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VOLUME TWENTY-TWO NUMBER ONE FALL, 1946

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Flamingo

DAN PAONESSA
Editor-in-chief

BECKY HILL
Business Manager

Zoe Vail Weston
Fiction

Betty Lee Kenagy
Non-fiction

Lynn Hirsch
Art

Wesley Davis, Betty Miller Davis
Poetry

Nathan Comfort Starr
Advisor

ASSISTANTS

Raoul Salamanca, Mary Alice Adams, Jean Lipscomb, Barbara Anderson, Charles Gundelach, Carlyle Seymour, Dan Hudgens, Sally Hobbs

EDITORIAL

The Bellman, in Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*, was a morbidly sensitive person. Every so often he would remove the bowsprit from his ship and have it revarnished; but his crew, never quite understanding the captain's confusing directions, was never sure which end of the ship the bowsprit belonged. However, it was generally fastened across the rudder. So no steering was done until the next varnishing day; and during these perplexing intervals the ship usually sailed backwards.

In previous years of experimenting, searching, and analysing, in an ordeal by confusion, the past editors were never quite certain in which direction the *Flamingo* was moving. This first issue of the year marks the end and the beginning of a period, with the bowsprit tacked on a new place.

This magazine will have, we hope, a greater reach than ever before. If the efforts of the editors are successful, the various branches of a liberal arts college will be combined with literature to form a larger whole—a oneness from the sum of many.

This issue contains the first of a series of articles on three branches of art. It is a criticism, or discussion, by English, Music, and Art instructors, and a student.

No longer will the poetry rattle with the dried, blood-caked bones of Time, or allude to trees that shed gloom and melancholy upon a lover who is dead and another half dead. There will be found no plush fiction of jolly cocktail parties with John's other wife.

All that is contained within these two covers combines the best talent of Rollins college. We wish for no more than that.

—D. P.



LADY BEWARE

A short story by WESLEY DAVIS

HE stared straight into the girl's face and in his wide blue eyes danced all the fires of love with the devil himself laying on the coals.

The girl's eyes included the whole class without appearing to rest on any one person, as she lectured on the technique of the short story. Her lecture was full of the precise little contradictions that teachers of this sort of subject are compelled to employ. The young man was stirred to deep mirth but the solemnity of his face and his direct stare were never broken.

"Now it is extremely important that the writer form sound working habits. You can learn to write only by writing. Writers are made, not born," the girl said earnestly. She leaned toward the room full of bobbing heads and scratching pencils. She hesitated a little to moisten her lips and became aware of the G.I.'s unwavering stare and still blank note paper. She noted his gleaming jump boots and ribbon-plastered O.D. blouse and the overseas cap thrown carelessly on the window sill at his back. She continued, "That is, few writers are born. Some may be born, that is." Again she hesitated. Again her eyes caught the boy's. She forced her attention down to her notes. "What I am saying is that some may be born with more aptitude for writing than others. But most of us must work and work and work." The girl felt vaguely now that she was trying desperately to please. Not the tired, dull,

trusting faces that bobbed dutifully up and down to take notes, but the staring soldier. "Now you may say that you don't have time to write, but you do have time. We have, all of us, a lunch hour. Well, perhaps not an hour—that's only a manner of speaking—" Again she stopped. My God, this must appear ridiculous to him! Again she looked at the wide blue eyes. His dark hair fell down toward the left eye and his hand raised in an easy gesture to push it up. She forced herself to give her attention to the whole room. She hoped desperately that her feelings were not being communicated to the class. Her precise contradictions now appeared to her more and more foolish and the knowledge only added to her confusion. She stammered as she made a valiant attempt to extricate herself, to try to sound coherent. "If you take just fifteen minutes each day to write, you will be surprised how much you can do. It may not really be much, but it will be something. And that is important. I don't mean that what you write will necessarily be important. It probably won't be. But it will be important from the standpoint that you have done something, and that is important. So you see how very important it is that the creative writer form sound working habits."

The G.I. leaned forward and began to scribble on the paper headed "*Sound Working Habits.*"

"Intellectual . . . Swelling with latent . . ."

He was glad he had come to the class; his buddy hadn't lied about this girl. The teacher was, he supposed, about 28 or 29, there was no ring on her finger. She was slender, not straight like a stick. Her severe suit with a demure ruffle at the neck made her look sleek, not prim. He looked about the class, tired government workers mostly, Civil Service employees or soldiers stationed in Washington, perhaps a few drifters. They took notes dutifully and looked at the teacher with dull, trusting eyes. The class was held in one of the huge government buildings and through the windows came muted noises as over-crowded Washington clanged and milled.

She leafed through her notes rapidly, glanced at the clock on the wall. Thank God the hour was about over.

"Your assignment for next week, class, is to write a short account, not to exceed five hundred words, of the most

exciting event of your life. By this I mean the event that you yourself consider most exciting."

"Is she kidding?" the soldier commented inwardly. He sat, still, with his head bent, scribbling a quick estimate of her. "Needs developing, but classy and intelligent in spite of the way she talks to this class."

"Of course we will take up more technical compositions, or writing that requires a greater amount of technical skill—I mean to say you will be assigned more complicated forms such as the vignette and the formal story." The teacher gathered up her lecture notes and the roll cards and asked if there were any questions. One of the aspiring students, a stout lady in a red dress, asked her to recommend a good grammar. The teacher wrote the name of a standard work on the blackboard. As no other questions were forthcoming, class was dismissed, and the students filed out with the automaton-like placidity which government workers seem to acquire.

Nearly everybody had left the room, but the sergeant still sat at his desk, absorbedly tracing o's and x's on his notebook cover. An excited lady bustled up to the teacher and pointed to a placard on the wall, "*Please do not throw cigar and cigarette butts on the floor.*"

"I just had to ask you about this," said the excitable lady. "They put that sign up just before our class came to order. I saw them. And yet, when we came in, the floor was *littered*, my dear. I do think we should have a clean floor to start with, anyway, and although I don't smoke myself, I think we should be allowed to smoke if the people who use the room do so, and besides, I think it's so insulting to caution us about it when the other people do the same thing, don't you?"

The creative writing teacher looked sympathetic, and murmured, "Yes, I'll speak to them about it."

When the social-minded lady had left, the G.I. sergeant had just finished a decorative border of x's on the front page of his notebook. He held it at arm's length and squinted critically at it. There was nobody else in the room now except the teacher. She knew instinctively that he had waited for her. He sat scribbling again, paying no attention to her. She had to approach him.

"May I help you?" she inquired.

"Nobody can help me," said the young man sadly, as he went back to his o's and x's.

"I beg your pardon!"

"I said, I'm past the point where anybody can help me," the boy amplified with a patient air.

"Would you like to tell me what you're talking about?" she prompted.

"You see, I'm convinced that Sherman was just a little bit right when he said that war is hell. He forgot to say that everything is hell."

"I wonder why you should be so cynical, and at your age, too."

The boy looked down modestly, as though she had paid him an extravagant compliment.

"My dear lady," he said slowly, "we really have very little to do with what we are. We are mere chips tossed about on the sea of circumstance."

"You seem wonderfully sensitive—" The young man made a disbelieving sound in his throat. He got up, placing his overseas cap on his head carefully. He seemed to have forgotten her presence entirely, as he walked out whistling in minor strain, what sounded to the girl like the sustained notes of a train whistle far off. She wanted to speak of the strange feelings inside her, but she could think of no words to match. As he passed out the door she felt that something very precious was slipping away from her. She choked back a wild urge to call after him.

She checked the locks on the windows, switched off the light. As she moved out of the room and locked the door behind her, she saw the soldier pause at the water fountain. She thrust the key into her coat pocket and followed, her heels tapping a quick rhythm.

Leaning into the spouting flow of water, the soldier swallowed in the quick rhythm of her steps. He had almost decided that tonight was the proper time. When her steps drew near, he straightened and turned to face her squarely. So intent was his gaze that she might have been the first woman of creation and he the first man, and this this first conscious meeting. The blue flames of his eyes charmed her into complete silence. Not an awkward si-

lence, for the solemnity of his face could admit of no self-consciousness, but a silence of intense inner elation on the elemental unspeakable level, that in itself constituted a marvelous satisfaction. She felt certain that the gap between the real world and her world of poetry had been bridged by a gypsy's eyes and a poet's soul.

"Well, teacher, we seem destined to travel side by side, at least for the length of the hall." She came back to earth with a warm smile, and an acquiescent, "Yes, it seems so."

As they passed from the building, he asked, "Why do you teach that sort of class? The combined genius of those people couldn't construct a story for True Confessions, or a Sunday School rime!"

She didn't know whether to laugh or be offended. "Well, I might ask why you're in the army and jump out of airplanes, but I won't. I will say only that this sort of teaching is not an unpleasant way to make a living. They pay me well and besides—" She stopped. She had started to say that she cherished the notion that someday a certain sort of person would come into one of her classes.

The traffic pressed along Pennsylvania Avenue in a never-ceasing two-way stream. Every fourth or fifth car was a yellow and black taxi with small red lights gleaming over its cowl. She wondered if he would hail one of them and say "Good-bye". What if he did not? What would she do? She did not know him and yet she felt that she knew him intimately. She had created him long ago and lived with him in her own world for as long as she could remember. He broke into her thoughts. "Let's walk this way." He pointed toward the obelisk Washington Monument, lit half-way up, its top almost disappearing toward the black sky.

She attempted a half-hearted protest. "But really, I know very little about you. I don't even know who you are."

"I am—and you are *of* all time and *out of* all time, of all place and away from all place. Something of me is a part of all that I behold; something else of me dwells in complete and lonely isolation. For instance, a small amount of rum lends warm life to and makes me a lover of the coldest and most inanimate lamp posts."

His transition from ethereal abstractions to this ridiculous picture caused her to laugh delightedly.

"Oh, you mustn't laugh at me."

"I'm not laughing at you—I'm just laughing."

Her thoughts raced and churned in a mad, blind confusion. How could it be that her sadness was shot through with such a strange elation? Her skin trembled like a hot filament. She said suddenly, "You must create; you are a true artist!"

"Create! Create what? Words on paper, a stone image, children? All subject to destruction!"

"You must get hold of yourself. You must control the great thing that burns in your heart and brain. You must direct it toward a good end. It is a rare gift to be able to see beauty and feel truth. Only great poets have such a keen esthetic appreciation."

"It could more properly be called a longing, a hunger, an endless search, a vain attempt to make a logical structure of a thing as elusive and unstable as water; trying to pin down with a point of a lead pencil a bubble of mercury rolling free on a table top. It means knocking on a thousand doors, peering into a million faces, crossing the hills to the valleys beyond, and rounding a thousand curves to search the shadowy places."

Her whole inner being ached as if a sharp wire were twisting about and cutting into the tissues of her heart.

"Oh, but there are real things—the joy and satisfaction of great poetry and music and songs. And the companionship of stimulating people."

"That's very fine, but do you suppose it really matters that Keats made an ode to the Nightingale and that he saw the beauty of a Grecian urn? You know Shelley said that the poet is like the bird of night singing in the dark to console its own solitude. Did it matter that a tubercular boot-legger in the Birmingham County jail could chord a guitar and make blues songs about America?" He paused and sang in a slow, heavy-vowelled drawl:

"I was a stranger passing thru yo' town,
I was a stranger passing thru yo' town,
When I asked you a favor,
Good gal, you turned me down."

She wondered if she could ever match this mad knight errant, who was on equally intimate terms with Shakespeare and poetry written in jailhouse walls.

The lines of a poem she had written long ago came to her mind. She spoke very softly:

"He must come singing who would call me his,
I ask not that he ride a palfrey white,
But that his eyes hold lights from far countries
And that he dream fair lofty dreams, my knight."

He wheeled about to face her. His eyes seared her face. Her lips trembled; her temples beat the red flame of her blood into her face. He turned away and resumed their walking. What had he looked for in her face? Had he seen what he wanted? She didn't trust herself to look up toward his face. They walked in silence. He wavered sometimes, like a blind man.

Finally he spoke again. "I'm not sure it's good for you to be with me. You say I should create. When I do, this is what happens." The easy, resonant cadence of his voice soothed for a moment her fevered thoughts. But through the casual sound the meaning of the lines beat its way.

"The green leaves know
For the wind has told
My grief a thousand times
How love was killed
While the town clock chimed
For the end of love
And the end of time.

The thin steel made
A three-cornered way
Between two ribs.

If you ask me why
I killed my love
At midnight in the park,
I will say, I found
Perfection and feared Time."

Her hand tightened on his arm. She knew she should be frightened. "My God, you're mad. Hopelessly, beautifully mad."

They walked far into the night and his talk reached

for stars and grappled with the universe. Poetic imagery spilled from his lips with the ease of tidewaters lapping across a sandy tropical beach. In his voice the girl heard the sound of muted trumpets playing softly; the low moaning of a colored blues singer. She saw the wistful face of the country lad, hurling rocks at the telegraph poles and devouring with his eyes every speeding high-powered car that roared down the highway toward the magic cities beyond his life. All the sadness and beauty of the American scene swam through the boy's talk. He built verbal stairways to the stars and smashed them successively with morbidities so intense that the girl was driven from moments of supreme ecstasy to a state akin to sheer terror. She was a delicate instrument in the hands of a master player. The girl felt that all the demon lovers of history had converged upon her. For her the world had suddenly changed to pure magic. All the Shelleys and Keats and Byrons of her wildest fancies were now walking with her and grasping her hand and lavishing all the poetry of their great souls on her. Just her alone.

How glad she was now that she had chosen the path of the intellectual, that she had been a little unpopular because she refused to be ordinary. Publishing two stories in a magazine of high literary standing had been very satisfying, but this was the final consecration. To find a man like this, with the sensitiveness of a great poet and the mad eloquence of an angry god. When they walked so close to the Washington Monument that it seemed to lean out over them, he threw back his head and shouted, "Oh God, look at that shaft. It makes the whole damned sky look small. You'd think everyone in Washington would be out here every night looking at it."

"It's so simple, so modern in design," she murmured.

"Yet it might be very old. Modern man's nearest approach to the grandeur of the ancients. What a magnificent monument to a great man!" The boy paused and looked up again and cried passionately, "But what a puny effort to immortalize the thing that was the man, Washington, or any man, even the humblest. What is this miraculous creation of cold stone compared to the warm life spark that fired the great general? That life is gone as we too shall

go! We shall be dust with the dust of Washington and this monument will live on, and a century from now others will stand here and gaze at this thing that will outlive them, too. Yes, great men can design and build great monuments in memory of other great men. But man with all his genius cannot save his own life."

The boy stood rigidly silent, with feet spread apart, fists clenched at his sides, and his head bent. The girl trembled with the shock of his mad speech, but she felt such compassion for him that she wanted above all to hold him close and soothe him with all the warmth of her body and spirit. She knew that she wanted him just as he needed her; she for the thrill of his madness, and he for the comfort that only a woman of great feeling can give.

They turned away silently: He in a seeming reverie of sombre thought; she not wishing to intrude with anything that might seem trite. How glad she was that she had clung to the romantic ideal of love; that she had shunned the ordinary and waited for the prince of charm whose every sentence touched her like an electric wire. But she wondered if he felt the same way toward her. What a horrible thought! Surely he did. Else why would he lay bare his very soul before her? Yes, she alone was the chosen one.

He guided her away from the park section to a neon-lit downtown street that swarmed with unpretentious night life. Things were going well, he knew. Now he wondered how she would react in the atmosphere of a bar.

* * * * *

Looking at her in the booth beside him, he knew that for her the pressure of the real world was far off. She was actually now what she had always dreamed, a lotus-eater, exquisitely lost. What a delicious thing. The sloe gin with coke and lemon had lit her eyes and inflamed her cheeks, and her lips looked moist like a bursting cherry.

Leaning over her now he said softly, "The world has shrunk to the size of this booth. Nothing matters beyond you. With you, ecstasy would last 24 hours every day. You know, the affairs of our lives are so like an inverted pyramid. We endure hours and days of monotony and routine between brief moments of bliss. My idea is to re-

verse the situation and live at concert pitch all the time. You know what people always say to me? They say, 'You're crazy. You'll burn yourself out before you're thirty!' And what do I do? I laugh at those prosaic little men without souls and say, 'What if I do burn out in five years? At least I'll *burn* and I wouldn't trade those five years for eighty years of your dry-rotting sort of life.'"

She felt that what he was saying wasn't altogether good but the gin was warm inside her and what he said about the world shrinking to the size of the booth they were in pleased her more than anything else in her life.

The Negro at the piano and the Buddha-faced trap drummer drank straight whiskey between numbers and converted the alcohol into frenzied jazz. The piano man wore dark glasses for no discernible reason, for the musicians sat in semi-darkness. His eyes were glued to the music rack before him as though he were reading music that wasn't there.

Suddenly the boy stopped talking. The tempo of the music had changed radically. Through the blue smoke haze of the barroom came the soft slurring voice of the Negro pianist, singing,

"I love you, I love you, I love you,
Sweetheart of all my dreams."

The boy put his arms on her shoulders and said, "They're playing for us. The continent of Africa and slavery and all the world's dark people are playing for us, darling."

She had long since ceased to worry about drinking too much, for he had told her that a person should become intoxicated with the very first drink and that if one resisted the effects of drink, then it was pointless to drink at all. Besides, drinking only served to intensify your real nature. If one were a poet by nature, then drinking could only make one a greater poet. Oh, how wise he was. How sophisticated, and yet so child-like in his enthusiasm for living.

When the bar closed at twelve, he guided her tenderly through the street back to the park. The night was warm and there was no moon. They crossed the smooth grass and halted by the hanging curtains of a weeping willow. Facing

her, he placed his hands gently on her shoulders. She looked up at him and in her eyes a wonderful light was burning steadily. His body tingled like fine wire.

He knew well that this was the proper time. She heard the opiate voice of love saying, "Only once in every age does Destiny bring together great lovers and achieve the ideal union of soul-mates. The world has known of Shelley and Mary Godwin; Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, and now—" Drawing her close with his hands firm in the arch of her back he pressed his lips hard against her mouth. The wind moved gently through the long fronds of the weeping willow tree.

* * * * *

A week, centuries long, passed, and the young teacher stood before the class to call the roll. A large-sized fly couldn't have entered the door that night without her seeing it. But he was probably just late—not an uncommon thing in this sort of class. She lectured mechanically on the subject of markets for short stories and as the hour wore toward its end, a paralyzing thought beat its way stubbornly into her consciousness. The only thing of a factual nature that she knew of the boy was the name on the registration card: John Brown, U. S. Army.

* * * * *

Her voice vibrant with conviction and her melon-heavy breasts undulating with every emphatic gesture, the girl evangelist reached for their souls.

"You must beware of false doctrine, my dear friends, and of those who speak with the tongues of angels to cover desires as black as the bottomless pit. The Gospel warns us that even the devil may quote Scripture for his purpose."

Sitting three rows from the front, the G. I. sergeant listened attentively and smiled very slightly.

"May you go forth tonight with the message of Jesus burning in your heart and may your light so shine that the lost sinners of Columbus, Georgia, may find the way to Jesus."

She closed the meeting with a special invitation to those who were not sure of their salvation to come to the altar for a special season of prayer. Taking the cue, the pianist began, "Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling."

As the mass of the congregation streamed toward the doors, several women with tear-wet eyes and two or three men, including the boy in the glittering jump boots jostled against the crowd toward the altar. He knelt at one end of the altar, slightly separated from the other repentants. Starting with whispers, the group prayer rose gradually to an uneven roar. They called on God in strange unknown tongues. Only now and then could the soldier detect cries in English, such as: "Hallelujah" and "Praise the Lord!" The girl passed from sinner to sinner, murmuring, "Bless you, Sister!" "The Lord hears you, Brother!"

With his head bowed and eyes closed the boy sensed the girl's presence before him. Above the roar she spoke softly, tenderly, "How do you feel, Soldier Boy? Are you right with God?"

Without raising his head, in a voice close to tears, he said, "I am doomed, dear lady. Doomed with the rest of mankind."

She hesitated, and then fervently, "No, no, dear friend, no one is doomed in the eyes of Jesus."

He asked very softly, "Where is Jesus, Lady?"

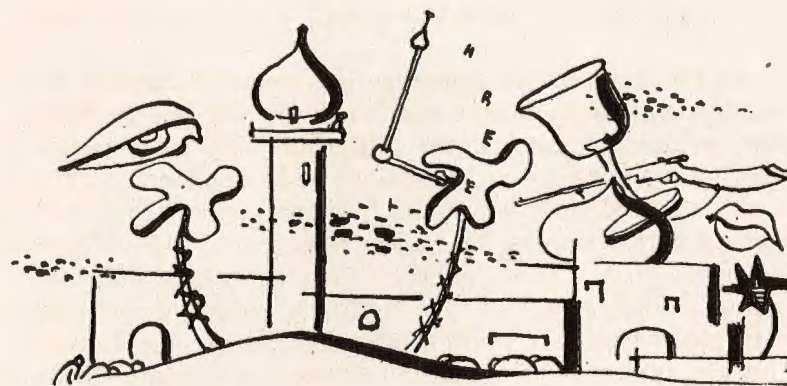
He raised his head to look squarely into the unblemished, white oval of her face, and in his wide blue eyes danced all the fires of love, with the devil himself laying on the coals.

AGAIN

Wander through fields moist with morning's dew,
(When will I see home again?)
Down lanes curled by the alien sun,
Cross streams swollen with ice and rain,
(When is war done?).

Laugh, fields, drenched with the brothers' blood,
(Grow, grass, as never before)
Cling bone to soil, turn flesh to sod,
War is within us, curse it no more,
(Leave it to God).

—Martin Dibner.



MOROCCO '43

Three o'clock. It is the month of Ramadan.

Again you drain the best of me
And I, drugged by Moroccan heat,
Lulled by the tropical sea,
Sit Paris-like, in honorless defeat.

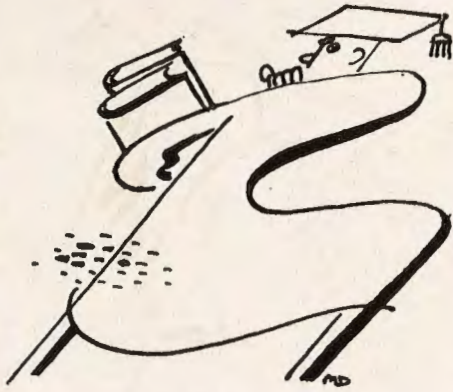
I sit discussing with you the soul,
Ah, le bon mot, exquisitely lipped,
While the muezzin cries and the dead bells toll,
And green grenache is delicately sipped.

In the yellow chintz sea that is your room
Undone by Prudhon and Racine
I drown in incense and perfume
While the world walks tightrope at Kasserine.

In Fedala passion roams the street
And souls are auctioned on the block.
All the romance of self-deceit.
And I must die at three o'clock.

A ram's horn is heard in the Medouina. It is a minute
after three.

—Henry Copps.



A FLAMINGO feature devoted to expressions of opinion by members of the Art, Music, and English departments, and a qualified member of the student body.

THE SUBJECT:

DONALD CARLISLE GREASON—Professor of Art

"I cannot rhapsodize over the Gershwin opus, but neither could I echo the remark of a conservative American composer I overheard in New York shortly after its first performance. A debutante talking of her piano studies said her ambition was to master the Rhapsody. With kindly commiseration he replied, 'My dear young lady, when you can, you won't!'"

I rate Gershwin's music with Benton's murals. Both artists have importance as fence-razers. They are not pioneers, since they discovered nothing new of their own, but they enlivened the national idiom of their day, the adolescent decade of the Twenties.

Briefly—it is not a national monument, not a pyramid, a Chartres Cathedral nor a Sistine Chapel; it is a milestone."

NATHAN COMFORT STARR—Professor of English

"I believe that Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue is neither flesh nor fowl nor good Ted Waring. It cannot make up its mind whether to be jazz or so-called 'serious' music. As a matter of fact, the jazz part of it is as ingenious and original as you are likely to find, and I do not even except Duke Ellington. Shortly after you get under way with jazz, however, the piece goes pseudo-highbrow, with Lisztian cadenzas leading up to lyric passages of moon-struck schmaltz. In a sense it is jazz with an inferiority complex."



GEORGE GERSHWIN'S "RHAPSODY IN BLUE"

CHARLES GORDON REX, Instructor of Music

"Rhapsody in Blue is the symbol of an era when the non-musical of Park Avenue moved in with the non-musical of Broadway, represented by Tinpan Alley. Tinpan Alley put down its beer mug and tinkled its tunes. When Gershwin came along, it got into dress clothes, explained the new music to Park Avenue, and together they raised themselves from the despair of being fugitives from Mozart.

"The current use of Rhapsody in Blue is to jerk tears at every Gershwin Memorial Concert given in Madison Square Garden accompanied by Oscar Levant."

MARTHA BARKSDALE—Second-Year Music Major

"I thoroughly enjoy the Rhapsody in Blue for its beautiful melodies and syncopated rhythms, but I do not consider it great music. True, it is unique and effective, but it cannot be compared with the music of the great masters on the basis of its aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural appeal.

"To me, its popularity and chief importance lie in the fact that it was the first and greatest attempt to create from the indigenous American idiom, jazz, a composition worthy of the concert hall. Also, it introduced to many prejudiced persons the beauty of the symphony orchestra and served as a bridge into the realm of serious music enjoyment."

JEAN

by JOAN F. LEONARD

EVEN in the early morning light the enchantment had not faded. The child's mind was misted by the insubstantial charm of fairy lands; and dew, which had fallen in the night, transformed the cobwebs into canopies on fairy beds. Jean felt the warm cocoon of sleep begin unwinding as she rose to dress herself. She felt the habits of her daily life closing in to confine her body, but still her mind was free to wander through protecting shadows in the light.

Breakfast was the same. Immaculate glasses and white milk reflected dizzy patterns on pale blue walls. Smoke from frying bacon drifted from the kitchen. As she sat down on her straight-backed chair, Jean lifted her eyes to see her father hunched above his cup of thick, black coffee. She felt sorry for him, sorry that he knew only the thick black taste of everyday. She wanted to give him her happiness. So, slowly she took her secret and laid it before him.

"You know, last night I woke up—and the stars were shining."

Her father broke a piece of toast.

"Oh, Jean! Eat your cereal."

And the shadows were lifted to reveal her naked mind standing cold and white.

NO SEQUEL

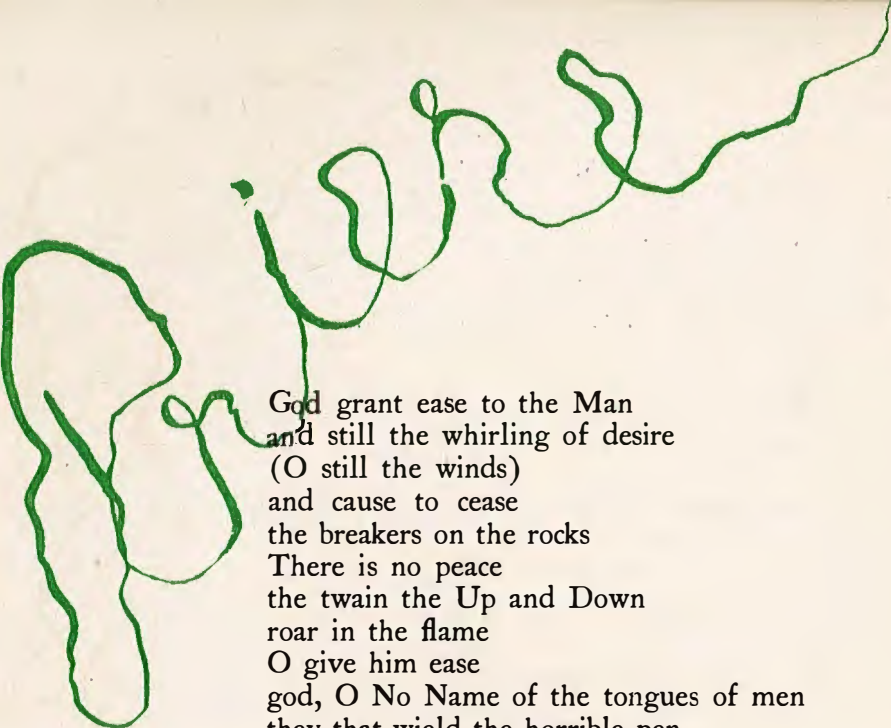
The last eagle cannot mate
Not on the highest peak—
From hill to hill, past earth's curve
And shadowed place, and whirl of wood ducks
Raised from quiet sloughs—
In widening blue flights, seeking his own . . .

O! leaf-green and hard cheek
Have made the swift wing:
Sky-seeking, earth-returning,
Each feather hollowed,
Filled with insect wine.


Rejecting present
Hating future
Wed the past
Seeking what is not,
In widening blue flights
Seeking his own—
Introverted grey flights
Approaching zero point.

Last man, refusing to believe in death,
(As the growing weight of hair
Presses out the dead face)
Fires the quick shot,
Awaits the wild cry.
There is no cry
But in the far-off brain,
Memory traces faint, fading echo.


—Wesley Davis.



God grant ease to the Man
and still the whirling of desire
(O still the winds)
and cause to cease
the breakers on the rocks
There is no peace
the twain the Up and Down
roar in the flame
O give him ease
god, O No Name of the tongues of men
they that wield the horrible pen



Quite near the heart
is the Abyss
bottom to depth
Come see the darkness, know its touch
and let the death seep in
enticing is the death
Man, can you tread
over the beaten flowers
the petals forced
into the dust of life?
★ The Way is dead
(you that contain
the qualities of death)
can you raise
the Invader from the suffocating cage
★ and from the heart's Abyss?



Who knows what fills
one cup and casts another's sun
into the sea?
Eerie the web of stranded men
spun by the past
forgotten eras that go on and on
and on again
into the lost eyes of the heart
seeking to crucify their own
(O seek us not)
look on the dying of the sun
Quiet, you cowards
for the nails are piercing.

No passing of the terrible pains

Then take the reins
of the soul, my god,
show me the source
of the strange currents
reveal to me
the spawning place of the clouds
draw the sword from my side
and then
(O No Name of the tongues of men)
give me the reins
and make to pass the terrible pains
and still the winds

—Anonymous.



BARBER SHOP

A short story by **MARTIN DIBNER**

THAT was how you read it, seated in his scrubbed and gleaming barber chair. **BARBER SHOP** Over and over again, because there was nothing else to read. Nothing else, unless you tried the line beneath it—painted in the same gilt letters on the outside of the awningless window. **ALBERT KOENIG, Prop.** As neatly arranged as the rows of jars and bottles that lined the mirrored wall, as crisply sentinel as the echoless snip of his scissors. Each visit you made was as passive and emotionless as the one before, and you watched that window almost frantically, for some familiar passing figure. But no one ever came. The townspeople rarely passed Albert Koenig's barber shop, for it was tucked away in one of the less-frequented side streets.

On weekends and before holidays, when the barbers on Main Street were rushed, some of the more impatient customers would patronize this obscure shop. But these sudden flurries never changed the tempo of odd, methodical Albert Koenig. His haircuts took as long as they always did. People who were in a hurry never came back to Albert Koenig, but it didn't seem to matter. He had been cutting hair the same way for twenty-one years, in the same place and for the same price. Every day except Sunday, year in and year out, please God. It was the way he wanted it to

be, placid and plodding, in phase with the ticking of his old wall clock.

Children would fret when their mothers took them to Albert Koenig's shop, and the time came when no children appeared there at all. They hated the bareness of its white walls. There were no comics to read. And Koenig didn't say the soothing things the Main Street barbers told them. Secretly, they were afraid of this quiet, harmless-looking man. But they didn't quite know why, and so they couldn't tell their mothers.

Again, it didn't matter to Albert Koenig. He disliked having them. They scuffed his scrubbed chair. He, in turn, was afraid of the children. He was a misogynist by instinct and a bachelor through choice. He was dimly aware that all about him was the pulsing existence of the town. Yet he listened to its gossip and small talk from the lips of his regular customers with the resigned patience and thin courtesy of his profession. It affected him not at all. Of everything that existed, there was one thing alone which was important to him.

He was Albert Koenig, Master Barber. This sense of pride, imbedded in the very fabric of him, could explain the peculiar existence he led. He was a simple man and within the rigid perimeter of this simplicity he asked for nothing more.

Master Barber.

Oh, he was proud of the pin-neat cleanliness of his wretched, out-moded shop, and the neat gilt-lettering on its window. But above all, he was proudest of his splendid achievement as a Master Barber. In all the years that he had toiled, he had never scratched a cheek, or nicked a chin. This record of precision and craftsmanship was his secret joy. Twenty-one years of meticulous service! A perfect record, unmarred, unequalled.

He would glow at the sound of those words, repeated countless times to himself. His eyes would lower, almost shyly. He would feel a hot flush of self-conscious pride diffuse his sallow cheeks and the blood would race madly through him. Twenty-one years of perfect service!

In idle moments he would visualize his epitaph in the town paper on the day following his death. The words, neat black type with a neat black border, would tell the world of Albert Koenig's achievement. His name—those

words. A great peace pervaded the ill-fed frame of Albert Koenig when he dreamed of the long-deserved pleasures that awaited him in death. He would read from his Bible to calm the excitement of such thoughts.

One afternoon in early autumn, Koenig had just finished cutting Gus Wagner's hair. Gus was the fat, genial, town printer, one of the few remaining regulars who were Koenig's patrons. The barber lathered the relaxed face, and then began the rhythmic stropping of his favorite razor.

This was always a moment of pleasure. He made the sound of razor against strop synchronize with the mellow tick of the old wall clock. Choir music, thought Albert Koenig, like the voices of a thousand boy sopranos in a cathedral on Christmas morning.

Strop, strop, Te Deum—

It happened easily and without warning. The strop had accidentally slipped and in a moment Albert Koenig's blood streamed across the brown leather and dripped to the tile floor. He looked at his wounded finger, fascinated, horrified. He remained motionless, remembering that blood had never before been spilled in this shop of his. Not in twenty-one years! Then, in dull surprise, he realized that in all his cloistered existence he had never before seen the sight of blood. He stared at it now, not believing.

He became aware of a sense of exhilaration such as he had never before experienced. It seemed to course with his pounding heart and blood through his entire being and out of the wound in his index finger. He felt no faintness, no revulsion, no fear.

He remembered a time of his half-forgotten childhood. They had lived in a dark, narrow house in this town. The house had long since been demolished, but not this memory of it. He was seated on the polished wood floor of the dining room, under a massive round oak table. His father was cutting hair. It was Albert's sport to catch the locks as they fell, and place them in neat piles according to color. His father had been a great master barber, too. Blood had never been spilled on *that* polished dining room floor.

Oh, yes, he remembered that friendless childhood quite well now. He had grown up unexposed to the wholesome dangers ordinary children face. No childhood friends at all. His father and strict Teutonic discipline were all he

knew. And how to snip and cut and shave . . .

No fear, no pain, but clean white tiles red with Koenig shame.

Gus Wagner was holding Koenig's hand under the water faucet, rinsing off the blood. It did not stop bleeding until the printer had gathered cobwebs from the basement and covered the wound. Albert Koenig sat trancelike, as Wagner bandaged his finger. It's not too bad at all, Albert, the printer was saying, just a little nick.

That was all it was—a nick. Koenig stared at the bandaged finger a moment, then shrugged his shoulders. He took up his razor once again as Gus Wagner settled into the big chair. He relathered the printer's face and started to shave him. His hand trembled slightly just before the first stroke. Then it was on its way. He was Albert Koenig, Master Barber, the same as always. For twenty-one years . . .

How red it is, he thought. How swiftly it runs.

The keen edge passed smoothly and expertly over the pulpy layers of fat that wreathed Gus Wagner's face. Wagner could not have known the thought in Koenig's mind a moment ago, when the barber's hand had trembled. Not really a thought, he corrected himself. A fleeting glimpse of a thought—no more!

These soft and unresisting folds of flesh—so placid and defenseless. Should this razor slip just once—O just the merest fraction of an inch! How red, how red, his blood would flow. A fleeting glimpse, that's all. Not quite a thought at all . . .

Wagner stirred restlessly and Koenig realized with a sensation of impending calamity that he had stopped shaving and the razor was dangerously poised over Gus's head.

Fractions of seconds passed like waiting years. But the genial printer yawned and opened his eyes and noticed the bandaged finger close to his face and he was solicitous. Albert Koenig commenced talking as he had never talked before. He was shaving the right cheek now and his own voice came alien to his aching ears, and much too loud. His finger throbbed beneath the gauze and adhesive. The clock pounded now, or was it his heart? He finished the right cheek.

He carefully restropped the razor and a feeling of renewed confidence possessed him. Gus Wagner was dozing as he started to shave the left cheek. Koenig thought fool-

ishly that his pounding heart might waken the printer. That would be terrible; he might suspect something was wrong. Though nothing is wrong. Nothing, I swear to God, Gus, nothing is wrong. My God, my God.

He tried to concentrate on the task before him. He kept his eyes averted from the soft blotchy mass of face-flesh beneath his functioning razor. It did not last. Some compelling force twisted his attention toward the flabby ridge of chins. As Wagner breathed, they undulated rhythmically beneath the creamy foam of lather. A confused awareness came to Koenig then. The ticking of the clock was out of phase with his heart beats. It was disturbing; nothing seemed right any longer. His tight neat world was falling apart, like the guts of a smashed clock.

He ceased all motion, watching the slow rise and fall of the printer's flesh. A small series of bubbles appeared and grew in a tiny pattern at the insistence of the sleeping man's breath. They formed beneath his nostrils and at the corners of his slack mouth. They grew and for a moment quivered, then gave way to a new pattern.

No human power could tear Albert Koenig's eyes from this show. His mind revived the promise of that first fleeting glimpse of a thought. It pictured what would happen to this lovely white lather. It marked the spot where the thin stain of crimson might start, then tracked its course as it melted as though into snow. Pale pink, then red, and redder, till it gleamed, a froth of deep red, flecked with white . . .

The piggy eyes of Gus Wagner were open and were watching him narrowly. With the blinking suddenness of bubbles burst asunder it crashed upon Albert Koenig's conscious self that Gus was talking to him. His mouth was forming the words, but Koenig could not penetrate their meaning. He simply could not hear them, yet he almost could see them as they formed and floated in the air around him. His shop, his chair, his jars of antiquated creams and lotions, his tile top shelf, the shaving mugs along the mirrored wall, his strop, his razor — he eyed these lifelong friends of his who stood mutely now, not helping him, not helping him at all.

A cool breeze came through the open door and stirred the linen neck cloth. The left cheek, shave the left cheek, and the zephyr soothed his fevered head and for an instant

there was peace of mind and everything was right again. Tick, clock, and beat, heart, and from the side street, wonder of wonders, came the quick laughter of passing children.

But the narrow eyes were watching every move he made. Gus Wagner's forehead was damp and sticky and curiously pale. The eyes were intent and frightened at what they had seen. Gus Wagner was afraid now. And silent. Beads of perspiration had formed on his brow and in a rivulet not unlike tears, coursed down the side of his nose.

Albert Koenig, Master Barber, carefully wiped the damp red face and patted the sagging cheeks to dryness. He tried to talk casually and the words failed in his throat. Gus Wagner remained sullen and unyielding. Neither of them spoke again. The barber felt old and tired, and strangely, he thought of his father once more, cutting hair in the dining room. He remembered the pain in his father's face when once he had asked if he couldn't grow up to be a priest. He remembered the times his father had caned him. Now the cool breeze blew sweet and clean again and Koenig struggled to keep his senses clear.

He massaged and kneaded Wagner's face. He applied hot towels, then a cold towel. He dried the soft face, and powdered it. He brushed the short-cropped hair. He worked rapidly, expertly, yet he could not escape the printer's stricken eyes. And when it was finally time to go, Gus Wagner paid him and as he hurried out, Koenig could not fail to observe the frightened, last-moment glance that was flung backward to the razor now folded and impotent on the shelf.

Albert Koenig walked through the town that night and out the clay road that led to his small cottage. He knew that something had happened to him, some calamity that threatened to disrupt his carefully perfect world. He hurried down the road, anxious to be home and hidden from all eyes. To happen to him, Albert Koenig, Master Barber, after twenty-one years of selfless devotion to mankind! He clutched even tighter the Bible in his pocket. A sound that might have been a sob escaped his bloodless lips.

Moonlight climbed through an open window and crumpled the bedsheets and clung to the floor. But something more than moonlight kept Albert Koenig from the sweet escape of slumber.

Had it been a dream? He touched the bandaged finger for assurance. And could he doubt the reality of Gus Wagner's soft pink flesh? Clear-limned against the darkly shrouded background of his thoughts were the spectres of those red-rimmed watery eyes; narrow, frightened, accusing.

A sense of deep melancholy swept through the barber's mind; then the anguish of self-pity. All he wanted of life was to be a simple barber; it was all he knew of life. And that life had been an humble and pious one. What was happening to him now seemed unholy and blasphemous and weird; a shattering discord, jarring his quiet, orderly existence.

He shuddered and moaned weakly as he remembered that Gus Wagner must undoubtedly know what lethal thought had crossed Koenig's mind that afternoon. And Gus might talk. It was a terrifying idea and in the semi-darkness Koenig himself became afraid with the fear only of the unknown. He tried to weep but could not. The years of solitude and self-denial had dried up the springs of emotion within him. And now, denied even the mere solace of tears, he tossed about in a wretched state of despondency.

His restless eyes glanced through the open window and across his small garden which was clearly visible in the moonlight. Beyond the tangled vines of his tomato plants he saw the gleaming new fence and the sties his neighbor had built to house his pigs. And then he made out the dark huddled shapes of the slumbering creatures themselves. Bumpy and irregular, their bodies blended into a massive form that shone oddly in the reflection of the full moon.

The miserable barber lay there bemoaning his unhappy lot. As he contemplated the peaceful scene he became aware of a subtle transition within his mind. He was not thinking about the unhappy occurrences of the afternoon now. He was experiencing a familiar and exciting desire. He mused now on the softness of a suckling pig with the same spellbound fascination he had recently regarded the flaccid layers of layers of Gus Wagner's chins. And in a short time he became aware of his guilt and it smote his conscience a mighty blow—an ineffectual blow, for now Koenig himself understood the hopelessness of conscience. In the face of this new and dread temptation, resistance seemed useless.

He was no longer blind to the significance of this obsession which penetrated the very core of him, and within the soul of poor Albert Koenig came the sorry peace of understanding what had become of himself. It was apparent that he would never find rest, or know peace until somewhere, somehow, he could satiate this unholy desire suppressed within his starved frame these many years. He must act now, or his carefully cloistered life might be forever ruined.

He could not know if what he was about to do, would purge him for all time of this cursed thing. He knew only that it must be done, done now.

With the deliberation of strong purpose, Albert Koenig arose from his bed. He knelt on the floor beside it and prayed to his Lord for strength. He slipped a pair of trousers over his underclothes and walked into his kitchen and selected a razor from a case on the shelf. He tested its edge, calmly and professionally, then he crossed the kitchen to the back door and walked outside.

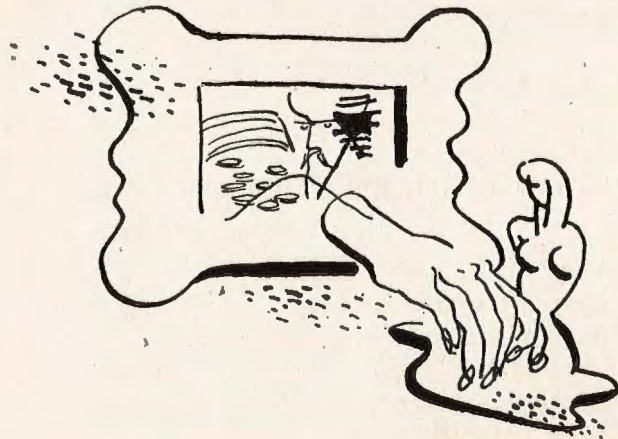
Across the field and clearly silhouetted against the night, stood the fences of his neighbor. He crossed the intervening distance with a steady and resolute stride, not unlike a penitent to a holy place. The cool earth and the soft grass clung damply to his naked feet. A faint breeze that stirred the nearby trees stirred his memory as well, seeming to urge him on. Quickly, silently, he was over the fence, the odor of fresh-peeled bark and the animal smells strong in his nostrils. He sank ankle-deep in the sty-muck which seemed to tug at him, as though to restrain him from this deed. But nothing earthly could halt Albert Koenig now.

He could distinguish the forms of the slumbering pigs. The newborn were slumped against the bristling sides of the sows. He bent over and quickly, silently grasped one of the soft yielding bodies. He flung it aloft, paused a split moment with the rare and dignified grace of a high priest performing a ritual at some sacrificial altar.

Before a sound could be uttered, his practiced arm descended in a deft, lightning-quick curve. He shivered with the surge of exaltation as the warmth of freed life-blood coursed between his fingers and down his naked arm. It flowed over his parched soul like soothing balm. It fed whatever it was that once starved in the being of Albert Koenig.

The limp body quivered in his arms, then suddenly became still and heavy. He placed it gently on the ground. A feeling of great tranquility possessed him now; a well-being, a weakness from joy. He was delivered. Albert Koenig murmured thanks to his God for he had found his peace again. He could sleep now. He threw the razor to the ground. Silently, he crossed himself.

The moon glistened on the stained, naked waist of a gaunt man as he strode across a green patch of field. His head was high and his shoulders erect, and an expression of almost religious ecstasy gleamed on his guileless, homely face.



TWO POEMS

BETTY MILLER DAVIS

NOTES ON MARY ANNE'S SHOW*

An amphitheatre where six schools clash:
There is Bathsheba's oriental splash
And stupid face of one that elicits lust
And knows no lust herself, the lyrical
Angle of leg, the strange and parallel breasts

Here mad christ's skinny finger skeletoned
On a six-fingered hand is raised in love
Or spooky benediction, Judas leans
Sinister eyes.

And through the valley of
The shadow vast compelling spaces move.

I would protest your signature in blue,
Autobiography in a trite hue—
Halt, Mary Anne, and through your conceptual sky
Let the green inclusive moth of evening fly.

*Mary Anne Wilson, Rollins, '46, exhibited a group of fine paintings last spring, which attracted considerable notice.

THOUGHTS ON MODERN POETRY

Lovers when young create an atmosphere
The chair the lamp all simple properties
Form their elaborate scenery.
The sweet unfocus of the eyes
Deliberate astigmatism
And reach Valhalla naturally.

We darling being wiser and more wistful
And wishing everything to go off well
Panting for spontaneity
Fear to do anything to break the spell
For honesty being rare
Cannot admit that it was never there.



THE NEW BIOGRAPHY OF LYTTON STRACHEY

An article by JACK FLANNELLY

INTERPRETIVE or psychological, and artistic biography, meet in the work of Lytton Strachey to form what may be called the new biography.

Interpretive biography holds that external facts and dates cannot reproduce truly and completely the actual man or career under study. Particularly since the acceptance of Freudian theory, even the deliberate and rational opinions and on-the-record thoughts of men are held to be no more than evidence toward interpretation of hidden motives and subconscious values governing their lives.

Artistic biography is closely connected with and overlaps this form. Since its first task is that of creating the illusion of life as it is actually lived, it employs the devices and techniques of fiction. It uses the soliloquy, the imagined or expanded conversation, selection, and the massing

of material in light and shade toward the predetermined effect. The actual temper of life is transmitted much as it would appear in fiction. Shifts of mood, hopes, fears, despair, the deepest recesses of psychological reaction—all have their place. The form belongs to art rather than history, and using the techniques of fiction (progress through time, foreshadowing, preparation, etc.) it naturally makes use of both style and proportion.

In modern biography Lytton Strachey signalizes and represents the combination of these approaches. His work is highly selective and deliberately stylized, his mood ironic and superior. His critical irony displaces the old idealism. He is satiric, and though satire implies didacticism, his work is highly individualistic compared to typically didactic biography of the past.

Strachey had much in common with the irony and pity of Anatole France, which, implying tolerance and sympathy, France understood as an intelligent attitude for his contemporary world. In this light it is interesting that Max Beerbohm refuses to consider him a satirist.

"The vein of mockery was very strong in him certainly, and constantly asserted itself in his writings. A satirist he was not. Mockery is a light and lambent, rather irresponsible thing. '*On se moque de ce qu'on aime*' is a true saying. Strachey was always ready to mock what he loved. In mockery there is no malice . . . Your satirist is mostly a robust fellow, as was Aristophanes, as were Juvenal and Swift; a fellow laying about him lustily, for the purpose of hurting, of injuring people who . . . ought to be hurt and injured . . . fundamentally he is grim. He is grimly concerned with what he hates in the age to which he belongs. I do not remember having found anywhere in the works of Lytton Strachey one passing reference to a current event. He was quite definitely, and quite impetuously, what in current jargon is called an escapist.'"¹

But is there not malice in his portrait of Doctor Arnold? There is no sympathy together with Strachey's distinctive brand of irony where the founder of the modern public school system is concerned.

"When he was told that the gift of tongues had de-

¹Beerbohm, *Lytton Strachey*, p. 12.

scended on the Irvingites at Glasgow, he was not surprised. 'I should take it', he said, 'merely as a sign of the coming of the day of the Lord.'²

And concerning what Doctor Arnold thought appropriate for the curriculum of Rugby the author writes:

"Was he to improve the character of his pupils by gradually spreading round them an atmosphere of cultivation and intelligence? By bringing them into close and friendly contact with civilized men, and even, perhaps, with civilized women? By introducing into the school all that he could of the humane, enlightened, and progressive elements in the life of the community? On the whole, he thought not. Such considerations left him cold, and he preferred to be guided by the general laws of Providence."³

And in his concluding pages, Arnold appears more dangerous than ridiculous:

"Under him, the public school remained, in essentials, a conventual establishment, devoted to the teaching of the Greek and Latin grammar. Had he set on foot reforms in these directions, it seems probable that he might have succeeded in carrying the parents of England along with him. . . . As it was, he threw the whole weight of his influence into the opposite scale, and the ancient system become more firmly established than ever."⁴

If it is satire which implies didacticism, then here is didacticism. Though Strachey tries, he cannot remain aloof from what is palpably an aversion to this man with whom he has nothing in common. Aldous Huxley describes his treatment of the Doctor as Voltairean. Strachey describes the Doctor's legs as short, which Huxley approves of as in the Voltairean manner, since "in attributing to the Doctor this brevity of shank he is justified by no contemporary document. The short legs are his own contribution."

There is more or less obvious subjectivity—an element of the new biography—throughout the essay, the author himself stepping forward to dominate but not usurp the stage:

²Strachey, *Doctor Arnold*, p. 435.

³Ibid, p. 429.

⁴Strachey, *Doctor Arnold*, p. 446.

"And yet—why was it?—was it in the lines of the mouth or the frown on the forehead?—it was hard to say, but it was unmistakable—there was a slightly puzzled look upon the face of Doctor Arnold."⁵

Had Doctor Arnold lived before the fall of man, Strachey writes, "he would have been a conservative." He is sure Arnold would have regarded the "bad poor", as he regarded the trades unions, with "horror and alarm". And though he has no positive proof for it, Strachey is sure that the question of Unitarianism was one of the problems which deepened the Doctor's frown and accentuated the pursing of his lips.

Max Beerbohm is particularly felicitous where Strachey's style is concerned. He finds his manner classical and natural, mellow and buoyant. It is a flexible manner, changeable according to the variation of the theme. This cannot be denied; from study of French models Strachey got his lucidity, from the English his humor and quiet zest. And there is a great deal of wit in his essay on the Doctor. After quoting Dr. Arnold on his terrible description of the boy of twelve who murdered the officer who had insulted him, Strachey remarks that there are the results of insufficient whipping; the joke is not pleasantly on the Doctor. Then there is Strachey's casual inclusion of Carlyle's description of Arnold as a man of "unhasting, unresting diligence," after which the author remarks that Mrs. Arnold doubtless agreed with the Scotchman, for she bore the Doctor ten children.

There are numerous other examples of why Strachey is so much admired and read, and the question of style is ever pertinent to his popularity. Details are heightened and massed, effects unalterably accrue to clever and painstaking causes; the writer's art makes us follow his narrative with both attention and interest. Here is no dry reportage of facts in order, in chronology; one aspect of the man is represented to us at a given moment, another aspect in its proper place later. There is balance and proportion. First there is Doctor Arnold as a man of God, holding forth in his chapel, then there is the man of affairs promulgating impressive generalities about the problems of the day. If

⁵Ibid, p. 436.

we grow tired of one facet of the man his biographer is ready with another; Strachey is solicitous of his reader's comfort.

But the satirist is always there, lurking in the near distance until he may sink another, sharper barb. Strachey tells us that the Doctor found Wordsworth's lovely lines about the meanest flower morbid. The Doctor found such objects "little". A few pages back he completes this picture of the man by noting how the Doctor "gently checked" the little boy who clapped his hands at the thought of the approaching holidays by reminding him of inexorable death.

But some sympathy must intrude on the reader's part for this strong stern man who believed so steadfastly in the Providence which had seen fit to bestow upon him his greatness. To him it was God's works which the Doctor carried out; he was as sincere as he was religious. Surely sincerity, however misguided, and religion are not discredits. When Strachey describes the Doctor's death and remarks that he had escaped his perplexities forever, we cannot but arraign the biographer for a piece of unbecoming flippancy, for lack of respect during a moment where respect is due. Sometimes Strachey's Olympian irony is too highly placed; he loses touch with the humanity of his subject. Elsewhere he may be as tender as Max Beerbohm claims him to be, but there is no tenderness, even where it may be briefly due, in *Doctor Arnold*. The biographer might have realized that all men are akin in death. And then Doctor Arnold *did* introduce morals into his scheme of education.

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TO ALTER HEAVEN

A short story by MILTON E. SCHWARTZ

HER HEAD was bent. The thin body slumped so that the back was rounded and the belly protruded in front of the chest. And the slim feet—the naked, black feet—took quiet but determined steps as if burdened by one great weight.

And as she walked, everything around Jennie seemed to dance. The howling wind whipped the fallen autumn leaves into angry whirlpools. Her little feet halted for a moment, then kicked a stone in the road. She ran after the stone and kicked it again, savagely. It hurt where her bare toe met the cold, sharp rock, but the hurt was good; it helped her forget.

A voice, singing, "Nobudy knows de trouble Ah've seen."

That was Jennie's voice. She always sang when she felt afraid and wanted to pray to God, but felt too proud or too ashamed to ask Him for help. Theo, her elder sister with the scarred, dark face, made her afraid all the time. Theo made her afraid when Jennie went to the barn by mistake and found her playing games with the Croop brothers. Such funny games! And sister squeezed her arm so hard that it felt like needles, and hit her on the face and told her never to breathe a word of what she'd seen to anyone, else she would be cursed and die.

"Theo said Ah'd die," Jennie told the wind.

But the wind blew on with his grey Northern madness and refused to answer.

She kept humming to keep up her spirits.

"Nobody knows but Jee-sus."

Jennie's simple cotton dress looked cleaner and whiter than usual against the dirty tar road. Jennie liked it that way, clean and white. She always brushed her hair well, and washed all over so that she looked nice, even if she felt sick or hungry inside.

Under her arm she held an empty burlap cotton sack. In her pocket—a five-inch jackknife that she had stolen from her brother. Jennie put her hand in her dress and removed the knife. Then she snapped the blade open and felt the sharp edge. Yes, she was sure that this knife was big enough to serve her purpose.

The blade pricked her finger and blood ran. Jennie bit her lips. The cut was slight and it seemed that she was in pain over something else—something within her that no one else could ever know about.

Last night when mother scolded her after Jennie had asked for an extra portion of "chittlins", mother couldn't see the hurt. When Theo with the-scar-on-her-face caught Jennie in the barn and pinched her arm, Theo didn't see that hurt either. Nor did fat Snowball, Jennie's best friend, know about it the day before as they walked home from school together. Jennie had just told fat Snowball about a beautiful fairy tale she heard at school, and how she got to feel about it, but Snowball didn't understand. She made fun of Jennie and pulled her hair.

"You marry a Prince Charmin'!" Snowball laughed. "Why he wouldn't even look at you. You're just a pore little nigger-girl with rags on yore back." And Jennie felt that way then—like she felt now with the blood on her thumb—hurt and alone. As if she were sick and there was no one to tend her.

It was twilight as she neared the factory gate at the end of the road. Suddenly she heard a car coming toward her. She left the road and forgetting thorns and branches, crept into some shrubbery. As the car passed, crammed with workers, Jennie could just glimpse their tired, filth-streaked faces. She coughed from the black exhaust that covered her.

Before her throat could clear, another auto, a flashy one

this time, driven by a milky-faced, delicate-skinned man, blared its way down the road. Jennie knew who *he* was. Often she had hidden behind the billboard-fence on the hill and watched his little girls playing in the garden. From afar, their shiny faces looked like polished white diamonds in sunbonnet settings. Maybe she too looked like a diamond—a black diamond. But her head dropped when she remembered that teacher told her that the white diamonds were worth more than the black ones.

Night fell and brought a sudden coldness with it. The woods along the side of the road became alive with nocturnal calls and screams. But the road seemed deserted. The last cars had left the factory. Jennie crawled from the hedges and wiped the dirt from her elbows and knees. She almost wept as she glanced down at her soiled white dress. She felt for the knife in her pocket. Yes, it was still there. As she put the bag under her arm again, and resumed her walk, she told herself she was not afraid. But a little shiver came to annoy her and run icily down her spine.

A sad, pale moon came up, white and round, blinking out of sight when the clouds passed by.

She hummed quietly to herself, "*Glo-ry Ha-la-lu-u-yah!*"

The round, vapory moon seemed transparent for a moment, and Jennie felt she was looking into a huge crystal ball.

She *did* see a huge crystal ball. It was the very one she had seen a month ago at the fair. The gypsy and her crystal ball. A little nine-year-old with big, brown eyes staring hard at the mystical globe before her.

The gypsy was hiding her face, but her hands were brown like Katina, the mulatto. Even her voice sounded a bit like Katina's. But Jennie knew that this wasn't Katina—it was a *gypsy* at the *fair*, and there was music in the air and the room was filled with a strange music. The gypsy told her what she must do and the way that she, little Jennie, could grow up and do whatever she pleased. It was all so very simple.

Jennie remembered how her eyes strained to look into the crystal and how sparkling it seemed to her. Now, as she walked into the dark, she opened her eyes wide as if she were back at the fair again gazing into the crystal ball.

"You must never tell this to anyone," warned the brown

gypsy. "It is against the law that you do this. If anyone were to find out, you would be put in prison or beaten or even . . ." the gypsy's eyes widened to burning yellow-white torches, her lips twitched, and trembled and spat, "*lynched!*"

She gave Jennie a piece of paper with instructions which Jennie memorized and then tore into little pieces and burned.

Jennie remembered these instructions. As she neared the factory gate, she grasped the knife handle firmly. Then she lay down flat on her stomach and started to wriggle under the fence. Her dress caught on the wire. She wanted to cry out, but she didn't dare.

A huge mound of cotton bales, piled high beside the railroad shed, marked the end of the trail. Jennie flung the empty sack over her shoulder and hurried toward it. She could make out the heavy form of the night watchman under an arclight at the end of the field. She held her breath as he flashed his light among the cotton bales. As he shone his light away from her for a moment, she ran to the rear of a gray company office building and hid. A light shone from inside the building. Jennie looked in. An old scrubwoman, tired and wan, was just finishing her waxing.

Jennie watched her. "Huh!" Jennie thought. "She ain't notten but trash. She's dumb. Go on, scrub, ol' lady. If you're smart, you'd a done what I'm gonna do."

The old woman rubbed her last corner and rose to put the brushes and wax in the closet.

"Snowball always pulls ma hair an' tells me that ah'm gonna be like you sum day. But no!" she whispered softly and difantly, "A'm gonna work in de big city. In a big of-fice. Wid swarms of white folks an' everybody callin' me, 'Miss Jennie Jefferson'."

The colored woman sighed as if she had heard what Jennie was saying. She put on her faded hat and prepared to leave.

"You gonna walk home, but a car an' a chauffeur am gonna call fo' me when Ah goes home. Wid a prince that got so much dough, he eats *chittlins* fo' breakfast an' supper. Ah gotta plan dat only me an' de gypsy-who-sound-like-Katina don' know about dat cotton."

The old scrubwoman's departure interrupted Jennie's thoughts. Jennie turned to watch the old woman waddle away. She saw her pause to talk to the night watchman,

then suddenly break into loud guffaws and heave her jelly-like stomach up and down in uncontrolled laughter. Jennie didn't like this laugh; it was something like the way her sister Theo-with-the-scarred-face had laughed before she had noticed Jennie in the barn. At last the old woman was gone.

Jennie rushed toward the pile of cotton bales and began climbing them. Although it was cold, her body broke into a profuse sweat. Her foot scraped over a bale wire. The noise attracted the night watchman. He shone his light in the direction of the bales. Jennie crouched down behind a bale until he shifted his light to another place. A drifting cloud covered the moon, and in the dark Jennie scampered to the top of the hill of cotton bales, and brought the knife from her pocket. Her entire body strained in one whole effort for breath.

While she waited for the moon to reappear, she opened the blade and ripped into the heart of the topmost bale. Then Jennie's little black hands dug into the soft, white cotton and filled part of her sack. The clouds moved away from the moon and the sky was filled with light. For a moment Jennie's black head silhouetted against the bright sky seemed surrounded by a halo—like pictures of the virgin in the church. When she looked down she could see the edges of the factory and the forest spread out like a fairyland. Staring fixedly at the moon, Jennie pricked her finger with the sharp knife and let the blood fall into the cotton in the bale. Then she stood up straight and pressed the cotton hard against her face. Her lips moved very slightly as she recited the directions that the gypsy-who-talked-like Katina told her to memorize. The magic words that would lead her into a new life of joy and happiness. She spoke them carefully, and as clearly as she could, her eyes shining and filled with a strange hope.

*"O cotton, cotton, soft and white,
I have sought thee in the night.
I have climbed a Mount', composed of thee,
Now grant this only wish to me.
I rub thee on my face with might,
Please turn my skin from Black to White."*

FRAGMENT

Look, you, at the sunrise, at the pines
That reach up, not to touch experimentally,
But only worship in humble silence.
Look, you, at each tiny flower and bird,
Living only to blend together all other
Beauties with their fragrance and song.
Look, you, and wonder why you live.

—Weston Emery.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

Professor X has said today
That we must change and do away
With ancient ways of discipline
That leave the childish mind a din.
“The children of our day must be,”
He shouted, “Handled differently.
Because of parents’ nagging ways,
Our younger set is in a daze.
Let all your children be at ease
And do exactly as they please.”

As an example, I shall tell
Of little Johnny Sittingwell.
He bit his nails down to the ‘quick’
Until his mother felt quite sick
From worrying about her son,
And asked me just what could be done.
I outlined our psychology,
And she departed, thanking me.
In two weeks John had shot the cat,
Had clubbed his father with a bat,
Had set the neighbor’s house on fire,
Had punctured mother’s back left tire.
At night, in bed, he screams and wails,
But never, *never* bites his nails.

Joyce Valerie Jungclas.

