

HELICON

Rhode Island College of Education

March 1942

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>When He Considered</i> John F. Hogan, Jr. '42	3
<i>Crisis</i> Elinore E. Snider '43	4
<i>Lullaby</i> Elinore E. Snider '43	5
<i>Born Again</i> Marion Wright '44	5
<i>I Walked These Ways</i> Dale Hofmann '44	6
<i>The Third Movement</i> Helen Sanford '43	7
<i>Parallel</i> Margaret Holden '43	9
<i>Harbor Dusk</i> Olive P. Draper '45	9
<i>Comeback</i> Yolande Magner '45	10
<i>Paths He Has Chosen</i> Muriel Vaughn '42	11
<i>Apprehension</i> Margaret Holden '43	12
<i>So Wide and Wonderful</i> Beatrice Schwartz '42	13

ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>For I Walked These Ways</i> Dominie Pusateri '42	6
<i>For Comeback</i> Natalie Harlow '42	10
<i>For So Wide and Wonderful</i> Dominie Pusateri '42	13

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HELICON

3

When He Considered

DRAMA critics were discussing *The Silent Woman*. The theatres were overdoing the popular interest in Greek and Roman plays. Soon was to appear the period of romantic plays.

At this time, to be exact, eight years after the turn of the century, he was born. Fortunately, or, if you will, unfortunately, his childhood was one of peace and quiet, one in which he could study and learn so well those things which were to be so consequential in his career. Peace and quiet, yes, because his country had no presentiment of the hectic years, the '40's, which were to so change that peaceful country, to so upset that secure government, and to so completely alter his very life itself.

But we must not get ahead of our story. John, for that was his name, learned music. Learned it and loved it. For you see, in those days, it was *music*. The recent distaste for piano lessons had not appeared, and, if that isn't enough to jar the "dead end kids" of our day, he liked the early English poets. Liked them so much that in a few brief months he was entirely under the spell of the great Spenser.

When he was sixteen, he went to college. We won't go into detail about his "school days." Let's suppose they were just like so many other years spent in so many other colleges by ever so many other boys of his day.

All through those years, one thought directed all his study—a

powerful determination to be a poet. By the time he was twenty-one, John was a great poet. Then he disappeared!

* * *

Horton is a small country village west of the capital. A notary public had come there to spend his last years, and now his son, a famous poet, joined him. People said he was idle. People said he was having one long holiday. People scoffed at this lazy young man and said he was wasting his time "turning over the Greek and Latin classics." Maybe he was; who knows?

In '38 and '39 John went traveling abroad. Most of the time he spent in Italy. Looking at the picture through spectacles made in these feverish '40's, we can easily see why immediately upon his return, he decided to write an epic on war. But another, a more personal strife was to put this plan on the shelf for a while.

On returning home, John married Mary Powell. Did we say "strife"? No, it wasn't exactly that. You see, Mary was a rather headstrong girl, and defying convention and ungratefully ruining the normal quietude of her father's rural manor, *she* deserted John!

Thus it was that he forgot his epic on war, and began writing furiously on—yes, you guessed it—divorce.

When he tasted the notoriety that comes of bringing to the public's ear subjects in which they are interested, but which have long been "taboo," he liked it. He liked this

new freedom to question, so his next topic was an attack on censorship of the press. The result? He was made a foreign correspondent.

One of his greatest services was the debunking of foreign propaganda. He worked enthusiastically making it appear what it actually was, ridiculous; but more than that, he answered it. Hence the "foreign correspondence."

Then it came!

Tops in his field! Brilliant as any man of his or almost any other day! Successful, yes, more successful than he ever hoped to be! Now was it all to be tossed into the angry waters of the sea of fate? Without that so important God-given talent, could he

CRISIS

IN this, my life's most consequential hour,
When danger is an actuality
Though still a word that's spoken half aware
Of what its meaning is on land or sea,
My heart has plumbed the cold,
abysmal depths
Of sorrow, anguish, and consuming fear,
And flown to heights of pride and loyalty
Where hope is vindicated, duty clear;
And I, remembering a coral reef,
A tiny dot in ocean's wide expanse
Defended with the blood of valiant men
Who stern with flesh and bone the steel advance;
And mindful, too, of how a captain lay,
His belly torn with shrapnel on the deck,

go on? Go on? Rather, could he still want to live?

Work he did, as he had never worked before. Far greater things he did than ever before. Did he mind, you ask. Did he realize his loss?

Yes, without question; yes, yes!

How did he feel? How did he take it?

At first he despaired. That led him to think deeply about it. And typical of the great mind that he was, he saw that he could do his part, that being blind wasn't the end of everything, and that he, John Milton, must be one of those *special workers*, "for they also serve who only stand and wait!"

John F. Hogan, Jr.

And fought his ship until his lips were pale
And pain had loosed his spirit for its trek
Across the borders of eternity;
Aye, mindful, too, of how an eagle spread
His gallant wings in daring, breathless flight
To write his name among the honored dead—
Ask can I view with equanimity
The holocaust of nations and the woe
That follows in the tyrants' crushing steps
(My heart reels from the onslaught, blow on blow)
And can I live my life in unconcern
When every breath of mine is bought and paid
With someone else's blood in far-flung lands,
When Truth is manacled and Christ betrayed?

Elinore E. Snider

LULLABY

SLEEP, my love, no stars are shining
Gentle dreams and do not waken
Til morning smiles upon the sea.
The tortoise-footed night declining
Has brought no radiant silver moon
To recompense the night-hawk's vigil
Or ease the sorrow of the loon.
Do not let the thunder's anger
Nor the jagged dart of light
Disturb you in your tranquil dreaming
Or wake you from your sleep this night.
I have knelt beside your window
To wait with heavy-lidded eyes
For the last zig-zag of lightning,
Western stars, and clearing skies.
Slumber still and when the day-star
Exiles night and bathes your face
In a warm bright luminescence,
You will wake in my embrace.

Elinore E. Snider

Born Again

"HAVE you been 'born again?'" the revivalist asks. I answer, "Yes, every spring." Just as the sap starts to run and dormant cells shake themselves for a summer's activity, so I find stirrings within my heart and soul. As I prune the grape vine so that it may bear rich fruit, I prune myself for new growth. When I rake and burn the remains of last summer's garden, I purge myself of old, empty, useless thoughts. The

spring thaw brings the frost from the ground. It brings from me any hoarded bitterness, too sour for fresh spring growth. As each plant receives its green color, the flush of new life, new hope, and new happiness creeps over me. New stalks push away the old; thus new thoughts and plans transplant the old within me. Ah, yes; just as a new-born babe stretches in freedom so the spring finds me "born again."

Marion Wright



I WALKED THESE WAYS

I WALKED these ways before:
 Stood on this white hill at eve,
 Felt the swell of this proud sod
 Under my heaving breast,
 Breath'd the sweet freshness
 Of the teeming soil,
 In awe, beheld the sun
 Weave the blue arched warp
 With yellow bands and red,
 Saw leaf and blade
 Burst from flaky bud
 And thawing clod,
 Heard the loos'd stream
 Break and rush and dash,
 Heard not through the ear,
 But through the soul's perception
 The beauteous language of the

New-delivered earth.
 I walk these ways again,
 And stand amazed
 As suddenly awakening in a
 Misty magic land
 Wondering
 "How long will this be?"
 My very senses hunger
 For each glimpse,
 Each swell,
 Each sound,
 Each quickening move.
 What beauty I shall meet
 Henceforth I know not.
 Then, God,
 Give me my fill of these!

Dale Hofmann

The Third Movement

"... and why broadcasting companies allow such trivial drivel as these sloppy romances to occupy, not only valuable broadcasting time morning and afternoon, but, more important, the thoughts of the American housewife, I can't understand. If the editor or any of this magazine's readers will be kind enough to write and explain to me just what the housewife derives from these programs, either in pleasure or education, I should be very grateful."

Box 234

Sept. 11

Dear Box 234:

What do you, a man, know about the type of radio program that gives a housewife pleasure? If they didn't find pleasure in these "sloppy romances" as you so spuriously call them, why do you suppose millions of women listen faithfully every day? As for being educational, without making any unkind remarks about some of those programs designed for men, I assure you the problems presented and answered on these programs have, in enabling the housewife to find a solution to the similar problems in her own life, definite value. Therefore, you have no grounds for your alien attack so recently published in a woman's magazine.

Sincerely yours,

"A Housewife."

Sept. 17

My dear Chastiser:

You have stated some very cogent

reasons in defense against my "alien" attack. But my dear madam, I am a music instructor in a boys' school and therefore my opinions are prejudiced. My belief is that programs of good music would give as much or more pleasure and certainly be more educational to the average American housewife. Your letter, dear housewife, shows considerable character. I should like to continue corresponding with you.

Sincerely yours,

Box 234

Oct. 7

Dear Sir:

I will consider continuing this correspondence only if we confine our subjects to music. I am interested in your opinions on concerts, conductors, and the sort of thing one can't find in books. Therefore, your correspondence, though not welcome, will be tolerated.

Your truly,

"A Housewife."

Oct. 22

Dear Arrogant but Ignorant:

Listen to the N.B.C. broadcast next Tuesday evening. Write me any thoughts you may have while listening, and I will write you my opinions of the conductor's interpretation. Also procure a score and follow along with the music. At least you are eager to learn, which is more than I can say for my pupils. You do me an honor to consider my opinions valuable enough for your perusal.

Your Instructor.

Jan. 20

Dear Pupil:

It is plain from the thoughts and opinions stated in your letters that your perception and sensitivity, plus your musical knowledge, are increasing. I can't begin to tell you what a pleasure it has been to contribute to your musical education. We have covered quite a bit of ground, haven't we? All the way from Palestrina to Copeland—and it's been fun. I feel that, as our letters have lengthened, we have become, not only correspondents, but good friends. After a particularly harrowing day with adolescents who close their minds to the glories of Bach, Handel, or Mozart, when I collapse in my little office looking off over the Berkshires, it is with inestimable pleasure that I open one of your letters. The relief I get in communicating with a kindred adult spirit is hard to express. The very impersonality of your letters has been a change from the constant pressure of people. So, though I don't know who you are, where you live, how old you are, or even what you look like (though I have often speculated), and you don't know much more about me, I feel we have really explored each other's minds, and that we are more fully aware of each other's true self than if we had perhaps known each other personally. I know, since I believe we have such an understanding of each other, that you will understand when I tell you that we shall stop writing. This is the reason.

As usual with young men of my twenty-eight years, I have fallen in love. This will surprise you: my Be-

loved doesn't know a concerto from a sonata. So our courtship was carried on without so much as a note of music.

Sarah, that is her name, has the most beautiful shoulder-length brown-blond hair. But it is her eyes I love best; they are the most mad-deningly unpredictable grey-green. Her skin is honey-toned . . .

I stop here abashed—this letter sounds like something from the pen of a love-sick schoolboy. But I know you will understand just how much of an inspiration she is to my composing. I will confess that I have composed a concerto! The first movement is an allegretto with a definite theme played by the cello; this first movement, I hope you don't mind, is composed as a crystallization of my impression of you. The second, which I have just started, is a scherzo to be played by the violin; the melody is elusive, graceful, lovely; I flatter myself it is the essence of Sarah expressed in music.

We are to be married tomorrow. Goodbye,

Alec Macomber.

April 18

Dear Pupil:

This letter will come as a surprise after my somewhat abrupt goodbye. Your letters had come to mean more in my life than I ever realized. I have discovered to my disgust, that though I still love my wife deeply, apparently my music is more important to me. You knew I was working on my concerto. The second movement was easily finished on our

honeymoon. I have tried and tried to compose the third and last movement, but I haven't an idea except that I would like the cello and violin to play together. I have no peace of mind, because I need desperately to share this, my achievement, with someone. I could play it for Sarah. I know she would be pleased that I had composed a movement for her, but she would listen without feeling any of the ecstasy, the fervor, that went into its composition and would miss the loveliness, the grace. Probably she would say inadequately, "That's lovely, Darling." That isn't what I need.

Therefore, I'm sending the score to you, as usual in care of the editor. Read it; hear it played if possible. Then write immediately your opinion of it. If you can gather from this letter how discouraged I am and how much I need someone like the friend you have been, you will answer.

Gratefully yours,

Your Instructor

May 30

Dear Pupil,

The third movement of our concerto is finished. In it, the violin and cello combine to play the part of the united themes of the first and second movements. Whether or not you find forgiveness for my brutal blindness, my darling Sarah, you will always hear your wonderful self in my music.

Your loving instructor.

Helen Sanford

PARALLEL

THIS rigid law to us has been applied:

Our lives run parallel and may not blend.

Though we have fought against it and denied,
Steadfast it stays; no force can make it bend.

I try, while you are following your trail,

To thrust aside the intervening space;

But wrath or prayers are not the least avail

To fill the void or build a joining place.

And you, I know, are seeking to unwind

Exceptions to this harsh, restricting rule.

Futility is all that you can find.

We both are baffled and can find no tool.

Since in this world you are forbidden me,

Perhaps infinity will hold the key.

Margaret E. Holden

HARBOR DUSK

GOLDEN, glowing, the silent sun slips beneath the edge of the harbor.

A silhouetted sailboat shadows glistening, blue-green waters to a deep emerald,

And is gently rocked by light ripples.

Far away, a lonesome bugle trails the dusky silence with fairy fingers of music,

And the silvery, shimmering evening closes in.

Oliver P. Draper

Comeback

BLUE, white, and gold—swirling; black upon white, intermingled, graceful as a dream. The swish of skates, the blue and white of the woman's dress, the gold of her hair, the black and white of his costume, now blending, now parting as if they were the very music itself.

The woman was thinking, observing everything. It was so long that she had almost forgotten how smookey an auditorium could be with the thousand of cigarettes twinkling in the blackness regardless of the "no smoking" appeals from the loud-speaker; how familiar the sudden hush when the stars entered. Heaven only knew—she had had long enough to forget—ten years.

Ten years. Doctors had given her an answer. Walk again? Maybe. Skate? Never. Maria, of the famous team, Paul and Maria—history makers even when ice revues were unheard of. And they had told her that she would never skate again.

Ten years lost from her life all because of a slippery road, a careless someone coming too fast. Ten years of doctors and hospitals and the same hopeless answer while Sonja Henie came from Norway; Erhart, Shipstad, Chandler. And Paul sought another Maria.

She frowned a bit now. Tension was in the air—she could feel it. Paul had always said he had a feeling for crowds. Now the climax was

coming. The blue and white and gold were billowing and dancing with the black and white, faster and faster through the ribbons of light. Then it was over and Maria could feel the tension subside.



Suddenly she found that she was trembling. Nearby a door blew open and the sudden chill made her feel the sweat on her forehead. The lights were snapped on. The applause was coming fast and hard and Paul and Maria were bowing and preparing for an encore.

Then Maria laughed, strangely, for someone stared. The doctors had forgotten. She did not need two good legs to skate again. She only needed in her soul, the faith to live on—live on as she was doing in the soul of the one in white and blue and gold out there, the younger Maria, her daughter.

Yolande Magner

Paths He Has Chosen

WE stood and watched them walk down the hill toward the novitiate, each postulant led by a white-veiled novice. Tears came to our eyes, but they were not the tears of sadness. Our Betty had reached the goal of her life, the result of years of planning. She was entering the convent at last.

Betty's announcement of her intention to become a nun had caused quite a stir in our community. True, everyone knew she was religious. They had seen her hurrying home from early mass morning after morning, and they knew she attended nearly all the church services. But Betty was a dancer, too. It is hard to reconcile the memory of a whirling, glittering sylph with the sober figure of a nun. Yet this was the choice she had made. She had turned her back on the possibility of a stage career to devote her life to prayer and work under the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. She was following the path He had chosen for her years before.

Had you walked into our classroom in St. Edward's School, probably you would have noticed Betty first of all. You would have seen a pretty little girl with burnished gold hair cut in a saucy Dutch cut. No doubt she would have smiled personally at you, and then you would have noticed her firm little chin and clear green eyes.

Betty had a white fur coat and a fur hat trimmed with ermine tails to match. Betty wore her smart little

dressess breathlessly short. She was often excused early on Friday so that she might go to New York for her dancing lesson at the Ned Wayburn studios. She had modeled in fashion shows for Providence stores, and danced in countless shows for the church and in theatres.

It could not be expected that all these special advantages would not have spoiled her a little. She was the only child of parents who had lost three infant sons before she was born. Their plans for her were directed to a great degree by the ambition of an aunt—her mother's sister. "Harding," as Betty called her, was characterized by restless energy and brittle sophistication. She, perhaps more than any other, fostered Betty's career and saw that she tacts, and worldly advantage. tracts, and worldly advantage.

Yet all these things could not stifle the Voice that spoke to Betty as she knelt at morning mass. From the time she first came in contact with nuns, she wanted to be one. "Please God," she wrote when she was very young, "make me a none." By the time she was in junior high school, her decision was clear. She would be a Sister of Mercy whatever the cost.

In her ninth year of school, Betty formally promised herself to her Divine Lover. She printed her "vows" in Latin and hung them on her bedroom wall, and wore a ring in imitation of the silver one she would wear as a nun. On her pillow lay the crucifix found in every convent cell. She collected favorite prayers in a little

"office" book, and said them as Matins and Vespers. A diary she kept at this time is full of allusions to her vocation, and to her love for her teacher, Sister Anastasia, in whom she confided.

"I love Sister Ann and Mom. Most of all Jesus."

"I said my office before going to bed."

The entries tell of snowball fights and parties, of fun at school and at home. But always they return to that theme.

It was while we were in high school that I became Betty's closest friend. She told me her secret, and we spent hours planning the future. Those were a happy three years at St. Xavier's.

We would stay late in Providence every afternoon, either at school practicing for plays and such, or downtown doing countless errands for our nun friends. Then we would indulge in the supreme luxury of a hot chocolate while waiting for our bus. We discovered the best and "gunkiest" confections of all the local bakery shops, and often set mouths to watering as we ate them on the way home. We constantly shopped for things for Betty's "hope chest." We agreed on all subjects, were highly amused at our own private jokes. We were very much satisfied with life and each other.

And so I cried a little as I watched her walking down the hill, clad in her postulant's dress and veil. I was lonely at the thought of our parting, but still very happy to know she was fulfilling the promise of her life.

The months and years slipped by,

and it seemed no time before Betty's profession day drew near.

"Does it seem possible, Mur, that my wedding day is fast approaching? Already my wedding dress is practically made."

In March, 1941, she received the black veil and habit of the Sisters of Mercy. The first chapter of her life was complete.

I visited her in her first grade classroom this September. It was dismissal time, and forty boys and girls were preparing to leave. The room was gay with pictures and books. I recognized some of those we had bought together. Betty, Sister Mary Pius, R.S.M., moved among the children. It was easy to see that they adored her.

All this seemed a far cry from the little girl who danced her way into the hearts of audiences years before. But no, that had not been completely forgotten. There on the ledge stood two little wooden shoes, one of her first pairs of dancing slippers. She was using them to hold the chalk.

Muriel Vaughn

APPREHENSION

MUD has been thrown into my crystal clear pool
Making it turbid and unsightly.
Henceforth I must be fearful.
Forever, though the clarity be restored,
This thought will torment me:
The silt remains at the bottom
Waiting to be stirred again.

Margaret E. Holden

So Wide and Wonderful



LAST night I had a terrible nightmare. I dreamed I was a tiny speck on the outside of the world hammering away at the equator. But the world was a walnut, and the equator was the middle of the walnut, and I was trying to separate the two halves by hammering away with a tiny hammer and my little strength. That was because father had told me that I think the "world is my nut

to crack." Father is always saying queer things like that. When I blew out the ten candles on my cake yesterday, father said, "Do you know where the lights go when you blow them out?" When I shook my head and laughed, he said, "Don't laugh, Marie, the lights of every birthday cake go up into the sky and become stars." When I was younger, I would have believed that,

but I'm ten years old now. Ten is quite grown up.

Father is a poet. He writes stories with long words, and he never finishes a sentence properly. He arranges his lines like this:

*The world is so wide and wonderful,
The wind must have a wonderful time
Whistling around the world.*

Of course he does not write his stories with such easy words as I just used. He writes about crags and cliffs and things you would not think people would want to read about. He doesn't work like other children's fathers. He just sits upstairs in his study and looks out of the window at the ocean rolling in, and then he gets an idea and he takes out his pad and pencil and he writes. He growls at us if we disturb him.

When I was young, I was afraid of father. No, I think "afraid" is not a good word. We were learning about "good words" in school today, and one of the words that the teacher said was a "good word" is "awe". I guess Steve and Bette and I were in "awe" of father. We were never allowed to play in the yard because we might disturb father. Mother always told us to "hush" when we went by his room during the day. We seldom had our meals with father, because sometimes he would work all night and then not get up for breakfast until we were having our lunch. He would come down stairs very cross and shout at us if we giggled or talked. He said our voices were like factory whistles. He said he had three little devils inside his head called Steve and Bette and Marie, and the three little devils were quar-

reling and wrestling. Every time they kicked each other, poor father would shout with pain.

We never laughed at father. We were in awe of him. At the end of lunch every day, he would say sternly, looking up from the morning paper, "We'll all eat dinner together at six o'clock." Then at six, mother would have all at the table, and bring in the hot food, and we would wait. Sometimes she would tip-toe upstairs at 6:30 and put her ear against the door. Then she would come downstairs and we would wait some more. Then Bette and Steve, (who are twins, though people say you'd never know it,) would begin to whimper.

At seven o'clock, Mother would take the food off the dining room table to the kitchen and heat it up again. Then we would eat without Father.

Sometimes he would come down at five minutes to six. Then he would say, "Let's eat in front of the fireplace!" He would build a roaring open fire and pull the coffee table over in front of the fireplace. Then he would carry in all the food and say, "Well, let's eat." Bette and Steve would sit on the bear rug and not be able to balance a plate of soup on their knees. Then they'd spill the soup and burn themselves and cry. And while mother would be fixing them up in the bathroom, the meat and vegetables would get cold. Father would get very cross. He would get up and storm. When father storms, it is worse than an ocean storm. Once he said he learned how

from the ocean. Wasn't that a funny thing to say?

I have a confession to make. I never liked father until this summer. I didn't like him at all. But this summer I was sent to camp. It was very lonely in camp. I don't think the children liked me. I think they were in awe of me. I do. I missed Bette and Steve. I liked to lie on the camp cot and think about playing with them on the bear rug in front of the fireplace. And I liked to think of the firelight on their blonde heads. I was very lonely for the sound of the ocean at night. I think I forgot to say that we live at the seashore all year round. At night you can hear the waves singing. In camp, I missed the sound of the lapping of the water.

One day, after breakfast, the counselor took us for a walk. She called it a "nature hike." It was silly. She would show us weeds and flowers and say, "This is timothy." Or "This is Queen Anne's Lace." And then everyone would say, the next time they saw the same thing, "Look! There's some Queen Anne's Lace." But it was silly. So I fell behind and went for a walk by myself. I discovered a lovely brook. I called it Brother Bubble's Brook. That name was because the brook sounded as if it were saying something like that when it hit the large rocks and wound around them.

Every day, after breakfast, I went and sat beside the brook and made up a "sitting-up dream." A sitting-up dream is a make-believe dream because you can make anything happen in it that you want. In a sleep-

ing dream you can't make everything turn out pleasantly. But in a sitting-up dream you can die and be dressed in a won-der-ful white chiffon gown with pink rose buds embroidered on it, and you can be decked with flowers and be in a dark room lit only with candles and have everyone weep over you. And then, when they all repent for not having loved you enough and for having sent you all alone to the camp, away from the ocean's singing, well, then you can wake up! That was one of my sitting-up dreams. Another one was having a white horse on which I could ride perfect. The children all laughed at me when I tried to ride in camp, because I had never before been on a horse.

Sitting beside the brook, I saw that the stones under the water were a warm brown color, with gold lines on them where the sun fell on them. The stones by the side of the brook were grey and dry. I pretended that the stones in the brook were lovely because they were caressed by the sun and the water, and the stones on the shore were grey because they were unloved.

Once every week, we had to write a letter home. I never wrote except when the counselor made me. She would insist. She would say meanly, "I insist!" I do not like people who insist. Then I would write to my mother: "Dear Ma: I am well. I eat a lot. I drink my milk. I miss Bette and Stevie. Love, Marie." The counselor would insist that I add, "P. S. I like the camp." I did not like the camp, but I thought perhaps the P. S. was like crossing your fingers

when you tell a fib; and anyway, she would insist.

One day I decided to write to father. I decided I would write a letter in funny lines the way he writes. I would not start, "Dear Father." I would start, "Father dear." So I did. I wrote:

Father dear,

I miss the ocean's singing,

The fire on the twin's hair.

I am like one of the stones that is not in the water.

I am like

One of the stones that is unloved and lonely.

Very lonely.

Father dear,

I am like the grey stones that the sun cannot shine on, because I have no brook to love me.

Marie.

I did not show it to the counselor,

but I mailed it to father. The next Sunday father came to camp. We went for a walk, and I showed him the brook. He said that I must never believe that I am a grey stone. I am a lovely golden brown stone around which the water gushes. The brook is like life, he said, sometimes flowing very rapidly, leaping over the rocks, sometimes placid and almost still. The rocks in the brook are in the stream of life and are lovely to look at because they are blessed merely in having life. I did not understand all that father said, but it sounded very nice. Then he took me home with him, and I was glad to go.

Father is no different. We still wait for him at six o'clock and eat without him at seven. But I am no longer in awe of him. Perhaps it is because I am ten years old now. Ten is quite grown up.

Beatrice Schwartz

Shepard

Where You ALWAYS Shop
With Confidence

... For Spring Apparel
on a modest Budget

The Fashion Shops
SECOND FLOOR

Just Out!

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