner, then lean his ragged broom against the brown tobacco stains on the wall.

The waiting room was stuffy. An information girl was loudly popping her gum behind the counter, forming weird circles with her flaming lips. Jules rubbed a clear spot in the door pane. Far across the dusky tracks the sky was still red. He opened the door and heard the fat woman with a camphor bottle sneeze. Outside the air was sharp. Sifted of heavier odors, the scent of smoke predominated. A green searchlight followed the tracks until they coiled like thin green snakes around the stack yards.

"Washington, Philadelphia, and New York!"

A pleasant shiver ran down Jules' back. It was coming! The grey uniform and brass buttons had said so! A chinless man with a brown bag came out to the platform.

"Post, sir? All about—" The traveller jerked his diminutive head in the negative.

Far away through the darkness Jules heard 7:45 shriek. He clenched his bag tightly. In a minute the red eye, like a glorious comet, would come whirling through the night. Already its deep hum was sawing across the silence. A cold perspiration dampened his forehead. The uniform yelled again. Then, in a flash it was there, grunting and quivering like a great black monster, half hidden in yellow smoke. A porter took



the traveller's bag. Jules grinned when the traveller rubbed where his chin ought to be and got on; then he trembled all over. Through the windows he could see people eating, fat old men and pretty women.

"All aboard!" The white-coated negro pulled up his stool. 7:45 gasped deeply and was off. Jules heard its hum sawing across the silence. He watched the muddy tail-light slide round the stack house. Then he stood gazing at the sleek green tracks. A slim white star quivered just above the dark house. Jules straightened his papers.

"Post! All about the Smyth murder trial!"

Inside the charcoal children were buying candy. He watched the white lips of the youngest engulf a whole Baby Ruth.

### *Blue Pearls*

TODAY I passed a jewelry store. In the window some blue pearls were scattered about on silvery velvet. I once knew an old countess who wore blue pearls over her expansive grey gown. She was a florid creature with violet eyes. Her full bosom and great soft arms were among those turvy things which made up my childhood. Even yet this comfortable person reminds me of grey mornings and woolen night clothes, a green rabbit painted on a white dish, and a large dark kitchen overhung with hams. Then one morning, when the rain made queer shivery noises on the roof, she left. I remember standing in the doorway, watching her wade down the sloppy path. One broad hip brushed the wet leaves of a lilac bush, and a few bright drops fell on her dress. I thought the rain would be so much nicer if it were blue like the pearls.

That afternoon I played with my kittens in the kitchen garden. The sun was a funny greenish color after the rain. The stillness between the yellow tomato rows seemed hollow, and I didn't know why. Later the pale leaves turned green, and I forgot my old friend. I went with the other children to pick daises. When the days grew short again and the bluish shadows hid the garden by tea time, there was a skinny person with cold hands to hear my prayers.

Then, today I passed a jewelry store. In the window some blue pearls were scattered about on silvery velvet.

### INARTICULATE

ALICE SWAN

ALL MY WORDS are quiet words,  
Impetuous thoughts that can't come out,  
Colorless or cautious words,  
A calm vocabulary in brown.  
The uselessness of gaudy thoughts  
Chasing each other up and down.  
I feel them hopping in my head,  
Impatient, panting to be said,  
Impetuous thoughts that can't come out,  
What have you got to dance about?

Why should I feel an intimacy  
For things that have no words,  
Giving the actual me away  
To animals and birds?  
Places and pictures, melodies  
I could converse with easily.  
Always the things that have no words,  
Never the people dear to me.



## BRIDLE PATH

JACK FISCHER

THE sun yawns a scarlet yawn in the west. Smells: leathersweat, straw, grain, livehorse. I mount the saddle. Why do mice inspire women to horror and artists to creation? Think I'll give Peggy a lump of sugar. Crunching.

Mount again. Walking. Trotting. Cantering. Stop. Open the gate. Open the gates of the temple. That woman had a gold tooth. Why did I think of her gold tooth when the reader read about God? Steady, Peggy. Get out of the iris. Bring heels into ribs. Galloping. The cool wind strikes my face. So freshmadden. Like the feel of quivering horseflesh between my thighs. Sound: thud thud. Smell: warm horse, ticklepungentodor of marigold. Sight: polyhedronic shadows among the eveningdusk mellowed petunia.

Peggy slows her gait. We're walking. Moonlight and roses bring wonderful memories of you, moonlight and roses and —God! so long ago. There was moonlight and roses and the lake and her. Her eyes: like two tiny stars illusionmirrored in deep pools. Her breasts: so young and firm. Her breath: so fast so hot. Kiss. Kisses and —oh hell, Peggy, can't you see where you're going. We're not going home yet.

Steady while you cross this river, girl. The river is the life principle. A long time ago John loved Beatrice. She would not. John cried and sought the river. He stripped, grabbed a knife, cut his wrists, stretched out, and slipped his hands into the water. He and the river were as one. Where do rivers come from? Where do they go? The liftingfloatingaway mists. So unreal. So ethereal. No wonder the ancient Greeks believed in river nymphs.

All right, Peggy, up you go. That's the girl (patting her on the back.) Nice work. In the shadow of the third rock a trout had swallowed a minnow; a snake ate the trout.

The dusk garment of evening is discarded for the black cowl of night. Night of fantastic shadows and sounds. The dog upon the hill howls. The spirit of the valley answers. She loved her man, searched for him, and pined away. Breezes catch the oak leaves and play a soft melody. Sappho played on her lyre to the virgin by her side. Bougainvillæ, a living color echo of Lesbia. Damn the mosquitoes! Chesterfields. Strike a match. A second match. Hold still, Peggy, can't you! Third match. Lit. Puff. When I go to heaven, I'm going to offer God a cigarette. Oh, go to hell! The apple trees with the fireflies snaponsnapoffglowing against them. Looks like they're bearing tiny stars instead of apples. A bat surprises the night. Flying up toward the moon. Moons are for lovers and not for bats. Too bad I'm not like the woman in "The Roan Stallion", Peggy, or we could be lovers. Robinson Jeffers and his heavy words. Makes his poetry like pieintherainallnight instead of like foam left by a waning wave. Salt. Cows love salt. You love salt, Peggy. Why? Deep breath. Smells: cool of the woods and warmth of the horse.

We're leaving the woods, Peggy. Starry night. Moon bright. Violets grew here last spring. And they send fresh violets to dead corpses. What damn fools society has made of men.

We're passing Ritchie's farm. His dog will bark. Kick him in the lung. Forstehen? No. You sense home. You're taut. Galloping. Fleeting smells; manure, muskysweetsoil, leather sweat. The radio tow-



er's gleaming red light. Red light: the beacon of the prostitutes. One lived at 13 Woodland Avenue. She was frail. She loved, lived, and died. She consecrated her body to Aphrodite. When she died, men cursed her and found new women. She was forgotten. No one sent her violets. A boy loved her. He was thirteen. He spent his last dollar to send her roses. Got drunk. Laid in the gutter and froze to death. You, the big city, didn't mourn. Mrs. Tuffle read about it and drank hot coffee. Jane read about it and lit a cigarette. Mr. Smith read about it and yawned.

The gate again. Ho, Peggy. Pull on the reins. Open gate. Mount. Gallop to stables. The cigarette butt glows. The mice scurry. And Peggy whinnies.

## FRAGMENTS

MARY LOUISE PAUL

### I.

SPRING is not yet with us  
Out of doors;  
For meadows lie  
Still brown and crisp and sere;  
And jonquils,  
As though half afraid to bloom,  
Are yet but golden whispers  
Underground.

### II.

Spring came upon us suddenly,  
Before I was aware,  
In white-flowering hawthorne,  
Down all the country lanes.  
Then after it had wakened  
Each virgin spray to bloom,  
It came to lie in quiet pools  
Deep within your eyes.

## THE HUMBLE SNEEZE

DOUGLAS RIGGS

OF ALL the many contributions towards physical comfort which the body affords, the least generally recognized, perhaps, is sneezing. To this tremendous subject only an introduction can be given here. In my opinion, it should be made the life-study of at least three people who could collaborate in writing an authoritative sneezology. "The Fine Art of Sneezing" they might entitle it—or, more simply "Sneeze!" However, that is for them to decide. Whatever the title, be you sure that the volume would defy the attacks of critics and gallop down the ages hand in hand with "The Bible" and "Shakespeare."

Few men have never experienced sneezes. Of these few, the most tragic case was that of Noah Webster. Noah never enjoyed one personally—all his ideas about them were gained thru his eyes and ears rather than thru his nose. Consequently he gave dictionary-diggers a greatly mistaken notion of the sneeze: "A sudden, violent, spasmodic audible expiration of the breath, chiefly or wholly through the nose." If he could only have yielded once to the prickling in his nostrils! Still, perhaps it is better for posterity that he did not. For if he wished to catch the essence of a full-bodied, red-blooded sneeze, he would have required at the very least three or four pages of dictionary. He would have had to leave out smooth, smoulder, smug, smut, smutch, smutty, Smyrniot, snack, and the sibilant substance of several similar successive S's.

All sneezes are divided into three parts. First, the Inception. This is when the nose by a gradually increasing tickling sensation informs the higher brain



that the body is going to indulge in a delightful eruption. If one is in public, where convention unjustly bars such pleasures, one may now rub the upper part of the upper lips gently but quite firmly. When the nasal passages are thus guarded, the unfortunate sneeze develops no farther and presently it entirely subsides. If, on the other hand, one is in private, now is the time to accord to the embryo sneeze the proper encouragement necessary for its fullest growth. This may best be done by screwing up the face, squinting the eyes, and repeating with great emphasis "Ha! Ha! Ha!" When the sneeze begins to say "Ha!" of its own accord, you know it has reached the second part of the process: the Reception. Everything depends on how you receive it. The worst thing in the world to do is to bury your face in a handkerchief. Why, I have known sneezes that would curl up and die even after the second stage at such treatment. Remember that a good sneeze has a great deal of vigor and vitality. It needs air. If possible the lungs should be quite full beforehand, and when the "Choo!" comes, it should be brought out with the greatest possible force. Be careful of sneezing indoors—roofs are not being built as strongly as they should be. The last stage is the Deception. This is when you find that you were not in private after all. The best thing to do now is to retreat as quickly as you can.

Having considered anatomy, now let us consider cause. People realized the value of sneezing much better two or three centuries ago than they do today. In that age of snuff, when the desire prompted a man, all he needed to do was to draw into his nostrils some finely divided tobacco, and the irritation produced would soon satisfy his longing by causing a series of

hectic explosions. Other foreign substances in the nasal passages will produce a similar effect. Dust and gasses befriend the sneezer. A cold in the head also gives beautiful results. Thus Nature compensates the sufferer. Another innocent source may be resorted to without causing any such commotion as would carrying a box of snuff. A curious sympathy exists between the eyes and the nose. If one gazes at a bright object when the eyes have not adjusted themselves to the light, a series of the most delectable sneezes is produced. Many a time I have been almost overcome by the detonations resulting from the sheen of sunshine on snow. With this method at hand, no one need ever crave a sneeze in vain.

This little introduction to the humble sneeze will, I hope, stimulate your interest in a lost art. You and I should learn how to do it properly. Sneeze! Sneeze as a pleasure! Sneeze as a pastime! Wrinkle up your nose and hide your handkerchief! Ladies! Gentlemen!! Ha! Ha! Hah! Hah! Ah! Ah! . . . Choo!!!

---

## MARY AND MARTHA

KITTY DAVIS

**Y**OU SWEPT the house all over  
And baked a loaf of bread;  
I touched a silken clover  
And woke a dream once dead.

You scolded me for dreaming  
Of silver-petaled dawn;  
But, oh, my dreams will linger  
When your small loaf is gone.



## POETRY SECTION

## EARTH MELODY

CHRISTY MACKAYE

ONE DAY I heard a clear untremorous reed  
 Played by a boy in wheat fields all alone:  
 Each note upon the air a scarlet bead,  
 No joy or sorrow, only birds of tone  
 Pricking the cords of thought until they bleed  
 And in the heart's deep earth red seed are sown.

And in the quiet after, I heard more  
 Than skies or meadows ever told before:  
 Cool consolation and a flock of pities  
 For hearts that drink the nourishment of pain  
 In music from the trees' small tongues, and  
 cities  
 Of busy crickets, and from the tread of rain.

Often I listen to music of man's lore  
 But seldom pause, as then, on the brink of day  
 To speak with trees and flowers along the way,  
 To listen to the sigh of fields, the rune  
 Of inlets where the waves go plodding through,  
 The untired birds' small penetrating tune  
 That winds write on a spider web with dew,  
 And the slow footfall of silence through the  
 hours  
 To make articulate and fitly frame  
 So clear a springing as the will of flowers  
 Poured out upon the air to build a name.

The pace of the Bible's great grey language  
 came  
 From contours of the wind, the sound of flame,  
 The loneliness we pity the old hills for,  
 Moulding the mind as oceans carve a shore;  
 But that and these were moulded by much more  
 Awfully moving among giant powers,  
 Yet speaking with most purity in flowers  
 As in that clear, untremorous music, blown  
 From a far reed in wheat fields all alone.

## THE EBBING OF THE DARK

AT THE turning of the night  
 There is no speech among the brooding watchers.  
 Through the hushed grey leagues of light  
 The hills are listening.

Now the waiting trees are crowned  
 With their completion, and the fear and gropings  
 Of tired endeavour, healed, are drowned  
 In time's relenting.

From the world's remotest arches  
 Only the muttered trouble of the tide  
 Is breathed and from their soundless marches  
 The stars are vanished.

And the winds unwritten way  
 The whisper of feather on feather ruffles the  
 dimness:  
 The stirring of the wings of day,  
 Her first fresh rumour.



## AUTUMN OCEAN

COLD ROCKS watch the roll of clouds  
 Along white plains of sky and prowling  
 Storms sweep down the shivering sea  
 And lock the shore in iron bleakness.

Sombre glint of wave and wild  
 White flash of spray that chills the twilight  
 Stir a weary drift of thought  
 Bewildered as the weaving waters'  
 Stumbling on indifferent coasts.

But there is comfort in the roaming  
 Breakers and the keening gulls  
 That glean along the wet grey gulches,  
 And the never-ending war  
 Of waves with weight of deeper water,  
 And the wind's low discontent.

The summer is spent and through the  
 measured  
 Drone of days beneath low skies  
 There wells an autumn presence of quiet  
 And the air is drenched with still  
 Slow turning of earth's thoughts to winter.  
 When the year's gold crest is reached  
 It breaks in greyness, deeply seeking  
 Peace within the winter sea  
 To lull its hunger into sleeping.

These verses are reprinted by kind permission from Miss MacKaye's volume entitled "Wind in the Grass" with an introduction by Edwin Arlington Robinson, which was recently published by Harper & Brothers, New York. Miss MacKaye is now a senior at Rollins. Copyright 1931 by Christy MacKaye

## THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

ETHEL MILLER

*TIME: The present.*

*PLACE: A southern state.*

## PROLOGUE

*The lifting of the curtain reveals a dingy courtroom. There are only a few spectators, the usual policemen and court officials present. We see a side view of the court. The bar is at right, facing rows of benches at left. Three negroes stand before a pre-occupied judge. Twenty-year old Jess is resentfully arrogant: Peter is a gentle and patient old man who was once a preacher; and Sam is a tall, angular young fellow whose happy freedom from care is displayed in a great expanse of very white teeth and an uncontrollable tendency to shuffle his feet.*

*Judge: (gazing with unseeing eyes toward the back of the room where a placard bearing the words "Justice to All" is hung, stifles a yawn) Well, boys, you admit that you are vagrants?*

*Sam: (Looking as though the word were too much for him) . . . Sah?*

*Judge: You admit that you haven't a job and have been hanging around eighteenth street for two days?*

*Uncle Peter: Jedge hit wuz dis a way . . . Ya see, us has got laid off up at de mill in Bessemer an' wuz on our way home to Texas. We cotched a ride dis fur, an' we 'llowed we ud git off heah ta look for food, so—*

*Sam: (In a plaintive tone) Ma belly think ma thoat cut!*

*Jess: (Looks contemptuous and kicks Sam's shins. He then glares defiantly at the judge and hisses) Aw,*



hell, why ya axin' fer explainin's? Y'all do jest whut ya feel laike enyways!

*(This audacity triumphs over the court's sleepiness and visibly arouses the ire of the judge.)*

Judge: What I feel like, eh? You can see how you feel when you have worked on the county roads for thirty days.

*The curtain falls*

\* \* \*

# SCENE

*A week has elapsed, and, when the curtain rises, we see Jess, Sam and Peter in convict garb. It is evidently high noon, for the sun shines brightly on the cotton fields beyond the gravel road. The three have sought the shade of a tree at left in order to eat their rations. Farther back at right we see other prisoners sitting and a guard leaning heavily against a post in back of them. He is displaying his gun to a passer-by and so pays no attention to the conversation of the negroes.*

Sam: Ah wish he ud pint dat sawed off shotgun toads d'otha d'rection.

Jess: Is ya skeered?

Sam: SA .ay, blackern Ah is, ya aint no Goliath yoself. When de Police chased ya, ya run so fast, yo vest pocket dipped sand!

Jess: *(Violently)* Dat's a lie.

*(He heaves toward the pick with which he has been working with the evident intent of making Sam pay for his indiscretion. Peter leaps up and seizes him, wrests the pick from his hand silently, and leads him back. Luckily the guard's back was turned, and he has not seen the episode.)*

Peter: *(Quietly)* Does ya want fer ta git yer giz-zerd full er buckshot? Don' cha know dat de guard ud

ha laid ya out daid, ef he had uv saw dat pefomance?

Jess: *(Shakes himself free from Peter's grasp and stands sullenly muttering)* Yo preacher nature jes' caint holp showin' out, ole man. Sam desaved a lickin'—an' he'll git hit one ob dese days too.

*But Sam feels relatively safe after Uncle Peter's intervention, so he sinks down lazily on the ground and begins to sing.*

Jess: Shet up dat racket!

Sam: *(Yawns and grins sheepishly)* Aw, Jess, hit's jes' too hot ta argie wid a critter laike ya. Ya gits so wuked up ova yo 'pinions. Ah'se hot haided some times, but, Lawdy, Ah laikes ta fergit ma troubles now and den. Now tek dis road wuk fer instance: Ah has jist as lief be heah wid de corn pone comin' reg'lar an' a place ta sleep come evenin', as Ah would be sarchin' fer grub in town. But, Jess, ya has griped eva sence us got putt on de road. You is mighty onsettled in yo mind. Mighty.

Jess: Dat means Ah got a mind, nigga. Ah has begun ta see whut our people kin do, ef dere wuz more fightas laike me an' less settas lake y'all. Ya 'cept enything de white man tell ya. Ya gits stuck in de pen caize ya caint fin' wuk, an' nen ya praise de Lawd fer givin ya corn pone! *(He spits vindictively to emphasize the point)*. Why, us has our rights, an' us'll git 'em one ob dese days purty soon. *(In a dramatic whisper)* T'otha evenin' at de meetin' ob de secret sassiety, dey said us oughta git ez big pay ez enybody, an', wen us is outa wuk, us oughta DEMand a *(With pride)* . . . a onemployment pension. Us is treated laike dogs, laike common evaday curs!

Peter: Yeah, but us ud do de same, wuz we on top.

Jess: Us'll see wen us gits dere. Enyhow hit's our



turn fer a while. Why shouldn't dey pay fer all us hev suffad?

*Sam:* Y'all talkin' foolishments now. Why don' cha fergit hit 'fore yer gits a shot tuk at cher? Hit's 'most time fer wuk, an' Ah declare Ah'm gwine injoy hit, caize y'all ull hev ter hesh yo moufs.

*Peter:* Sam, ya has de ontroublesomess sperit Ah eva see. De good Lawd wuz kind ta ya, ta mek ya so free an' easy.

*(Turning to Jess)* Coase, Ah wants a change ob de way things stands, Jess. But Ah don' believe dat killins an' bloodshed am de way ta do it. Ef our people ud eddicate theirselves an' mek de white folks know whut dey kin do, de change ud come natural wid no hard feelins. Now, us hurts dem, an' dey hurts us . . . laike a circle ob evil. Us has need ob patience an' hard wuk an' de knowin' ob de brothaly love ob de Lawd.

*Jess: (Becomes more and more excited until the end of the speech when he is beside himself)* We has done dat long 'nough, Peter. Dat ain't got us no place t'all. De hates won't change till human nature change, an' Ah 'spect dat neva will. De leada ob de meetin' tole us dat eben de giant animals whut lived afore history kilt each otha off de face ob de wuld an' dat's whut us'll hev ta do, ef us wants ta be de boss. *(Grandiloquently)* Ah has de sperit ob de new nigga, grown out fom de war experience an' oppression. *(He has evidently learned this speech. Shouts.)* Ah will be boss!

*(He picks up a stone in his rage, and hurls it at the guard but misses. The guard raises his gun with calm deliberation and shoots Jess before the thunderstruck gang realizes what has happened.)*

*Peter: (In consternation)* Hit all go in a vicious circle.

CURTAIN

## WAITING

HENRY BROKMEYER

**I**T WAS USELESS to try to study. The light from the reading lamp fell on the blotter and on his Latin grammar. He couldn't read a word. He scrootched his body in the heavy chair and shuffled his slippered feet in the thick pile of the rug. Spring came from the great valley, stole up the gulch at the side of the house and into the wide open windows, puffing out the drapes in gentle swellings and saggings, ruffling the corners of the pages under his relaxed fingers ever so gently, ever so temptingly. He rubbed the palms of his hands into his eyes, got up suddenly, and stepped swiftly out of the library onto the porch, closing the screen noiselessly behind him. He stretched and drummed on his chest with his fingers as he drew in deep breaths of the night air.

The moonlight was clear and brilliant, falling like silver mist on the tops of the trees, a mist that fell away from the porch wall and seemed to flow, a ghostly river, into the invisible valley below. The flat top of the wall was white, and the outsides of the pillars smoothly silver. The stars were out, too, and from the porch he could see the little blue arc lights that marked the paths to the valley. There were the lights of the drive winding below, the lights of the valley itself: engine lights, signal lights, purple, green, white, red, twinkling minutely. All these lights, of mills and switch yards, farms and shanty-boats, were only low stars in a bottomless sky this night.

There was, too, a sweet, expectant silence. He heard the little night noises from the valley: the hum of ventilators, the chuffing of engines, distant train whistles. But this night they were only whisperings and rustl-



ings of spring stealing up the Missouri; they came through the woods gently and seemed to make the blackness and denseness of the nearby trees close and friendly.

Even the darkened porch, so familiar in the daytime, seemed mysterious, yet sociable. A couple of rocking chairs faced each other in the shadow confidentially and companionably.

But it was the air that was spring. It was exciting and heady, yet it made him drowsy. He felt he was breathing the moonbeams and the vastness and loneliness and all the closeness and sweetness about him. It was laden with the earthy scents of the woods after rain, moist and warm, yet with thrilling freshness. It was full of promise, yet wistful and a little haggard. He let the air out of his chest in a profound sigh and felt suddenly lonely.

Two auto lights cut into the darkness, lit the boles of the elms in the yard and the leaves of the trees in the gulch, then swung onto the porch wall and the steps. The gravel in the drive whispered as the little car came to a stop. The churning of the engine ceased, and all the lights went out, except the parking light that whitened a patch of gravel and grass. He heard the door click softly.

He stepped quickly into the white of the steps. A low whistle came to his ears, soft in the mild air.

"Mary?"

## YOUTH

KITTY DAVIS

TONIGHT I saw a flock of wild geese wing  
Around a half-grown moon,  
Then go singing into darkness.

## HERITAGE

*An Interlude*

VIRGINIA MCKEE

NO," SAID HESTER simply. "I have never seen him—since David was killed. He was only a baby then."

The Cravens, each and all, gasped discreetly. Emily fidgeted with her copy of *Old Age and Health*, and bearded John made odd patterns on the rug with his cane. No one spoke. Finally, Lucian's wife, Eulalie, said cautiously, "You never even *wanted* to see your own child?"

Hester's lips quivered with a shadow of a wistful, terribly sad smile. It would scarcely be termed a smile. And all she said was, "*Wanted* him! Oh . . ."

Gertrude and Rachel Craven, misunderstanding purposely, murmured together and agreed that poor David's wife must be a terribly unfeeling sort of person. The child had been with them since David's death, while his mother had been astounding London literary circles with her book of war poems, *Poppy Petals*.

While Hester sat and looked out of the window at London, thinking of blue eyes, soft baby skin, silk rings of hair on a round head and of holding a plump little bundle, having his satiny cheek pressed close to her face—her baby!

\* \* \*

Hester was alone in the splendid dimness of the age-old Craven drawing room. It was drearily raining outside, and the two heavy Copenhagen vases near the windows were silhouetted against a silver sheet. She was waiting for her son, her little boy whom she had seen so long ago, who was to come to her fresh from his Welsh nurse. They were to be alone; Hester had fought



for this against a dense barrier of misunderstanding. What would he think of her? Would he love her, or would he be afraid? Oh, he couldn't be afraid of anything. Not David's son! And would he blame her for leaving him with the Cravens all these lonely, tender years? Oh, he couldn't understand why she had done this because he was too young even to fathom her love for David. When he was older, perhaps . . .

The heavy door did not creak—it was too well oiled—but Hester heard it open. Her heart raced until she almost choked. Here was her son! Hers and David's! She turned. He was coming closer, a blur of white in the dimness. Her son, her little boy, David's son—

He came quite close to her, but she could scarcely see him at first. She spoke very softly, with little rushing catches in her voice.

"Robin! My little boy, my baby, David's son—"

She held out her arms to him; he hesitated, and she drew him to her, stiff, unwilling, childlike.

"Robin, I am your mother."

Still he said nothing. She repeated firmly, with an eager sort of sadness, "I'm your mother, darling, speak to me. I'm your mother!"

Then he spoke doubtfully, "Are mothers *nice*?"

She wanted terribly to cry, but she tried to hide the tears that seemed to sting her eyelids.

"They always *want* to be, Robin."

He asked curiously, "Why do you call me Robin? Grannie calls me Robert, and Trigget Master Robbit!"

"Don't you like to be called Robin? You see, I've never been here to know what to call you, but I've always thought of you as Robin, my own little boy."

"I wondered why you didn't come b'fore," mused the child.

Hester's heart wrenched. She drew him toward the window to see him, to see David's son.

Soft rings of golden hair like David's sunny thatch? Blues in his eyes like David's beautiful, changeable eyes? Square chin and rosy cheeks? But, oh no! For a terrible tense moment she thought she must surely cry aloud, not because he was so utterly unlike the beautiful child she had imagined but because he was so utterly unlike David and so very like herself. He had her pixie-like profile: pointed chin and oddly tilted nose that would some day shape itself into the delicate, raking line of Hester's own nose; the wide mouth that seemed ruthless on a child; the sharp hazel-green eyes with arched, interrogative brows; and the dark mane of hair that was his one beauty. It was almost black, and its curly tumult would sometime change into the quiet waves of Hester's hair. He was not softly plump and baby-like as are most six-year-old children; he had a thin, restlessly supple body and small dark hands. His face was narrow and brown, sad, and somewhat mature. His eyes held a curious look of disillusionment; they were almost piercing as he scanned her face with uncanny, unchildlike shrewdness.

"You are not like the lady in the book," he observed quietly.

He liked books, already!

"What lady, dear? Did Trigget read to you about her?"

"No. Trigget reads with her nose, so I have to read to myself. It was hard to learn, too; Trigget didn't know much about it. I can't pronounce the lady's name, but, anyhow, she wasn't a very nice person. She had black hair, though, and that's why I thought you might be like her."



Black hair! Hester, reflecting, visualized the gray-headed Cravens.

"The book is in Grannie's room," continued the boy. "But don't tell that I can read. They'll say I'm—percorious—again."

Hester wanted to kiss her son, but she had a feeling that he wouldn't let her, so she said, "And what else do you do, Robin, besides read? Play? Do you know any nice little girls and boys to play with?"

The great hazel eyes widened and a semblance of a smile wavered on his lips. His voice was a reverent whisper.

"Oh, yes! But I can't tell."

"Can't you tell mother, my precious?"

"Do people tell things to mothers?"

"Everything, because mothers never, never tell," assured Hester.

Robin considered her gravely for a moment. Then he said, his voice hasty and unsteady with importance, "well, then, if you will never, never tell, she is a little girl and she is terribly beautiful, and I love her more than anyone else in the whole world, and she comes to tea with her mother, and she steals up to the nursery ever so quietly, when she is supposed to be fast asleep on Grannie's bed. She has hair like the silk Trigget sews with—it shines like Grannie's ring—gold, I guess, and her eyes are as blue as blue! She has pinky red cheeks and the reddest mouth you ever saw, and her hands are wee, wee little things, all soft and nice!"

He paused, breathless, and stroked Hester's hand involuntarily, murmuring, "Why, your hands are soft and nice, too—and cool! Grannie's aren't," he added distastefully. "They have roughish little wrinkles."

Hester smiled. Her son, adoring a little girl and noticing wrinkles—

"What is the little girl's name, dear?" she asked, running her tingling fingers through his hair.

"You are quite sure you will never tell anyone in the whole world?" His eyes were wistful now.

"Never, darling. Never."

"Well, her name is—*Hester-rr!*"

The way he said it! The way he said it! Hester felt herself growing quite weak; a terrible unnatural feeling gripped her, as if she were in a dream. David, David, his intonation, his caressing, lingering way of saying her name, the beloved slurring of the 'r'; oh, David, David! All were embodied in the voice of his son. For a moment, the illusion was so intensely real that she reached her arms out to her dead husband, believing him with her again.

Robin's sharp little voice brought her back to earth.

"What is the matter? What is the matter?"

David's son, David all over again, even if he looked nothing like him. Ah, now she could love the little elfin boy wholeheartedly; he was hers, so much hers. What cared she for golden curls and baby perfection when he said "*Hester-rr*"? He was not strange to her now; no, he was David's son, David with her again, stirring her heart with a strange comfort.

She swept him into a sudden tumultuous embrace, and she could feel his heart beating against her breast like that of some caged little wild thing. He was frightened! She crushed him tightly to her heart, and suddenly he relaxed against her pulsating body. He himself did not know why he reacted thus to a stranger. But somehow she did not seem like a stranger now. Some unfathomable intuition of that thing called herit-



age told him that it was his mother, his own flesh to whom he was so close. She was soft and sweet and warm, and her white fingers, her dark silky hair that had a twist to it that his did, her warm throat, all smelled subtly of something very delicately cool and sweet. He did not know that he smelled crushed wood violets, having never smelled any violets at all. And then he thought of his beloved Hester. Strange, that he should think of her now; he always considered her much too nice and wonderful to think of when he was near anyone. He reserved these precious thoughts for the ghostly dark of the nursery when Trigglet had tucked him in between the starched sheets and gone creaking away downstairs. But somehow, this lady was not just anyone; she had not yet called him "queer child" nor exclaimed over his warm brown skin and pointed chin as if they were deformities, and besides, she was his mother, and mothers always tried to be nice, she said. She had the loveliest mouth, as red as Hester's but a little larger, like a newly opened rose; it felt like a flower against his cheek. Her hands were so coolly pleasant to touch; long slim fingers tipped with shining, shell-pink ovals of nails, and she wore only one ring, a tiny, silvery band. (He had never heard the word 'platinum' or the term "sensitively artistic hands".)

"You know," he said, leaning confidently against her. "You make me think of Hester-rr. No one else ever did. Only beautiful things make me think of her: flowers and rainy grass and the sky just about tea-time and music in church (if I don't have to wear my new shoes) and the sunshine comin' in the colored windows and the little silk smell of Grannie's hank'chief bag and—oh, pleasant things—pleasant smells—"

*This*, from a six-year-old! And they called him queer child! There were so many things he was going to understand now.

"And you love her very much?" she said, crushing the small, boneless hands in hers. There were tears in her voice; they flickered on her eyelashes. "You love her very much, and I—I make you think of her. That is a very wonderful and beautiful thing for you to say to your mother, Robin darling. You make me think of someone I love very much, too,—oh, so much more than you could ever understand now, Robin. And he said "Hester-rr" just as you do. You see, my name is Hester, too."

Robin's eyes were round and transfixed by an incredulous expression of joy.

"I think that after a while perhaps I might love you as much as I love my Hester!"

He sat gazing shrewdly at her for a moment and then murmured contentedly, "Hester-rr . . ."

"Yes, David darling," she answered, forgetting.

## AUTUMN TWILIGHT

BARBARA REED

ONE WILD pink line  
 Streaked above the hill;  
 Otherwise the hour  
 Is color-less and chill.  
 Welcome the softness and closeness of the night.  
 Hearts beat so lonely in the cold twilight!



## THE FLAMINGO

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

Three Rollins undergraduates have contributed volumes to the series of "Vest Pocket Poets" issued by the Angel Alley Press. In the case of two of these the edition is entirely exhausted.

BALANCING THE SCALES, by Dorothy Emerson (*Out of Print*).

DAGUERREOTYPES, by Stella Weston (*Out of Print*).

OUT OF CHRYSALIS, by Christy MacKaye.

Less than a dozen copies remain of the "Rollins Book of Verse," an anthology of the work of twenty-two Rollins undergraduates. The volume has an introduction by Jessie B. Rittenhouse, who will again give the course in Poetry Writing during the Rollins "Winter School" which opens January 4.