

Rollins College

Rollins Scholarship Online

The Flamingo

Winter 1949

Flamingo, Winter, 1949, Vol. 24, No. 2

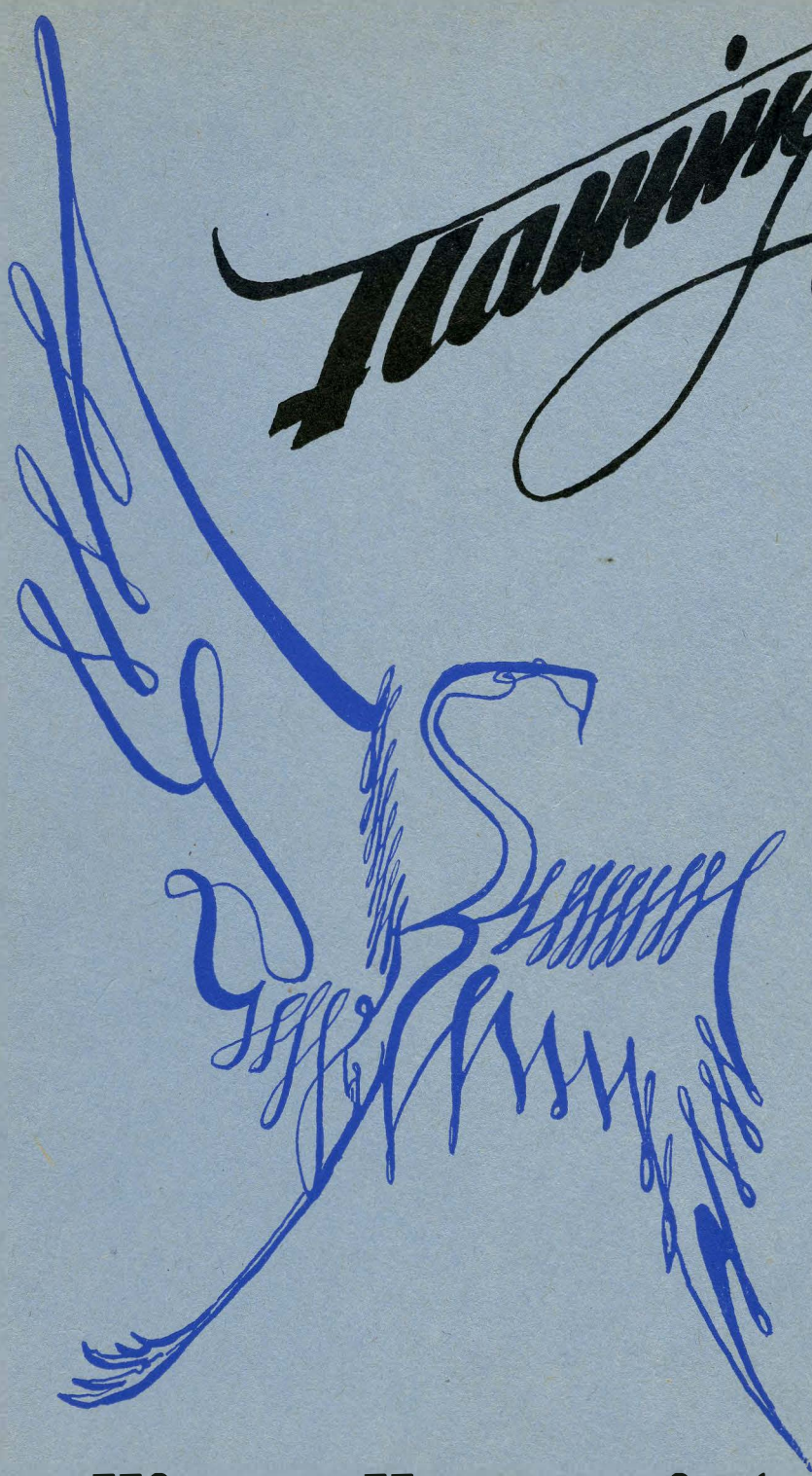
Rollins College Students

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.rollins.edu/flamingo>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Training



rollins college - winter

The beauty of the bloom
Is in the flowering.
The bud has never lived
Which fails in opening.
Know then, the first warm breeze
Will break the binding sheath.
So, have no need to seize
Protection from the flower,
Force not the opening
But wait the gentle spring.
—J. F. Leonard

literary



quarterly



HAROLD P. McKINNEY
Editor-in-chief

NAN VAN ZILE
Business Manager

Dan Hudgens
Art

Stuart James
Fiction

Jan Chambers
Non-fiction

Hall Tennis
Poetry

Mary Baily
Exchange

Grace Butt
Manuscript

N. C. Starr
Faculty Advisor

Eleanor Hummel
Asst. Business Mgr.

Janet Ott
Asst. Non-fiction

Harry Baldwin
Asst. Art

Joan Leonard
Asst. Poetry

A GRIM FAIRY TALE

GRANNY Konfeterbaum had been our housekeeper for many years. When she died, we wanted to bury her next to her husband, but the will was definite. The small urn of ashes didn't seem much to send back to a blasted Germany—so we surrounded it with clothing and food. The package left the same day the letter did. The letter told Granny's daughter, Gretchen, to bury the ashes beneath the old linden tree, Granny's favorite childhood spot.

A letter of gratitude from Gretchen came yesterday.

"Your wonderful package arrived . . . I made soup of the black powder last night; it was very good. The lovely container it came in now holds the first linden blooms of spring . . ."

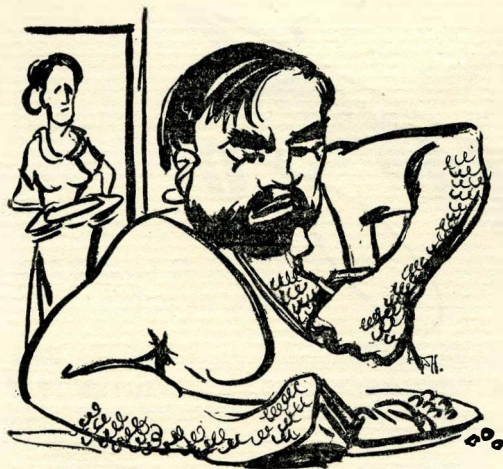
I hope my first letter ends up in the dead-letter office.

Flamingo

VOLUME TWENTY-FOUR NUMBER TWO WINTER 1949

IN THIS ISSUE

Titles	Page
A POEM..... <i>by</i> J. F. LEONARD	1
A GRIM FAIRY TALE..... ANONYMOUS	2
IT AIN'T GONNA RAIN TOMORROW <i>by</i> MARILYN LAHN	4
THE CORRECT TIME..... <i>by</i> GORDON CLARK	8
GOD BLESS MOMMY..... <i>by</i> MEG SMITH	20
BEN MHOR—A POEM..... <i>by</i> GORDON B. CLARK	24
COBH, EIRE—A POEM..... <i>by</i> GORDON B. CLARK	25
ROSE HILL..... <i>by</i> DALLAS WILLIAMS	26
A POEM..... <i>by</i> SAM BURCHERS	33
A POEM..... <i>by</i> RICHARD W. GLATTHAR	33
A POEM..... <i>by</i> HAROLD MCKINNEY	33
PERFECT VENGEANCE..... <i>by</i> HAROLD MCKINNEY	34
A FRAGMENT..... <i>by</i> HAROLD MCKINNEY	39
FROST IN THE TEPEE..... <i>by</i> SAM BURCHERS	40
EUGENICS..... <i>by</i> JACK E. TEAGARDEN	46
RAIN: IN THE MANNER OF POE. <i>by</i> STUART JAMES	47



IT AIN'T GONNA RAIN TOMORROW

by MARILYN LAHN

PAPA sits slumped in his chair, sopping big lumps of stale bread in a bowl of greasy gravy. He eats like the pigs outside, making as much noise, and shovin' more food in his mouth before he's swallowed the first mouthful. He slops gravy all over his black beard but he don't bother to clean it off. He don't look up at us kids once, nor at Mama, and he ain't thinkin' about nothin' except soppin' his bread with his big grimey hands. His thick black eyebrows come together in a frown, like always. Always frownin' and always mad. Funny, how he's got them wrinkles on the sides of his eyes. They call 'em laugh wrinkles, but I ain't never seen him laugh.

Mama ain't eatin much of anything. She just sorta keeps pickin crumbs off the bread. "More gravy, Jessie? Gravy, gal? Eat yuh dinner, Molly. Eat so's you'll be strong and pretty." Mama's skin is the color of the ashes in the fireplace after the wood's all burnt up. Her face is all kinda shrivelled up and wrinkled. She looks like an old, old woman, but she ain't really old at all. Her eyes always look hurt and sad, the way our dog's do when he's been bad and we hit him. She always smells of potato peelings, and starch, and all kitchen things, and she walks and talks weary-like.

Molly, keeps jabberin about what she learnt in school, talkin, talkin, talkin in her squeaky voice, but there ain't nobody listenin except maybe Mama. Yuh never can really

tell if she's listenin or not. But finally Papa, with his thick hoarse voice, says, "Shut up with thet talkin!" And Molly starts to cry, and Mama soothes her with soft words and hands her some more bread.

Jessie sits quietly, her beautiful face sullen and angry, her dark eyes flashing. She keeps lookin at Papa like she wants to kill him. Then she looks at Mama, and there's pity in her face. But it ain't the kind of pity that yuh feels when yuh see someone yuh love sufferin and yuh wanta hold em and stroke em and take the pain away. It's more the kind of pity yuh feel when yuh see an old person dyin of the cough or somethin—an old person who's a stranger to yuh and yuh don't try to help cause there ain't nothin yuh can do.

Jessie won't look at me. She hardly ever looks at me now. She used to laugh with me and tease me, and comb my hair with her hand. She used to talk to me like she never talked to nobody else. She'd tell me things; she'd tell me all about Joe, and about how much she loved him. Joe was a big blonde Swede who used to call on Jessie. Papa hated Joe and never spoke to him when he came in the house. So Joe was always very quiet and was anxious to get Jessie out. That way, I never got to know Joe much, but I liked him cause Jessie did, and I loved what he did to Jessie.

While she was going with him she was always laughin, showin her bright white teeth, and she sang a lot in her low throaty voice. But now Joe don't come around no more, and Jessie is sullen and quiet. There's pain and anger in her flashin eyes and she don't look at me no more. Guess I love Jessie better'n anybody in the world, and it makes my heart break to see her unhappy. I want to touch her pretty, dark face, and tell her that maybe Joe will come back. I want to take her hand and make her comb my hair, and tell her to sing, but something holds me back. Maybe it's cause I don't really believe Joe will come back—and maybe it's cause there's somethin else—that it ain't only Joe's not coming back that makes Jessie look that way. I guess I feel that she's got some secret, some black hidden secret, and that she'd never tell me what it is and that it's gonna come between us like a wall, and that Jessie ain't ever gonna tease me again.

Everybody's finished dinner and Mama says, "help me

with the dishes, Jessie,” and Jessie just screws up her mouth. So I say, “Jessie sick, Mama. I’ll help ya,” and Papa starts screaming, “she’s always sick—she ain’t no good, she ain’t no good.”

I’m helpin Mama with the dishes and I say: “Mama, why does Papa keep saying Jessie ain’t no good—she is good, she is. Maybe she’s sick, Mama. When are things gonna be different? Ain’t anything ever gonna change?”

Mama’s voice is weary and she says: “Things change, daughter.” She is only half speakin. “Tomorra’s a’comin. See, it’s rainin now. But the rain’s gonna stop; tomorrow the sun’ll be shinin. It ain’t gonna rain tomorrow. Things change.”

I’m helpin Mama with the dishes, but I ain’t thinkin what I’m doin. I’m thinkin about Jessie and how beautiful she is. But I’m thinkin that she don’t laugh no more, and the secret that’s pullin her away from me. I’m thinkin about Papa always callin her bad, when I know Jessie’s good. She’s a good girl, she’s good, she’s good!

“Is Jessie sick, Mama, is she?”

“I don’t know, girl, she never tells me nothin,” and Mama’s face looks hurt and scared.

The dishes are done and my hands smell of strong soap and dirty linen. I take the garbage out for Mama and the rain comes down in great big drops, cool on my hot face and neck. The moon shines with a kinda pale light and it looks scary. I come back and sit in the back hall for a while, where it smells of musty, damp wood and apples and it’s cool and quiet and I can think about Jessie.

But I can’t think for long, cause I hear Papa in the front room screamin at Jessie and Jessie cryin, and I think “the secret, the secret,” and fear catches me in the throat, almost chokes me. It tastes awful and makes my stomach sick. I try to get up, but I feel all weak and it takes a couple of minutes before I kin pull myself together and run to the front room. There’s Mama standin in the doorway clutching tight to Molly. When she sees me going at papa, she grabs me by the arm and holds me.

Papa’s yellin: “I always knowed it. I always knowed it. You was no good when you was borned. Slut! Cheap slut! Git outta this house. Ya ain’t no daughter of mine! You slut. Whore!”

Jessie's voice, usually so low, is high and crackin and she's speakin loud and fast, hysterical like.

"Sure, I'll get out. Give me some money and I'll get out. Miser! Miser!" Then she starts shriekin, "Give me some money. I'll need money, and I'll get out."

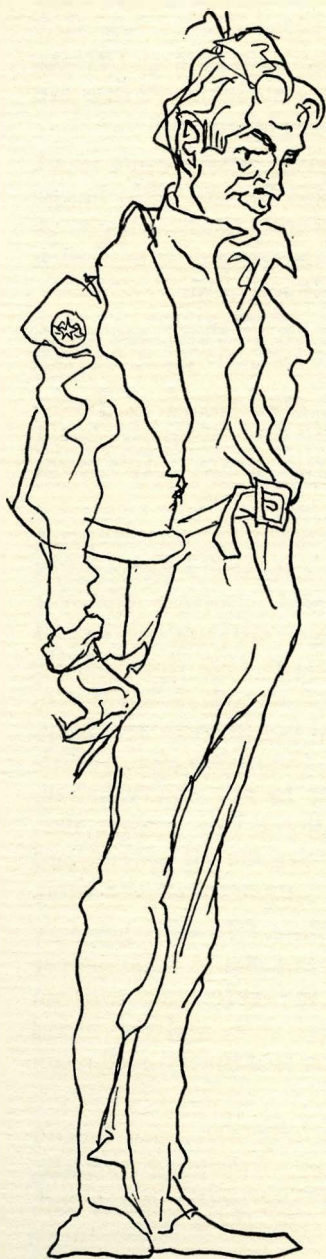
I feel cold and sick, and start cryin, cause I can't stand to see Jessie hurt. Then I see papa reach for the whip hangin on the wall, and he starts lashing at Jessie, swingin at her, thrashing, and it makes a hollow sound against her thick flesh, and she's on the floor rollin and screamin.

I break away from Mama and I go at Papa, trying to pull him away, screamin "Stop! Stop!" and gettin in the way of the whip so he'll be hurting me instead of Jessie. He keeps fightin me off and he's cursin and swearing, but I keep at him, cause he's gotta stop hurtin Jessie. He's gotta stop!

All of a sudden I see the poker settin by the fireplace and I grab it and hit Papa's head with it, and I keep hittin and hittin and the blood's squirtin out, squirtin all over everything, and Papa's on the floor, very still and his head's all mashed. I can hear Mama hollerin and then Molly cryin, and all of a sudden I'm weak and scared. I fall down, sobbin. I lay there for a long time and not knowin anything. When I finally get up, I see Mama on the rockin chair, holdin Molly on her lap, holdin her close to her shrivelled-up bosom, stroking her hair hard and fierce-like, rockin her, rockin her like she was a baby. Her eyes are all glazed and kinda vacant-lookin, and she's moanin, moanin all the time.

Jessie's sittin in the corner, weepin softly with her face in her hands. I want to see her face but she won't uncover it. Her shoulders shake, and that's the only way you can tell she's cryin. Papa's lyin there, real still, and the blood on his head and on the floor is beginnin to dry into redbrown clots.

I git up slowly and walk to the window cause I can't stand to look at any of them anymore. It's hard to walk, like I been sick for a long time and jest gettin outta bed. I look out the window and it's still rainin. But the rain's gonna stop. It's gotta stop sometime. Sometime tomorrow the sun's gonna shine. Things change. Things is gonna change.



THE CORRECT TIME

by GORDON B. CLARK

"WHERE'S Kalahan?"

The question called for no answer. The clock over the bar said eleven twenty. For an hour and a half that morning we had been speculating on the same question. All of us were there now—except Kal. His absence was like the absence of bubbles in champagne.

There was an uneasy silence and then Kurt—probably the most confused navigator the Air Force had ever produced—continued his explanation to Morris, who had joined our squadron late in the war, that it was a trumped-up story that he had mistaken Malta for Sicily.

This was the fourth day of our squadron reunion. The first since the war. Johnson had arranged the whole thing. Only nineteen out of a possible seventy-four had shown up. Wives, babies, jobs, finances had taken their toll. However, we were making up in intensity what had been lost in numbers. True, we were a little more circumspect than in the old days—but that still gave us quite a bit of room for self-expression.

Kalahan, coiner of our immortal battle cry: **NOT LED INTO BATTLE—BUT PUSHED!** had set the general tone of events. It was he who had snapped us out of it when some of us began to wonder just what the hell our reunion added up to.

None of the boys had changed much. Kal least of all. He could still lull us into a nostalgic mood that was heart-rending, then slap out a callous remark that dumped the present over us like a cold shower. And during those four days he had wavered in and out of our rooms as mysteriously and abruptly as ever.

We stared at our drinks. The minute hand dropped lower. Then those of us facing the door saw it open uncertainly. A thin figure hesitated on the threshold. Kal's entrance was definitely un-Kalahanish. We saw Kal at the same moment as Pete, the bartender. Pete looked up languidly, turned away, then snapped his head around with the speed of a striking rattler.

"Kalahan!"

There was no indication from Kal that he saw us or heard Pete. He walked slowly but directly to the bar, leaned against it and stared intently at the rows of bottles behind Pete.

Kal was bareheaded, his black hair disordered. His tall body somehow conveyed in its entirety a sense of unreality. He passed one hand carefully over his unshaven chin. We noticed it had been cut slightly. His lips moved and we heard an incoherent jumble of words. He seemed to be reading the labels on the bottles.

Finally he unzipped his worn flying jacket—he wore a suit only in the evening—tucked his plaid shirt tightly under his faded pinks and lifted one moccasin-clad foot to the rail. Then clasping his hands before him he continued his perusal of the bottles.

From any angle Kal was thin but this morning he looked like an only partially rejuvenated broomstick. He leaned more heavily against the bar, unfolded his hands and reached for the dice in a purely mechanical movement. His eyes dropped only for an instant as the dice tumbled to a stop.

"We were looking for you last night, Kal." John-

son's voice was discreet. "You and Tony. We had tickets for a show."

Kal continued to stare straight ahead as though he hadn't heard Johnson. He seemed to be searching for something. Whether it was among the bottles or elsewhere was impossible to tell.

Johnson bent humbly over his drink. The rest of us sipped reflectively. After all, it was still early. We watched Kal from the corners of our eyes. The invitation to become alive was his to take or refuse.

Kal finished his study of the shelves. He hunched his shoulders forward, shuddered slightly, and looked at Pete.

"Give me a Black Satin," he said tonelessly.

There was just the suggestion, the faintest of veiled warnings, underlining his request. Yet it was plain enough. He knew what he wanted when he wanted it and was not open to any suggestions prompted by a concern in his mental or physical welfare.

We had found Pete's Bar a few doors down the street from our hotel. Pete had served with the Engineers on some of the airstrips from which we had flown. A common bond was established. And in those few days he and Kal had become as brothers, a fact unwarranted by Kal's first observation that it was a mystery to him how anyone from that branch of the services had ever attained such a pinnacle of success as was Pete's. Pete had bridled momentarily, but something in Kal's voice had made him relax. Kal had that knack of causing people to remember things, the good things. They like that. Pete had taken an immediate and almost clinical interest in the fluctuations of Kal's mind.

Each morning Pete had restored Kal to some semblance of stability with a concoction that, according to Kal, was of infinitely more importance than the atom bomb. Hence this direct request for a more malevolent eye-opener was, of necessity, stated with the proper nuance.

Pete, after one glance at the expressionless yet unrelenting face before him, shrugged his shoulders and picked up a large water glass. He measured the two shots of bourbon insolently, added a dash of lemon with an irritable gesture, following up with an openly vindictive jab with the bitters. Then he held the glass under the beer tap with professional unconcern.

"Go easy on the satin," Kal said flatly.

Pete placed the drink before Kal and stepped back and watched Kal without visible emotion. For seconds Kal remained motionless, viewing the glass as if from a great distance. Finally he placed one hand around it, lifted it and revolved it slowly. He brought it to his lips, fixed his glance coldly on Pete, and drained the glass in one easy and prolonged swallow. Returning the glass to the bar he observed it intently, then lifted his glance again to the shelves.

"Anybody got a cigarette?"

The sound of his voice and the fact that he had finally recognized our presence prompted a quick flurry of packs. He took one from the nearest, held it up to eye level, then thrust it back in the general direction from which it had come.

"Only peasants smoke those stinking cheroots," he said wearily.

Another pack was held out and he took one and stuck it between his lips without inspection, inhaling deeply as the donor followed up with a match. We felt as if a great weight was being eased from the morning. Kalahan was relaxing.

"Anybody seen that bastard Tony this morning?"

No one had seen Tony since he had disappeared with Kal the previous evening. But everyone smiled. The ice was breaking. Kal was groping for dry land. It was evident that one of the events that made up Kal's life and which exploded in a sort of irregular chain action, had occurred. We were witnessing only the last tremors.

"He wasn't here neither," Pete said.

Kal looked at him with an air of bored and arrogant superiority.

"Either, either," he said slowly and distinctly. "*Either*, not neither."

"Tony wasn't here," Pete said.

Kal indicated his glass with a raised index finger. Pete picked it up and began mixing another Black Satin.

"So it was like I was saying," Kal said, as though interrupted in the middle of a lengthy speech, "me and Tony was at Gregory's Grill last night . . ."

He stopped abruptly and stared haughtily at Pete. Pete's mouth remained open but he made no sound.

"Me and Tony, I said. Okay?"

"Okay," Pete said, and closed his mouth.

"That place burns me up," Kal continued. "Fancy iron bars over the windows and pictures of foxes chasing horses on the walls. A bit of Merrie Old England. Pip! pip! and all that." Kal snorted. "Remember Creepy Joe's?" We remembered and smiled. "There was the real thing for you. So old it smelled!

"Anyway, me and Tony have had a firkin or two when we roll in there. Right away we can see people looking at us like we were from Mars. You know the kind; tweeds, pipes, the old look, and quiet like a church.

"So we're standing at one end of the bar. Also there are three yo-yo's sitting at it, each by himself. We have a couple of drinks and get to the point where we're wishing we were some place with a little excitement, like for instance a bankrupt morgue. It gets under my skin so I says to Tony: 'Let's ask one of these donkeys at the bar for the time. If he gives even a minute later than my watch you clobber him. If it's earlier, then I'll clobber him.'"

Kal paused, glanced at Pete and picked up his drink. He sipped it, dropped his cigarette on the floor, took another from a pack of his own, lit it and continued.

"So we walk up to the first donkey who is sitting with his back to us. Tony says: 'Say, you got the time?' And this guy is a quiet looking guy with a nice gray suit and he looks at us and feels around in his suit—and to God, he ain't got a clock on him!

"We pass on to the next donkey. He has a beard that sticks out on each side like a runaway hedge. I tap him on the shoulder and he puts his glass down and looks up at me.

"'You got the hour, chum?' I say.

"He looks at me kinda funny from a big red face and then starts making noises like someone from Upper Sobbovia. 'Come on,' I says to Tony, 'what with this probably bein' a UN coffee house there'll be international repercussions if we straighten out this yo-yo.'

"So we arrive at the third donkey. By this time everyone in the place is watching us, probably thinking it is some kind of an act. I notice the bartender is trailing us inside the bar.

"Tony grabs this guy, who is leaning over the bar.

The way Tony grabs him I can see he isn't going to waste any more time keeping peace in Gregory's Grill. The guy stands up when Tony touches him and he is a tall, nice dressed guy with a chin like Superman's.

"What's the time, colonel?" Tony yells. And this guy just sort of grins friendly like, flips up his cuff and says: 'Eleven thirty-three on the nose.'

"Tony starts smiling. He eases himself back just a little and says: 'Well, who's it gonna be, me or you?'" I look close at my watch and nearly passed out. I'll be damned if I didn't have eleven thirty-three too.

"Tony," I says, 'this ain't our night. We coincide.'

"That really shook Tony. He just stood there and blinked at me. Then he walks up to the bar and orders a drink. I follow him up and ditto. Tony takes out his watch, lays it on the bar and studies it. I can see the thing has hit him hard. Finally he says to me 'What time you got now, Kal?'

"I take a look and tell him I got eleven forty-two. Well, I hadn't any more than said that when the sonofabitch clobbered me, right on the chin. I went over backwards right into the middle of a party of four dames. When I get up the whole place is in an uproar and Tony is yelling that we forgot to synchronize our watches.

"I start across the floor after him and then about forty donkeys landed on us and we're tossed out like a couple of bums."

Kal dropped his cigarette on the floor. We could hear the sounds on the street piling into the silence.

"Give me a small beer, Pete," Kal said.

"Sure thing, Kal."

We relaxed and Johnson told Kal about the meeting we were holding that afternoon. Plans for the future and all that. Kal said he'd be there, but you couldn't always depend on Kal. Then Kal looked at us sharply, almost as if he were worried.

"All of you sure you haven't seen Tony this morning?"

We shook our heads.

"Anything wrong, Kal?" Reilly asked.

"No, not a thing," Kal said. "And remind me this afternoon to tell you yo-yo's how tough it was, back in the old days at Algiers."

He walked to the door, then turned back to us.

"One of you donkeys take care of my check. And if Tony comes in let me know."

His face still seemed worried as he went out.

We began straggling into Johnson's room a little before three. It was a surprise to find Kal already there. Even more surprised at the relative splendor of his appearance.

Kal was sitting by a window, looking down on the street. His hair was combed, his face shaven. A dark, freshly pressed suit, hung nonchalantly on his spare frame. Whenever anyone entered the room he would swing around toward the door, then back again. With a shrug Johnson made Kal's mood evident. Kal was not talking.

We all knew a few things about Kal's silent periods. Basically there were two reasons for them. First, that something had happened. Second, that something was going to happen.

Kal had been very silent the day he had brought his plane back from a raid with Nevers, his co-pilot, dead in the seat beside him and he with a shell fragment stuck in his back.

He had been practically serene the day our very crowded officer's latrine had collapsed into a very deep hole. It was incredible that so stoutly a constructed building could have given away. But that was before a rather determined group of investigators discovered that two large timbers had been sawed almost through.

"Sabotage," Kal said later. "Everywhere these days, sabotage."

Still we were rather puzzled as to why Kal had closed up again after such a remarkable recovery that morning. I could see the boys trying to figure it out. Then Johnson came up to me.

"Jim," he said, "take a spin down to Tony's room and see if he's in yet. No answer on the phone but we'd better make sure."

I was surprised. It didn't seem natural that Kal was worrying about Tony. But I went. A chambermaid in the hall let me into Tony's room after I had pounded on the door for a minute. The room was in perfect order. Then the chambermaid said no one had slept there last night. That hardly seemed important but I went back and told Johnson what I had learned. He went over to Kal and told him.

We had all arrived by then, that is except Tony. Johnson stood up and motioned for silence.

"Now, are all of you positive you haven't seen Tony today?"

Kal had swung around and was watching us intently. We all shook our heads.

"Kal thinks something's happened to Tony."

"Tch, tch, tch, tch," clicked Morris.

"Oh, heavens to Betsy," Silvers said.

"No, not that, anything but that!" Reilly fell on his knees and grabbed Johnson around the legs. "Please, please, say it isn't so!"

"Cut it!"

When Kal put that sound in his voice things were generally cut. We stared at him. His face was hard, his eyes serious.

"What's eating you, Kal?" Reilly said. "So Tony hasn't showed up today. So what?"

"He didn't sleep in his room last night."

"So . . . ?"

It was evident Reilly had the same thoughts we had. Tony is no dope. And Tony is about as big and rugged as they come. He is scarcely the type one loses sleep over.

"Tony was broke," Kal said. "He left me outside Gregory's saying he had a date. I didn't have much on me. But I promised to lend him twenty-five this morning. Tony didn't show up and no one has seen him."

There was something a little odd about that. On Kal's part the gesture was practically epic. Kal had always been broke. And as for Tony not showing up for the money, well, that just wasn't Tony. When you've lived with fellows through the rough days you get to know that it is the little things that are the tip off. Everyone was silent.

The phone rang and Silvers answered it. He listened for a moment, then motioned to Kal.

"Some joker wants to talk to a Mr. Kalahan. Got a queer voice."

Kal moved quickly.

"This is Kalahan."

Yeah . . . no . . . yeah." A long pause. "What!"

His face was expressionless when he turned to us, hand over the mouthpiece.

"Anybody here got a thousand they can spare?"

We just sat. Kal lifted the phone again.

"We're fresh out for the moment, chum. You know, the stock market, rum, ravishing, and roistering. I'll give you a ring in a decade or two."

He replaced the receiver methodically and returned to his chair by the window. We were sure it was news about Tony. Kal's face was still serious.

"Well, who was it?" Johnson said impatiently.

"Oh, you mean the call?" Kal spoke as if it were something that had happened in the dim past. "Oh, that was just some yo-yo having a little fun. Probably Pete and one his gags."

Johnson was shuffling papers on his bed. He asked for suggestions for next year's reunion and read the names of the boys who hadn't come. We started talking about the old days. Then all of a sudden Kal got up and went to the door.

"I'll see you donkeys in a couple of hours," he said, and went out quickly.

We were having dinner on a rather elaborate scale that night; reservations, steak, and all that. Naturally Kal hadn't shown up at the end of two hours. There was no sign of him by the time dinner was scheduled and we decided to start eating without him. Then, half way through our dinner, Kal walked in.

He waved gaily to us and came up and sat down in an empty place and began grabbing celery from all the plates within reach. There was something relaxed, almost joyful in his movements.

"You found Tony?" Johnson asked.

Kal nodded affirmatively and then went silently to work on the plate placed in front of him. We sat around smoking—and waiting. When Kal had finished he called the waiter.

"Can you get me some dry, stale bread?"

The waiter looked puzzled but nodded.

"And a jar with some water in it?"

The waiter looked at the rest of us and nodded again.

Kal leaned back as the waiter left.

"We're going on a little journey, friends," he said.

"To jail. But just for a visit, so don't worry."

"You mean Tony's in jail?" Morris asked.

"Now there's perception for you. Right. I haven't decided yet whether or not to let him out."

We waited silently. There was nothing else to do.

"Tony's being held on a charge of burglary," Kal finally said. "Held for a thousand dollar bail. That was Tony on the phone this afternoon. He didn't want the rest of you to know about it. We're dropping in to see him at ten."

"Is he guilty?" Morris asked.

"You see what I mean," Kal said to the rest of us. "That's the danger we run, inviting novices to our affairs. All in favor of stoning Morris to death say aye."

We all said, "aye."

"When I left you I went down to the station. The minute I walked into the place I began to have a guilty conscience. First thing I knew I was going back over my life. But that didn't help. It only made me feel worse.

"So I dropped my flaps and came in for a landing in front of the desk. They gave me the story. Tony had been picked up over on 58th about eleven thirty last night. Tony's tale is that he was standing in front of this apartment house waiting for a cab. Suddenly this yo-yo dashes out of the building and grabs him, yelling two-forty. Then a crowd starts milling around and a prowler car comes up and takes him away.

"The law's story is that an apartment in the building was robbed earlier in the evening and the joker that pulled the job was spotted getting away by the yo-yo that lives in the apartment. When this joker sees Tony hanging around he thinks it's the thief so he calls the law. What's more he comes down to the station last night and says he's sure Tony is the guy. And Tony was in no condition to give a very logical rebuttal.

"Well, I know it wasn't Tony but the way the chief is looking at me while he's explaining things I figure he's wondering whether to lock me up too or let me go and trail me until I slip a stiletto into someone."

"We should have had the chief in our squadron," Reilly said.

"Have that man stoned, too," Kal said.

"Then for some reason," Kal continued, "the reason being that I'm actually a repressed genius, I ask what time the crime took place. And I find out it was at ten fifteen.

"Then I feel sort of relieved and tell the chief that he can unbar the portals. That Tony's innocent. All the chief wants to know is do I have a thousand dollars handy.

"So I ask if I can see Tony and they lead me back through a lot of doors and into the middle of the cages. There's Tony, sitting in a corner of one of them reading a magazine just like any normal person. So I put a real serious expression on my face just as Tony sees me and stands up.

"He starts screaming that it's about time I showed up and have I got the thousand dollars so he can get the hell loose and straighten things out.

"I just shake my head sadly and say: 'Tony, please, let's not have any of that. After your promises. Mabel. The kids.' Then I sigh. 'I'll do the best I can, Tony. Have courage.'

"God, you should have seen his face. First I thought he was going to cry. Then he looked like Dr. Jekyll just after tossing off one of his specials. When he started clawing at the bars I knew it was time to take off. I could still hear him screaming when I reached the street.

"Then I had to go to work. I grabbed a cab and went to Gregory's Grill. I hadn't any more than stepped inside when the bartender was telling me I'd better leave while I could still solo.

"It was a toss-up for a few seconds. Finally I made him see the light and he let me sit at the bar while I told him about Tony. First he said I should be in with Tony. Then he says he doesn't want to get mixed up in anything. I work him over that hump and then he agrees. He says he can make the station at ten tonight and that he knows where the big guy, Superman, lives and I ought to go see him because he's really a big wheel.

"So I dash over to the address he gives me, a real plushy place, and Superman isn't in. It took me until just a little while ago to find him. Finally I caught up with him and God!"—Kal's face lengthened—"he is really a big wheel, in the State Department. If we'd ever clobbered him we'd have had J. Parnell Thomas working overtime. But I explain things to him and he's O. K. Says he'll be at the station at ten."

"Oh, I see," Kurt said as Kal lifted his coffee cup. "This fellow and the bartender can prove Tony was at Gregory's at the time of the burglary. It's the time element."

"A genius," Kal said. "Everywhere I go there's a genius."

We pile into taxis, Kal with the package the waiter had given him. We're at the station right on the dot. Kal leads the way in. Two men are there, one short, heavy guy and a tall, good-looking fellow in expensive clothes, talking to the officer at the desk. The officer is making notes and nodding.

Kal shook hands with the big guy and we all clustered about while the three of them went over things with the officer. Evidently the big guy was important because he did most of the talking and the whole thing was over in a few minutes.

Pretty soon a cop came out with Tony following behind him. He was smiling, but as soon as he saw Kal his eyes started glittering.

"Listen, chum . . ." he began, but someone told him to shut up. Kal shoved the bundle into his hands.

Tony didn't say any more. Everyone stood around smiling and then the bartender and the big guy left. Tony signed some sort of paper and then we walked out of the station.

"You guys could-a had me out earlier than this," Tony said, as we stood on the sidewalk. He didn't look at Kal.

"Sorry, old man," Kal said. "Dinner engagement, you know. But we didn't forget you. Open up your package."

Tony tore off the paper wrapping. He lifted a piece of the bread and banged it against the lamp post. Then he held the jar of water up to the light. Disappointment lined his face.

"By the way, Tony," Kal said, glancing at his wrist, "you got the correct time? I told the bartender we'd be up to Gregory's at ten thirty for a drink."

Tony was calming down. He grinned at us and lifted his arm to the light.

"Sure, Kal. It's . . . ah . . . ten twenty."

We didn't see Kal swing, but suddenly there was a sharp sound and Tony was sitting on the sidewalk, slices of bread around him and the water from the broken jar spreading between his legs.

"Sorry, chum," Kal said. "We should have synchronized our watches. I've got ten twenty-two."

When Tony stood up, still smiling, and clapped an arm around Kal's shoulder it gave us a good feeling. We knew then what it was that had brought us together.



"GOD BLESS MOMMY"

by MEG SMITH

BARBARA turned up her glass of milk and gulped it down quickly. She always put the milk off until last, then drank it in a hurry so maybe she wouldn't taste it. Why did Bernice always say that milk was good for you when it wasn't good at all?

The little girl wiggled her chair back from the table and stood up.

"Bernice, I've finished my breakfast, milk and all. May I . . ."

"That's a good girl, dear. Now wipe the mustache off and I'll get your coat. Johnson is waiting to take you to school."

"But, Bernice, could I just go in and tell Angel good morning?"

"Your mother is still asleep, Miss Barbara, and you mustn't disturb her. She went to a party last night, and she will be very tired today. Run along now. You'll see your mother this afternoon before she goes to Mrs. Sligh's cocktail party."

"Bernice, Angel did look pretty last night, didn't she?"

"But of course, Miss Barbara, your mother is a beautiful lady. Now here, put your coat on and I'll take you to the elevator. Johnson will be waiting for you at the side entrance. Now hurry or you will be late for school."

Barbara walked down the carpeted hall to the elevator at the end. The carpet was soft and thick and springy, and Barbara thought that she and Bernice sounded like two kittens tip-toeing along. The little girl reached up to punch the little black button and when the elevator door snapped open she stepped in, waving goodbye to Bernice.

Barbara liked the ride on the elevator each morning.

The shiny steel grillwork overhead reminded her of Perch's birdcage home that stood in the corner of the playroom near the window. As the elevator descended she hummed the song that Perch sang to Pinkie and her so often when they played house together in the playroom. When the elevator reached the fourteenth floor Barbara stopped humming in order to say good morning to Pinkie who joined her here each morning so that they might ride to Mrs. Pashley's school together. Barbara had been delighted when Pinkie moved to the hotel just four floors below her. It had been almost six months ago now, and they had decided at the very beginning to be Best-Friends. Pinkie was the first Best-Friend Barbara had ever had, and it hadn't taken long for Barbara to love Pinkie better than anyone . . . except, of course, Angel.

The little girls chattered endlessly all through the rest of the elevator ride and they were too wrapped up in conversation to even notice Johnson as he threaded his way through the early morning Park Avenue traffic toward Mrs. Pashley's School for Young Ladies.

"Mr. Henderson brought me a new book the other day, Pinkie. It's called 'Little Women,' and it's all about four girls. Two of them are sort of like us, they . . . Who's Mr. Henderson? . . . You know . . . the man who always sends Mommy yellow roses. . . . The one who looks like Captain Marvel after he says SHAZAM. Anyway the one named Amy in the book reminds me of . . ."

And so the talk continued as Barbara and Pinkie walked up Mrs. Pashley's steps holding hands.

Just four hours later Pinkie and Barbara skipped down those same steps and out to the car where Johnson was waiting. Barbara was glad that school was over for today. It hadn't gone so well, and she was relieved to be away from all those giggling little girls. Their laughter reminded her of the way water sounded going down the lavatory drain every morning when she brushed her teeth. They 'most always laughed the same way . . . except today when she tripped on the rug in the hall and bumped into Mrs. Pashley their laughter had sounded different. The giggles weren't the ones that the funny stories Miss Vaughn read to them brought forth. Somehow all the little mockings sounded loud and ringing in Barbara's ears, and she thought she might have to cry but Pinkie came up and placed her

arm around Barbara's shoulders. They walked away together, and everything seemed to be all right again.

When the two little girls reached the car Bernice was there as well as Johnson, and she told Barbara that her Mother had thought of a nice surprise for this afternoon.

"We are going to find you a beautiful new dress to wear at your mother's party tomorrow night, Barbara. Johnson will take us down to Jay Thorpe's and we will find the prettiest dress in the store for you."

"Will Angel meet us there, Bernice? Will she help us decide which dress is prettiest?"

"No, dear, your mother is busy this afternoon, but I am sure she will like the dress we decide on."

"Oh . . ." and Johnson wedged his way into the stream of traffic and headed toward Fifth Avenue.

The sales lady was tall and sleek, and Barbara thought she should be in the movies instead of a little girls' dress department. The sales lady probably thought the same thing, for she used as much dramatic ability in showing Barbara and Bernice little frilly dresses as the leading role in the latest melodrama would have called for. When at last she brought a blue organdy dress with tiers and tiers of ruffles and little pink rosebuds around the neck, Barbara and Bernice agreed that Angel would certainly think this was the prettiest one, so Bernice followed the sales lady to see that the dress was folded correctly when it was wrapped. Barbara sank down in the big round divan while she waited for Bernice, and whispered to Pinkie that she hoped they could eat in the playroom by themselves tonight since Angel wouldn't be there. When Bernice and the sales lady returned Barbara wiggled off the divan and followed Bernice toward the elevator.

Barbara was silent on the way home. Bernice thought she looked tired, and decided that she must see that Barbara went to bed on time tonight, and that she didn't keep the light on and read as she usually did. That child lives between the covers of a book, the nurse thought to herself. "Ah me, children are so carefree."

When Barbara ran into her mother's room, Angel was putting some of that sweet perfume behind her ears. Barbara stood still a minute and thought how tall and blonde and beautiful and how like a real angel her mother looked.

"Mommy, we found the very prettiest one! It's blue with little pink rosebuds around the neck and sleeves, and Bernice says it's just the dress you would have picked!

Bernice is taking it out of the box now. Come with me and let me show it to you."

"I'm sure it is lovely, darling, just like you. I haven't time to see it now, but sometime tomorrow you must dress up in it for me. Come here, sweet, and give Angel a kiss before she leaves. Be careful, hon, and don't muss Angel."

"Mommy, will you come in and see me when you come back? Will you come in and tell me good night?"

"It will be late, dear, and you must go to sleep like a sweet little girl. Bernice will tuck you in, and before you know it you will be dreaming. And Barbara, remember we call me Angel. Don't you know we both decided we liked that better than Mommy?"

"Yes, Momm—Angel. You are just like an angel and I love you very very much.

"Now run along dear. Bernice will have your dinner all ready in the playroom before long. Good night, darling. You are Angel's sweet little cherub."

Barbara ate her dinner at her little table by the window in the playroom. She and Pinkie played "banquet" during the meal. They were in a king's palace and were dining from golden plates and the king was so nice to them. He promised to grant them three wishes, and would use all the power in his kingdom to make them come true. Even after Bernice brought in the ice cream, they were still planning what wishes they would ask the king to grant them. At last they decided that the very first wish would be that they would always be as best friends as they were now.

Bernice helped Barbara get ready for bed early that night. She thought the little girl looked tired, and she made Barbara promise to go right to sleep and not read tonight.

When Bernice had turned out the light and closed the door behind her, Barbara looked for a long time at the two bright stars that were peeping into her window. She kept her eyes on those stars as she crawled out of bed and knelt quietly under the window. The little girl's lips moved ever so slowly, but if anyone had listened closely he could have heard the words she whispered while she looked up into the star-pricked sky.

"Dear God, bless my sweet Mommy, and my Daddy who's up there with you. Help me to be a good girl . . . and oh, dear God, please someday make Pinkie as real to everyone else as she is to me."

TWO POEMS BY GOR

BEN MHOR

The dark, Scotch woman came to the door
And after her a pale, thin man
With death-haunted eyes, her husband.
She brought water in a jar,
Gesturing toward the slack-uddered cow
On the lake pasture below.

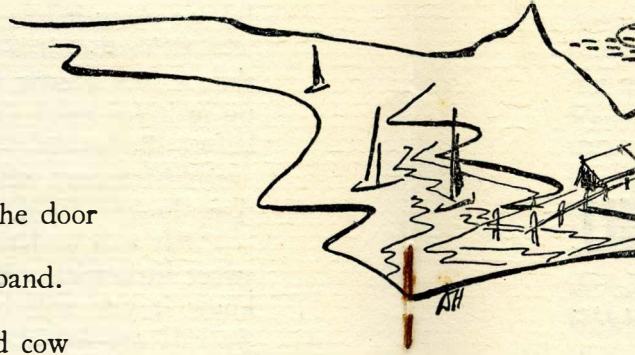
"They've climbed Ben Mhor," she said,
Her husband smiling weakly, muttering:
"For fifty years I've lived here
And was once half to the cairn,
But that was many years ago."

The woman's eyes sought upward,
As if she could see the wind
At its careless, continual play
With the rock cairn.

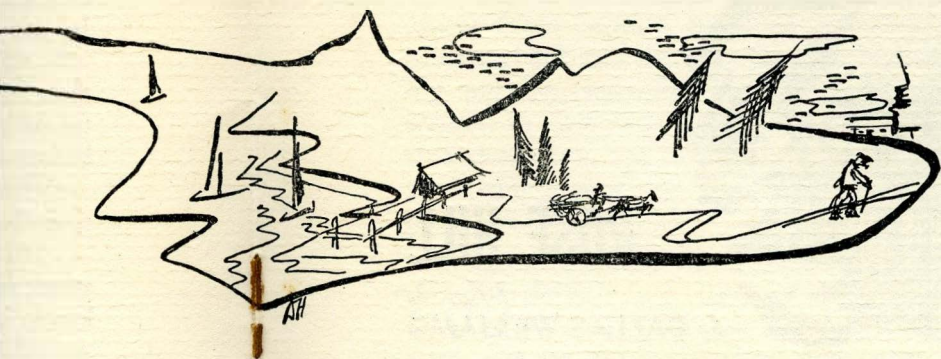
"There's a bird's nest," she said,
"Near the top. It seemed strange
To find such wee, blue eggs
Where there's nothing but rock and wind.
Yet I think the bird will still fly there
After the last stone's gone from the cairn."

Below, on the lake, a wind squall
Burst white over the sun-flecked water,
Sent a chill about the door. The man closed it.

The Scotch woman was alone—looking up beyond
The granite outcroppings toward the peak.



10 POEMS BY GORDON B. CLARK



COBH, EIRE

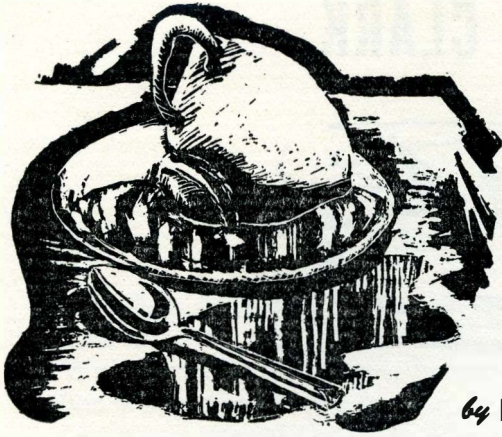
The old men idling on the piers
Tamp on their pipes and watch the years
Pass like jackdaws in the rain
And mouth again their old refrain

To all who come and pause to scan
The harbor. Here—they say—we ran
As young men out to sea. Those days
Were bright. And they tell of the ways

With them when the English came,
Fools that scoffed at the Irish flame;
Searching their homes for hidden guns,
Tramping the town to rolling drums.

After each sun the old men go
Back to their houses, row on row,
While the rotting hawsers limply sway
And tides deny both night and day.

Waiting . . . waiting . . . and not in vain
For the last jackdaw in the rain.



ROSE HILL

by DALLAS WILLIAMS

Nell almost dropped the coffee pot on the table. "Burn your hand, honey?" inquired her husband cheerfully. "Here, let's have a look at it."

Nell extended her arm stiffly across the table. "I do it every morning," she said thickly, "but you rarely notice."

"Put some Unguentine on it," came through the last of his orange juice.

"It's too late for that," she glared at him. "I told you I do it all the time, Claude."

"Then stop," he smiled.

Nell felt the tears rising in her eyes. "I would give anything," she thought, "if you weren't in such a good humor at this unmentionable hour." She found herself watching his head bent over his plate, the hair neatly parted and still damp at the sides.

"You can't expect me to look as good as you do in the mornings," she explained, gingerly wrapping her napkin around the coffee pot handle.

"Did I say there was anything wrong with the way you look?" inquired Claude pleasantly.

"You don't have to. I have eyes."

"Pretty ones, honey," Claude smiled into them. "Big and blue and full of dreams this morning."

"In other words I look sleepy." Nell picked up the cup of steaming brown liquid she had just poured and handed it to him unsteadily. "Just because you don't care is no reason to be so—smug," she articulated with difficulty.

Claude set his jaw firmly as he removed the half full saucer from beneath its china counterpart and poured the contents back into the cup. Silently Nell blessed him for saying nothing, knowing how he hated spilled things. She wanted to rush over and throw her arms around those massive shoulders, but her legs were gripped with their usual seven-thirty paralysis. Anyway, the shock would probably be too much if she did.

How could he stand this, every, every morning, she thought dully. And with such an uninspired creature in front of him. After a year of breakfasts together he didn't even put up the prescribed newspaper barrier. But that might be because he never put on his glasses until he had left the house. "I don't want you to remember me all day as a four-eyed old businessman," he had said once.

She brushed back a curl that had found its way over her left eyebrow. At least she didn't wear metal curlers or a handkerchief around her head; maybe this was the only thing that saved the situation. She wasn't so sure just how safe it was, however, after last night. Still, he looked innocent enough now, over his third piece of very loud toast. Nell cushioned her chin in the palm of her hand and leaned toward him. "Claude, do you know that you talk in your sleep?"

He swallowed and coughed protestingly. "I do not."

"Well if you don't," she said, "why should I distinctly remember your mentioning another woman's name, not once but several times last night? With your eyes closed?"

"Ridiculous," her husband retorted. "You can imagine more things than any three women I know."

"I suppose I should be glad you didn't mention three," she reflected gloomily.

"I give up." Claude folded his arms and tilted back in his chair. "Who was the lucky girl?"

Don't pretend like that," said Nell. "She's very pretty. You were pinned to her for a while in school, as I recall. And I know she's always—"

"Oh, Rose Hill!" Claude laughed shortly. Nell had expected him to act more surprised. The expression on his face was almost—fear. "What else did I say?"

"I couldn't tell. You were mumbling."

"Don't look like that," Claude told her angrily. "You know as well as I do that Rose is very thoroughly married."

"She's still awfully good looking," Nell narrowed her eyes. "And with plenty of time on her hands."

Claude shrugged a little too carelessly. "Well, some fortunate few have people to do their housekeeping for them. Are you sure you didn't hear anything else?"

Nell regarded him sweetly. "Not a thing. More coffee?" She gestured toward the pot, which was no longer steaming.

"No, I don't think—well, if you think you can manage it now. Be careful," he warned, pushing the cup into her hand.

"Just call me Shaky." She laughed feebly as she poured the last drop from the spout, and her hand trembled as she offered it back to him. Then it happened.

"Oh, Claude, I'm sorry—all over your coat—How could anyone be so clumsy?"

Nell did not realize how unprepared she was for his violent reaction. "I thought I told you to be careful," Claude glowered at her. "This is the one thing I positively cannot stand."

She stared helplessly as he threw down his napkin. "But you've never—" her voice trailed away and her small shoulders drooped beneath the pale chintz of her dressing gown.

"Nothing to do but put on another suit," he said, standing up decisively. "I'm not saying you could help it, Nell."

She listened as his steps faded up the stairs. He would forget about it, of course. And it might happen with anyone—even Rose Hill. She walked an uneven line toward the oval mirror above the sideboard. "Good Lord," she whispered. "Just look at yourself." Well, what could she expect, if she continued keeping the house as strenuously clean as she had been? "You hag!" she whispered fiercely to the girl who stared back at her from the carefully polished surface. There were hollows beneath the large soft eyes. Claude had told her that she was biting off too big a hunk

when she held out for the large house instead of the small apartment they had considered before they were married.

"It'll be too much for you, Nell," he had warned. "We won't be able to start off the way you've been used to, and you'll be doing it all yourself." But she had been equally firm. It had been sweet of him to consider her like that, but she knew that he really wanted a real home, like the one he'd been brought up in. She thought of the stately Brooke house that his family had occupied for two generations, with its staff of perfectly trained domestics. But she had become a good little housekeeper. Claude had often said as much. She turned away from the mirror and pushed his chair gently under the table. When she looked up, he had appeared at the door and was studying her, a serious expression on his even features. She ran over to him and held out her arms.

"How convenient," he said, draping the soiled coat over them. "Better take this to the cleaner's sometime today. I'd stop with it, but I'm a bit late as it is."

She followed him out into the hall. Claude was into his overcoat before she could help him with it, but she was close behind him as he hurried to the door.

"Will you be late tonight?" Her upturned face wore an anxious look, in spite of her brave attempt to hide it.

Claude wrinkled his forehead thoughtfully, but hesitated just a little too long. "Yes, I'm afraid I will." He turned to the door, then back to her. "You get some rest, Nell, you look tired." His lips brushed her cheek and then he was gone.

Nell walked slowly back to the breakfast room and began stacking the dishes.

By ten o'clock the house was in perfect order. She had even found strength to scrub the kitchen floor, which gleamed with a vengeance as she stood rubbing her knees. "If I talk in my sleep tonight it'll be about linoleum," she thought. Immediately she wished that she had not reminded herself of last night. Of course it was absurd to think of Claude with anyone else, but he had looked so strange when she mentioned it. And they didn't come much prettier than Rose. He had perhaps been crazier about her in college than she supposed. And she must remember it wasn't a

practical woman who kept two maids so that she wouldn't have to soil those fine, white hands.

As she walked toward the hall, Nell noticed Claude's coat where she had left it. The thing felt vaguely heavy as she picked it up, and starting to the stairs she wondered if Claude had absent-mindedly left something in one of the pockets. After a brief search she drew out a black leather case, and stared pityingly down at the coffee-stained coat. "What a shame you had to be in such a hurry," she thought, "and how can you possibly get through the day without your glasses?" She would take them to him right away, on her way to the cleaner's. She snapped the case open. Yes, they were all in one piece.

Then she noticed the little yellow scrap of paper lying beneath them. She recognized Claude's small, cramped handwriting at once, and wondered what warranted a note to himself. He often scribbled such things to remind himself of essentials. Really she had no business reading it, since it was certainly not intended for her—but it was so short! She squinted and ran to the landing halfway up the stairs where the light was better. Standing by the double window, Nell lifted the glasses carefully out and bent to scrutinize the bit of paper in the case. She blinked hard and looked away from the light a moment. Funny what being tired can do to one's vision. She stared down at the paper a second time. No, she had made no mistake. It said simply

Rose Hill
10:30.

Nell could not tell how long she stood there, looking simply at the unmistakable marks on the paper. Once she picked it up and turned it over, then laid it gently back against the velvet lining and covered it with the glasses.

The front door banged shut downstairs. Nell slipped the case into the pocket and turned quickly.

"Who's there?" she said in a low, trembling voice.

"Well now, who are you expecting?" Claude bounded across the hall and up the stairs two at a time. He stood on the landing and looked up at Nell, his firm mouth relaxing into a sheepish smile as he pointed to the coat.

"I was wondering when you'd miss the glasses," Nell said lightly. That—that *is* what you mean, isn't it?"

Claude regarded her curiously. "When did you find them?"

"Just now. I was going to bring them to you—I didn't expect you back."

"Nell, are you all right?" Claude sounded anxious, but she wondered why he should be staring out the window just then. When he glanced back she was playing distractedly with the sleeve of the coat. "You're the strangest person sometimes, Nell," he said.

"Me!" She turned away.

"Nell, I want to know what's the matter." Claude pulled her toward him.

"Can't you guess?"

"You're tired," he said.

Nell gazed at him through eyes glassed over with tears. "I've never minded being tired before," she said slowly, "and do you know why?"

Claude looked back from the window, his smile fading to disbelief. "Nell!"

"Because I was fool enough to —love you." She sobbed the last words into her hands, but Claude was racing down the stairs to answer the loud knock at the door.

"Stay right where you are, don't move," he called over his shoulder.

"Ashamed that someone might see me," she thought miserably. But he might be a trifle more subtle about it. However, he needn't think that she was going to stand there like a piece of sculpture while he received heaven knew how many women in her own house. She stalked down the steps and stood directly at the bottom.

Claude's voice, in animated conversation with a low-pitched female one, floated around the corner.

"I've never been so glad to see anyone," it went on. "You don't know what a relief it is to know for sure—"

The woman laughed, and Nell's face froze as she caught sight of her husband leading toward her a tall figure

in a trimly fitting dark overcoat. Nell opened her mouth and closed it again, unable to make a sound.

"Mrs. Brooke, meet Mrs. Olsen. Christine," Claude was saying.

"How do you do?" said Nell finally, as the woman clasped the small hand offered in both her large, warm ones.

"You don't remember me, Mrs. Brooke?" she asked.

"Well—" Nell shook her head and turned beseeching eyes upon Claude.

"Think now," he smiled, "Rose Hill? She used to have the best housekeeper in town, but yesterday we had a little talk—"

"Oh!" Nell sat down suddenly on the step behind her.

"And she told me about how she didn't like the winters here,—John had told me last week they were leaving for California—and he mentioned that Christine wouldn't be coming along. So," he grinned at Christine, "we got it all figured out to surprise you!"

"You certainly did." Nell rose and smiled radiantly at Christine as she slipped her hand around Claude's arm.

Christine beamed at them both. "You're right, she's too small to take care of this big house all alone." she announced, looking to each side of her. "But she sure has kept it up fine. You're a lucky man, Mr. Brooke."

"Wait till you see me at breakfast," said Nell, giving Claude's arm a squeeze.

"Breakfast, oh, don't mention it." Christine assumed a mournful expression.

Nell looked at Claude in alarm. "Why, what's the matter with your breakfasts, Christine?" she asked.

"It's not them, it's me," the tall woman sighed dejectedly. "I'll try to do better here, but Mrs. Hill always said I'm like a soul dead and then dug up again in the early morning. And it's terrible to do, but I always—"her voice trailed away in embarrassment.

"Always what, Christine?" asked Claude sternly.

"Always spill the coffee," she replied.



Do not mourn the jester,
Look! He plays his part so well
That he is still smiling,
As they carry him to hell.

—Sam Burchers

One impulse from the vernal schools
May teach you more of man,
Of indolent and wayward fools
Than all the sages can.

—Richard W. Glatthar

Is the beauty in the blossom,
Or is the beauty in the tree?
Is the beauty within nature,
Or is the beauty within me?

—Harold McKinney



PERFECT VENGEANCE

by HAROLD McKINNEY

"**T**HEY knew I had only a few more months to live—yet they couldn't wait. And after Colt was gone, I could feel her hating me, taking an insane joy in knowing how I would fear dying slowly, torturously, alone—tied to a bed and hemmed in by walls. But I've fooled her and I won't have to eke my life out into nothingness.

"That's what the rest of my life would have been like, Father, if I had confessed. A gray nothingness. Gray like these stone walls, like the bars, the blanket—like the clothes I wear."

The priest's large eyes followed the movement of John Sheldon's fingers over the graying, short-cropped hair. He didn't notice the incongruous touch of youth the haircut added to the wasted, drawn face. As John lit a cigarette, their eyes met over the steady flame of the match. If John had hoped to find admiration, he was disappointed. There was only compassion.

"I appreciate your spending this last hour with me, even though I have no faith." He blew out the flame and flipped the match to the floor. "I'm not afraid—but talking does help. You see, Father, quick death is what I want—not just to rot away. And I don't believe there is a life after death. That would be too cruel."

John averted his eyes from the priest's and jumped to his feet. He walked to the bars and stood there for a moment, silent, listening, his fingers spasmodically gripping the cold steel. He turned again to the priest.

"I have nothing to wait for. Without Jean's love and my good name, nothing's left. They're both gone. And the

pain here . . . ,” John Shelton’s hands gripped his abdomen as though forcing back some living creature seeking to escape, “. . . grows so great I would have killed myself somehow if the verdict had been life imprisonment.”

He stood composed now, his head tilted in the direction of the massive iron door at the end of the corridor. There was a hiss of air as he sucked at the cigarette and drew the smoke deep into his lungs in a quick, greedy gulp. He looked at the cigarette, then dropped it to the floor and stepped on it, deliberately mashing it beneath the sole of his shoe.

“Execution is quick, Father—and it’s final. What I can’t stand is this damned waiting! Each minute slows to an eternity, crawling monotonously across time like those gray bar shadows across the floor. I can tell time by them . . . when that shadow gets to that crack, they’ll be coming.” He paused. “That’s all living would be to me, a dull gray shadow imperceptibly crawling into pain. At least, death can’t hurt that much or be that monotonous!”

Sitting on the cot, he again consciously avoided the compassionate eyes.

“Maybe confession is good for the soul. I really hadn’t planned to . . . leave without making one. First, I don’t feel bad about murdering him. Startles you? Perhaps bank presidents aren’t supposed to kill. People trust them. Well, I’d do it again—only I’d be smarter this time. The prosecution was getting close to the real motive until I threw them off. As if I could kill my best friend over money! It was revenge. Colt destroyed my pride and my love; I had to kill him.”

John Shelton sat quietly for a moment.

“Colt was a wonderful fellow, the kind other men want to be. He’d dash into any situation—and then dash out again. He never got hurt but other people did. No woman could resist him, not even my Jean. Why he couldn’t leave her alone I . . . Well, that’s when he made his mistake.”

John jumped to his feet. “I hear footsteps, Father! Are they coming now?” He walked to the bars and craned his neck to look down the corridor. “It’s only the guard.” He turned to look at the shadows on the floor. “A few minutes more then.” He stood there motionless, seemingly lost in contemplation of the shadows. When he spoke, it

was in a hushed voice, as though from a distance; a voice speaking of things gone by.

"Colt and Jean; the sinner and the saint. Father, she is everything a man can want; more than a man should have. I don't think she is beautiful to others; she lacks the sophistication for that. People first meeting her hardly notice her; then one day, suddenly, they see her as she really is—an angel, a naive angel. That's what I used to think."

He stood there, his head bowed and shaking slowly from side to side, enunciating the bewilderment that came into his voice.

"God, how I loved her. I adored, worshiped her. She was so pure. I tried to protect her, spare her any ache or pain. I worked hard but my ambition was for her. Anything she wanted, she had—not that she ever asked for much. To give her everything, I had to cheat myself of many hours with her, but I thought she understood. She was always so understanding and helpless, but it was the helplessness of innocence, I thought.

"When Colt stole my love, I don't know—probably before they knew I had only a few months to live. I should have sensed their love but I didn't. But then I loved them both so much, I trusted them to the point where I encouraged Colt to be with her when I was away. I never would have suspected if I hadn't found those letters. The love-blind fools! Oh, if she had only burned them!

"After that, I didn't know what to do. I was still winding things up at the bank before I . . . ah . . . retired. One night the pain was so intense I came home earlier than usual. Imagine, I couldn't resist . . . spying on your own wife in your own home! I turned away from the window, the pain in my heart driving out the pain of my body. I walked the streets that night, thinking."

John Sheldon strode rapidly back and forth within the confines of the cell. His words came rapidly now, tumbling from his lips, one sliding into another.

"Oh, I could have divorced her—or died quietly without doing anything. But they had smashed the last days of my life. And I still had my pride. I didn't want divorce; I wanted revenge!

"During the trial, I kept Jean's name out of it. Neither she or Colt ever knew I had found the letters or seen them together. But she must have known why I kill-

ed him. Day after day she sat in that courtroom waiting, waiting for me to expose her. I knew that once I did, it would finish her. But that would have been too quick, too easy for her. And while her soul was slowly shrinking, I could feel her dissipating what little strength she had in hating me. Once, when I met her eyes, she frightened me—but what can she do? Hot house flowers get used to care; they expect it. Now there's no one to protect her. Maybe she thinks I was noble and shielding her. There's nothing noble about revenge, Father!"

He stopped the nervous stride to light a cigarette, then talked on, pacing out the words.

"I could have pleaded the unwritten law and gotten away with it. In love triangles the jury is always on the side of the wronged man. As it was, they were nervous about sentencing a man who wouldn't talk other than to admit cold-blooded murder. Those fools would have given me the very thing I didn't want—imprisonment. Only Jean could have 'saved' me and she was too weak to expose herself.

"So I got what I wanted; revenge—and then a quick death. But my revenge isn't finished. As I loved, so I hate. For destroying my love, they both have to be destroyed. Colt had no mind; I killed his body. But Jean, angelic sensitive flower, is paying now—and she will pay more! The doubt is gnawing at her; soon certainty will come but it won't give her any relief. When she learns that the world knows of her guilt, she will die—but slowly, Father, bit by bit.

"Her imagination will do its work. She will read scorn into the blank faces of strangers; a friend's smile will be a sneer; honest sympathy will turn to condemnation in her daring brain. And it will destroy her. First her soul, then her mind, then her body—slowly, the way she would leave me to die. She can't stand before my revenge; I protected her and made her weak. I know her!"

John Sheldon stood looking down at the priest whose head bowed in prayer. When the large eyes raised to meet his, he threw his head to one side. As he started to speak again, he ground the cigarette to pulp in the palm of his hand.

"Confession, Father, it's good for the soul. I couldn't confess in court—that jury would have pitied me. And I

couldn't stand many more days like this. I'd be a raving maniac.

"But Jean and the world has to know. She will be exposed—and it will come too late for them to do anything about me."

He stopped and looked at the gray shadow starting to slide into the crack in the floor.

"I've always detested the way criminals go to their death protesting their innocence. It leaves doubt—where I would leave no doubt. They will know they punish the right man this time.

"Yesterday my lawyer told me all chance for a reprieve or pardon is gone. He tried to obtain one in spite of my objections. That obstacle is gone. Today, one of my employees is sending sealed envelopes to every newspaper in the city. I prepared those envelopes the night before I killed Colt and my confession is in each one. It goes like this.

"I, John Sheldon, have suffered a just fate. I did premeditatedly murder Colt Prentice for having illicit relations with my wife, Jean Sheldon."

"Ah, the words, the words . . ."

He swung to face the kneeling priest.

"Pray, Father, pray! But not for me. For Jean! I don't need your prayers but she does. My revenge will cut her down like a blossom beneath the frost."

He stood shaking, then slumped to the cot. His forehead dropped into the cupped palms of his hands; his fingers slowly kneaded the fevered brow. The prayers of the priest rose in an undertone, deepening the silence. John Sheldon straightened, listening.

"Father do you hear the footsteps? . . . They come for me . . . I have courage, Father. I'll be steady to the end."

He rose and walked firmly to the bars and stood stiffly, facing the corridor. A man's happy voice shattered the foreboding silence.

"Father! . . . What! . . ." John Sheldon fell against the bars, futilely beating his fists against the cold steel. Knuckles split and blood oozed slowly through the broken skin. "What is this smiling devil saying? . . . The Governor has granted me a last minute reprieve . . . My wife? . . . Love letters . . . My fingerprints . . . She pleads the unwritten law for me! Oh, my God!"

A FRAGMENT

(from *It Comes Only Once*)

by HAROLD McKINNEY

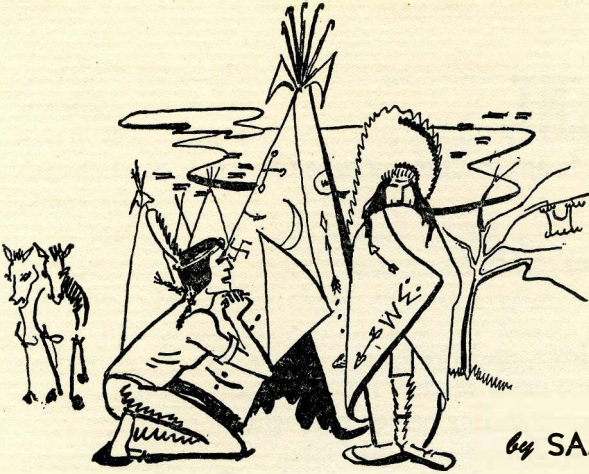
The seat of my love, and my pain,
Where it lies strongest, soothes me most.
The sharing of a sea dollar brings me riches
No heaping silver dollars can evaluate.
The wide-smiled sun, scintillating from chopped
Salt-sprayed hair, blesses me again and again.

Close to you in the surf, siren-music,
Said by Homer to drive men insane,
Comes luted through the strings of wind,
Sounding against crested, watery harps.
I listen sadly to the beckoning chords,
And smile at you, for I am tighter bound
Than Ulysses by ropes against the mast.

The crescent of curving beach fades,
Disappearing into the smoke of distance.
We are alone for the moment, sharing our solitude
With pelican and sand-piper, lulled by whispering
Of waves breathing against the sand.

The dried-salt taste is good about the lips,
As though the tears for my young love have ebbed
There and stopped; this is no time for tears.

But an island of distant palms hangs, hovering
Above the sea-mist, giving solidity and, worse,
Time to my dream; it can not last.
Yet, on this beach, I am at peace with love.



FROST IN THE TEPEE

by SAM BURGHERS

IT was the Moon of Frost in the Tepee (January) in the Sioux village. A light morning snow covered the camping grounds and the air was as clean and cold as an arrow's point. A young brave, erect in posture and clad in leggings and a long buckskin jacket came riding jauntily through the village on a shaggy pinto pony. His destination was the lodge of Chief Running Bear. As he ambled along he sang a legendary Sioux love song to the ancient buckskin pony he led by a long rope. The morning snow caught on his moccasins as he slid from the moist back of his pony. The elderly chief was at home sitting crosslegged by his lodge in the face of the rising sun.

"Chief of Santa Sioux," said the young brave confidently, "two ponies I bring for trade of squaw," and the young man gestured proudly toward where his two old horses stood forlornly. "One pony young—other almost young. Many moon I see Little Deer work with village squaws. Many sleeps my heart sad for love. Now I come with honor and offer all ponies. Let us smoke bark of red willow."

The aged warrior sighed a breath of long distance and tightened his thick buffalo robe around his shoulders. His dark, emotionless eyes gazed out from their wrinkled sockets of many winters and inspected the young hopeful Sioux who waited impatiently.

Standing spread-legged in his newly tanned leggings, Thunder Cloud looked older than his sixteen years. Priva-

tion and self-inflicted hardships had aged him prematurely. His beardless face was sharp featured like that of the mountain eagle. Only his flashing black eyes showed his true age; respectful, sincere, and honest. His body was muscularly grooved and colored like the stain of the summer red cherry. His sweeping black hair was parted deep and painted red, as this was the custom of courtship. And, as an added incentive to some Indian maid, red beads decorated his moccasins, leggings, and jacket.

"No!" clipped the chief, his sharp unexpected retort ringing deadly like a sudden quick beat of the war tom-tom.

Thunder Cloud's face dropped like a falling rock. He stood stunned, gaping in idcision. Then he turned and appraised the two old horses he had brought. "I am a fool," thought Thunder Cloud, mounting and pointing his pony's ears toward the nearby hills. "Chief want brave warrior, many ponies for Little Deer," Thunder Cloud told his horse as they ambled along. "Me untried in battle . . . have only two ponies. Go . . . talk to Great Spirit."

Reaching the summit of the nearest hill, Thunder Cloud kneeled on the crisp ground and scratched away the inch of snow that hid the black soil beneath it.

"Hey-a-hey, hey-a-hey, hey-a-hey, hey-a-hey!" chanted Thunder Cloud, and he threw the wet, black mud six times, once to the heavens, once to the earth, and one time each to the four sacred points of the compass. Wiping his hands on his breech cloth, he stood and addressed the sky: "Great Spirit, give vision. I am only sixteen and belly sick for want of Little Deer. Give wisdom."

All was silent on the hill and in the snow-glistening valley below. It was as if all of nature's creatures had stopped and were listening hard to hear something.

"I hear a voice," thought Thunder Cloud, straining and breathing fast. "Yes, perhaps vision comes. No . . . No . . . only friend on hunt."

A second young Sioux came to the top of the hill. Tall and bony he stood, with a friendly grin splitting his red face. "Ho, Thunder Cloud," said his friend, Tired Ponies. "What game you play?"

"No game I play this sun," answered Thunder Cloud disappointedly.

"Friend of many moons, what makes face like mule's rear?" asked Tired Ponies, leaning lazily against the hip of

the boy pony who unconcernedly was searching for grass nibblings that weren't frozen under.

"Two ponies for Little Deer I offer. Running Bear wave hand like I summer fly, to swat. True to Sioux custom, I never speak to Little Deer, but many sun I watch her work with village women. Ho!" moaned Thunder Cloud, rubbing his hand over his stomach in an ailing fashion, "I grow sick in belly for love."

"Not worry. I have three pony," gestured Tired Ponies in open-handed generosity. "Repay in moon of pony foal. Let us go." Tired Ponies laughed with satisfaction and waved his bow high as the two men started down the hill.

During the afternoon, while the sun warmed the glaring land and the women of the village busied themselves tanning bison hides and preparing the evening meal of sun-dried prunes and smoked buffalo meat, the two friends gathered Tired Ponies' horses from the valley floor.

Setting a determined tilt to his chin, Thunder Cloud came riding with five ponies to the lodge of Chief Running Bear. "Ho, old man. I have more pony. Two young . . . three hardly old. What say you chief?" said Thunder Cloud boldly, and with all the daring his eyes could muster.

The elderly chief ignored Thunder Cloud and continued cutting thongs of rawhide. Then, as he was testing the strength of a rawhide thong with a mighty pull of his sinewed arms, he looked up and through Thunder Cloud like a sharp and cutting winter wind. "No!" he said. His word was like a flooding river, covering every field and sweeping aside everything in its mad path.

Along the trail from the creek came a young maiden, aquiline in feature and graceful as the deer. She carried two full waterskins which swayed gently with her weight as she walked. Little Deer blushed brightly when she saw her would-be husband. Lowering her eyes, she went into the lodge silently, all of which was the proper thing for an Indian maid to do.

"There thunder this day," thought Thunder Cloud, scrambling for his bay pony and yelling wildly to stampede the other ponies on the move.

"I return pony, hand of horses not buy Little Deer," said Thunder Cloud, sitting disgustedly on the tree-stump by the creek where his friend sat fishing.

There was only the gentle sound of the bubbling creek water while the two Sioux sat meditating Thunder Cloud's unsuccessful romantic tribulations.

Suddenly Tired Ponies leaped high with enthusiasm, burying his flint tomahawk in the snow-covered creek bed with a swishing thud. With a quick gesture and a pointing finger he said: "Steal . . . steal Little Deer!"

"Yes! I think to steal her. If I caught, lose hair. I paint up to be evil spirit. All people afraid of me," said Thunder Cloud.

By flickering firelight the young braves busied themselves with the white and black paint they stole from White Hand's medicine lodge. Thunder Cloud found himself painted completely white with black streaks of lightning on his arms, legs, and chest.

"You brave warrior. All Sioux nation run away when see you," said Tired Ponies laughing hard and long as they doused the fire and started on their night mission.

The moon shadows were still and the faint heavy smell of smoked bark still lingered in Thunder Cloud's trained and sensitive nostrils as he crept into the lodge of Chief Running Bear. Cautiously he sidled around the dying embers of the tepee fire and searched for the bundle of buffalo robes that held Little Deer. Outside he could hear Tired Ponies ripping up the lodge stakes in the rear. Then Thunder Cloud found his woman and he could feel the heat of her body against his hands and forearms as he gently scooped her out of bed. "Little Deer much heavy," thought the kidnaper as he frantically struggled to adjust her weight to his liking.

"Chief and father, dog in meat again?" asked a youthful feminine voice from the far end of the lodge and Thunder Cloud knew that he held the wrong woman in his arms. "I lose scalp this night," thought Thunder Cloud, desperately searching in the darkness or somewhere to replace the chief's still sleeping wife before he awoke. Moving quickly Thunder Cloud felt his moccasined feet hit something and he could feel himself falling.

"Yaaaaw!" screamed the chief's fat wife and Thunder Cloud found himself lying spread-eagled on the chief's bed and the chief was still in it.

The village of the Sioux awoke with the old woman's terrified wailings and poured forth from their lodges into

the moon lit night like dogs from their holes when meat was brought into camp.

Thunder Cloud uncoiled to his feet like a fleeing brush rabbit and buffalo-charged out of the lodge even before the chief could catch his lost breath. Down the long river trail through the village raced Thunder Cloud, his dashing feet pumping even faster than his pounding heart. Reaching the river's bank, he sprinted into the icy darkness of the freezing water like he was rushing to the bosom of an old and lost friend.

A cry went up through the village that an evil spirit had visited the chief and there was much excitement and disorder throughout the remaining hours of the night. Huge roaring fires were hurriedly built to keep the painted devil from returning. In the heat of the discussions, as many and varied were stories the sleepy eye-witnesses told, Tired Ponies sneaked innocently away to the river where his friend had last been seen.

Dripping wet and hopping around like a one-legged bird on the frosted earth, Thunder Cloud was bitterly drying off by a leaf-fire when Tired Ponies came puffing down a ravine and found him.

"We old women. No more return I to village. I leave. Tie up horse's tail!" declared Thunder Cloud determinedly, shivering with chattering teeth.

"With you I ride war-path. Together, brother Sioux," said Tired Ponies, making a face of war and shaking his prized elk's tooth necklace until it rattled.

Over the mountains and frozen buttes to the west lived the Crow Indians—immortal enemies of the Sioux. Toward the Crow nation rode the two Sioux warriors of sixteen years. They whipped their ponies for several days until they came upon a sheltered hidden valley, huge cliffs towering and guarding the unnatural winter grasses of its pastures.

"There!" whispered Thunder Cloud, as not to be deprived of his discovery by even the animals that lurked about in the forest. And Tired Ponies looked down into the valley and saw many ponies grazing behind the village of tepees that sheltered the people of this fortunate Crow tribe.

"We steal horses!" commanded Thunder Cloud.

"Or lose scalps," gulped Tired Ponies.

Down into the fertile valley they crept, leading their horses behind them, stopping here . . . listening . . . going on . . . stopping . . . listening . . . until they found what they searched for.

A lone sentry, warming beside a small fire, guarded the remuda. Hunched low in his robe, he stared listlessly into the crackling flames, unaware that his enemies, the Sioux, were anywhere within a hundred miles of the valley.

Making plans of attack, Tired Ponies tied his pony and skirted around his quarry to hide behind a large pine tree where he waited eagerly with tomahawk in hand.

"Hoka hey!" screamed Thunder Cloud, leaving his concealment on horseback and galloping straight toward the Crow sentry.

The Crow, alerted by the fierce war cry of the Sioux, grabbed up his bow and bent it deep with a long-shafted arrow pointed at the charging Thunder Cloud.

Tired Ponies was creeping on his adversary's back even before his friend's blood-chilling war whoop rang through the air. A quick, short blow of the tomahawk and the Crow folded limply to the ground, lying face down in the valleys winter grass. His arrow hurled itself into the air, falling harmlessly even after the Crow was unable to see it.

Stampeding the remuda through the valley pass, the two Sioux were away with their loot before the Crow village was aware of the embarrassing two-man raid.

"Crow chase?" asked Tired Ponies, looking behind him for sign of pursuit.

"No," laughed Thunder Cloud. "No pony have Crow."

Four sleeps the victorious Sioux pushed the hundred head onward, never stopping except to eat a hurried meal of rabbit or berries. At the close of the fourth day they reached their own tribe, driving the herd before them. The sound of many fast-moving horses brought the villagers into the open brandishing weapons of war as they thought they were being attacked.

Black and bay and pinto and buckskin ponies stampeded into the village, snorting and frolicking among themselves. And the people of the Santa Sioux knew Thunder Cloud and Tired Ponies were brave warriors for they waved their coup sticks high, indicating a victory over the enemy.

"Ho, chief, think you this enough ponies for Little Deer!" shouted Thunder Cloud, proudly, as Running Bear

emerged from his lodge prepared for war only to face an army of ponies instead of men. Little Deer came out of the lodge behind her father and there was admiration in her eyes.

Chief Running Bear gathered his robe around him and raised his hand solemnly. And all the warriors hushed their women and children to hear the words of the chief.

"Brave warriors Thunder Cloud and Tired Ponies. Keep horses. I want not. I want brave and good Sioux for husband of Little Deer. Take her, Thunder Cloud," said the chief, "and may there be no frost in your tepee this moon."

EUGENICS

Inspired by a line in P. G. Wodehouse

Breeding has its compensations—
Maintaining classes, types and nations.
But, as blood lines run their courses,
Aristocrats resemble horses.

Thus, we only can deduce
Handsome families are quite loose!
Skeletons in closets then
Let's bring into vogue again.

We're less like horses, more like men
Till the blood runs thin again.
That's the moral written here—
One example makes it clear:

Grandpa was the Count of Blank;
Grandma hadn't any rank.
Papa has a peasant's face,
But still he is addressed, "Your Grace."

Quadrupeds are nice in stables.
Let's have less at dinner tables.
Haemophilia isn't fun:
Breeding shows in the long run.

—Jack E. Teagarden

With many a quaint diminuendo
The music rises in crescendo.
Through the air outside
Hear the wild Valkyries ride.
Hear Brunhilde's golden voice
As dramatically it dwells
On the story that she tells,
And the woeful tale impels
You to lift your head and listen,
As the raindrops sadly glisten
On your crystal window pane.

Hear the rhythm in the rhyming of the rain.
Hear its airy tripping,
Hear its gleeful skipping,
In a sprightly vein.
Now the tunes of Strauss;
How they sing, how they ring,
Through the darkness of the house!
See the raindrops whirling,
Watch their graceful twirling,
Keeping time, time, time,
To the rythm and the rhyme
Of this melody sublime.

Now the rain is lighter;
Lighter, lighter.
Now the storm's diminished,
The symphony is finished.
See, the sky is brighter,
Your window pane grows whiter,
Hinting of a moon.
Yet the water in the gutters,
Still it trickles, still it mutters;
Mutters, mutters,
Out of tune.

Slowly sleep comes slipping,
With the raindrops dripping,
Drip, drip, dripping,
Through the silver of the moon.

