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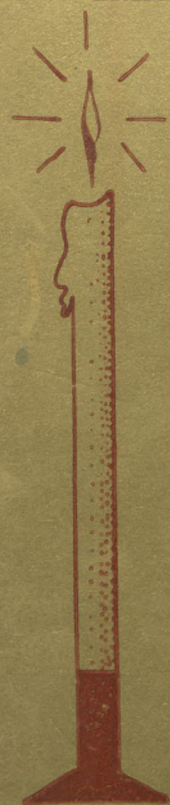


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QUIZ and QUILL



December, 1940

The Quiz and Quill

-- PUBLISHED BY --
THE QUIZ AND QUILL CLUB
OF OTTERBEIN COLLEGE
Westerville, - Ohio



FOREWORD.

In the spirit of the holly and the guiding star, we present to you the combined literary efforts of our alumni, members and friends. Communications from far parts of the world are here—Berlin, Bermuda, Canada,—and with them, the light-winged thoughts of those who are around us every day.

If we can light a Christmas candle in your hearts, and enhance a bit, the warm halo of good will that surrounds this season, then we shall have delivered our Christmas gift to you.

—The Quiz and Quill Club.



THE STAFF.

Louise Gleim	-	-	-	-	Editor
Eldon Shauck	-	-	-		Associate Editor
Donald L. Williams	-	-			Business Manager
Bette Greene	-	-			Publicity Manager

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Mary Thomas	-	-	-	-	Alumni Secretary
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Lewis Carlock					Eldon Shauck
Bette Greene					Georgia Turner
Fred Long					Betty Woodworth



LITERARY AWARDS

SPRING - - 1941

J. A. BARNES SHORT STORY CONTEST

First Prize	-	-	-	Donald Courtright	'40
Second Prize	-	-	-	Monroe Courtright	'40
Third Prize	-	-	-	Joseph Ayer	'40

DR. ROY A. BURKHART ESSAY CONTEST

First Prize	-	-	-	Kathleen O'Brien	'40
Second Prize	-	-	-	Charles Messmer	'40
Third Prize	-	-	-	Viola Senseman ex	'42
Fourth Prize	-	-	-	Rudy Thomas	'43

DR. ROY A. BURKHART POETRY CONTEST

First Prize	-	-	-	Edgar Daniels	'43
Second Prize	-	-	-	Louise Gleim	'41
Third Prize	-	-	-	Viola Senseman ex	'42



THE QUIZ AND QUILL CONTEST

FALL - - 1940

POETRY

First Prize	-	-	-	Marjorie Miller	'43
Second Prize	-	-	-	Wilma Moler	'43
Third Prize	-	-	-	Janet Scanland	'42

PROSE

First Prize	-	-	-	Darrell Drucker	'43
Second Prize	-	-	-	John Perry	'44
Third Prize	-	-	-	Emmajane Hilliard	'42

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

BETTE GREENE

The snow, tip-toeing from the sky, covers the earth with a pure, downy blanket. The air becomes clear as the crystal of polished glass, and smoke curls from the chimneys in thin wisps of whiteness. Within a house, the yellow fire, sending forth its rays of warmth, is surrounded by sparkling faces filled with giving . . . Christmas is here.



THE SOUND OF SNOW

ROSEMARY MCGEE

If we were wee folk,
And could hear the snow
Gently falling down
On the window panes,
Over the ground below,
I wonder how it would sound.
Do you suppose all the wee folk, far and near
Would go to Florida every year,
To escape the terrible din and sound
The snow would make falling on the ground?
I'm sure the snow would tinkle down
With beautiful harmony everywhere.
Merrily singing all day long.
The king would declare a holiday,
Wee folk would come from here and there
And listen to snow, singing its song.
I know folk from Florida would come every year
In big motor cars filled with good cheer
To hear the beautiful melodious sound
The snow would make falling on the ground.

A FENCE POST

WILMA MOLER

"Come look," I called to a friend today,
"Our God again has been out at play,
Practicing archery way up in the sky;
The cloud was his target, the white one so high.
One golden arrow in leaving his bow
Quivered so slightly and fell far too low;
It came hurtling down through celestial space
And straightway it fell, at rest in this place."
"Why, that's only a fence post," he laughingly cried;
And I felt my heart breaking, sobbing inside.
For I thought it an arrow; I thought it God's play;
He called it a fence post, and stuck it in clay.



MOOD

VERDA EVANS

The memory days are keeping me from sleep.
They drive me from my books, my peace is lost.
I walk in fear the night-changed city streets
Lest I, obsessed by April, forget the recent frost.



EXCUSE

MARJORIE MILLER

If I should tell him that I was not there
To take a test because the trees were bare,
And rain dripped softly like a gentle grace
From blackened branches on my upturned face,
He'd have no understanding. If he did,
Convention would demand that it be hid,
And I be reprimanded. I must lie;
Not tell him winter's almost here, and I,
Sensing the world's bereavement and her pain,
Forgetting, wandered lonely in the rain.

ASPIRATION

LEWIS CARLOCK

Haven't you ever felt the urge to create some great piece of art, compose a great song, an immortal poem, or to write a bit of literature that would put the "Gettysburg Address", or Shakespeare to shame? I have often thought that there was some great story floating around in my veins just waiting for me to sit down and let it out so that the world could receive some benefit from it. Of course I would never be discovered in my life time; no great writer is ever discovered until after he has been dead for some time. That may be one reason why so many of them die young. Another reason could be that they starved to death but I musn't think of that.

Perhaps someday I will receive the inspiration to write and will create something like: "Thoughts While Strolling", "On a Mahogany Table Top", or "Under the Kitchen Sink"; an essay that would be read by the millions and cause school children to suffer throughout the ages to come. Can you imagine a college professor trying to probe my inner soul a hundred years after I am dead and trying to discover what was going on inside my mind to cause me to write the immortal "To a Water Spout"?

Maybe I will be walking down a country lane and spy a worm emerging from the grass and, then I will be inspired to write a saga of the Sahara—the long winding caravan of camels wending its way across the scorching sands. I don't know whether I should make myself a hero, or make the hero a fellow just like me.

These thoughts will come out of me some day when the time is ripe, but that will be another day. I shall begin my essay tomorrow, or maybe next week, but not today. Today I shall rest and think; today I shall rest.

QUATRAIN

WILMA MOLER

Alone, one rose upon the stem,
Quivered and fell, then all was bare.
The wind, one flower, and lastly, I,
Sensed that winter was in the air.



CHORD TO LOVELINESS

RUTH EHRLICH

Ugly rain—cold, bleak rain,
Gray dreariness masking the dandelion's sunny smile.
Dripping, sleeting, gray wetness—
Somber drizzling makes all earth dismal and forlorn.

--!--

A robin pipes a shrill cheeriness.

--!--

Silver rain—cool, soft rain,
Hazy grayness kissing the dandelion's thirsting lips.
Glist'ning, caressing, small tear drops—
Compassionate skies revive radiant green freshness.



BITTER-SWEET

HARRIET M. RAYMOND

Broad fragrant fields are clover-clad,
Gay flowers frolic in the breeze,
Young clouds play tag across the sky,
Contented sway the maple trees;
The children's joyous laughter rings
Through woods and valley, glad and free,
Bright stars come out with twinkling eyes
To peep at Earth most lovingly.
And peace pervades through all the land

Of Canada in June.

All training camps are filled with lads,
The rifle range is crowded too,
Tall street lights wear a blackout band,
Grim convoys leave with silent crew—
No word to anxious parents left,
Who look for sailor sons in vain,
While sweethearts desperately knit,
And bravely smile to hide their pain.
For war pervades through all the land,
In Canada in June.

SPECTACLE

BETTE GREENE

The soft blue of a night sky,—studded with a brilliant, here and there. . . . Then over this evening dress of velvet comes the silvery spotlight of the moon.



COLORS

JANET SCANLAND

Red-Black:

Angora, and jet black velvet,
Silver jewels twinkling bright,
Red lips, and soft pink powder;
A co-ed's Saturday night.

White:

Soft white of loveliest laces,
Pale roses in long thin hands,
The light of candles on satin,
And a slender gold wedding band.

Yellow-Green:

Cool green beneath slow waters,
Soft murmur'ing to gold blue skies,
Blackness of low hanging branches;
So summer passes us by.



MOZART SONATA

ELEANOR BROOKS

Song—song does have wings!
You said, "Were you conscious
Of my presence, as you listened?
Time and distance are no matter
To those who seek for truth together,
To those who seek for beauty,
To those who wish to share."
And as the music mounted, cool, and sweet,
Cool as night air, and sweet as your strong lips,
Suddenly, quietly, you were there.
Not there alone . . .
Wherever we are, we are not alone.
The leaves on a shrub are gold in the flame of a campfire---
And you are there with me, seeing them.
* "I wanted to tell you how beautiful it was"---
But now I know there is no need.
The song of our searching has wings,
And across the world, we seek for truth-together.

* Christopher Morley, in "The Dogwood Tree"

REVELATION

EMMAJANE HILLARD

A stranger, after the first glance, would have called Dana glamorous -- the word covers a multitude of sins. She had beauty and intelligence, she was charming and gracious. But it was that deep sense of stillness about her that made people think she was any more than ordinary. Those of us who knew her best had come to feel a deep, uncontrollable hate for her. Coldness shut us out and, during the last few years, old friends had ceased to seek her company. Some think that that was cruel, but intimacy never lasts without feeling, and the woman no longer had any ability to feel. At parties she would sit apart and watch us -- we thought she sneered. When people stopped at her side to chat, she looked like a queen holding court. We never knew what she thought of us -- perhaps that made us hate her more.

I don't try to excuse myself. If anything, my hatred was deeper than that of the rest, for we two had been chums and confidantes as children. At her wedding I was maid-of-honor; and afterwards, in the vestry, we had exchanged friendship rings to bind us closer for the years to come. I remember how we laughed and said that she wasn't taking away my brother, but that Jimmy had brought me a new sister. I suppose we were heedlessly happy and just didn't stop to think that life wouldn't always be laughter and fun.

We didn't know that war was so near -- Hitler was just someone we read about in the papers. Then one morning we faced a second world war. Everyone started to sing all the songs from the other Big War. We were all really scared to death but everyone tried not to show it. The whole country seemed sure of victory -- no one seemed to think of the price defeat would bring. Dana and I held hands waving Jimmy off, and decided to do Red Cross work to pass the time. Months came and were swiftly gone. By then we knew what lay ahead and the women fought in spirit beside the soldiers, trying to do what was expected and keep up courage.

Nothing was really different until Jimmy was reported missing. Then Dana just got quieter and, after

the first shock, we never saw her cry again. Silently she went about, accomplishing twice as much as before, and waiting.

This time the war lasted only a year and a half -- modern methods were too deadly. We did win, and newspapers screamed headlines of "Democracy's triumph"; editorials sobbed out the "joy and gratitude of the oppressed Europeans." The country went mad, as it had in 1918, and every one began really to live again. As the boys we knew best came back, glowing with victory and honor, we gathered them to our hearts and set out to rebuild.

The War Department sent word that Jimmy had been found in a German prison and was on his way home. Dana read the letter aloud, smiled, and put it away. That was all, for she had been sure it would end that way. She had spent a week fixing up their home to welcome him but she seemed to feel no excitement. Suddenly, I was hurt because Jimmy was coming home and Dana didn't seem to care. Finally I decided that she was hiding her emotions.

I shall never forget the day the second letter came. We were hanging the last curtain and stopped to read it after the postman was gone. Dana read it silently, then without a comment or a second glance, handed it to me. Jimmy had died on the crossing from wounds they had failed to mention. Head in hands, I cried for all the things that the war had done to us, for all the wonderful things that would be no more; and felt vaguely comforted that Dana shared this grief with me.

But she didn't. When I raised my head, Dana stood on the ladder hanging the curtain as if nothing had interrupted the work. Finishing, she turned to face me. It was then that my hate began, for she stepped over to the desk and took his picture down. To the question in my eyes, she said stupidly, "Jimmy won't be back."

After that the crowd never sought her presence, but she was always there -- always alone in the background, watching. She felt our bitterness I know -- it must have twisted her heart and hurt her terribly. Now it is too late to make amends but we know the truth.

We called her cold and hated her for lacking our own weakness. We did not know, when Jimmy died, her will to live died too and left her so. We did not know how much her heart ached for her loss and that the eyes that looked so dry, cried often in the silence of her room over trifles he had left behind. How could blindness like ours know it was a wall, erected to help her live out the empty life left her -- a life she did not want but had to live because she was too strong to quit.

You wonder how I know -- and why it is too late--
I know because I saw her kneeling all alone, beside a bed of flowers he had planted. I thought she was praying and so held back. When at last she silently arose, I let her slip away; for I saw one blossom, redder than the rest, was wet with tears that glistened in the night. That was yesterday. Today I understood the words I had heard her whisper - -
"Soon, yes, soon."

This morning she was dead. Softly, as it is with a little child, that spark of life went out. How fitting that there were no words, no tears, no prayers, except her own. I feel that Jimmy met her somewhere on the way and that they are together. I hope somehow, somewhere, they know we understand, at last.



REMEMBRANCES

MARY LOU PLYMALE

No, I shall not forget
Those perfect days we shared;
That June day when we met,
And then the day I bared
My hungry soul to you.

My wish is that you, too,
May never cease to feel
The secret love we have,
The memories, vivid, real,
That burn within me, now.

INCREASE

MAMIE EDGINGTON

These things have increased my stature—
Cool moss that I chanced to see,
Low creeping beds of myrtle,
A leaf wafted down from a tree,
Half broken buds of witch hazel,
The cry of a lonely bird,
A rocky retreat in the woodland,
Soft stirrings, scarcely heard.
And these have plummetted depths—
Books, music, words, and friends,
Firelight on crisp evenings
Calm rest as daylight ends.
These heights of heaven and depths of earth
Have lifted me from the sod,
Have made me a part of the infinite,
Have drawn me close to God.



PRAYER OF A SOLDIER

MARJORIE MILLER

Teach my heart hatred, Lord,
And let it not
Remember men are brothers, Lord.
Men have forgot
Thy teachings, and they are at war.
So let me learn
To scorn the enemy once more,
To kill and burn.
Remind me not their small babes weep
And hungry die.
Let me forget wives vigils keep
And lonely lie
Let me not see a mother's face
Washed with despair,
As she replaces in its case
A lock of hair.
Oh, let my hate be fervid, Lord,
When the drums roll.
I cannot fight two battles, Lord.
Quench Thou my soul!

BILBARRY

VIOAL S. SENSEMAN

He was a strange person. But perhaps that isn't the best way to start. For he wasn't queer—he was as normal as anyone else. Nevertheless, there was a quality of strangeness about him—he never seemed quite real to me. I felt as though I had groped out for him through long dark years, and that if I turned from him for even a moment, he might dissolve into thin air. Then, search and plead and suffer as I well knew I would, he would not come back.

The mystery with which he surrounded himself may in part explain the feeling of unsureness I had about him. It was hardly in keeping with his character, for he wasn't capricious, or moody, or withdrawn. He was the kindest man I knew. He seemed to read my deepest thoughts. One might suppose this would have been boring—but it wasn't. It was delightful. He could tell what I was thinking, but he never pretended to understand how I arrived at the thought. That is to say, he understood my thought processes, but if they interested him at all, it was that they were mine, rather than that he admired my logic.

He was not, I believe, intentionally mysterious. He just never gave a detailed, chronological report of himself up to the time I knew him. I don't even know how old he was. I never thought of him in terms of age, or family background, or educational accomplishments. I knew he was connected with some architectural firm, and that his family was wealthy, apparently; that he seemed cultured, and was clever in a whimsical way, but with the solidity of a person of deep convictions. However, I knew very little about him, and these facts were pieced together from our conversations . . .

I remember how we met. I was at a friend's apartment. The place was swarming with people I didn't know. It was one of those casual parties that I seldom attend. If it had been anyone else's party, I wouldn't have been there. But Elizabeth knew so many interesting people, and my slight literary reputation put me among the privileged number who were pardoned all idiosyncrasies.

They were a group of smart youngsters past the peach fuzz age but not yet at the blase stage, intermingled with successful artists in various lines who had "arrived," and who, although a trifle sleek and worldly-wise, still viewed life with interest and restrained excitement.

As I wandered aimlessly past a French window I came upon a dangerously dark young man who held out his hand and introduced himself with enthusiasm. Now dark, dangerous men interested me; so when he offered me a cigarette and motioned to a chair pulled confidentially close to his own, I settled back for a mild, amusing flirtation.

We got on well—so well, in fact, that I have occasionally recalled his trick of suddenly looking at me intently, probingly—daringly—and then I wish I could remember his name.

Be that as it may, we were sitting, smoking, talking, when a man appeared in a doorway and lounged against the door jamb. I glanced at him without really being impressed until I noticed his eyes. But even then, my interest was the good-natured friendliness of a self-satisfied woman indulging in an agreeable flirtation. And this was "Bilbarry." (Of course, that wasn't really his name. He was named Will Barry IV. But I didn't catch his name, and thought the girl who introduced us had said "Bill." Later I got to calling him by his full name—or what I thought was his full name—because it was so euphonious. Still later I shortened it to one word, "Bilbarry," with the accent on the first syllable.)

As I said, I noticed him standing there. He wasn't exactly staring at us, but watching with that friendly, detached interest that was so characteristic of him. And when I saw the solemn mischief in those brown eyes, I grinned—just frankly grinned. I knew he saw and understood the situation we two were dabbling at casually as we sat smoking . . . I ground out my cigarette.

And then, as I saw him walk away with some girl, I stared after him. My dark Casanova excused him-

self charmingly to get us some drinks, and I remained there, thinking startled thoughts, while all around me people milled, and laughed, and drawled.

Elisabeth came by then, and asked if I had seen her brother. I told her I hadn't, and she explained he was supposed to look after me and take me home when I decided I couldn't stand it any longer. But I protested that I didn't want to leave and had no intention of leaving yet. She laughed that delightful low, naughty chuckle of hers and said to me, "It must be a man. I knew it! — I knew it! Isn't it?" And when I admitted it might be possible, she said, "I thought so. I never knew you to stay at a party longer than a half-hour for anything else."

Then Tall - Dark - and - Dangerous returned, and Elisabeth left us to dance with her nice young ex-husband. After that, a gay young group of casual acquaintances descended upon us, and Will Barry and the girl were at the edge of the crowd...

To say I had fallen in love with "Bilbarry" at first sight would scarcely be the truth. I had always expected it to be that way for me, but I thought the man would be the sort who is tall and blond, and strikingly vital — a man's man that women turned around and sighed after. (Dark and dangerous men, I had decided, were good for one's ego — which accounted for my interest in the dark Casanova of the moment.)

I expected to look at this blond young god once, and then be aware of a tumultuous excitement, and to hear the sound of bands playing and drums beating a quick tempo.

But this—this wasn't any of that. I had looked across at a dear stranger and smiled. And inside me grew a tenderness, prophetic of secret laughter to be shared. He had, somehow, with his little-boy air of mischief masked by solemnity, cut right through my veneer of semi-sophistication, and reached right down to a laughing, adoring little-girl me I had forgotten about.

He wasn't a stranger—he was someone I had known intimately in some previous life... And that was the beginning of our acquaintance.

Our love was a simple, natural evolution. At least mine was. And yet, I loved him so much I was helpless against it, and this hurt. There was so much I wanted for him—and nothing I could do about it but stand by and love him, with that helpless, hurting tenderness, mixed somehow with the pathos of gay, secret laughter, verging on tears one knows cannot be shed.

It wasn't that I doubted his love. I knew it was there. But I never really thought about it. It was "Bilbarry" himself I thought of—the way he eyed me solemnly and admiringly for a silent moment, while I waited breathlessly for him to say I was pretty, or that he liked my hat, or some other foolish nonsense. But he never did. His words belied his eyes—for he always said I had a smudge on my nose, or my hat was crooked. And his eyes, those dear solemnly laughing eyes, razzed me gently.

And if I doubted—and I know, now, I did—it was a doubt of his physical reality. I used to sit by him in a darkened concert hall, or theatre, and thinking in a puzzled way of the terror of his leaving me, I would put out my hand and touch him, lightly. He must have known, though he never spoke of it (as we never said any of those unmentioned understandings between us), for he would hold my hand, lightly, casually.

I used to think, confusedly, of Lohengrin—wasn't that the story?—and never asked him questions of the past, or of what was to be. I had a childish superstition about questioning him. He was never real to me. He was the embodiment of a spirit I had conjured up in my heart, and if I questioned this miracle too coolly and analytically, Eternity, having granted me these moments, would promptly reclaim him for its own.

People used to look at us together, their faces questioning, as if they, too doubted the actuality of this enchantment. Sometimes I wondered if I were mad, and that I only imagined him; if perhaps no one else saw him and they thought I laughed with and talked to a phantom-lover.

I loved him so terribly. I guess everyone who saw us together knew that. Strangers smiled at us, sharing some gay mischief as we passed them on the street; and if their smiles were puzzled, they were friendly, too. I got to avoiding old friends—as though I feared they could destroy this love of mine. I wonder, if, dimly, I believed they would assure me there was no “Bilbarry,” and that I walked in an unreal world? Yes, I must have feared their sophisticated realism.

So you see, I wasn’t surprised when he drowned. And it seemed inevitable that his body should never have been recovered. They told me—those kind strangers who had been his friends. He was among those missing when the great liner sank.

They had no business making a soldier of him. He wasn’t the type. But are men ever, I wonder?

Those two young architects—his business partners—explained to me the various details, but none of it registered except the fact of his English nationality. He had been “called for duty,” they said, and had sailed. In English waters a mine exploded and the liner sank.

Facts! What had I to do with facts? “Bilbarry” had been with me . . . he had left me. I was alone again . . .

I wonder if, sometime, from being alone so much, I shall again need him so terribly that my need will call him back from those dim companions of his other world.



FIGMENT FIEND

EVELYN TRYON

I hoped it was a figment
A mouldy modicum,
Certain I am it hung there
’Till all my soul was numb.
I would have liked to twist it,
To tear from it all shape,
But I could not move it . . .
My inexorable Fate!

AS IN NOVEMBER

ELLEN MAE VAN AUKEN

The naked trees have lost their autumn-colored dress.
They stand disrobed and stretch still branches to the sky.
Just as the soul of man shall one day stand alone;—
And shorn of greed and vanity and silly pride,
Before the throne of God.



THE WANDERER

ELDON SHAUCK

A Translation of "Wenn ich den Wanderer frage"—Author Unknown

"Whence do you come?"

I ask a wanderer.

Sighing deeply, he gives his answer,

"I go from home to home."

"Whither do you go "

I ask a peasant.

With happy heart, he sings,

"To my home, my home."

"Where does your fortune bloom?"

I ask a passing friend,

Joyfully turning, he cries,

"At home, at home."

Thus one day I am asked,

"What tortures you so?"

With loneliness, I weep,

"I have no home."



HEAVENLY FUZZ

MARCELLA HENRY

God is shaking his rugs today
From his bannisters in the sky
And the heavenly fuzz comes fluttering down
On his children walking by.
They smile and hold their faces up
For they know that there'll be more
Of the powdery fluff that the angels scuff
As they run across God's floor.

OVER TWO ITEMS OF WORK

EDGAR DANIELS

If I had to describe the mood I'm in now, the writer in me would be hard put, for it's that sort of mood you drift into and don't realize it until you're there. It happens when you have two items of work before you, and in lieu of trying to decide which to do first you let them both go.

You have loosed the ropes which held your dinghey of thought at the pier of application. You are mentally adrift. But these are pleasant waters, and there is little sign of the rough winds of apprehension. There is only a little tremor of uneasiness while you are still in sight of land, but that feeling steals away like the fabled Arabs, and you never miss it. Instead, before you is the vast, cool sea; above it a Hellenic sky and clouds flushed blood orange by an unseen sun, and beyond the horizon the fascinating call of trivial thoughts.

In your right mind you would never know which call to answer, and you would squander costly time on the calm of indecision. Or in your right mind you might spin about in a whirlpool of misdirected action. So it is just as well that you are not in your right mind, are not guiding your dinghey, but are in a receptive humor for whatever comes.

Therefore, you peer over the horizon, and your tiniest inclination brings you to the bourne of close-knit islands. You are ashore, you are hearing the soft rise and fall of waves, you are breathing the fruit-like fragrance of the jungle.

Looping vines appeal to you and you are among them.

They remind you of chattering, frolicking monkeys; they remind you of Bronx Zoo—and lo, you are in Bronx Zoo amid the manifest odors of sawdust and animals! Great gaunt cats pace before you in ponderous silence. A powdered path shows you through trees and gardens, and

you are at home,

you are at school,

you are in a powerful city,

you are in the cool comfort of

a country landscape.

The visions stride and leap about, inconceivably fast, incredibly vivid, unutterably absorbing.

Then you are aboard your dinghey again, and it is moving toward a shadowy port. As you draw nearer, the blurry forms assemble, and you can barely make out a desk, a lamp, a typewriter—and two items of work.



ON AN INEBRIATE

DONALD L. WILLIAMS

He died like he lived,
Friendless, alone,
Defiant, and drunk.
His could have been love,
Respectability, and happiness.

To his door came opportunity on constant pilgrimages
to beg his indulgence, but to her he turned a deaf ear
and stayed

Friendless, alone,
Defiant, and drunk.

When he died,
They buried him

In a pine box furnished by his sister, to save him from
Potter's Field. To carry his pall, were eight men who
never knew till the funeral day that he had once lived
—a man among men. And they got a kid preacher to
say words of comfort to the poor sister, who cried for
his soul and forgot how mean he once treated her.
And they gave the kid preacher two dollars to read
the service for the dead over the pine box when

They buried him,
Friendless, alone,
Defiant, and drunk.



DAWN

EDGAR DANIELS

The day had not a good night's rest.
By winter wind its sleep denied:
Day faced the brash, accusing West
All haggard, pale and sorry-eyed.

FANTASY

DARRELL DRUCKER

Yes, it sure is funny the way a piece of music can get under your skin. It's happened to me several times and once so bad I've never got over it. I can feel it now when I think about it. And the funny part of it is, I'm absolutely tone-deaf. 'Can't remember a tune five minutes after I've heard it. Why I couldn't whistle America right now if I tried. I'd whistle something and it would sound like America to me, but to anyone else it would just be noise.

This curse, or blessing, as the case may be, got me into an odd predicament a few years ago. You remember when I holed up for six months and didn't go anywhere or do anything? 'The Hermit' they called me in the crowd I was in at the time. Well it was this lack of ability to remember music that did it.

Maybe you remember that colored boy that played piano in that little wine-cellar in the French Quarter? Well, Mary and I were going there quite often at that time. It was considered the smart thing to do and the best people were seen there.

The first time I saw this piano player it struck me that there was something different about him somehow. When he was playing popular swing music or requests, he acted just like any other piano player you might see in a thousand small night-clubs anywhere. But when there wasn't much of a crowd it was different. He always played "blues songs" then, and in a way that brought tears to your eyes. He'd lean back all slack and relaxed with his eyes shut, and sway and play. I tell you I never heard anything like it in my life.

Well, like I said, we were pretty steady customers, Mary and I, and on nights when the two of us didn't go there, I usually dropped in by myself just to hear him. That way I got pretty well acquainted with him and he told me about his life. I know it sounds kind of funny to be friends with a nigger, especially to a Southerner like you, but the guy fascinated me.

Bee-bee, he called himself. His last name was Bates. He had been playing swing music a long time.

Seemed like he was just born on a piano. Of course Bee-bee wasn't his real name. Only a few of his closest friends knew that, and none of them dared to call him by it. When he was just a baby all he did was kick. His mother told the white doctor at the clinic.

'Reckon we oughta name him after a horse, Mister Doctor. Does you know any horses whose names begins with 'B'? Seems as though it'd sound good to have two names startin' the same way.'

The doctor sort of smiled and thought a while and then he said:

'Well, Mrs. Bates, there was a mighty horse that lived a long time ago named Bucephalus. How does that sound to you?'

She liked that all right enough and that's how Bee-bee got his name.

Well you can imagine how it would be for a kid with a name like that in a nigger school in Georgia. He always had to lick every kid in his class before he could get a minute's peace. The family moved around a lot too, so sometimes he had two or three classes a year to lick.

One of his school-teachers took a liking to Bee-bee and started him off playing the piano. He stayed there long enough to learn some simple tunes and how to read music. His mother had an awful time with him when it came time to move from that town. Only after a couple of sessions with his daddy's razor strap or a stick of stove-wood could he be persuaded to go along. After that there was no keeping him away from a piano. He broke into churches, schoolhouses, and even into private homes to practice. Almost got into some pretty bad trouble a couple of times too. When that happened they'd just move along again. His daddy was a big strong buck who could always get work till the first payday when he usually got drunk and ran wild through the town. Folks used to say Old Man Bates was a one-man riot when he'd had a quart of nigger-gin. So they were used to trouble of that kind.

Well Bee-bee worked on his music here and there and by the time he was fifteen he could pick up a few dollars once in a while in a stomp-joint or speak-easy. He'd just sit there slack-jawed, his eyes wide open, staring at nothing and play the saddest music you ever heard. Whenever he did that, the guy that owned the joint would come over and kick him awake, saying,

'We don't want none of that sob stuff, nigger. This is a good-time place. Let's have some jazz.'

And that would always be Bee-bee's last night there. He wouldn't take pushing around from anybody. He was just like his father in that respect. He was big like Old Man Bates too and there weren't many people who picked a fight with him. When they did it was really something to see. He usually ended his engagements at those joints by half-killing the owner. None of that razor stuff for him either. It was bare fists, teeth and feet.

Well, he drifted around the country, playing in joints in Frisco, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia—anyplace the freight he hopped happened to stop.

I guess it was during this traveling that he picked up the gambling fever. Most niggers have it, but Bee-bee, just like in anything else he did, had it the worst and was the luckiest man I've ever seen. He shot crap like he played piano. He crooned to the dice, he begged, he pleaded, he sweated and swore, and usually won.

Along the way he ran into other roving musicians like himself, none of them knowing what they wanted, where they were going, or why. But then I guess most of them would have been satisfied with three meals a day and time to play. From these music-tramps he learned about New Orleans here, the Mecca of all 'blues' and 'swing' musicians. They told great tales of 'Happy Jack's Red Joint' and the music you could hear there. It was a place where anyone who could really 'get out of this world' was welcome to come and play, eats and drinks on the house. And there was always an enthusiastic audience at Happy Jack's. A man was appreciated there. And they told him about 'Luke's'

too. I don't suppose you've ever heard of either one of those places, even living right here in New Orleans. Only those "in the know" go there. 'Luke's' is another place for musicians like Happy Jack's—mostly colored. All the big boys in the business go there when they come to town, Erskin Hawkins, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Earl Hines, Count Basie and Chick Webb.

Well, these stories sort of got under Bee-bee's skin and he started working toward here in the haphazard way of a hobo. He finally got here and was in his element. He practically lived at Luke's and Happy Jack's, shuttling back and forth whenever he got tired of whichever one he was in.

He got acquainted pretty well that way and that's how he got the job in that wine-cellar I was telling you about. Maybe Luke and Happy Jack got tired of passing out free meals or something, anyway they tipped him off and he got the job.

Naturally, as soon as he started earning money he started rolling dice. The colored boys used to get some pretty wild games going after hours. Some of them lasted until three or four in the afternoon of the next day. When one player in the ring got tired or was broke there was always somebody to step in and take his place, and Bee-bee always stuck to the last and generally cleaned up.

I met him just a couple of weeks after he'd started the job and even then he was riding high; flashing his winnings around too much, you know, and whenever I'd caution him he'd just flash those big white teeth and laugh it off.

Well, I'd known him about six months when I started staying after the place had closed to hear him play the way he liked to play. Like I said before, I can't whistle a tune or sing it but I love to hear good music and really appreciate it.

One morning about four o'clock when the place was deserted except for the two of us the thing happened. He was sitting there running his fingers over the keys playing odd chords and breaks in a slow rocking rhythm. He'd been fooling around like that for

a few minutes when he broke into a strange melody. I can't describe it except by that word strange, or perhaps weird and sorrowful. It sounded like all the centuries of meanness and dirt, all the humiliation, cruelty, and pain his people had suffered had come out in one plaintive wail. He went into that trance of his and enlarged on it, babied it, fit in minor chords, and background rhythm. I remembered thinking, 'This is it. It's what I've been looking for and couldn't find.'

Maybe I went into a sort of coma myself. Bee-bee played on that theme until dawn, perspiration running down his face, not relaxed this time but tense and rigid like a dream, or perhaps nightmare. When he stopped we were both exhausted. It was all I could do to get home. Bee-bee stayed there and slept on the piano.

The next night I got there early. It had occurred to me that he might forget it, it was completely from my mind as was only natural. But when I told him about this fear he shook his head and said, 'Andy, I couldn't never forget that. I been trying for that all my life. That's just me. But I'll write it down sometime.'

Well, that was that. I couldn't persuade him, but that fear was still there. Something as great as music like that should be given to everyone and guarded against loss.

That night there was a crap game as usual. I didn't stay but I heard about it afterwards. It seems that a couple of heavy losers had rung in some crooked dice to beat Bee-bee. He hadn't found it out until he was almost broke and then he demanded his money back and wanted to fight. One of the others pulled a razor and Bee-bee got in the way and—well, they buried him on Friday. And a black Friday it was, too, for me.

I covered the town asking his friends if he had played that melody for them. No one had heard of it. I knew I'd recognize it the minute I heard it if someone would only play it again. I had even given it a name. I called it 'Fantasy'.

That's why I stayed home for six months. I spent that whole time trying to pick it out on the piano. It wasn't any use. I almost went mad with desire and frustration. It seemed to beat in my head—so intangible, yet so powerful. Sometimes I would almost catch it and then it would be gone.

It's been haunting me ever since. I can't seem to think of anything else. Maybe someday I'll get it. Then you'll see. There, I almost had it then!



PERSPECTIVE

THELMA SNYDER GRABILL

"Love," the child laughed, "must be
A pair of red mittens—
Warm, necessary, gay!"
Sighed Youth, "Perhaps Love is
A scarf, moon-flecked, flame edged,
To be worn lightly
Or not at all!"
Age whispered, "Love is
A cloak, pearl-grey,
To be wrapped securely
About one's Beloved,
For winds blow cold
And hearth-fires burn low."



AUTUMN

EVELYN TRYON

A festoon which hangs
A ribald riot of color
Clasped at one end in summer's cool green
Chained at the other to a snowball.

HERITAGE

PHILLIP O. DEEVER

The tragedy of life, I think, is this:
That with all other things which I bestow
Upon the life of him whom I call son;
Things that are right and good for him to have—
My loves and joys and hopes and priv'leges;
I also lay upon his tender head
A freighted heritage of other things
Which I am now ashamed to own my own—
My hate, my fear, my sin, my prejudice,
My world with all the error of its ways.
To think that after I am dead and gone,
His back will then be bent with evils mine,
And all his children's children suffer ill
Because my world would not have done with sin!
This is the tragedy that breaks God's heart.



ILLUSION

LOUISE GLEIM

If I could have the private chance, just once,
To burn my fingers, reaching for a star;
If I could pull it, wriggling, down to Earth,
And find out what its secret passions are;
Then I think I'd want it back up there,
Laughing impudence at me below,
And where, with other stars, in friendly space,
All its warts and blisters wouldn't show.



"THE GIFTS OF LIFE"

JOHN PERRY

Last night I saw a woman sleeping. In her sleep she dreamed "Life" stood before her, and held forth from each hand a gift: from one **Love**, from the other **Freedom**, and said to the woman, "Choose". And the woman waited long, and then she said, **Freedom**. And "Life" said, "Thou has well chosen. If thou hadst said **Love**, I would have given thee that which thou didst choose, and I would have gone from thee and returned to thee no more. Now the day will come when I shall return. On that day I will bear both gifts in one hand."

I heard the woman laugh in her sleep.

EUROPEAN NIGHT

ANONYMOUS

Europe, October 1, 1940.

The clothes are all carefully laid out, the flashlight handy, a bucket of water on the back landing, the bathtub full in case of a bombed main. One goes to bed early tonight, as usual, for the sleep will come—perhaps—in two installments. But sleep is hard to woo, for the mind and nerves are waiting. One finally dozes off.

Eleven-thirty, God, help us, there it goes again. that ghoulish shriek of the sirens. Habit has made the routine rather quick and simple by now. Inside three minutes, one is out of the room, fully clothed, coat and hat on, flashlight in hand, and standing on the balcony, awaiting developments. The streets are deserted, for no one stays out late any more. But in all the surrounding houses, one hears the little noises of people preparing hastily, glumly, resignedly, for the midnight vigil in the cellar.

Five minutes of silence. Then a distant flash, as of summer lightening. Flashes brighten the whole Northern and Western horizon before the guns begin to tremble in the air like thunder. More and nearer guns join in. Searchlights spring up and weave their patterns in the sky. Suddenly a parachute flare burns brightly and mysteriously overhead, making the streets as light as day. The sound of motors is heard. The sky goes mad with bursting shells and strings of tracer bullets.

The heavier roar of bombs can be distinguished and then the anti-aircraft batteries nearest the house let go with a crash that shakes all the windows. Shortly afterwards, there is the clink and clatter of falling shrapnel on the roof and streets.

The time has come when prudence and that little quiver in the stomach and knees triumph over curiosity, and one hastily descends to the cellar, and gravely shakes hands with all the neighbors. There is a babble of conversation and an uneasy stir now and then, at some particularly loud explosions. Two maids play a game of cards with two children. One reads "Alice in Wonderland", feeling very much as Alice did.

At three o'clock the "all clear" sounds, and one climbs wearily but gladly up the stairs. A glance out the window shows a fire raging off to the North. One shrugs and slips quickly out of clothes and into bed.

"Let me go to sleep quickly, dear God, for tomorrow there is work to do, and tomorrow night they will come again." And so the nights will pass, week after week after week.



INDIFFERENCE

JANET SCANLAND

Never to question where going,
Never to wonder why,
Only to drift with others
Like a cloud in the far blue sky;

Never to turn at a cross road
To a path beside new shores,
Just to follow the same worn path
Trod by the crowd before;

Never to answer the bright lure
Of green, far distant hills,
Only indifferent moving
While the heart itself stands still.



DAYBREAK

EDGAR DANIELS

Lightly springs the redstart merry
On a trembling twig of cherry,
Warming with her dulcet trill
The haze-bound earth forlorn;
How she rustles in the night,
Chirps on dawn's first streaking light!
What a potentate of crimson color rules the sunny morn!

The cormorant in languor crawls
And smears a trail on bayou walls
O stagnant water, slopped from
Mud-scaled claw and soggy wing;
Hid among the rushes there,
Breathing strident on the air,
He preens his slimy breast and hears the redstart sing.

ETERNITY

DOROTHY ALLSUP

When you are dead, God flings your soul
 against the sky
And makes a star of you.
So shall you shine in silence
Unless the God of this great universe
Hurls you to earth, another falling star
To crumble into dust like all the rest.



COMMERCIAL

DARRELL DRUCKER

Will George be saved
From this depraved
And monstrous fiend incarnate?

Sadie and Gus
Wait for a bus
Tomorrow they'll get on it.

Dark-haired and fair
They all declare
Our hair-wash does it better.

Just listen to
What one from New
York wrote us in a letter.

Blonde and brunette!
Tried our stuff yet?
Dandruff will be diminished.

Tune in again
Tomorrow when
This chapter will be finished.

TIDES

ALICE SAUNDERS BREWSTER

Where are the words to weigh all my thoughts
Like ocean tides changing, leif or not?
Sometimes they shatter on sounding rock;
Sometimes they catch at the sand's smooth shock.
Again they glide,—adventuring chance,
Lingering in shoreward shallows to dance,
Ever more restive, crests of the sea
Crowding their heads wherever they be,—
Yet always they turn back to the blue
Returning, yearning always toward you.



MY WISH

ROY A. BURKHART

That you may find it in your heart to say:
Forward I go;
Break bonds that hold me so
Within the harbors of safety,
And face the unknown deep
And ride the billows high.
Thus I, myself will know
The storm, the sea, the dark,
The light on yonder shore,
The way uncharted,
The goal unstarred,
The mountains, and God.



CAME THE DAWN

BETTY WOODWORTH

It's the first day of Christmas vacation;
You're still snuggled tight in your bed,
And sleep has consumed your whole being
From your toes to the top of your head.
. . . You suddenly wake with the feeling
That your clock has forgotten its task—
When, behold! comes the thought, "It's vacation!
I don't have to get up for class!"

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