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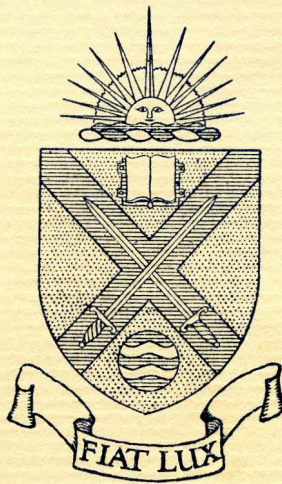
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THE FLAMINGO

JANUARY, 1941



ROLLINS COLLEGE

WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

THE FLAMINGO

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Vol. 15

WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

No. 1

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Caricature of Sally McCaslin

MARY ANN WILSON

THIEF IN THE NIGHT

SALLY McCASLIN

MILLICENT rose early and fumbled on the floor of the closet for her Spring slippers. It was dark in the closet although in the cluttered little mill town outside, day had already come and a Sunday morning heat reflected itself from the gray, unpainted walls. She struck a match, carefully shielding its flame from the heavy trousers and coats that divided themselves over her back. Its sallow light played weakly over her queer, distorted shoulders and the unmatched brown eyes that searched intently among the litter of stiff, unmated shoes.

The door opened and a woman entered, fat, dirty, unrestrained. She combed her oily gray hair with a coarse rubber comb, tossing its heavy length from shoulder to shoulder, and twisting it into a greasy coil with strong wrists. With her teeth clinging tightly to a hair pin, she spoke, her breast heaving as she lifted her arms.

"Millicent, what are you doin' in that closet?"

"Nothing", was the answer sent back from the musty darkness.

The woman took the hair pin from her mouth and held it in her hand. Her eyes were leaden in their swollen settings as she continued. "Well, git outen of there with that match afore you burn the place up."

Millicent found one of the objects of her search, a cracked, run-over, patent leather sandal. She thrust her foot into it quickly and began to look for the other.

The woman moved her sinister weight to the door and peered in. The child froze automatically moving the shoe covered foot stealthily under the skirt of her short gray petticoat. The woman detected the movement, let her eyes run curiously over the child's position that threw her hunch back into relief against the darkness of the closet. She said with directness, "Now for God's sake, why are you puttin' on them old shoes? You ain't had a pair on since school was out."

Millicent did not move. The match burned down, scorching her fingers. She withdrew her hand slowly almost cautious-

ly, letting the charred stick fall to the floor. The woman crunched it with her foot. She spoke again, a vulgar tone of authority bathing the word,

"Say."

Millicent crawled wearily toward the door. She sat in the light and blinked, not bothering to hide the shoe.

"I aim to go to Sunday school," she said.

"To what Sunday school and who in God's name put that notion in your head?" The woman spread her hips with command.

"Aldine did. Miss Daniels told Aldine to come and bring all the other kids her size she wanted to. They goin' to have a play and she has to have a lot of kids."

The woman began to comb her hair again.

"Where is all this?"

"In that Sunday School where Aldine goes."

"What Sunday School where Aldine goes, for God's sake?" The leaden eyes showed yellow streaks.

"That brown one up yonder by that Pee-Wee Golf place. Miss Daniels told Aldine she wanted everybody. It's a play about fairies. It's a pageant." Millicent pronounced the word carefully. "They got costumes and everything." She checked her enthusiasm.

The woman considered carefully, biting her lower lip, scratching her head gingerly along the part.

"How do you know she wants you?"

The wet, uncontrollable tears rose at the remark. Millicent did not want to cry. She did not even feel hurt. The tears just came, slipping smoothly down the sides of her cheeks. She said again in a low, tired voice,

"Aldine said she wanted everybody my size. She wants 'em to be fairies. They got costumes with wings and everything."

"Wings!" the woman ejaculated, "Wings! My God, Millicent. Can't you just see yourself runnin' around on a stage with a pair of wings hooked on your back, the shape its in. I say wings. You better not go."

She turned to the bed and began to rip off the cover.

Millicent spoke again, a hurried pleading note in her voice,

"Aldine said she wanted everybody. They don't have enough. Dolores is goin'."

"Well, go on then. It don't make no difference to me. Only don't come back here bawlin' to me if you don't git no part." Then softening, she added, staring out the window into the paper littered gutter, "Child, you got an affliction 'cause your mother never took care of herself 'fore you came. She died and I've kept you the best I know how. But remember you got an affliction."

"Can I go?" Millicent asked.

"If you want to," was the answer.

"Do you know where my other shoe's at?"

"You'll have to look for it," the woman said.

Millicent struck another match and crawled back into the mildewed folds of the closet, her bare foot looking brazenly bare beside the patent leather sandal.

She found the shoe looking somewhat worse than she remembered it did when she had last kicked them off, tired after the long mile trudge after her report card, and the last day of school conversation. That was almost two months ago. Millicent had come home and had announced in the dark room where her aunt slept when she was off duty at the mill that "she had passed." Her aunt had said, "Shut the door." And Millicent had shut the door and pulled off her shoes and had gone outside and helped her cousin take the back wheels off his wagon and beat the rims out straight.

The two months had gone quickly. There hadn't been much to do. There was always the mill roaring and growling as if it were held too tightly within its sturdy brick walls. There was the sound of the whistle shrieking its senseless and unexpected hysteria at the end of each eight hour shift. There had been thunder storms sweeping the gutters clean for a day or so and leaving sodden newspapers stuck to the sewer gratings at the corner. One of the storms had been rather bad, had ripped a giant limb from the maple tree in the mill yard and had flung it awkwardly to the earth to lie there like a grotesque giant with his feet in the air. The next day Millicent had climbed in and out of its wet, smelly foliage, contemplating the brazen scar on the trunk, the tombstone to its fall.

Tomato season hadn't been much fun. A farmer had given her a nickel on the platform of one of the packing houses and another farmer had told her to "Git on home" because she took a tomato off his wagon. It was hotter than usual. Her

aunt had complained of high blood pressure and her cousins had gone up town to the picture show on Saturday afternoons. Sometimes she went with them, but she liked better to go into Louie's and sit on a high stool and order a hamburger with her dime.

Her back hadn't bothered her much. She looked again at the fat woman making the beds.

"Aunt Gladys," she said, "Aldine did say she wanted everybody to come. She said they had to have about a million fairies."

"Alright," the woman answered. "I said you could go, didn't I?"

The buckle that fastened the strap was gone from the shoe and Millicent fastened it with a safety pin. She put on the dress that her aunt had made over from one of her cousin's. It was a deep purple crepe with a scalloped hem and neckline. Aunt Gladys had put a piece in the back to make it fit snugly over the hump on her shoulders. The tops of her white cotton socks were stretched and she put rubber bands around them to hold them snugly against her ankles. Then she wet her brown hair and plastered it smoothly to the sides of her head.

She would have been early to church but just as she was leaving Aunt Gladys sent her to the store for a can of salmon. She had run home so fast that the safety pin in her shoe came undone and scratched a deep red mark on her foot.

When she yelled in front of Aldine's house, Aldine's older sister came to the door with her baby and said, "Aldine's done gone."

The news frightened her. She tried to remember her one visit to the church before she had even started to school, but could only recall a picture of the backs of benches and confusing glass topped doors. She said hesitantly "Is Aldine goin' to be a fairy?"

The girl in the doorway answered, "I don't know anything about such truck. You'll have to ask her."

Then she began to run. She prayed that God would let someone else be late too, or else put Aldine where she could see her, but her heart kept right on jarring her thin chest and there was a coppery taste in her mouth. There were rows of cars in front of the church and from one of the class rooms came singing but there was no one in sight. She climbed up the long

flight of concrete steps leading to the auditorium. There was a men's class meeting in one corner of the room. As she started down the aisle they began to pray. She stopped dead in her tracks getting a nervous thrill out of her remembering to stop when people were praying. She decided to be very business-like. When the prayer had ceased, she walked noisily down the aisle to the man who was still standing, thumbing through the Bible.

"Where are they seein' about the fairy play?" she asked. The man appeared bewildered and amused. "Wait a minute, little lady," he said with an emphatic air of surprise. "Now, what is it you want?"

The other men smiled. Again she felt the wet tears melting around her throat. She swallowed desperately.

"Aldine," she said, "Aldine said Miss Daniels said everybody who wanted to could be one."

"Oh," the man said again with emphasis, "Miss Daniels. Go down those steps and it's the second door to your right."

She rushed for the steps, bumping her knee against the bench in her haste. It made a loud noise but she did not look back. When she reached the stairs, she pulled up the skirt of her dress to catch the tears just as they brimmed over and balanced themselves on her stubby lashes. The stairway was dark and smelled of furniture polish. From the basement there came the various hums of different class rooms. She counted the doors twice to be sure that she entered the right one. Trembling she pushed open the door of Number 2.

They all seemed surprised to see her. Even Aldine looked surprised and made no offer of explanation. After a long pause Millicent's eyes found those surrounded by the tightly curled hair of Miss Daniels.

She began once more, "Aldine said I could be a fairy in the play if I would come."

Aldine spoke condescendingly, "She's a hunchback who lives down close to me, Miss Daniels. She wants to be in the play. I said it might be you could use her."

"Oh," said Miss Daniels and then slipped into her role. "What is your name, dear?"

Millicent Price," was the reply, "but I live with Mrs. Banning."

"Well, Millicent," the teacher went on, "we're just so glad

to have you in our class today. We were just talking about the pageant when you came in. Now do you want to sit in that chair over there by the costumes?"

Millicent sat down. Next to her was a chair piled high with filmy robes of fairies and on the table were their magic wands. On the top of a cabinet stood the wings, graceful, delicate, filmy and shining with gold dust. They were made of thin white gauze stretched over buoyant wire frames and fastened with straps to the fairies' shoulders. She gazed at them awed by the gold dust but enchanted with the whole effect. Turning to the fat little girl with the red purse beside her she said, "If I had wings, I wouldn't work 'em all the time. Would you? I'd just get a good start and then sail a while like a killdeer does."

The fat little girl made no answer. Instead she turned to her companion and giggled noisily behind her hand. Millicent hated her . . . hated her almost as much as the cousin who stole her marbles and swapped them for the insides of an alarm clock. The little girl turned back to Millicent.

"I am going to be the Sunshine Fairy," she said. "And Kay's going to be the Fairy of the Raindrops. Miss Daniels already told us."

Millicent scratched her knee attentively until she saw that it was dirty and then she pulled the purple crepe skirt over it with a sinking heart.

Miss Daniels talked on. Millicent heard the words, rehearsal, cue, and cast, with a thrill from their newness. The others listened nonchalantly. Even Aldine seemed only half interested. At last a bell rang sharply and the conversation took on a shrill note of high pitched voices and scraping chairs. Aldine arose and asked with poise before the whole class,

"Practice at three, Miss Daniels?"

Miss Daniels answered, "At three sharp and start learning your lines right away, Aldine."

Aldine left. Millicent could hear the heels of her new shoes clicking up the stairs. The strange little girl who had sat beside her also left, closing her red pocketbook with a snap. Miss Daniels called after her,

"Remember, three o'clock, Elaine. And you will see if the little Burns girl would like to come and be a fairy, won't you? We're going to need some more children."

Turning back to the pupils left in the room Miss Daniels frowned as she studied her list of characters and then looked at the group before her. Millicent grinned. She had heard Miss Daniels say that she needed some more people to come and be fairies. Gently she caressed the long white dresses. Gingerly she handled a magic wand. She had to move a few steps to reach the wings; but the same gentle tug that sometimes at school made her eat her lunch at recess instead of waiting until noon, drew her forward. Slyly she picked up the gauze frame and slipped the strap over her shoulder. She twisted her neck to see the fairy equipage in place and met the rather shocked eyes of Miss Daniels looking straight at her. The other children had ceased talking. They too, had their eyes upon the fairy wing on Millicent's back, and seemed at a loss for words. One child began to laugh then stopped suddenly and blushed with embarrassment. Millicent tried to take the wing off slowly and with indifference but her fingers shook. A loose wire caught in her dress, and Miss Daniels came forward and lifted the wing off without a word.

She cleared her throat in the awkward silence. Millicent cringed, cringed until her muscles ached and her palms were moist and nerveless.

She said in a hoarse and trembling voice, "I ain't aimed to hurt 'em none."

The Sunday School teacher found herself. She began to talk.

"You didn't hurt them, and now let's see, where were we? We've got to find some more little girls to be fairies and some children to be flowers but we can get those later. Now let's see, who would like to be the South Wind Fairy?"

There was a chorus of "me, Miss Daniels, me." Millicent did not speak but she timidly raised her hand.

"Well," said Miss Daniels thoughtfully, "Suppose we let Helen be the South Wind Fairy." She wrote her name down and Helen grinned happily.

"And now the West Wind Fairy," she went on. Again there was the chorus of entreaties and Millicent raised her hand.

"Charlotte," said Miss Daniels. "Suppose we put you down for the West Wind Fairy. Would you like that?"

"Oh yes'm," answered Charlotte, and left the little circle

in front of the desk to sit down and look on with approbation.

The role of the Tree Fairy was given to Lois. Priscilla became the Fairy of the Hilltops. The River Fairy went to Maxine.

Miss Danels spoke kindly now. "Let's see Millicent doesn't have a part yet, nor does Marie. How's this? Shall we let Marie be the Fairy of Shade and I have a special job for Millicent because I know I can depend on her."

Millicent blushed with pleasure and sent her eyes scurrying to the floor.

"Millicent," said Miss Daniels, "how would you like to work back stage with me and pull the curtain between acts? I can depend on you to bring that curtain up and down at just the right time and that's why I want you to help me. Would you like that?"

Millicent answered almost before she finished the question, "Oh, I'd love to do that, Miss Daniels! That'll be fine!"

And then she left, running fast over the walk to get behind the Pee-Wee Golf place before the tears came. But the tears didn't come. She walked on, remembering only the awful moment when they had looked at her with the fairy's wing on her back.

Aunt Gladys said "Well?" when she walked upon the porch carrying her shoes in her hand. Millicent raising her eyes for one necessary glance into her aunt's face, answered,

"Miss Daniels wants me to help her pull the curtain. You have to pull it between acts and stuff. I got to help her."

Then she walked quickly toward the closet, dropping her shoes with a clatter to drown out her aunt's words. But she would have known what they were, even if she had not heard them.

"Well I'll be damned!" she said. "If that ain't just like 'em. You know blamed well she wouldn't stick any of the others in back where they wouldn't be seen. Yeah, stick you in the back where you won't spoil the looks of things, but where you can do a little work. It's a wonder she ain't made you take up collection or somethin' so's the congregation would feel sorry for you and donate a little money for her pocket."

Then Millicent did cry but not very much. She sat on the back step and watched the trucks backing up to the loading

platform of the mill and one tear rolled down and dried on her cheek in the sun.

They rehearsed the play for three weeks and then gave it in the middle of August on a sultry moonless night. The bright lights of the church reached out through the windows and doors and cast shadows beneath the people on the outside. Quickly the auditorium filled. Millicent, peeping through a hole in the curtain could see the brown backs of the benches only in scattered dashes through the crowd. Their excited talk reached her ears like the far away hum of off-key bees. Elaine was a little late. She came with her hair set in tiny blonde curls, carrying the fairy costume in a small leather case. Her mother came in too, wearing a hat and holding the wings carefully in one hand. She helped Elaine undress, then slipped the fairy dress over her shoulders, and began to snap it up the back.

The other fairies looked on . . . waving their wands or straining their necks to see how the wings gracefully swayed when they walked. The Fairy of the Hilltops practiced her dance, pirouetting until the skirt bloomed around her like a mushroom. Miss Daniels was there in a blue evening dress with a glittering belt, putting a bowl of flowers on the stage and now patting rouge onto Helen's cheeks. Standing in front of the curtain, she made a short speech, telling how the pageant was given to benefit the missionaries in foreign fields. When she came back stage, she gave the signal and Millicent grasped the rough rope and pulled, bending almost double to raise the velvety blackness and disclose the Fairy of the Raindrops gently consoling the drooping flowers in the garden of the Little Princess.

The audience clapped, and Millicent did not move from her post at the curtain rope all night. Lois forgot her lines and Millicent ached to tell her but instead she held on to the curtain rope with small thin hands.

When the last line was uttered she lowered the curtain with a thud and leaned her cheek against its heavy, thick folds. The audience clapped loudly and began to push toward the door. The mothers came back stage, kissed their daughters and lifted the wings off their shoulders. The minister shook Miss Daniels' hand. Millicent was left alone. She wanted to go home, but she hated to be the first to leave. She walked into a small dressing room, and murmured something about looking for Aldine when she saw that Maxine was there with her mother

bending over to tie her shoes. They left quickly, going out the side door into the street, leaving the costume folded on a chair. The wings were half leaning against the back.

The softer light made them more fragile and the gold dust glowed like a fairy's tears. Millicent picked it up. It was so light, so perfectly balanced, like a Spanish fan or the wings of a butterfly. She fanned it, feeling the cool air lift the hair from her forehead. It was beautiful, delicate, white . . . a fairy's wing.

Before she knew it the impulse had come and she had opened the side door and begun to run, holding the wing tenderly, feeling her way over the rough bricks of the street. She ran swiftly, away from the church and Miss Daniels and Elaine with her tight curls. Away from the lights and the automobiles and the talking people, and down into mill town. When she turned through the alley at Louie's corner, the roar of the mill met her in the face, the yellow houses became gray, and a truck lumbered and lurched through the narrow street. She slowed to a walk, stopped for a moment, slipped her arm through the strap, and fastened the wing to her shoulder. She turned her head, watching it as it rose and fell, hiding the hump on her back. "Miss Daniels give it to me," she whispered. "Miss Daniels give it to me."

THE MOMENT

We bid good-days, and are
The day's dead.
The moment reaches for
Life instead.
The moment no tears drown
Or forget,
In surviving, has you
Passing yet.
Mind whispers, in a daze,
To the soul
How in the moment's ways
Love is whole.

THOMAS CASEY

STILL LIFE AND FISH

JESS GREGG

IF Mr. Fountleroy had been a big man, burly and boisterous, the combination of name and personality would merely have been ludicrous. But since he was gentle and painfully shy, it had pushed his life toward the tragic.

Mr. Fountleroy didn't blame his name for his failure in life. He'd become so accustomed to hating it that he'd forgotten it, and the blame had somehow shifted onto his wife.

It wasn't that Laura didn't have her good points. She was a wistful creature, but silence, as far as she was concerned, was off the gold standard. And too, she had to be supported. There was no way out of that.

"It's her fault," Mr. Fountleroy was prone to think every morning on his way to work. "It's certainly Laura's fault that I keep accounts now, instead of being an artist — a famous artist, surrounded by beautiful things."

Here he usually closed his eyes, trying hard to remember their apartment in the brown stone house. Everyone has their genius, and Laura's was combining mission style furniture and tinted photographs into a perfect haven of unlikely comfort. Here and there could be found a delicate figure of porcelain or an exquisite hand-painted miniature, his contribution, side by side with her green cut-glass boat inscribed, "Remember the Maine," or her imitation ivory elephant with ruby eyes.

For a moment each morning he'd stop in front of the small antique shop next to his office building, and bloat himself with the beauty crowded in the show case, so, camel-like, he could live on its nourishment all day. It didn't really matter in what surroundings he lived, but the window was important.

It was Monday morning, and as usual, he quickened his pace, saving his breath for the moment he could release it in ecstasy, visually caressing each object. Suddenly he stopped short, that particular moment of existence suspended in a vacuum of pure horror. The window display centered by sheer force around an oil painting somewhat playfully titled, "Still Life and Fish". Mr. F.'s eyes darted away from it with precisely the same shock he would have sensed had he walked in

upon his wife bathing. He sought relief for a moment in the enchanting arabesques embroidered on a fan, but the picture compelled him to look back.

In introspective confusion, Mr. Fountleroy wondered how such a picture was executed, and why the artist was not. It was as if the painter, having thoughtfully mixed his pigments with equal parts of mud and sawdust, attempted a sunset, and after a moment of indecision, painted an eye and some scales on the largest and greenest cloud. Then, after spattering it with stray vegetables, he was apparently converted unto Christianity, and repenting his sins, attempted to scrape the whole composition off with a fine tooth comb.

Even the faint veil of dust refused to soften this grim orgy of inspiration, which Mr. Fountleroy was stunned to note, boasted the price of twenty dollars.

"It's a rape of the muse," he was shocked into stuttering, but even such a daring declaration couldn't quell his indignation, and he repeated, "It certainly is rape!"

All day the peculiarly dead fish swam thru his mind, causing constant erasure and revision in his books. Out of morbid curiosity, he stopped after work to once again disbelieve his eyes. The merciful dusk of the unlighted window did what it could, but nothing less than a complete black-out would have improved it sufficiently to satisfy Mr. Fountleroy.

"What are you so fidgety about?" Laura demanded that night from the kitchen cupola. "If you're trying to think of some excuse to get out of going to the movies with me . . ."

Mr. Fountleroy didn't answer, but sat at the table trying to memorize his hands.

"You never think whether I might not want to go out at night," she continued sadly, "I never have any fun. I don't get any satisfaction out of life. I just cook for you, that's all . . ."

"You're very kind, my dear," he started to say.

"Even when you are home, you act as if it isn't good enough for you," she went on reproachfully, "and yet I go right on cooking and sweeping and try to make our home livable . . ."

She entered and set the platter of halibut in front of him, too intent on what she was saying to notice the expression that suddenly froze on his face. Hanging her apron on the hook, she turned back just in time to see him whisk out of the door.

The next morning, he tried to watch his feet until he was safely beyond the antique shop, but a force of negative fascination willed him to look up. He glared at the malignant intruder in his window. The fish's lone, glazed eye stared back at him, a reflection of his own distaste. Yanking his gaze from the hypnotic miscarriage, he indignantly hurried on.

It ruined his day again. The fish's apparition weaved thru his columns of figures as if they were undulating scarves of sea weed. He prayed with a desperate hopelessness that when it was time to go home, the picture would be out of the window, no longer to contaminate the other lovely pieces. But as he passed the display en route to the subway, the fish, still propped up there, gloated victoriously at him.

The night was no longer comforting, and his sleep brought visitations of the fish in its perilous state of decomposition. To and from the office he began to pass the window without even turning his head. Sometimes he wistfully stole a glance, just long enough to determine if the picture had yet been sold, but it was always there — a repellant potentate surrounded by a court of beauties. Now and again he considered flinging a brick thru the window, aiming it straight at that disgusting canvas. But of course that was silly, and besides, it might hurt one of the lovely objects there.

His enforced fast from beautiful things made life a colorless routine. There was only the drab office, and after that, the drabber apartment. There was no beauty, no soul, no dreams — just a kind of famished hopelessness.

The morning came when the strain was impossible, and fighting his will, he turned to the window, feasting his eyes on the exquisite objects, gorging himself, without looking directly at the picture. But it was not satisfactory. There was no free sensation of enjoyment and at last he knew what he must do.

"I'll buy the thing," he told himself. "I'll buy it and then I'll burn it, rip it to bits with my knife."

"But it's twenty dollars," he argued. "That's a pretty penny to pay for something you're going to destroy. You could buy something truly beautiful for that amount."

"I know," he countered, "but I couldn't buy enough to make that apartment beautiful, and to take this thing out of my window will be cheap at the price."

Hurriedly he made his way into the shadowed sanctum, and carefully holding his coat folds about him, pushed by the crowded tables toward the preoccupied salesman.

"I'll take it!" he shouted to that amazed person.

Keeping the parcel tightly grasped under his arm, he walked through the office, using clouds for shoes. Slowly he unwrapped it in the men's room, and laying it in all its ghastly glory on a wash basin, opened his pen knife with a delectable sensation of freedom.

"Morning, Lordie!" It was William, the office boy.

Mr. F. nodded guiltily, a smile gingerly exposing his teeth.

"Say-a-ay, what's this?" William studied the picture, his eyes half closed, his thumb cocked before him as he'd seen artists do in the movies. "I didn't know you went in for art," he said.

"Oh — yes," Mr. Fountleroy admitted. "I'm very fond of it."

"You'd have to be!" decided William with a final look at the picture.

Blushing, defeated, Fountleroy hastily wrapped it up and hurried to his desk. All day it lay there, his eyes gloating over it almost continually as he carefully considered how he meant to destroy it.

Five o'clock dragged around at last, and sliding into his coat, he grabbed the picture and raced downstairs. Glee-fully he paused at the store window, noting with a dangerous sense of victory, how radiant it was now. Carefully, he re-introduced himself to each familiar piece, comfortably studying each recent addition. Then remembering his vandalistic duty, he hastened toward the subway.

He'd forgotten about Laura in his excitement, and was really quite surprised when she opened the door for him. Guiltily, he kissed her and began to edge toward the bath room.

"What have you there?" she asked.

"Nothing," he replied.

"It's likely you're carrying nothing all wrapped up in brown paper," she insisted.

"Well—" he hedged, "—it's a little something that made me think of you. Now you mustn't ask questions," he quite

suddenly decided. "It's for your birthday."

"Which was three months ago," she reminded him rather sharply. "Let me see it."

He backed away from her, and as if by practised choreography, she followed him step for step.

"What's the matter with you, Herbert?" she demanded half laughing. "Let me see what you've got."

Reaching around, she took the package from his flexless fingers and pulled the scarves of paper from it.

For a while she just stared at it, finally turning back to him, visibly touched, her voice teary.

"An oil painting — a real oil painting. And it made you think of me." She walked over to him. "Herbert, this is the first present you've given me in years, and — and I do appreciate it."

Unable to talk, she scooped up the papers with her free hand.

"Here—" she turned and smiled at him. "We'll hang it together."

Tensing his muscles, clamping his jaw, he held the Gibson Girl reproduction she handed him, and in horror, watched her hang Still Life and Fish over the mantle. Artistically, she walked back and viewed it, sniffing and smiling, hands on hips. Even Mr. Fountleroy had to admit it fitted in with the other pictures so well, one scarcely noticed it.

He went to his chair, and sat down smiling. It was all right.

TWO POEMS

PEGGY HUDGINGS

PIECE

The secret machinations
Of the quickened pulse
Shadow-dark the play.
Memory insults

And seeks the higher stage,
The rank mnemonic plot,
Cries on aging passions,
Feeling that's begot

By old discursive scene,
By manufactured pain.
In fear I listen for
My entrance cue again.

EVENING SONG

The aching bell-note quivers
Upon the quiet's breast.
Shun the raucus sunlight
Of the day's behest.

Avoid the shameless glances
Of the slattern noon,
A polished pistareen.
The rising of the moon

Performs the sweet abortion
Of the labored dusk.
The dusk is thin and slender,
And the shimmering thrust

Of the starlight grieves
Down along the west.
The aching bell-note quivers
Upon the quiet's breast.

FOR WHOM THE QUARRY DIES

THOMAS CASEY

THE stubby cigarette hung on his lower lip. He removed it as he spat from one corner of his mouth. The unsuspecting cockroach was drenched. Extending his leg, he crushed the wriggling body to a soft mess beneath his heel. His wife sat watching, too sick to object to the stained floor.

"Smells like the victuals you been cookin', Jenny," he said, turning another page of the Western Stories magazine.

Silence ached in the tidy one-room shack. Fingers of wind wagged the chintz curtains. The woman twisted herself around in a creaky chair, turned her face vacantly to the wall. Her high cheek bones poked the skin out like cloth, and her face was sucked in at the mouth, nerve-starved, bloodless with pain.

I must have somethin' bad, she thought to herself, sharp pangs stabbing through her senses. That's crazy though. I never afore been whole sick. I always been proper, even 'fore marryin' Knute. Never once been sick like this.

She spoke to her husband without turning her face to him. "Sol be here soon?" she asked.

"Yeah. 'Spect he's left home by now." There was a pause while he drew breath. "Shut up, will yuh. I'm readin'."

"Do you have to go huntin' today, Knute?"

Outside Belle whined, and on scent of something, ran helter-skelter round the house and off into the cypress. In a moment the dog was back, snuffling and whining and scratching at the screen door. The man said, "Hush up, Belle." He did not answer his wife. The rasp of a turned page was the only sound.

Again she held conference with herself: I can't tell Knute I got a misery, 'specially when him and Sol's going huntin'. Won't do to plead with him neither, him thinkin' I all the time got an ailin' or a bellyin'-about-nothing that ain't important. If only Gypsy Park warn't so durn far, I could walk it. I think I could walk it easy. I need doctorin' sure. Knute ought'a be gettin' to town now, me in flames with fever on to burnin' up."

Through the door the near river sparkled sunlight into the room; the reflections shimmered like water on the far wall. There was the perfume of water-lilies and reed flowers on the light air. From the dimness inside the shack the strayed eye could see the distant side of the Kaloosa, over the quiet flow of the river. From that far shore it was ten miles in to Gypsy Park. Settlements in the Everglades are very much alike. Within the township was a red brick courthouse, two general stores, a barroom Knute liked, and Doctor Sayres' office. Looking out the door, Jenny thought of the doctor's office, full of strange medicine smells. She feared it a little, and thinking of it always made her nervous. Now, however, she was learning from pain to understand and appreciate it, and she placed greater faith in it's meaning. This time thinking of it helped her not to worry.

The Western Stories magazine slapped the table, flew fluttering across the room, flopped and slithered under the iron cookstove. Knute stretched his legs like a rested animal and thrust himself up from the chair. He took his rifle from the corner, stood at the open window sighting it carefully on the pause and movement of imaginary game. He stopped once and turned his cheek to the wind with a curious expression.

"Gawd a'mighty, wind's just right for huntin' deer in the flats. Dog if that ain't an idea. Bet the fox are runnin' too."

Then he sighted at length along the polished barrel, first closing one eye, and opening it, closing the other. When he was through aiming the firearm, inspecting the parts and clicking the trigger, he wiped the surface clean of finger dabs with his shirt sleeve, and cradling the gun like a child, sat down to load the magazine with bright new shells. There was a metallic clank as each cartridge disappeared from his hand.

"Remember the time me and Sol got that big buck out to Corry Lake? Boy, did he weigh a ton! We tracked that Goliath all afternoon before I got me a bead on him and put two into him. And yuh know what happened? S'pose you think he dropped and didn't fight none? Well, that big bozo took it like a stump. He wouldn't lay down and quit. Hell, he didn't give up for three miles cross Kaloosa. The dogs was all pooped out and we was in about the same fix. We got holt of him though and toted him back. Old Sol and me ain't had as much fun as that since we hung that nigger down at

Bay City. You can never tell when you're gonna scare up one of them big hoofers. They give you your money's worth, and I ain't jokin'."

His wife listened with her always obedient and interested face. But her eyes were wide, fixed and unseeing. He was too excited to notice them, or that they were inflamed and moist. Though her eyes stared with their old yield of understanding, they could not have made anything solid of him, anything stable or certain. They seemed only to follow the stream of his voice, float here a moment, then scudding quickly there or somewhere else, drift to a new and different field of attention. Her glances were ordered about like the risen dead to watch and not to frighten living.

Finally her voice crackled in the warm drowsiness of the room.

"Knute, I ain't feelin' well. Seems like I'm swellin' up big inside. I feel fit to bust."

He looked up and tilted his head for a joke.

"Don't tell me we're bloomin' into a family. That ain't in keepin'. Belle's just had a litter."

"You're not payin' mind to me now, Knute. I know how we can't be affordin' much else'n our victuals, but I got need for a doctor. I've got an awful hurt."

"You had somethin' last week and you ain't gone to the devil yet and you're still talkin',"

"But that was them scummed eggs the Myers give us. You got cramped yourself but you wasn't tellin'."

"Them eggs was good and I ain't been suffered-up by them or any other'n. You got a lot of scariness in your head. Now leave me to think straight on what I'm going to do today."

Jenny's dry lips moved heavily.

"I ain't foolin'," she said.

"You know durn well I'm going huntin' with Sol," he flared. "I ain't gettin' no doctor for a lotta stomach dreams."

The woman groped over to the bed, crumpled down like a sack of meal. She didn't stretch out, but curled up cat-like, burying half her feverish face in the coarse slip of the pillow. She lay there damp and hot, lassos of blond hair looped against the sheet.

She thought a long while and came to a decision.

"Wasn't it nice," she said, opening her eyes, "having

Granddaddy Joe last week for supper. Didn't I cook up them mess of quail you shot pretty lookin'? Kin you recollect we had muffins'n beans'n okra'n carrots'n potatoes'n rice? Ain't it that we had coffee, too, and a lot of fun talkin' mighty and important about plantin' cane in the glades and takin' it to the mill and makin' money?"

The dog whined outside. Then suddenly the screen ripped at the sharp sound of clawing.

"Hush up, Belle. I'm comin' soon." The man turned to his wife. "What you talkin' about?"

"Then last year you got rattler bit out'n the patch and hol-lered for me and I came brought you in and got you well and then took care of the spring peas. You forgot me prayin' away the hurricane and savin' Belle from the gators. Where you goin'?"

Knute went out the door. It slammed behind him. Jenny heard him brush through the grass and walk down by the river. She heard the hollow sound of boards as he tramped out on the dock. From the end of the dock he was probably surveying the Kaloosa trying to make out Sol's boat in the blinding glares of sun blinking off the river like chips of diamonds, perhaps straining his hearing for the lively sputter of a motor. He whistled once for Belle. And a moment later he was talking to himself or to Belle.

He don't care a hoot, she thought. That's just his way though. Wish't he'd growed up with a little more timber. That man simply riles me sometimes, he's so durned like a boy. Selfish, don't-carish, and crazy for shootin', pure crazy for shootin'. He ain't got enough sense to see I want terrible bad for doctorin'. Wouldn't know a soul was sick till they was half dead. I gotta wake that fool up quick. She turned over and felt parched in the mouth and stared up at the big cracks and the red knot-pits in the ceiling.

There was a long wait before the door opened and Knute entered.

"Knute, I gotta get to Gypsy. I got an illness and you know it. I'm sick and it might be catchin'. Both of us can't be flattened out when work needs doin' around here. One at a time's worse enough. You git now and get me Doc Sayres."

He was scratching his head. His eyes were far away.

"Wind's sure blowin' rightways for deer in the flats. Belle's botherin' for a run. Hate to hold her back on quail."

"Knute, I ain't funnin' with you. I hurt bad inside."

He looked at her sternly.

"Sure as it'll wear off, I ain't gettin' no five dollar doctors. I'm going huntin', and as I get back you'll be up prancin' around like a coon and not talkin' and floppin' and playin' corpse so you kin have visitors for five dollars a dip. Sol'll be here soon, and I'm going huntin'."

Straining upright in bed, Jenny touched her feet to the floor. She tried her weight, checked her balance against dizziness, and stood up. Knute was at the door looking out, listening to the chirr of a katydid. She managed her way across the floor with an unsure footing and stopped before the bureau. She confronted her image in the mirror and touched her hand to her face with disbelief, examining and exploring the new lines, chilling with frank panic at the gaunt face and the pale features. She tried to nerve herself before speaking.

"I got washin' tomorrow, Knute. You shore do dirty up clothes. They's heaps of shirts'n pants'n underbottoms. You ain't got nothin' left clean. Wonder if'n we got enough kindlin' for my wash fire? Don't guess we have. I ain't askin' you to chop, though, 'cause I kin do that myself. I like doin' choppin'."

"I ain't dirtied clothes purpose to work you."

"Ain't said you had. Just said they's a heap of 'em I aim to do tomorrow. Gotta cut me a fishpole too so's I kin catch some perch for eatin' tomorrow. We ain't had perch in a full moon."

"Seems as how I'd like me a fry of fish tomorrow."

"Wouldja, Knute? Then I'll be early cuttin' that pole." Bending, she picked up a tiny dress with frills and folds that might have belonged to a doll. Holding it up and turning it around, she said, "See here what I made for Emmy Myers' baby. Since the mite's been sickly and Emmy ain't been much use herself, there's no p'int holdin' back. I reckon they be needin' help again. I'm goin' to take her over this dress tomorrow and see if they're in a fix for me comin' every day like I done before. They was hard off, the whole bunch of 'em, men-folks and all, with Emmy laid up. They would

of starved wasn't for me comin'. They sort of hungered around like a lot of hound dogs waitin' to be fed. Tain't natural the way men-folks gets to expectin' of a woman."

Jenny held herself stiffened at the back of a chair, her fingers curled white over the top. She watched Knute's face with anxiety. Knute was thoughtfully turning the black-tongued wick up and down in the kerosene lamp.

"Ain't you got tired yet?" he said. "Why'n't you get to bed if'n your sick and can't do without'n a doctor and pink cures?"

"I got to clean up genuine round here tomorrow after breakfast."

"If'n you're sick get to bed and shut up."

She went over and sat down on the bed.

"Will you get me Doc Sayres?"

At the door Belle began to whimper like a forgotten child. Knute threatened her.

"Go 'way, Belle! Get on away from here. Get now!"

The dog retreated with a dumb look.

"Knute," she began, "don't you listen to me no more a-tall? You know for truth I ain't feelin' well and want for Doc Sayres to come. Why do you keep bein' stubborn and won't go get him?"

"I ain't as stubborn as you are fightin' crazy mad for Doc Sayres. You act like an old hen 'fore layin' an egg. Nothing ailing you that gettin' out of doors won't remedy. C'mon, you kin go huntin' with Sol and me."

"Knute, you promise me you'll get to Gypsy quick now and get the doctor."

"Show me where's the achin'."

"It ain't an achin', it's a blamed swellin' and aggrivatin'."

"Let me feel where it is."

He went over to her. She took and guided his hand to her left side. Finding the spot, she pressed his blunt fingers down. Then he pushed them down himself, much harder. She cried out.

"Ain't nothin' bad," he said.

"God!" she yelled, rising up, beads of perspiration on her forehead merging and streaming in streaks down her face, "you're a skunky muck-hole minded hog! You shore need butcherin'. Ain't no feelin' or pity or understandin' in you."

She was sobbing. Tears fed into streams of perspiration. "Cut out that cryin' now. If'n you're so set on havin' Doc Sayres and messin' up my day over a bellyache, you kin have your durned own way. Seems how you're always havin' it. Shut up now and don't make no carryin'-ons. I'll get Sol to take me on into Gypsy. I'll get Doc Sayres, and there pure better be somethin' wrong with you."

Jenny slumped down on the bed. She had won. She felt wonderfully relaxed and happy, and charged with new strength. She hid her face in the pillow and cried. She tried to stop but the sobs came too fast and free. They swelled out of her like music. She had won Knute over to her way.

Belle, back at the door again, began to suck her breath in and out like a saw in pitch wood. Somewhere in the green rubble of the swamp a bullfrog rumbled up and down the scale. Then there began, almost inaudibly, a drumming sound carried on the wind, throbbing with a puff and chug, puff and chug. It came in-shore like a fog from somewhere up the river, an unseen broken wave of billowing sound. It was heard inside the shack.

Knute walked to the window and looked out, thumping the wall with his fist.

The sound of the motor became louder and more persistent. Belle was whining and yelping wildly now. She was dancing and pawing at Knute through the haze of the screen.

Knute left the window and strode across the room.

The sound of the motor outside sputtered its way up to the dock. It choked and strangled. There was a deep silence. Then Belle deserted the screen at a bound, barking and running and hollering down at the river's edge.

Kunte heard Sol calling his name.

"Keep quiet now, and I'll get back quick."

He lifted his rifle. She turned and looked at him with red eyes.

"You takin' Belle?"

"Yeah."

"But I'll be alone. You don't need Belle."

"She needs the runnin', Jenny. Going to town won't hurt her none. Do her good like it does all folks."

"You sure you ain't going huntin'?"

"I tol' you I was going for Doc Sayres."

He pushed open the door. Sol was calling in an anxious voice, and Belle was barking her head off.

"Be right back. Go on to sleep."

SYSTEM

To the body leaning
Cumbered, cumbersome,
On the slender pivot
Of equilibrium:

Learn disastrously
To repeal
Any law of being
For your weal.

Apprehend the value
Of dissonance,
Nor seek to break the new
Into its old components

(i. e., never
Seek to systemize
The eternal element
Of surprise).

Like a poem, learn
How to wear
Adjective adornments
(And let these be spare).

ELIZABETH MILLER

PROLOGUE

JANE BALCH

Here is the beginning cell,
an atom on the side where merging will take place
with any other cell.

This is the stir of wind
that starts the hurricane,
the grain of sand displaced
which brings a landslide thundering.
Here in this calculated spot
will be a hole
wherein will lie the piling of a bridge
immense . . . strong. Bridge of thought.

The echo has not come back from the noise.

The image has yet to be reflected.

It is the start.

The pencil has only touched the paper.

Here, found in words that smooth your head
and say, with a mother's lullaby softness, "listen",
are thoughts that grab you by the shoulders,
shaking you, shouting like a soap-box radical, "get it?"
There are all the inflections between the two.

The baton has made its downward swoop.

The "ing" has just died from the "good morning" of the sleeper,
newly awakened.

The day is beginning.

I

Slowly I walk in the sunshine,
watching the clouds gather
near the horizon,
feeling the world grow around me
till slanting grass shoots up like stalks of corn,
trees stoop from their looming,
and I am lost.

II

Pondering on my perSPecTive,

(which at the moment is only
a word distorted
in a fun-house mirror)
I sink to the ground beside the water,
for the world is a frenzied tumult of deformities.
People are "bewildered infants
trying to spell GOD with the wrong blocks."
What are people? Is there a God?
I shudder.
The lake does not answer. The wind hesitates.

III

I ponder vivid thoughts until they settle — evening snow.
The book is open.
Words that I read drag like monotonous scatterings of ink,
are slow drippings of a leaking faucet. They have no meaning.
Titles, abstract, leap up in steam. I cannot follow.
Again I turn to my thoughts, kicking turf with their restlessness.
The swirling giddy color fills the eye,
floods warmly through the socket, frenzy-yellow.
A black abyss of time and night and hunger pass.

IV

Emotion gives way like a spray of glass.

V

On looking up I greet a calculated, normal world.
My relationship with yesterday
and clouds
is once more sane.
This, the eager reality,
this, the awakening.

NIGHT ECHOES

FRANKLIN CIST

A MIDNIGHT jazzband at the Glen Island Casino, playing over a national hookup; local station WBAX on your car radio as you make an all-night drive to Pittsburgh; metropolitan WOR as you drive your girl home on a sodium-vapor lighted highway in Jersey; WHB, Kansas City, as negro couples dance to a second-hand radio in a drab dive on Cypress Street. Midnight on the Hudson, eleven o'clock on the Mississippi, eight o'clock on the Columbia River. A voice in the night, a culture, a civilization.

Jerome Arizona: KCRJ, unaffiliated, narrow-gauge, with power of one hundred watts as authorized by the Federal Communications Commission, playing phonograph records and advertising local merchants and local products, heard in the daytime for ninety miles or so—Prescott, Flagstaff, Phoenix, tuned in at night by a prowler car in Kansas or a radio amateur in Buenos Aires. It's small sphere expands with nightfall and the tired announcer, still local, still of, by, and for Jerome, is heard where Jerome is only a name, and to those who listen, the voice with its twang and its preoccupations is Jerome or Arizona or the United States. "We'll show Phoenix whose got the liveliest boosters of any city in Arizona. We'll get the state live stock show next year; trade's booming; boost Jerome, the fastest growing little city in Arizona." That's Jerome; ever heard of it?

WNEW, standing for Newark, serving New York and New Jersey, twenty-four hours a day, commercial and prosaic in the daytime, but at night another sphere grown big, another voice of the 600 voices that are America. The Milkman's Matinee at 3:30 A. M., jazz records announced in a tired, intimate voice; playing to Cafe Society and his date, parking on the way home from the Stork Club; playing to the all-night truck driver, moving perishable freight from Boston to Detroit; playing into the vast blue night, reflected from an invisible, impalpable ceiling, and hitting the earth again in Deluth or Manilla or Omaha.

WDBO, the voice of Orlando, Florida, pride of the cham-

ber of Commerce, Columbia affiliated, local minded, medium powered; a pair of winking towers in the night, spraying music to the four winds; steel masts, commonplace and ugly in the flatness of Dubsdread; a studio, converted suite in the Fort Gatlin Hotel; a man and a microphone; four letters on the books in Washington; a power of public opinion; a cosmic insect radiating it's personality from two red and white antennae; an every day miraculous thing, prosaic and romantic, powerful and clumsy, useful and abused. A commonplace to the people in the frame houses under the towers, a miracle to the poet, a mouth-piece to the politician, the friendliest station on your dial, 580 kilocycles.

NO SEQUEL

Look child! the haunter and the haunted
Are little shadows lightly drawn,
The patterned rays of sun that slanted
Angular through branch have gone,
The horn that singularly taunted
Is silent on the shaven lawn.
I have told you there was no need to gaze
In terror on that eyeless kindly face.

The fury of the chase abated,
The moisture on the forehead dried,
The thirst for preservation sated,
And preservation now denied,
You seem forever to have waited
The final swordplunge in the side.
Priest and priestess, male and female merge
To shadows with that sharp metallic surge.

ELIZABETH MILLER

PROFESSOR WHITSHAW AND THE 6:27 RUSH

RODERICK MACARTHUR

DOCTOR STOM settled in his seat: track 19, third car, fourth from the rear, on the left, by the window. He glanced at his watch. It was 6:24. He always came at 6:24 to avoid the 6:27 rush.

He opened the evening *Sun* and read the stock quotations. "American Can: 103½." A large advertisement at the corner of the page caught his eye. *Warning: Do Not Participate in the 6:27 New Canaan Rush This Evening. The Train Will Be Blown Up Before Reaching White Plains Transfer.*

The financial page was not very interesting. Dr. Stom was a sociologist and owned no stock. His glance strayed out of the train window into the station. There were large placards about the track displaying the same message as the advertisement: "Do Not Participate in the 6:27 Rush — The Train Leaving Track 19 Will Be Blown Up. Warning!" These would be seen by the commuters who saved the *Sun* for reading on the way home.

Dr. Stom looked at his watch again: 6:26. In another minute they would all come; a mass of dark gray suits. The clerk with the startled eyes, who got off at White Plains, would be late and take the third strap from the front on the right. The South Norwalk man with the pince nez, his black suit standing out from the more rakish dark grays of the others, would sit across the aisle two seats behind. The gold watch chain from Stamford who said two years ago, "American Tel and Tel can't stand another two per cent," would sit in the next seat ahead, on the aisle side.

Beside Dr. Stom would be the broker with the mustache, and they would again discuss the 6:27 rush until Greenwich where that gentleman got off. Dr. Stom would explain for the last time why the 6:27 rush must unfailingly occur at 6:27, because of the Sociological Absolute Predictability Equation.

At 6:27 the commuters came steadily toward the train, reading their papers. They paused, brow wrinkled, looked

up at the placards, then back to their papers, and passed on.

As soon as the train was under way, Dr. Stom realized that a disturbing element was present in car three. The broker with the mustache was sitting ahead where the Stamford watch chain should be. His eyes constantly left his *Sun*, shifted about the car, and returned to read. His mouth formed the words of the same stock quotation over and over again, as though he felt it contained some clue to his uneasiness. The Stamford watch chain was sitting ahead across the aisle, in the place usually distinguished by the South Norwalk black suit. He was slowly sliding from side to side in his seat, vainly attempting to adjust himself to his new environment. The black suit was hanging from a strap in the front of the car, with mouth closed tightly, and the startle-eyed clerk was not to be seen at all. Obviously there was an outsider somewhere in the car. Dr. Stom looked about. The outsider was there — beside him.

He watched Dr. Stom with alert gray eyes under curly silver brows. He wore a red rose boutonniere. The outsider smiled and spoke, "I beg your pardon, but why did you take this train tonight?"

"To get home, of course. You see, I live - - - "

"Didn't you see the notices that the train was going to be blown up?"

"Yes," said Dr. Stom. He placed his left hand flat upon the window sill. "But — ah — I don't think we've met. My name is Stom, Dr. Stom. I'm a sociologist."

The outsider smiled again. "How do you do, Dr. Stom. I'm Whitshaw, professor of mediæval literature. I wrote those notices."

"What notices?"

"The ad in the paper and the placards in the station saying this train would be blown up. I put them there."

"Oh, yes. What did you do that for?"

Professor Whitshaw looked beyond Dr. Stom out of the window. "To stop the six twenty-seven rush," he said.

"Stop the six twenty-seven rush? Why on earth should you want to do that?"

Professor Whitshaw looked back at Dr. Stom. His eyes opened very wide. "These commuters are not living the happy adventurous life that was meant for them. I merely tried to

supply the stimulus which would remind them to return to natural romanticism."

"And you tried to stop the six twenty-seven rush?"

"It's the least a man can do for the poor souls."

Dr. Stom straightened himself. An opportunity to explain the Absolute Predictability Equation had obviously presented itself.

"You may as well know now," he said, "that it is utterly impossible for you to do such a thing. Sociologists have known for years that all human activity necessarily results from past sociological conditions . . ."

"Nonsense," protested Professor Whitshaw, "man is charmingly unpredictable and powerfully passionate; motivated by inspiration, whim, and desire."

The train stopped at White Plains. The South Norwalk black suit, hanging from the strap, swayed forward in accordance with Newton's law of inertial mass. He looked up from his paper at the people leaving their seats. But the person in his usual seat did not move, so he looked back to the quotations.

Dr. Stom continued, ". . . and when there occurs a situation such as the six twenty-seven rush, where the resultant human activity of one day is, at the same time, the causal condition of the next day, you have a . . ."

"Scholastic humbug," muttered Professor Whitshaw. "You fancy, beautiful men are automatons."

"Then you have a sociological habit pattern, which is self-contained and consequently can never be broken."

The Stamford watch chain had given up sliding back and forth as an adjustment procedure, and was merely twisting slowly from side to side as he read.

"Otherwise," asked Dr. Stom, "how can you explain the fact that the six twenty-seven rush occurs invariably at six-twenty-seven?"

"Chance," said Professor Whitshaw.

"Chance?" said Dr. Stom.

"Yes." Said Prof. Whitshaw, "If I throw a pair of dice, I may get seven, ten times in a row. That doesn't mean I'll always get seven. The six twenty-seven rush will soon occur at some other time or not at all."

Dr. Stom slowly shook his head. "Sheer impossibility,

Professor. Quartzham says in his famous paper on population movements, that just as surely as the astronomer can plot the course of a star, so the—”

Professor Whitshaw struck the back of the seat ahead, such a blow as to cause the broker with the mustache to look up from his *Sun* and check his watch. His voice rose.

“I don’t care a rap for all your crew of Quartzams and Jetsams. The human will is not beaten so easily. I can—and I *will* stop the 6:27 rush.”

“When do you think you’ll perform this miracle?”

“In forty-eight hours!”

“You failed the last time.”

“But I’ll not fail the next!”

The watch chain paused in his reading to look out the window at a row of boxcars passing at the moment. “See that man?” cried Whitshaw, “He does not remain buried in stock quotations. His soul cries out, and he gazes into the world. He is not deaf to the romance of the boxcar. And he wears a gold watch chain.”

Dr. Stom pushed himself back in his seat with the hand on the window sill. “It may interest you to know,” he replied, “that this particular commuter always looks out of the window at this point in the trip home. It’s merely part of the habit pattern.”

The gold watch chain looked back to his evening *Sun*.

“By God, sir,” said Whitshaw, “that man will be one of those who will *not* engage in the 6:27 rush within forty-eight hours!”

Stom relaxed his push on the window sill. “Really, professor, such spirit in the wake of your last defeat is to be admired, but such unreasoning.”

The professor appeared to subside. His curly eyebrows moved up to his curly hair. He picked a bit of thread from his trousers. “Since this equation of yours is infallible, perhaps a little wager would be in order. Say ten thousand dollars, just for the sport of the thing.”

“I don’t care for sport,” answered Dr. Stom. “It would be no sport, anyway. It would be philanthropy. I don’t need it, thank you. Besides, this is above mere wagers. I am defending the science of sociology itself.”

“And I, sir, am defending the divine nature of man.”

The next day at 6:24, Dr. Stom approached the entrance to track nineteen. As he walked ahead, reading the *Sun*, he suddenly found himself confronted with a large gate of bolted steel plates. Upon making sure that the thing was impassable, the doctor looked back at his paper, and turned the page.

"Hello, Dr. Stom!" Professor Whitshaw's voice rang through the station. "I've stopped it this time, haven't I?"

Stom looked up. "Oh, hello, Whitshaw. Why don't they open this infernal thing?"

Professor Whitshaw smiled. "Why, I put that barricade up. How do you like it?" He walked over to the gate and patted the steel plates. "She's certainly a strong enough stimulus to turn any commuter to the happy way."

"You put this up? But how? — why?"

"I simply bought a pair of overalls and went to work. Spent the whole afternoon at it. Remember you said it was impossible to stop the 6:27 rush?"

"Oh, it is. Absolutely impossible. You see, Quartzham says—"

Whitshaw drew him aside. "You shall see," he said. "Here they come now."

The commuters came toward the barrier, reading their papers. The Stamford gold watch chain was among the first to reach it. He paused, looked up, studied it thoughtfully, let go of his paper with one hand and touched the gate. Then he withdrew the hand, found his place again and resumed his reading. Many others, without noticing him, silently did the same. The black suit that got off at South Norwalk, was with a second group which pulled up behind the first. Finding further progress impossible, he merely stood without looking up and shifted his weight from one foot to the other. More dark gray suits pulled up and began to mill about, reading their papers. Finally the startle-eyed clerk arrived at the outer fringe of the crowd. In another minute the train would be gone and the rush would be stopped. The broker with the mustache was in the middle. He looked at his watch, carefully, folded his paper, thrust it into his pocket and began to move forward. Others did the same.

The great gate began to bend. Bolts snapped with a loud crack. Steel plates ripped in two. And with a tremendous crash, the whole structure caved in toward the waiting train.

Dr. Stom took his place in car three. Professor Whitshaw sat beside him and studied the palms of his hands.

"Well," Dr. Stom said, "I hope you are satisfied now that the Absolute Predictability Equation is, by definition, absolute. The rush is part of a closed order and no power under heaven can change it."

Professor Whitshaw was still watching his hands. "There must be a way . . . perhaps . . . these poor people . . . I've got to do it . . ."

Stom ignored his musings. "You've failed for good," he said. "Naturally! I'm writing a commentary on Quartzam for the *Social Science Quarterly* and shall certainly mention this mad experiment of yours."

The professor sat bolt upright and turned on Stom. "You, sir," he said, "you think men are not beautiful creatures who crave a romantic existence. I'll show you the human soul can stand only so much. Then it turns in it's ways. By God, sir, the 6:27 rush shall be stopped! I have twenty-four more hours to do it, and one last trump card to play."

When Dr. Stom took his old seat in car three at 6:24 the next day, he was relieved to find no warning posters, no iron gates, nor anything unusual in the station. He settled in his seat and unfolded the evening *Sun*. He looked at his watch—6:26. Whitshaw had but one more minute to prove that fantastic theory, to defeat him, Dr. Stom, to discredit the Science of Sociology, and to free the commuters from those imaginary chains of enslavement. How could the fellow expect to pit a blur of impassioned thinking against the factual, absolute knowledge of him, Dr. Stom, who was considered an authority on Quartzam and wrote his Ph. D., thesis on the Absolute Predictability Equation? How could the professor believe that ordinary men were not ordinary men at all, but poets or artists or something, when they are actually ordinary men?

Last evening Whitshaw seemed insanely determined to stop the inevitable 6:27 rush, but reflection in the meantime had probably shown him the impossibility of his mad objective. Still, the man was obviously demented, else why should he try to interfere with the life of the commuter at all? And he spoke of a last trump card. His obsession might well lead to extreme measures. However, the crusading zeal of the mad-

man is soon dissipated. The professor might have got hold of one of Quartzam's books, seen the error of his ways, and returned to his classroom. Yes, that was it. The good professor's passionate desire for truth had led him to it. He had given up in defeat. That explained the absence of any paraphernalia for stopping the rush.

Dr. Stom held his paper with his right hand, placed the other ahead of him palm down on the window sill, and pushed slightly. The corners of his mouth drew up, but it did not open. He looked out of the window.

At 6:27 the commuters came in a dark gray wave toward the waiting train. The glitter of the Stamford gold watch chain was clearly visible in the front row.

Suddenly a thunderous rattle began in car four behind, and there were streaks of light in the air.

The watch chain stopped and began to slump where he stood. The front of his dark gray suit slowly turned a dirty red. Many others fell on their faces around him. The deafening staccato continued. A machine gun was mowing down the commuters as they came.

The gold watch chain grasped his rolled newspaper in a livid white hand and stumbled into the car. Still the wave came forward. The fallen ones began to pick themselves up. The South Norwalk man, his black suit contrasting sharply with his bright, bloody shirt, was weaving toward the train with the next bunch of wounded. As he got within six yards of his goal, another burst of bullets caught him, and he fell and lay still. Then he slowly twisted his head so as to see his wrist watch, painfully pushed himself from the floor, staggered into the car and, flopped down, across the aisle two seats ahead of Dr. Stom. Blood ran down inside his sleeve and dripped from his fingers as he fumbled in the pages of the *Sun* for the closing quotation on American Rolling Mills.

The machine gun stopped, but many of the fallen, having just glanced at their watches, were still groping their way toward the car. The Greenwich broker, with one leg shot away, face set, crawled on hands and knees to his old seat, climbed upon it, glanced at his watch, and proceeded to unfold his paper.

The White Plains clerk arrived and looked on, terror-stricken. He twisted as if to turn and go back, but his feet

remained in the same spot. Finally, with eyes wide and straight ahead, he walked into the car just behind the last of the wounded.

Dr. Stom folded his paper and stepped outside. There was Professor Whitshaw standing with his shoulders stooped, hands hanging limply at his sides. His face was deeply lined and shone with tears. His eyes stared blankly ahead through pools of water. He drew up a hand and sobbed into it.

"I stopped as soon as I saw it was no use, but the poor sheep never—" There was a whir of electric motors and the commuters' train to New Canaan sped out of the station with its bloody cargo. The two men were left alone beside track 19.

Professor Whitshaw dropped his hand and stared after the train. "My God," he said.

Dr. Stom glanced at his watch. "Six thirty. Great Scott! I've missed my train."

MATRIX

Then, propose another love!
The evanescent mold
Of normalcy has changed before,
Surely it will hold

Some other metal stuff.
The worn edges rust
With too much mixing of
Intelligence and lust

(Sorry products of a frame
Fraught so with care).
Propose another love, then,
Clean the corners there

And burn the lesser oil
Until there is no token
Of the other casting,
Of the heart, broken.

PEGGY HUDGINGS

DIALOGUE

"But the avalanche will come that crushed
Through heat we wandered
Seared but shining
Through
Through earth undimmed.
But made bold
Not by heat or cold.
And with these around us
And though strict shores bound us
Peace found us, found us.

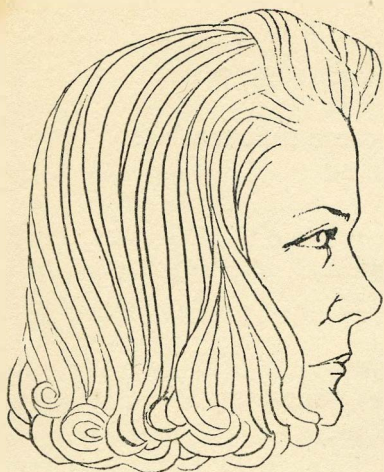
"Who dares find peace
In days like these?
For we are such
As these cannot touch.
The love of freedom frees us.

"For a while;
But the avalanche will come that crushed
And broke our brotherhood.

"Then we will smile
And say: We wandered through
A burning wood,
Seared but shining once
Through a burning wood."

ELIZABETH MILLER

FAMILY PORTRAIT



Sally McCaslin

SOUTHERN as grits 'n' gravy, Sally McCaslin was born and just grewed in Trenton Tennessee, where she came to know and love the people of the hills. A quiet, introspective child, she went thru school saying no more than was necessary, but remembering everything. Finishing high school in 1938, she went to seek her fortune in Tampa, Florida, at that University.

Forced into taking a creative writing course, she made the best of it, and wrote her

first short story, "*Come Seven*," which consequently won her many, many dollars, a scholarship to Rollins and a summer job with the same.

Coming to Rollins in 1939, she promptly wrote four more short stories: "*Summer Night*," "*The Lunch*," "*The Odds*" and "*Pink and Trimmed in White*," three of which have appeared in the *Flamingo*. All of them deal with her hill people, showing an especial understanding of the child mind.

Dark, attractive, Sally insists she has no driving ambition, and has trouble making people believe this. Although interested in every subject but geometry, she admits a strong partiality for English.

Her summers are divided into modeling clothes, writing feature articles for the newspapers, and, of course, her own writing. She dislikes coat hangers, people's noses, patriotism, muscle-bound women. Likes dogs, books, window shopping, colored babies. And she isn't too quiet anymore, either.

