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CUTTY SARK



Cutty Sark

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Editor's Note

Those of you unfamiliar with Robert Burns's "Tam o' Shanter" may wonder what connection a cutty sark has with the Fall publication of Otterbein's Quiz and Quill Club. Allow me to reveal the essence of the poem and the significance will materialize like witches in the night. In "Tam o' Shanter" the hero lives in Scotland and enjoys his nights out drinking with the boys. One night, however, he drinks far too much whiskey and finds himself, thoroughly intoxicated, riding home on his horse. While passing through the dark woods, Tam believes that he sees a coven of witches dancing obscenely. One witch dances particularly well, and she wears a cutty sark, which is a camisole, or woman's under-shirt. Tam, in his drunkenness, yells: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!" The next thing he knows, the witch is chasing him. Tam sees a stream ahead, and knowing that a witch cannot cross running water, he crosses the stream. The witch has closed the distance between them, however, and she grabs the horse's tail and yanks it off.

So be forewarned when you read the literary works within these pages: you may see in the flesh images that should exist within your mind alone.

Now wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Each man and mother's son take heed;
When'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
Remember Tam o'Shanter's mare.

--Amy Shaw

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In Your Eyes I See

In your eyes I see
 what you never see.
In your fingers I feel
 what you never feel.
In your mind I know
 what you never will know.
Hide from me,
 I am like you.

--Les Epstein

Fence

Built with the intricity
 of a spider's web.

Kindergarden faces,
 pressed noses,
branded, impressioned faces,
 stunned
caught in the web,
 watching the world
 pass them by.

--Juli Slack

Morning in May

Early morning coffee
slushes back and forth
in her cup like
mud
between the toes of
a lonely child after
a summer's rain.

Her bony fingers
twist and wind
around the ceramic
mug
like a clinging vine.

Her lips are parched
and her teeth stained.
Caffine and Nicotine.
Desolate and fathomless eyes
stir the coffee
and stare
down
with revenge
at an empty hand.

No gold ring treasuring memories.
Only a pale ring of flesh
holds the remembrance of
what was once
there.

Angrily-
she pushes the cup aside
along with
the past
and reaches for the bottle
that helps her forget.

She takes one last look at
the picture of her children
before she drowns her sorrows.
I long to hold her and comfort her
and remind her of the single word
she starves for...
Mom.
But we are his now
and it hurts.

--Cathy M. Allen

Soldiers of Glory (II)

Come summer all warriors don their battle gear
They drill long hours for that first duel
Under watchful eyes each warrior works his hardest
In his attempt to become a superior fighter

Each position is carefully filled
As the mighty leader compares and chooses-
Chooses those most fit
To do battle in honor of their people

Each battle drains power from the warrior
Each battle brings more pain
But they do it time and time again
Because they are the Soldiers of Glory.

--Dave Williams

The Hazards of Exercise

The reasons behind America's obsessive concern with exercise are a complete mystery to me. Everyone seems to be searching for the quickest and most painless route to a sleek, trim body. Every magazine reports a new doctor-tested exercise program that guarantees a healthy increase in heart-beat, along with promising the hopeful reader that he or she will sweat off two pounds per workout. All well and good, of course, until you overdo it and your heart rate increases until you reach fibrillation, and the healthy sweat leads to dehydration. Your enthusiasm may be slightly dampened after the ambulance transports you to the nearest hospital where you awaken--attached to a cardiac monitor and wearing a smelly shirt.

After being released from the hospital, you may find yourself disillusioned by those popular magazines. However, don't despair! Right next to those magazines are small purse-sized pamphlets that offer a wealth of ideas on ways to get in shape. For a mere fifty cents, you can be secure in the knowledge that you will always have some inspiring reading material for those spare moments in a busy schedule. Whenever you are sitting on the bus or standing in line at a fast food restaurant, for example, you can pull out your pamphlet to learn "How to Jump-Rope Your Way to a Better Figure."

If you are looking for a more relaxing and less strenuous way to exercise, yoga may be a good choice. Yoga, which is based on meditating and deep breathing, brings you to a greater awareness of yourself, as well as leading you to a state of relaxation. After struggling for half an hour trying to twist your legs into the peculiar cross-legged position of the meditation exercise, you may decide to abandon this step, if only to redistribute your weight to ease the strain in your pulled leg muscles. Standing on your head should suffice if you're willing to overlook the strange colors that your face turns as the blood rushes to your head, or if you choose to ignore the deafening pounding in your ears. Now that you are

relaxed and aware of yourself, the next step is to collapse on your bed with an ice pack on your head. So much for deep breathing.

If all else fails, school sports are always a good way to get a healthy amount of exercise. Don't forget the Mutual of Omaha Insurance first, though. You may need it after the hospital bills arrive for the sprained ankle that you picked up by stepping into a pothole during the Field Hockey Tournament, or the broken finger from the basketball tryouts when the basketball bounced off your unyielding index finger as you leaped for the rebound. The insurance could also come in handy for the splintered shin that occurred when the runner threw the bat into the catcher's shins, and you happened to be the catcher.

School sports can also contribute to enhancing the overall appearance of the participant. This adage is true, of course, if you don't count the blistered and bruised feet from trying to keep pace with the cross country team, the skinned knees and floor burns that occurred when a desperate dive was made to save a wayward volleyball, or the lifeless bleached hair of the swimmer.

In my opinion, the best kind of exercise is the type you get while reading exercise books as your digestive system burns off calories by metabolizing the bag of chips you're munching.

--Carol Huston

A Secret Well Kept

Quiet is the way.

Kept silent for stay.

A secret

until I can tell someone

or

until someone tells me.

--Les Epstein

Lost Love

I promised myself not to live to be too old,
for fear of the future.
Someday, when I am 95 or so,
I might walk down Main Street,
and there you will be.
And one of us will say,
"Remember this," or "Remember that."
And we will laugh.
Laugh at the silly, stupid mistakes we've made.
And we will wonder.
Why?
Why we let them stop us.
Why?
And we will laugh.
Laugh at each other.
Laugh at ourselves.
And we will wonder.
What might have been...

--Charlie Daruda

Bird and Dog

The bird is born free
The dog in captivity
The bird learns how to live
The dog how to beg
The bird leaves the nest
The dog runs away
The bird lives in happiness
The dog lives in hunger

--Dave Williams

Wishing

To sail away or soar up into
the sky
To Kiss all my worries good-bye
To look ahead with hope
To look behind with pride
To have faith and never have cried
To look back and be able to
Say I've never lied.

--Dawn R. Dillard

A broken world
A break so bad
No glue could mend.
Like a sword
Your words stabbed
Through my heart
Was there no end?
My broken world
Now only sad.
No more letters will you send.
A new life, I now must start
To try and mend
A broken world
With one broken heart.

--Corinna Murray

Crystal Clear

Her "world will survive as the crystal survives under the crushing rock-masses" writes Bernard Blackstone of Virginia Woolf.¹ What is the nature of Woolf's world, "the crystal"? What factors developed it? And what were "the crushing rock-masses" that hid it from many? One may explore the possibilities by studying the world of Mrs. Dalloway, which in turn will be better understood if read in the context of Woolf's own life. Many corollaries exist between Clarissa's crystalline world and Woolf's own.

Virginia Woolf saw many vivid examples of male exploitation of females. When she was only six or seven her eighteen-year-old half-brother, Gerald Duckworth, sat her down on a ledge and began to explore her body. When she described the event years later, Woolf said that his hands did not stop, as she had hoped, when they reached her private parts. When she was about twenty, George, her other half-brother, advanced on her sexually, although he never raped her. These physical violations of her privacy taught her both to be ashamed of her body and its pleasures, and to build a wall around her sexuality. Although in marriage she did not abstain from sexual intercourse, Virginia Woolf was frigid.²

Clarissa Dalloway, though never described as frigid, is poignantly described sitting on her single bed that seems to grow narrower every year. Because of her illness, she must sleep alone; Woolf, too, was often confined to a single bed because of ill health. Before her illness, Clarissa could have had the passion and robustness of love if she had married carefree Peter Walsh. But she rejected him and his passion because she was not willing to accept his love's other side. It demanded too much intimacy: "But with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable..."³ The emotional violation in such a marriage would have been worse than a physical one. Clarissa, therefore, married Richard, who gave her that freedom of privacy.

Leslie Stephen, Woolf's father, had no concept of women's need for emotional and mental privacy. His wife sacrificed her health in attending to his vast psychological needs and died at the age of forty-nine. Afterwards, Stephen passed the "legacy of (his) dependence" from his wife to his daughters, and his excessive mourning darkened the house with his even

greater sense of failure. "Women, creatures of emotion as the Victorian myth had it, were for Leslie emotional wastebaskets. Afraid of having failed as a writer and thinker, he could not confess his failures to men, so he turned to his daughters for reassurance."⁴ Woolf saw what he did to all of them and resented the burden of male egotism that invaded women's physical and emotional privacy.

The freedom and privacy that Clarissa Dalloway had enabled her to live as she wished, and one of her greatest pleasures was to give parties. Woolf was usually uncomfortable at such parties as Clarissa gave. At one dinner party she found herself unable to dance gracefully with her socialite brother or to speak gracefully; in short, she felt a complete failure. Once, when in the company of particularly kind ladies, she began to relax and spoke endlessly; but she said something appalling about Plato (it is not known what), and thoroughly embarrassed the ladies and her half-brother, George.

Yet Woolf wanted to succeed in social situations. She saw that most people "in Society" were ignorant and the success that George wanted was a shallow one, but she loved being at the center of things, being with wealthy people and those with respected names. Quentin Bell says, "She was in fact a romantic snob."⁵ He seems to have viewed Woolf as Walsh views Clarissa.

Neither man saw the richness and fullness the women found in social gatherings. Clarissa's parties bring together a variety of people. She invites whomever she wants and delights in the unity she creates out of gatherings that were random in the broad sense; she can choose from literally all of England. For example, when the Prime Minister comes to her party, he adds to that sense of connection partly because he looks like any man one might see, even perhaps, a Septimus Smith.

The mention of Smith's suicide at Clarissa's party, in the midst of all that unity, vividly portrays a man's life without order. He could not control his madness. Woolf unites the conflicting, yet polar, worlds of sanity and insanity that she knew from her own life. Clarissa, not outraged that a man would kill himself, rejoices in his courage to see his life as it is and resolve the chaos and madness the best way he can. One recalls that Woolf took her own life, but only some sixteen years after she wrote Mrs. Dalloway. I do not suggest that

she was trying to prophesy her own future, but that she was trying to piece together her two worlds.

Woolf explored many aspects of her life through her writing. Her family had many writers, and her parents encouraged education. Though she did not attend college like her brothers, she and her sister used her father's library, and he educated them. Yet she envied her brothers' comradeship with fellow university students, a significant part of education. Clarissa, content to be uneducated, makes up for that missing communion through her parties.

Hours of discussion with her brothers and their friends were perhaps for Woolf and her brother, Thoby, an extension of their childhood education. Woolf and her siblings wrote family newsletters, and she was the chief writer. She began to keep a diary that recorded events and people, and provided a place for her to practice critical and creative skills. She records her revisions of Mrs. Dalloway there, and a brilliant discovery she made about her technique:

I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters: I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humor, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect and each comes to daylight at the present moment...It took me a year's groping to discover what I call my tunnelling process, by which I tell the past by installments, as I have need of it. This is my prime discovery so far; and the fact that I've been so long finding it proves, I think, how false Percy Lubbock's doctrine is-- that you can do this sort of thing consciously.⁶

Virginia Woolf brilliantly discovered her unconscious technique; more importantly, she completely incorporated it into her story. She connects the different caves of her characters just as Clarissa brings together the caves of her guests.

If there are any crystals to be found in the depths of Virginia Woolf's own, personal cave, they are the crystals created with her writings. The forces behind these works,

especially of Mrs. Dalloway, are complexities that she gathered, explored, and then gently rearranged to form the worlds that Bernard Blackstone says will survive.

Notes

¹Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary, ed. Leonard Woolf (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1953), p. viii.

²Phyllis Rose, A Woman of Letters (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

³Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1925), p. 10.

⁴Rose, p. 19.

⁵Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf, A Biography (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), p. 77.

⁶Mitchell A. Leaska, The Novels of Virginia Woolf, From Beginning to End (New York: The John Jay Press, 1977), p. 85-6.

--Loretta Hardman

Special

Special can mean a lot of things
When a rose first starts to grow it holds a
promise of something

Special.

When I first met you, you gave me the hope
of something

Special

(and I wasn't disappointed).

You're special to me for lots of reasons.

You're special because you try to understand me;
even when I don't.

You're special because you're patient with me;
especially when I'm not.

You're special because of the way you make me feel
(like I never thought I would again).

You're special because of the way you feel
(I can see it in your eyes).

You're special because of what you don't feel
(that makes me feel softer around you.)

You'll always be special to me
(because I'll always care).

You'll always hold a very special place in my heart
(because of how beautiful you are).

I care for you in a special sort of way
and

I'll miss you in a very special way.

--O. Roush

--The few dwindling leaves
cling to the branches.

Each one is old and
preparing to die.

They are leaving to become
eventually part of another tree.

The branches are dark,
separate yearnings.

They each reach for life,
beckoning for continuation

And realizing change as inevitable.

--Kimberly Marie West

A Poverty Song

I.

The
Steam from the shape
That
Rots on the ground,
Now begins escape.

II.

The
Lump in the dust
The
Maggots have found,
Wins its dreamy lust.

III.

The
 Boy and the girl
Who
 Look at the mound,
Envy their brother.

--Tim McMasters

--Throughout these windblown fall days,
My thoughts drift towards you.
 I wonder about your life; if it is complete.
 Like a seagull's gentle gliding, does your heart
feel full of peace?
 As night falls upon me and the stars blaze
above me,
 Is there wonder left within you?
 I am whole, but inside my life is broken.
 With the sun, I find laughter and warmth.
As the sky is wondrous, I see the limits are never
closed about me.
 Music tells all about me, poetry lets me learn and
express.
 And you, I could share all within me.
 My dreams were complete to you, the whims were
in stride...
 I could say in my heart I had once truly
cared and given
 For together we discovered love.--

--Kimberly Marie West

Gentle Hands

gently close
my eyes with your peaceful vengeance
lay me down to rest
for you are but a selfish woman
and I am but the portrait of death
sweet poison poured into wine
forbids my body to grow old
my mind has not much time
ah, but you are not able to touch my soul
for I have known
of this time to die
for I have known
life is no longer mine
my body shall cling to the earth to rot
as I approach to see the face of God

I will not call you evil
I will not curse you damned
peace has finally come to me
with the working of your gentle hands

--Giovanni Moscardino