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1951

THE HELICON

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

GRAY: *The Progress of Poetry*

A STUDENT PUBLICATION

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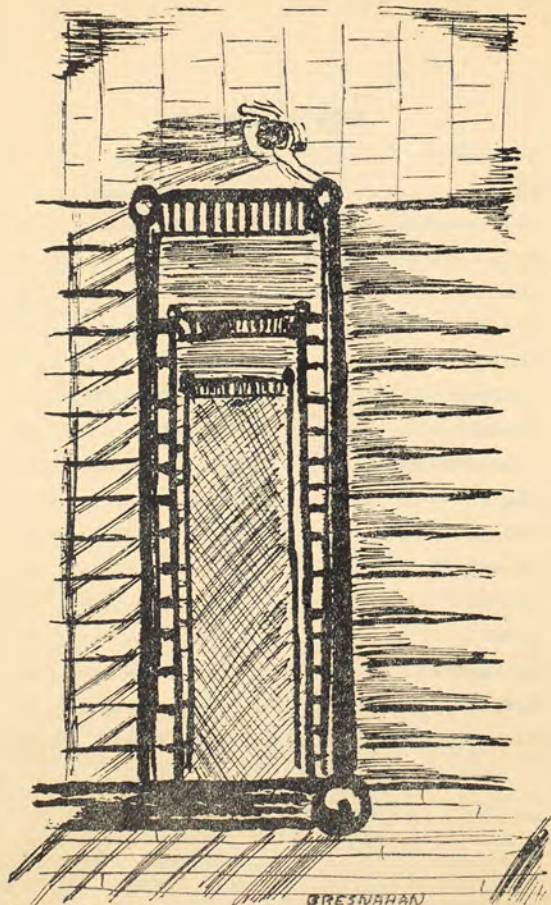
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Table of Contents

The Transition	Joan Stoddard	1
Answer	Florence Piacitelli	5
Thoughts On Friendship	William Ferrara	6
Preface To The Story Of A Man	Vartkis Kinioan	7
Above All He Gave Her Happiness	Florence Piacitelli	7
Dawns Pebble Tossed	Robert Hargraves	8
The Difference	Joan Duval	8
Two Poems	Palmer Bernard Wald	9
The Circus	Hely Merikoski	10
Concert Of The City	William Ferrara	13
Essay	Phyllis Cambre	14
Proper Motivation	Robert Hargraves	15
Beyond The Veil	Barbara Gusetti	16
Willy Had A Word For It	A. Helen Agronick	18
A Gem	Phillip Oliver	19
The Angry Sea	A. Helen Agronick	21
Kid Brother	A. Helen Agronick	22
The Grapes Of Wrath	Vartkis Kinioan	23



BRESNAHAN

"She retreated from the smoker and ran up the three flights to her room."

The Transition

"THE elliptical is the apparent path of the sun through the sky; this apparent motion is caused by the revolution . . ." thankful that her roommate had attended science class today—she would copy Ginny's notes that night. With a telepathic message she urged Ginny to take legible and logical notes and permitted herself to forget her surroundings.

Mickey was a little frightened by this faculty she had recently acquired—the ability to withdraw into herself so completely that she was conscious only of her thoughts. She stared at the high ceiling of the lecture room, the rows of tiered seats, the regimented heads of other college sophomores, the tiny, far-away instructor relentlessly grinding out mysterious phrases and long obscure words, but saw nothing.

Thrusting her head forward as though she were about to sleep, Mickey gazed in the direction of her greyish tweed skirt and the yellow sweater that overlapped it, but still she saw nothing. She was standing again around the peeling wooden railing of her dormitory. The night was ominously quiet; lights twinkled in the distance at the far border of the park. Lukewarm air heavy with lilac enveloped her and seemed to set her in a world apart—a world of her own self-consciousness, packed with emotional blockades, frustrations, yet filled with an overwhelming realization of the infinite richness and unlimited possibility of life. Laughter pushed upward inside her—Mickey pictured herself as a sausage stuffed to the bursting point with ideas and tentative reachings-out to the people she knew, yet coned by that unyielding skin of doubts and fears.

It was that hideous bus ride, she thought, that was the last straw. The rain splashing through the night seemed to turn the trackless trolley into a small, isolated world. Street lights blurred through the watery glass, although all outside buildings were obscured by a wet curtain. The bus driver, set apart by his screen, hummed tunelessly as he maneuvered the bus through crowded streets.

Mickey sat near the rear of the bus on a side seat, watching her fellow passengers. Two men dressed in worn and dingy work clothes sat side by side staring at the darkness. The lines of the faces were drawn and deep, not at all resembling the happy men in American magazine advertisements. The nearest to the window slumped in his seat with his hands dangling forgotten, eyes slowly closing and opening with a jerk at frequent intervals—Mickey had never before seen a face so well reflecting dreams forgotten, hopes snatched away. His companion fumbled in some inner pocket for a cigarette, lighting it surreptitiously, and proceeded to drag upon it unenjoyably.

Mickey looked away. Two women in front of her were conversing in loud tones. Both were well-dressed and prosperous looking; both had faces which were somehow not quite what they had grown up with.

"Try as I will, Mazie, I don't know . . . I work my fingers to the bone—all I do is think of my good-for-nothin' husband: wash his socks, cook his oatmeal, mend, clean, cook—I'm sick n' tired of it! He doesn't care! I'd like to see him spend a day workin' like I do. Passin' an hour every night in the barroom, expectin' me to keep the house on what he gives me—I'm fed up!"

"I know how you feel, May. It's the same with that lazy sister of mine—but what can you do? Some day I'm gonna get out and get a job and to hell with everyone else."

True unselfishness, thought Mickey.

A girl in the early teens sat with her friend, who appeared slightly older. Both wore white wool kerchiefs, pea jackets, and lipstick—plenty of it. When she spoke, an almost indistinguishable whine could be heard. "Oh, come on with us tonight, Janet. The Stardust Place ain't that bad. Besides, you don't have to tell your Mom. What she doesn't know won't hurt her. Boy, you gotta see the fella I met last week—those eyes he's got—" and at this point her voice faded to inaudibility.

Mickey squirmed, feeling damp wrinkles of clothing push at her thigh. Physical discomfort added to her mental disturbance. It's exaggeration, she told herself. You're getting hypersensitive. These people are fellow members of a democracy. All men are created equal, remember? Ghastly collection of people like this appear only in forced themes sweated out by college freshmen who have nothing better to write about. Look around—that Negro across the aisle seems a decent sort. Intelligent-looking, human, for one thing. He's had more obstacles to overcome than you'll ever have. The man's eyes were soft. Once they swept her face with a look that held a trace of—pity? Or was that imagination again? A metallic rasp interrupted her; one of the women beside her was speaking to her companion.

"Where'm I livin' now? Still on Stickley Street, but not for long. Them gov'ment housin' projects are gona be filled up with niggers—boy, and then what a crowd of 'em they'll be! Neighborhood won't be fit to live in—"

Mickey stared at the woman's harassed face, the unhealthy pallor of the skin, the petulant droop of her lips that even in repose resembled the studied sneer of a hard-boiled movie actor. As she watched fascinated, the women continued to talk, and their irritating voices carried a language in which the grammatical errors nearly matched their thoughtless remarks. She glanced across the aisle and hoped intensely that the nice looking

man had not heard. And yet who is to say whether their ideas are any worse than mine. What difference does it make, anyway? Mickey seemed to feel each separate muscle in her brain rebelling at the task of unpleasant thought to which it was driven so often.

—Her stop. She lurched up the aisle, feeling clumsy and overgrown as she was catapulted toward the front of the bus by an unexpected halt. Then Mickey had paid her fare and was swinging rapidly down the street toward the dorm.

Mickey remembered how, standing there on the porch, she relived that busride, and then continued to speculate despondently on "God's flock" until her reverie was interrupted by her roommate's arrival. After returning Ginny's "Hi," she stood awkwardly silent, not knowing how to bridge the gap between their two different worlds. It was Ginny who spoke first.

"Come on down to the smoker for a while, Mick, and then let's go to bed."

"Guess I will. And I'll be able to use that sleep." Mickey winced at the sound of her words. Why must she speak at all if everything was to be so artificial? She couldn't say that she'd much rather stay alone in the night. A remark like that would alienate her from the rest of the society she despised so thoroughly. She was not sleepy—why had she said she was? With a mental shrug and raised eyebrow, Mickey followed her roommate to the smoker, which they found already filled with their chattering friends.

A chorus of "Hi's" and "About times" and they were swallowed into the cyclone of words.

"Oh, that jerk—I guess he's a nice boy, but for a date . . ." (here a note to indicate revulsion).

"Go ahead and flush him, Jean. I'll get you a blind date for the houseparty."

"Sally, did you see 'Tight Little Island' at the Exeter yet?"

"Yes, wasn't it wonderful? I can't stand Hollywood movies now."

"I still maintain that a world social structure couldn't be built on Nietzsche's philosophy; it would be chaos."

"He had some good points, though. Man shouldn't be confined to a straight-jacket of moral and social laws, it only leads to outbreaks . . ."

"Of what?"

"Man's true nature, which . . ."

"Oh, hell . . ."

"Stop swearing!"

Now they were off, Mickey thought, and where did arguments lead? They'd be at it until morning now. It used to interest her, but she had

become familiar long ago with every blind alley to which that volley of fascinating words drew them. She retreated from the smoker and ran up the three flights to her room, undressed rapidly in the dark, and wormed under the blankets of her cot. Mickey surveyed the prospects of the next few weeks with a mixture of distaste and disgust. The mental void would live with her yet awhile, she was positive, but hadn't she been repeatedly told that it was only a stage she must pass through? When she considered losing her jealously guarded thoughts, however, a strange reluctance to relinquish them seeped through her. Mick wondered why—but time will tell, she thought, and gave herself up to the heavy relaxation that flowed from the unyielding mattress to her back and legs and arms. She was asleep.

There was no lessening of her depression when she awoke the next morning. Ignoring her stomach's clamor for breakfast, Mickey dressed with effort and set out to inch along the route to classes. Another grey day—purple shadowed trees marching by in single file, hovering protectively over drab, regimented houses. People oozing out of the houses at intervals as she passed by, all intent upon reaching their offices before the nine o'clock deadline. Two young men did not blend in with the crowd of white-collar workers. They were coming toward her, dressed in working clothes, their faces hard and pale looking, their eyes blank and cold. Suddenly the taller of the two said something to his friend, who turned and gave him a look of warm affection; the two immediately seemed to grow human—and good. Something inside Mickey wrenched hard: if only people were lice-like *all* the time; these Jeckyl and Hyde transformations made the human situation pathetic. The two boys passed; Mickey turned up her collar against the penetrating cold and quickened her pace.

Now, sitting in her class, feeling no better after having relived the past few hours, Mickey heard the instructor gagle, "Class dismissed."

Quickly the room became unbearable. Mickey gathered together her books and hurried out. She wanted to scream, to shout, to swear, to cry, and it was for this last purpose that she dodged through the crowd to the girls' lounge. It was deserted—thank God, thought Mickey. She withdrew into an uncomfortable corner chair and pretended to be engaged in earnest study. If only, she thought, situations weren't so hopeless. . . . You can't change people. Can I face fifty more years of disgust, disgust which is the progenitor of loneliness? At this moment two objects of Mickey's disgust entered the lounge. These were a pair of motherly and plump matrons, one of whom was speaking:

"Lydia, I'm at my wits' end! When I think of the state the world's

in, and the way my young grandchildren are fritterin' away their lives. Oh, I don't know what this world's comin' to!"

Her friend paused to reflect before replying. When she spoke, her voice revealed an old and hard-won resignation. "Jus listen to me, dearie. The longer you live, the more you realize you got to live and let live. Quit worryin' about other people and enjoy simple things like mystery books and television. Don't think too much. A little's all right, but think too much and you crack up, just like—(a snap of the fingers)—that!"

Suddenly Mickey began to laugh. She laughed and laughed and laughed, and then she surrendered.

Joan Stoddard

Answer

HOW do I make good-bye
Please tell—how, how . . . how?

You know how we changed to hello
On awakening from the everyday hi.
Our eyes gleamed, our conversation, too.
Yesterday's film, a Broadway play, the Cantos
Then politics and religion for opinions
Respected, exchanged, never followed, just left.
We relaxed at the end, or was it our hearts?
Praise Miss Lowell for the patterns
Ours was one of them.
You were (fill this in) you know those faults
Must I exploit you to yourself?
This minute, is it time?
Now, when only one still cares
But the bored one doesn't dare,
How do I make good-bye?

Florence Pacitelli

Thoughts On Friendship

WHEN the winds of desolation
breathe upon us with their draughts
of isolation, and depressions seek
to daunt the spirit of our perceptions,
it is then our agitated thoughts dwell
upon the friends we love, and our
meditations of them bring us peace
and consolation.

That oblivion which we seek from the
confusions of life and its endless
intrusions is found in the memories
of friends we have met coming or
going the road to success. Just
the thought of their presence is
enough to contend with the hallucinations
and disappointments of men.

Thus when reality calls us from
our refuge of thought, we awaken to
life and our depressions are naught for from
the sanctuary of memories formed by our friendships
new hope, determination, and courage are born
that we may continue our journey along
life's winding lanes till darkness doth fall
enveloping all and we answer to the summoning of
that Glorious Call.

William A. Ferrara

Preface To The Story Of A Man

FOR the long and futile years in darkness:
For the hours in glowing light
shadowed by the clouding of the vacant skies:
For the spectre of time sunk deep in the bosom,
pounding for life, then released with a
gigantic force:
For the weeping and sobbing from wounds:
For the deep gashes and the contorted grimaces
made for the red life ebbling away
into nothingness:
For the time on the river and the vesse'
cast on the banks of the forgotten sea.
For the Word of Innocence; for the desire
of perfection:
For the affected return:
And the man
That was molded in the end.

J. Kivorian

Above All He Gave Her Happiness

ABOVE all, he gave her happiness.
A lovely, lovely gift —
Her spirit pulled it close
For it felt as soft tissue wrapped about a gift
As it is given in the box.
His gift was unbound and more delicate than any fabric.
Surely there were triumphant moments as receiver.
She smiled — or her lips smiled — she sensed ripping inside her chest
She felt iron tears dripping from her eyes
To her feet, where happiness fell beneath her spirit's reach.

Florence Picitelli

Dawns Pebble Tossed

RIPPLES follow, move aside,
 Shadows, ebbing with the tide.
 Withdraw to shelter, till once more night,
 With soft approach, sends off the light
 Which banished them.

Green willow hangings soon betray
 Perch, which slip from dark to day
 And write their lines with darting dips,
 While branch and pond touch fingertips
 In understanding.

Only poplars seem to share
 The toast proposed by morning's air.
 Thrown back, the quilt of dawn's grey mist
 (Its ripples end at shore's brief kiss)
 Is soon forgotten.

Robert Everett Hargrave

The Difference

A KING is no better than his slave;
 A flower no better than a weed.
 For what is the king without his crown
 Or the flower without its seed?

Yet the slave is a fool to say he is better
 Or even to make such an inference.
 Though he refuses to face the fact,
 There still remains . . . the difference.

Joan Quval

TWO POEMS

The Last Delirium

BLACK and crimson,
 Death approaches on the sands of alien shores
 And draws the scarlet blood from the pulseless veins
 Of dying men.

Burning suns prepare
 To scorch away the bits of flesh and skin
 That have withstood the torments
 Of the wind and rain.

And hungry seagulls fly in hordes
 Above their rotting bodies.

Requiem

A WEEK ago she died.

I looked at all the people
 Saying prayers for her

And smiled.

Palmer Bernard Weld. —

The Circus

I HAD never been to a circus before. But I had been a good girl for three weeks—well, almost a good girl—and now my mother was going to take me to the circus. Daddy told me in his solemn voice last night that it wasn't every seven year old girl who could go to the circus. Now I was ready in my pink dress, all ironed and starched, smelling like hot sun and dry earth. I screwed up my toes in my new soft shoes and hoped Mommy would come soon. At last I heard her high heels coming down the stairs and I reached up my hand to take hers. I felt so happy because she didn't have gloves on and her hands were soft and cool. I just knew she had put on some of the sticky lotion she got out of a bumpy bottle on her dresser.

The screen door slammed behind us as we left the house and I listened to the little stones make their funny noises as we walked down the path. Mommy lifted me onto the front seat of the car and kissed me right on my nose. It's funny, but she does that every now and then and her voice gets a little fuzzy, but soft afterwards. Then the car moved forward and we were on our way.

"Did you learn any circus songs at your school, Bumpkins, that we can sing?"

"No, Mommy, I don't know any. But Mommy, tell me again what I'll see at the circus."

Then Mommy began to tell about the circus in her warm voice. She told me of the man called barkers who would try to call people in to see all sorts of things—sideshows Mommy called them. There were coated apples, candy, fresh buttery popcorn, and ice cream—all good things to eat. We would go into a tent and there would be elephants, lions, lady dancers on horses, and clowns—all sorts of clowns. Clowns that make you laugh so hard, you cry. I sort of wanted a clown of my own.

I felt the car begin to slow down and I knew we were there. For a moment I didn't want to go to the circus but then I remembered Daddy's voice saying, "No matter what, Bumpkins, you have yourself a good time." I tried to smile at Mommy as we got out of the car together.

I heard then what Mommy had been telling about—voices and voices, men shouting, children crying, others talking. Mommy took my hand and we walked over to the ticket collector. I gave him my ticket and he said, "Thank you, young lady." I felt so proud. Then I smelled popcorn and I told Mommy we just had to have some. We walked around eating the

popcorn and Mommy told me about everything. Everyone sounded so excited and I knew the little boys and girls like myself were having fun.

Mommy squeezed my hand and I knew at last that we were going into the Big Top where all the acts were. I tried to act like a young lady and I sat quietly by Mommy—but, Oh! The horns blew and everyone seemed to gasp together. Mommy got excited and grabbed my arm. "Honey there are the clowns. There's one with a long red nose and he's got on yellow baggy pants with patches all over them. He's trying to turn cartwheels but he is always falling down. Another has just a patch of red hair standing up straight, and thick red eyebrows, but he looks so sad."

"Mommy, what's that heavy noise?"

"Why, that's the elephants. A beautiful lady wearing a short sparkly, pink dress is riding the first elephant."

Mommy's voice went on and on. I was so happy. I loved the little dogs for there was one like Spot, my own dog. There were ladies on trapezees but Mommy didn't tell me much about them.

Then it was all over and I was so excited. As we were leaving, I began to jump up and down. And I jumped up and down on someone's foot. Hard, I guess.

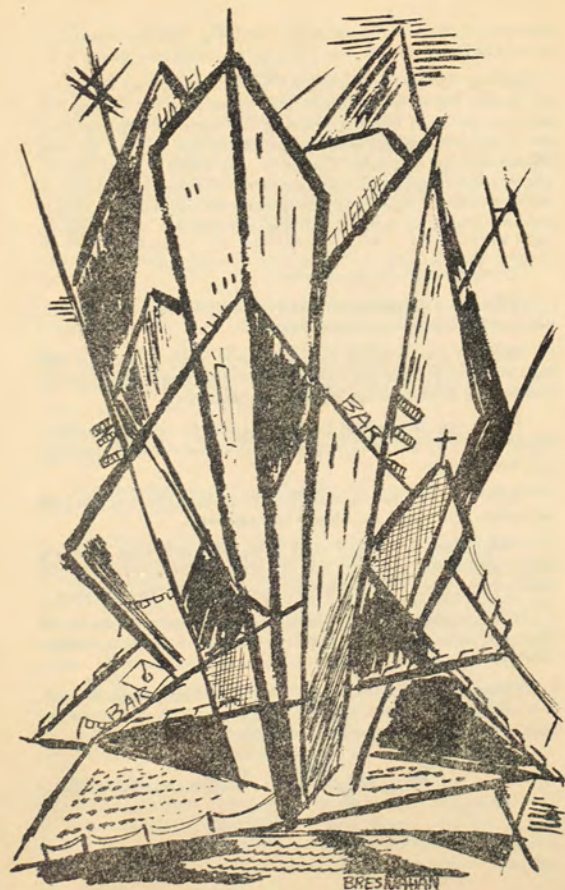
"Little girl, can't you see where you are going?" His voice was hard and splintery like wood and I began to cry all over.

I don't know how long I cried in my Mommy's arms before she whispered to me, "Don't mind what the man said. He didn't know that you really can't see." I smelled her clear perfume and I felt right again.

"All right, Mommy, but let's hurry home now for I want to tell Daddy all about the circus." I put my hand in hers and we walked slowly towards the car.

I knew, though, I wouldn't say anything to Daddy about the man. It would make him sad. I wanted Daddy to think my first circus was really wonderful, as his must have been when he was a boy.

Wely U. Merikowski



Concert Of The City

BREATHE in the music you hear every day
The sound of the city you pass on your way!

Your feet on the pavement
The rhythm they make
The sound of a horn
Or the jam of a brake
The laughter of children
As they run along
The scream of a siren
When it joins the song
The flutter of starlings
That feed on the mall
The cry of the headlines
Newspaper boys call
The chatter of friends
Whom you greet on the street
The friendly "hello"
From the cop on the beat
All add to the symphony played every day
With every sound blending what it has to say.

The clatter of boxes
That swallow our mail
The chimes of the clock
That ring out without fail
The roar of the train
As it speeds on its way
The whist'ling contralto
From ships in the bay
The rat-a-tat-tat
Of a man at his drill
The groan of a truck
As it climbs up a hill
The far-distant purr
Of a plane in the sky
A cry for a taxi
As it stops near by
All add to the symphony played every day
With every sound blending what it has to say.

William A. Ferrara

Essay

LIFE with its many idiosyncracies found it necessary to make me a commuter, and I duly rise each morning and take up my role as a slave of the timetable. Being a nervous person, I find it impossible to sit quietly on the train and observe the scenery; therefore, diversion becomes my main objective. Reading popular digests helps to distract me, for they are shallow and relaxing, requiring little mental effort to assimilate.

It was in just such literature that I read an excerpt from an essay by G. K. Chesterton. It was called "What I Found In My Pockets" and it concerned a man without books and newspapers on a train. After a period of time he discovered that he was carrying about with him an unknown treasury, that which was contained in his pockets.

Here was a man in the same situation as I, but by utilizing his knowledge and imagination he made the journey interesting and enlightening by analyzing the objects in his pockets, while I was content to remain passive in the digest rut, reading predigested articles. In answer to the challenge offered by this article, I immediately emptied my only pocket and it contained the sad relics of a well-spent dollar bill—four pennies. To meditate upon the missing fifth penny was the logical thing to do, but recalling that the government likes a share of every nickel, a mental block ensued, for reflection upon taxes was definitely not the antidote to boredom. My next approach was what could be done with four pennies.

Outside of offering them to the neighborhood children who nowadays are almost too wordly to accept a lowly penny, or of inserting them into a gumball machine, which is out of the question because of my profession, I was driven to the conclusion that I should stack them neatly on my dresser and wait patiently for another fifth one to appear.

At the next opportunity I placed the coins into a neat pile on the corner of my dresser. Now each morning when I rise I am confronted with four silent reproaches to the fact that I have neglected to obtain another penny to make my four five. A quintet of pennies can face the world unafraid, being equal as they are to any nickel ever minted. It is becoming increasingly difficult to return each night to my inadequate four, unable to add the missing coin, because Fate has played a two-fold trick on me. My memory has failed me completely and I have not received a single penny in change since I read that fatal article. I have become suspicious of every bit of printed material, and digests throw me into a

state of bewilderment. I no longer can relax on the train with one, and the ride has now become dull and monotonous.

I am no longer an ordinary commuter—merely a slave to the timetable; I am also a slave to four helpless pennies. All because Mr. Chesterton took a train ride, and had to write about it.

Phyllis Lambie

Proper Motivation

IN days of old did teachers scold
And pupils act sublime.
And now and then is seen again
An echo of that time.
Though changes start and changes end
And progress marches on
(As systems keeping up to trends
Call forth a new solon.)
This teacher must, perforce, sit by
While pupils, in the mode,
Dash up and down the widened aisle,
Till their wild oats are sowed.
Then must the pedagogic seer
Watch o'er his gleeful clan,
An inkwell thrown? What must he say?
"God bless you, little man!"
But there is come a time when e'en
The lowly prof doth balk
And humble thanks give way to spans,
"Sit down; shut up; I'll talk!"
"So you would now ascend my throne
"And keep the classfires burning
"Well listen then (and realize that
The shortest worm is turning.)
"You think that school's the pupil's woe,
"His only hope—vacation,
"Well let me tell the teacher's scourge—
"Progressive Education!"

Robert Everett Hargrave

Beyond The Veil

BENEATH sharp thorns
A Rose

With petals tight,
As though to shield
Itself
From their despite.

* * * *

Trying hard
To bear
The piercing pain
That tears
Soft petals
Thriving, but in vain.

* * * *

Thirsty petals
Dying,
Straining to break through
With drooping arms
Praying,
For just a little dew.

* * * *

Now pink petals
Darken
And fold themselves around
The weary little
Rosebud
Dying on the ground.

* * * *

A gentle Breeze
Encircles
The tired Rose
And lifts the cruel
And spiny Veil
That made the petals close.

Silently it wraps
The Rose
In its warm, moist Breath
And slowly wakes
The Rosebud
From its sleep of death.

* * * *

Sweet air and warm, bright
Sunshine
And the feel of light, cool dew
Gives new life
To the tortured Rosebud
As it starts its growth anew.

* * * *

For now the Rose
Has drifted
Beyond that Veil of Death
And has found a peaceful
Haven
'Neath His warm and loving Breath.

* * * *

In our dear Lord's
Favorite Garden
It now reigns o'er the rest,
For it's Queen of all
The roses
And the Rose our Lord loves best.

Barbara Guzzetti

Willy Had A Word For It

IT has been suggested that conversation could be greatly improved by injecting Shakespearian quotations at stated intervals. Although the practicality of such a procedure is questionable, herewith submitted are quotations from the first act of "Hamlet" which might be used in the various circumstances listed.

AS IT IS SAID NOW

You tell him we're not ready to take the exam.

They're the practice students at Henry Barnard.

This dress used to fit

As a senior, I won't be required to take final examinations.

Some instructors would love to know what are in those notes that are passed.

Report to the main office at once.
My Toni has lasted over four weeks.

Prof. Waite: "I'm sorry but you don't deserve more than D in your History and Philosophy of Education final."

Overcut.

Oh, that gym class!

Must that proctor breathe down my neck?

Cafeteria coffee.

You cut Chapel once too often.

Mrs. Andrews disapproves of: cigarettes, soda, beer, etc.

AS IT MIGHT BE SAID

"Thou art a scholar; speak to it."

"By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes . . . whilst they distilled almost to jelly with the act of fear, stand dumb."

"O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt."

"No reckoning made, but sent to my account, with all my imperfections on my head."

"For your desire to know what is between us, O'er master't as you may."

"Upon fearful summons."

"It waves me still."

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

"a truant disposition."

"Our state to be disjoint and out of frame."

"Why this same strict and most observant watch."

"Of unimproved mettle hot and full."

"It shows a will most incorrect to heaven."

"Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned."

AS IT IS SAID NOW

There is a great deal of traffic on Promenade Street.

There will be no final in this elective.

That's my critic teacher.

Mr. Greene gave us a surprise quiz in Shakespeare class.

AS IT MIGHT BE SAID

"I'll cross it, though it blast me."

"For this relief, much thanks."

"A countenance more in sorrow than in anger."

"Oh villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!"

A Helen Agronick

A Gem

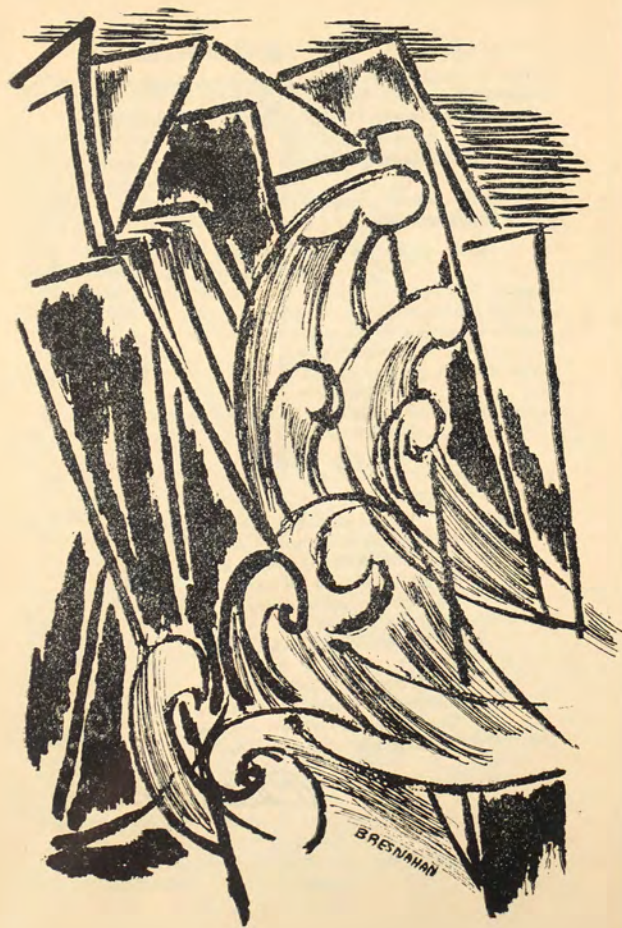
NO hope have I to penetrate

With vision clear and thought so pure
The barricade which bars all men
From God's Realm and Mysteries rare.
Not all the books on this small earth
Absorbed, divulged by thoughtful mind
Could give a hint or light a spark
To Tell me what lies back of Him.

* * * * *

But He came to me and left with me
This gem—a thought so full of truth:
"The Source of all we have or know
Can strengthen us or else we die."

Philip Oliver



The Angry Sea

THE angry sea
 With grim, determined skill
 Sucks deeply in its icy
 spume — and gathers force
 To hurl itself resentfully
 Against the rock that blocks its course.
 And with each crash
 It cries staccato, shrill,
 Its retching spasmic taunt,
 "I will — I will."

The massive rock
 Deep, solid, and unmoved,
 Crevassed by many other
 tempestuous seas,
 In answer to this chant
 Replies complacently,
 "You can't."

A Helen Agronick

Kid Brother

THAT no good brother o'mine," Joe snorted as his thick fingers circled the empty beer glass. He banged it on the bar and wiped his mouth with the back of his sleeve.

"He's good for nothin'," he said to his companion. Willy always agreed with the man who was buying the beer.

"Stole fifty bucks, sure as if he lifted it out o' my pocket."

Little Willy tipped his head back and drained the glass.

"Two beers, Mac," Joe yelled, and slapped a bill on the sticky bar.

"Yup" he went on thoughtfully, "My own brother talks me out o' fifty bucks and then disappears. S'been more'n two weeks now."

Willy stared at his glass then broke the silence.

"S'too bad."

"Too bad ain't the word for it!" Joe's drunken anger got the better of him. "Takes fifty bucks! My two best shirts. Skips town. Rotten through and through. Been nothin' but trouble to me and the wife ever since he was a kid..

He lapsed into a sullen silence and thoughtfully examined his half-full glass.

Willy drank.

Joe drank.

The small room was getting hot. Joe tugged loose his tie and swore as the collar button fell to the floor. He retrieved it clumsily.

"Maybe the kid had his reasons," Willy rationalized in his slow, uncertain way. "Might-a had to leave town."

"The kid's not good, I tell ya," Joe said, "always gettin' into trouble. Life the wife always says, he'll wind up in jail—if he ain't there now. Nothin' but trouble," he muttered.

His anger subsided, but the red flush deepened on his huge square face. His head fell back and the lager disappeared down his throat. He slammed down the empty.

"Willy," he squinted to bring his companion into focus, "Willy, I swear I'll knock his block off when I catch 'im," and his huge fist crashed down on the bar.

"Two, mac."

He pocketed the change.

Willy agreed with him eagerly. Joe had cash and was always good for a few beers.

"Yup," Willy grinned, attempting to appease his friend, "that brother o' yours just ain't no good."

Joe swivelled sharply from the bar and grasped the startled little man by his worn lapels.

"Whaddya talkin' about," he bellowed at the petrified Willy. "Whaddya mean, 'He aint no good,'" and he pushed his big red face down into Willy's. "Don't you call him no good," he roared. "Why he's my brother!"

A. Helen Agnew

The Grapes Of Wrath

CRIMSON . . .

And the fading colors making humble
The earth . . . in a flaming cloak.

The winter came early
That year, as did the nestling babe:
Rain, sleet, snow, and fog
Sent the urban home to his fuel,
Made the farmer penniless,
Washed away the minerals,
Burying deep the salt,
Making it bitter to the taste
Of the sleeping worms.

The sun parched
The lands, and the lean faces became
Charred and pimpled—line
After line of rippled waters
Ran to the sea, down to the fish
And the weeds.

And the ugly lands
Stood barren, without motion.

Then the storms came,
Mercilessly butchering, devastating
The already ruined men:
Choking, coughing, clutching
For one speck of life, one hope,
One fulfillment, or one promise
Wave after wave of dry rain
Covered the houses and the fields,
Piling deep over memory
And desire.

S. Kivrian

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