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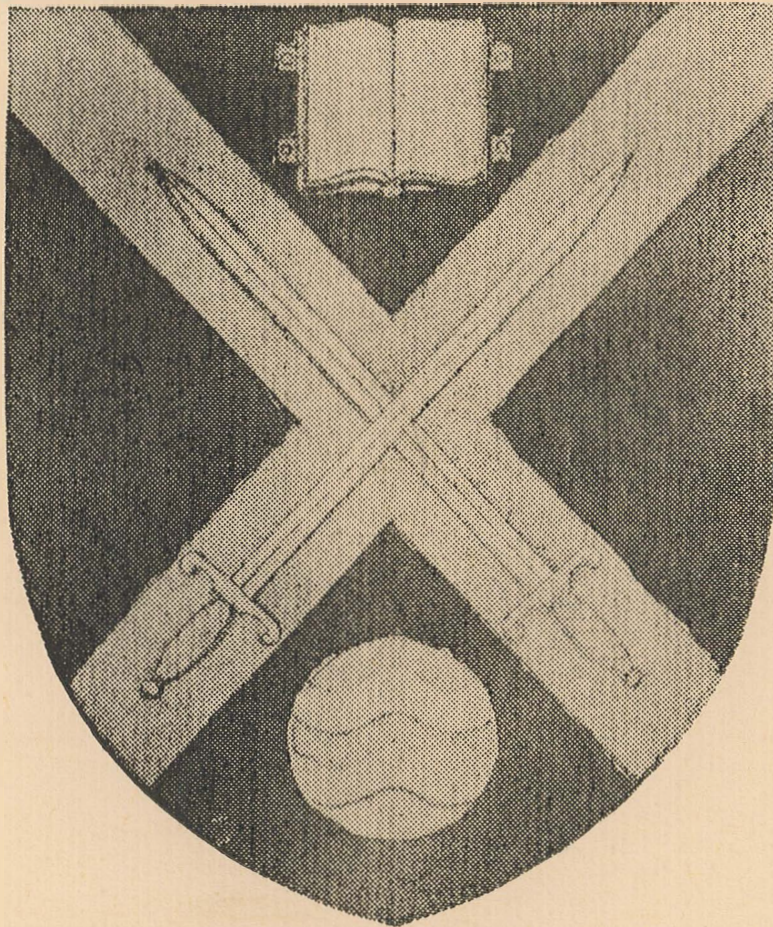


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# THE FLAMINGO

FEBRUARY, 1943



ROLLINS COLLEGE  
Winter Park, Florida

# ROLLINS FLAMINGO

ROLLINS COLLEGE

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"HUSH Yo' MOUTH, HONEY. WE'RE ALL BLACK HERE."

## And Someone Laughed

E. BROWN

SHE HAD stood at the gate for so long that her legs were beginning to tire, and the blue flowers she had picked as a present for her mother were wilting in her small, hot hands.

The poplars had seemed to march with her, all the way from the big house down to the gate, but now they stood still and straight, waiting. Their leaves, pointed and folded together as if they were saying their prayers, were all dry and brown from the hot summer sun.

The gate, to Ellen, was a magic place. It was hidden from the house by the hump of a little hill, and the driveway rolled down the hill to reach it, curling like a big S. By standing on tiptoe she could see through the bars how the road outside went on and on crookedly, to Nowhere. Down this road her mother would come home. She would come driving in a beautiful carriage. She would hold a lace parasol over her head to keep the sun off her shiny light hair. When she saw Ellen she would wave and smile. Then the coachman would jump down from the box. He would open the gate and Ellen would run out into the road laughing. They would drive away together and Papa and Miss Beck would be left alone. Ellen felt sorry for Papa left with Miss Beck in the big old house with the high walls shutting it in. Maybe they would come back and save him later on.

Miss Beck had a cross, fuzzy voice and a smile like a bad smell. Her eyes were so cold they made you shiver all over the way a snake did. She wore a long black dress that hissed when she walked. When Ellen tiptoed into the library to kiss her father goodnight, Miss Beck always went too.

"You mustn't stay long Ellen," she would say. "You mustn't upset your father." So

Ellen would tiptoe out again. Papa hardly seemed to know she was there.

"Oh, Mummy," Ellen whispered to the gatepost, "please come."

"Whatever are you doing here, child? I've been looking everywhere for you. As if I didn't have enough to do without your running away and hiding."

"I wasn't—" Ellen began.

"Come now, Ellen. Throw those nasty blue things away. We're going up to the house and get ready for supper."

Ellen stooped and laid the flowers tenderly in the shade. As she followed Miss Beck to the house she hung her head and dragged her feet on the ground.

"Hurry up, Ellen. You shuffle your feet just like a nigger. One would think you were Mandy's baby, not a nice little white girl."

At the words something inside Ellen hurt. If she were Mandy's baby maybe that was why Mummy had gone away and Papa was so queer. Maybe it was all her fault.

"Mandy's black," she said pointedly. "And she's the cook."

She followed Miss Beck up to the nursery in silence. She held her head perfectly still while curls were made around a big stick and a blue ribbon tied on tightly. Ellen's hair was dark and stringy. Her skin was sallow and her grey eyes were much too big for her face. Thinking how ugly the child was Miss Beck gave the ribbon an extra tug. Then she oozed her tongue out between her thin lips and smiled.

"Now then," she said complacently. "You look more like a lady. You're going on a visit Ellen."

"Where?"

"To see your Cousin Matilda in Richmond."



What do you think of that?"

Ellen swallowed.

"Are you going too?"

"No indeed. You're a big girl now and you can take care of yourself. Miss Beck's not going with you. She's going to stay right here and take care of your Papa. Isn't that nice?"

Ellen shook her head.

"You're not the one. Mummy's the one."

"What on earth are you talking about, child?"

"To take care of Papa," Ellen explained. "And me too."

"Stop your nonsense," Miss Beck said sharply. "It's time for supper."

"I don't want no supper," Ellen said. "I don't want to go way. I got to go back to the gate and meet her. She said so."

"Who said what?" Miss Beck asked.

"Mummy," Ellen explained patiently. "She told me to wait."

Miss Beck opened her mouth wide. Way at the back of it a little red thing was dancing up and down. Ellen watched it, fascinated.

"Your mother never told you any such thing," she said at last. "Your mother's dead. Do you know what that means?"

"No," Ellen said. She didn't know why but she was scared.

"I'll tell you what it means," Miss Beck said, and she was smiling. "It means she's gone away for good. She'll never come back any more."

"She will, too," Ellen cried. "I talked to her down at the gate and she *will* come back. She *told* me. She may be there right now this minute."

"You're a liar," Miss Beck said coldly, "a nasty little liar. I'm going to lock you up in the cupboard and let you think it over. You'll stay there until you learn to tell the truth."

Ellen darted toward the door, but she wasn't quick enough. The cupboard was

drafty, dark and narrow. The clothes, strung on hooks like limp ghosts, swished softly to and fro above her. The child crouched carefully on the floor among the shoes. She was pretending they were people. The shoe that was Miss Beck she squeezed tighter and tighter until it squeaked.

"I'm going to kill Miss Beck," she sang softly to the shoe.

"I'm going to kill her." And so she fell asleep.

It was Mandy who came later to unlock the cupboard. As she looked down at the sleeping child her kind old eyes were wet.

"Poor little thing," she murmured. "She ain't got nobody to keer what becomes on her." She picked her up, as though she were a doll, and carried her downstairs to the carriage that was waiting to take her away. Ellen opened her eyes and murmured sleepily:

"Am I your baby, Mandy?"

"Cose you is honey, my little white lamb chile."

She never saw Mandy again.

\* \* \* \*

Cousin Matilda's house was huge and dark. The ceilings were almost as high as the sky. The rooms were big and cold with great, tall, spotted mirrors, enormous fourposted beds, and large, marble-topped tables. On the tables were many little china figures, shepherds and ladies, and monkeys with long tails. Nobody was allowed to touch them.

Cousin Matilda was a tiny woman to live in so big a house. She looked like a dwarf. She wore her hair in a flat pancake on top of her head. It was white hair and so thin that the pink skin showed through underneath. There was more pink than white. On her chin were two long whiskers that tickled when she kissed you. The whiskers made Ellen go hot and cold with terror. They seemed to stab right into her like little black pins.

In the living room was a grand piano. It was locked. Sometimes Cousin Matilda would open it and run her fingers over the keys, and

then a magic would come into the sad, dark room. It made Ellen want to dance.

"You mustn't touch the piano, dear," Cousin Matilda said. "You might break it." But sometimes, when she was sure no one was near, Ellen would tiptoe into the living room and talk to the piano, and touch it.

On the walls of this room were many portraits. They were The Family. They were sacred. Their round, painted eyes looked down at you as if nothing mattered to them any more. Ellen used to try to outstare them at first, but finally she gave that up. Not much seemed to matter to Cousin Matilda, either. Ellen never saw her except at meals.

They ate these in a big dining room with a long table in the middle. She could scarcely see her cousin at the other end of the table because of the centerpiece between them. It was all grey, spidery grass that swept out like a fan.

"Be careful of the china, dear," Cousin Matilda would say. "Your great uncle William brought these plates all the way from London, and he prized them highly."

"Yes, Ma'm, I will," Ellen would answer. She didn't know how to cut up her meat without, perhaps, hurting the china, so she left it untouched.

On the wall of the dining room was a picture of a naked lady lying on a rug. It fascinated Ellen because she liked to go without clothes herself. But once when she'd been standing naked, looking at herself in the mirror at home, Miss Beck had come in and caught her. Ellen had been so scared she'd popped into the dirty clothes basket and Miss Beck had said that was just where such a bad shameless girl belonged. Looking at the picture Ellen decided there must be something wrong with her body. Perhaps it was too flat on top. Nobody seemed to mind her legs being crooked because they were allowed to show. Once Cousin Matilda noticed her looking at the picture and Ellen blushed and almost dropped her fork.

"That's a very fine reproduction," Cousin

Matilda said. "Your great uncle William was always so fond of the Arts."

Ellen became used to the new life, to the big dark rooms inside and the dirty cobblestone streets outside, to the black people living all around them. Cousin Matilda said that she would never think of moving, even though this section of the town had deteriorated, and Ellen smiled politely because she didn't know what that meant.

"Your great uncle William built this house when Vine Street was the height of fashion," Cousin Matilda said. "He would be appalled if he could see it now."

"Yes, Ma'm," Ellen said.

"Always remember child," Cousin Matilda went on irrelevantly, "that though you may be poor, you are a lady."

"Oh," Ellen said.

"Yes indeed," Cousin Matilda said, taking out a handkerchief and dabbing at her eyes.

"My dear father," she looked at Ellen reproachfully, "and *your* great uncle William," she dried her eyes triumphantly, "was the President of a College." Her voice fell down to a whisper.

Ellen said nothing.

Sometimes Tom the butler, took her out walking. He was all black except for the palms of his hands and these were a purply pink, like the inside of a brown rabbit's ear. His name was Tom, after Thomas Jefferson.

"Do you mind being black, Tom?" Ellen asked him once.

"Bless you, no, honey," Tom said. "I've been black all my life. I reckon de good Lord's got His own plans about me."

"And me too, Tom?"

Tom smiled.

"When we git up to Hebbin, honey, us'll both find our own wings like de good Lord planned."

Ellen loved Tom. When he was too busy to take her walking she would sit out on a little balcony above the street. Sometimes a hurdy-gurdy man came by with a real live



monkey on his shoulder. Under its gay, belled cap, the monkey's face looked so sad she wished she could tell it how much she loved it. She wished she could give it a penny.

One day when she was sitting on the balcony a little black girl came up and spoke. Her hair was kinky and corkscrewed all over her head in tiny question marks. She had a big hole in her stocking. She was eating an ice cream cone which dripped down her dress. She held it up toward Ellen.

"Hello," she said. "Wanna bite?"

Then she darted quickly out of reach, hopping up and down on one foot and giggling.

"Come and git it then. Come and git it."

Ellen climbed over the balcony and chased her down the street and up the alley. When she finally caught her they scuffled and the little black girl dropped her cone. It fell into a puddle, the cream oozing out of it.

"I'm sorry," Ellen said, stupidly.

"I don't keer," the black child said proudly.

"My pappy kin git me another one any ole time."

"You mean any time at *all*?"

"Sure."

There was a long pause.

"What's your name?" her new friend asked.

"Mine's Ellen. What's yours?"

"I'se called Viola Hallelujah."

"That's pretty. Wish I had a name like that."

"I've gotta puppy," Viola said. "Wanna see him?"

"Oh yes," Ellen said, happily. "What's *his* name?"

"It's a she," Viola said. "She's named Trouble after a racehorse."

"Let's go see her."

Viola lived in a funny, crooked cabin hugged up close to a big tree. It seemed funny to see a tree growing right in town. The front yard was tiny but pretty. A path of shells ran from the sidewalk to the steps and

there were red and blue flowers on either side of it. Around the yard was a white painted fence with a real gate in the middle. A little bell rang when they opened the gate and the puppy came out from under the house and ran toward them, falling over her front paws, wagging her tail and barking with a high shrill happy bark. She was a yellow puppy with long floppy ears.

"Ain't she cute?" Viola asked. "We keep her shet up in this yard so as she don't run off."

The door of the house opened abruptly and Viola's pappy came out. He was a large, cross-looking man the color of chocolate. He reeled as he came down the steps, and he smelled queer. He cuffed the puppy and sent it howling under the porch. Then he turned to Viola.

"What you doin', bringin' home white trash?"

Viola rolled her eyes.

The big man looked at Ellen. Then a sort of doubt came into his face.

"Say, is you white or colored? Mighty dark for white trash. You come here and let me look at you." He smiled.

Ellen pushed open the gate and ran blindly. Once she fell but she picked herself up and ran on. She never quite knew how she found her way home. She crept into the house and up the stairs. Cousin Matilda's room was at the top of the stairs and the door was open. Ellen heard voices.

"She must be told," Cousin Matilda was saying. "And I suppose I must get her a black dress for the funeral."

Then Tom spoke.

"Don't take her, Miss Tillie. And please don't put no black on her. Jest let her stay here and we won't never say nothing about it."

"She'll have to know some time."

"Yes Ma'm," Tom said. "But let her grow up a little first."

Ellen crept up the stairs to her own room. Every day after that she examined herself in

the mirror to see if she was getting darker but nothing showed. Maybe, she thought, if she washed a lot she could keep the black from coming out. She washed every morning and every night, carefully and thoroughly. The bathroom was at the back of the house at the end of a long hall. It was dark in the hall even in the daytime, and at night, with the smallness of the candle and the bigness of her shadow rushing along the wall beside her, she was afraid and she ran.

One night she heard music coming from the house across the alley. She jumped out of the tub and opened the window to listen.

The negroes were having a party. The rich, dark notes of their laughter floated over to Ellen on the warm summer air. It was warm, thick, juicy laughter that struck all through her body, teasing her. She could see the colored people quite clearly, the women in gaily colored dresses and the men in black suits with white at the front and long tails in back. One woman wore a bright yellow dress and she had a big red flower in her hair. Her skin was the color of rye bread and her hair was black and slick against it. She smiled and laughed all the time, as if she were happy.

Ellen stood still, watching. She forgot to be afraid. She was thinking that maybe it wasn't so bad to be colored. Maybe it was good. Tom was good. He was much gooder than Cousin Matilda or Miss Beck though not quite so good as mummy, but it was better not to think about *her*. She guessed Miss Beck was right when she said she was gone. And Papa too? And Papa too. The words made a little tune in her mind.

Ellen took the candle and walked back through the long hall. Cousin Matilda's door was closed. She crept past it carefully, a step at a time and down the stairs. Once a step squeaked and she blew out the candle and waited, trembling. But the quick, choky little grunts that meant Cousin Matilda was asleep never stopped. Ellen felt her way down the rest of the stairs, holding on to the bannister. In the hall she bumped into some-

thing big and black. She knew it was only a table in the daytime but the bump scared her. The heavy front door was bolted and it took her a long time to get it open. She had to stand on tiptoe to turn the handle. She pushed the door wide and slipped out. She tried to close it softly but it got away and made a loud fierce bang behind her. She ran down the brown stone steps and around the corner.

There was only one lamp lit in the street. The gas made a little yellow tongue inside the glass, licking at the glass as if it were trying to get out. The night smelled soft and blue. Maybe it was lilacs or maybe it was stars, only stars were too far away. Something brushed against her leg and she jumped. But it was only a cat. It looked up at her and mewed. Then it ran away, a black streak with its tail straight out behind it. Ellen ran, too. When she reached the corner, she stopped still and put only her head around it. The party house was right there, dancing with light. The front door was open and the music came out of it loud and gay. She heard a sound behind her, the clomp of shoes on cobbles coming fast. She ran around the corner and into the house.

There were a lot of people. There was a sweet, damp smell. The beat of the drums, which she had never heard so close before, sounded terribly loud as if something awful were going to happen. Her heart beat, keeping time with the drums. Her hands were wet and she rolled them up into a little ball. Suddenly she saw the lady in the yellow dress, all the way across the floor. She started walking toward her. The drums stopped. The lady in the yellow dress was talking to a man, but when she saw Ellen she stopped talking and stared.

"Lawdy be! A white chile."

"What's she doin' here, anyway?"

"Her hair's all wet and she ain't nothin' on but pajamas."

All Ellen could see was the yellow dress. The lady was bending over her. She smelled like anything but roses.



"What you doin' here, little white girl? Is you lost, honey? Jes' tell Mamie Rose."

Ellen opened her mouth. Then she shut it again as though the words wouldn't come out. She began to cry. She made no noise crying, but the tears rushed out of her eyes as if they had been held back so long that it hurt them now to fall.

"Don't be skeered, honey," said Mamie Rose. People began crowding round them. Ellen's hand, which had been clenched, now unclenched itself and reached out to touch the yellow dress.

"Pretty," she said.

Mamie Rose kept on talking all the time.

"Don't you worry none, baby. We'll find out where you belong at an take you home, see? Somebody go git some ice cream for this young lady. Go on. Don't push round. You jes' skeer her. She's a little lost white chile."

Then Ellen found words.

"I'm not lost," she said. "And I'm not a white chile neither. I'm Mandy's baby and

I'm black."

"Hush your mouth, honey," said Mamie Rose. "We'se *all* black here."

And then the ice cream came. It was good. Mamie Rose was good. Tom was good.

It was at this juncture that Tom emerged from the privacy of the gentlemen's lavatory. When he saw the white child sitting on Mamie Rose's lap, he did not at first recognize her as his own little Miss Ellen. She looked strange. Her cheeks were flushed as though with fever. Her chin was streaked with chocolate ice cream. And in a high, clear treble, risen almost to the pitch of bird-scream, she was announcing,

"Oh no, I'm *not* a nice little white gal. I'se black, see? Black, clack, clack. We'se *all* black here."

And because they were all black there, there was a moment's hush while the child's words went home among them like little dark ghosts seeking a home. But pretty soon the music played again. And someone laughed.

### AUTUMN STEED

I feel the damp cool air on my face,  
And am for an instant  
Transformed  
Into a black stallion  
Racing the wind over the hill.  
I pause  
Blocking the leaden sky,  
My hooves pawing the crest.  
I rear,  
My nostrils scenting snow,  
And then,  
Turn to gallop before the blast  
That is surging winter onward.

EUGENIE VAN DE WATER.

## First Dance On Board

By VIRGINIA ARGABRITE

I was afraid, John; you didn't know, but I was. When I saw you coming toward me a phantom of fear and almost hatred clutched at my heart. I wanted to turn and run back to the powder room, re-comb my hair and re-touch my lip-stick, smile sweetly at the matron and pretend to her that I was experienced and in for a good time, but I didn't run. . . . I watched Betty Jayn take her boy's arm with all the assurance and aloofness imaginable. That is the way I wanted to act too, but I just stood there, not listening to what you were saying and hating myself for even having to tell you my name. My voice sounded so weak and young that I hardly recognized it. Your hand touched my elbow and we silently made our way through the crowd of midshipmen to the rows of folding chairs.

When we sat down I looked at you and felt horribly self-conscious and embarrassed. I was glad I had worn my green dress, it made my eyes look green. You weren't handsome enough to stagger me, but I was glad you were my date. You had a funny lock of hair which hung damp over your forehead and I wanted to push it back, but I didn't. Your eyes were very blue, like the china dishes mother has at home. I liked them, your eyes I mean. Your face reminded me of the portrait of Jackson which hung in our history classroom, so stern and sinister—but your mouth gave you away, John, it was tender like a woman's. I wondered if you tried to set it in such a straight line so it wouldn't look so feminine or if you ever paid any attention to little things like that? You smiled at me and asked me to dance. I felt very awkward in your arms because you were so big, but I wasn't afraid any more. I liked you, John.

When the music stopped we walked out on

the ship's deck. The last shadows of twilight hung over the river and somehow the Hudson looked dark and foreboding. We talked about the orange peels in the water, and you showed me the boats you had to row when you went on a cruise. Then you showed me the blisters in the palms of your hands. I was going to tell you about the time when I was little and got a blister from roller skating and it got infected, but just then a bugle blew and we all stood at attention while they lowered the flag. You turned your back to me then John, but I didn't mind. I watched the flag and wondered if my make-up was streaked where I had been so hot.

When you turned around, John, I felt something I had never known before. I had read about it in books, seen it in movies, but it was like a curtain rising on a different scene of a play. A play at which many times I had been the audience, but never the leading lady.

They were selling cokes down on the lower platform and we went down to buy some. Do you remember how my heels caught in the tiny bumps on the gang-plank. And how you had to take my arm to keep me from falling? You probably don't, but I wished the whole platform had had bumps on it so you wouldn't take your arm away.

We got our cokes and watched a foreign looking man play "Anchors Aweigh" on an accordian, then we sat down on the bumper of a car and sipped, watching the river. It was a nice night—the damp air had long since taken all the curl out of my hair, but I didn't mind because you didn't seem to notice.

I can't remember that we talked. Conversation seemed unnecessary. We sat for a long time and watched the people on the boat and listened to the music from inside, then you flicked your cigarette into the water and gath-





CONVERSATION SEEMS UNNECESSARY

ered up the empty bottles. We went back on board.

It was sticky and hot inside the gym which served as a dance hall, but you braved it for quite awhile, then I had a hunch that you didn't like to dance and shyly suggested the stern of the boat. You looked relieved and as though like you liked me a little.

We found two barrels painted grey and sat down on them. After you lit your cigarette you looked at me for a long time. I didn't think about my straight hair or paintless mouth, I only thought how wonderful you looked sitting there in your khaki uniform with the wind rumpling your hair. You started to say something but changed your mind.

We watched the little red and green stars of an airplane in the sky, and saw a beam of light from the Jersey side pick it out of the dark and follow its course across the night. Then I asked you what time it was, that was cruel, like hissing beside a drowsy cat. You looked at me as if you wondered if I were

bored. I wanted to say something then, something we both would remember, but I couldn't think and probably you wouldn't have remembered anyway.

We walked down the gang-plank, but this time you didn't take your hand away from my arm and I felt all warm inside like I do when mother gives me a hot toddy. I found the car I had come in, the chaperon was already there. You shook hands with me and thanked me for a "swell time," then you smiled and went away quickly.

I was glad I hadn't gone back to the powder room, John, glad I had worn my green dress and glad I had met you,—very glad I had met you!

Somehow I think I grew up at that dance with you. I learned how to talk without speaking, to feel without really feeling and for the first time to know what liking someone really means. I knew there had never been anyone like you before, but I pray each night that there will be again.

1943

Fight today  
For fight we must.  
Flight today  
Is flight from trust.

Foe advances,  
We laugh out loud.  
Foe advances,  
Where our planes crowd.

So cease, vain tears,  
We're marching on;  
For future years,  
Our babes be born.

Fight today  
For fight we must.  
Flight today  
Is flight from trust.

JANE WELSH.



# Sawdust Steak, Well Done

By BEN BRIGGS

WHEN they cut down the old pine tree nowadays, they may send it to your meat-market. Fantastic — you say? Not at all. We learn that German scientists have made proteins from sawdust. Protein is the active ingredient of a beefsteak, and Nazi factories are turning out enough of this substitute for their entire army, according to reliable reports. The Allies regret this discovery because it will undoubtedly prolong the war.

Sorrow for this immediate consequence can be justified, but the hurt is not too great. This second world conflagration may go on for another five years, yet anthropologists tell us that men have inhabited this planet for a thousand centuries. An eight year war is scarcely a detail.

So we may add this discovery to the already amazing list of synthetics that will contribute to the comfort and happiness of men in all future time when Hitler is a legend like Alexander and Ghengis Khan. A few students of history may know that Reichsmarshal Goering undertook a program of reforestation to help provide war materials for—let me see—that was the Second World War.

Wood is fast disappearing from its unspectacular role of the past as a fuel or a building material. Now it goes into the maw of the organic chemist's test tube to emerge in forms that seem incredible to the layman. Treat it with hydrochloric acid in just the right way, and your wood has suddenly become snow-white crystals of sugar. Or maneuver its molecules in another direction and it is transformed into cattle feed. A yeast enzyme and wood yield beverages fit for Fifth Avenue's most elite cocktail lounge. Yeast is also responsible for the protein synthesis which has already been mentioned.

More familiar to Americans is their tooth-brush handle, camera film, cellophane wrapper, and automobile finish that was wood-pecker bait before the chemist came along with retort, test tube, and boundless imagination. Just stir in water, sulphur, and air. Dissolve the result in ether and alcohol. Then brush your teeth at least twice each day. A man with no scientific training whatsoever was looking for a way to make billiard balls without ivory when he hit upon the basis of this process. Now the celluloid industry is far more important than all the elephants in Africa.

Theoretically, almost every known organic compound can be made from the elements contained in wood—carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. The only limiting factor is the ability of the chemist to string the atoms together in just the right way. And arrangement is important. Methyl ether, a poison, and alcohol, a much more pleasant poison, have exactly the same number and kind of component atoms. The organic chemist is surrounded by thousands of reactions that may be used for making different combinations. Some of these methods are too expensive or difficult to be practical, but almost every day sees the addition of a new process. And the chemist still has several tricks to learn from nature. He has never hooked rubber molecules together in the fashion of the rubber tree. Consequently, synthetic rubber is a material quite unrelated to the natural substance.

Responsibility for recent advancement in chemistry rests in large part on the major laboratories of the world. The plodding attic chemist struggling alone on the trail of knowledge is running a poor second to the modern research scientist surrounded by the finest equipment that can be had. In Germany,

these research institutions were quick to realize the necessity for making their country self-sufficient. What was more logical than that they should turn to the forests for the raw materials of their amazing chemical industry? Wood is a natural resource that cannot be exhausted because more can always be grown. War and propaganda hide the extent to which they have succeeded in this incredible ersatz, but certain it is that failure has not given the Nazis material for three years of conflict.

Likewise, we do not know yet of the victories of American researchers in this time of war. One of the spoils of our global struggle will be new, cheaper, and better products that have already begun to flow from our retorts. And we may rest assured that our chemists are not overlooking wood in their quest. Perhaps these processes will do much to relieve

the economic disruption that will follow the furling of the world's battle flags.

Finally, we may consider the future of wood synthesis in industry. With the gradual and inevitable exhaustion of petroleum new fuels must and will be found. New sources must be sought for the dyes, plastics, and rubber that are now made from the wastes of oil refineries. What more likely raw material could be investigated than our forests which contain the proper elements—often in fortunate arrangements? The time may not be far off when we shall see a remarkable extension of reforestation into one of our leading industries. Such may be the most striking victory to date for the organic chemist—a victory far more enduring than any by Marshal Rommel or General Alexander.

THE END

## SONG OF LITTLE THINGS

And I shall make a tiny song,  
Of the little things, that we  
Of narrow minds and vainful pleasure  
Seeing, do not know we see.

The curving handle of a cup,  
The blue in candle light,  
The crispy tops of rich brown rolls,  
The octagon mystery of a kite.

Mossy tendrils that caress a wall,  
The yellow on a bumble bee.  
Light of day and dark of night.  
These things we do not know we see.

Not as the heart could really see,  
Only the eye and rambling mind—  
We do not pause to understand  
The beauty we might find.

VIRGINIA ARGABRITE.



# The Neon Sign

By KAY HERRICK

THE COLD, relentless rain splashed down upon the pavement, as the iridescent rays of colored light played upon the illuminated stone with quivering shadows. The dark bleakness of the starless sky above me was as menacing as an endless cavern, lit only occasionally by a wandering star while far away on the river shore, the vigilant toots of a passing steamboat whispered spasmodically in my ear.

Wearily I made my way along the deserted street, moving as if in a dream, oblivious of other beings. Then I stopped in front of a sparkling Neon sign which dazed and fascinated me as it blinked on and off, and tired, and bewitched by its eloquence I stumbled blindly into the building which it adorned.

The room I entered was congested and misty with smoke; swarms of boisterous, hysterical people revolved around me, and thousands of voices, shrill and harsh, thundered through my ears, drowning me in their intensity. Swaying dizzily, I made my way towards an obscure corner and sat down despairingly. How was I ever to find my way out of such a place, and what was I doing alone and far away from my own home? Realizing my predicament, I relaxed and glanced around me trying valiantly to discover a familiar face or even an approachable stranger, when suddenly my eye lighted on a dimly-lit painting hung crookedly beside me, and stupified by its serenity in contrast to the hysteria that revolved about me, I stared unceasingly at the small panel. It was a Scottish landscape, with all the finesse and assurance of a modern impressionist, for its vibrant, colors warmed my heart. I searched for similar paintings and found a few hidden in the recesses of draperies and grain calendars. Joyful as a child on Christmas morning, I scrutinized each painting, and then as I quietly sat in my corner, dozens of puzzling thoughts raced through my mind, and I became flabbergasted and perhaps, even a little jealous of the person who had painted in this room.

"Excuse me, sir, but could I serve you?" Startled, I looked up and beheld a minute waitress shivering before me; her entire face seemed lost in a white expanse of fear, and as I absently gazed at her floundering blue eyes, she spoke again:

"Excuse me, sir, but could I help—?"

"Yes, what is this place I've got myself into?" I inquired.

"Hit's a tap-room," she explained carefully. Tap-room, I laughed to myself, the foolish way people disguise things that they are ashamed of.

"Hit's really called 'The Chalet'," she said, "because Mr. David, the man that owns it, is awful arty." Arty, the paintings, I pounced upon the idea.

"Tell me, what IS your name?"

"Swan." She curtsied and sighed coquettishly. I winced. "Oh, yes, well, Swan, did your Mr. David paint all these paintings?"

"Oh, yes, queer ain't they?"

Ignorance is indeed blissful, I thought to myself. "Which is Mr. David?" I inquired expectantly.

She looked about her enthusiastically. "That lad with the brown hair, behind the bar, sir," she said. "He's—"

"Swan, come here, blast you." Her description was cut short by a shrill summons, and bobbing desperately, my little nuncio disappeared.

I watched her vanish behind a dark door, and sat silently thinking of the strange picture into which I had wandered, when a low voice interrupted my reverie, and looking up I found the dark-haired lad standing by me, urging me to have something on the house as an introduction to "Mr. David's." I don't know what I expected in the appearance of my prodigy, but I was at once appeased and amazed at the sight of him. I discovered as he passed from table to table, with his quiet smile, that he was startlingly young, with a



HE IMAGINED HE ALWAYS DID WHAT THE OLD MAN TOLD HIM.



wistful, sensitive face. His plaintive grey eyes were as soft and hurt as a troubled young fawn, his mouth weak and undefiled. His well-shaped head and plain brown hair gave him the look of a modern Apostle; in this bustling room of vagrancy he looked like a valiant star wandering aimlessly in an angry sky.

"Swan," I looked about for my colloquial friend, eager to resume my questioning. A faint rustling, a strong, pungent odor.

"What'll ye be havin', sir?" She appeared at my elbow, her eyes glistening with eagerness.

"Tell me more about David," I said. "Why did he ever leave his painting for this?"

"I'll tell you the whole story, sir. You see, some years ago, when Mr. David was just a lad, he imagined he had a companion with him all the time—an old man it was. Of course, there wasn't no such person at all, but Mr. David thought there was, and he thought this old man told him to draw and paint so that he could put on paper what he felt inside of him."

I murmured to myself.

She looked at me queerly for a moment and then continued. "He started painting and as he painted, always imagined that everything he did was what the old man told him to do and not his own ideas at all. He went up, getting good, I guess, and he always believed his old man was there pushing and at last his success kinda went to his head, and he decided he didn't need anyone, no, not him, so the old man died, or at least he thought he did."

I watched her intently as she talked, growing more and more excited and her whole voice and manner changed and she seemed transfigured into another being, not the bar maid Swan, but a glowing person.

"Then he couldn't go on," she said, "he'd lost his imagination and he started downhill and soon he got very sick and his mind got sick with him. For a long time he tossed and turned, not even caring for his own wife, just always searching for his lost helper."

"Yes, but what happened then?" I inter-

rupted.

"Oh, he gradually got well, and when he did, it was just as if he'd never known how to paint, as if he'd never known anything worthwhile. He was just a man without any ambition, content to go on living from day to day with only the simplest things in life to comfort him." She finished breathlessly, and looking about her at the swarming mobs, sighed.

"So he took this job, and earning his living this way, is perfectly happy?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, he's happy—but all that's left of that wonderful other life are the paintings on these walls."

"And his wife?" I asked.

She looked at me gently. "He's forgotten she ever existed, sir."

"Does he ever look at these paintings and wish he could paint again?" I asked wistfully.

"No," she said, "he never looks at them; he's forgotten, he's forgotten it all."

The words echoed hopelessly through my mind; forgotten. How sad! A great talent and gift, forgotten. A beautiful idealism and philosophy, forgotten. Deep in my reverie I did not know that Swan had drifted away, the bustling crowds had moved on, that the clanging jazz had ceased and that only the misty blue smoke remained.

And the girl, Swan, how did she know? Ah, poor creature, she was his wife. He had had no use for her and years ago he had discarded her as he had his faithful father, because they never really existed for him, but were only temporary visions that soon vanished.

I sat there awhile by myself, half dreaming, half remembering and then slowly started on my way. The smoke breathed gently on the throbbing, painted images and, encircled the brown head behind the bar. The lights quivered, then went out, and a bedraggled cat strolled listlessly across the floor.

Outside the rain still harassed the impassionate night and the twinkling lights of the Neon sign blinked on and on.

### "A DREAM"

I dreamed of her last night,  
Strange dreams can bring back  
Yesterdays you thought you'd  
Buried in the misty past!  
Yet all today my thinking has been  
Tinged by thoughts of her; the way  
That one is conscious of the sun's  
Warm breath on summer days.

ALICE HAINES.

### "AUTUMN LEAVES"

Dipped in God's blood  
Are the autumn leaves,  
And scorched with the will-  
Divine. Each red leaf is  
A burning heart; is a  
Soul that cries for thine.

ALICE HAINES.

### EVENTIDE — A REVERIE

At eventide the myriads of cares that veil  
each day  
Are drowned within the pensive beauty of  
the breathless night;  
And fade away forgotten in the mild noc-  
turnal light,  
Content to seek the shadows left by every  
parting ray.  
By gentle Orphean breeze unfurled, the tran-  
quil mosses sway  
As if to give direction to the swallow's  
restless flight,  
So mind may glide alone in skies denied  
by mortal sight  
And penetrate a realm of thoughts that words  
can never say.  
In calmness may the soul renounce suppres-  
sion and despair;  
In light of darkness find a virtue long ob-  
scure and soar  
Away to boundless freedom in the soft am-  
brosian air;  
When man has come so near to heaven,  
God could wish no more.  
Some day the world in thought will grow, in  
love and peace abide,  
And every placid heart will know eternal  
Eventide.

PAUL HARRIS



# Walt Whitman's Musical Style

By WARREN IRWIN TITUS

WALT WHITMAN has been credited with the origination of free verse in America. But from what sources or inspiration did this unique style spring? Despite many examined relationships to the mannered verse of Blake, Browning, or Carlyle, it is generally well conceded that Whitman was not a poet who sprang largely from literary influences. He was more than ordinarily self-made, for he deliberately sought to free himself from older models and from accepted media of expression. Yet in his search for the new, there was one influence on Whitman that may have played a greater part in the molding of his style than is commonly thought. That influence came from the past, and it was the influence of music—more specifically, Italian operatic music.

Although he was not a professional musician like Sidney Lanier, Walt Whitman did have a strong appreciation of the art. In his formative period in New York, supplied with the usual press-man's pass, he haunted the opera. Later, during his sojourn in New Orleans, in the period when "Leaves of Grass" was yet in incubation, he had further operatic opportunities. Rarely did he miss the chance to hear good soloists, orchestras, and bands. That he was profoundly moved by music—particularly Italian operatic music—is evident from his writings.

An early testimony to his love of opera appears toward the beginning of "Specimen Days":

"I heard, these years, well rendered, all the Italian and other operas in vogue. I heard Alboni every time she sang in New York and vicinity—also Grisi, the tenor Mario, and the baritone Badiali, the finest in the world."

One of the greatest influences on Whitman was the contralto Marietta Alboni of the great

old school of Italian singing. Whitman heard her every time that she appeared in New York. Her voice, more than any other artist's, made an extraordinary impression on him, and in several poems, such as *Proud Music of the Storm*, he mentioned her by name. *To a Certain Cantatrice* was probably addressed to her.

The best evidence of the impression made by operatic music on Whitman is to be found in his verse itself. It was his love of the aria and rhymeless recitative found in Italian opera that probably strongly influenced the character of his own poetic chants. He associated himself with singers, or had in mind the effects of orators or the declamations of actors before the footlights, far more than he had in mind the conventional poetry of libraries. Several of his poems might well have been composed at the opera—an assumption that is not too far-fetched when one remembers that he is said to have written in the street, on the ferry boat, at the seaside, and in the fields. Perhaps to the music of the opera was due his very emancipation from what he called the "ballad-style" of poetry, by which he meant poetry hampered by rhyme and metre. Poetry to Whitman seems to have been a kind of musical utterance expressing the rhythmic pulse of America. He abandoned himself to that utterance as he did to the singing of Alboni. "I was fed and bred under the Italian dispensation. I absorbed it and probably show it." And even a greater admission, "But for the opera, I could never have written *Leaves of Grass*."

But if his style in itself is not sufficient evidence of the musical influence, there are the countless Italian words or phrases drawn from musical terminology that abound in his works. Such words as "romanza, bravuras, cadenzas

piano, aria, trio, staccato, forzando, cantabile, con amore, dolce affetuoso, and finale" are distinct evidences of Whitman's Italian music leanings.

The whole conception of Whitman's poetry, then, seems to have been colored by the recitative of the singer, reaching his audience with his voice. There is even a considerable visual resemblance between the pages of Whitman's poetry and the pages of operatic librettos. Poetry was not something to be written—but something to be uttered. Whitman's was the art of the Italian lyric stage put into verse.

\* \* \* \*

It is only logical to assume that any attempts at setting Walt Whitman's poetry to music would have to be conceived in the same style from which the verse sprang. In other words, the declamatory style of the modernist school of composers is the only possible musical outlet for Whitman's free verse. The classically harmonic melodiousness of the old masters could never be the style for something that springs from the Italian recitative! It is natural, therefore, that attempts to set

Whitman to music have been attempted only recently by what are termed in music, "impressionists of the neo-classic school."

Roy Harris has been among the most successful at setting Whitman's poetry to music. He has composed several choral numbers of distinction, including a *Symphony for Voices* based on the poems of Walt Whitman. More recently, the youthful George Kleinsinger has accomplished a remarkable task in creating a musical cantata based on various Whitman poems. There have been numerous other attempts at setting Whitman to music, for the task has fired the imagination of many composers. The fact, however, that only American composers have voiced the true sentiments and grasped the full character of the verse is significant of what a composer must have in common with Whitman—an inner understanding of the vast greatness of America and a conception of our democracy. "I hear America singing; the varied carols I hear"—therein is the spirit of Whitman. Only those composers of socialistic democracy (like Kleinsinger) can ever hope to express Whitman in song.

Here we are sitting,  
Waiting,  
We ought to be knitting,  
Waiting.

SILVA TWITCHELL.



## THE WORLD'S LEGENDS

The world's legends are destroyed this day.  
Hope, out with the winds, makes tearful  
moan,  
And the careful threads no longer stay  
That were woven dreams where sunlight  
shone.  
The stars are torn from the breast of night  
The song of earth is hard and shrill  
There is no more music, we must only fight  
And let him sing who can and will.  
Never, never speak of happiness,  
For hell his bowels has emptied forth.  
No peace, no love, no kindliness.  
In life no progress, nothing worth,  
While God put goodness in a shroud  
The sun went hiding in a cloud.

—ROSALIND DARROW.



