

HELICON



THE HELICON

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

Gray: The Progress of Poetry

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

May, 1944

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The Fallen Angel

RECENTLY I heard a very strange tale. It was told me by an Angel who sat next to me on the 4:15 bus the other night. I was really quite surprised. He was one of those paradoxes—a human Angel—if there is any such thing. His huge white wings were carefully folded, but he seemed to have come a long way since his voluminous robe was a bit ragged and needed pressing. Very naturally we fell to talking. He said he was bothered by sore feet. The heavy clouds of Providence smoke had grounded him and he wasn't used to walking.

"But really," he said, "it will be worth all this trouble if only I find the treasure."

"What treasure?" I asked, sensing a break in the monotony of the usual evening ride. It was then he told me the following story.

"The treasure I'm seeking is centuries old, and attained great popularity about three hundred years ago. In a small kingdom of the Orient, a king's army badly defeated the invading force of a long-standing enemy (much to the surprise of everyone, including the victors). Naturally, these victors received a great deal of booty, much of which had belonged to them, in the first place. But, out of all the treasures gained, there was one whose fame spread far and wide. This was a golden rocking horse."

"A rocking horse," I said surprised, "oh, come now!"

"A rocking horse," repeated the Angel firmly. "It was ages old and

had belonged to the little son of the conquered king. "Strangely enough," chuckled the Angel, "the son never appreciated the horse since he was always falling off the smooth golden sides, and he much preferred his battered wooden one."

Here the Angel paused and pulled one of his huge white wings even more closely to let a passenger pass.

"I think I understand," I said as he settled back again. "It wasn't its artistic properties that made the horse valuable, but the fact that it belonged to the royal family of a hated rival."

"That's the general idea," agreed my companion. "This treasure became so valuable that it was finally placed in a heavily guarded museum where thousands came to view it."

At this point he lapsed into silence. For a while I wondered if this were all of the story. A mile or so went by before the Angel said softly, as if giving voice to a train of thought: "Then there was the lamp." I said nothing, reasoning that after a golden horse, a lamp was not unusual.

"The lamp," he continued, "also came from the conquered country. Some physician, traveling with the army, had spotted it in an old farmhouse. It was so made that it effectively burned a certain oil and gave off healing vapors. Naturally, being practical, years ahead of its time, and not connected with royalty, it received little publicity. A few short reports in the medical journals of the time acclaimed it, but nothing

else. Meanwhile, the fame of the horse spread far and wide.

"And that," sighed the Angel, "is human nature. A worthless golden horse is placed in a museum and the record of a little healing lamp is lost among a few musty old journals."

"A very odd story," I said at loss for an adequate reply.

"Yes," he agreed, "and that's why I am going out towards Asia to try to excavate the greater of these treasures."

I swallowed hard, acting as if searching for century-old treasures were an everyday matter to me.

"So you're going to look for the

real treasure—the little lamp," I said in my best offhand manner.

The Angel turned to me with that weary-of-human beings look in his eyes and said very slowly in that direct truthful way Angels must have: "Lamp? No, naturally I'm going after the golden horse."

There isn't any more to tell. I got off at the next stop. When I looked back, he was still sitting there in the bus, heading, as we often do, towards the land of a wonderful lamp looking for a worthless rocking horse.

Yolande Magner
Junior

Were It Not

WERE it not that spring is come again,
And life, new-born, is seen on every hand,
The hope that fires dull eyes and quickens heavy hearts
Might fail to rise anew o'er this, our land.

Were it not that showers scudding past,
Bring with the leaden skies and pelting rain
A promise warm of swelling buds and blossoms gay,
The world might not forget its racking pain.

The world, in present agony engrossed,
Now thrashing savagely in quest of foe,
Might not remember that there is above
A Presence Mighty, who is Hope and Love.

Were it not that soldiers, weary, ragged, worn,
Indifferent to hunger and relentless pain,
Sustain this Hope, upheld by noble hearts,
This war might yet be fought once more in vain.

Eleanor Labrie
Junior

Commencement Ball

THE gym was looped with gardenia garlands,
Loosely bound, waxy, and dewy.
Thousands upon thousands
Rounded the corners and banked
the walls.
The floor was a mirror, many-hued,
Changing as the sea changes.
Blue and green lights, swaying
gently,
Shaded by clusters of shiny blooms,
Rippled the floor as a breeze
Ripples a still pool.

*Everything slow,
Indistinct as a ballerina's skirt,
Hazy at the edges,
Fading away. . . .*

The door dissolved and the
Steps rolled away into a glossy
Sea-green ramp,
So long that it disappeared
Into the night.
Twirling
Balancing
Dancing
Down—down—down—
To the campus.
Only the white dinner jackets
Of the men and the full
Gauzy skirts of the girls . . .
No people—only the white clothes
Waltzing in the darkness;
And above, on the
Summit of a mile-high hill,
Half hidden in thick mist,
The brick walls of the college stood
With gardenias spilling out of the
gym.
The white blooms dropped like ripe
fruit

From trees in summer
And scattered down the sea-green
ramp.

*Everything still,
Only the music softly playing—
Growing louder—faster—
More urgent. . . .*

The sky suddenly sprang to life
With a million stars shimmering.
The moon broke out of
The mist over the hill
And the yellow walls vibrated
For an instant in the sharp light,
Then stilled and stood like
A citadel—a refuge,
Less frightening than the night.
The girls, with outstretched arms,
Ran toward it up the liquid
Sea-green ramp;
And all the time the
Water flowed quietly,
Carrying them farther away,
Until the hill grew dim
In the distance. The moon
Was covered with mist
And the building vanished
Into clouds at the top.

*Everything hushed—
The musicians still—
Only an elusive melody,
Only a suggestive scent
Sings and clings in the hearts of the
dancers. . . .
Everything silent—
Even the water flowing silently—
Only an elusive tune
Singing in the heart.*

Marge Latham,
Senior

You

RAIN on the parched earth of living . . .
Sunrise of my life . . .
A light to be sustained through the moonlit eve . . .
The sole star in darkened heavens . . .
My guidon over the quaking land
And tossing waves of the years,
At last bringing my unworthy self
To the shore where only a ripple is seen:
To tranquility, joy, and love.

Venita Jalbert,
Senior

A Moment

EXAMS to take—then summer:
Summer of pink mornings,
Garish, burning afternoons,
Cool-swathing evenings
Of cricket concerts,
Earthy and grassy breaths.
"Will these weeks never end?"
I pleaded.

They ended.
Then, in anguish and
Fresh-cut pain, I begged
The hour stand—
Aye, the very moment.
I hugged it close
And held each breath within me,
Knowing that each exhalation
Pushed the moment
From my grasp
To the thin mist
Of another yesterday.

Dale Hofmann
Senior

A Poem

MY life is a tree.
Its branches . . . my soul's
projections
Into each new day.
Its leaves . . . my days.
How stealthily those leaves
fall!
The green . . . Spring in my
heart.
The brown . . . Winter of
disappointment;
O how easily could the brown be
green
If I but realized the brevity of
My cycle from God to God!

Betty Doyle
Sophomore

The Flier

HE is no longer mine;
His heart belongs
To that lovely silvered thing —
His plane.

His heart beats faster, not when I am near,
But when she lifts him high above
The noisy, crowded thoroughfare
Into the vast celestial emptiness
Where time stands still,
And he can glimpse eternity.

He knows what makes her very pulse to beat,
And he can feel the slightest wrong
Which mars her perfect flight.

Even if I could, I would not part these two,
For they belong, this fearless man
I used to call my own
And this great thunderbird.

Together they will roam the skies
And win the freedom due them.
Together they will leave a mighty trail
Along the shining rainbow path.

And when at last, this thing is done,
And there is no more need to fear
The shimmering blue above,
He will come and give me back
His love, and hold my hand
With quiet strength.

*Polly Draper,
Junior*

Bettina and the Duchess

PIETR and Kara Slatenje are artists on the high trapeze. Everyone in Hungary has seen them in glistening white tights as they work forty feet up without any net.

They always worked together except for the year when Kara was having their baby. They named the child Bettina. She was round and pink and, like all Hungarian children, had huge dark eyes and black hair . . . and an active terror of the trapeze. To watch her parents swaying on the steel frame, so high above her that they seemed like small specks of whiteness, was more than she could bear. The sight made her knees too weak to support her.

For her fourth birthday, Kara made her a pink satin and tulle dancing dress. She put it on and subsequently refused to take it off for two weeks. Only by making her another was Kara able to get it off her at all.

It was an odd sight to see this pink clad baby flitting about on her toes with the long black pigtailed bobbing gayly on her shoulders. Mr. Pushovska, who owned the circus, watched her dancing around the ring and waltzing among the horses in the stable. Bettina loved horses almost as much as she loved to dance.

When Queenie died after foaling, Bettina pillowed the gawky little bundle that was her colt on a pink tulle lap. Contentedly, the newly born colt sucked at her fingers. When a bottle was brought, the colt would have none of it; she was per-

fectly content with Bettina's fingers. In desperation, they dumped the milk into a bucket, and still allowing the baby to suck, Bettina brought her nose gently down into the pail of warm milk. It made a lovely gurgling sound as the foal drank and everyone relaxed.

Mr. Pushovska patted Bettina's head and told her she was a "fine liddle gurl wid da horsis." A day or two later he said, "If you wasn' dere, da cold wouldn' lif. You like her fer yours, yes?"

From the moment she became sole owner of the Duchess, which was what she named the colt, Bettina began to build dances around her. When Bettina was seven and the filly two, Mr. Pushovska decided to put them in the ring.

Every day for weeks the Duchess was curried and washed and her long, silky mane brushed until it shone. Her bridle and hooves were painted gilt and Bettina twined wild flowers around the reins. Bettina, herself, had a new pink ballet dress. Kara loosed her pigtailed so that her hair hung down her back in a soft black skein, and Pietr brought her a pink camellia to pin in it.

She rode into the ring bareback, with her hair streaming behind her, ankles crossed neatly, and one hand on the flowered rein. They walked around the ring — the Duchess arching her neck daintily and stepping high so that her gilt toes shimmered under the klieg lights. Dropping the rein, Bettina gave a little leap and landed on one toe as the

Duchess broke into a canter. She let herself fall at right angles to the horse and balanced her body with the small of her back. One knee was bent; the other gracefully extended. She leaned far back until her hair almost swept in the sawdust. Around and around they cantered without slackening pace. Sliding to the floor, she grasped the rein and both actresses bowed. Her debut was over. Bettina sprang to a kneel and turned her face up to blow kisses as they galloped out of the ring.

The spotlight turned from Bettina to white specks swaying gently at the top of the high trapeze and suddenly her knees would no longer grip the haunches. They were out of the Big Top; and horses drawing cages, preparing to roll on to the next town, came racing up.

Bettina slid off the Duchess into the dust. For a while she was conscious of pounding hooves and rattling wheels and dust in her mouth.

That was all. Pietr and Kara have never had any other children.

*Marge Latham,
Senior*

A Life

ONE rose bush among the millions;
A shoot for each course,
Each tiny thorn an affliction, countless numbers;
Each flower a joy so sweet and beautiful
The sorrows lie in the shadows of the petals.

*Venita Jalbert
Senior*

The Choice

IF all about me
Were a floorless field
Of shifting dunes;
A sunless fen of vines and trees;
Mad climbing waves,
Biting the cringing cliff
Beneath me;
A glistening beach,
Stubbled with remnants of ships;
A silence of no depth nor height,
That by the minute
Becomes a buzzing,
A hissing, a wailing intensity,
The brand of loneliness
Could burn and scar my soul no deeper
Than this aloneness
Where each face and voice I know.

We knew that we
Must brush away our dream,
Since but a word
Did make it thinnest mesh.

I would be this hard rough stone—
This eaten brittle wood
To be unhurt
By what I see I've done.

*Dale Hofmann
Senior*

Dedication

THESE lines
To you are penned
With hope that they will reach
Your silent limbo and unlock
Your hearts.

Albert Cohn, '40

Summer Storm

THE slight summer breeze had perished prematurely in the consuming heat, abandoning a lax, breathless world to the ravages of a pitiless sun. But there was an electric stillness in the mountain air which vividly foretold the rapid approach of a blessed storm. Suddenly, a gust of wind, cool and thrilling, agitated the dry leaves and was gone, leaving behind the smell of rain; from afar, muted drums of thunder beat a steady tattoo. A peculiar yellow light diffused the atmosphere; leaves and grass assumed a bright green hue; and at the first clap of thunder which shattered the neighboring sky, the lazy chickens scuttled madly for cover. Overhead, black clouds, marching ponderously across the sky, enveloped the distant mountains in a gray, moving mantle.

Without warning, a blinding flash of lightning ripped the concealing veil. Deafening thunder crashed and rolled about, reverberated from peak to peak and shook our small cabin to its very foundations. The rising wind plucked the leaves from the trees, ensnared them in its violent embrace, and hurled them helter-skelter through the air. A drop of rain spattered on the porch steps and was joined by another and yet another. Soon these were replaced by a rushing sound and a mass of rain sweeping down from the mountain heights and erecting an impenetrable barrier, which completely erased the outside world. The rain mounted in intensity and frenziedly lashed out at anything in its path with long icy fingers. Twice its fury

abated; twice it became a blinding downpour which threatened to engulf the entire world.

Finally, its anger spent, the storm subsided and the rain relapsed gradually into a falling drizzle. Intermittent flashes of lightning momentarily brightened the pale sky, the thunder-heads rolled past, growled submissively, and retired. All nature lifted its dripping head and drank of its cool refreshed surroundings.

*Beth Cashman
Sophomore*

The Pears

LIKE brides
In garments white,
Or May Queens virginal
And chaste . . . They stand in
flowery swathes
Of bloom.

Albert Cohn, '40

Peachtrees

THE trees
Are wrapped in tulle
Of gayest pink . . . And dance
Like happy sprites from radiant
realms
Of joy.

Albert Cohn, '40

Daily Bread

"DINNER is served, please, Madame," the butler announced in subdued tones. Mrs. Baldwin led the family into the long panelled dining room.

The laundress had taken undue care with the great, white damask tablecloth. The gardener had cut the finest of the American Beauty roses for the centerpiece. The footman had so polished the heirloom silver that it gleamed with its original lustre. The waitress had been particularly careful in laying the crystal goblets and the monogrammed Sevres china.

The chef and his assistants had considered only Mr. Stephen and his preferred tastes in the prime rib beef and the delicate French pastry. The young master rather fancied these dishes and from then on would not be in for dinner for some time.

* * *

"Come now to your supper while it's hot," called Mother. Mrs. Kelly gathered her brood together in the big cheery kitchen.

Maggie had put on the pretty oil-cloth, the one with the large red poppies. Her twin, Marty, had cut the fattest roses from the Rambler on the back fence. Tom had scrubbed the much scratched silver plate. Helen had washed and laid Mother's few remain wedding dishes.

Mother and the girls had prepared Johnnie's favorite meal, roast beef and fresh apple pie. He liked them

both so well and wasn't going to be home for supper for a while.

* * *

"Didn't you guys hear that bell?" barked the sergeant. Privates Baldwin and Kelly jumped up from behind a mountain of light brown many-eyed spheres, threw down their sharp implements, saluted, and sprinted for the mess hall.

Tonight, chow was beef stew and apple pie—something worth fighting for.

Mary Lafey
Senior

Jonquils

OVER
All the green lawns
Yellow stars of gleaming
Light are scattered recklessly like
Laughter.

Albert Cohn, '40

Nostalgia

HEAVY
Mist can turn these
Fields to seacoast lands . . . Then
Yearning for New England grips me
Tightly.

Albert Cohn, '40

The Skywayman

THE sky was a ribbon of aqua, tossed among clouds of fleece,
The earth was a spinning planet many long miles beneath,
The sun was a blaze of glory above the rolling shore,
And the skywayman came riding, riding, riding.

The skywayman came riding
Up to the hangar door.

He'd a helmet on his forehead, a white silk scarf at his throat,
A parachute fastened tightly over his leather coat;
His trousers were pressed in a knife-crease; his socks were a tasteful sight.
And he rode with a merry twinkle,

His face was all a-twinkle,
His goggle rims a-twinkle, under the blinding light.

Over the smooth ground he sped in haste and stopped in the hangar's shade;
For he had to keep an appointment to a tryst that he had made.
He arrived at the house in a taxi, and who should be waiting there
But the postman's blue-eyed daughter,
Zeni, the postman's daughter,
Braiding a perky pigtail into her short brown hair.

But peeking in through the window, a pallid face appeared,
Where Jim, discarded, listened, he listened and he leered.
His feet were as flat as a pancake, his teeth were a glistening gold;
But he loved the postman's daughter,
The postman's blue-eyed daughter.

He heard the lad's last message, for malice had made him bold.

"One kiss, my dearest darling, for I must be away;
But I shall be back with the dawn of a not too distant day.
For if I get back by midnight, and my leave is granted me,
Then look for me in Maytime,

Watch for me in Maytime,
I'll come to thee in Maytime, unless I'm on KP."

That was the end of April; she listened for a word,
But from Jim, the furtive, her dad an earful heard!
When the lilacs were starting to flower and the days were growing warm,
Her father took to watching,
Watching, watching,
Her father took to watching for the flier's uniform.

He said no word to his daughter, no matter how she'd pout,
But locked her up in her bedroom and would not let her out.
Through her brain there ever pounded his parting words. Said he,
"Look for me in Maytime,

Watch for me in Maytime,
I'll come to thee in Maytime, unless I'm on KP."

She twisted the lock with a hairpin, but the famed Yale brand held firm.
 Her anger mounted higher, fanned by unladylike terms.
 The minutes crawled by like hours, the hours dragged by like years,
 Till the second week of Maytime,

On the bright twelfth day of Maytime,
 A sound in the heavens confirmed her growing fears.

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom! Did the father hear it—the engine roaring
 clear?

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom! in the distance but swiftly drawing near.
 Down the ribbon of aqua, down on the sunlight's beam,
 The skywayman came gliding,

Gliding, gliding,
 The postman waited tensely, in his eyes an angry gleam.

Zoom! Zoom! in the scented silence. Zoom! Zoom! in the shimmering air.
 Soon he came to the house on the corner, and who should be waiting there,
 But the postman who answered the summons; not a second did he stay.
 He told his daughter's lover,

His blue-eyed daughter's lover,
 That she had just been married and now was far away.

He turned—he sped to the eastward. He did not know who stood
 Crushed, in the chamber above him, her clenched lips stained with blood.
 He went overseas, not knowing that his dearest love was true,
 That Zeni, the postman's daughter,

The postman's blue-eyed daughter,
 Had watched for her love in the Maytime and had bid him a silent adieu.

The P38 rose upward, the skywayman in her seat,
 With the white clouds churning behind him, he was bent on some daring
 feat!

The guns were primed and ready; the throttle was opened wide.
 When they shot him down from the skyway,

Streaming in flames from the skyway—
 And the smoke left a trail in the skyway to show where he had died.

But still of a springtime day, they say, down from the clouds of fleece,
 When the earth is a spinning planet many long miles beneath,
 When the sun is a blaze of glory above the rolling shore,
 The skywayman comes gliding,

Gliding, gliding,
 The skywayman comes gliding, up to the hangar door.

Over the smooth ground he speeds in haste and stops in the hangar's shade,
 For he has to keep an appointment to a tryst that he has made.
 He whispers a name to the window, and who should be waiting there
 But the postman's blue-eyed daughter,

Zeni, the postman's daughter,
 Who pledged her love to the skywayman in the lilac-laden air.

Inez Bliven,
 Senior

Figaro

BEVERLY was the rightful owner
 of the kitten. We all knew that,
 but anyone with half an eye could
 see that the kitten liked us better.
 It took two months for us to convince
 Beverly, but on the day her
 grandmother found the "horrible
 animal" on her pillow, we won our
 point completely.

So, captivated with our prize, a
 winsome ball of fur attached to a
 tail meant for a full grown cat, we
 carried him home in state. Although
 Beverly relinquished all claim to her
 kitten, out of courtesy, we allowed
 her the privilege of naming him.
 Promptly she announced that he
 would be called Figaro, because he
 looked like the kitten of that name
 in Walt Disney's *Pinocchio*. I dis-
 agreed immediately, but was forced
 to submit. I was to learn, however,
 that Figaro was the one and only
 name for the funny little cat with
 the funny disposition.

From the very beginning, Figaro
 was affectionate. Unlike any cats we
 had ever known, he showed his love
 plainly. Our guests always admitted
 this, too, after surviving his efforts
 to "kiss" them with a dewy pink
 nose. But, strangely, my father, who
 always hated cats, doted on the
 cheek-rubbing which Figaro gave
 him.

Despite his violent show of love,
 Figaro had a sleepy attitude which
 we attributed to an Angora ancestor
 somewhere in the dim past. To this,
 also, we accounted his unusually
 long fur. He seemed to realize his
 somewhat doubtful superiority, for

he was very discriminating about the
 place where he slept. He chose first
 the piano keys, but since he had a
 penchant for jumping up and down
 in the middle of the night, and con-
 sequently disturbing our slumber,
 we cured him of using them for a
 bed. Next came the top of the china
 closet, and then my father's desk,
 (especially when it was piled high
 with papers.)

Finally he discovered the radio
 cabinet, which was comfortable and
 well heated. Not encountering any
 resistance, he settled there, to spend
 the best part of his life in peaceful
 repose. And it was there that he
 would greet with a violent twitch of
 his tail any overtures to wake him.

Unfortunately, Figaro's tail was
 our only means of knowing whether
 he was pleased or annoyed, for he
 never took the trouble either to purr
 or cry. Perhaps it was from shame
 that he refused to use his voice. It
 might have been a feeble one, un-
 suited to his royalty. Or perhaps he
 saved it for the benefit of the cats
 of the outer world. We could only
 guess, for Figaro refused to en-
 lighten us on the matter.

The closest he came to speaking
 was a vigorous opening and closing
 of his mouth. At any rate, he favored
 us by going through the motions!

Catnip always seemed beneath his
 dignity. We offered it to him time
 and time again, but it never took
 effect. A gentle sniff, and that was
 all. No raptures, no ecstasies; just
 a flick of the tail, and a shake of

the paw, and he would amble back to his vantage point on the radio.

Amble is the only word that could describe Figaro's walk. It was a combination of a stately meander in front and a crab-like motion behind, which made his hind legs look as if they were perpetually trying to catch up with the front paws on one side or the other. Beverly aptly named the laughable gait "swivel-hips." Figaro, however, strolled nonchalantly along, blissfully unaware of the sensation he caused.

Because he was so unusual and lovable, we gave him more attention than we should have. He flourished under it, but waxed proud and possessive. Resenting the fact that our other decrepit cat was allowed to eat with him, Figaro took fiendish delight in waiting until his rival was engrossed in his meal and then slap-

ping him on the nose with a dainty white paw.

We were just beginning, after two years of living with him, to understand our black and white pussy, when we noticed he was losing what little vitality he had. No longer did he jump into his paper bag, or roll his little spool under my father's feet. As he grew steadily weaker, we put him in a basket behind the stove. When we came near, valiantly he tried to flick his tail, but even that was too much for him.

Then, one morning, a loud meow brought us all out of bed. In his hour of need, Figaro had finally deigned to call us, and we had failed him. For when we arrived he was curled into a tight ball, fast asleep. And we knew he would never be rudely awakened again.

Mary Jo Trayner
Freshman

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