HELICON

THE HELICON

"From Helicon's harmonious spring a
thousand rills their mazy progress take."

Gray: *The Progress of Poesy*

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Joyous Swinging

WITH a reluctant warmth the four o'clock winter sunlight lay across the flat front of the Community Center. "The babies won't be out yet," thought Miss Brooks, as she passed the line of perambulators with pink and blue blankets rolling like fat baby billows over the sides. When she opened the door, unmistakable baby noises and smells verified the fact that little dark Italian children were still being examined and weighed by the district nurse in the auditorium. Miss Brooks's dancing class would have to wait. Fifteen more minutes of grace, for which Miss Brooks thanked the Powers That Be and That Make Babies. After stowing away her coat, kerchief, and school books in a locker, she and the thirty-odd girls who had gathered for the dancing class sat down on the benches outside the auditorium door to wait.

Soon came the question she had been dreading. "Mizz Brooks, what we gonna do in the Chris'mas Show? Can we do a Tarentella, Mizz Brooks?"

"What do you want Santa to bring you for Christmas, Philomena?" she asked, hoping to change the thoughts that were uppermost in all their minds—the same thoughts that were the cause of the eager enthusiasm displayed by all the children from hollow-cheeked little Anna with her dark braids, to fourteen-year-old Philomena with her mischievous dark eyes and sulky young mouth. While Philomena politely answered, Miss Brooks was thinking.

"Here they all were, with little enough, goodness knows, without her having to disappoint them by saying they didn't know any dances well enough to do for their parents in the Christmas Show. Every other class had something to be displayed proudly, some accomplishment, something—that is, all but her dancing class. They had rhythm; some of them were graceful; but in a few lessons you can't teach a group of thirty to waltz and fox-trot well enough to perform on the stage for parents. They wanted to do the Italian Tarentella. That was out; definitely. In the first place, she did not know how to teach it. Oh, she could make an academic stab at it, teaching each step from a book. But to polish it to perfection, to give somehow these awkward little colts the fiery grace needed to perform such a dance well, would require a complete metamorphosis.

"I wonder if they have become too Americanized. They seem to have lost some of the grace native to their race."

The short release she had felt when engrossed in her thoughts was suddenly brought to an end. There was the question again, more persistent still: "Mizz Brooks, what we gonna do in the Chris'mas Show?" She looked at her little questioner,

anxious-eyed Anna, then quickly away. What was the use to stall any longer? She'd simply have to tell them that their class wouldn't be doing anything in the Christmas Show. She thought apprehensively of the demoralizing effect of those few words on the class. There would be no managing them. Not that there would be weeping, wailing, or gnashing of teeth—they had had too many disappointments not to have become hardened. But there would be no purpose, no enthusiasm; there might even be an undercurrent of sullen resentment, for their Latin temperament is sometimes hard for a New Englander to understand. Just as she had come in her gloomy thoughts to the possible breaking-up of the class and the disgrace of her own inadequacy, her eyes rested on a poster behind Anna's head. It advertised a square dance to be held for Service Men. A square dance—I wonder—they are too Americanized to be entirely graceful—why not, then, give them something really American to dance? Dances originating on American soil, dances with an angular dignity and grace of their own.

With impatience Miss Brooks watched the door for the stream of babies to end.

"Mizz Brooks, you got a secret surprise smile on your face," said Philomena, with the astonishing awareness of another's mood characteristic of her race. "That means we are to do somethin' extra nize! Maybe a Tarentella like my big brother and sister does?" Hereupon the other twenty-nine little girls caught her mood and danced around like little dark sprites—or demons.

"Well, it wouldn't do any harm to try a Virginia Reel."

By now the last white-nightgowned small baby had nodded his way out of the auditorium from over his mother's shoulder. Miss Brooks thumped on the piano to get the attention of her pupils, who were whirling around and around in anticipation.

"Girls, we have only two more classes before the Christmas Show. How many of you are willing to work hard to learn a dance?" "No lack of enthusiasm," she thought wryly, as the thirty separate responses grew deafening.

"The dance we are going to learn is called a Virginia Reel. There are costumes for boys' and girls' parts; so take partners and form two straight lines, each girl opposite her partner. Listen to the piano and clap in time to the music." She rushed to the piano before the protests and mutterings in which "Tarentella" could often be heard started a mutiny. As the thumping rhythm of "Turkey in the Straw" was drawn from the old instrument, the girls first stood and listened resentfully. Then their sense of rhythm, on which Miss Brooks had been relying, made them clap their hands in sympathy with "Turkey in the Straw, Turkey in the Straw . . . " After the music had stopped, there came a demanding voice, "What kinda steps go to that music, anyway? What'z the dance like? Y'a don' jus' clap your hands all the time, do ya?"

"Suppose Philomena and I are head couple. That means we start off the dance," said Miss Brooks.

"We wanna be head couple, don' we, Angela?" said Anna.

"You and Anna be foot couple," directed Miss Brooks, "and Anna, since you are the girl, come up the center and bow to me." After completing directions, Miss Brooks went back to the piano and started the music again. " 'Keep them moving' is my motto from now on," she said to a responsive key-board.

"Evelyn, you're not clapping! Rosa, it is your turn to sachez down. Try to do it without bumping into each other so much, girls. Teresa, you are a boy; so you bow."

The sunlight had now withdrawn its reluctant presence completely; the janitor had turned on the lights. "The enthusiastic light on their faces would be enough brightness to light the room," thought Miss Brooks with grim satisfaction as she shook a hand that seemed paralyzed to the chords of "Turkey in the Straw."

"When Anna and Angela sachez down to the foot of the line again, we'll stop." Dum, dum, *dum*.

"Good-night, teacher. Thank you, we've enjoyed ourselves," said Anna and Angela in the exact, polite voices they had been taught to use.

"Can we do it again next week?" asked Philomena, her mouth engagingly turned up at the corners.

"I want to be head lady next week, Mizz Brooks, to get in practice for the night of the show, huh?" suggested Rosa ingratiatingly.

There they were, the whole thirty of them, on the stage with a lighted Christmas tree in the background. Their dark eyes looked out mischievously at the audience. Some of them peeped from under the ragged brims of old straw hats; others from under dark curls or pigtails pinned up on the bobbing heads that topped the full cotton skirts worn in Virginia Reels years ago. The audience of fat Italian mothers and fathers were leaning forward in their chairs, heads and feet moving in time to "Turkey in the Straw," mystification and admiration on their faces. Dum, dum, *dum*. Girls were filing off the stage now, with many shy backward glances in response to the clapping of the audience. Then in Miss Brooks's ear she heard:

"You know, Mizz Teacher, my Rosa's been a good girl every night after dancin' class now. That's a good dance, that Virginia Reel; Rosa, she come home so tired, she's not got no energy left to be bad!"

Helen Sanford

THE notes——
A torrent comes pouring forth;
The hail beats on the roof
The rain drives against the panes
Thunder roars
The lightning strikes!
The storm has avenged its own death.
It ceases——
The pianist rises—
All is quiet . . . .

Lydia Palmer

Peter's Father

WHEN Peter was a little boy and came to have cookies and milk with me every Friday afternoon, I remember his asking about his father. He never asked questions of his mother; he knew it was useless. Peter's father was a legend in Austria even then, you see, and the snatches of lore Peter had heard fascinated him. He longed to know more of the dangerous life his father had led.

Peter is a man now, and he doesn't come any more on Fridays for cookies and milk. He is too busy at the airdrome accumulating his last hundred flying hours in order to get his commission. Even so, he comes to see me sometimes when he can get away. He came a week ago. It was late at night, and all the servants had retired. Peter came up to my bedroom, and we made coffee. As we sat drinking it before the fire, I was reminded of the visits of Peter's father during the last war. Only our conversation was different, for where Peter spoke of his commission, his girl, and his mother, his father and I had talked of escapes from concentration camps, and of smuggling information to British Intelligence.

I watched the boy beside me. In many ways he seemed like his father.

It was several months later that Otto found me nodding over a book in the library and formally recited the little speech with which he always announces my visitors. I roused myself sufficiently to brandish my cane at him. How dared he keep Peter waiting to be announced!

I needed only to glance at Peter as he came to kiss me, to see that he was no longer a man. Since last I had seen him, he had become a soldier. No doubt his commission would arrive any day now, for he was already wearing the black and silver uniform. In that instant I made up my mind to tell him about his father.

Peter sat in the big leather chair before the fire. His father had always sat in that chair. I settled my shawl about my shoulders and began the story.

To tell Peter of his father's life I had searched for dashing, glowing words. None but starkly simple ones could tell of his death.

Peter sat staring into the flames as I finished. " . . . . Even after they had murdered your father, the Nazis, of course, would not admit to a traitor in their ranks; and so your father was buried in his Nazi General's uniform, his casket was draped with the Nazi flag, and as he lay in state at the Cathedral, his bier was surrounded by a detachment of Hitler's own Elite Guard. But for all the Nazi pomp and glitter, your father has remained the symbol of truth and freedom for Austrians everywhere.

"All this happened when you were still a little boy. Your mother didn't wish you to be told because she is as good a German as she is a wife, and she feels she cannot justify your father, much as she desires to. But, my dear, you and I are Austrians; our Austria must fight again soon. I know that you long as your father longed to see her sovereign of herself again; my dear, you are choosing the wrong way. Your country can never be free while she fights with these Nazi brutes. You're an Austrian, Peter. You mustn't join them!"

Peter's jaw was tight as I finished speaking. He ground out his cigarette and looked at me.

"Yes," he said, "we're Austrians. You, and Dad, and I."

And I knew then that Peter was like his father in more ways than I had imagined.

I filled glasses. Wordlessly we drank our sherry, and our silence was a toast to Austria and to all men who have loved her.

Marjorie Latham

Lament for Spring

WINTER is a guest who has overstayed his welcome. I was elated when I saw the first red leaf drop, the first snowflake fall. Now the dancing snow no longer excites me. I am weary with seeing the bare trees shaken by piercing winds, the crisp bushes withered with the dull ground cracked with frost, the cold. I yearn to see again the green of the new buds, the softer green of the growing grass, the rich brown of the moist soil. I want to see robins flying in a blue and golden sky. This wish is a prayer within me. Please, God, make the spring come soon.

Lillian Aiello

Hope

O, GOD, that such an utter waste could be,
That this Thy world should be a tomb of night
Where monsters and not men rule air and sea;
That love and learning all should lose their light,
And imitation Caesars strut and stride;
That men of faith should bow their heads in shame
To walk as servants by the victor's side,
Though in their hearts adore Thee just the same.
But yet there lingers hope for better days,
For still a light doth pierce the bitter shade:
The souls of men mold not into the ways
And patterns which the conquerors have laid.
'Tis true that Caesar lives in history
But Thou alone controls eternity.

Barbara Dill

Loneliness . . . .

Loneliness is a bird in the wilderness
without friend or foe,
is a bare tree in winter
stripped of its foliage,
is a rose surrounded by
weeds—
Loneliness is a house deserted by
everyone,
is a mother after the loss
of her only child,
is a heart that no longer
throbs—
Loneliness . . . .

Lydia Palmer

Bliss

MR. HOVING loved Mrs. Hoving dearly. Mrs. Hoving loved Mr. Hoving dearly. It may be safely said that for the two months of their married life, each had loved the other with a soul-consuming passion. Life was a pleasant dream to be marveled at in utter incredulity, the days shooting by with unbelievable swiftness as moments of ineffable bliss crowded one another from the calendar.

"Oh, my! girls," said Mrs. Hoving one day to her bridge club, "there is nothing in the world quite like married life. It is indeed the acme of something or other and I am so happy." Mrs. Hoving beamed at her three much-married companions, who were exchanging knowing glances under finely arched brows.

"Marianne," began Mrs. Hoving's partner carefully, "we are of course entranced beyond expression to see that you are so delighted with your marriage. In fact nothing could please the club more than to know that one of its most valued members and best bridge players has made such an agreeable choice of life partner. Harry is truly a sweet boy and one who will work hard to provide you with the best sable-dyed muskrat available." Here Mrs. Hoving's partner paused and, with another significant glance, threw a lateral to the elegant lady seated next to her.

"Yes indeed," said l'Elégance, promptly completing the pass. "We are so happy for you, my dear. But, Marianne, there is one thing which you must always remember. Deep down in their secret hearts all men are rotters and curs of the worst sort. Sooner or later your Harry must conform to the pattern set by all other males. Eventually he will break your sweet little heart, and we of the bridge club feel it our duty to warn and protect you from his vicious cruelty."

A gay little laugh tinkled forth from Marianne at the absurdity of such a thought—a laugh like a lilting piccolo cadenza, dying in a swift intake of breath; the three ladies looked like the Spanish Inquisition.

"This is ridiculous," said Marianne bravely, her chin held high. "My Harry is a prince among men. He could never do anything to hurt me. He is too gentle, too tender, and fine. I am sure there never was anyone quite like him, and there probably never will be, either."

"Marianne," began Mrs. Hoving's partner once more, "you have spoken nobly and again we are proud of you. But does your husband smoke, Marianne? Do pretty faces intrigue him? Does he like Rita Hayworth? And, Marianne, what does your husband do when he goes to his club? Do you know, Marianne?"

"If you don't mind, we will drop the whole subject," said Marianne, dealing the cards with determination. "Harry and I are very happy and we will remain so."

"Bye me," said l'Elégance.

That same Saturday afternoon Harry Hoving sat in his club's bar, idly stirring his rye highball. Harry's eyes were dreamy. He ran his hand through his dark brown hair. Visions

of Marianne in an apron roasting turkey, Marianne curled up on the divan with an apple and *Grapes of Wrath*, Marianne aglow in her black sequin dinner gown, Marianne carefully dusting her favorite picture of him—all these floated airily through his brain cells.

"Ah, me," said Harry thinking aloud, "What a lucky fellow I am to have married Marianne! What more could any man ask than to have a sweet girl like that building his home? Really, I am incredibly happy."

"What's that you say, Hoving?" The man at the next table turned around, a tolerant smile upon his face. "Incredibly happy, eh? You are probably perched on your own private cloud these days. Well, Harry, go to it; enjoy your life to the utmost. These pleasures don't last, old man. Your little cloud will soon dissolve into vapor, causing you to hit the earth with a terrific thud. How well do I remember the night that Mabel—but have another drink, old boy?"

"Don't be foolish, Ed! Of course my happiness will last!" declared Harry exuberantly. "Marianne and I love each other dearly. Ours is no ordinary marriage. Ah, she is so adorable, so lovely, so sweet . . . . Thanks, another rye."

"Ah, but, old fellow," said the next table complacently, "you simply don't know women. Deep in their hearts they are all deceivers, and your little fluff-bundle will prove no exception. You don't believe me, of course, because you are still in the bill-and-coo stage. But, old man, when the coo disappears and naught but bills remain, the picture will become less pretty. When she buys mink muffs, throws too many parties, has the girls over for bridge, makes you carry an umbrella in the rain—then, my friend, will paradise vanish and life become mundane."

"Such things could never happen with my Marianne," said Harry blissfully. "She is a queen among women. She could never do anything to annoy me. She is much too noble and fine and good."

"Spoken like a man, old top, but do you know whereof you speak? Does Charles Boyer thrill her? Does she like champagne? And, Harry, have you investigated the laundry man? Well, have you, old sock?"

"Let us drop the whole subject," said Harry firmly, as he sipped his highball. "Marianne and I are very happy and we will remain so."

"Two more ryes," said the next table.

At six o'clock that Saturday evening Marianne came tripping up the stairs. The door was ajar. Marianne's eyes lit up. Harry was home! What a pleasant surprise! Rushing into the living room, she stopped suddenly in utter dismay. There on the divan was a copy of a magazine, its pages opened to a large, colorful picture of Rita Hayworth. Visions of the ladies of the Inquisition swam before her shocked eyes. Carefully she closed the magazine and deposited it in the rack. Entering the bedroom provoked a new shock: her Harry was sprawled upon the bed; his shoes were off; his tie was loosened. His mouth was opened wide and gentle little snores came whooshing forth. He looked queer. Marianne edged nearer the bed. She felt most peculiar; a damp sweat lay upon her furrowed forehead and her hands felt strangely clammy. As she

came nearer to her husband the unmistakable odor of liquor met her protesting nostrils. So this was what her husband did at the club! The cad! The Ladies of the Inquisition were right behind her in spirit. She could feel their breath hot upon her neck.

"Oh, Harry!" sobbed Marianne as she ran into the kitchen. She sat at the table and cried for a while. Her soul, she thought in anguish, had reached abysmal depths. To no avail she tried to reject from her head the suspicious thoughts planted there. Marianne sat very still; she would be rational about this thing. She would turn on the radio. Perhaps the noise of the raucous music would waken Harry. Maybe he had some explanation for his outrageous conduct. Marianne tiptoed to the little radio, snug on the kitchen shelf, and tuned it in cautiously. Minutes passed; she became more courageous and tuned it in louder. There was no stir from the bedroom. This was most annoying. Marianne turned the radio dial until the music was pouring forth full blast. Still all was quiet in the bedroom. Between the boogie-woogie beats she could hear Harry's soft, regular snores. Marianne became enraged. She ran to the large radio in the parlor and turned on the same music. The roar was deafening. Marianne held her breath. The bedroom remained as silent as a New England town at four in the morning. Marianne sobbed wildly. In anger she switched the radio station. Now the two radios blared out different, rasping tunes. It was nerve racking. It was horrible. It was unbearable; the sobbing Mrs. Hoving jammed her hat on her head and flounced from the house.

"Taxi!" she managed to gasp and straightway rode to the home of Rosalie Brown, her best friend. Quiet, calm Rosalie heard the tearful babble with equanimity and put Marianne to bed in the pink guest room.

Saturday evening at nine P. M. Mr. Harry Hoving awoke from his sleep. His head felt heavy. "Marianne," he murmured sleepily. "Marianne," he repeated aloud. In due course of time Mr. Hoving arose and walked through the apartment to look for Mrs. Hoving, who was very much absent. This was a fact not quite understandable to Mr. Hoving, who, contrary to Marianne's sad surmise, was not in the least "plastered." It is true he had had two drinks, but, as he often proudly said, it took more than a few drinks to blotto a Yale man; Mr. Hoving had merely taken a nap. Where was his wife? It was certainly most unpleasant to awake at nine in the evening and see that one's wife was not yet at home. Unpleasant ideas began to flit through the same brain cells which had been housing such dreamy thoughts scant hours before. Suddenly Mr. Hoving stopped dead in his tracks. On the kitchen table was a bill from the laundry man. The laundry man! Well, Ed had warned him. Ed had said that something like this would happen. Mr. Hoving jammed on his hat in fury, slammed the door, and went to the home of his best friend, Ralph Brown. Rosalie, Ralph's understanding wife, opened the door with a slight smile.

"Leavemeforalaundryman," mumbled Harry as he entered. Then, "Hello, Rosalie, is Ralph home?"

"Why, yes, Harry, and what did you wish to see him about?"

"Oh, nothing at all, just wondered if he were home, that's all."

Rosalie led the way to Ralph's study, and shut the door. Soon, to her amusement, she heard gruff masculine tones rumbling, one complaining, the other consoling.

It is mighty lucky for the Hovings that the Browns have two guest rooms, thought Rosalie, as she got the green one ready for Harry.

Sunday morning at ten A. M. Mr. Hoving arose and dressed, as was his custom.

Sunday morning at ten A. M. Mrs. Hoving arose and dressed, as was her custom.

At ten-thirty Mrs. Hoving opened her bedroom door and bumped into Mr. Hoving, who was opening his door.

"Darling," said Mrs. Hoving.

"Darling," said Mr. Hoving.

Life was a pleasant dream to be marveled at in utter incredulity as another moment of ineffable bliss made its mark and gently fell from the calendar.

Ruth C. Rotman

Pieta

I WILL go to the valley where lilies grow
And gather flowers to clothe my Dead
In vestments of unblemished snow,
And wreathe a garland for His head
That knew the piercing thorn.
With blossoms I will cover up His wounds,
With chaliced buds to cup the flow
Of blood from transfixed hands and feet
But late released from anguished throe,
From flesh by scourges torn.
How pale the lips that uttered prophecy
Of torture suffered on the hill!
Now closed are eyes that saw but foes,
And deaf His ears; the voices still
That gave Him naught but scorn.

Elinore Snider

Soliloquy

THE wind tore through her hair. It filled her clothes as a sea gale swells and rounds a ship's sails. Passionately, it wrapped strong arms about her. She folded her toes in her shoes to stand a bulwark on the hill.

She looked long. She gasped.

Why did you do it, God? You've made this all too beautiful—soft, merging prism tints scribbled with bare, black limbs; the grey-brown, crusty earth vaunting thin green leaves, encouraged by last week's sun.

Beauty hurts me, God.

* * *

And this afternoon, as *Aida* charmed gowned matrons and tweedy typists in the antique, gilded House in the sky city, it "rent the veil" before my eyes, and I could see and hear and feel the splendor and the power, the misery and the tears of all the ages, now phantoms in the register of time and memory.

They didn't pierce—they pressed and stifled me.

You *know*, God,

Beauty pains me.

Dale Hofmann

Pebble in the Water

GERALD TRAYNOR opened heavy-lidded eyes on a room that seemed unusually bright for this hour of the morning. The brightness hurt, and he closed them quickly. "Sun's rising early," he thought consciously, and realized that he was fully awake. With an effort he pushed down the blankets, brought himself to a sitting position.

"Ought to get to bed at a decent hour once in a while," he soliloquized. His familiar bed-chamber felt strange to him, but everything was as usual. He could see the back of his wife's dark head, its curls in childish disorder, in the other bed.

He rose to his feet, pulling on his robe, and squinted at the watch lying on his small table. His face lost its sleepiness, registered shocked surprise.

"Great glory! Nora! It's nearly nine o'clock! I've overslept."

Nora stirred lazily; before she was fully awake, she heard the hissing of his shower.

"*Now* maybe you'll let me have Marie call us." Her voice was raised to carry over the noise of the water, which stopped abruptly as he retorted:

"First time in ten years!" Other words came lower; the closed door of the bathroom muffled them. She shrugged philosophically, slipped into a filmy dressing-gown, and pulled a bell-rope hanging near the bed.

Shortly a girl in white dress and blue apron appeared; she wore an air that said, "I knew this would happen some day," as Nora gave her her instructions.

"Mr. Traynor will want breakfast immediately, Marie; probably just orange-juice, toast, and coffee. I'll have mine up here as soon as it is properly prepared."

"Yes, ma'am. Anything else?"

"Only to tell Nurse to bring Danny to me when he's ready to go out."

Marie left; a half-dressed Gerald dashed into the room and finished his toilet with more speed than care. Nora sat at her dressing table, slowly brushing the tangles from her hair.

"Why so frantic, darling? Will the office disintegrate if you're not there at nine-thirty?"

He knotted a blue-gray tie with quick skill.

"Bellman conference very first thing. If we lose his contract, I might as well fold up."

"Oh-h! and Mr. Bellman hates to be kept waiting. Come in!"

Marie followed her respectful knock by her entrance with a small tray.

"Mr. Traynor's breakfast."

"Good!" He buttoned his coat and swallowed his orange-juice. "Put it on the table there."

Hot coffee and dry toast preceded a husbandly kiss; Nora reciprocated in kind.

"Only quarter past; I'll make it," he said with satisfaction. Then, as he half ran from the room:

"Don't forget to deposit that Red Cross money. I'll call you if I can't make dinner."

Mrs. Traynor enjoyed a leisurely bath; Marie brought in her breakfast as she was about to ring for it.

She ate and dressed slowly, and was applying her lipstick when the door burst open and a sandy-haired four-year-old tumbled in noisily.

"Morning, Mummy," he crowed; his assault left her breath for no more than a "Danny!" Presently he scrambled out of her arms to the floor; his cheek was smeared with fresh lipstick. Nora laughed at the sturdy little figure in white sailor suit.

"Now Nannie must wash your face. Where are you going this morning, Danny?"

"To the duck-pond again!" He was gleeful. "Yest'day we stood on the bank an' threw more stones—Mummy, why do the pebbles make rings in the water?"

Suddenly grave, he waited for her answer. She tried to think of a reasonable explanation, could not, and replied vaguely:

"Why—I guess because of the current or something. First they make little rings, then bigger ones."

It no longer concerned him. "Come with us today, Mummy? It's great fun—the ducks know me now."

"I can't, sweet." She smiled at him gently, glad the subject was changed, "I've got so much to do this morning, and I slept late. You go with Nannie and be a good boy."

"Okay—but you come next time!" Danny hugged her and ran out, followed by his nurse, a serene, gray woman. Nora called Marie.

"Is Miss Brownley in yet?"

"Yes, ma'am. Down in the study."

"Very well. You take these things back to the kitchen."

She walked downstairs unhurriedly, through the hall to the back of the house, and opened the door on a wide, high-ceilinged room with book-lined walls. Miss Brownley, plain and efficient in a tailored suit, sat at a plain and workman-like desk, separating the morning's pile of mail. Nora became brisk.

"I'm late this morning, Miss Brownley. Let's go through these quickly."

The secretary picked up a neat engagement book.

"You have an appointment at eleven, Mrs. Traynor."

She was sitting down, already quickly perusing one of the opened letters. She answered without looking up.

"Oh, yes—my hairdresser. Cancel it, will you please? And make another for day after tomorrow."

"Morning or afternoon?"

It struck Nora suddenly that Miss Brownley's voice was more carefully colorless than usual.

"Er—morning. I'm golfing in the afternoon. Are you well, Miss Brownley?"

"Quite, madam," lifting the telephone from its cradle and dialing rapidly. Nora went back to her letters.

By one-thirty, all correspondence had been taken care of, and Miss Brownley closed her pad sharply, concealing the pages covered with the lines and loops of shorthand symbols. Marie announced lunch. Nora rose.

"Thank you, Marie. If you'll transcribe those letters this afternoon, Miss Brownley, I'll sign them as soon as I return from First Aid Class. I want them to go out today."

"Mrs. Traynor!"

"Yes?" She stopped, turned. The secretary's normally pale face suddenly flushed.

"It's—I wanted to ask you something—a sort of favor—I . . . " She stopped, confused. Nora glanced at her watch.

"Would you very much mind waiting until this afternoon? I am afraid I'll be late for my class. It's not imperative?"

Miss Brownley's unusual color swept away, leaving her face sallow, mask-like.

"No, Mrs. Traynor. It can wait."

The matter thus satisfactorily set aside, Nora left. Characteristically refusing to hurry through her lunch, she arrived at her class to find it already begun. But her lateness was an excuse for an amusing recounting of her morning, in the social hour that followed work.

In the Traynor residence, Miss Brownley still occupied the study. She sat at the typewriter desk near a window through which afternoon sunshine streamed. She herself remained in shadow. Her machine clicked steadily for a few minutes, and halted while she read her work over. With an exclamation of disgust, she tore the sheet from under the rubber roller, and tossed it, crumpled, into the waste basket. Fresh paper replaced it; the rhythmic clicking began once more.

A moment later she pushed back her chair with an impatient movement, rose to her feet. She walked quickly toward the telephone, stopped abruptly, and shook her head. Mechanically she drew a well-worn letter from the pocket of her jacket, and seemed to read it again. Her lips moved slowly as though it were necessary to articulate the words, before their meaning could be clear.

"I—can't!" she said aloud, and looked about in startled surprise at the sound of her own voice. Hurriedly she replaced the letter in her pocket, and turned to her task of transcribing shorthand. She finished three pages before spoiling another sheet of paper; with the new error,

her attention wandered once more, and it cost her a visible struggle to retain her seat, continue her work. A neat pile of type-written letters and envelopes was growing in the wire basket at her right.

Mistakes became more frequent until she stopped, at last yielding to the abstraction. For a few moments she sat with her head on her hand, eyes closed. Then, new determination in her face, she forced herself to take the few steps that brought her to the telephone. Her hand was on it when its bell tinkled, once, clearly.

With a sigh of defeat, she replied to its summons.

"Traynor residence, Miss Brownley speaking."

Nora's voice came over the wire.

"This is Mrs. Traynor. I won't be back this afternoon, nor for dinner. Finish today's correspondence, and you may have the rest of the afternoon to yourself."

"Yes, Mrs. Traynor."

"Oh, and please tell Cook that Mr. Traynor and I will be dining with Mrs. Johns. I'll see her about tomorrow's menu in the morning."

"Is there anything else?"

"No, I think not."

"Mrs. Traynor, I'd like to ask—"

"Tomorrow, please," Nora cut in crisply, "I'm terribly rushed. Nine, as usual. Good-bye."

The line went dead. Slowly the secretary replaced the phone, turning toward the waiting typewriter. Her face changed, hardened. In sudden decision she took her coat from the closet where it had hung, dressed quickly, even to her gloves. Then she moved to the little safe set in the side wall, between two book shelves, and spun the dial. After a moment the round door swung open. She reached inside, withdrew her hand as though recoiling from a snake—and thrust it in once more. This time when it emerged, it held a brown, official-looking envelope. With feverish haste she concealed it within her large bag; then left quite calmly. She went out of the house by the back door, stopping to give the cook her message. A short time later her ancient car could be heard, sputtering on its way down the graveled drive.

Gerald and Nora found dinner a pleasant affair. Mrs. Johns was a rather elderly widow, known for her excellent conversation and food. When a man-servant appeared halfway through the main course and summoned Traynor to the telephone, he left, wearing a frown of annoyance. By the time he returned, it had changed to mild astonishment.

"I'm awfully sorry, but I'll have to leave. I'm afraid you'd better come, too, Nora. It's about Miss Brownley."

The unconventional leave-taking accomplished, Nora demanded more explicit information. Gerald started the car.

"She's been arrested for driving so as to endanger. She struck and seriously injured an old man with that rattletrap she calls a car, late this afternoon. Then she tried to run out."

"Miss *Brownley?*" Nora's astonishment wasn't mild. "I'll swear she never did more than twenty-five in her life!"

"That's not all." He guided the machine onto the highway. "When arrested, she was found to be carrying nearly a thousand dollars cash in one of my office envelopes. She admitted taking it from our safe. I thought you'd taken that to the bank this morning."

After a moment Nora said:

"Please, Gerald—take me home. I don't want to see her." There was only silence during the rest of the short ride.

After her husband had left her, Nora wandered about the house, restlessly unhappy. In the study she found the incomplete pile of letters, the unusually large amount of crumpled paper in the waste basket. For lack of another occupation, she signed the letters, sealed them into their envelopes, and searched vainly for stamps.

Gerald called to say that he had recovered the money, refused to press charges, and had given Miss Brownley her notice.

"I don't understand her in the least," he declared. "Her calm is uncanny. Officials think the man she struck will not recover, but I don't believe she cares."

A short time later she answered the phone again, to be greeted in a thick Irish brogue.

"I'm Miss Brownley's land-lady, Miz Traynor; shure, a telegram's come for 'er, an' I don't know what to be doin' with it."

"My husband will come for it," Nora promised. She managed to give the commission to Gerald without too much difficulty.

Time passed very slowly. It seemed hours before he finally came home. He was nervous, talkative.

"There's nothing I can do for her. The man died." He lit a cigarette. "That telegram—her sister is dead, too. Funny, the way she took the news. She'd been so quiet. She read it, and exclaimed: 'If I could have gotten the money!' Then she wouldn't say another word."

"She's been rather strange all day," Nora said thoughtfully. "Sit down, won't you, Gerald? You've been pacing ever since you got home."

"Sorry." He dropped into a chair. "Somehow I feel as if it were our fault—but I don't see how it could be."

"Why—of course not!" Suddenly she got up. "Let's go to bed. We don't want to oversleep again tomorrow."

"All right." Gerald crushed out the cigarette.

Much later, when he was beginning to feel sleepy, Nora's voice came to him through the darkness.

"Danny's beginning to ask the queerest questions, Gerald. Today he wanted to know why pebbles make rings in the water!"

"Hm-m? What did you tell him?"

"Oh, I don't know. That they make little circles, and then bigger ones. But he was cute. Good-night, darling." *Gertrude M. Baron*

MY bed is the ground,
That solid foundation of rock and sand.
Security I find in the curious compound
That nourishes cells of moss and fern
And the earthy mouths of golden-rod—
A storehouse of minerals
Sending ingredients up trunks
To the lofty end buds of hickory trees,
Up crooked stems into rhythmic patterns of sumack leaves.
No obstacle now between me and my goal;
Straight from the ground I grow toward the sky.

Winifred Wildes

Morning Magic

I SAW the rising sun today
Across a snow-topped world,
Sparkling on the icy tips
Of slender birches curled,
Painting big white fleecy clouds
A hundred tints or more,
Outlining flapping sails upon
An idling boat off shore.

It rested on a picket fence,
Snow-crested in the night.
It gave a shining radiance
To wild birds in their flight.
It wandered through the window-panes
Of half the homes on earth,
And told to all the joyous news:
Another day in birth!

Polly Draper

What Are We Fighting For?

1

FOR the first breath of spring with its promise of hope,
And the fragrance of apple blossoms in the cool air;
For the joyous ring of wedding bells throughout the month of June,
And the cheery songs of returning birds which dispel the winter's gloom;
For the happy yet solemn high school graduations,
And the right to dream as we will . . . . . .

2

For the warmth of the sun during summer days,
And the bright colored flowers and grass so green;
For the sudden and welcome thunder storms,
And the ice cream cones we eagerly devour;
For the cry, "Batter up", at the baseball game,
And trips to the mountains and shore . . . . . .

3

For the pungent odor of leaves burning in mid-October,
And the tang of apple cider bought at wayside stands;
For cheery drives through the country on Sunday afternoons,
And the roar from an excited crowd at the college football game;
For the family gatherings at Thanksgiving to enjoy turkey and all the fixings,
And the heated election campaigns . . . . . .

4

For the first arrival of snow from a gray and somber sky,
And the eager cries of children as they slide down the steepest hill;
For the merry tinkle of bells along the city streets,
And the awe-inspiring toy displays in the large department stores;
For the colorfully decorated tree with small stockings hung close beside it,
And the true meaning of Christmas . . . . . .

5

For these small things in the life of each of us,
And for the larger more important ones as well—
For the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Four Freedoms,
And everything that gives us liberty, equality, and security—
These make up the American way of life,
And that is what we are fighting for, willing to die for.

Rae K. O'Neill

IF there were purple rain upon a silver bough
And a golden bird to sing,
Fluttering from the orchid sky
With molten flash of wing,
My heart would run with swift bronze deer
Across the flowering hill,
But in the perfumed shade my soul
Would long for heaven still.

Elinore Snider

Byrd at Advance Base

THE darkness that consumes the light and makes
The day and night an undivided one,
Has found within my mind a deeper gloom,
Devoid of memory and reason's sun.
The silence of the dark, the snow, and stars,
Unbroken by a laugh, a song, or tears,
Has been a heavy burden laid unseen
Upon my heart for long, uncounted years.
Oh, God! to feel the fever burn my skin,
To feel the frozen bed on which I lie,
With only cold to cover up my bones;
To suffer all alone and still not die.
How deaf and dumb and senseless to my pain
The constellations and immortal snow!
The solitude's become an enemy.
My anguish, hunger, loneliness, and thirst
Cry through the night and through the unlit day.
There are no gentle fingers on my brow;
There is no voice to whisper dreams away.

Elinore Snider

On Hearing "Prelude to Lohengrin"

THESE notes
Are echoes of a throbbing soul
That saw beyond the scope
Of this marred Eden,
Sullied by ignorance
And hate and greed;
Saw love
And peace
And beauty
Stir the hearts of men;
Heard troths of comradeship
Ring in the shining day;
Saw pity, joy, content
Illume the grim maze,
Infuse despairing man
With richly-flowing strength
And radiant hope
In the goodness of the morrow.
O, the might,
The swelling grandeur
Of these strains!
They plead with man.
And this clear harmony—
Ethereal theme,
Now rising to magnificence,
Now weeping
In a melody naive!

Dale Hofmann

Tribute

(Miss Catherine M. Curran, 1938, remembering the many times Dr. Clara E. Craig read St. Paul's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Chapter 13, verses 1-13, has written this poem.)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels

And I implore Thee that gentle and beautiful words move within my lips and inspire my pen with wisdom,
Only the heart whispers—serenely—of the great majesty of being, of walking long roads
Evenly and surely, just stopping to rest now and then—
Pausing a while to speak to a friend
Then pursuing the longest trail up, up the hill, surely, steadfastly up, up, strengthened by laughter and loving and living and people.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child

And now though a man I feel as a child—humble, so humble;
I watch as a child—wistfully;
I pray as a child—triumphantly.

For now we see through a glass darkly but then face to face, now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known

I shall know as surely as there are dusk and dawn
That the power of life—God-given and Mother-blessed—
Once walked beside me and then went Home.

And now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity