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FLAMINGO

VOLUME NO. 37

WINTER 1959

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COVER BY LEO HANSBERRY

THE SCARF

By JODY BILBO

It was a tiny wisp of blue, a bit of evening sky cut out and draped in soft folds. The blue caught the glow of candles and then the glow flickered and soft shadows slid across it.

His eyes saw the small movement and lifted to the pale slender hand that held the scarf. A single immense diamond captured the candle light and broke it into a hundred tiny candles. The flecks of light made a starry pattern against the warm-toned wood of the booth.

Her hand lay across the top of the high panel that divided his booth from hers. He could see her hand only to the delicately turned wrist, and no more. He wanted to touch the blue scarf, to explore its soft folds. He wanted to touch her hand too, but he knew he wouldn't.

Just to touch the scarf, though — she would never know. And if she didn't know, she wouldn't shrink away. He didn't want her to move her hand. If she did, the emptiness would come back.

Just to touch the scarf — he raised his hand toward it. But when he saw his worn grotesque, twisted fingers near her supple, tapered ones, he pulled his hand back sharply and buried it in his lap.

If he touched it very lightly, he would have the softness of it to remember later. He raised his hand again. Gently, very gently, he touched the blue scarf. It was as soft as he had known it would be. But she must have felt the touch, for she flicked the scarf, and it fell so that it lay over her hand like a veil.

She began to play with it, turning her hand slowly so that the scarf slid off it with a silken whisper. He watched, fascinated, as she twisted the blue softly around her little finger, and as easily untwisted it. As her hand moved, the star patterns of the diamond shifted and played across his upturned, twisted face.

With a sudden carefree motion she tossed the scarf. Like a wisp of smoke it curled and turned, and floated down again. A breath of air caught it, to drift it just out of the reach of her fingers. But she made no move to search for it, and he wondered that she didn't seem to care.

He picked the scarf up from the velvety cushion where it had fallen beside him. When he looked up, her hand was gone; and the emptiness hit him. He held out the scarf to where her hand had been.

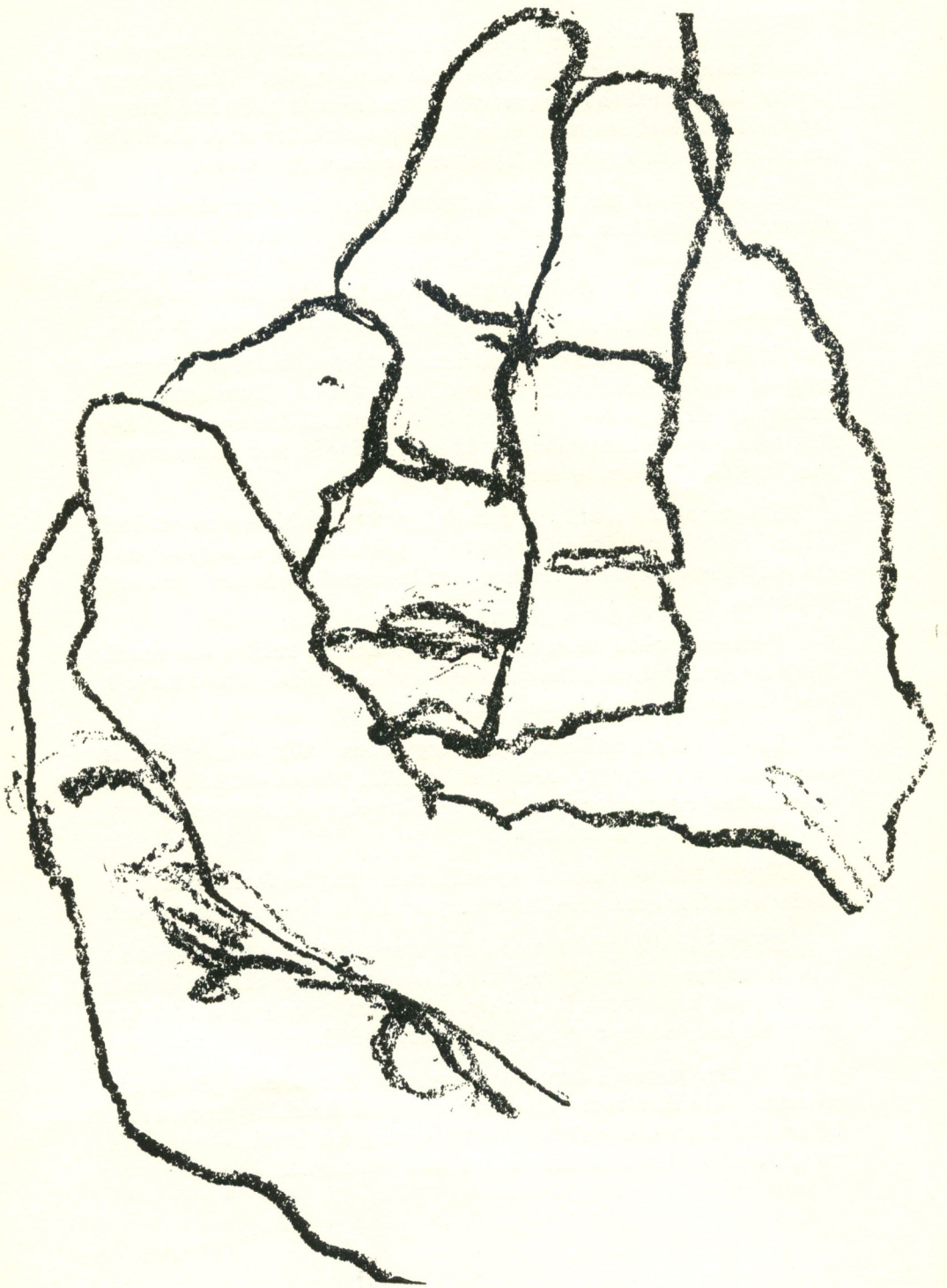
He knew what he should do. He should return the scarf. She'd be grateful, and maybe she'd smile at him. She'd have a beautiful smile, and it would be for him.

People didn't smile at him very often. When they did, it was usually out of pity. And the beautiful women — their smiles were summer sunshine; but the sunshine clouded over when they saw him, and they shied away.

Maybe this one would be different. Maybe there would be kindness in her eyes. He knew they would be blue, like the scarf.

Still he hesitated. He couldn't stand it if she too stared at him in terror. He took the glass of deep red wine that he hadn't touched yet, and drunk it quickly. A warm feeling of confidence surged through him and he started toward the next booth.

But the warmth drained away and left a cold pit in his stomach. He shivered. The scarf warmed his chilly fingers and he nestled it in his pocket. Then, bowing his head between his hunched shoulders, he limped out into the night.



*A mass
Of molten gas
Flew from its sun one day
To form an orbit of its own,
And cooled.*

*Upon
The surface grew
A land, a paradise;
Within its seas a tiny bit
Of life.*

*The bit
Of life began
To grow, evolve, produce.
The planet waited patiently - -
Serene.*

*And soon
The life emerged
From deep beneath the sea.
The land gave freely of its fruit.
It grew.*

*And lo!
From creatures dull
A thinking being rose.
In awe, the land did shelter it
With love.*

*Then turned
The new-made man,
With avid, lustful eyes,
To tear the beauty from the land,
And flee.*

*Still turns
About its sun
A planet cold and bare.
And deep within the raging sea —
No life.*

By TINA LEVIN

THE JOURNEY

GAIL CISSNA

*You do not know of the wondrous journey that I have taken.
I have traveled to the innermost recesses of the human mind.
I have wandered, star-struck, down the labyrinthine corridors
of subconscious man,
And have flown through the wide limitless sky of unbounded
thought.*

*My trip was so brief and yet for such a long time.
Its crystal moment was a cannon exploding in my ears, and a
blinding sunburst too brilliant for eyes that are open.
A welding together of the immeasurable reaches of space
Was the rushing of my feet down the pathway to infinity.*

*But as a sage said to me before the journey's start:
You will have to come back very soon.
The prismatic rapture of that sunlit world is too electric to
behold for as long as you would desire.
It isn't given to you to stay suspended in your discovery.*

*And so I return — return to what?
To the dull, angry rattle of humanity,
Which buzzes and mutters, and futilely gropes in its black morass.*

*How can I endure this torment?
I have to listen and make polite reply to a mass that knows
nothing and understands less.
I cannot impart to them the soaring crescendo of pure thought
that I have seen.
Better for me had I never gone.
It is a racking Hell to be back.*



*I live half a life
With half a mind.
When you left,
You took me with you.
And perhaps
Half of my agony
Is the effort
Of becoming whole again.*

SHOREEN TEWS

SWEET SIXTEEN

ANNE SILVERMAN

Mrs. Fine sat by the edge of the blue-green waters of the chlorinated kidney-bean-shaped pool of the Hotel Sea Conch of Miami Beach, and contemplated her leather-brown thighs. She was almost alone. It was eight o'clock in the morning and there was a heavy peace on everything. It was tangible, as thick as sour cream. This peace, however, only made itself felt on the periphery of Mrs. Fine's sphere of attention. It was her thighs that choked the core of her being. Her splotched, leather thighs. She rubbed them ruefully. "There must be some kind of cream . . ." She nearly spoke the words aloud, and that would have been horrible, because she was not, after all, entirely alone. There was a man on the other side of the pool, filtering it or something. Mrs. Fine sat over on her hip, and rearranged her legs. She patted her hair, took off her yellow-rimmed sun glasses, waved them, and smiled. "Good morning, Morris," she called. Morris hadn't heard. She stretched the sides of her face into another smile. "Good morning, Morris," she called again. Morris looked up and grunted and then returned to his work. Mrs. Fine smiled an indulgent little smile and turned her face up to the sun — shortly, shortly she would be turned from cowhide to snakeskin. The sun baked in, and Mrs. Fine lay there for what seemed like hours. She had lost all sense of time. There was nothing in the world; no family, no things, only the hot, beaming sun.

After about fifteen minutes she was awakened, however, by the light, quick step of her tall, thin daughter. There were other steps, too. Not her husband's. She knew her husband's step. Her daughter was with a boy. With a tall, thin boy. How funny! How ironical! "Mama," Carla said, "I want you to meet Gene. He helps Morris take care of the pool."

Mrs. Fine again sat over on her hip, and removed her sun glasses. She extended a Johnson's Lotioned hand to the boy. "Pleased, I'm sure," she said, and gave him her gayest smile. "You must be very strong to do all that hard work."

"It's a living."

"Carlie, don't just stand there like a stone. Offer Gene a seat! Where are your manners? You'd think you had been brought up in the slums."

"Really, no thanks, Mrs. Fine. We're leaving soon."

"Oh, yes, I know, trying to get away from this old fuddy duddy. Well, I don't blame you. I was once young, too." Mrs. Fine laughed unnaturally. They all laughed unnaturally. The young people protested, and felt obliged to stay.

"When I was young, which was not *too* long ago, (again, an unnatural laugh) I had a beautiful, olive complexion, and long legs, like Carlie's, but I had much more on top. I won a beauty contest in the Catskills. I had on a white, tube bathing suit, which was quite daring for the times. It contrasted beautifully with my skin and hair. My, how I affected the young men then!" Mrs. Fine looked mistily, reminiscingly at Gene, as if he had been there, as if he had been affected by her, as if he could still be affected by her. And he was affected. He smiled back at Mrs. Fine.

"Aw, ya still got some life left in ya, babe," Gene said, and patted her arms and laughed. "But you'd better watch out for Morris, I think he has an eye out for you. He takes out the mothers, and I take out the daughters. We're a team."

Mrs. Fine shrugged. "You know what he said to me this morning? Just before you came, in fact. He came over here while I was lying here minding my own business and said to me, 'Baby,' he said, 'are you all alone, or is your husband down here with you?' Well, I told him in no uncertain terms that my husband was here, and he just walked away. That's the kind of a man your Morris is." Mrs. Fine gave Gene a half smile, but her eyes were sad. She spoke to Gene, sang to Gene. Gene was the only one in the whole world who understood her. "Now I can't understand a man like that;" she said.

"That's old Morris," Gene said. "I mean, he doesn't mean any harm." He jumped up. "Come on, Carlie. We'll be late. It sure was nice meeting you, Mrs. Fine."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Fine. "Now Carlie, be sure you are back in time to help get ready for the sweet sixteen party. You can't expect me to do all that work by myself." She smiled indulgently at the young backs until they were out of sight. Carla was walking rather quickly.

She turned back to the sun again. The healing source of light. The killing measurer of time. The deep full sun. Mrs. Fine submitted to it for three hours before she remembered that she had an appointment at the beauty parlor. She stood up in the painted, wooden high heels she never took off in public, and turned to see who might have been looking at her. My, the cabanas had filled up! She put on her gold and white terry-cloth robe and walked consciously toward the beach entrance of the hotel and down the hall into the waiting elevator. "Four," she said to the little high school girl who ran it. She glanced surreptitiously at the girl's round, firm neck and jaw lines. The girl opened the elevator door for Mrs. Fine, and Mrs. Fine walked out into the blue-green hall of the fourth floor like a queen, making absolutely certain that her head was held high.

She opened the unlocked door of the hotel room. Her husband was shaving. She could hear him singing in the bathroom. She went in to him. "Arnie," she said, "how many times have I told you to lock that door. You never can tell who's going to come in and take something. And you're making such a racket, you wouldn't know if an army was in the next room."

"Hmmm," said her husband, and continued shaving.

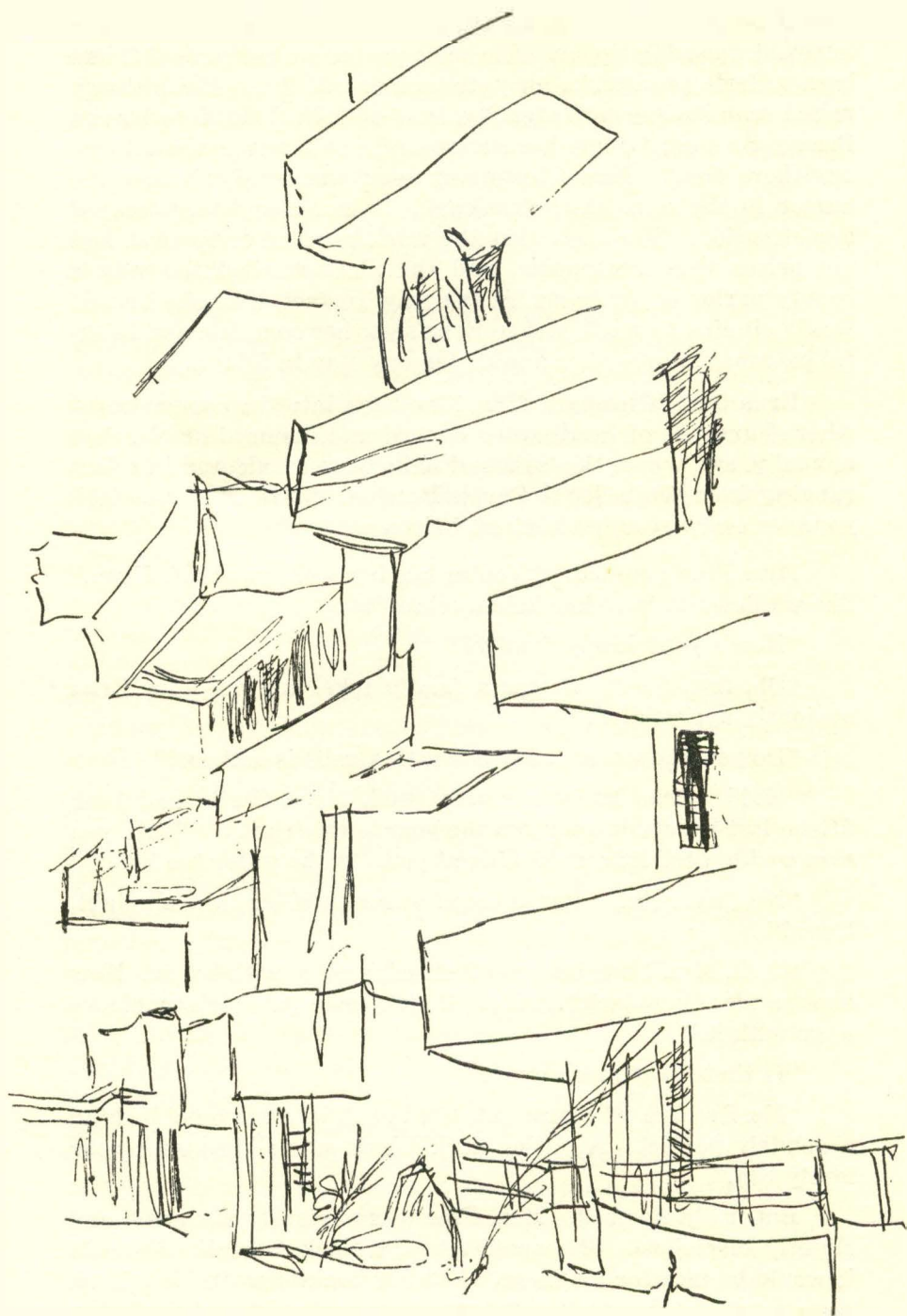
"Things are stolen, things are stolen," said Mrs. Fine. "Dear, I need money. I'm going to the beauty parlor."

Mr. Fine put down his electric razor and began searching for his wallet in his pants pockets. "All I know is, that every time you go to the beauty parlor, the bill rises. I am being ruined by inflation. My dollar is inflating, the waistline of my wife is inflating . . ."

"My waist . . ." Mrs. Fine moved her hands up and down her sides.

"I was only teasing, Rose, dear. Here, take this and come back beautiful for your daughter's party."

Mrs. Fine dressed and left. She walked down the stairs to the lobby. She was in no mood to take the elevator. The desk clerk tipped his hat. Two men hurried to open the door for her.



Mrs. Fine felt better. She had forgotten for the moment that her husband was a big tipper. The beige pavement looked as if it had been suffering sunstroke for years and years. It lay like a sharp, raised scar leading into eternity, into Lincoln Road, into Erna's Beauty Shoppe; "Come here once, and you'll never want to go anywhere else." Mrs. Fine never even wondered whether the humor in the sign was intentional. It had completely escaped her attention. She knew that the workers were competent, and the prices were reasonable, and the place smelled the way a beauty parlor ought to smell; the way, in fact, that she herself was beginning to smell, and so Erna's got her complete and faithful patronage during her annual ten-day stay in Miami.

Erna herself brought Mrs. Fine back into the compartment where hundreds of heads were washed and hennaed or bleached annually, and where thousands of nails were manicured in colors ranging from White Ice to Purple Passion. "Mrs. Fine, you look younger every year, no kidding," Erna said.

Mrs. Fine preened. "You're looking well, yourself, Erna." She sat down to have her hair washed.

"How's your lovely family?"

"Oh, fine, fine." It was a family joke, and one that Erna obviously appreciated.

"Do you know that today our little Carlie is sixteen?"

"No!" (Erna knew perfectly well, since Carlie had been fifteen last year, and fourteen the year before that.) "Well, you sure couldn't tell it from looking at you. Is the water too hot?"

"No, just right. Just a touch of henna after this, all right, Erna?"

"Well, Mrs. Fine, the gray'll streak orange with henna. How about a nice blue-black? And we'll give you a pale pink manicure to go with it."

"Is there *that* much grey?"

"No, Sweetie, of course not, but I can't let you go not looking absolutely perfect. And the black'll look so striking with your lovely tan."

But it did no good. Mrs. Fine was obviously wounded, and slightly suspicious. She would take the black, though. She said it would be nice for a change. But her beautician in New York always gave her henna, and it turned out perfectly, just perfectly.

So Mrs. Fine went through the entire process without taking any pleasure in it. (It was a horrible, horrible day. Nothing went right.) Wash, rinse, dry. Wet, set, dry. Manicure, pedicure, facial. Five movie magazines and two tuna salad sandwiches were consumed under the dryer. There was nobody, but nobody like Clark Gable any more. There were nothing but mamby pamby pretty boys coming up. A shame. Degeneration of the species. She spoke to Erna about it, and Erna agreed with her. Wholeheartedly.

Presently Mrs. Fine emerged from the hands of her transformer, a new being. Black sausage curls were plastered proudly to the sides of her head. Her dark eyes in her hard, larded face beamed under pencil line brows. (Not a superfluous hair.) Her pink nails gleamed moonily from the ends of her stubby fingers. She surveyed herself in the mirror with pleasure. (Perhaps the day would turn out well after all.) Erna got her tip and escorted Mrs. Fine to the door. "See you in two days," she said. "Now take care."

* * * * *

Six o'clock and the canapes had not arrived. Mrs. Fine was beyond words. "Where is he, that damned caterer?" she said, and when someone approached her for anything; "Don't speak to me. Don't speak to me." She rushed frantically around the wide hall in her tight, low-cut, black velvet dress and her tight, spiked, clear plastic high heels. Her face was flushed beyond the reach of even the most lavishly applied cosmetic. And her hair! Her set was loosening, falling! She had caught a glimpse of herself in one of the mirrors that panelled the hall. She must calm herself, and she must comb her hair. She went into the ladies' room and rummaged through her little, black velvet pocketbook for her little rhinestone handled comb. Carefully she combed her curls. Carefully she replaced the hairpins. When she was quite sure that her sausages looked precisely the way they had at the moment when she emerged so brightly and shinningly from Erna's, she sank back into a gray armchair, sighed, and picked up a copy of *Vogue*. But before she had even read the table of contents, before the flush had left her face, she remembered the canapes. She sprang up from her chair and ran back into the hall. But they had arrived, the canapes had arrived and it was about time. The man was just placing the last of the trays on a table. And Carlie had come down. She was wearing her yellow, chiffon dress. Her mother rushed over to her with a corsage of three yellow roses and sixteen lumps of sugar.

"Here, dear," she said, "this is for the birthday girl. And you must pin these on me." She handed her a corsage of pink roses. "You look lovely, dear, lovely. And see how your mother has gotten herself spruced up, too. After all, she wouldn't want her Carlie to think her mama was an old bag."

When Mrs. Fine's corsage was pinned in place, with the roses standing upward, just the way flowers *should* grow, she went over to one of the trays and tasted a canape. They were soggy, but weren't they always? Mrs. Fine was resigned to them; she was resigned to the world, to her daughter, to her daughter's friends, to the caterers, to her husband. She had entered a state that Zen Buddhists would have found admirable. But her lipstick was smeared. She had noticed that in the panelled mirrors. And there was red caviar in the corners of her mouth. She went back to the ladies' room, and she took her little, black velvet pocketbook with her. She extracted her jeweled lipstick case, carefully outlining what she had duly chosen to be her mouth. She stared at herself in the mirror, lifting her head, then lowering her head and looking at herself with her eyes wide. She smiled a half smile at herself and was pleased with the effect. She watched her profile from the corners of her eyes, and then she lowered her eyelids and watched her lashes fan her cheek. After a while, she returned to the hall, straightened her husband's tie, and told him that he looked handsome; she was told in return that she looked handsome. Gratifying. The orchestra began to stream in. It was a warm evening, and the men were hot and uncomfortable and had their collars open. Mrs. Fine directed them to their places and suggested that they button their collars and replace their ties. But the men had brought dinner jackets. Mrs. Fine was relieved. She told them that they might use the men's room as a dressing room.

"After all," she tittered, "you men wouldn't want to get dressed in front of everybody."

The men filed out, taking their dinner jackets and ties with them. Mrs. Fine went back to the ladies' room to read *Vogue*.

Seven o'clock and the guests had begun to come. Mrs. Fine, Mr. Fine, and Carlie formed a receiving line and greeted the first of them at the door. "Oh my," said Mrs. Fine, "so many presents. Carlie will just have to share them with her mother. I just hope you have all brought things that are a little too big."

The guests were directed to the refreshment table, and the orchestra began to play "You've Got the Magic Touch," followed by "The Miami Beach Rhumba." The guests began to dance; a few of them at first, and then all of them. Mrs. Fine had a whiskey sour (a lady's drink). Gene was dancing with Carlie. They were, after all, a sweet couple, (she thought) a really sweet couple. Carlie's yellow dress swayed with her body in time to the music. Gene was looking at Carlie with . . . interest. Carlie smiled at Gene. When the dance was over, Carlie brought Gene over to her mother. "Don't we dance well together, Mother?" Carlie said, "Gene taught me how to do the rhumba."

"Well," said Mrs. Fine, "Gene will just have to teach me, too. Then I won't have to take lessons at Arthur Murray's. Gene, would you like something to drink? Just soda for Carlie, though, because she's still a little girl, even though she can do the rhumba. What's that — isn't that called the dance of love?"

"No, Ma'm, that's the tango."

"Oh, then don't you go around teaching her the tango." Mrs. Fine shook a finger at Gene and frowned a mock frown at him.

The music began to play again. Mrs. Fine had another whiskey sour (a lady's drink). A boy was standing near the refreshment table, not dancing. "Come on," said Mrs. Fine, "you can't stand there all alone. Dance with me."

The boy looked at her and raised an eyebrow. "Okay, babe," he said, "if you're sure your mother won't mind."

They moved to the center of the floor and began to dance. It was a lindy. Mrs. Fine danced it with more abandon than accuracy. She smiled widely, brightly, and shook her large form liberally. Soon there was a circle gathered around her and the boy. They were clapping and shouting "Go, Mrs. Fine, go." Mrs. Fine noticed Carlie leave the circle. Her face was bright red, and she looked as though she were about to cry. Sixteen was a terrible age, Mrs. Fine had read that somewhere. Sixteen, temperamental as hell. Gene must have said something. It was a lovely party, a perfect party, though. But God! Carlie would be sixteen for a whole year yet, and they would have to live with her. Ingrate. It was a *perfect* party. Mrs. Fine danced many, many dances that evening, and soon, she forgot about her daughter. She even danced with her husband once.

*So tall he is, and slender, and so fair
So gay he is, and with such pretty words
So like a thrush for making a sweet note
My heart, as I watch him, trembles in my throat
So that I am all wonder to behold him
He being what he is, I being I
To dare in reverence alone to hold him
And touch his cheek and forehead with a kiss.
All loveliness he is, the whole world over
All joy, all grief, all beauty to his lover.*

*Red, red was his color; the tones
that pervaded his being with warmth
and life.*

*Red he was, his soul of crimson burning fire . . .
his mind, ever changing yet constant . . .
Join fire.*

*Vermillion the cliffs of his homeland,
the stone that crumbled at his touch . . .
and then to dust of coral —
his color.*

*Scarlet was his love, dramatic, intensely constant
Red were his eyes, the terra cotta of the
earth
leaping with green and golden flames
the reflections of his soul . . .*

*Of the tones that pervaded his being
with warmth and life . . .
and
life.*

Anonymous

*Fair and elect are you whose eyes are brown
Lent here to cultivate the basest weed
Outline the lily with celestial crown
Redden the fading rose going to seed.
Prepare to stand with majesty of wheat:
For you shall brush the starlight from your hair
On some terrestrial Ararat, the threat of evil
Never following there.*

Anonymous

YOU ARE GONE

*The early hours are so still,
And I am awake against my will.
A cigarett does nothing to chase
Away the image of your face.
The blue smoke drifts out toward the dawn
And only reminds me — that you are gone.*

GAIL CISSNA



He shook his fist menacingly at the pompous congregation of men seated about the table.

"Bah, you narrow lunk-heads! The greatest find in all scientific history and you have the gall to term it poppycock."

With that, the little man furiously struggled into his overcoat, unceremoniously plunked on an undersized homburg atop his bulbous head, and turned for a final word with that mildly amused group of dignified personages.

"Mark you, this is my last offer."

His thin mouth was set and his fierce blue eyes glowered at them as he hesitated, waiting for a reply.

General Sorenson, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force Technical and Scientific Research Commission, raised his stately bulk from its sitting position. Making no attempt to conceal his riotous amusement at the previous scathing blasts leveled by the slight little man, he politely sought the privilege of speaking for those eleven honorable military nobles seated before him. His sweeping glance of request set off a chain reaction of acquiescing bald heads, eleven in all.

"We express our regret, Dundy, but the Air Force, as yet, has not been aroused by a need for flight instructors . . ." (he paused, almost choking, his frame doubled in laughing convulsions, then making a super-human effort to finish his sentence) . . . "to teach the pilots how to fly WITHOUT a plane!"

At that conclusion those middle-aged men of respect joined in a chorus of howling guffaws and cackles as the sputtering Julius Dundy restrained himself from further outbursts. He bounced his brass-tipped walking stick off the marble floor with all his might and, catching it neatly on the rebound, stalked out of the disordered room. As the boisterous laughter decreased to dignified smiles, his quick, sharp steps gradually faded and died with the clanking of the elevator door.

Doctor Julius Dundy had long been adviser to the Air Force T. S. R. C. In fact, it was he who had engineered the development of guided missiles from their earliest conception to their present-day strategic importance. Until recently, he had been regarded as a top-notch physicist by that same assemblage of military brass which had so coarsely dismissed his most sincere attempts to impress upon them the importance of his discovery: Dundy's uncovering of a long-sought method for human flight — without motors or any accompanying devices! The fact that he himself was unable to do any bird-like loops or even rise off the

ground, coupled with the complete absence of any scientific procedure, was grounds enough for the Air Force to refuse his generous offer to display his technique on some of their valuable crop of young pilots.

To these men of keen intellect, in a time when scientific minds reign supreme, each hour brought the time closer when that unfortunate character, Julius Dundy, would find himself securely nestled in a mental institution. Just three days of wild activity on the part of the fuming little man served to bear out the official theory and Dundy was hustled off to a Washington booby-hatch, despite his most vehement protests. Poor Julius was given a hopeless classification, locked up with some suitable lunatics for company, and the key was thrown away.

And so closed the door upon a slight little man of science, once a member of the military's most important defense unit. Julius Dundy, many times applauded for his outstanding technical contributions in page-two editorials of the evening newspapers, now was caged like a puppy within the forty-foot walls of a mental institution's garden.

Three months later a copy of the Washington Herald lay spread in front of General Sorenson and his eleven associates. Besides the weather, reaction to Senator Ferret's speech, and some to-do about the cost of living, there was a tremendous headline and several columns of comment complete with pictures and maps. To a reader of the *Herald* this was the story: The inmates of a Washington asylum had been detected in the process of a mass flight where no means of transportation was visible. In a body they had risen over the confines of a rather forbidding wall and continuing quite at ease had covered the full distance to Griffith Stadium, a major-league ball-park, to watch the Washington Senators engage the New York Yankees. Strange as that was, it was even more unusual that only one of the institution's company had not been in the party. Yes, it was poor Julius Dundy, still unable to master his own methods, still the unfortunate little man who could not practice what he preached.

Oh, yes, the inmates did return home again and in the same way that they had left . . . but, alas, they were in broken spirits. The Washington team had blown the ball game in the ninth inning and the Yankees had won, four to three. Despite the urging of a violent Dundy, they never left the roost again.

TINA LEVIN

*Dusk, and the curve of field and
hollow*

Etched in gray when a star appears:

Sunset . . . twilight . . . the dark to follow . . .

*And thoughts of you through a mist
of tears.*

Anonymous



GO 'WAY, GOD!

*Look at that atheist!
Shameful!
See those poor, misguided
Agnostics? Heathens all!
Poor souls!
I believe in you, God.
See how good I am?
I believe in you, but
Go 'way for now!
Who wants to be morbid?
I just want to have a good time,
Like everyone else who isn't odd!
What's wrong with that, God?
Hey! Where'd you go, huh?*

DIANE DESANDERS

EL MOMENTO A LA CASCADA*

*Una gota, una gota que cae, que cae espantosa y
vacillante de una roca indecisa a dejarla
caes en el rio de la vida.*

*Este grano de existancia a la vez confuso y
determinado, se liberta. Que hara? Que
pueda hacer?*

*Libre pero aprisionada, ella combata el arroyo que
se ha vuelto torrente. Salvaise? Ay! El rio
se burla de ella y de sus companeras.*

*Incessamente en adelante, ella esta empujada
sabienda bien la destinacion de suviaje fatal.*

*El corriente se ha vuelto horriblemente rapido y de
repente al horizonte — LA CASCADA — el principio
del fin, la peradilla del rio y de sus discipulos.*

*El rugido se pone ruidoso, la conmocion esta por
todas partes, ella esta empelada, apretada,
estiechada — Un infierno de caos!*

*En un momento aterrado, la cascada emite un
gemido de truinio, y Puf! El viaje esta
acabado, la muerte la aguada sobre las rocas.*

*Dentio de este momento a la cascada, un instante
momantaneo de gloria para nuestro grano
de existencia, entonces el principio de una
eternidad confusa.*

DANNY LAURENT
Paris, France
Orlando, Florida

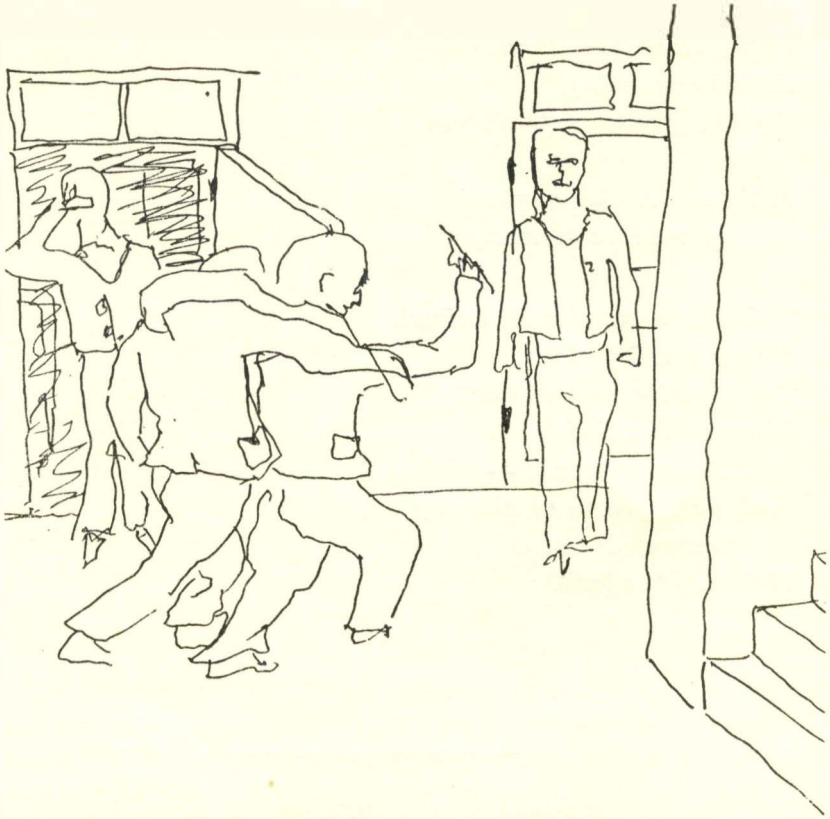
* (This poem is a translation of "L'Instant a la Cascade" which appeared in the Fall Issue of the Flamingo — 58.)

*Dark, black and threatening,
Angrily groaning,
Streaking out bright flashes
as its warning
Is the sky on this day as it
approaches morning.*

*It is like a caged wild animal,
Roaring and furious,
Till it no longer can fight.
Then, with a shriek of
terror, it breaks - -
And, as the earth awakes, its
tears of defeat
Melt into the land.*

*Boast not so much the splendid dyes
Of cunningly-wrought tapestries,
Of painter's blue and red;
I've seen three scarlet butterflies
A-flutter in a golden breeze
About a milkweed's purple head.*

TINA LEVIN



FAMILIARITY, SIRE OF CONTEMPT

JOSEPH A. PAGE

I had seen the corporal angry before. But I had never seen him in a rage like this. As he came into the squad bay, he must have kicked the doors open. They slammed against the walls, heralding his entrance like big brass drums.

"Familiarity breeds contempt," he rumbled. "Of all the stupid, idiotic verbal garbage I've heard that guy throw out, this stinks the worst." He cursed his way over to my bunk, and I started applying the soothing lotion.

"Hey man! Calm down. What's all the noise about?"

"Page, I just got chewed out and threatened with a bust in rank by that old grandma we've got for a first sergeant. Someone informed him I was in the officer's club in town last night with Lieutenant McLean. He called me into his office and tore into me like I had committed adultery or something. I started to explain about McLean being a classmate of mine in school. But he thought I was making excuses. 'I don't want any alibi-Ikes in my outfit,' he says, 'stow it!' So I tried to explain tactfully that there were no written regulations against enlisted men fraternizing with officers. 'It's against military custom,' he says. 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' And before I even had time to sneer, he ordered me out of the office. Familiarity breeds contempt. Boy, if that isn't a teeth grater for you. When he says something like that, I'd like to punch him right in the mouth. Familiarity breeds contempt. Where do they get such ridiculous sayings? If familiarity breeds contempt, how do all the officers stand each other? In fact why don't all the guys in this barracks go around with an air of contempt? We all work together, we eat together, we sleep together. Man, we couldn't be more familiar. And yet we get along great. How do we do it, Page?"

"I don't know. Maybe there's something wrong with us."

"There's nothing wrong with us. But there's plenty wrong with that thick headed, seven-striped zebra we call 'Top.' Come to think of it, I always thought animals were the only things that could breed. Page, have you ever seen a living, breeding animal called a 'Familiarity'?"

"Nope. Can't say that I have."

"Neither have I. But if our first sergeant and comic book erudition say that they exist and can breed, why then they exist and they can breed. But why don't they call little baby 'familiarities' by another name instead of 'contempts'? Seems they could call them 'famies,' 'families,' or something like that. What would you call a little 'familiarity,' Page?"

"Gee, I don't know. Sounds like a pretty good date to me!"

"Very funny, very funny. You know, I wish I could handle myself more calmly whenever I run up against someone like that first sergeant. Right now I can think of just what I would like to have done. When he gave me all that 'familiarity breeds contempt' jazz, I would have liked to be able to look him straight in the face and, with a lot of dignity and resonance in my voice, say, 'Perhaps, when contempt is deserved.' "

"SONG OF LIFE"

*God sent His singers
upon Earth*

*With songs of sadness and
of mirth*

*That they might touch the
hearts of men*

*And bring them back to
Him again.*

VIP VIBOONSANTI

AH, MEN!

*Men are stinkers,
Men are rats,*

*Men are rough and rowdy brats.
Men are awful,
Awful bad.*

*Life sans men
Would drive me mad.
Ah, men!*

JODY BILBO

SEX UNJUSTIFIED

*I thought you really cared for me.
You wanted just biology.
I say that I don't care, but still*

*I need you, and I always will.
Why must it always be that sex
Just maims, distorts, and finally wrecks
The feeling that brings deeper bliss
And comes before that first sweet kiss?*

DIANE DESANDERS



THE PIT

GAIL CISSNA

I.

*Feathered brown bird pacing on a sandy shore;
Alone, piping out his lonely dirge in a wave-edged wilderness.
Crested, foam-headed breakers
Rolling in, then halting, to patter timidly upon the
Grain of existence.
Sunlight sorrows, filtered through the filigree of cloud.
I write the galaxy and the pit upon the sand,
And the small piping bird laces his mark
Over my life.*

II.

*The torn and the tangled; weeds strewn over
The stone walk, leading to a spouting fountain,
Crystal, and misty in its inscrutability.
Dimly veiled, I pass the fountain and walk
Directly to the pit. Skirting the blast-hot edge.
Burnt in the middle of the shimmery lake, plummeting,
The chasm mouths abysmally.
Tiny ladders hook into the crevices,
With tiny rungs splintered.*

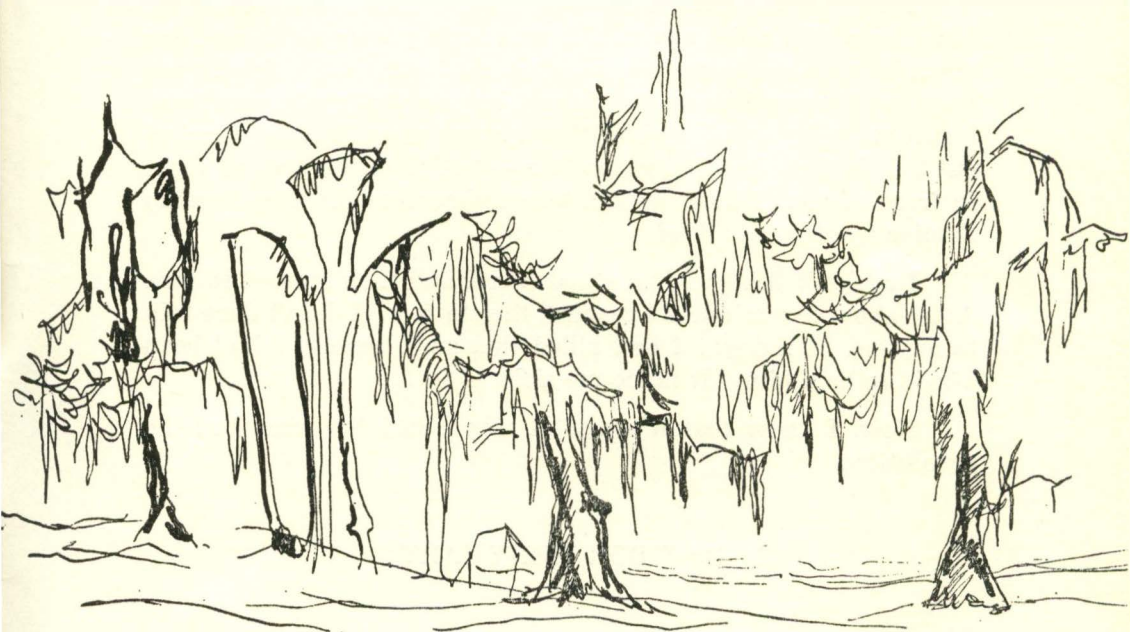
III.

*Boulder splattered, briery gray precipice.
I walk and walk and walk to the huge flat altar,
An icy, moist wind whipping over the heathen moor
And blowing at my resolved back. Proper names I disregard,
And in woolen armor hurl myself upon the altar.
It flags, and sinks, and finally liquefying, precipitates me
Into a whirling mass of concentric circles.
An angry vortex of muddy-glass green, tomato red, and
swirling black.
At last to the galling end.
The pit.*

ILLUSION

*Moss hung down
Weighted to the ground.
Fog was sleeping on the lake,
Hiding it from view.
Either that, or
A piece of world fell off,
Leaving the bare edge of earth
To drift through infinity.
In this desolation
There were only foggy grey
And mist and I.
No sunlight filtered through.
No birds expounded in the trees.
Moss hung down
Weighted to the ground.*

DIANE DESANDERS



FEAR OF THE NIGHT

I remember the date exactly; it was October 26, 1956. I had been ordered by an officer to go out and watch Seventy-second Street. I had a premonition that something was going to happen. It made me a nervous wreck, so for four hours I did nothing but smoke cigarettes.

About two o'clock in the morning I heard something moving behind me. I didn't dare turn around, as a cold fear crept through me. Two minutes later I looked back and saw something that I will never forget. Three feet away stood a man, glaring at me. He was about six feet tall, his clothes were torn and ragged, his face was fat, and his hair messy. His eyes pierced the darkness like a tiger's. I couldn't think of what to do; it made me panicky. My one hope was my rifle, but the fear of those glaring eyes left me motionless, and I couldn't move for about five minutes. I wanted to say something but nothing came out; then I wanted to cry, but all my tears dried up. One thought went through my mind: "Is he a Russian, or is he a Freedom Fighter?"

I knew that I had to do something. I wanted to stand up, but I heard the noise again. He was trying to speak to me; but when he opened his mouth, blood gushed out. This frightened me more because I knew that I must help anybody who was hurt. I automatically stood up and threw away my rifle, and reached out to help him; but it was too late — he fell to the ground right in front of me. I knelt behind him and screamed. The Russian Soldier was already dead.

I couldn't think; I just stood there, and then started to run. After about five minutes I reached the station. I didn't dare talk to anyone. I thought I had killed this man because I had been afraid to help him. It made me sick.

Now, I know that it wasn't I who killed the man, but the revolution.

By TIBOR MENYHART

