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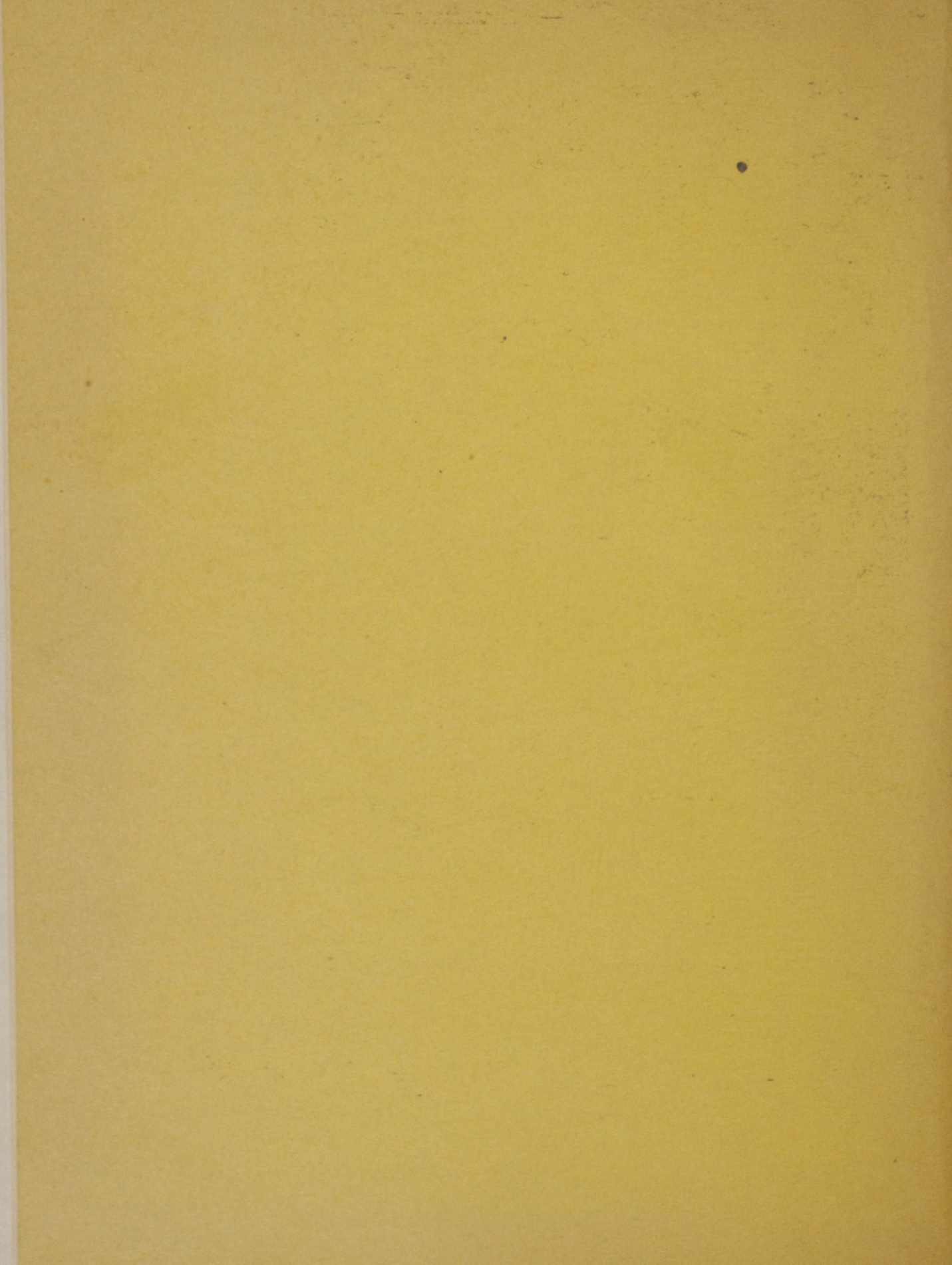
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THAT GOOTCH

By Jean Gordon

In the morning the sun would dissolve the mist from the mountains. The lumberyard whistle would blow at eight-thirty and its shrill voice would start at the top of the foothills and waft down toward the town. Doors would then open all along the streets. Another day would begin.

It was too small a town to have a "best" district and a district across the tracks. Nearly every house in town was on a par with another; none pretentious, none lowly. The blocks were laid out in neat checkerboards; the business district in the middle and the residence streets radiating out from the center. The business district, too, was unpretentious. Two or three grocery stores, a moving picture theatre, a beauty shop, numerous gas stations, a ladies' ready-to-wear store, a music shop and a hardware store. The town was clean and orderly, set as it was in the high, pure air of the mountains.

East from Harper's grocery, further down the slope, two doors would open and two girls come out on their way to school. In 1937 they were fourteen and in high school. One girl was tall for her age, with glasses and an adolescent, angular figure. The other was quite small with blonde hair and a paper-doll face. They were a little incongruous together, like Mutt and Jeff, but they were good friends; you could tell by their casual acceptance of each other. They would start down the sidewalk and the tall girl would match her steps to those of the shorter one. The short girl would toss her head in a cute way. She was used to being admired. Perhaps that was why she and her tall friend fit so well. The tall girl knew the part she had to play. For instance:

"Did you ask your mother?" the tall girl might ask.

"Sure I asked her, Gootch. She didn't say a word. I guess they just expect everyone to go to the Ball when they get in high school," the small girl would answer.

"Well, I guess so, Marie." Her tone was hurt, yet still adoring. Who would ask her anywhere?

It was a cruel name, Gootch. She had never minded it before but now that she was in high school, it seemed only right to expect that people should call her by her right name, Margaret. Somehow, she could not suggest it. Maybe after all, she looked like a Gootch. They might laugh if she said, "Call me Margaret, please." So it went on as Gootch. And she went on, having nothing for herself, giving everything in helpless adulation of others who were prettier and more popular than she. But it had never mattered before. She had always been able to hold her own before this year. Now it was different. She had found a field in which she couldn't compete.

And the months went by and the high school years went by and

blended into a whirligig of colors and events.

Everybody had a car in those days. If a boy didn't have a car, he wasn't a very good date. They rode up and down the streets, raced up and down the highway and even came bumping home from school in someone's broken-down jalopy. In the eyes of young Ted Parker and Jim Green and the rest of the crowd Marie and Gootch were in two separate provinces. Marie was a girl you could have a good time with; a fellow could take her out and learn all the answers. Gootch was a good kid, although a girl you didn't date. Gootch was more like one of the fellows--a real pal. She was all right to have along if you weren't going anywhere special but when they paired off, well, Gootch was just a fifth wheel.

They used to drive up in front of Marie's house while the tires screamed and every rattle and bang magnified itself in the sudden disobedience of the laws of inertia. Marie would lean out the window.

"Where ya going?"

"Just a ride. Come on, Marie."

"Wait'll I tell Mother."

"Hurry up. We gotta have the car back by ten."

Gootch always saw it all from her house next door. But she was proud--never came along if she wasn't asked. Sometimes if she was outside when they drove off, she could put on her best grin and make a wisecrack as they started.

"Don't do anything I wouldn't do, you guys."

Marie always told her about it when she got back. Perhaps Gootch knew more about Marie than her own mother. Gootch always looked at her with adoration in her eyes and egged her on. Second-hand fun was no disgrace if you couldn't get it for yourself.

"Where'd you go, Marie?"

"Out to Tony's." This was good for a gasp of astonishment from Gootch. Tony's was on the blacklist.

"Did you drink anything?"

"Sure, I couldn't be a sissy, could I? I had some wine. Say, that Tony makes good wine. That's quite a place, I'll tell you."

"Did Ted kiss you goodnight?"

"Yeah, but I didn't think he was going to. He's kind of bashful, really. When we got to the steps, he started to walk off. But I know how to get around that. I haven't been around for nothing."

"Oh, Marie!"

Marie was variable. First it was one, then another, never anyone for very long. But she always had someone, someone to go out with on evenings, to the school parties with. That was more than Gootch did.

But Gootch developed her own defense. She developed from a "good kid" into a "card." Gootch was always around with her sense of humor, always doing something no one else would do. She was always good for a laugh.

There was the spring of their Senior year in high school. The Senior Class was giving the Ball. They got their heads together about decorations. It was to be a forest, right inside the gym. They hauled cedar boughs until their arms ached, tacking them on every board until the great, barn-like room was just like the out-of-doors itself. In each corner they put tepees and in front of one of them even laid a little fire. They had a spring, built up with rocks and running water. They strung crepe paper, midnight blue over the ceiling and hung silver stars from it.

Gootch was like a workhorse. She tacked and nailed, climbed ladders, ran uptown for paint, for nails, for crepe paper. This ball was a personal thing to her. She would see it just before the crowd came; that was all. She did not have a date. But this year she hoped. It seemed to her that it wasn't asking too much that in her Senior year she should be asked to her own Senior Ball. A lot of the boys were waiting until the very last to ask girls. For the first time, she gave herself away to Marie. They were standing in the doorway, surveying the gym, directing the others as they hung the big, gilt moon in the east corner.

"Isn't it pretty, Gootch?"

"Wonderful. This'll be the best Senior Ball they've ever had. Marie, all the fellows haven't got dates, have they?"

"Johnny hasn't asked anybody!"

"I wish I could go."

"I wish you could too, Gootch. After the way you've worked, it seems a shame."

Gootch watched her work on Johnny. She was entirely without shame. This year she would have a date.

"Johnny, why don't you take Gootch to the Ball?"

"Gootch? Say, who are you trying to kid?"

"It would mean so much to her, Johnny. Look at how she's worked. Have a heart."

Johnny scrubbed his toe around on the floor.

"What would the other fellows think, Marie? Gootch is a spook. I just can't take her."

"You can carry it off, Johnny. Just take it as a joke. Gootch understands. She wants to go so much."

Johnny thought awhile and went back to his decorating.

Later in the afternoon he went over to where Gootch was stringing stars from the ceiling. He tried to be casual; he did not want her to take him wrong.

"What do you say we wow them tomorrow night, Gootch?"

Gootch was overcome. She had no comeback.

"Wow them, Johnny?"

"Sure, at the Ball."

"You're asking me to go?"

"Sure. Let's pep the thing up. Have you got any Indian clothes at home, Gootch?"

"We've got a beaded jacket."

"Well, wear it then. Get a blanket. Go as a squaw."

"Johnny, you're kidding. I've got a formal."

"Well, all right then. Have it your way. Be around about eight."

Gootch floated home in ecstasy. She was going to the Ball. And not with a drip either because Johnny was smooth. She couldn't dance very well, she knew, but she'd get by. She went home and laid her formal out and pressed every inch of it. She'd never worn it.

Johnny did not appear at eight, nor at eight-thirty. Gootch was in a panic. Maybe he'd made a fool of her; maybe he was just joking. But at ten minutes after nine the doorbell rang. It was Johnny, dressed in an immense feathered headdress and a beaded, buckskin jacket.

"I thought we were going to the Ball." He did not notice the formal; did not tell her she looked nice.

"We are. Get your coat."

Gootch obeyed. She was too stunned to comprehend.

They were the last to arrive. Johnny caused a mild sensation. They were the focus of every eye as they came in the door. He danced around the floor with Gootch once, then squatted in front of one of the tepees, enjoying himself. Gootch stood around, not quite knowing what to do with her hands and feet. So she sat down beside him. Even Marie thought it was funny.

"Aren't they funny," she said. "That Gootch! You never know what she's going to do next."

Gootch didn't forget that for a long time.

None of them had to worry about dates after that though. There was no use; there was no one to go out with anyway. War was cruel perhaps, but exciting too. Exciting when the band got out down at the station to send the boys off. And exciting when one of the boys came home colored with ribbons and oozing glamour. Then suddenly, it wasn't exciting any more. The town, stripped of its younger people, drifted into a quiet lethargy, into club meetings, church socials and an occasional high school dance.

For Marie it was worse than it was for Gootch. Marie chafed under the strain, restless and impatient at the inactivity. Home had no allure for her.

"Let's go somewhere, Gootch. Let's go out to the Coast where there's a little excitement. This town is killing me."

Gootch was a hometown girl.

"We'd be lonesome out there. And besides, where would we live?"

So they stayed. Marie was hesitant to go alone and Gootch was satisfied at home.

In the spring a young engineer came to town to supervise the lumber mill. He was an older man, about twenty-five, and unmarried. Gootch and Marie saw him the day he arrived. He was tall and good-looking with a quiet, kind face.

Marie reacted as if a charge of electricity had been shot through her.

"That's for me, Gootch. Full speed ahead."

Gootch thought he looked like a prince in disguise. But she sat and said nothing, a hopeless lump.

It was Marie herself who introduced Gootch. She went with him to a farewell party for one of the teachers. Gootch was sitting on a bench along the wall, talking to old Mrs. Rafferty when Marie noticed her and came over.

"Gootch, this is David Lancaster. David, this is Gootch, everybody's pal. She's a scream, really."

David noticed the flat look that came into Gootch's eyes.

"Gootch? They surely don't call you that all the time."

"Margaret's my name."

"Well, then I'll call you Margaret."

Gootch fell in love with him that moment. He was the kindest man she had ever met. After that, Marie dragged him away but

in the next few weeks, Gootch saw him often, stopped to talk on the street, saw him at the movies and one day had a coke with him in the drugstore.

Gootch didn't feel like a "card" with him. He made her feel as if she were someone, someone that didn't have to be smart and witty to get along. Someone that could just be herself.

It was a miracle really. Not only a miracle to Gootch herself but to everyone in town. But as Mrs. Lester said at club meeting,

"You never can tell. When they're tired of playing around, you can't tell who they'll pick. But it takes a big man to see what he does in Gootch."

Not so miraculous though, when you stopped to think about it. Gootch was calm with a wisdom that came from experience. She was not unattractive either. Most of her gawkiness was gone and she was carrying herself better, not stooped anymore but erect, with her chin up and out. David was tall enough so that they did not look queer together. Gootch was reveling in it. He was the first tall man she had ever known. Her friendship though with Marie underwent a sudden change. Now it was Marie who was the listener. Marie still could not believe it---not Gootch who had never gone out with boys. He must be joking--or maybe he was just being kind. She felt like a fool. Worst of all, Marie had lost that feeling of admiration that Gootch had always given her. She began to feel frustrated and unhappy as if life had suddenly played a trick on her. She no longer had the confidence that was so much a part of her. For Gootch it was the opposite. She had something she had never had before.

One afternoon she met David on his way home from work.

"Are you doing anything special the rest of the afternoon, Margaret?"

"Silly question! She would never be doing anything special if it were without him."

"No. What did you want to do?"

"Let's go for a walk up the butte. It isn't late; we can be back by six."

Summer had just begun to tip the spruce and cedars with a tinge of gold along the outer edges of their boughs. The earth had a pungent, warm moss smell. The path was clearly defined but not cut away so much that it was not rugged. They ran up the slope and then turned to look down at the town, set neatly as a jewel, below them.

David threw himself down on the grass.

"I like it here, Margaret."

"I'm glad. I'm awfully glad."

"Why don't you marry me, Margaret? We could make a good life. We'll be as safe as anyone else is in this crazy world."

He did not need an answer. He had only to look in her eyes.

After awhile she stirred determinedly.

"David, why was it me? I want to know that. Why was it me instead of Marie, for instance? Marie has always had everything. "It's never been me before."

"That's why. You see, Margaret, when a fellow has been around he looks for something different. In girls, for instance. A guy isn't looking for a butterfly. Sometimes I guess some people's chances never come, or at least they think so. But if a guy's got any perception at all he'd see a girl like you first of all. You put on a front but things were never very funny to you, were they?"

"I had to have something."

"You've got it."

And she did. She had a dignity no one could take from her.

They were married in the early fall. Gootch could never have been called a beautiful bride but she was a lovely one. She had an inner happiness that was good to look at. She was something that represented faith and security and permanence. Marie was her only bridesmaid and Marie was prettier but no one looked at Marie. They looked at Gootch.

"She's a fool to get married in times like these," the woman's club decided. "He can't get out of this war any more than other men can. And what will she have then?"

Their marriage followed the pattern of the days. He was re-classified and left six months after they were married. Gootch was a hometown girl. She had no yen for army towns. She stayed quietly at home and waited with Marie. Then he was sent overseas.

Mail was the most important thing in the world to Gootch. She walked up to the postoffice half an hour before the mail came in to wait. Sometimes she had a letter; more often she didn't. Mail from Africa was an uncertain thing. One letter that came just before the invasion she treasured most of all. He had written it just before he left North Africa.

My dearest Margaret:

We are leaving tonight and you shall probably read about it in the papers before you get this letter. The barges are just below on the beach. I can see them from where I am now.

I do not want to talk about that, though. I am writing to you now because the danger to us tonight is greater than it has ever been before. That is uppermost in my mind. Not fear for myself, but for you.

I want you to do something for me that will be very hard. I want you to develop a philosophy about all this that

will carry you through, no matter what happens. If we are not destined to go on together, no amount of grieving or worrying will help us. We lie in the hands of God.

If I should not return, do not think of what we might have had together, but what we had. You have something, Margaret, that you can treasure forever. It is yours to keep and I am glad that it was I who could give it to you. There is no one who can take it from you. You are Margaret, my wife, to me, and you shall always be. You were never Gootch. Keep our life together close to you and be happy.

All my love,

David

After that letter, there was a lull. Gootch did not go to the postoffice; she waited for the mail to be brought to her. And then, nearly a month later, she got the telegram.

They marvelled at her. She did not cry; she did not go around the town asking for pity. She had a marvelous dignity that no one could touch. Even Marie had no hold on her; she felt inferior in the clear, strong gaze of Gootch's grief. The ladies of the town called on her sometimes in the afternoons. They thought company was good for her. But they went away resentful of her self-sufficiency.

She was good for a discussion at the woman's club. Mrs. O'Brien was frankly skeptical.

"She didn't love him any more than I did. This hasn't even touched her. She got married just to be married."

And Mrs. Rafferty said, "That's what I keep saying. She'd have been better off the way she was. That's the way with these war marriages. Here today and gone tomorrow and what have you got? A married name and no chances for the future. Marie, here, is the wise one. No overnight marriage for you, eh, Marie?"

Marie laughed and it felt like a rake drawn across an open wound. And Gootch heard about it and laughed too. But no one called her Gootch any more; they called her Margaret.

DON'T RUSH THE DOCTOR

By Victor E. Archer

The telephone jangles. Doctor Morris deliberately listens to a couple more heartbeats, then with a dreading and resigned look, drops his stethoscope on his vest and reaches for the receiver. The dreading look is because this call will most probably upset his carefully planned day; the resigned part of the look is because he is a doctor. Somebody needs him. He must help.

It so happens that America is at present fighting a war--with a shortage of doctors. Consequently, doctors are very busy; in fact, rushed. Dr. Morris is no exception. As he regards a doctor's wasting time as nearly criminal, he has carefully planned his day to utilize every minute. He cannot allow for house calls because he may not get any for several days, and if he doesn't, the time would be wasted. Into this background, Dr. Morris's telephone intrudes.

An accident perhaps, or, more probably, some distraught mother wanting him to come over right away to look at her little boy who has been coughing since day before yesterday, no doubt so that she can go shopping with an easy mind. Or maybe it is rich, senile Mrs. Evans who wants him to come over right away to rub her back with liniment. Dear old lady, she is so accustomed to imposing on people.

Dr. Morris reluctantly lifts the receiver. He hates having to tell these people that they must wait until after office hours. After all, he can't postpone the examination of that new pneumonia case or postpone the incision of that infected finger at the hospital, both of which he had planned for this morning, except for a matter of life and death. Why do so many people waste his time by having him make house calls when the patient could just as easily be brought to his office? But if they can't be brought in, why don't the people tell him the trouble and then let him (the doctor) decide how urgent the case is? Among all the doctors of his acquaintance, Dr. Morris knew not one who wouldn't drop everything else and rush to the scene if simply told that a child had been run over on Jefferson street. But dropping everything to rush across town to take "Junior's" temperature is something else again. Ah, well, maybe it is an accident, thinks Dr. Morris, as he puts the receiver to his ear and says, "Dr. Morris speaking."

"Oh, hello, dear. I do hope you won't forget to bring a loaf of bread home for dinner."

"I won't, Marge," he replies shortly to his wife as he carefully replaces the receiver with the trace of a smile flitting across his sombre countenance. "But that damn phone had better not ring again."

ON THE CLASSICAL TEMPER

By Jim Boyack

The term "classic" puts one in mind of books, or of decades of history, or marble statues that are fine and excellent -- so much so that they are destined to go gloriously through history. But that, withal, are pretty dry and uninteresting. The Greek civilization, taken at a point three or four centuries before Christ, is sufficiently distant in the past so that memory of their faults and quirks of daily living have been lost. We have left the glorious tradition of their high accomplishments in literature, drama, and sculpture. It is to the characteristics of this ancient civilization that we apply the term "classic". Such characteristics, for example, as austerity, simplicity, common-sense, extroversion, temperance, and the virtues of the Golden Mean extolled by Aristotle.

However, the classical temper of the time was not something which the Greek people adopted in the form of a constitution with amendments and by-laws. But rather out of their daily living, their outlook on life, and their heritage of thought and tradition from the past they developed the characteristics by which we have come to think of them. Not being bothered with such perplexities as movies, and term papers, and final exams, and registration procedure, the life they lived was comparatively simple. Hence when the great and renowned Sophocles came out with a tragedy simply written around a single theme, they applauded loudly and bestowed the prize upon him. It was that type of play which had the greatest effect upon them.

Nor as a people were they much worried about themselves. It was much more interesting to look into the neighbor's yard than to mope at home. And it was better yet if they could have a look into the life of a king, particularly if it were such a well-known king as Agamemnon, whom they had heard about ever since they learned to talk. Hence, on them, a play about great characters produced the most effect.

In much the same way, all their more general ways of acting and thinking came to be reflected in the art and literature of the time, just as the complex inanity of our civilization is sometimes reflected in impressionistic painting or stream-of-consciousness writing. Or better yet, funny-books. The Greeks were a philosophic people. For hours they would sit with Socrates under a tree attempting to explain logically the crazy world around them. For them a play could not be a simple farce. But it had to have a central theme that dramatized the working of eternal principles. Agamemnon commits the sin of pride. And for that, fate must exact retribution. Unfortunately his family takes it into their hands to exact the retribution, not trusting the gods, perhaps. Then, for the sin of murder, they in turn must pay, till in the end Orestes finally gets let off when mercy comes to temper justice. The Greek is moved to tears and unconsciously grips the edge of his stone seat as he watches the heroism of the protagonist who bears up nobly under the weight of tragic and irrevocable fate. And when

the play is over he says to himself, as he wipes away his tears, "I can be even more virtuous, and if need be, just as noble in the face of an unfortunate fate."

To all this overt evidence of the Greek mind seen in the type of drama that was most successful, and the kind of architecture, and sculpture, Aristotle is duly attracted. Aristotle was even more logically minded than his Greek contemporaries and sought to reduce everything to logical and reasonable principles. Including the science of logic itself. And so well did he succeed in his scientific endeavors that for nearly two thousand years afterwards few rose to dispute the principles he had deduced.

Even the dramatists and writers were not free from this influence. Particularly was this true of the French dramatists of the late 17th century. At the time they were experiencing a Renaissance of literature and had gone back to these ancient Greek models which had become "classic" by then. They proceeded to take Aristotle's word on the subject of play producing about five times as literally as Aristotle meant it, and copied as well the entire spirit of the Greek time in spite of the fact that they were Frenchmen living at an entirely different time and age.

In Racine's Phaedra we find a play more Greek than the Greek plays themselves. The action is bound into a well-knit whole so skillfully one would find it easier to take apart a Chinese block puzzle. Rigidly the time limit adheres to a single day, and to a single locality. And the characters fall into categories that aren't to be altered. Theseus is a king. Oenone, a nurse. Phaedra, a queen. Hippolytus, a prince.

But though the French sought to recreate for themselves the glory of classical Greece, their neo-classicism fell short. For, after all, it was a pseudo-classicism. And if a literature is to achieve greatness, it must reflect the people as they are, not as they wish they were, or as they think they ought to be. The classicism that developed in France was not the classicism of the Greeks. Though the Phaedra adheres with due strictness to the laws of Aristotle as the French had amended them, yet there runs through the words of the characters a warmth of emotion and an expression of love and feeling that was typically French. The terribly poignant thought of Phaedra as she visions herself coming before her father in the netherworld is but a single illustration of the emotion that fails to be hidden by the formality of the play.

After all, the French were not entirely devoid of reason, and we see them developing the unities not only in the spirit of an ancient classicism, but for the sake of achieving good and effective drama. Certainly a play that adheres to the unities achieves a singleness of effect that is difficult to achieve otherwise. They were not copying only--but adding as well.

Again in the case of the English we find yet another brand of classicism, superficially taking on some of the Greek characteristics such as simplicity, common-sense, and devotion to the nobility. But Pope and Aeschylus, had they met, would probably have

found themselves thinking in a different language as well as speaking a different language. Pope had forgotten that one wrote to achieve a unified effect. He had come to polishing his epigrammatic couplets with such diligent care that he quite forgot that they might serve a purpose other than to be passed from mouth to mouth. Nor did the weighty presence of gods and eternal purposes serve to seriously provoke the thoughts and deeper emotions of men. Rather, in his Rape of the Lock, we find that he has provided a whole host of fairies---fairies which, though they give the same aroma of the involvement of a mighty fate as do the gods in the Iliad and the Odyssey, yet serve an entirely different purpose. We laugh at them, for their reality is but gilded papier-mache, meant to be no more than an imitation of the genuine gold of the gods of Homer.

At the end of the eighteenth century neo-classicism gave way to the infinite variety of forms and freedoms of the romantic period. But because classicism expresses something fairly basic in human nature, it is not dead. It never has been, for we find it in such stories as those of Samson and of Ruth in the Bible, where simplicity and social integration are outstanding elements.

And today. Does not the highly-developed art of short story writing consist of developing a single plot with a single effect? This is pure classicism. Or the complications of our business world which we find reduced to logical and orderly columns of figures and charts in the books of the accountant. Again we have the spirit of classicism. Even our skyscrapers and automobiles and airplanes are classical in design. Their lines are simple and smooth and structurally a part of the whole. In fact, our entire modern concept of functionalism, in which design and purpose form a unity, is but the present-day development of the classical temper.

Classicism may have suffered from austerity and formality, but in its sanity and simplicity and temperance lie virtues for which we shall probably always find a use.

WIND ON THE PRAIRIE

By Fay Buchholz

It was early March. There should have been promise in the season, an exuberance in the swelling buds of young trees, in faintly greening lawns, in the delicate pink and white shoots of tulips and hyacinths pushing up out of dark, spring earth, in the liquid call of the first meadow lark, singing from long, early-morning shadows. But there was no promise, no hope.

The barren, wind-swept prairie gave no hint of the season; it might have been autumn, or a winter without snow. There was in it none of the eagerness of a season of beginning.

It seemed to Nora as she came out of the house and surveyed the vast stretches of dry sod lying in every direction that there was only futility in the seasons. She stared at the two brown lines of dusty road that led across miles of prairie. The road went on forever, she thought, like life. She stood for a long time on the back porch and stared at the gray fields beyond the farm yard.

She knew the scene well. It looked exactly as it always did--bleak, comfortless. Interminable miles of flat prairie lay beaten and lifeless, chastised by the wind. Far to the west rose a rim of drab hills, ugly little slopes, covered with prairie grass. Without the dignity or strength of mountains, they offered no beauty in serene peaks, no magnificence in sheer rock walls and perilous crags; nor had they any of the undulating softness of wooded slopes. They were simply a rolling continuation of the prairie. There was an irony in the hills; they lent no protection to the prairie and its inhabitants, yet they barred them from the world beyond the horizon with a barrier as impervious and as insuperable as a vast mountain range.

Nora gazed now at the hills. Slowly, her attitude lost its abstraction. She stiffened. Rebellion crept into her brooding eyes, and into the little, hardening lines at the corners of her mouth. Her fingers curled, tightened, until she clenched them so that the nails cut her palms. Her head was tilted back, chin out, defiant. Then the sudden animation left her. Life ebbed from her. Defiance was gone; it was no use. Like the landscape, she was again without hope. If there were something here to fight, she thought. If the wind were a gale to battle, the prairie, a force to subdue--, but there was nothing with which to grapple. There was only a gradual wearing away by the wind which mocked the futility of human effort.

With an involuntary sigh, the woman turned and started toward the steps. A tumbling weed, caught in a sudden eddy of wind bounced across the sheltered porch and lodged against her legs. Its sharp prickles pierced her cotton stockings, and she kicked it away, shoving it off the porch, into the path of the wind,

where it was again caught up and driven on its jouncing route toward the barn. At the foot of the slope, it lodged in a fence corner, where a dirty stack of similar dry thistles piled higher and higher in the wind.

The gray, dead grass of the yard bent monotonously toward the east. Absently, Nora stooped to pick a spear of it, and noticed that it remained curved in her hand. She looked at the scrubby chokecherry bush on the slope above the barn. Its twisted branches pointed, like gnarled fingers, eastward. The new row of Shelterbelt poplars, too, bent before the ceaseless onslaught of the wind from the west.

As Nora rounded the corner of the house, her hair was caught in a sudden gust of wind and blown around her face in loose strands. She twisted them into the knot at the back of her neck while she braced herself and headed into the wind, toward the clothesline west of the house. Her eyes were slits now, narrowed against the flying grit from nearby fields.

As she hurried, she stumbled against the cyclone cellar, a mound of dusty tan clay with a rough door set into one of its slanting, sod-tufted sides. The cyclone cellar--now used as a root cellar--was standard equipment in the yard of every farmer who had come out to Dakota and Montana from the Central States. Back there, too, the wind had menaced them, but with a different sort of terror--swift, unexpected. Cyclone cellar! Nora sneered to herself as she hurried past the dusty mound. As if they ever needed to fear any sudden or surprising alteration in the deadly monotony of this wind! She would almost have welcomed a cyclone, she thought, or an earthquake. Any change to relieve this flat void which blighted the lives of the people here.

She reached the clothesline. A row of dishtowels and a tablecloth flapped dejectedly from the line. Beside them fluttered two small, print dresses, one red checked and the other with blue flowers, brave flags in the gray-brown sky.

They did not look clean, Nora worried as she removed the clothes. She shouldn't have left them out in the dust so long. She noticed a rent in the hem of the red-checked dress, and frowned. Betty was so careless with her clothes--such a tomboy! Just as soon get on a horse on Sunday and ride off to the pasture with her father, never worrying about her best dress, nor thinking how hard it was for them to get new clothes, with crops the way they were!

She took down the other small dress, and fondled its bright ruffles. Cynthia, now, was different. People remarked that you'd never know the two little girls were sisters, in spite of their physical resemblance. Tom's blue eyes, impish in Betty's brown face, surveyed the world with gravity from under Cynthia's long, golden lashes, and the fine, yellow hair that tumbled in a riot under Betty's torn straw hat fell shining smooth around Cynthia's face as she bent over her books or her drawings.

Whenever she thought of her grave older daughter, Nora felt

the weight of responsibility and frustration, grief for her own lost girlhood, despair for Cynthia's future. Here, Nora knew, the child would come to be just as she, herself, was--bitter, and without hope. All her talent would come to nothing. Blighted and starved by the barren surroundings, it would die as the grass died under the endless drought and wind.

It wasn't fair, Nora raged silently. A girl like Cynthia ought to have a chance. If she could have good teachers, a lovely home, books, music, gracious living--. Of course, Nora mused, as she gathered the clothespins in her apron and started back toward the house, of course, Aunt Louisa in Milwaukee was the answer-- if only Tom weren't so stubborn about keeping the family together. Memories rose as she thought of dear Aunt Louisa's home. She pictured Cynthia, now, in a ruffly, white dress and blue sash, her curls shining and slippers gleaming in the sun as she came down the wide steps of the familiar, old house, and past the green, flower-bordered lawns at Aunt Louisa's. No, she checked herself, that couldn't be Cynthia; little girls nowadays didn't wear white dresses with blue sashes. The figure on the steps was herself; Eleonora, curled and starched, leaving for some birthday party, years ago.

Her throat ached as she remembered. And all those same, lovely things of her childhood might be Cynthia's, if Tom weren't so blind. Couldn't he see what eleven years on this God-forsaken farm had done to the girl he had married and brought out from the East?

She had been so full of hope, then, and the future, so wonderful. The misgivings which she had experienced when she stepped off the train in town and saw the handful of frame buildings, as isolated and insecure as a toy village in a vast sea of gray land, had remained voiceless in the face of Tom's enthusiasm. During the fifteen-mile wagon ride to the farm, the prairie had blossomed, for she had seen it through Tom's eyes. They had visualized farms and towns rising from the uninhabited expanse of land. The two dusty tracks through the grass had widened into a paved highway, connecting prosperous farms with the distribution centers. When, finally, they had reached the top of a rise and looked down on their own farm, they had known the spell of the land. In their enthusiasm, they had seen rippling fields of tall wheat rise from the prairie grass. A garden, and orchards had shaped themselves in the yard. The unpainted shack and sheds had dissolved into a shining, modern farmhouse, with a great, red barn.

All through those first years, it had been so. Nora's hopes and plans had kept pace with Tom's. The hard work had been lightened by their enthusiasm. Belief in the dream had kept Tom at his plowing until the darkening night had made it impossible to see one more row--had kept Nora at the endless tasks of housekeeping made difficult by lack of water, electricity, and all the conveniences which had always been, to her, necessities.

The drudgery, however, had not been without recompense. She and Tom had had each other, and the children. To encourage their

hopes, there had been two or three years of good harvest, when the wheat had matured full and golden, surviving until it was cut and threshed and marketed. Those years had made possible the new house to replace the shack. It hadn't turned out to be a very fine house, but it was a start, Tom had said, and they would build additions as the income from the fields increased.

Tom bought more land, and planted more seed. But the harvests somehow dwindled, in spite of larger investments. A change came over the land. Almost imperceptibly, the air became dryer, the rains, less frequent. Slopes that had been green all summer now showed their sides dry and rusty in early July. Fields in the streaks of lighter soil began to stir in the wind. The garden grew less abundant, and looked sparse and dry except where the watering-trough overflowed into it. The grain in the fields was not so high, or so thick as it had been. The heads were lighter, and the loads of grain sent to the mill, smaller. Tom began to talk of the rust.

Then, one summer, the grasshoppers came. Brown, humming clouds of them settled on the fields, on the garden, even on the fence posts, and when they had gone, they left in their wake a desolated country.

Nora's hope began to wane. She supposed that Tom's faith in the land had deeper roots than hers. He was bound to the land by five generations of solid, American farmers. Finally, her courage had failed. Now, at thirty-five, she was old, her spirit broken. How could Tom want that for his daughters, too? He was so stubborn and unreasonable!

Then she felt ashamed at her disloyalty toward Tom. He did his best, and he worked hard. He'd always had such big dreams of pioneering, of building a community here on the prairie. Tenderness rose in her as she remembered the dogged way he started anew after each disappointment. It wasn't easy for him, either.

Nora reached the house and went up the porch steps, past a row of milk pails along the wall, and opened the splintery kitchen door. A little cloud of dust stirred up from the window sill as the draft rushed through the house. It seemed as though there was no use in trying to keep things clean, she thought. The wind blew the dust in again as soon as you had brushed it off.

She glanced at the clock on the shelf above the kitchen wash stand, and saw that it was time to start supper. The fire in the range was out. She had to re-kindle it with poplar twigs and bits of apple box before she could put on lignite. Assiduously, she fanned the twigs. Kindling was a luxury here on the prairie. She remembered wooded slopes in Wisconsin; delicious, cool, green banks where Aunt Louisa spread picnic lunch under great oaks; tall, black evergreens in Northern Minnesota, where they had gone on camping trips in the beautiful, irrecoverable past.

A scuffle of feet on the boards of the back porch and the sound of laughter recalled her to the supper preparations. The door flew open to admit a big, smiling man and a chattering, little girl, hand in hand. Behind them bounded a jovious Shepard dog.

"Well, Mother," the man grinned, "we've had a big day. Betty helped me clean the barn lot. Tomorrow, we're going to burn the thistles along the fence, there."

"It won't do any good. The fence will be covered with thistles again before you're through, in this everlasting wind."

"Daddy showed me a bluebell in the corner by the well," Betty chimed in, "but I didn't pick it, because he said it had some more buds to open yet. We found a bird's nest, too."

"Shut the door, Tom," Nora said, without looking around, "the dust blows in so."

The man secured the door and went over to the wash stand, rolling up the sleeves of his heavy, blue shirt as he walked. "Over on your rug, Towser." He stooped to pat the dog, whose red tongue dripped on the linoleum as he watched the supper preparations.

Tom opened the lid of a cream can beside the wash stand, lifted a dipperful of water from it and drank deeply. Then he filled the wash basin, found a bar of soap, and lathered his hands and arms.

"We're going to get something new, Mother, bet you can't guess," volunteered Betty from the corner where she knelt, fondling the dog. "It's going to be a new wheat field," she continued, "below the south forty. Daddy said so."

Nora did not turn from her work at the stove. She stiffened, waiting to hear the false heartiness in Tom's voice, the confidence with which he tried to reassure her at each venture that led them deeper into debt, rooting them irrevocably to the farm and the prairie. Then she turned on him. "Tom," she begged, "you aren't going to spend any more on land, are you? It's been the same ever since the drought--six years, now--we've scrimped and saved to try to keep ourselves fed and clothed, and every year you've put more seed into the ground--wasted it. Every year was going to be the turning point, you said, the big crop year. Can't you see it isn't ever going to be any better?" She knew that he wasn't listening, that she couldn't persuade him. Her voice broke in desperation.

"Now, Mother," he remonstrated gently, "you mustn't get so upset. This new quarter is a good buy. I can get it from the county at about half its value."

It was useless, she knew, to go over this old argument again. She turned her attention once more to the meal.

"What's for supper, Mother?" queried the small girl who had come to peek into the kettles on the stove.

"Be careful, Betty." The woman brushed her aside. "That's hot fat in the big kettle; I'm going to make a few doughnuts. I thought I'd warm up the potatoes and gravy from this noon. That will make plenty."

"Doughnuts!" the child shouted, ecstatically. "I'm going to tell Cynthia. Where is she, Mother?"

"Up in the attic, I suppose. She was reading up there the last time I saw her this afternoon." Betty dashed through the living-room door.

"You know, Mother," Tom said as he splashed happily at the washstand, "this is going to be a good year for us farmers. I was reading only last night in the Farm Journal where they say this will be a great wheat year."

Nora turned to look at her husband. As she watched him, his big, stupid face flushed and smiling while he talked of more crops, more fields, a sudden revulsion gripped her. She stared at his massive shoulders in their greasy, denim shirt, at his red, wind-burned neck, his stubbly beard. He was a stranger; she wondered what he was doing here in her house, planning a horrible, endless future of debts and disappointments to enmesh her and bind her to an eternity of wind and isolation. She realized that she hated him. As he ducked his head into the wash basin and began to splash the water about his face, the smell of the cheap, carnation-scented soap nauseated her. One thought rose to dominance in her mind: She must leave Tom. She must get Cynthia away from this place now. Her throat felt dry, and her voice sounded queer. "Tom, we're going away, the girls and I. I can't stand it here any longer. I'm leaving you, Tom. We'll go to Aunt Louisa's."

She waited for what he would say, or do, her own words echoing in her mind. Their irrevocability frightened her. She had said them, finally, said them right out, to him. It was like having closed a door and locked it behind her.

And then suddenly, her anger was gone as swiftly as it had enveloped her. Like coming into the sunlight from a dark pit--like regaining consciousness after an anaesthetic, she emerged from it. She felt lonely, with deep grief. It was as if something had died, a thing which she would have alive again, if she could. But it was gone. She had killed the past and the present. The future dissolved and was nothing. Everything between Tom and her was shattered, and with its loss, she realized that this, above all else, had been the substance of her life, the quality worth living for.

Tom did not answer. Slowly, timorously, her eyes sought him, afraid of how he would look.

Then, when she saw, it was as if bright dawn had burst upon the dusk of the room. Happiness welled within her as the realization impressed itself upon her mind. Tom had not heard. He

splashed the water about his face and ears, sputtering lustily. She could not believe it, but it was true. He had not heard.

A warm glow suffused the shabby room. She wanted to walk about and touch the familiar objects in it, to make sure they were still there, still hers.

Then Tom emerged, groping for a towel. When he had dried his face, he took a comb from the shelf and smoothed back his hair. He looked pink and scrubbed, and very young. He glanced toward her quizzically. "Why so quiet, Mother? Not angry about the field, are you? You know I wouldn't have decided to take it if I weren't sure--."

"Was I quiet, dear? I suppose I'm just tired. I washed clothes today. Of course I'm not angry. You know best about the farm."

"Well, then, how about some of those doughnuts? I'm starved!"

She moved toward the living room and called, "Cynthia, Betty, supper's ready."

The sound of their feet and chattering voices, the warmth of the kitchen, the smell of the rich, golden doughnuts and the sweet scent of carnation soap mingled around her, filling the room with a sense of blessed security, while outside, the wind continued its relentless sweep across the prairie.

*****

ADOLESCENCE

I am afraid,
And all I can fear is myself.
Vague unrest shakes me
With nameless longing. I yearn
For the sea, cry aloud for adventure,
Yet I feel rooted and frustrated.
I am old and young in an hour.
Intense peace floods my soul;
I lose it while seeking another.
Age calls it adolescence.
I do not know; I only know
I am afraid.

Nancy Brechbill

GREENWOOD DOES ITS PART

By Bernadette E. Kelly

It was an ordinary, unattractive, hot little southern village that turned out so willingly to help in the housing emergency when a large army camp located a mile and a half from the town. There were some people in the town who had sons in the service who realized the plight of the newcomers.

Listed in the Want Ads in the morning paper were the following statements: "Wanted. Place to live by army officer and wife. Have twin boys, age 3, but will drown if you insist." "Twenty-five dollar reward to anyone locating furnished room for officer and wife!" "Couple willing to make own repairs and redecorate house or apartment need a place to live. Price no item."

The Chamber of Commerce announced that the women of the town had opened a housing agency to help the visitors to Greenwood become located. The housing agency consisted of a large office with several clerks sitting at desks. A telephone was in front of each clerk. Out in the main part of the office several girls, women with children, and a few soldiers were waiting. This morning the phone rang. The clerk answered it, making notes on a card. Then she rose and read the announcement: "Room for rent, four miles out on Highway No. 2. No bath or running water. No children or pets allowed. No wearers of slacks or shorts. Price reasonable." The phone rang again. The clerk announced, "Listen to this bomb-shell. At 100 Main Street, furnished room for rent. That is all the information they would give. No phone number." Twelve of the waiting people dashed out of the room to investigate. The clerk murmured to herself, "Let's see. 100 Main Street. That's the old hotel right next to the jail down in the bad part of town. No wonder they didn't give any details." A lady stepped up and inquired about the motels. Should she try the tourist cabins? The clerk called seven different numbers. Every motel and tourist cabin in town was filled. Some of them had waiting lists of nearly four hundred names. Another call came in. Several people left the office to try to rent this new listing. Then a soldier with his wife and baby came up to the desk, "I just went to that house--and talked to the lady that just called in. She said she'd have to rent to a couple without kids. Said everybody in her house would move out if she took us in with the baby. Her house is just fixed over and she couldn't have it all scratched up by people who have kids. The poor woman, has to worry about kids scratching up her house. She's lucky she isn't worrying about bombs blasting it up! She was telling us about the advertisement in the paper--she said a fellow was kidding and said he'd have to drown his twins. Yeah, that's funny to her. I just don't get the joke!"

Another clerk was answering the phone. "Yes, we list rooms for rent. Please give me the details. Yes. Yes. All right." She announced, "Room for rent, no children, pets, smokers, or

drinkers. Furnish your own linens. Clean your own room. \$40 a month." Turning to the next clerk, the announcer confided, "That poor woman said it's about impossible to get decent renters anymore, seems like all of them have kids!"

Wives and families of the service men were pouring into town. They hoped to live near their husbands, brothers, and fathers while they were still in the United States. Of course, the town couldn't accomodate them, but it was doing its best.

Mr. Sewell wanted to help. He had a little grocery on third street. A few years ago he bought an old house on the corner of third and E Streets. It was very old and run down, but he bought the house and two lots for \$500, and rented it out for \$15 a month. Then the army came. Mr. Sewell bought some wall board, put in some partitions, strung light cords back and forth from one room to the other, and fixed up twelve "apartments" in the sixteen room house. These new people were pretty anxious to find a place to live, so he rented out his apartments for \$30 a month. Then he had a vacant lot. He covered that with trailers and rented them too. He quit the grocery business. His wife and two daughters bought the finest wrist watches the jewelry store on Main Street offered. His two girls took a week off from school before Christmas and went to the city to buy fur coats. "It doesn't really matter about missing school," the older girl smirked. "Most of us get married before we graduate anyhow! Now that Daddy is making so much money he wants us to have the best clothes in town!" Yes, the people of Greenwood were doing their part.

A lady on the bus remarked to her companion, "I don't exactly have an apartment to rent. It's a little house out behind our house. I never planned on renting it, but I feel I should help out in this emergency. Perhaps I could rent it to an employed couple; a soldier who stays at camp most of the time with a wife who works. You see they can get water from my house and use our bathroom, and I've put some right pretty wallpaper over the boards and put a bed and table in the place. Don't you think about \$40 a month would be about right considering it is private and everything?"

One day a young girl walked into the housing office. She looked ill. Upon being questioned she reported that she had surprised her husband last week by coming from Wisconsin to visit him. "He didn't say, but I think he's being sent 'over' soon. He planned on coming home on furlough but they cancelled his leave. I had just enough money to buy a ticket, so I packed a lunch and came. I couldn't get a room in a hotel, so I slept in the lobby the first night. Then I caught a ride to camp the next day and found my husband. He can't get in this week. Where I'm staying now I take care of two children and cook while the man and woman work. They don't charge me any rent, but I have to sleep on the back porch. Honestly, I just have to get another place to live. It's so cold on the back porch, and there isn't any door on it, and I get so frightened at night." The girl was sick. Of course, she never should have left home--but here she was. Some Greenwood woman was doing her bit working downtown, and hired this soldier's wife to do her housework and look after her children. She paid her her "room" and board.

Then there were emergency rooms. Rooms that were not really for rent, but could be used in desperate cases. An emergency room was used for the soldier's wife who came to see her husband and was expecting to be confined at any moment. The moment arrived sooner than she expected and she went to the hospital a few hours after she arrived in town. Twenty-four hours after the baby was born she was dismissed from the hospital--crowded conditions and lack of funds made it impossible for them to keep her longer. The mother and baby were installed in this room in a private home and a visiting nurse was sent out once a day to bathe the baby. As soon as the mother was strong enough she and the child would be sent home. She hadn't known it before she came, but her husband was "shipped out" the night before she arrived.

The townspeople lamented, "Why don't these people stay home? Imagine their having the nerve to come all the way down here and cause us so much trouble." Of course, these people who filled the town should have stayed home. But they all were drawn by the knowledge that this visit with their men would be, perhaps, a final "goosey". For many of the wives who came to see their husbands, for the children who came to talk for the last time with their fathers, this visit in Greenwood was to be carried forever in their minds.

One woman came into the office each day to find a room. She had two little girls. Her husband was an officer and they had sufficient funds. She could not rent decent living quarters anywhere. "Two children, four years old! Why, how do you expect to find a place to live!" was the answer she received at each house.

Of course, no one blamed the people of Greenwood. They were doing their duty. They were helping out. They turned their homes over to the newcomers. They stopped at nothing to help the country in this time of emergency. All they asked was not to be bothered by other people's children, sorrows, and everyday lives. While they were about this patriotic business, of course, it was a wonderful chance to make some money.

THE NIGHT WAS BEAUTIFUL

By Margaret Duncan

I sit here and watch you standing down there, looking like a teddy bear in those striped coveralls with your hat shoved back on your curly head, talking to the girl. I sit here on the railing with a cigarette between my grimy fingers while people push and crowd their way through the clutter of paper, coke glasses, and people surrounding me, and there you are standing below me in the midst of all the clutter and color. As you talk, your black eyes flicker up toward me, meet my sulky stare, and look away again quickly. I know I've fallen in love again, maybe hard this time, fallen in love with your long hand's firm, warm touch and your dark, curly head above the collar of your white jacket, with your queer, quiet voice and even the dark ugliness of your face--fallen in love for no reason at all. I sit here watching you and think of other nights like this.

I.

The snow was piled inches deep on the bare maple branches and though it still fell softly and there were no stars and no moon, it made the night light and glowing. This was a night of glory and I walked beside a tall, awkwardly handsome school boy. We didn't talk much, Slim and I, but he held my hand very tight and looked down into my eyes. The night was beautiful and it was ours. He was my first love.

"I've forgotten Slim," I say, "It isn't true that an old flame never dies." You say it so bravely, my dear, but I've seen your glances catch and hold, stinging each other's hearts in passing, cutting much too deeply into things that are gone and should have been forgotten.

II

And then one night horses pounded along a silver road marked by the shadowy outlines of trees and shoulder to shoulder in the moonlight we rode, the black horse and the grey neck and neck. At the end of the road we stopped by the edge of a cliff and stood together, the slight, wirey, stoop-shouldered figure and I. The moon swept over the river below in another silver road, a road we could never travel together. We turned and went down to the fire without speaking. It wasn't shoulder to shoulder any more, that was dead. The eyes that looked at me across the fire were sad, tired; and we went back to face the world together and break our hearts against the stone wall it had put between us.

III

There were footprints on a mound of black dirt. They should still be there, burned into the earth for all time. There began and ended life. The man was short and square of shoulder. He stood,

feet spread wide apart, swaying slightly with his jaw stuck out angrily. With one hand he held the girl's in a hard grip and with the other the bridle of the big brown horse standing steaming in the cold rain. He was furious and not a little drunk. "Well, I hope I see you again," his soft southern drawl stumbled badly, "but I don't think I will."

The girl, despair and even terror in her eyes, pulled free and walked away without a word, twisting her heavy riding gloves in her strong fingers. That boy's in Africa tonight and I'm sitting here looking at you, but I haven't forgotten.

IV.

There's nothing quite so wonderful as belonging to someone, Jo thought as she sat between the two men in the big, rattling, swaying, old horse-van. There was a big, silver half-moon, a perfect crescent, sliding through the starlit, autumn sky over the blue hills. She could see it just beside the brim of Bill's battered, old hat as he leaned over the wheel. She laughed softly to herself. To look at him you'd never know he was the finest horseman in the state. That wide, smiling, lantern-jawed face with its snub nose and pale blue eyes would never typify the romantic cowboy. But he was the greatest of them all.

She felt the smooth coolness of Grant's leather jacket at her shoulder and looked up at him. Sitting there in the dark, he looked stern. The strong, high-cheekboned face with its sharply hooked nose and straight, thin-lipped mouth was remote and forbidding, but she knew how the long-lashed grey eyes could sparkle with fun and mischief. Then he turned and pushed against her shoulder, "What're you bein' so quiet for?"

"Just being quiet." She shrugged and a star tumbled out of the sky in a long, fiery, silver trail. God walked the low, rolling, blue hills that night.

Yes, there will be other evenings like this and I'll be standing here with someone new. You walk up the stairs. "Oh, lord," I say, "I knew I'd run into something like this if I stayed around here long enough."

"You say, 'You're liable to run into most anything over here.' But you're smiling at me, so I give you the memory of those nights. This one is ours."

LETTER TO MY STUDENTS

By Baxter Hathaway

1.

It's a world of talk, yes, grant it, it's a world of talk,
 And the world elsewhere is flaring into cinders
 And up is down and down is up; you don't know which way to go,
 Although the way is marked out plainly enough for you;
 And they push you down the way, the hands, and the faces leering,
 The phrases half caught, the inference, the innuendo--
 Why do you resist then? The path is easy. Why are you here?
 To escape the vortex? Flight and fear? To find, led among still
 waters,
 The quiet hand of God from a vanished world, the vanished world
 disowned,
 Soothing your fears and quieting your pulse? It is not there,
 Outside, the night and the black and the cries and the evil
 and the twisted heart and the torn flesh, the ugly
 laughter with the soul gone, cackling to the flaming sky?
 It is not there? We have forgotten it? It was of no importance?
 It is not there, that's all? It was a bad dream we had
 in the night in a moment of forgetfulness?

2.

It is a world of talk we live in, grant it, merely words,
 Measured slowly, only half articulate in spite of the measuring,
 And words are filmy stuff, slight gossamer skeins that catch and
 break
 To short unweildy threads, so that after we finish there you
 cup your hands to hold and scan your garner and you find
 Little or nothing.
 Is it fright that makes you wish more in the harvest?
 Is it a panic desire to find a world of your own making, safe and
 secure, walled high about and the cellar full of provision?

3.

Here is the answer as well as I can give it to you:
 The words are hard, and the lurid flames are only ghosts
 that linger by the quagmire marshlands of the world,
 Phantasmagoria of disease. The words drone on,
 And brick by brick and straw by straw while the winds blow
 In tempest and in heat the workman labors building
 Straw by straw and brick by brick and then in time the
 wing is done, the ell, a doorway opens in and out
 and windows give on vistas up to then unseen for
 lack of framing.
 And there is no other way but by putting brick on brick,
 Except that the figure lacks in this, that the will must grow,
 The plan be planned, rejected, altered, while the days grow
 old and the bricks are piling.
 Needed is passion.

4.

Youth has no passion? Passion is for age, and sights and sounds
Distract the young, like the yokel, aimless, wandering
At time of carnival where all the stalls allure
And every spangle is an el dorado? Youth is the leaf
upon the wind, uncaring where the wind goes?
Needed is passion, for all life is passion, not sights and sounds--
The will intent that shapes and works its shape and does not
falter,
That twists the sheets at night and cannot sleep and yearns...
And can you say, and you and you, that you have yearned?
For what? So, name it? Is it the universe entire, built up and
furnished?

5.

Then with the bricks and straw and passion shall our words,
Nouns, verbs, and adjectives, proceed to shape
The figure of desire where blood has bled
And agony has lived its night of terror,
And home is not till we have made our home
For having cared.

TAWNEY OF MOODY MARSH

By Helen McDonald

It was one of those nights that eyes see bats fall through the silvered air like spiders dropping down the threads of silken webs. The cold breeze from the lake tasted of wild water cress, and the swamp gave up a breath of sweet peppermint and sour lichen. The clangor of the golden geese had died as the great birds settled on the lake at sundown. Even the ducks had ceased quarreling about proprietorship, it was the mating season, and silence enveloped the valley that never slept.

The fire bugs were glowing in the willow trees, and, as the leaves swayed in the wind, it was as if a hundred eyes blinked in the darkness. One felt that the willows held stalking figures that peered with seeing orbs out of the rustling foliage.

Ears could hear the spring gargling its alkaline mineral, while the zephyr purred in the tall grasses; but the melody of night was so faint one could have detected the gentle notes of fairies had they blown through hollow willow reeds.

But suddenly the air vibrated with a mournful howl that was almost human in its deep yet grotesque pitch. But the creek didn't stop to listen, nor did the fire bugs cease shining, nor the grasses stiffen. Maybe the two old swans on the slough lifted their long, curved necks for a moment before going back to feed on the pond weed hugging the creek-bed's bottom.

"It's that garl-darn Bugle," Griffin informed his friends from where they sat in the crude rockers on the porch of the dude ranch. O'Neill and Kane remembered the long, flea-bitten English fox hound they had seen the previous day. It had stood sulking about a mile from them. They could make out its long, drooping ears caught with burrs.

"Mad as a coot," Dick Griffin had said as he rowed the boat up Moody Marsh. "Got a mind some day to shoot him myself." They had heard a goveling noise, followed by throaty whines, and then the jack snipe had broken cover before the sensitive nose of the hound dog. "Kills about a fourth of the ducklings, I warrant; worse than a coyote."

"Whose dog it it?" Kane had inquired.

"Just a wild dog," Griffin answered shortly. They could see by his increased strokes on the oars that he was angered. Once he glanced at the rifle lying in the prow of the rowboat, but looked menacingly away again. "Need the bullets for stealing pelican," he muttered inaudibly under his breath.

But tonight as Griffin leaned in his hand-made chair of pine, he felt inclined to reward the inquiries made by his dude guests. As the gray smoke curled from his pipe and hung heavy about the carbide lamp's impassioned flame, he turned to O'Neill and Kane.

"Funny thing about that hound dog," he began. "Must be about twenty-two years old by now." Kane started. "Yep. Outlived any dog I ever heard tell of...if someone doesn't shoot it, it's liable to set a record." O'Neill laughed.

"I betcha," Griffin continued, "that there are two people down in the marsh tonight."

Eyes followed his to the moonlit waste of cat tails, bulrushes, and wild hay.

"A mad dog, and a mad man."

"O'Neill grinned; he remembered the words of his partner, Kane, earlier in the week: "There's one thing about a dude rancher--he can sure weave a good yarn." This might prove to be one of them.

"Tain't much difference between the dog and the man", Griffin continued. "They're both wild. The kid's been that way nigh on to two years now. Don't know nobody--just running loose. Lives with his ole man but stalks the country night and day--loon mad.

"You'll have to meet the ole man before you leave. He's a character. Heart and soul's in Tawney. Funny name, ain't it, for a kid? The ole man'll tell you how he picked it. Been a curse to him ever since, he says. Superstitious as hell," Griffin mused.

Kane could see that Griffin, in a mood like this, was going to beat the "ole man" on the draw and tell the story with his own version. The banker stretched his short legs out to the table and tilted back his chair. O'Neill pumped the insect spray into the air a few times and then settled back for a treat.

"Well, it was like this: Tawney was born here on Moody Marsh about nineteen year ago--1900, I think it was. MacBride'll tell you how he acted as mid-wife, but that's a joke, because I went after old Doc Bowman myself.

"The lad was a husky-looking little tyke, but he was prutty brown for a baby. "Injun in the wood pile," the fellows'd say, but old Doc Bowman blamed it onto the kinnikinick roots he and the old lady smoked. She died of pneumonia a winter later, leaving old MacBride and the kid alone. They was a prutty old couple to have a baby, but it kind of made Jim young again. He was proud as hell of his "Injun" baby.

"Anyway, one morning a couple a months after it was born, he stepped out of the cabin to watch a flock of golden geese that had just flown into Moody Marsh and were circling the lake--same bunch you fellows saw wing into the east the other night--they ain't never left here. Guess they kind of like us," he added, and winked here, putting in a word for his dude ranch, which he did whenever the occasion presented itself.

"As the ole man looked, he saw their golden-brown breasts dipping into the water. "Tawney-looking, ain't they?" he said to him-

self, and then he looked down at the couple-a-months old babe lying quietly in the crook of his arm. Unconsciously, I suspect, he connected the golden-brown face of his son with the golden-brown breasts of the golden geese. "Tawney-looking, ain't he?" he tells sang again in his brain, and he yelled excitedly to his wife within.

"'Saree," he called, "We've got a name for the boy. We'll call him Tawney!" But as he turned to go into the house, he saw over his left shoulder two white swan settling down with the golden geese. That, he'll tell you, was the curse.

"'If it weren't for them damn swan,' he says over and over again, "my Tawney'd be a fit boy today." I've seen the ole man stand on them banks above the lake and curse those two white swan, sitting out there on the calm water hour after hour, till it finally kinda got to be a religion with him. I've never heard a man rain down such pious words in such an impious way in my life! Don't matter what he's doing--if he's out plowing up a potato patch or fixing fence, or rounding up the cows, he'll stop everything at the sight of them two trumpeters going over. He'll wave his fist at their nonchalant flight, aim his ole tobacco juice in their general direction with the wind, and scream in his high treble until there ain't but a breath in his tired lungs."

"Did you call them trumpeters?" O'Neill interrupted. At the question, Griffin looked at the expression on the faces of his audience; this was the first time he noted the intensity of his listeners' interest. Usually when he embarked on a talking spree, it mattered not if his dude guests slept, day-dreamt or crept away, for he became unconsciously lost in his spoken thought. But now that he noted their attentiveness, he warmed anew to the account.

"Yep; the last of the trumpeters. These two were young birds come down from the Red Rock Lakes, where lives the only flock left in the world. They was young birds when they come here, but a year old, I take it. The main flock has lost its migrating instincts... time I can remember hundreds of them beating out a pattern against the sky, going southward; but now preservation's all they got in mind, what with only about ninety left. But I guess these two young uns had prutty hot blood in their veins and thought they'd take a little gander for themselves. No wonder the ole man Mac-Bride was fit to drop when he saw them two white birds a-lighting in with the geese. You don't see fowl of a different feather mingling together--'cus they was young and probably curious, I reckon, but they ain't never flown with them geese again; both of us can vouch for that. They're mighty particular old birds now, and kinda elegant in their ways. They go back home every winter, 'fore the hunting season opens, but just as soon as spring comes calling they fly on down again.

"You know, there's something about them birds that tugs at a fellow's soul; I get a feeling of the mystic about me whenever I hear their high, thereal trumpet song. And they're a powerful bird, too. Why, they've been known to kill people. Matter a fact, I heard tell how they killed a sow of Leary's once up on the Manida

junction--just beat it to death 'cause it was in the same wheat field where they was feeding. Oh, they're a majestic fowl, all right.

"And I'll tell you, I can just see old man MacBride waiting for 'em every spring. He gets more ornery than a cat in winter, keeping all his meanness pent up inside of him with all them curses, but when those two old swan come back, why he's the happiest cussing man I ever saw. He just tosses off all his ugliness on the wind...Why, you know, I think he's glad to have something to cuss at, now the old lady's gone."

Griffin stopped to light his pipe; the night was cooler, and little ripples played in the moonlight on the water. Lamps in the windows across the lake gave a steady gleam, and stars were trying to compete with the moon's bright light. The crickets in the wild foxtail grass had begun a broken concert in the upper octave, and the swallows could be heard whistling above the cliffs to the north. A cotton-tail had darted across the yard and Griffin's rat-tailed spaniel gave momentary pursuit.

"Yes," Griffin continued, picking up the threads, "you'll be hearing MacBride swear that he's gonna kill "them damn boids". He's been threatening now for the last fifteen years, but they don't seem to take much notice of him. Oh, I've had to speak to him... you know I've been made sort of an honorary game warden around these parts. Not that I'm ever aiming at trouble, but I know the value the government puts on those swan. So I told Mac that him and me'd come to blows if those birds was to be missing.

"'They'll be missing all right,' he'd say; 'I'll blow 'em to pieces!' And he has taken a couple a shots at them with that old .22 Winchester of his, but he's so old, and trying to bag them with a rifle--but then again, I kinda think he missed on purpose, 'cause considering for an old gent, he is prutty steady. But they didn't take no heed of him nohow--just kept right on a-flying."

"But what other argument has he got against the swans?" Kane asked, anxious for the story to get underway.

"Well, after Tawney started to grow, he began to bleach out--he started getting white. The ole man had kinda liked that healthy brown, but when the kid was about a year old, he was white as the moon--too almighty pale for a youngster. "It's them damn swan," the ole man'd cry. "They took offense cause I called him after the geese. Look at my Tawney," he'd add, "he's white as a girl." And he was--he was just as white as the swan.

"But he grew up a husky young chap. How could he be otherwise, being a chip off the old block? MacBride was proud of him. But he had that delicate look--that sensitivity that made you sorta glance twice to see if the pins were under him. And he kinda took to books, a thing the ole man never could understand. He read a lot, and he thought too much for a boy.

"Well, It was just at the time of the war, and we had had a lot to say about things, one way and another, but none of us did

anything, 'cept give another field or two to the wheat. 'Bout the month of July there was a thin fellow passing through these parts--some sort of a ranch hand, I suppose, I don't rightly know, but he boarded a night at MacBride's. He was one of those talkers, and he filled the boy with the propaganda of war--the honor of defending your country, fighting for the flag and dying for the "cause." Well, he was a prutty smooth speaker, I guess, and Tawney was a boy who was a great listener. The next day, when the ole man got up, the two of them was gone.

"Oh, MacBride knew why his son had disappeared, all right. And he knew how to cover up, too. The only way I could tell he was plumb sore was the way he'd carry on with them white swan. If they was sitting peaceful out in the middle of the lake, he'd get the notion they was tantalizing him, and if it took him two hours, he'd jump in a boat and row all the way out there just to disturb them for five minutes. They'd fly up and land a couple a hundred yards away on the slough and ignore the bent, white-haired ole figure standing in the boat and tossing oaths at them.

"And Bugle knew that his young master was gone. Nights you could hear him howling like a ghost, hour on hour. The ole man had to keep him chained up. But one night, I guess he just went plain mad, broke his chain and all, and it weren't for weeks that ole MacBride saw him again. But he couldn't get in miles of him; he was one of the suspicious wild. Lived off the country, like a lone wolf, and the hand of Tawney wasn't there to restrain him. He just turned killer for the joy of it--ducklings, partridges, pheasant, rabbits--all were at his mercy. He was a frenzied animal without a master.

"'Where's yore boy gone, Mac?' some of the gang from Ennis would ask him.

"'He's gone to fight for his country,' the old man would drawl in an affected voice of pride. But I could see he was lonely, broken-hearted, and lost. 'Wish I had more to follow after him,' he'd say, but I knew he was a worrying, tired ole man.

"They notified him about eight months later to come and get his son. He never told none of us the particulars, but there was a letter sticking out of his breast pocket when he stopped by my place in clothes I never saw him wearing except at funerals or weddings. They had belonged to an earlier day, and now hung baggy about a shrunken, shriveled form. He was driving his model T.

"Where to, Pop?" I asked him as he stopped at my store. I was busy putting in supplies for the summer, and we was adding a couple a new cabins on the north end, expecting a busy tourist season--people getting away from the strain of war worry.

"'Going to the coast to pick up Tawney,' was all he'd say. But there wasn't any spirit in his voice, and I could tell the way he avoided my eyes that the news was bad.

"Well, he was gone about a month, old model T and all, but one

day I heard it come puttering up the road. I went out, and there was the two of them, sitting on its high front seat, the ole man stern in his tall stetson, the tobacco juice dripping down the corners of his mouth. He was not planning stopping, I could see, so I ran and opened the gate over the broken cattle guard for him to pass through.

"'How are you, Tawney?' I called, but the face only looked blankly ahead. Afore I could notice closer, the old lizzie was tearing up the rocks in the middle of the cow trail.

"'Bout a week after that I saw the boy. He was walking down the road the cattle take to the swamp from the benchland. I had been fetching in my musk-rat traps for the summer, and he passed me about a hundred yards away. He was mumbling to himself, and there old Bugle was ranging out in front of him. Ole MacBride told me later how one moonlit night, only a couple a days after Tawney was back, he heard the old dog howling to the moon, and next thing he knew, the boy was out a bed and away, and when he came back in the morning, the dog was with him. But as I looked at Tawney from where I stood with my traps, I saw that his step was a feeble, plodding one, kinda like the ole man's. Only the dog seemed to know what he was mumbling, for his old tail was beating the air like a bee.

"They're both crazy," I thought, "man and dog--loon mad."

"The one thing that struck me so funny was his skin. Tawney was again brown as an Indian, the color of the breast of the golden goose...not the delicate, pale boy that had gone away, but the "Injun baby" the ole man named "Tawney." Wasn't long till we all knew...

"But it weren't as bad as it might have been, nor it weren't one of those hopeless cases of shell shock you hear about. Not that he's ever been the same, but this old country's built him up again. This mountain air's the thing for the lungs--and the ole man's cooking--and the warm sun. Tawney's a youth again. Runs like a deer, hunts and fishes like a redskin...oh, he don't talk none, only to the dog, but it does seem they understand one another. The lingo of lunatics, eh?

"I guess they're both just children, Tawney and Bugle. They are on the go constantly--never doing anything, just pirates getting into all sorts of mischief. Ole Mac does all the work, while those two play. You see, you might say the young man has reverted back to childhood, what with the pranks he plays on all the wild life of Moody Marsh, and the old dog, Bugle, at his heels, just as devilish--a riotous pair of madmen! Children of Luna, I guess."

As he said this, Griffin's eyes wandered to the marsh, from whence had come the hound dog's yelp earlier in the evening. Two pairs of eyes followed his, as three lost themselves in quiet speculation. Griffin was getting tired, and O'Neill stretched a leg he hadn't realized before was stiff. Suppressing a yawn, the host

rose and stretched.

"'Bout time to leave Tawney and turn in, I reckon. Locklaven may be biting round about sun-up, providing they don't feed on bugs all night in the moonlight. Maybe you'd like a try in the morning?"

"Sure thing," Kane asserted as they entered the lodge from the porch. But how little they realized that the saga of Moody Marsh, related to them by Griffin, was to come to its climax this very night.

Down near the mouth of Calling Lake, where the slough and alkaline springs empty into its blue-green depths, the hound Bugle was crouching flat on his stomach at the heels of a blithe, silently creeping figure. Not even the breathing of the two was audible, although at times an asthmatic whine whistled through the nostrils of the dog. Tawney's feet were clad in buckskin moccasins he had tanned by hand, and his buckskin shirt was open at the throat; his hair hung long and matted down his back like the white, uncut hair of his father. The moon was in his eyes, and they gleamed in wordless excitement. There was no difference twixt day and night to this nomad of the wilderness. Every landmark he knew--every curve in the slough was familiar. As he peered, the moon, a hunter's lamp above his shoulder, reflected its image in the sighing water as it lazily swooned with the current.

Step by step the two crawled, aware only of each other's intentness. Occasionally the hand of Tawney reached back to touch the cold, damp, quivering nose of the hound dog. To both it was no new game--this stalking through dense cat tails to raid the unsuspecting nest of wild fowl. This was as old to both as childhood. The puppy Bugle had been carried through the wastes of Moody Marsh when his short legs had become too tired to travel. He had felt the rollicking movements of his young master as he hung suspended on his slender shoulder. Together they had lain on the banks of the slough, waiting in keen anticipation as the arm of Tawney moved slowly back and forth in the water, drawing his long fingers across the back of a native trout. When felt the process of hypnosis complete, he would cease tickling his prey and suddenly grasp it in his boyish fist. Laughing in exultation, he would throw the squirming silver on the bank. Then would dog and boy measure it from top to tail before Tawney would hit it across the head with a thick branch. Into the knap-sack it would go to lay among the first early bitter-roots of the year, or shy twin bells, or flowering moss and Indian pipe, or pink and soft mushrooms picked after a spring shower. Nature kept few treasures from them.

Tawney knew the color of the mallard's eggs, the soft beating heart of ducklings held between his hands, the warning note of the rattlesnake, the track of the fox, the call of the curlew, the best eddies to set his beaver traps. He knew the clefts in the crags where the swallows slept, the lair of the "she" covote, the nest of the bald-headed eagle, the song of the humming bird's wings, the colors of the wild canary.

Now the man Tawney and the old hound Bugle were on another

scent, but tonight's plunder would be one never before realized. They were proceeding with utmost caution. As he cast a glance over his shoulder toward the bend in the slough, Tawney saw the two old swans treading the water in motionless dignity. Their long, curving necks ducked occasionally under the surface and spray splashed in the star-dusty air as their dark heads again emerged. The black bills were plainly visible, and their feathers shimmered like silver in the moonlight. It was a picture of fascination, yet this was not the mission the two were on tonight. Freezing in their slouching positions, eyes alert, muscles taut, they waited. Long they crouched until the first swan slowly rounded the bend and disappeared from view; soon it was followed by the other.

Then again Tawney and the dog began creeping, slowly moving in the direction of a mound of grass, tules, and willow twigs, visible in the moonlight only to eyes of the hunter and nose of the hound. For weeks now they had glimpsed the white bodies settling on the slough, catching debris in their bills and depositing it on the further bank. When they went on searches up the slough for bull heads, the two adventurers worked their way far around the serpentine bend where it curves like a horse-shoe, always keeping several hundred yards between the swan's domain and themselves. But tonight their curiosity was to be rewarded. This was the night the two old swans would feed by the light of Waconda's lamp. For days they had not strayed from the spot, but hunger was the determiner in this midnight wander.

None know the wild beauty of the hunt but the hunter and the hunted. Ear perceived all the sounds of night--the laughing water, the wheezing wind to the north in the cliff's crags, the sighing of grasses, the heavy scraping together of brown-topped cat tails. Nose smelled the freshness of mosses, the sulphuric odor of stagnant puddles and decayed tules, the wet scent of wild hay, the far-flung perfume of skunk, the sickly smell of wild onion, and the rich heaviness of dewed earth. Eye saw the shadows of scattered clouds sneaking across the moon's heavy face, the brilliance of the water, the bending path of grasses where feet had stepped, and the flash of duck wings above the lake. Tongue tasted the moist biting air, and body felt the robe of evening lying like cold silver about the flesh. No sense was cheated of the poetry of moody marsh; the entire body wore its environment and became a part of it. It changed with the seasons and all sense perceptions changed with it, but its meter of life was constant throughout. Tawney and Bugle, reveling in the joy of the hunt, crouched in anticipation, anxious to be upon the quarry, but wishing to prolong the suspense of the moment.

Slowly the invaders approached the nest, only eight or nine paces from them. As they raised up cautiously to peer ahead, the air was rent with thrashing wings! Turning quickly, Tawney saw a phantom of white flinging directly before him through the moon-misty air. There was no time to duck or dodge, no covering to hide behind. As his feet gripped the earth more firmly, his head and neck reeled backward from a violent blow. He doubled forward in a bent position to protect himself, but the powerful outstretched wings closed about him with beating ferocity. Nor was the dog spared.

Claws and feathers mingled as the second swan strove to drive off the aggressor. Yelps and hissing beaks pierced again the silence of the marsh. Here was enacted the code practiced by the wild for their young.

Having no weapons of protection against the angered parents, there was but the alternative of flight, and both transgressors took it, pursued by angry, flashing wings, tearing claws and biting beaks. As they dove into the mulberry thicket, the antagonizers gave up the chase.

Tawney sunk into a sitting position, back propped by the stout saplings of the grove. He put his reeling head in his hands. His knuckles felt the caressing tongue of the joyous Bugle, whose tail was cracking the air in delight. The foe had left, and the hound dog was ready to renew the adventure. It was not the first time old Bugle or Tawney had taken a licking against the forces of nature. The dog would be up and off again for another fray, would his young master but say the word. But Tawney remained motionless.

There was a rush of blood surging at his temples--his head felt flooded--his heart seemed to be violently beating within his brain. It left him feeling light-headed. For a moment he seemed to be hanging in a state of coma. Then as quickly as it had come, it was gone, and he raised his head in strange wonderment. A sudden awe fell about him...the weird branches enveloping him, the eerie glow of light etching their tresses, the coldness of the air..and then he felt the broad head of the dog resting pensively on his knees. His hands reached out and took the long drooping ears between them.

"Bugle," he said in a warm tone of voice that he realized to be his own. "Bugle," he repeated in astonishment. "Is it you, ole boy?" With his hand on the dog's head, he stepped slowly out of the bushes onto the high grassy bank of the slough.

"This is Moody Marsh, and it's moonlight, and here's the slough, and the crags beyond, and the cottonwoods along the river..." And slowly it all came back to him.

He saw the willows by the springs, and the silvern lake, and mountains that hemmed in the valley he loved so well. He could not know that a sleeping nerve in his brain had been awakened. He was merely aware of a consciousness he had forgotten.

Suddenly the garb of childhood had dropped from him and he stood--Tawney, the man. He had **thrown** off the unhealed scar of war. That which time had failed to wear away, the balm of beating wings brushed aside, instilling by their palpitating fluctuations the former pulse of reason. Wings of iron might deaden, but wings of feather could heal. Where fear flew with the one, love soared with the other.

"I'm at home," Tawney whispered softly to the marsh. And it seemed to answer him in the language of the wild--the wordless silence that makes utterance without lips to the spirit. But the song

of the marsh was music played anew to ears that had been deaf to its full meaning. Once again more than the senses could respond to its call--the soul would answer with a voice heard only where all is calm and cognizant...in nature's wilderness, Tawney knew serenity survived.

As he and the dog stood in the swampland they loved, the trumpeting song of the swans floating on the night air seemed to proclaim a truce of peace. The old swans would live out their years in Moody Marsh, and their tawney ugly duckling would grow to follow the V-ing throngs to the rice fields. Now the old man's curses would turn to blessings, for his son had truly come home.

