

HELICON



1954

CENTENNIAL YEAR 1954

rhode island college of education

Janus am I, oldest of potentates,
Forward I look, and backward and below
I count, as god of avenues and gates,
The years that through my portals
come and go.

Longfellow, "The Poet's Calendar"

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CATHERINE McLAUGHLIN	Editor
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Editor's Note

Since this is the Centennial Year of the Rhode Island College of Education, it is most apropos that we look to Janus, one of the early Italian gods, for thoughts and inspiration.

As Janus looked backward and forward, we also can look back a hundred years and record our advancement and accomplishments and look forward in hopes of another hundred years of even greater accomplishments. Janus is a symbol for open-mindedness, a characteristic which should be prevalent in the Profession, for as teachers, we should be receptive of new ideas.

I wish to thank all who have helped with this publication, the Faculty Advisor for his valuable suggestions and the Staff for reading the manuscripts. I also want to thank all the contributors for helping to make this a worthwhile Centennial issue of the "Helicon."

C. E. M.

II Nostro Pane Quotidiano

1

In my country many customs and traditions seem so natural that nobody ever suspects that in other countries they are not even known. I thought that veneration for bread, inherent in the hearts of most Italians, a natural inclination of people in any part of the world; but it is not so.

In Italy we do not consider bread as we do meat or sweets or any other food. Bread is more than mere sustenance to us. Besides being, with water, the main form of nutrition for our bodies, it is also the food with which we feed our souls. Every day it becomes, by transubstantiation, the body and blood of our Lord. We cannot be indifferent toward what Jesus chose to hold such a great mystery.

We ask for bread in our beautiful daily prayer, the Our Father, and treating this food with little or no respect would, to most Italians, indicate that we are not sincere when we pray to God. Could we in honesty petition for something that we did not consider important?

To understand the true meaning of bread in Italy, one must live among the humble people, especially those who live on small farms. One should see how happy they are after the harvest, and with what fervor they thank God for having given them their Daily Bread. Many farmers express their thankfulness by giving to their parish the flour for the Sacred Host.

As a little girl, I always had the due respect for bread but the reverence given it by my elders I could understand completely during the last war when we stayed in near starvation for several months. Oh, how we all asked forgiveness of God for having many times wasted the bread he had given us! How we promised to appreciate it highly if He would give it to us again! We could not think of anything else to satisfy our needs. Bread, bread was all that we longed for. One day my Mother, for a loaf of bread, wanted to give her diamond to a German soldier, and because he did not wish to accept it, not having bread to give, she came back home, crying like a child.

True respect for bread was impressed upon me as a child. Each time my Mother made bread she made a large cross in the center of the top of each unbaked loaf so that when it came to the table fresh from the oven, we were reminded of our Lord and of His sacrifice upon the Cross. This was a simple way of showing gratitude.

2

Another family custom taught me to revere bread. Before and after the war, when food was plentiful and scraps sometimes had to be disposed of, my Mother, like other Italian housewives, hesitated to throw away bread. She kept every little piece until it became useless. Then she blessed it by kissing it, and fed it to the birds or burned it. Never would she place it in the basket of refuse where other scraps might go.

Many good lessons has my Mother taught me. Among the simplest and the most beautiful is the respect I should show to our daily bread.

Maria Rao

Sonnet To Organ Music

A murmured sweetness lingers in the air,
And softly breaks the silence of the night
With tones of gentleness. And debonair
As whitest sea gull in his graceful flight,
The murmur swells and rumbles, now aloud.
The heartbeat quickens, beating like a drum.
The murmur rolls again; and list'ning crowds
In awe but wonder whence these waves have come.
Pulsating sounds of heart and temple beat
As angry tides retreat; then, with a roar,
These white-capped music-waves turn from retreat
And crash as foam against a rocky shore.

The organ music swift becomes as soft
As ebb of tide, or flight of bird aloft.

Jane Allaire

Bright Yellow Yesterdays

3

Wasn't it funny and lonely being together, with no place to go but close?

You wanted to write a play and I wanted to study painting. But we didn't do anything that year. We just smiled and held hands and walked fast through the streets.

You wrote a poem. We burned it, and then tried to remember what it said.

Remember the old German restaurant with its red-cheeked hausfrau? The first time we had schnitzel. I wore a pink hat, and you bought me white violets. We sipped wine and smiled at people. Why did we order wine in a German restaurant?

* * *
You walked slowly through the pelting rain, your head bent against its sting. I saw you push your hand deep into the pockets of your trenchcoat. We made coffee. Your hair dried in tiny ringlets on your forehead.

* * *
In August you helped with the haying. The dust stuck in your hair and burned your eyes. I saw the strong, slow movement of your back and arms as you reached and dragged the golden piles to you, and lifted them into the truck. After a long while, you looked up and smiled — long and slow.

* * *
The morning was very quiet on the island. From the upstairs window I watched the day begin. The old man across the way lifted his happy face to the sun and watched the morning from his doorway.

Below, on the beach, three bare-footed boys, with their trousers rolled up, were raking dead fish into baskets.

Men with muscular brown chests moved and shouted on the docks. When the noise of the pile drivers started, the gulls fled in white confusion, their screaming trailing far out of the harbor.

She was tiny and lovely, and she possessed many secrets. Sometimes, when we were alone on the beach, early in the morning, she would tell me of the secret places and people that she knew. But when the beach people came, with their bright umbrellas and lunches and noise, she would leave me and go far down the beach to be with her friends. I knew that they lived in the rocks, at the water's edge, and behind the sand hills.

You called that place our summer island. Remember?

Carol Warner

Sea-Scape

To L.M.

4

Last night I heard the sea singing;
Its song was meant just for me.
It awoke in me an awareness
Of God and eternity.

Last night I heard the sea singing
As it lapped the fog-shrouded shore;
It opened its mouth and swallowed sand,
But still left a billion grains more.
And I thought . . . how many thousands of years
Has the sea splashed upon this place,
Trying . . . trying with all its force
The grains of sand to erase?
The answer came rolling back
Riding a foghorn's mournful moan.
It flooded the air . . . lessened . . .
Then settled in the sea's soft drone.
The sand will be kissed and kissed again
By the passionate lips of the sea.
For a thousand years more this will go on,
And yet the sand will be.

(refrain)

Last night I heard the sea singing
Its song was meant just for me.
It awoke in me an awareness
Of God and eternity.

Donald F. Lyons

Five Twenty-five Local

5

It had stopped raining at five P.M. on the dot, and now a mist hung over the city like grey silk. It shrouded the globes of the lamp-posts; it sequinned the neon signs of bars and restaurants; it lay still and glistening upon the streets.

Taxis pulled up and drew away from the main entrance to the train station. Suitcases stood like sentinels, ready and waiting on the damp crust of sidewalks. People hurried to and fro from the station; the lights from within shone gloomily from the old station ceiling. High up on the wall facing the main entrance, the circle of clock with yellowed surface and dusty Roman numerals ticked away the minutes.

The information desk was thick with people firing questions at the attendants. The movable chart was raised, lowered, erased, written on; raised, lowered, erased written on. Travelers checked watches against the old clock on the wall and cigarettes were lit, smoked, and ground to nothing on the tile floor.

Porters with brown faces, some smiling, some grim, and some wary, pulled the baggage carts in and out of the doors leading to the tracks.

The rumble of trains arriving and leaving mingled with the chinking of dishes from the luncheonette and the drone of the masculine voice over the loud speaker. Feet scraped on the tile floor, and suitcases noisily collided with the steel lockers.

The slap of money on marble could be heard if one listened carefully, and the steady, varied-voiced words, New York, Boston, Bridgeport, Washington, Philadelphia, etc. were poured into the ear of the ticket agent behind the metal grill work. Above all, though, the aroma of steaming coffee seemed to prevail.

At five-fifteen, the five-twenty-five local pulled into the station, its wheels churning the dripping rails, and the importance of its white steam filling the air.

The five-twenty-five local was a small train, only four cars besides the engine. It stood tensely on Track Two, waiting while people boarded it, edging down the aisles of the cars, and plopping into the blue-cushioned seats. The steam was wiped from the windows, and the steady fingers that children always seemed to have were traced over the steam until the windows were a lace work of names, lines and little fat houses with smoke issuing from one-faced chimneys.

6

A woman dressed impeccably in a navy-blue raincoat settled herself in a seat in the last car and took off a navy-blue hat. She brushed carefully at her well-groomed hair which glistened brown under the overhead lights. She opened a magazine and turned the pages with rhythmic steadiness.

Three high school girls, with soft clean hair still damp with the mist outside, giggled among themselves as they piled into seats, dropping their books and pocketbooks. They ran combs through their hair and outlined their mouths with lipstick. Their fluffy chatter filled the air until they fell to musing, each girl's thoughts filling her eyes.

Business men filed wearily on, greeting each other in spontaneous enthusiasm which quickly left them as they slumped in seats, some dozing, some rattling newspapers.

A matronly woman with three children got on and spent a few minutes placing them in orderly fashion in seats near her own. She held a baby in her arms. The infant wailed interminably, its squallings causing amused grins, uplifted eyebrows, and looks of utter disgust among the passengers.

At five twenty-five, the conductor hollered the all-aboard and the train slid forward on the smooth cold rails. Soon it left the shell of the station and burrowed into the moist night air, determined and aggressive.

The passengers relaxed comfortably in the familiar sways and lurchings of the train. Stray lights flashed momentarily in the windows. The local pressed on into the hurrying darkness, stopping only for a few brief instants to catch its breath at the whistle-stop stations along the route.

At one of these a college girl boarded with unnoted calm. Her savoir-faire was unobserved as she settled herself easily into a seat. The lights overhead gleamed on the polished smoothness of her abrupt, rather startling hair-do. She smoothed the dampness out of the crisp, short strands and picked up one of her books. Opening it, she began to read rapidly.

No one noticed that she furtively lifted a wisp of handkerchief now and then to wipe away the tears that fell from beneath her lowered lashes. All the while her eyes raced across the printed pages, until at last she dropped the book from her hands and rested her head resignedly against the soft back of her seat. She wept openly now, but still no one

noticed. And the steady pace and lurch of the train mingled rhythmically with her thoughts. I wish I were dead. The words repeated themselves in her brain with even tense willingness.

The matronly woman with the three children raised her voice to scold two of her impish offspring as they raced up the aisle and back again. She shifted the baby in her arms, and reaching out caught the warm red wool of her youngest son's coat. He spun around, pulling with all his five-year-old weight, squealing, "Yemme go, Momma, Yemme go, Momma."

While his baby face contorted with rage and impatience and his tiny feet stamped on the leather treads of the floor covering, his Mother's hand drew him in like a fish on a pole, until her knees encircled his tiny body. She had him in a vise now, and letting go the red coat, she smacked him hard on his hand which flailed the air angrily. The older boy was standing behind his mother's seat, his face red with mirth. His childish high laughter silvered the air with brightness, and he shivered with delight like some small fiend who was alien to his Mother's eyes.

Five minutes ahead, over the trestle, the next station loomed out of the fog. People stood on the platform waiting, not yet hearing the far-off plugging of the train.

Into the tunnel dived the train, the lights in the cars blinking and wavering.

Its roar, muffled by the tunnel, suddenly poured forth from the other end, and the train issued out in a cloak of steam and smoke. Hissing loudly, it spun along the tracks toward the trestle that hung narrowly over the churning depths of the river below.

At six-seven, the college girl blew her nose, a business man dropped his paper to the floor and fell asleep, the lady in the blue suit came to the back cover of her book, and the woman with the three children sneezed and lost her hold on her son.

At six-eight, the train missed the rail on the trestle and plummeted over the side, crashing swiftly into the waters, engine first, pulling the cars like a toy train after it. Below the waters drank it swiftly. Above, the trestle loomed empty with only the echoes of the water churning below it. Far down the track, lanterns bobbed and the sound of running feet drummed with quickening anxiety on the vibrating wet rails.

Joan Duval

Foey! on You, Mr. Marlowe

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountains yields.

The curtains hung limp over windows too dirty to care. She lay on the bed, sobbing softly; the entire apartment echoing her misery.

"Hey, Mary! I'm home," and the door slammed. "What's for supper?"

"Hi, honey, I made a tuna casserole for tonight." Her eyes still red from weeping, she carefully kept her back to him.

"Look, Frank, we've got to do something about this place. I won't live here another minute. All day long I've scrubbed these windows and waxed the floors. Can you see any difference? Of course you can't! I'm fed up with the whole mess!"

"Slow down, Mae, so I can understand what you're talking about. Now see here, honey, you know I'm working as hard as I can at the job. We don't have to live here forever. Just as soon as I get another raise, we'll get out of here so fast you won't know what happened."

"Sometimes I wish we had waited a couple of years before getting married."

"Come on, Sweetheart, remember all the things I've promised you? Someday we'll have a house so big you'll need two maids to help you."

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

"Yackety, yackety, yak! Don't you ever get off that phone?" he shouted. "It's not bad enough living near so many people that you know all their business. Oh, no! You've got to spend half the time telling them everything that goes on."

"Look here, you jerk, I'm cooped up in this hole all day long," retorted Mary. "It's all right for you to have a swell time gabbing with your cronies at work, but just let me get on the phone and you blow your stack."

"What do you expect me to do? Here I'm starving, waiting for you to move a finger so I can eat, and you just sit there blabbing with that half-wit Agnes."

"All right! All right!" she screamed. "Maybe tomorrow you'll come home and I won't be here. Maybe you'd like that better."

He stared at his still empty plate resignedly.

"Well? Answer me! How I ever married you I'll never know. Mama was right when she told me I'd be disillusioned someday."

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral claps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures thee may move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The night had grown cool. Husband and wife had patched up their quarrel. There were still some children playing in the street below.

"Through with the first section, Frank?" She did not realize the potential danger in those words.

"Here, take it. But I don't know what the heck is so interesting in those phony ads."

"Humph, little you care about it. I could go on wearing these rags for the next twenty years for all you'd care."

For five minutes all was silence, except the soft rustling of pages.

"Frank? Are you sleeping?"

"Hmmm? What? Oh, no, I'm listening. What is it?"

"Frank, how do you like this hat advertised in the paper? It's marked down from \$12.98 to \$9.98. Imagine that! And it comes in navy. I needed a new hat for Easter anyway."

In disgust Frank turned away, but not without putting up a stiff fight.

"Now see here, kid; we've been married for two years. Right? And in that two years you've bought five hats. Right? Okay, so you want a new one. What would you do with a new hat? You only wear it for an hour every Sunday."

"But, Frank . . ."

"You listen to me. Last month you bought a new dress. Then you bought a new belt to wear with the dress. Then you needed new shoes to match the belt. You're not getting a new hat!! AND THAT'S FINAL!"

The shepherd's swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

He tiptoed into the room, not quite sure of what he could say.

"Get out of here, you monster. I don't ever want to speak to you again."

"Mary, sweetheart, listen to me. I'm sorry I was so mean; honestly I am. Please, speak to me."

"This is the end, Frank. The very end! I'm sick and tired of promises all the time."

"But, darling, believe me. I don't care if you buy a dozen hats. Just say you forgive me. I'll never do that to you again. Please, honey, tell me you're not mad any more."

"Can I go down city tomorrow to buy the hat?" she asked cautiously.

"Anything you want, angel, anything at all."

"Then I'm not mad any more . . . and Frank, I didn't really want a new hat. Last year's is still as good as new. Anyway, I just wanted to be sure of something. You know, I read a poem once . . ."

Margaret Bargamian

Antithesis

A bent old man and his grandson,
 Vibrant with youthful vigor,
 Sat on the dunes in silence
 Later broken by the boy.
 "Some think daydreams silly—
 A thing of evil, spawned
 And weaned at Satan's breast . . .
 But what harm lies in mentally
 Metamorphosing
 From the cocoon which I am,
 To the chrysalis that I would be?
 Dreams are merely incubating desires
 Awaiting fulfillment,
 And the dreamer has only to
 Uproot
 The tree and transplant it
 To his own garden where it will
 Bear fruit.
 Why is it wrong to stand
 With arms outstretched . . .
 Groping . . .
 For a sublime celestial body,
 Only to find a star of lesser magnitude
 In one's hand?"
 And the old man answered nothing,
 But gazed out upon the sea;
 The boy
 Plunged
 Into the cold, deep water . . .
 Floundered . . .
 Then swam.

Donald F. Lyons

Eternal Spring

A young man sat quietly in a wooden wheelchair on the cement patio of the hospital watching the busy world. The burgundy robe and blanket covering him soaked in the glaring sun which made his shoulders, thighs, and scalp hot. The soft cooling breeze playfully tousled his light brown hair and pushed lightly at the delicate yellow forsythia blossoms in the yard below. From where he was sitting, two flights of cement steps above street level, he could look out over the two acres of land the hospital used for parking, recreation and walking. He could easily see the main road beyond the high wire fence as well as the tall buildings of the city a short distance away. A book lay open on his lap, every so often the sound of the wind teasing its pages. He breathed the clean air of the new spring deeply and with satisfaction. He liked spring, had liked it since he was a young boy with a fishing rod and a baseball glove. It was the sign of life, a new, fresh, vibrant life.

It was a wonderful season, he thought, the best time to live and the best time to die. He stared with sharp brown eyes, squinting now from the glare of the sun at the trees, shrubs and grasses, recognizing them all by name. There was the feathery hemlock, the broad-leaf rhododendron against the hospital laboratory building, the ash tree with its smooth, gray bark, the red maple . . .

Three little boys, aged nine, whistled happily as they walked through the woods, fishing poles over their shoulders. On the damp bank of the stream they sat down to enjoy a fine day of fishing. All morning they were quiet, contented and carefree, but about one o'clock the rumblings in their iron stomachs brought them back to reality. When starvation threatened, they decided to go home, but suddenly the realization that they had to face their parents after bunking school made them tremble. They sat gloomily in the shade of the great oak trees, no longer carefree and gay, now worried and hungry. "I wish I was a big maple tree just like the one across the stream," said Jim. "Then I could always be in the woods and I'd never have to go to school."

He was still staring at one of the red maple trees that flanked the esplanade. It was tall and strong and straight just as he always wanted to be. He smiled as he thought of the punishment he had received for his childish spring escapade. A wistful smile moved his sensitive lips as he thought of his first cigar and his father's reactions to it. He stared out at the cars on the streets, all moving determinedly, hurriedly. He was not in a hurry, for he was going no place — at least not just yet.

Dozens of cars were parked on the right side of the grounds. The grass had disappeared; only dust remained to form a background for the rows of automobiles. This side of the grounds shone as the sun threw rays of light splashing and splintering on the enamel and chrome of the autos . . . he was driving his first car, an old '36 Plymouth which he had bought in the spring of his eighteenth year. He was stuck without gas going up a hill; he was stopped at the busiest intersection in the city, because the smoke from the exhaust pipe threatened to asphyxiate the people in the cars behind him; he was almost frozen to death from driving in zero weather without windows; he was fixing a flat tire at midnight ten miles from home; he was doing dozens of dangerous things, almost laughing at Death. He would laugh no more.

This time he was standing behind the cedar tree and blooming forsythia bush down in the yard. He was kissing a girl, a very special, lovely girl. He held her close as he touched her smooth brown hair, touched her cheek, her neck. It was a lovely night with the silver spring moon against the black velvet sky. It was a happy night. She had promised that she would wait for him. She meant it, but he knew he did the right thing by sending the letter. She would be more hurt knowing this, than thinking he no longer loved her. The book in his lap fell to the ground, unnoticed, as he fished into the pocket of his woolen robe and pulled out a small bronze medallion. She had said it was a lucky piece. He held it warmly in the palm of his hand.

He began to feel drowsy. The doctors had said he would. He looked again at the skyscrapers supposedly symbolizing the power of man (but he knew better), at the shining cars, the smooth, gray bark of the ash tree, the vase-shaped elms, the boxwood elder, the patches of light green grass forcing their way among the yellow and gray of the earth. He felt the smooth breeze, the caressing hopeful sun. He was alone, but in his aloneness he felt warm and good. He was happy. It was spring again and spring was the beginning of a new life. His eyes closed. A smile was on his lips.

Lois Chabot

Frivolity

A waste of years filled with foolish laughter and immaturity,
A blush of shame at virtues sought after with no zeal at all;
I wake and shudder at the shortness of Time's staff.
Trembling in the starkness of reality I ask,
Is it too late? Who can answer?
For even now the Devil stands at the foot of his staircase;
And I can hear him laugh.

Joan Duval

Excerpt From A Book

He reached for some support as he felt his legs buckle under him and receive the blow of the wet, dirty pavement. His flight cap fell away and he was conscious of the wind rolling it down the empty street like a stolen, crooked halo. As it sailed around the end of a building, he noticed three old men coming around the same corner. They were gone in a few minutes, lost in the storm, and he hated them without seeing their faces.

He hated them because they were going somewhere together, interested in some stupid mission that he knew nothing about. "Ugly, dirty old men," he thought, "holding on to your grubby, paper-wrapped packages. Why should you have any reason for moving so surely into the storm? Why should you walk so closely together as though to protect your bags of beer or cheap, Dago wine? You have no right in your wretchedness and antiquity to have any feeling of worth or necessity."

Feeling the pain in his back and the cold in his stomach, he realized that he was sprawled in the middle of the street, like a rejected alcoholic, a derelict, a product of all the filth and evil that he had always rebelled against. His anger grew with a passion that a week ago he would not have believed his vocabulary possessed.

He bitterly renounced all the beliefs that he had used as principles of guidance in every decision and act that he had ever known.

With the mouth of a slut he blackened the Mother that had born the Man that now had failed him so terribly. He reslew the Jew that had promised so much and had deserted him forever. Throwing back his foaming mouth he cried, "Kike, Kike, Kike!"

Like a spirit trapped in a high, black canyon, the storm raged on, blocking from sight the light of many stars that looked down on the deserted street and the deserted man. For just one moment one star moved a little closer to the city in an attempt to make the scene a little brighter in the last hours of the night. It was a clear, proud star that returned to its orbit as quickly as it had left, refusing to humble itself by a closer association with the earth. It had known times of great importance and was respected as a great star.

It was almost midnight now and the tears and hate and anger that Bob felt shot forth from his mouth in one final curse, "There is no God. Nothing matters!" He feebly got up and walked to a stoop of a nearby building. It was a deserted warehouse that smelled of hay and wet feed and was cold as a stable. He sat down in the open doorway and put his pounding head in his hands. Only the glow from his captain's bars caught in the ray of that proud star showed that a man sat there.

A sharp throb in his temples told him that he was no longer drunk and that he was now feeling all the shameful pains of soberness. Lifting his head from his hands he looked into the faces of the three old men that he had seen minutes ago. They stood there still holding on to their wet, dirty packages. They were not looking at Bob but behind him, into the narrow, poorly lighted room that was a few feet back into the warehouse. Bob turned and for the first time noticed the young girl. She was sitting in the far end of the room holding something in her arms. She rocked to and fro, quietly humming a song that Bob knew he had heard before, but in his hangover state could not place or name. It was not anything current from one of the new shows; it was not an old college song that he had sung in the softness of a winter moon; it was not one of the barrack songs that airmen sing to keep out the loneliness; and it was not one of the hurt, lost songs that he remembered his children learning. It was something sweet and old, yet fresh and new with a strength that only a great symphony should have. It sounded like the silence just before a dawn and yet it had the power of thankful tree voices after a storm. It was the loveliest thing he had ever heard.

Suddenly Bob realized that it no longer was part of this one young girl or the grey little room. The song had flown to the street and

filled the hearts of the three old men, who no longer looked wretched in the first gold lights of the new morning. They stood there, proud, strong, and noble. They, too, sang this old new song.

As the notes left their lips, they raised their eyes to the new morning and watched a flight of new, silver bombers, winging like protective angels, toward the East. The drone of their motors caught up the melody, and as they became starlike, the wings of each friendly plane wrote out the melody in notes of pure lace-like vapor.

Bob looked from the sky to the old men and watched them quietly open their packages and lay the contents at the feet of the young girl. Like three other gifts from some other story they seemed to add a new light and fragrance to the room. One was a fresh five dollar bill in a merry paper wallet; one was a large bottle of baby oil that smelled of olive trees and carnations; and one was a small rubber ball that was made for the smallest of hands. "Strange gifts for a young girl sitting alone on a cold winter day in a deserted warehouse," thought Bob.

As the day grew brighter and Bob's head cleared, he noticed that in the girl's arm was a sleeping child wrapped in an old blue and white blanket. At the side of the girl and child, watching them, was a tall middle age man. By the interest he showed, Bob decided that this was the husband and father of the girl and her baby. For the first time in many minutes Bob spoke, "This is a hell—." He found that he could not say the word "hell". It seemed out of place in this little room as though the word spoke of an unknown world at the other end of the earth and was not to be ever understood by these people.

He had wanted to criticize this man for bringing his Family to such a miserable, unhealthy place, but somehow he felt no right to scar this tall silent standing figure. It seemed right that they be there. It seemed right that he be there, too. While he was watching, the Child woke and the world outside with Him. Bob felt a love for this Child that he had never felt before. He bent a little closer and yet a little closer. Then he started to cry softly, not with the angry torment of the hours before but humbly, feeling all the turmoil in his heart leave and a sweet peace take its place. The Child looked up at this new sound and with a healthy cry joined with Bob in his tears. As full daylight came and the bells of Christmas filled the air, Bob stretched out his hand to comfort the Child and found himself on his knees.

Daniel R. Gooden

Cantata

(To D. Y. R.)

I

Who would know how to Love?
To feel Love?
Come. Together we will seek this joy
Exquisite, this ecstatic Pain.
Walk with me in the blue folds of
Morning
Shot with gold. The Lady lends her
Colors to the Day.
The day is a composition
In Blue, and Gold, and Love.

II

See! The birds are happy. They know
Not why. They can only feel.
And the flowers. Humbly beautiful
They stand, full bloom, thinking
Delicate thoughts.

III

Love permeates the air; rosy and warm.
Infinite.
Whenever a soul, borrowing the flower's
Trick, unfolds itself to the
Universal Sun,
Love flows in
Effortlessly.

IV

Stay with me yet!
Together we may discover how the bird feels
And how the flower springs from bud!
Stay! Discover! You will never know Death!

V

Oh. You will go.
You would lose yourselves in the ages.
Go then. But my thoughts go with you,
Following, through the mists and shadows.

Try to smother your sad aspirings.
The birds will still sing, and the flowers
Will always throw their scents
Upon the air.
And someone will remember.
Someone.
Remember.

Elaine Richards

Anne

I

I see her seldom through the day;
Yet, when I do I shy away
For some strange reason.
Did Eros in spring season
Shrink from Psyche in whose life
He saw the virtues of a wife?
Did Orpheus not with lyre display
His glowing warmth throughout the day?
Then, cannot I them imitate
And choice acquaintance do create
By holding fast when she appears
In hope she'll banish trying fears.

II

But what if this should come to be,
 And this fair lady encourages me
 To greater care and hope?
 Did not Venus in her scope
 Tempt many, but all the while
 Her infinite mirth was just a smile?
 And Cynthia's whim, did it not harm
 Endymion's life through Jupiter's charm?
 But hope wins out and bids me chance
 The shaky ladder of new romance,
 And climb as high as please my mind
 To leave for now, earth's cares behind.

III

Oh, now I see her coming nigh
 And all my thoughts evoke a sigh.
 Smoothly sways her crips attire
 In rhythm all demoiselles desire.
 I dare not flee, fearing discompose
 The air about a scented rose.
 A smile nudges her blossoming cheeks
 And sends off light in glowing streaks,
 That warms my heart which beats yet fast
 Long hours after sweet Anne has past.
 Lo, for her beauty chance I all
 Of crushing disappointment's toll!

Roger Viera

Of These My Brethren

Many years ago there lived in a tiny farming village among the hills of southern France a lonely old laborer of the earth named Simon. Each dawn Simon would start on his journey to town to sell what few vegetables he could to keep himself and his farm. He lived alone. His wife had died shortly after their marriage. All the villagers knew about it, but they never said a word. They watched him silently as he stumbled by their homes every morning pushing his cart to market. Poor Simon, he had no one — no one!

One morning something very strange happened. The villagers could hardly believe their eyes when to their very great surprise, Simon came running down the road pushing his old cart of fresh green kale in front of him and rushing toward the top of the hill as if he would never make it. One woman ran out calling after him, but in no time at all Simon had disappeared! In fact, all that was left were bits of kale leaves which had flown from Simon's cart and formed a scattered palmed path in the middle of the dirt road.

At the edge of the village was the little church of St. Matthew. Here Simon finally came to a stop. He ran into the rectory alongside of the church and panted, "Father Michael . . . Father Michael . . . it's I . . . Simon!"

"Simon? Simon who?"

"Simon from the village, Father!"

"Very well, Simon from the village, what can I do for you?"

"I . . . I wish to confess myself, Father!"

The priest made ready to listen to Simon's confession. It began . . . "Forgive me father . . . I have not been to confession for twenty years!"

"Why, my good man?" asked Father Michael patiently.

"Because I am . . . I mean I was an atheist," was the timid reply. Simon clenched his hands fearing what would come next.

"What made you change your mind, Simon, from the village?"

"I had a dream, I had a dream . . . Dieu!"

"Tell me about it."

"God came to me in my dream. I saw him! I saw his face! He spoke to me!"

"What did He say?"

"He said, 'Simon, I will visit you today!'"

"Did He say anything else?"

"No . . . no . . . He just said he would visit me!"

"Tell me, Simon, you believe in God now?"

"Yes . . . yes I believe . . ."

"But if He does not come today will you still believe?"

"But He said He would. I have picked my best kale especially for Him. I know He will come. I must leave now."

"Wait Simon. Why did you not believe before?"

"My wife, she was killed by a runaway bull on the steps of St. Matthew's. I . . . I must leave now."

"Simon, stop here tonight on your way. I'll watch for you."

"Yes, father. Goodbye!"

"God go with you!"

But Simon did not hear Father Michael's last words. He was too much in a hurry to keep his appointment with God. He is not a customer to be kept waiting, he must have thought as he hurried along. In no time, he arrived at the bustling market. Business had already begun, people were buying and selling vegetables, but Simon was not to sell any of his kale to these peasants. No. He was going to save every bit for God.

"Ho there. For how much do you sell your kale?"

"I am very sorry, Sir, but it is not for sale."

"Then why do you peddle it here?"

"God is going to buy it from me today!"

Ha! Ha! HAA! HAA! Ha! Ho! Ho! HA! Ha! HA! HA! HAA!

Ha!

The noon whistle blew. Simon's stomach ached. His kale began to turn a sick yellow from the hot sun. He took out his water bottle from beneath his cart and drank. A poor ragged beggar from the crowd walked slowly by and sat in the gutter. Simon went over to him and gave him the rest of his water. In a moment he heard shouts. He turned and a small boy ran smack into him!

"Stop thief!"

"What has happened?" Simon asked.

"This little rascal stole some fruit from my cart! I'll teach him.

Police, police!"

Please, Mister, don't call the police. Don't let him call the police.

I didn't have any money—I had to steal it—my mother and sister—they haven't eaten for days—I had to—please, Mister, don't let him call the police, please!"

"All right. You, Sir, there is no need to call the police. I will pay for what is stolen."

"Thanks Mister, thanks," and the boy was gone.

Simon reached into his pocket and pulled out his last silver piece.

"I know you. You're the man with the kale. Well, did your God show up yet? Ha! ha! You keep away from my cart!"

Simon turned. The man in the gutter was gone. He picked up his water bottle and lifted it to his mouth. It was empty! He went back to his cart, recited a foolish little prayer he had learned as a child. He cried!

The day dragged by. A woman came to his cart. She carried a child with her.

"My, what a lovely umbrella! How much would it cost?"

"I'm sorry, Madam, but it is not for sale."

"I have a silver piece, the clouds have gathered. It is a long way to my home. I fear it will rain soon. I heard thunder. My child, he's very little."

"Here, you take it."

"Oh, but I insist, Sir, you must take this silver piece."

"No, please take it. Cover yourself and your child."

"You are most kind, Sir. I shall return it tomorrow."

"No, keep it. And wait, it grows chilly. Here, wrap this covering about your child. It will protect his body from the cold. I have another like it at home."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" And with that the woman was gone.

It was dark. Simon slowly turned his burden around and pushed toward the broken road which led to the hill outside town. Soon he would pass by St. Matthew's where Father Michael would be waiting. What would he say? He knew now how foolish his dream was. Even Father Michael had warned him that He might not come. No, he thought, there was no God. He would go back to his home and lead a quiet life just as he had done before—without God.

"Simon—Oh, Simon from the village!"

"Yes, Father Michael?"

"I wonder if you have some kale left? I would like a pound if you please."

"Yes, Father . . ."

"Come in, Simon. I'm anxious to hear what you have to say."

"I have plenty of kale left, Father. I have all of it."

"I am sorry to hear that, Simon from the village."

"I am sorry I bothered you with my foolish story, Father."

"Sit down, Simon. I'll get you the money."

"No, don't bother please. I won't accept any money. Today has been my day of charity. Everything is charity."

"What do you mean, Simon?"

"I gave a man my water for nothing. I bought fruit for a boy who was starving. I even gave my umbrella and cart covering to clothe a woman and her child. So you see, Father, everything has been charity. Therefore, I wish no payment from you. I will leave now."

"Simon, wait. You don't realize what you've said just now. Simon, I . . . I've been reading from St. Matthew this evening. Have you ever read the Bible, Simon?"

"No, Father, I have not."

"Here read this — Chapter 25 — read it aloud."

"For I was hungry and ye gave me food: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink . . . Naked and ye clothed me . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it . . . unto Me!"

"Simon, the Lord has done great things for you this day . . . Simon."

"He . . . came . . . to . . . visit . . . !"

Simon from the village hurried home that night. He had much to do for the next day.

Gennaro DiIorio

Bright Interlude

At eight fifteen the Tropical Room of The Purple Cat opened its bamboo doors to the public. Dinner dates began to arrive in smart cocktail gowns and crisp white jackets. The aroma of perfume, powder, liquor and cigarette smoke all tried for first place in the air. Harvey, behind the polished maple bar, was setting clean, sparkling glasses on the shelves beneath the bar. At the alcove, in the corner amidst palm trees, artificial tom-toms and a big papier-mache brown native, the orchestra was setting up little bandstands and settling down to work. At eight thirty, the music began, and the chinking of dishes started. Thus another night in the Tropical Room of The Purple Cat had begun.

Antone Foss, the headwaiter, stood at the entrance, menus in hand. He was a tall, slim, nervous man, dark of skin, eye and hair. His long tapering fingers gripped the glossy menus, and he tapped one foot slightly as he looked over the room. It was a large room, with tables scattered about. Bamboo screens littered the room, and the waitresses were dressed like natives in sarongs, with leis strung about pearly shoulders. The beat of rumba music filled the bodies of the musicians and they swayed to the music, smiles plastered on their masculine, dark faces, their white teeth flashing in the muted glow of indirect lighting. Their eyes wandered over the crowd. The guitar player was about thirty-eight, married, used to the profession with which he had once been in love. The pianist, almost bald, but with a tiny fringe of black near the temples, had once had a drive to play in the musical profession, but the glamour had worn thin when after ten years he was still playing for an audience which had remained unappreciative. The drummer, now busily engaged in shaking maroccas, was the youngest of the trio, slight, lean, perhaps twenty-six or so. His eyes still glittered with a sort of excited anticipation. A tiny black moustache quivered above his mouth, and the rich blackness of his hair caught the light and held it among deep waves. The music climbed faster and faster, the heads of the trio bobbing with the tempo, fingers flying, big silk sleeves rippling, and then an abrupt finish with a final shake of the maroccas, dwindling, dwindling . . . applause. Antone looked over the crowd, pleased, a tight little smug smile playing about his thin lips. The evening was under way as waiters and waitresses wiggled their way among tables and chairs. Laughter, music, singing, dancing, eating, and polite, subdued hilarity all went rippling along over the room and out through the bamboo doors to the bar.

He sat at the bar, broad, tanned fingers playing with the plastic

stirrer "The Purple Cat Club." He muttered the words happily to himself. "Where you can sink into any kind of oblivion you want. Any kin' no matter what kin' you want, the Purple Cat has it." He raised his head suddenly and it nodded heavily from too much liquor.

"Say, where is the Purple Cat anyhow?" He surveyed the floor beneath him, blinking hard. "Here kitty, here kitty." His voice was soft. A childish grin played about the loose mouth.

"Arthur." He called gently to the bar tender.

"What is it, Duke?" Arthur leaned against the bar, bracing himself with both hands. He looked over the face before him, Duke Van Westen, playboy, millionaire. Here he was, drunk, and the world was his oyster for the taking.

"The sign says Purple Cat, but where is the cat?" He spread his hands in amazement.

"There's no cat, Duke. Mr. Kidder had a boat named 'Purple Cat,' so he named his club the same thing. And don't ask me why he called the boat that, because I don't know." Arthur grinned.

"Aw, Arthur." Duke laughed loosely, "you're always one ahead of me." He took up his glass and drained it.

"You make the best highballs in town, Arthur ole pal, ole pal. Actually, I really don't like high balls. And I have no excuse whatever for drinkin' 'em, but here I am." He looked up in surprise.

"You'll be okay, Duke, just take it slow." Arthur gave a short nod of assertion and went down along the bar to wait on.

"You'll do, Duke." Duke gazed into the polished top of the bar.

"Right now I'd like to start up a lively conversation with someone on the Einstein Theory, but . . ." He glanced around. "Nobody's here but me and the couple down the line there." He waved a hand towards the man and woman who were being served by Arthur. "So, I guess I'll just have to think a conversation with myself." This struck him as enormously clever and funny and he sat there in a happy glow. I'm Duke Van Westen, rich, handsome, sometimes, he grinned, when I'm not drunk, which isn't often. He sobered his expression a moment. I wonder if I should stop drinking? A shake of the head. Why? Myrna's gone. Pop's practically disowned me, and mother has flown the coop to South America with Sissy. So why should I give up drinking? I'm happy when I'm drunk. I'm happy now, so I must be drunk now. I wonder why Myrna was never happy with me? But then I never got drunk until

Myrna left. He thought with the semi-logic of a drunk and then chuckled. A phrase of a song drifted over his hazy mind. "A woman's a two-faced, a worrisome thing, who'll lead you to sing the blues in the night."

"Arthur, do those boys know 'Blues in the Night?'" Duke half rose in earnestness from his stool; his feet clamped over the metal rungs. "No requests until midnight, Duke." Arthur was polishing glasses.

"Oh." Duke settled back on the bar stool watching the smooth, clean motions of the cloth in Arthur's hand. "Say Art, what do you have to be to be a bartender?" The eyes focused interestedly. Down the bar the couple exchanged amused looks. They listened interestedly for a few minutes, as Duke gave forth with a lengthy, seemingly logical tirade on his own answer to his own question. Then he sank into a lethargy.

"Who is he?" The woman's voice was cool, amused, cultured.

"Name's Duke Van Westen." Arthur offered as little information as he could.

"Is he always like this?" Again the smooth sure voice.

"Not always, m'am. But he's a happy drunk, never bothers no one, and he is kind of lost like. One of these days he'll snap out of it, then he'll be a right guy all the time." Arthur pondered the slumped figure at the other end of the bar.

The couple turned back to their own tight little world of conversation, and Arthur went on meticulously polishing his glassware.

It was eight-fifty-five when the door opened. It was raining in New York City, and a gust of rain-filled wind slithered in the door.

Arthur glanced up out of habit. The couple went on talking and Duke Van Westen remained slumped in his semi-oblivion.

She was pale in the glow of light overhead. Her hair was drawn back tightly at her neck; it glistened with rain, and, as she wore no hat, there were large patches of dampness on the coat as if she had been walking for some time in the rain. She stood uncertainly on the threshold looking quickly about the room. Her eyes remained for a few minutes at the bamboo gates to the Tropical Room. There was a terrible fear in them which lessened as she listened to the light, quick samba music. A cloak of great weight suddenly seemed to drop from her shoulders and she shrugged ever so slightly and advanced to the bar, climbing upon a stool near Duke.

"Evening, Miss." Arthur waited before her.

"Uh . . . I'll have a Rum Coke, please." She appeared nervous for an instant. But then regained her poise and the fluttering hands suddenly quieted on the bar.

Arthur glanced at the damp coat. "Pardon me, Miss, but you'll catch your death in that wet coat. Check it for you if you're staying a while." He smiled friendly.

"Oh, I Why yes, all right." She was slim and willowly as she shrugged out of the raincoat. She held it in her hand questioningly.

"Mort, check the lady's coat, please." Arthur motioned to a waiter heading for the kitchen. The girl turned and smiling, handed over her coat. She watched him disappear into the lobby between the Tropical Room and the bar. He came back shortly with a check. "Here you are, Miss." The hand extended fingers holding a scrap of cardboard.

The girl suddenly blushed furiously. "Oh, my wallet, it's in the pocket."

"Be back in a second with it." He disappeared again.

"Oh, isn't that a shame, making him go back again." She turned apologetically towards Arthur who was scrubbing at his already immaculate bar.

"It's his job, Miss." They both grinned companionably. "Now what would you like to drink again?" He flipped up a glass from beneath the counter.

"Rum Coke." She fumbled with the collar of her blouse.

"Clean forgot." Arthur starting prying up the cap on a coke bottle.

"You know I bet whiskey would taste good in a coke." Duke sat completely engrossed in the bottle of Coke in Arthur's hands.

"Never can tell, til' you try it, Duke." Arthur grimaced as the cap popped off and sailed across the counter and onto the floor.

"Wal, I'll stick to Ginger Ale for now. Don't want to mix my drinks." Duke went into convulsions over his humor and his eyes wandered in their delight towards the seats beside him. The girl had been staring at him, but now she looked away in complete ignorance of him. He stopped laughing and focused his eyes.

"Hum, Duke boy, there's a nice gal." His eyes traveled over the white blouse, the grey wool skirt, nice legs in sheer nylons, and the pretty feet in black suede heels. Not a bad survey for a drunk, he thought. He studied her face. Nice face. Not beautiful like Myrna's but pretty, if she

only didn't wear that lovely blonde hair scooped back like that. She turned and glanced at him as he was staring. Their eyes held for a second and then he grinned. She looked away. Oops! he thought, must 've looked too much like a leer.

The music had stopped and there was just the occasional swish of the door in the lobby as new guests entered the Purple Cat Club, and the slight creak of the bamboo doors as someone went in and out of the Tropical Room. The bar had begun to fill up, but there was still a vacant chair between Duke and the girl. She sat toying with her second Rum Coke, her eyes cast down, her hands tracing the rim of the glass. She seemed lost in thought. Then instantly she raised the glass and drained it.

"Another please." Her hand pushed the glass forward a little. Arthur refilled it and set the fresh drink before her. He glanced sharply at her. Not an ordinary girl. She wasn't wealthy, but still not ordinary. She didn't get drunk often, he could tell that, but tonight she seemed all set to get fried right up to the ears. He pursed his lips wordlessly.

"Me, too, Art." Duke shoved his glass towards the bartender. The girl glanced down at him, lifted her glass and studied his face over the rim as she drank. On an impulse, Duke got up and drink in hand covered the space between them and settled on the stool next to her. "Mind?" He asked it softly, politely, trying to look at least half way decent. She looked a little unhappy about it for a minute and then looking away shook her head. Duke settled even more comfortably on the stool.

They were silent for perhaps fifteen minutes, during which she finished her drink.

"Another?" Duke stared at her empty glass.

She hesitated and then spoke, "Yes, please." The "please" jolted him. It wasn't said prettily, for underlying it was a sob. He glanced swiftly up the bar. Arthur was busy. He looked at her. "Why do you wear your hair like that; it would look pretty down?" He tried to make it sound light and casual, but suddenly it wasn't light and casual; he was terribly interested and his voice shook a trifle.

The girl stared at him and then said, "Excuse me a minute." She slid off the stool Duke started to say where are you going, when he saw her head towards the Ladies Room. He turned back and caught Arthur going by him and ordered another Rum Coke.

She came back and touched his arm as she sat down. He turned.

She had loosened her hair and it fell in long waves to her shoulders. She looked beautiful now. He stared for a minute and then told her so. She reacted the way most women do when they are told that. She got more beautiful; her face glowed; her eyes became moist, soft, clear. "What's your name?" He was a little amazed at the steadiness of his words. Perhaps he wasn't so drunk after all.

She looked at him uncertainly for a minute, her eyes wavering over his face. Then she spoke softly and almost tiredly, "Norma, Norma Albright."

"Well, Norma, I'm delighted to know you. I'm Duke Van Westen." He grinned a bit sloppily down into his drink.

She turned again and her eyes were bright darts, alert now. "Duke Van Westen." Her mind said the words again. So this was the playboy that all the papers typed little columns about.

"Norma Albright." He rolled out her name. "Nice name." He glanced up and studied her. "Nice girl." She was still staring at him. "Don't worry." He smiled already amused himself by what he was going to say. "I may get drunk, but everyone says I'm a nice drunk . . . a happy drunk."

"I'm not worrying, Mr. Van Westen, I was just thinking that's all." Norma twirled her glass and stared at it.

"You know Norma, I was doing just that before you came in." Duke drained his glass.

"I was thinking, wouldn't it be nice to discuss Einstein's Theory of Relativity with someone. But there wasn't anyone around." He hunched his shoulders.

"What do you do, Norma?" he inquired interestedly.

"Do? What do you mean, Mr. Van Westen?" She took a sip from her glass.

"Do for a living, and call me Duke; I haven't inherited the business yet!"

"Oh, I see, well . . . Duke . . . I work in an architect's office on Wall Street." She pursed her lips which felt a trifle strange from three or four Rum Cokes.

"It's nice work, and we're up so high that the view from the window next to my desk is breath-taking." She paused. "You know, I've never told anyone about how the view affects me, but I'd like to tell you." She moved around on the stool a bit and her knee bumped him. She

appeared not to notice it, but her face was framing the words. Duke smiled. She was very young and extremely innocent, he decided.

"When I look out at the buildings and the sky and the river, I feel that God must love me a little more than he does some people, because he's allowed me to be in this pinnacle, to see the glory of his land from above, as he sees it." She stopped. Duke sat there staring at her. "That is one of the most beautiful statements I've ever heard." He said it quietly, and there was no slur of liquor in his voice.

Suddenly they both became conscious of the music loud and beating behind them. "I know a place, it's a big dine and dance out on the Sound." Duke was already pulling out his wallet to pay the check. "It's nothing particular, but they have a band there with a trumpet man who is gone. What do you say?" He paused waiting for her consent as he fingered the twenty in his hand.

"A trumpet." Her voice was soft. "I used to go to a place in Maine where the trumpet music was wonderful. That was so long ago, really." She seemed lost in memories.

"Well?" Duke slipped off the stool and steadied himself with one hand on the bar. He stood tall in a lightweight summer suit. "Yes!" The word was a breath, an excited breath that was a trifle pungent with drink. She slipped from the stool and stood beside him, slight, willowy and her eyes level with his mouth.

"Art?" He called to the bartender without taking his eyes from hers. "Art, here you are." Now he turned and handed the twenty to Art. "Norma and I are going to Over the Rainbow and, Art, we are going to dance our feet off." Duke suddenly felt light headed, or was it simply light hearted. He smiled genuinely, warmly down at her and it was really the first genuine, warm smile in months.

"My coat." She said it quickly as if she had just remembered it. Her hands coming up before her, the ticket in one.

Duke went for the coat and she stood silently. For a brief moment she felt a burst of clarity in her mind. This wasn't really the proper thing to do. Then her thoughts shifted to this afternoon, and there was a sudden rush of tears to her eyes.

"Your cape, my lady." He swept it about her shoulders. The tears disappeared and he thought the misty radiance in her eyes was part of her sudden glowing smile.

"Nite, Art, and if you should see that purple cat around, feed

him well." Duke pocketed some of his change and tossed a five on the bar. "See you, Duke, and take it slow." Art picked up the five and slid it somewhere beneath the broad white apron. "Nite, Miss."

Norma turned at the door and smiled. "Goodnight, and thank you." She wondered what she was thanking him for, and chuckled a little to herself.

Duke opened the door and they stepped out into the rain. Beneath the canopy on the sidewalk, he helped her into the raincoat and she dug into one of the pockets and extracted a kerchief. He hailed a cab and helped her into it.

"Over the Rainbow on the Sound," he directed, his face screwed up against the driving rain.

The cab sloshed through the rain and from the slightly open window next to him, Duke heard the tires hum on the wet road. Beside him, Norma sat quite still. He turned and glanced at her. The drinks were starting to wear off after the half hour's ride in almost silence. Had it all been a mistake? She had seemed lonesome back there in the Purple Cat. Lonesome and somehow sad. He had wanted to make her happy, but perhaps it had been all wrong.

"A penny?" Her voice was music in the gloom. He felt himself lurch inside with the sudden realization that she had been going through the same turmoil inside and had no doubt been wondering if he'd been thinking just what he had been thinking.

"Really not worth it at all," he answered. Then thought. "Or maybe that would be too cheap, after all." He smiled at her upturned face. "I was thinking that this is the first time in three or four or maybe more months since I've been this happy." He lied, but then it came to him and there was truth in it anyway.

"It doesn't last does it?" She chuckled a little.

"What doesn't last?" He was puzzled.

"The glow." Her voice dropped.

"Oh that, well, you can always buy a new one." He sighed. "But first I'd like to dance a while. Haven't danced in years. Okay?"

"Fine, I love to dance, but, like you, it's been some time since I have." He glanced sharply at her, but she was staring out into the rainy darkness and he couldn't see her face. He certainly had detected true sadness in her voice though. His male instinct for protectiveness went whole hog then, and he thought, "What on earth could have hurt her so

much? A man? Death in the family? Broke?" He rolled off all the reasons he could think of. They rode the rest of the way in silence and finally almost on the tip of the Sound they arrived at Over the Rainbow. It was big and garish through the rain, but it was a place where you could lose yourself, and Duke, as he stood with rain dripping on him as he paid the fare, felt that here were two people who definitely needed to lose themselves.

Norma stood beside him, and he took her arm and they skipped through the rain up the broad wooden steps and went "Over the Rainbow."

Inside it was brilliant with light in the lobby, and they stood almost blinded as they checked their things. Music floated out at them and the sound of dancing swishing feet. Just as they entered the dance hall, the trumpet solo flared up and reached out to them. They stood, hands locked unknown to either of them, giving themselves up to the music. "I haven't been here since I was engaged," he muttered the words and then the shock hit him of what he'd said. He looked quickly at Norma. Her eyes were fastened upon him in amazement and sudden caution.

"I'm divorced." He reached for her before she could answer and took her into his arms. She came towards him never taking her eyes from his.

"I should have told you probably, but well, I was feeling no pain then, and never even gave it a thought." He still felt a certain buoyancy from the liquor but he had lost the main effect of it. "So that's my problem, now what's yours?" He tried to sound light, but it wasn't light at all, for his voice was tinged with deep earnestness.

"I'll tell you later, perhaps," She took her eyes from his then and came in closer to dance. Her hair smelled sweetly of rain and something else, and then the sudden softness of her cheek touched his chin for an instant. She danced wonderfully.

An hour later, the glow was back and they were alternately drinking and dancing. The liquor made them seem as if they had danced together eternally.

"I won a dance contest once." She tilted back her lovely head and told him quite sincerely. "We danced a tango, and everyone applauded. That was a long time ago, up in Maine. Seems like such a long time ago." Her voice wandered and so did her eyes. He watched her. She was very lovely, he told himself, and it wasn't just the liquor talking;

she was truly lovely. When she tilted her head back her hair fell and touched his hand on her back. It was soft.

"I imagine you could win any contest, Norma." He said it quietly.

"Duke, you don't know what this evening means to me. I'll never forget it." She said the last words and then a strange fascinating fearful look came into her eyes, and she looked away quickly. It was one of those moments when there is something that has to be said but no one knows just what it is.

"Norma, have you ever been married?" He said it against her hair.

"No, never. Do you want to tell me about your marriage?" She wasn't prying, but sort of sensing that he wanted to tell her about it.

"There isn't much to tell, really, Myrna was beautiful, still is I suppose. She married me, why I don't know. She certainly didn't love me; maybe it was my money. Then after two years of perpetual hell on earth, she folded her tent, and walked away from me. I had been crazy about her, and she knew it. I still have her footprints all over me I guess." He tried to make it sound casual. "We were divorced four months ago. She's in New Mexico I heard." He finished speaking abruptly.

"Let's sit down a while." Norma pushed herself away from him and they walked back to their booth. It was against the wall, and they sat opposite one another, silent, listening to the music, drinking and watching the people dance by.

It began to get very late, and Over the Rainbow became less crowded. The big circular globe hanging from the ceiling kept turning and casting multi-colored lights over the dancers. Duke sat watching Norma. Her eyes were slightly slanted, he decided, long lashes cast shadows on her cheeks, and a flush had spread along her cheek-bones. She looked beautiful. The white blouse was open at the neck and he saw the shadow of her chin on the white skin. Yes, she was beautiful.

Norma looked away from the trumpet player who stood on the bandstand sending long tearing notes of "Body and Soul" into the air, and saw him looking at her. She smiled and he smiled. "Hi, Duke." He answered and reached across the table for her hand. She thought. How could any woman help loving him? He's rich, handsome, and so kind. She remembered his words . . . "a happy drunk." Perhaps Myrna couldn't

stand him being a happy drunk. Somehow though she felt sorry for Myrna and not for Duke.

She felt the pressure of his warm big hand and looked into his eyes.

"Norma, I" He suddenly released her hand and tilted his glass to his mouth.

And so their evening passed, until at one-thirty they found themselves alone on the dance floor, and the music dying in their ears. "I think we should go, now." Duke looked around and laughed.

"Why, Duke, everyone's gone but us. They must be ready to kill us." She laughed too.

The light overhead flickered and went out; the band started clearing away music stands and sheets of music. Instruments played accidentally as the bass fiddler put away his instrument and the drummer his drums and cymbals. No one noticed particularly the couple standing in the midst of the semi-darkened dance floor. And if they did, they had seen couples kissing before anyway.

The rain had stopped when they went out and got into a waiting cab. It had been decided they would go to her apartment for coffee, and she whispered the address to him. He told the driver and the car leaped ahead sending them swaying forward. They laughed and laughed, all the way to her apartment they laughed. And up the stairs to the second floor they giggled and chuckled.

He flopped into a big easy chair, his coat on. "Nice, really nice." He looked around in the muted glow of lamplight. Chintz, books, the gleam of polished maple, and the deep comfort of the easy chair. She had disappeared and came back in a few minutes. Her coat was gone, and she was coming towards him swaying slightly and laughing.

"You look like old man winter in that coat. Take it off." She helped him off with it as he stood unsteadily.

"You can be replaced you know," he told her smugly. She took the coat and hung it in the closet. "So can you."

Her hair fell back and he stood there watching her. "You're beautiful, Norma. How many times have I told you that tonight?" He saw her turn and close the closet door. She came towards him and stood a little distance in front of him, one hand resting on her hip as she looked at the ceiling thinking. "Uh . . . one thousand nine hundred and fifty-two

times, I think, but I'm not sure." Her eyes glinted merrily and they laughed again.

"Say, Norma . . ." He sobered. "You still haven't told me what your problem is."

She started and the gaiety left her face and he was horror stricken to see it suddenly become haggard and pale. He reached out and put his hands on her arms.

"Norma, what is it? Tell me." His voice shook with intensity.

"Please tell me; I want to help."

"There is no one who can help, Duke." Her voice was old, tired, harsh.

"Norma, things can never look that black." He tilted up her chin gently and was surprised to see tears in her eyes.

"Duke . . . Duke I'm . . . going . . . to . . . die." She said the last word quietly.

The silence about them was like a living thing, standing there waiting with them. He didn't realize how his hands had suddenly gripped her arms. Then she winced and the sound of coffee boiling over in the kitchen sent her from him. His arms dropped to his sides and he simply stared at the light in the kitchen. "I'm going to die," she had said.

He suddenly came to life again and his feet carried him swiftly to where she stood in the kitchen near the stove pouring coffee into white china cups.

"Norma?" He just wanted her to turn and look at him and smile. She set down the percolator and went to the refrigerator.

"Norma, you were joking?" He advanced and stood gripping the back of a rather spindly kitchen chair.

"Oh sure, I was joking, Duke, and I'm going to die with a big laugh on my lips." She swung around almost savagely and planked down coffee cups, cream pitcher and spoon on the table. Her ferocity frightened him. She sat down and lifted her spoon when a cry escaped her lips and she dropped the spoon. It clattered to the floor and lay there winking silver glints up at them. The bright blonde hair spilled over the table as she buried her head on the white sleeved arms and wept bitterly.

He was drawing her up against him and leading her from the table almost as if it were a dream. She went with him, her hands covering her face and her whole body shaking with the terrible sobs. He settled her on the couch and went for the coffee.

"Here, drink a bit, you'll feel better." He bent over her and felt a terrific throbbing ache in his forehead from the liquor.

"Norma, now stop it, you'll only make yourself sick." He said the words and then could have bitten his tongue out. As if she wasn't already sick. He sat down beside her. "Norma, Norma, darling, please stop." He put his arms about her and she became part of him as he felt her torment enter him. "Norma, I love you." He whispered the words and then repeated them until she stopped sobbing and he lifted her face; "I'll never leave you." He kissed her mouth still trembling from the tears. "I couldn't now."

"Duke, don't say any more, please, please Duke." Her eyes closed and she leaned against him. "I have only a year or so to live. Nothing can be done; it's too late."

"No, no, I have money, we'll . . ."

"Money won't cure me, Duke. The doctors told me that there is nothing anyone can do now. I'm going to die."

"Tomorrow we will be married and I'll take care of you. Do you have any family at all?" He took her hands in his.

"None; my parents died in an automobile crash when I was a baby. I was put into an orphanage. But Duke I couldn't marry you." Her voice struck a decisive note. "It wouldn't be fair to you." Her voice grew steadily weaker until Duke knew that sleep had mercifully overtaken her. He got up and lifted her in his arms. A door off the living room was ajar and in the half light he saw the outline of a bed. He placed her on the bed and took off her shoes. There was a blanket folded at the foot of the bed and he covered her with it. His whole body shook as he stood there looking down at her. Quickly he turned and went to the living room. He switched off the muted lights and groped his way back to the couch. Sleep came over him, a sudden swift dark cloud that enveloped him dreamlessly.

Did she dream it all? One hand pushed back her blonde hair as she sat up gazing out the windows at the sunlight poking its way into the room. Then she heard the sound of coffee boiling over and slipped from the bed.

Norma stood in the doorway to the kitchen. The man at the stove glanced up and their eyes met. "You're beautiful," he said. And she was, her face flushed from sleep, and the sunlight from the window glancing off her blonde hair. She came towards him and stopped a few

feet away. He was tall, and she in her stocking feet came only up to his chin.

"Duke, I thought it was a dream." Her hand rested on the whiteness of the stove. "I thought . . . but you needn't fear that I'll hold you to anything." Her eyes dropped and he lost their blueness to the linoleum floor.

"If you don't Norma," he took her hands and was near her, "I shall have nothing worth-while to live for." She looked up sharply. Her eyes reached his, all the loneliness and anxiety welling up in them.

"Duke, it won't be pleasant at . . . the end." She watched his face.

"Norma, this may sound odd to you, but, my dear, I need you."

He said the words fervently.

She looked up at him and for a long time they stood in the sunlight their eyes locked, and then the coffee suddenly spilled over the stove and made a little puddle at their feet.

Joan Duval

Memory And Desire

The nurse wheeled the patient out through the newly washed glass doors and down the gently sloping ramp to the esplanade. She turned the wheelchair to place its back to the wind.

The patient glanced up and said to her, "It really is a lovely day."

The nurse — her mind was on what she would wear to the dance that night — replied, "Yes. It certainly is."

Her hands busied themselves tucking in the blanket about the patient's legs with quick efficient motions.

"I'll be back shortly," she said, "so why don't you enjoy yourself for a little while. We don't have days like this very often." With that she turned and hurried back to the hospital, her smart serviceable shoes making no sound on the pavement.

The patient sat in the wheelchair motionless, now and then glancing at the city in the distance. Her sallow emaciated hands tapped nervously against the arm of the wheelchair.

It was that false spring, typical of New England, and the day wore its promise like a billboard. Julia, the patient, realized all this, but she did not care. It was too much of an effort to care any more. She gazed at the seagulls swooping down into the canal that transversed the parking lot in the distance. Julia could not see what they were diving for, but she could hear their cries. On that bright spring day it was a bitter cry, an angry cry; it made one remember.

But I don't want to remember, she thought. Remembering is too painful, and I have so little to remember.

Suddenly, one of the seagulls emerged from the canal clutching something bright red in its beak. Julia tensed and leaned forward in her chair. The quick motion caused the blanket to fall to the ground unheeded. Julia peered intently at the . . .

* * *

Red pocketbook swinging casually, the woman approached the two children. Julia and Carol had been to the movies and their minds still saw the memory of Humphrey Bogart fighting all those Germans single-handed. Carol had found a buttercup on the way home, but they had admired it for only a short time. Then they walked on in silence remembering the movie. Carol still clutched the already wilted buttercup in her hand.

It was the red pocketbook they noticed first; it was such a pretty red. Then they noticed the lady was sick.

"She walks kinda funny," Julia said.

The children moved closer to the edge of the sidewalk to allow the lady to pass. She saw them then, and she said, "Don't mind me, kiddies, I'm just not right."

When they passed her, they ran a little way and then turned to look at her.

"I bet I know what's wrong with her," Carol said.

"What?"

Carol looked at Julia for a moment, and then with an expression on her face too old for her years said, "She's drunk."

Julia laughed nervously at first, but when Carol began to imitate the lady saying, "Don't mind me, kiddies; I'm just not right," Julia threw her head back and . . .

* * *

Her lips curled in derision. Julia turned the wheelchair into the wind. The cool breeze caught the damp tendrils of hair, and she raised her hands to smooth the hair.

That was one hell of a day, she thought. It was the beginning and somehow it was for me the end. My life reached perfection that day on the way home from the show until I met the lady. I wish I had died then. Everybody reaches a moment in his life when, whatever he does afterwards, he can never be so happy or so perfect; from then on, life is only the anticlimax before the grave. That was my day.

Nurses busied themselves with the other patients on the lawn. Adjusting the backs of wheelchairs, moving trays into the patients' reach, speaking words of comfort, and the endless platitude.

"It's a lovely day."

It was two o'clock. Julia saw one of the nurses hurrying across the lawn. The rays of the afternoon sun were caught and reflected by the spoon and medicine bottle held in the nurse's hand. The glass bottle . . .

* * *

The brown glass bottles were heavy, and one of them was plainly visible in the top of the bag. The label was displayed for all to see. Julia wanted to turn it around, but it took both hands to carry the bag.

Gee, seven refunds and a nickel back on each means I can go to the show and I'll have fifteen cents to spend. It was a vast sum to the eleven-year-old Julia. Her mother had been drunk again last night, but that was nothing new. It didn't bother Julia any more, not after all these

years. The only time she worried was when the two of them fought. Somehow it made her cry. Was life like that for everybody? She wondered. As she entered the drugstore, she glanced at the sky. The clouds, like pregnant women, moved in solemn progress across the sky. She looked up and saw . . .

* * *

The nurse had paused in front of Julia's chair, and in an attempt at humor the nurse said, "Time to take your medicine, little girl."

Julia did not smile, but with a grimace she took the medicine. She found it difficult to swallow.

"Would you fix the blanket around my legs, nurse?" Julia asked.

The nurse regarded the blanket fallen to the lawn. Her expression plainly told Julia that a patient should be more considerate of the nurse's time.

"Certainly," she said, as she picked up the blanket, "but do try to be more careful."

When the nurse had left to continue her rounds, Julia's attention was drawn to a slight grass stain on the pink blanket. Engrossed in other thoughts, she traced the pattern it made on the blanket.

A car swung into the hospital driveway. Julia heard the occupants laughter stop as the car continued on down the drive to the hospital entrance. They always stopped laughing.

Visitors! she thought scornfully. They never realize how much we appreciate laughter. She knew they had left the car when she heard the skid of tires on the pavement, and the sound of the car door being slammed.

They left the car radio on, she thought to herself as the muted strains of a popular tune echoed . . .

* * *

From the Lake House. It was the spring of '45. The night of Julia's senior prom. Several cars were already parked in front of the Lake House Lounge. The headlights of a car cut across the lot, resting for a moment on the parked cars, then moving on to an empty space. Jim Desmond parked the car over against the fence. As they emerged from the car the three couples were still arguing.

Jim: But I tell ya the place has got atmosphere.

Betty: I can imagine! I suppose the rats crawl out of the walls at eleven o'clock and put on a floor show.

Julia: What I'm worried about is will we get served?

Jim: Worry about nothing. I've been here before. This place will serve anybody.

Al: If they serve you, they will.

Jim: Very funny! Pardon me while I laugh.

The couples continued on in silence. Most of the kids had left the prom, and were at the lake club already. The band played a soft shuffle rhythm as several couples danced about the dimly-lit floor. They found a table in a corner and sat down. The night was a succession of drinks, and some jokes liberally sprinkled with dirt and sex. And laughter, always the laughter, it was there to bridge the dull moments. They endeavored to forget about tomorrow — to live only in the present.

Betty: We went to the jam session over at the Basin Club Sunday. They played some of that progressive music. It was terrific.

Al: Have you ever been to the Pilgrim Club? That's the place for music. They never stop. Some of those coons just sit around all night shaking all over. They act like they were hopped up.
(Laughter).

A girl singer in a tight-fitting sequined dress walked up to the microphone.

Jim: Will someone tell me whether she is on the inside of that dress getting out or on the outside getting in?

They'd all heard him say it before on other occasions, but they laughed anyway.

Julia: Jim, sometimes you're impossible. (coily).

Singer: I'm as restless as a willow in a windstorm,
As dizzy as a puppet on a string.

Someone: Let's dance.

They rose and moved on to the dance floor. For a while there was only the sound of feet sliding across the smooth dance floor, and the quiet, insinuating tones of the singer.

And afterwards . . .

Jim fitted the car keys into the ignition, and started the motor. He released the brake, and the car rolled slowly toward the parking lot entrance. Betty turned on the car radio, and Julia lit a cigarette. The soft glow illuminated the car for a moment — then darkness.

The Lake House was deserted. Papers swept up by the capricious night breezes rustled in the vacant parking lot. The absent moon sud-

denly issued from behind a cloud, spreading its cold light on the desolate scene. The last car sped down the isolated country road. And then there was silence, the awful silence, unbroken save for . . .

* * *

The last rays of the afternoon sun made fantastic shadows on the hospital lawn. At first Julia thought this caused the dull throbbing in her temple, but when she turned her wheelchair with its back to the sun's rays, the pain was still there. The pain was . . .

* * *

. . . still with her even after the operation. She had been unconscious when the knife had cut deep into her flesh, unconscious when they destroyed that part of her which made her a woman. Afterwards she kept saying that she wouldn't have minded if the pain had disappeared. The doctor had been sure that the cancerous growth had not been malignant. He had warned her of the consequences of the operation, but she knew that if the cancer was not removed she could only look forward to death. And so she had consented. After the operation, she had gone for X-ray treatments every week. That was the worst part — the endless X-ray treatments. They served only to make her nauseous and to prepare her for this lingering death. And now . . .

* * *

On this beautiful spring day she knew that she was dying. The pain tore at her body, and no amount of morphine could ease it. Beads of perspiration dotted her upper lip. The eyes were dull and glazed, and only the mind lived, remembering . . .

* * *

The day the priest visited her room she had been feeling a little better. The night before she had slept peacefully, not resorting to the drugs as she had to do so often now. For the first time she had thought that she might live. The priest had been no comfort; he had asked her if she wanted to confess.

"I don't believe in God, Father. I did once, but if there is a God, I don't think that he would condemn anyone to hell for one little sin. People live twenty-four hours a day, and because in one of those hours they commit a sin they're supposed to go to hell. No thanks, I wouldn't believe in a God like that if you paid me."

The priest had not been shocked. He saw that Julia was distraught by his presence; so he had left.

... memory and desire ... the clouds, the pregnant clouds ...
 don't mind me, kiddies; I'm just not right ... voices, the old voices ...
 faces, the sad tired faces ... the night of the prom ...

I'm as restless as a willow in a wind storm,
 As dizzy as a puppet on a string. . .

and Afterwards . . .

There had been a fight at home when she got in at three o'clock.

Mother: Where have you been till this hour?

Julia: Why don't you go to bed? You've been boozing up again.

Mother: Why you little slut, is this the kind of daughter I've
 raised?

Julia struck her then, and then walked out of the house. She
 had never gone back, and never regretted not going back. She had got
 a job and for three years she had been happy until the operation.

* * *

And now she was dying.

Why? The pain ceased. Julia's nerves tensed; the skin around
 the hollow, emaciated cheekbones and the sunken eyes tightened, pre-
 paring for the final assault.

And in that moment she knew that without her this pain could
 not live, the cancerous cells would die. In the end she would conquer,
 and that which had defeated her itself would be defeated. The pain
 returned, and in that moment Julia perceived all the answers, all the
 whys and wherefores. She wanted to cry out,

"I know! I know!"

But it was too late. The figure in the wheelchair slumped for-
 ward and fell to the lawn. And there was a stillness.

* * *

The hospital lawn was deserted. Papers swept up by the
 capricious breezes rustled on the vacant esplanade. The absent sun
 suddenly issued from behind a cloud and spread its warm light on the
 desolate scene. The last car sped down the isolated hospital driveway.
 And then there was a silence, an awful silence . . . unbroken save for
 the passing of an occasional car.

David Dillon

