mountaineer
Published by the Students of Montana State University

Green Water
Padding the Cell
Over the Mountain
Poems
It’s Been Done Before
Sonnets
Fable
Nine Mile Report
Exile

TOMMIE LOU RUSH
HELEN BRUTSCH
AGNES REGAN
SERGEANT DAVID PERKINS
MARJORIE POWELL
WALTER KING
FLORA SAGEN
RUTH E. ANDERSON
MARJORIE KARLIN

Volume 4
Fall, 1945

Speer, Lucille (Library)

Number 1
Price 40c
Missoula

Mercantile

Company

Where Missoula and Western Montana Have Shopped With Confidence for 80 Years.

If you’re lucky in love a Christmas gift of jewelry or silverware will leave her breathless

B & H Jewelry
mountaineer

FALL 1945 VOLUME 4

STAFF

Editor ................................................................. Agnes Regan
Business Manager ................................................... Tommie Lou Rush
Circulation Manager ................................................ Mary Ellen Fifer
Publicity Manager ................................................... Lois Pat Nelson
Faculty Advisors ................................................... John Moore and Baxter Hathaway
Editorial Board: Walt King, Marjorie Powell, Marjorie Karlin, Irene Turli, Coleen McCool, Helen Brutsch, Jane Jeffers.
Circulation Staff: Betty Lu Collins, Betty Odom, Myrtle James, Kathy Lloyd, Marcia Fahey, Audrey Kramis, Nancy Kincaid, Mary Eleanor Redpath, Esther Bergh, Cornelia Shuder, Eleanor Linse, Elda Jean Martin, Elizabeth Little, Madge Schreiner, Jane Cheadle, Pat Miller, Betty Jo Trerise.

SPONSORS

Allied Fashions .................................................... C. C. Jamison
B and H Jewelry ................................................. H. H. Henrikson and Mrs. A. Sheridan
Buttreys .............................................................. J. H. Shaw
Cecil's ................................................................. Mrs. J. E. Monohan
Conway's ............................................................... D. R. Conway
Curry's Lunch ...................................................... V. & H. Curry
Ellis Photo Shop .................................................... M. A. Ellis
First National Bank ............................................... T. Jacobs
W. P. Fuller and Co. ............................................... T. F. Rush
Gift Shop ............................................................. Mrs. E. M. Brown
Garden City Floral ............................................... J. K. and S. K. Caras
Hamburger King .................................................... R. Giffen
Kephart's Beauty Salon .......................................... Mrs. R. C. Kephart
KGVO ................................................................. A. J. Mosby
Lucy's ................................................................. Lucy Bros.
Missoula Mercantile .............................................. C. H. McLeod
Murrill's .............................................................. R. Ingersol
Montana Power and Light ....................................... F. W. Bird
Missoulian ........................................................... R. E. Morrison
Office Supply ....................................................... C. Elder
Potter Refrigeration Co. ......................................... C. W. Potter
J. C. Penney Co. .................................................... S. F. Newmack
Super Cream ........................................................ E. W. Graybeal
Student Union Store ............................................. M. McCollum
Yandts' Men's Wear ................................................ Corner of Pine and Higgins
Yellow Cab Co. ....................................................... J. H. Ferrington
Green Water

By TOMMIE LOU RUSH

It was no use. I sat down on the ground and stared at the boulder, expecting every minute to see the old man come around it and beckon to me. I had cried the second time. I had cried hard. Not very many tears had come. That was because I was scared, so scared that I knew tears would blind me and I wouldn't be able to see him coming, and then I couldn't run away. I had conserved the tears but let the sobs build a wall inside my throat until I could hardly breathe. Now I was tired, so I sat on the ground and stared at the huge rock in front of me on the path.

Mother had told me not to go down that way. It's summer, I had said. Something is calling me. Let me go, please. Don't wade, she had said. And don't go up the green path. Don't drink green water. So I had gone walking in the hot day without my straw hat, kicking up clouds of red dust with my bare feet, feeling the dirt sift through my toes. The branches of the trees hung over me and their leaves brushed softly over my face while the little twigs from the thorn bushes had pulled at my clothing and scratched my legs. Once there was a deep scratch, so I picked up some dust, spat into it, mixed up a little paste and rubbed it on the scratch to stop the bleeding.

Everyone and everything was asleep in the sun. Even the flies were too lazy to buzz around me. Far, far away I could hear the screen door bang behind mother, and she called. But I could not hear what she said, and I did not turn around to go back to try to hear what she was calling. I kept on walking up the road, keeping a red haze between the sun and me with my dusty way of walking.

I first disobeyed her by wading. It was wonderful. You know how it is—like taking an aching cool drink after being thirsty for a long time. When I set my eyes on that water, I couldn't stand it any longer. When I rubbed my dusty feet together, they felt like dry, rough paper.

It is necessary, I said, to get my feet wet. I could feel them twitch in eagerness. There was nothing I could do to stop them. They led me to the creek and in they stepped. The water washed off the mud and sucked in between my toes. I thought the scratch would begin to bleed again when the mud was washed off, but that was a mistake I had
made. The water was so icy that the wound closed as if in defense to keep warm.

It was time to go home. The sun, to be sure, was still two-thirds the way up in the sky, but one more third and it would be behind the tree tops and I did not like the thought of a long, dark shadow preceding me on my way home. I did not like my shadow. I hated it.

It was time to go home, but I sat on the bank with my feet tucked under me looking down the deep green path. I had never walked past this boundary before. What could be up there? And what was the green water? Why was mother so sure it would bring me harm? I had defied her once today, why not again? Very soon a thin film of mud covered my legs as I started walking up the still, dusty way of the green path. Soon the dust dissolved into a hard-beaten track and then dark green grass sprung up in the least trodden parts. The branches hung closer and closer to the ground until I found myself near-ly crawling on all fours. I had just about decided to turn around when I noticed the house. It, too, was green, but old and streaked as if washed by many rains, and there, sitting on the porch, in a broken rocker, sat an old man, nodding in the early evening air.

"I will speak to him, I said, and then I 'll go."

"Hello." I stood with my hands behind me, staring at him. "Howdy." He opened one eye slowly and then raised the other eyelid a trifle. I saw that that organ was missing.

"What you doin' down this way?" he asked, rubbing his feet on the porch. "Walkin'."

"Tired?"
"Nope."
"Hungry?"
"Nope."

There was a long pause and then he dragged the word from his mouth.

"Thirsty?" he said softly, leaning forward on his elbows. "Could stand a drink." The old man rose stiffly and stretched for a moment.

"Come on," he said. "Well's over this way."

I stood by the ivy-covered round wall of white stone. A dipper hung on a nail driven into the beam that stretched up from and over the top of the well.

"Help yourself," said the old man, lifting his eyelid a little higher from the empty socket. I leaned over to take up a dipperful, but I stopped.

"But it's green!" I said. "Sure, what did you expect?"

What had I expected? Sure, the water was green. I was up green path and that was where green water was. But such a green. Clear, all the way to the bottom. The only thing that broke its surface was a small ripple that came from nowhere. There was no moss or algae growing on the sides of the well. There wasn't a frog or a minnow in it. Just the cool, green water rubbing itself cattishly against the sides with its continual minute ripple. Don't drink green water. That's what mother had said. I dipped into it and held my head back, letting it run down my throat, spilling it out of my mouth, trickling it down my chin.

"Cool, wasn't it?"

I nodded my head. "Thank you." I hung the dipper in its place, turned my back on the old man and walked away. I thought
I went back the same way I had come, but somehow it didn't seem the same. I walked for nearly half an hour, and suddenly, there I was again, back at the green house.

"Thirsty again?" He opened his one good eye and stared wickedly at me. I shook my head a little fearfully and plunged off in another direction. I could hear his laugh following me. I did it a third time. And now, here I was, sitting on the ground, staring at the boulder. I could see the sun, ready to disappear behind the trees. Of course, I could sit here and wait for the old man. There was no use to go around the boulder. The old green house would be there with that little white well beside it. That horrible white well with the hideous old man leaning on it and laughing at me. I wouldn't go. I wouldn't. I'd let him find me first. Oh, no, not that. As long as I kept on, I might find a way. That was the only thing I could do to keep up hope.

If You'd just give me another chance, God. I'd listen, really I would! I'd do just what mother told me to do. I'd not go wading or explore where I shouldn't. Oh, God, if You'd just let me make the decision all over again! If I were just there at the entrance of the green path and could choose again! Why, so I was! The green path stretched before me once more. I could feel the cool water on my feet. The sun was still two-thirds up in the sky: It must have all been a dream. I would turn and run, run home so fast. As fast as ever wind went.

But it is not a dream. And there is no turning back. Each day I said I shall do this and this. I should have done that and that. But now it is too late. I shall keep on doing this and this, and I shall probably keep on telling myself that it should have been that and that. The green water is too tempting, so in the end I lose everything. Funny, isn't it? If only I knew where the ripple came from.
Without a doubt, sages of better times or even recent times have pronounced judgment on these very items, but here and now, despite all remarks to the contrary, it is time that the mind of a lesser being express itself. It takes little or no provocation to start one spilling off about his various complaints and ailments, whether they can be remedied or not. Such an opportunity as this probably comes once in a blue moon, so on with the show.

The bug bit or rather somebody prodded the bug to bite, early in my childhood. The desirability of knowledge and the prospective success to be attained via an education were pounded in my ears from the time I learned to spell my name.

That day is a memorable one. Mother, weary with my continual whining, thrust a pencil between my chubby fingers, brushed the hanging hair out of my eyes and with great patience pushed the clenched fingers up and down the paper in an effort to teach me how to write an H. That was the beginning.

For fifteen long years, and brother, I'm not kidding when I say long, I have been laboring under the delusion that the search for knowledge was the ideal, that high school was not to be the end of my education, that I was a scholar at heart. Could be that the delusion has lasted long enough, that the "outside" world can teach fully as much. My burning desire to learn has quietly faded with the years. Now it is nothing more than a few coals sputtering in the empty caverns of my mind, and soon, aided and abetted by a capricious curiosity, I shall see what this cold, cruel world has to offer.

Voicing opinions as to the relative merits or demerits of education is bound to cause trouble. Therefore, I herewith present a few examples of the inhabitants of the higher institution of learning. Classifications are purely based on hypothetical situations and any resemblance to known persons is accidental.1

Species: Alpha Lambda Delta

Peculiarities: Rimless spectacles, occasionally bi-focals which cause characteristic grotesqueries in the organ of sight. Head thrust slightly forward, determined

1 I might say this is a risky business, and say, Mabel, fill up the mugs, I'm getting thirsty.
but credit is due the curious minds which are often classified here and wrongly so.

**Habitat:** Coke store, hen sessions, front row in classes, hilarious parties where Joe said the cutest things to me.

**Interests:** What dress Annie is going to wear, gossip, how bad the food was at lunch, why daddy doesn’t send more money, the clothes Professor Hopscotch wears.

**Special Abilities:**

**By-word:** Darling, I didn’t know you had a date!

**Outcome:** The best wives with the most spoiled brats.

**Species:** The Too-busy, eager Sorority Woman.

**Peculiarities:** Hurried speech, perpetual running hither and thither, coat flapping in the breezes, brandishing of sword of power over heads of inferiors.

**Habitat:** Any and every meeting. Her policy is to know, to be aware, to search for the practical and useful.

**Special Abilities:** An organizer from the year One whose school spirit is often drowned by loyalty to her cohorts.

**By-word:** Ever upward, ever onward.

**Outcome:** An executive of the first water, standard bearer for the W. C. T. U.

**Species:** Mr. Wiseacres.

**Peculiarities:** Pipe or cigarette listlessly dangling from grim lips, piercing eyes which see all but tell nothing, supercilious attitude toward the inexperienced, contempt for the struggling ignorant.

---

* The fellows can tell you, I can’t.

5 An earnest, enthusiastic and willing worker for advancement of public welfare.
Habitat: Philosophical meetings, the stacks in the library, public gatherings where the destiny of the world is discussed. Bless his soul, the world would stop whirling on its devious course without him.

Special Abilities: Note-taking, which no one can understand.  
Rabble rousing.

By-word: These are the facts.

Outcome: The man who sits in the lobby of the Florence, discussing human frailities, the downfall of nations, the ruination of youth.

These are the illustrious wayfarers whose fortune or misfortune it is to come to college. Expectantly the world watches them. Enviously their childhood chums, who did not have the opportunity to come to college, read of their wondrous activities in the daily news. These are the worthy alums-to-be who, in a few years, will pound each other on the back, screech at seeing one another across a hotel lobby or lift their drinks in memory of the good old Alma Mater.*

A great fear has assailed me, taking it for granted I will sooner or later be freed from the bonds of assignments, that I shall regress to my vegetable state. Will I no longer open books where men throughout the eons have expressed great and not so great thoughts? Will the teachings throughout the years be nothing more than one lumped episode in this soul-consuming business of life? In such case, if it is true, I would say even fifteen years of one environment can not change the natural tendencies of man. Perhaps all this time there has been something within me rebelling at the confinement of school-

* Neither can he.
* Which reminds me, where did Mabel go?

ing, something which insists that living is experiencing, not reading and dreaming. Perhaps remaining in complete ignorance, accepting what was offered, eating and sleeping, satisfying the mere bodily wants I would be happier than not.*

Are the people who finished a college education, who moaned and groaned as we do now, any happier for accomplishing it? They, who talk of what Time, Fortune, Newsweek and the Post say, they who read books, they who claim to know what this maze we are about to enter is like, are they any happier, any more satisfied with their lives than the man who fought his way with his hands, who used brawn many times rather than brain, who left high school with the one purpose in mind, to find work?

Ah yes, the pitfalls are many, once one ventures on the long road of learning. Falling by the wayside or lingering on the brink of ignorance is really not so bad.** Earthly pleasures, to you I bow in reverence, recognizing your power.

But such is not to be the pleasant fate of one who, prodded constantly by his elders, takes the dire step, sinks swiftly in the mire for a short while, finds the bottom and begins to struggle with the basic elements of learning. You can not say, "I have tried," and throw in the sponge, for a latent spark will continually come to life as long as there is breath in the body or the wheels of the mind grind on. The time comes when even we, the ignorant, begin to realize how little we know and how much there is to learn.** You can

* Ever hear of the noble savage?
** Or is it?
** Bitter pill, fill the mugs, Mabel, I'm in need of solace.
not stop wanting to know, you can not stop the cudiosity or satisfac-
tion of finding out something that lies hidden in the words of others. The torture of never knowing enough, never completely blacking out the insatiable desire to discov-
er and the realization that all can never be known or learned drives the weary mind on. You are un-
done the minute you learn how to read."

These words, let me but return to my vegetable state, cause an-
guish in my heart, for I, too, am one of the unhappy wretches who forever must be chained to the lamp of learning. Let me laugh, let me shout, scream, wrestle, bite or claw at the monster, I will nev-
er be released."\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Better call in the strong boys with white coats.}

"I want to get out," say the beaten souls who have such a short time left to intensively con-
sume their education. Fools, don’t you know that this is but the beginning? To you will come the dregs of satisfaction, the res-
idue of crusading, inspired spirits.

Your work can not end with the eight-hour day, for perhaps some-
body will unwittingly make the remark, "What did St. Thomas Aquinas preach?" Nothing will do, but you must rush home from the office, search in frantic haste for those notes taken in Human-
ities many long years ago. Your ignorance you can not fathom, nor your short memory.

In closing may be observe a mo-
ment of silence for the spirit of knowledge, persistently jolting our lazy, weakened minds.
Over the Mountain

By AGNES REGAN

If there had been a widening in the road he might have turned back, but by then it had narrowed to a gravelly alley winding between the trees, wide enough for only one car. He sat tensed over the wheel, a frown creasing his forehead against the din of the motor. Overhead the branches grew thicker, shutting out the twilight which was setting deeper in the gulch and dulling the outlines of the trees and the road ahead. He fumbled along the dash board and flicked the light switch. Ahead a single, dim beam peered into the dusk along the left side of the road.

He swore under his breath. One headlight against miles of bad mountain road. One failing headlight and a heavy, ancient coupe, ready to fall to pieces on the way. The thought hit him like a cold punch and he forcibly put it from his mind, concentrating on the road before him. When he hit a corduroy stretch the car body rattled and shook, a piece of the flapping roof flying loose and falling past the window.

The road curved and began to climb gradually. He strained to catch landmarks in the dim light, trying to remember the once familiar way. On his right he watched for a small clearing with one wall of a fallen stone building still partly standing in the center. After a quick glance as he passed it his mind raced ahead to the turnoff to the mine and the old corral. He caught his breath sharply. Beyond the old corral was Crazy Hilda's. He had forgotten Crazy Hilda, with her straggling hair and wild, burning eyes. At the memory of her eyes he felt a wave of fear. Strange, he thought with sudden detachment, that he should still be afraid of the witch-like old woman, more afraid now than when he was one of a bunch of dirty-faced kids hooting at her and pelting her with pine cones until she chased them with a piece of squaw wood, screaming threats. But she was not as crazy as they had thought. If she saw the car now she might remember it as she remembered everything that passed before her shack, and one person knowing that the car had taken this road, even a crazy old woman, could set his scheme off.

He gripped the wheel, biting his lip to keep it from twitching in the nervous habit he had acquired in the past months. Around another turn the road forked and he took the lower one, recognizing the other as the mine turnoff. He watched now for the corral, trying vainly
to think of a way to avoid the notice of Crazy Hilda. He had chosen the road because it was little used, but now that value changed to a threat, for a car passing in the evening would obviously be noticed by the solitary woman. Finally he saw the corral in the trees to his left. Its smallness startled him. He had remembered it as a large circle of poles, not the cramped space he saw now.

He passed a pile of rocks and remembered that the shack was around the next turn. Slowing a little and straining, he caught a glimpse through the trees, then came out in the clearing in front of it. The door sagged open and the roof caved above the window. Surprised, he stared and then laughed nervously. It had not occurred to him that Crazy Hilda might be gone with the years that had passed since he had tried the road. At the same time he realized that the mountain pass might have changed, each spring rain wearing it away and blocking it with rock slides.

He concentrated on the trail ahead, following its windings. On a hill he tried to shift and the gears grated and stalled. He swore at the obsolete Buick gearshift, reverse of modern gears, and shifted to the right hand low to start again. He drove as fast as he could on the bad road, with the thought of time and escape pressing him on. Once the car hit a rut and jolted, knocking something loose on the car body that banged over the bumps before he stopped. He climbed out and stumbled on the broken running board that had torn loose on one end and was dragging on the ground. Wedging a piece of branch between it and the fender, he propped it up and got back in the car. The upper door hinge was broken and he had to roll the window down and pull up with the outside handle to close it. As he slammed it the window handle fell off onto the seat and he flung it back angrily onto the ledge behind the seat and started again. The road was less gravel, more dirt, rutted and washed. Mile after mile he followed it, staring into the night which had become black, cloudless and starless.

A report like a shot broke above the motor roar and the wheel jerked and rocked in his hand. Swearing furiously he skidded to a stop. When he stepped on the running board it broke again under his weight, tripping him forward, and he kicked it angrily, then propped it up again. Behind the car it was too dark to see, so he hesitantly lit a match, holding it low where the flickering light showed him that the right rear tire was flat. By a second match he saw a wide rip torn in the tire. He flipped the match out when the flame burnt his fingers and felt around for the spare above the back bumper. His hands ran around the edge, feeling the worn smoothness of the tread. The car was on a slope and he had to back a dozen yards to a level spot before he could work.

By the headlight he studied the front tire, an old type, large and heavy, that was changed by taking off the whole rim. He pulled the car seat out and pawed through the junk under it for tools. By the light of a match he found a wrench and hammer but no jack. He slung the rest of the junk back and on a chance pushed the top of the rumble seat up and felt around there. Among the cushions and dirty blankets he found several pieces of a jack which he took back to the front light to fit together. It was rusted and the base was broken.
where it fastened to the shaft. Under the car seat he found a spool of wire and, returning and squatting cross-legged in the road before the light, he repaired it clumsily. He placed it beneath the back bumper and raised it easily, until he realized that the bumper was forced up so far it was nearly breaking off, but the wheels still rested on the ground.

Disgusted at the waste of time he knocked the jack down again and this time placed it far under the back axle, feeling in the dark for a level spot to set it on, and awkwardly pumping the lever to raise it beneath the car until the wheel lifted and the tire spun free from the ground. Bracing his knee against the wheel he loosened the bolts with the wrench and unscrewed them quickly. One of them was rusted and stuck as he struggled with it, sweating and grunting with the effort. It came loose suddenly and he lost his balance and stumbled forward, kicking the pile of bolts he had carefully placed by his feet. In feverish haste he pawed on the ground in the dark, slipping all he found into his shirt pocket.

Finally he gave up and returned to wrench the tire rim off the wheel. It stuck and he jerked at it futilely, then wormed beneath and hammered at the inner edge. Painfully he kicked and struck until the tire came loose suddenly. He felt the dampness of blood and hurried to the front of the car where the light showed the hand partly crushed and gashed badly on the palm, with the skin scraped off the back. Swearing savagely, he bound it in his handkerchief to stop the bleeding, then wound another rag around it and clumsily tied the end. A wave of nausea passed over him and he sat down weakly on the running board until it passed. He pushed back his hat, held his forehead for a moment in his grimy hand and tried to calm himself and get a clear picture of what he meant to do.

Looking at it now, his situation was more senseless than any of the meaningless months he had just gone through. First the fight, then running, then taking the car—he couldn’t even remember what the fight had been about. It hadn’t been his quarrel, but something noisy between two drunks near him. He just leaned on the bar, staring ahead ignoring their wrangling until something insulting jarred on his overtense nerves and he snapped back, bitterly. Suddenly he was ducking a swinging beer bottle, stepping in with the quick, unthinking move he had drilled a thousand times, automatically twisting and jerking, and horribly, sickeningly feeling the bones crack and grow limp in his grip. Then he was running up the alley, vaulting a wall and running for blocks in another alley, until he realized with a start that no one was chasing him. And at the same moment he saw the car and formed his plan with the quick decision that had become automatic with him in the last few years.

Sitting now on the propped-up running board he shook his head, trying to brush away the panic and see as clearly as he had seen in the
mountaineer

moment when he seized his scheme. If he stayed calm, he told himself, he would be all right. The plan was simple—to get across the pass to the old Morgan road that ran down and struck the Carson highway near the small lake. Once on the Morgan road he could leave the car near the highway and double back on foot to the railroad, hop the two-ten freight down into Carson. Once there he had a dozen choices, to catch another freight out or take the bus or day coach or even hitch a ride on the highway. It wouldn’t matter there if anyone saw him; no one there could connect him with the fight miles away when there was no direct highway connecting the towns, and no train between them until the stub ran at noon the next day. If he could get across to the Morgan road and hide the car, he figured he would be safe. The car would be found, but not before morning, or the day after. Not before there would have been plenty of time for someone to have driven it all the way around by the highways and ditched it in the bushes somewhere along the Morgan road. No one would look for it very hard, not for a week or two, anyway. Not for a jalopy stolen from in front of a shack in the depot district where gangs of tough kids were always getting into trouble, turning in false fire alarms, fighting in the alleys, swiping old cars. He had done it himself when he was a kid, savoring the thrill of thinking that someone might be chasing him, yet always sure that there would be no real search. A new car missing would have caused enough stir to get the patrol notified, but not a rattletrap like the one he had taken. He was not worried about a search for the car, only about getting the car across the pass before it broke down, or had another flat. If he could only get across to the Morgan road—

His hand ached and shook slightly. He told himself again that he must be calm. He would have enough time if he went steadily. It was still early; he wondered again at the strangeness of a brawl so early in evening, even in a depot section bar. Fixing the flat would hold him up, but there was still time to get across to the Morgan road before the two-ten freight hit the top of the pass. As a kid, when he had stayed for a while in Carson, he had hitcheshiked out to the Morgan turnoff to swim at night in the pondlike lake, then trudged up the old road and cut up to the tunnel end and waited for the two-ten freight to chug slowly out of the black cavern. Before it started down the long grade that followed it was easy to hop an empty box car, choking at first against the smoke that had filled the car in the tunnel, then settling back for the hour-long ride from the divide down to Carson.

In some ways it helped to have been a wild kid, one who could tear across the country in the middle of the night without anyone worrying at home; in some ways, yes, but in others it meant running without a chance in a corner like this. Another man could have stayed and faced the charge with a fair chance of getting off—self defense, combat nerves, four years of service—He smiled cynically. Four years service against twenty years of wild record wouldn’t mean much in his town.

Suddenly he wondered why he had gone back at all. There was no one who really wanted to see him, nothing for him there. A job, maybe, if he seemed steady and sobered down, but nothing better
than he could get in any other town. But it was home. He laughed bitterly. Home, that he was running from half an hour after he had gotten there. Just gotten there and walked across the street from the station for a drink to ease his weariness after his long ride and half an hour later he was riding again, this time with fear pushing him on.

Lucky, though, that it hadn’t been longer, for no one he knew had seen him. He remembered the shock he had felt as he glanced at the mirror across the bar and looked without recognition at his own face, haggard, unshaven, in unfamiliar civilian clothes. No casual acquaintance could have recognized him. And no one in the bar had seen him closely; no one would be able to identify him when he was rested and shaved, if he returned then for a new start.

Lucky that the car had been several blocks from the bar, so it would not necessarily be connected with the fight, and that it was on the down grade so he could coast out of earshot of the house. Lucky, too, that it had plenty of gas and was an old model which needed no key. Lucky! His mind caught at the word and repeated it in a throbbing rhythm as he sat slumped on the running board. He would need luck to get across the pass before two o’clock.

A few miles back he had thought of turning back and trying some other way out, but now he saw that his only escape was to go on. There was no one chasing him; he could have waited until morning to go on, but the thought of spending the night where he was, alone with his nerves, made him shudder. Determinedly he stood up and dizziness swept him. He leaned against the car. After a minute he picked up the wrench and unscrewed the bolts on the spare. He worked awkwardly with one hand, wincing when he had to use the other. With painstaking caution he jacked up the car again, careful to stay from under it. He fitted the spare onto the wheel and pushed it on. It balked and he kicked it in a few inches, then hammered it further into place. Feeling its smooth tread again, he thought of the miles of rutted road ahead. He fished in his pocket for the bolts and screwed them on, tightening each one with the wrench. On one the thread had been twisted and he tried several times before it would wind on. He was one bolt short and hunted by match light in the grass along the edge; then, nervous at the loss of time, he gave up and quickly jammed the seat back into the car and pulled the door up and closed.

For miles the road climbed and wound up the gulch, showing signs of disuse more and more as it went up. Once he had to move a fallen tree from across the trail before he could go on. The ruts grew deeper and he forced the wheels out of them and rode on the edge. His hand throbbed and the ache moved up his arm. He wondered how long the spare would hold up over the rocks.

The road dipped sharply and involuntarily he shoved on the brake, releasing it partly as the wheels skidded. For a second there was only blackness ahead, then the feeble light picked out a crude bridge, sagging on one side, over a torrent of black water that rushed down the gully. The gears ground as he shifted automatically the wrong way and hastily reversed it to the right-hand low. Cautiously, without letting the rear wheels slip into the ruts, he eased
down onto the two planks of the bridge and felt it sag further under the weight of the car.

Desperately he gunned the motor and the car struggled up the bank where the climbing trail turned and steepened abruptly. He fought the wheel to round the curve and felt the motor strain, sputter and die. He jerked on the handbrake and hesitated, knowing that he couldn’t back around the sharp turn down onto the bridge. He pushed the starter button with no response. Sweat broke out on his forehead and he wiped it with his sleeve, noticing again the throbbing ache in his hand. Carefully he tried the starter again, heard it turn over and raced the motor. One hand on the brake, he slowly let in the clutch until he felt the motor catch. He pushed off the brake and the car charged ahead a few feet, coughed, and began to slip back. He jerked the brake again, and wiped the sweat from his eyes.

Sticking his head out the window and squinting, he tried to make out the road ahead. The rise went up steeply for another dozen yards of rutted trail, before it leveled a little and disappeared in the trees. Again he started the motor, released the brake and lunged up a few feet before the car stalled and rolled back. For what seemed an eternity he repeated the lurching starts, gaining a yard or two at each try until they finally brought him a few feet from the top of the rise. He pushed the starter for a last effort and with dismay saw the light blink and go out. Panicky, he gripped the brake, gunned the motor and charged up into blackness. The car strained and suddenly leveled and shot ahead. He slammed on the brake, shifted to neutral and flicked off the light switch, letting the motor run.

In the dark he fumbled for a cigarette and match, his hand shaking so he had to steady it on the wheel to get a light. He took a long drag and tried to relax. Suddenly he realized that it was cold, a biting cold of the pass that was more than the wind and the night. He felt along the ledge back of the seat for the window handle and rolled it nearly up, huddling in the corner and gently moving the fingers of his injured hand that was stiffening. He thought again of waiting where he was until daylight; the chances of getting away would be almost as good in the morning. He tried to consider it carefully, but a vague terror gripped him and he discarded the idea quickly, shuddering at the thought of fighting his nerves through a night of worry. A soft rain began to sift down and gather into big drops on the windshield. For a few minutes he puffed on the cigarette, then tossed it out the top of the window and flicked the light switch. The single bulb blinked on and glowed dimly.

He sighed shakily and started again, moving slowly and trying to stay out of the treacherous ruts that were beginning to be slick from the rain. The chill told him that he must be near the top of the pass, and although the road was still winding and climbing a little he watched anxiously for a sign of the divide. Rounding another curve he suddenly saw the sky move from the tree tops down the trunks until it showed through the stumps and he realized that he was at the top.

The road came out on an open plateau and the constant wind which always blew at the top of the pass caught the car broadside,
mountaineer

jerking the wheel in his hands. Rain was driven sideways, coming faster, turning the road to slime and seeping through the roof and around the doors. The road narrowed to two deep ruts with tufts of grass growing between, which crossed the open space and plunged back into the trees out of the wind and started to wind downward.

He drove in low, holding his breath when the car slipped in muddy spots. The windshield wiper swung erratically, flipping off the edge for a wild sweep of air, returning and settling unsteadily to smear across the window and back, then flipping off again. The driving rain blinded him and at times he slowed almost to a stop until it cleared enough so he could follow the weak light.

The road was a slick trail now, with tiny rivulets trickling down the ruts. When a flash of lightning lit the sky he saw with a shock that through the trees the hillside dropped into a steep gulch where the road wound downward in a series of steep hairpin turns. A few hundred feet ahead the bank on one side of the road fell away sharply, leaving the road a narrow ledge clinging to the side of the gulch.

He hugged the upper bank, creeping down the slippery trail behind the feeble headlight, muttering a profane prayer. Now and then a lightning flash showed him where he was and he shuddered at the drop below. Slowly the pressure of time came back to him, goading his snail's pace until he let the car move a little faster and caught it when the wheels began to slip toward the outer edge. In places the bank had slid down into the road and he edged past the narrow spot with the car tilting outward on the slick clay as the inside wheels climbed the pile of fallen dirt and rock. The crawling descent was an endless nightmare enveloped in a pouring darkness, lit only by the single beam and occasional sky-splitting flashes of lightning. Once there seemed a drop ahead, and the light picked out a spot where one of the sudden storm rivers washed through the road. He got out to see more closely.

The water pouring down a gulley just in front of the car had washed a jumpoff, then turned and streamed down the road for a few yards and poured down the bank again. Irresolute, he hesitated a minute, turned back to the car. When he tried to close the door the hinge broke loose again and he struggled angrily a minute before it caught. With infinite caution he let the car inch down the bank, biting his lip until it bled unnoticed as the wheels hit the water and rolled slowly through. Where the water poured over the bank there was a slight pull to the road again and the car started up and slid back. Panicky, he gunned the motor and the wheels spun and slipped a little down hill. He got out again and waded through the water to pull grass and brush from beside the road, and stuffed it for traction under the smooth place he could feel in front of the wheels.

Again he started the car, felt the wheels almost catch, then spin and begin to slip sideways. Calming his growing terror he climbed out into the dark again, pushed up the top of the rumble seat and felt in the back.

Between the cushions he found a blanket and he wedged it beneath the rear wheels, corduroy-
ing the slickness beneath it with sticks. Carefully he pressed the starter, released the brake and felt the wheels catch and push the car to the road again.

Numbly he relaxed his frown and remembered the ache in his hand. A little further along, the road hit the floor of the gulch and leveled off, traveling again in an aisle of trees. The stream in the gulch bottom was swollen, and the mud holes were treacherous, but the road had widened enough so he could skirt them safely or splash through the shallow pools.

His tense nerves refused to relax and he still sat strained forward, staring into the diminishing rain. Slowing for a minute, he lit a match and glanced at his watch. One-thirty-five. A minute later he came out on the wide gravel Morgan road and saw far down it the lights of the highway. Through his relief he felt the ache in his shoulders from the strain and the weakness in his legs. A controlled, exhilarating triumph pulsed through him. There were no lights on the road, no chance of meeting another car.

A mile from the highway he turned off along an overgrown trail and drove a hundred yards into the brush along the creek, pulled on the brake and flicked off the motor and light. The rain had stopped. He sat for a moment in the car, still listening for the sound that no longer drummed on the roof. The swollen creek roared faintly a hundred feet below. Above the bushes the sky grew lighter and, as he watched, split into separate clouds, breaking gradually before the moon. The light hit his eyes and as he caught the reflection in the mirror, a slow, tense grin crossed his face.

Quickly he jumped out of the car across the broken running board and pulled the sagging door up into place to slam it. He walked rapidly through the dripping brush along the trail to the road, then turned to look back. The moonlight shone on the bushes, shimmering on the drops of water that clung to the leaf edges. The car was screened by the brush, hidden in deep shadow.

Turning again, he walked for half a mile up the road, then cut off across the sage brush slope toward the trees. Once in the scrub pine he made his way more slowly but steadily up toward the tracks that wound around the hills. The pain in his hand had stopped throbbing and his head was clear. It took a long time to reach the tunnel but he did not hurry, knowing that he was in plenty of time, savoring the relief that flooded through him.

When he came out on the tracks he paused to light a cigarette with his clumsily bound hand and walked slowly to the spot where they plunged into the blackened gap in the mountain. He squatted on the bank and looked across the valley that spread below. The air was cool, but lacked the biting chill of the higher pass. The upper stream was hidden, but far below, it emerged from the bushes, a winding silver ribbon, then was shaded again by trees. On the far side car lights blinked along the highway and disappeared where it climbed a distant hill. Moonlight picked out objects in the valley—a water hole, pile of rock, the wet roof of a barn.

He felt the ground vibrate and he jumped up in alarm. The rumble of the approaching train sounded far away at first, then narrowed to a roar that echoed
through the tunnel as it entered the other end. He laughed quietly at his own tenseness, but the palms of his hands were damp and he could feel them shake. He wiped them heedlessly on his rain-soaked jacket as he ducked back to escape partly the smoke that poured from the tunnel mouth. Crouching low out of the blinding glare of the front light, he watched the engine huff its slow way out of the black hole, and the first black shape of a box car follow, outlined against the moonlit sky. He waited for two, three more to pass as the train gained momentum, then deftly leapt up the bank, ran a few steps with it and caught the hand bar on the car end. He swung his foot up and groped for a resting place. It found the lower bar, balanced for a minute on the edge, and slick with the mud that had smeared on it from the road, slid off again. The train jerked suddenly and the car lurched ahead. His fingers slipped on the wet bar and he clutched in panic with his injured hand, throwing himself off balance and swinging his body between the cars. Pain shot through the arm, convulsing it in an agonizing spasm that broke his grip. Desperately his nails clawed the slippery wood.

His scream rose and was drowned in the roar of the train as it thundered down the grade.
POEMS

By SERGEANT DAVID PERKINS

PREMONITION

If I return to find you hollowed,
Emptied of love and of anger too,
How bitter will be the road I followed
There to find the shell of you!

Without fangs and without flowers,
How shall I know you, when you come
Bearing neither of these powers?
How can you drive or lure me home?

LINES

"Surely they will not pursue the dead
Beyond the grave,"
Is what he said—
Ah, but they have,
And for the brave
This knowledge is a friend
As chains are to a slave—
Accepted. There will be no end.
LULLABY

This is a song that will probably never be
Said, or sung, or played on a flute,
And there is doubt that it will ever be
Cheer for the silences of the mute.

Low, slow, soft and regular
Cadence it has, but it cannot remain
For a lover to sing to his love as he begs of her
Kisses, but vanishes out of the brain.

Though love is young, the days are decaying it
Easily, quietly, out of all care,
And a song goes old as a singer is saying it
Gently, quietly, into the air...

And where disappeared? have them search, have them guess,
But nothing is left of the virginal trust
That was youth's own life, and the fathomless
Echoes are gone and the lips are dust.

SONNET

I sometimes wonder if I am the ghost
Of someone who once lived upon the earth.
Is my own private way of breaking toast
Some person's old way? Hold back with your mirth,
For laughter never really settles anything —
And this is quite a problem. Just suppose
I thought that I could speak, or sing,
Or have for thinking any way I chose,
When suddenly the horrid revelation
Of a stranger's words came rushing over me,
And I found twisted in my conversation
Speech that had no right there, or to be
In any mouth, because it had been said
By so-and-so, who was a long time dead!
HEARING NO MORE

Hearing no more your clear voice speaking
Clever words, I know I am alone
In this new land, alone with the solemn reeking
Of dead flesh, and the quiet dignity of bone
Detaching itself from its prisonhouse and seeking,
Hollow-socketed, the world unknown
So many weary years. The sullen leaking
Of bright blood, and the sudden, shocking groan
I have of life yet... Oh my comrades, let me
Go, it is too long, even her smile pales
Swiftly in my memory; she will forget me...
On your feet... on your feet... these are strange trails
Upward into Aves, into your soul...
The sound of bugles, and the burial.

ST. PAUL'S BRIDGE

Dusk and the heavy air are all about me.
Even the barges bulk their heaviness
Into the water now more devoutly,
Seeming to know, somehow, or somehow to guess
The freedom of water, and their imprisonment.
Dusk and the heavy air have choking fingers
Into my throat, and where the water went
I wish to go. The evening sunlight lingers,
Slanting into the river. Rusty-brown,
The water, twisting, eddies and goes on—
And suddenly I lean, and wish to drown
In those dark secret currents. Gone—
Be gone now swiftly!—down, go down
Into another life, up into another dawn!
It's Been Done Before

By MARJORIE POWELL

I

GOT only a few glimpses of Mary at the mixer. It was crowded and hot and I was pretty busy myself. But I did see that she looked her best, in a light blue dress that made her seem even tanner than usual. She was dancing with some tall, dark-haired soldier. Even busy as I was, I could see that he was a good-looking deal, built like a wedge.

Mary wasn't home when I got in, but she came in a few minutes later. She ran up the stairs and threw open the door. Her eyes almost blazed she was so excited, and yet she was tense too. I felt as though she were holding her breath or something as she stood there.

"Well, come in," I said. "This is your home too."

She still stood there.

"Well, what have you been up to?" I was trying to arrange my hair in a chignon. It makes me look older that way.

Mary sat down on the foot of her bed, and the white bedspread plumped around her.

"I have a date tomorrow night," she breathed, as though she didn't believe it.

"Swell. With that fellow I saw you dancing with?"

"Yes. He walked right up to me the minute I got there and said 'Hello' and we danced all evening."

She started to unbotton her dress. She was holding her breath again. But she didn't say anything more. And even though I guessed she had been hit with a buzz bomb I just went on trying to wind my hair into a chignon. She didn't seem to be in the mood for talking.

The next evening Mary started dressing right after dinner, with more care than she usually took. She asked me three times if I thought her dress looked all right. I said it did. It was white sharkskin with a Peter Pan collar. Mary looked all dewy and shiny. She was so excited. He was supposed to come at eight o'clock.

At five to eight she picked up an old copy of Mademoiselle and started to leaf through it. She wasn't really reading it, just passing the time. At eight-fifteen he still hadn't come. At eight-thirty the rustle of the pages as Mary listlessly turned them was like a restless whisper. At a quarter of nine she said, "Do you think he will stand me up?"

"It's been done before."

He didn't. He showed up at nine o'clock and by then I was
nervous myself. Mary had chewed off all her lipstick, so she put on some more while I let him in.

He was good looking, all right. When I opened the door I saw that. But the only thing I really noticed were his eyes. They weren’t Mary’s kind at all. They were green with dark lashes and they looked right into you, turned you inside out, and then threw you back together again. Bedroom eyes if I ever saw a pair.

He looked me up and down and said, “Well, where did you come from?”

“Mary will be down in a minute,” I said, ignoring the question.

He walked in, took off his peaked cap, and sat down as though he owned the place.

“Well, you’ll do until she is,” he murmured.

I went upstairs and helped Mary brush off her best black coat.

“Do I look all right?” she said anxiously.

“Sure, you look swell.”

She blew me a kiss when she went out the door.

And I was left there thinking about that fellow. I wondered what the deal was. I could tell Mary liked him all right. But I was surprised she did, after meeting him. Somehow it was like her wearing purple lipstick or reading ten-cent westerns. I hadn’t talked to him much or anything, and still I knew he wasn’t Mary’s kind. You could see it in the way he swaggered when he walked and the way he looked at you. As though he didn’t care much about who or what you were.

When Mary came home, she was quiet and didn’t say much.

“Did you have a good time?”

“Yes,” she said, as though she was annoyed with me for stopping her thoughts.

“Where did you go?”

“Dancing. He got a few drinks and then we went dancing. He dared me to drink a coke high, so I did. I don’t want him to think I’m just a kid. He’s a lot older, you know.”

Well, Mary, I guessed, was old enough to have a drink.

She went out with him every night he asked her after that. Sometimes he was late and sometimes he was early. She never talked about it much. She just left the house and came back again and went right to bed. She didn’t pay much attention to her school work the way she used to. Whenever I’d try to talk to her about him she would shut me off like a faucet. It gave me a sort of lonely feeling. I think, though, that she sensed how I felt about him, because when she did talk it was “You’d never guess that Tex is so nice just to meet him” or “Tex is awfully nice to me. He treats me like a queen.” But she didn’t write poetry anymore or talk to me about it or anything. She just went around in a kind of haze, pulsing with something I had never seen in her before.

Sometimes I would meet them when I had a date myself. They were always alone, never with other couples the way most of us dated. They could sit in the Blue Room or the Crystal Room or some other of those darkened, subdued lounges all evening. They never seemed to talk to each other much.

Last Saturday night Mary came home early, about ten-thirty. I was in bed with a cold myself, so I was there when she came in.
"How come you're home so early?"

She didn't say anything at first. She just looked at me, and I thought she hated me for asking. She unbuttoned her coat slowly, threw it on a chair, and said, "Something funny happened."

"Oh," I replied, not quite daring to ask what.

"He got higher than a kite," she said. "Drinking straight shots."

"It's been done before."

"Yeah, and then we went upstairs in the hotel. He had an overnight pass."

"Whew!" We can be expelled from school for that.

"I know I shouldn't have," she went on, not looking at me. She didn't move her face much when she talked. "He said he wanted to mix me a real drink. So to please him I went up. In the elevator. He walked up the stairs. But when we got there he didn't have any drinks. So I left."

I didn't say anything. I tried to be casual, as though she came home early from a date every night.

She took off her clothes and put on her blue and white striped pajamas. She got into bed without washing her face. She lay still as though she were very tired. I still didn't say anything because I didn't know what to say.

"I don't know what my mother would say if I ever told her."

"Don't tell her," I answered, thinking she would answer that she had to.

She didn't. She said, "No, I won't." She set her mouth in a hard way and I knew she never would. "I guess it's all in a lifetime."
Easy enough in winter to forget
when snow has quite obliterated all
the paths we took across the fields, where yet
I saw you, wraith-like, late into the fall.
Easy, I say, in winter to revert
to rooms and occupations where no trace
of you had ever been, no lingering hurt
to lurk in corners or infest the place.
You had no part in winter. It could stay
much as it had been, before you had come.
And then one's blood runs slower, so they say,
and summer's loves are easy to benumb.
Easy in winter, yes—but winter's fled.
And spring resuscitates what is not dead.

Inconsequential must my days appear
to them who view their outer substance merely,
letting the chaff obscure the wheat and queerly
reckoning the scanty yield as overdear.
Whole truth and half truth lying always near
together where the dim-eyed cannot clearly
perceive distinctions, essences—would yearly
auditings in abstract bring them cheer?
Who can assess the value of a blight
better than he who suffers from its spread?
or gauge the worth of a destructive storm
than he who feels its thunder pass his head?
Who else but I appraise in any form
the nuclear profit from my damaged sight?
Fable

By FLORA SAGEN

THERE was once a man who lived with his sister and her little girl. The woman was not an old one, but one very much determined, although in her heart, she was kind. For she had kept her brother, the man, for many years, and he was not the lightest of cares; for you see, as people who had seen him said, he was not quite right. But oh, he was right in the eyes of the little girl! And in truth, he was good, and kind, and a gentle playmate for the little child.

They lived in a house, these three, where the parents had lived before, and their parents, deep in a forest and separate, quite, from the world around. There were trees and wide skies, and the youngsters were very happy together, the little girl and her child-uncle.

It was queer, the man being the one who was not quite right, that he, and not the woman, noticed and knew when the little girl grew up. Perhaps he only sensed that the girl grew smarter than he. For he always had trouble with the business of thinking, while her thoughts seemed quick as her dancing feet and clear as her laughing voice. It saddened him somewhat to think that he was losing his playmate, as he most surely was; but then, when she had time, she still remembered the old games and liked the long walks in the woods and the hiding places; and, for a grown-up, she could tell quite remarkable stories she had read in books, this niece of the little-boy man.

One day, then, the grown-up girl said calmly that she had decided she must leave the quiet forest home and be about her business in the world. The woman's face grew very red and her brows drew together and her voice rumbled like thunder. The girl looked very distressed, but she stood quietly, until the voice of the mother grew so furious and loud that the girl clapped her hands over her ears and stood looking helplessly about her.

As for the man—he could not bear the look of misery on the lovely face of his playmate, and although he was very much frightened he approached his sister, who was trembling with rage, and touched her arm timidly. "You will not allow her to go?" he asked fearfully.

The woman's fury broke forth anew, sending the man scuttling for the corner, and when the woman had finally spent herself, she
folded her arms decisively and said the girl was too young, and that the world would wait for her until she grew older. And the girl, very white-faced, said now was the time when she wanted the world; but the mother turned away and would say no more.

Then it was that the poor child-uncle crept out of his corner and touched the woman’s arm patiently once more. “I remember once,” he said slowly, “when I was little, and the circus was to town, and I wanted so to go. And such a wonderful circus it was, with all silver and gold painty things, and the talk of the fairy-folk all about. I mind the little cars they had for rides, and they was red and shiny, and whirled around as fast . . . That was when we had a mother, and she feared for me, the little one, that I would be hurt. But I was brave, I was . . . and when I got on that little car, I was a captain of the wind, and it whistled around me, and do you think we was afeared, the wind and me? Oh my no . . . me and the wind rode the shiny cars with the elfs trying to catch us, and my, how we laughed! And the people, they was all little black dots below, and their horrid screeching and their bothering wasn’t to be heard above the laughing of me and the wind and the elf-people. Oh, and it was lovely, the flying through the air, and the little thrills in my stomach . . . But I mind the other time I went on the cars, when I was older and bigger, that was. I wasn’t afeared, not me, but the wind whistled and roared about till the elfs wasn’t to be heard at all, and the wind, it stunk, and things was shaky before my eyes. And then I was sick . . . before I got down even, I was, and everything was whirly and whistling. My, but I did hate to be sick on that red shiny car . . .”

The child-uncle wandered outside to look at the sky then, scratching his head; and while the girl ran about singing and packing her things, the woman stood in the doorway and looked out at her child-brother, and her eyes were shiny with tears.
PEOPLE always asked Geraldine and me what we did all day to pass the time. It was a standard question. That, and “Weren’t you afraid, just the two of you all alone!” They seemed to think that “lookouting” was a pretty risky venture for two girls to undertake, and their incredulous tones when they questioned us hinted at any number of vague possibilities. The Forest Service was first experimenting that summer with women fireguards on their lookouts, and when the opportunity came along for us to work for them, we grabbed it eagerly.

Our first look at Nine Mile was an experience I’ll never forget. We were delighted with everything from the first moment. The lookout building was on the peak of a low mountain with miles of tall virgin timber below. We could see seven other lookouts from our point on the surrounding peaks, and to the south, we could see the clear yellow sweep of the Flathead Valley, and the hazy blue outline of Flathead Lake beyond that. Our water haul was comparatively easy, and the wood supply was right at the foot of the tower. We weren’t high in relation to the other lookouts in the district, but we were in a “hot little spot,” as the ranger described it to us, where we would probably have a good chance to spot several fires.

And people always asked Geraldine and me what we did all day to pass the time! The first two days we were busy from sunrise to sunset making our little station clean and liveable, carrying our canned goods up from below where the packer had left it, cleaning the stove, sweeping the floor, trapping mice, and setting up our beds. We were on a thirty-foot tower, with two flights of stairs leading up to the catwalk. That second flight of stairs was a terror to us from the beginning. It was very old, and creaked and swayed under our weight each time we stepped on it. Arms loaded with canned goods, we climbed it gingerly, breathing a heavy sigh of relief when we finally reached the catwalk.

We caught our first fire the second evening, just as the sun was setting. Geraldine was inside cooking supper, and I was prowling around the catwalk looking for any trace of smoke. I was looking so intently for just that purpose, I thought maybe I was only imagining things when I saw
a faint puff of white rising from a ridge to the southeast. I called Jerry to come and take a look, and for a few minutes we saw only the purple outline of the hills, laced with dark shadows in the fading light, and then we both thought we saw another thin thread of white rising above the ridgetop. We quickly took our reading on the map-board, noting a trail and a creek supposedly in that vicinity. We called Gus, the dispatcher at Big Creek, and told him we thought we had a fire, but explained that we were expecting one so heartily that maybe we were mistaken. He took our readings, and then we settled nervously down to eating supper. About fifteen minutes later, Gus called back to say he had checked on our fire and found that it really did exist, in the Coram District near trail Number 333 and Watson Creek, just where our readings had indicated, but that men were already fighting it. He ended with, "Nice work, kids." We were so delighted our first attempt, we did a wild dance around the mapboard, hitting each other on the back and singing at the top of our lungs. Small matter that someone else had already reported the fire! It was still exclusively "ours" to Jerry and me, and though it was miles away, not even in our district, we had spotted it and given the correct map readings to Gus. Our egos were inflated a mile high that night.

At the end of the first week, Gus called us early one morning, when the rains had commenced again and the clouds were hanging so low they seemed to "whitewash" all our windows cutting off the view in every direction, and told us we were going to leave the station all day. Some of the trails around the vicinity of Nine Mile were badly overgrown and strewn with windfalls, just how badly it was going to be our job to find out. He told us to take the map out of our fire-pack and look at it while he gave directions of where we were to go. It sounded easy from our post by the telephone, and we ate breakfast quickly and left the station in good humor. We had some difficulty finding the beginning of the first trail he had outlined to us because it was so badly overgrown. When we were finally on it, we could see the faint traces of a trail every now and then, but the majority of the time we had to depend on blazes to direct us. Two hours later, we were hopelessly lost, giant cedars towering above our heads, stocks of thorny Devil's Club all around us nearly waist high, and a large green moose meadow forming a U around us. We spread our map out on the ground and studied it carefully, then got out our compass and compared its reading to the map. Our woodsmanship had some pretty bad holes in it, we discovered, so we pocketed map and compass again and decided to backtrack to the last blaze. We were five hours getting oriented and on our way again, and it was nearly dark when we covered the last trail we had been instructed to go over. Tired, bedraggled, and mud-stained we wearily climbed the stairs of our tower and reported in to Gus. "Thirty-seven windfalls and no trail, Gus," we told him. He had been getting worried about us, but when he heard our report, he laughed. We were getting initiated.

Of course, there were many days when there were no fires to report and no hikes to take, and
THE
PERFECT
CHRISTMAS
GIFT

Flowers
from the

Garden City Floral

We Predict:

We enjoyed these times just as much as when there was more excitement. The days didn't seem long enough to suit us, and we often stayed up until one or two in the morning, sometimes eating a second supper then. Boredom just wasn't in the vocabulary of our language on Nine Mile. We read everything we had brought with us, and all of the magazines we found in the loft of the station when we got there. This reading material was all in magazine form, dating from 1917 to 1942, as great a variety as could be found on any magazine stand in the United States. The majority of our evening reading was done by candlelight. We had very poor luck all summer with our kerosene lantern and mantles, so we became accustomed to doing all our tasks after dark by the light of five or ten flickering candles, stuck on to pieces of firewood with wax drippings to hold them upright. Five or ten candles for the first month, but as our supply began to dwindle, so did our extravagance. The last week we were on Nine Mile, we carefully conserved our one remaining stump of wax, and for the first time all summer, we went to bed as soon as it was dark.

In the evening, after our last watch-period, we liked to sit out on our catwalk facing west, so we could watch the beautiful sunset over the Smokey Range. We ate sandwiches and told jokes and talked for a couple of hours until it was dark and quiet all around us, and the night wind began to rise, carrying with it the muffled roar of Kimmerly Creek in the canyon below. In August, the weather became hot and quiet, and we discovered we could lie in bed and read by the light of the full moon, that made our little
windowed cabin as bright as the daylight. The sun came up in an aurora of colors that month, waking us at four o’clock with its hot rays in our faces. We sat up in bed and watched it climb over the Great Northern Mountain, while the moon was still riding high in the sky in the west. Because we were on such a low point, it was too hot to stay long in bed once the sun was up, so we were always up early, cooking and eating an immense breakfast and chopping wood.

One day, the ranger came up to Nine Mile with a pack of paint and brushes and turpentine and gave us instructions about painting our tower. Neither one of us had ever wielded a paint brush before, and we looked at each other with apprehensive glances after he left. It took us three weeks to do the task set for us, but we were prouder of our paint job than anything else we had accomplished. One morning, when we were nearly finished with the job, we were painting the undersides of the shutters, which were wired up off the windows when the tower was occupied, making a roof for the catwalk. We were having our difficulties—paint was running off the brushes, down our arms, dripping off our elbows, and splattering our hair and clothing and shoes. We were as covered with green paint as were the shutters. In the midst of our labors, the Nine Mile ring came over the telephone and I sprang to answer it, leaving clear green footprints outlined on the floor; the paint oozed out between my fingers when I grasped the phone. It was Gus asking us if we could see a smoke just south of us. The process of finding out whether we could or not necessitated involving the...
map-board and the fieldglasses in the paint-smearing orgy. No, we couldn’t see a smoke, but for a week afterwards, we were busy with turpentine trying to clean all the paint off everything we had smeared up.

When things started to get dull during the day, we spent the afternoon alternately taking our watch periods and baking a new kind of cake or pie or casserole dish for supper. Breadmaking was practically an all-day task, and by the end of the summer we had tried, at least once, every dish suggested in the Lookout Cook-book.

Mail was the high-point of our lives up there, just as it is in every out-of-the-way place. We got ours about every two weeks, sometimes walking three miles down to the Canyon Creek Road and pulling it out from under the culvert where someone from the station had put it for us, and sometimes getting it from the ranger or his alternate when he came to Nine Mile on inspection trips. Jerry and I got word that some man working at the ranger station was beating everyone else out in the quantity of mail he received. Not to be outdone, we brought down a stack of magazines from the loft one evening, got out a bundle of penny postcards we had brought with us, and proceeded to send for every free sample and advertisement we could find listed in the magazines. About a week elapsed, and then mail for Nine Mile Lookout literally poured in by the boxfuls. We got free samples of baby food and dog food, booklets from the American College of Swedish Massage, pamphlets on How to Prolong Your Life Though Diabetic.

Every evening, the dispatcher
at the ranger station placed all the lookouts in our district on one telephone connection, and we spent hours talking to one another. We got to know some of the fellows we had never seen much better than some people we had lived among all our lives. Everybody had a story or a recipe to tell about, or something to relate about his bear and moose and porcupine experiences, or some comment to make about the beautiful evening, as he witnessed it from his point. We turned our little battery radio on, and by holding the mouth-piece of the telephone against the loud speaker, boys out on the higher peaks with no radios could listen all evening with us.

And people always asked Jerry and me if we weren’t afraid, just the two of us all alone! One night, about two o’clock, I woke out of an uneasy sleep to find the wind beating against the windows, the tower shaking with the impact of a heavy wind, and lightning dropping all around us, so that the telephone was ringing in stacato time every few seconds. There wasn’t time to be afraid; we had work to do. I ran to the door, slipped an arm outside to the power box, and disconnected the telephone. We had been warned to keep away from our map-board and stove and beds when the lightning was directly overhead, so we both crowded into our one all-wooden chair and sat watching the display going on around us. The wires, which were strung around the outside walls of the cabin and grounded, were glowing faintly purple from electric charges. As soon as the storm had passed over us a little to the north, we again connected the telephone and went to work on our map-board recording strikes. We
found two fires within a minute, and phoned them into the station immediately. When daylight came and the storm had passed, we set about making some order out of our far-flung readings of strikes, relayed them into Big Creek as soon as they called for them, and then took more complete readings on the two fires burning on the range just east of our mountain. They were on the Glacier Park side of the North Fork River, so Gus hooked our phone connection in with two of the Park lookouts who could see the fires too, and we got a crosshot on them. Smoke chasers were sent out from the ranger station, and all day we checked their progress and watched the fires being beaten out.

Bored? Afraid, just the two of us all alone?

Smartest Gifts…

for

MOTHER
Sister
Sweetheart

from

Cecil's
By MARJORIE KARLIN

THE yellow light from the street lamp sharply outlined the solitary young man who leaned against it, hands in the pockets of his worn black suit. It cast a long shadow that merged into the darkness beyond the circle of light—a shadow which never merged with other shadows, beside which no other shadow was ever cast.

The artificial light made his badly-cut hair and thick lashes seem even blacker, intensified the contrast made by his white face and deep blue eyes. It deepened the hollows in his cheeks and the lines about his eyes, lines that seemed to contradict the boyish expression and slight figure.

He had stood thus almost every night since he had come to this town—a pleasant enough town with wide, tree-shaded streets and small frame or brick houses set back from the walks and surrounded by neat lawns—the kind of town that is always called "typically American." It was hot on a summer day as valley towns are but cool and pleasant in the evening when the breeze rustled the leaves of the plane trees, brushed the faces of the passersby.

The breeze brought to the young man under the street lamp the murmuring voices of the young couples as they passed under the trees, arm in arm, and as he stood motionless, listening, his terrible loneliness swept over him again.

It was better in the daytime when people passed back and forth before the window of his little shoe-repair shop and occasionally smiled a greeting as he sat fixing their shoes. Then he had diversion and work to occupy his hands and drug his mind. But in the evening, after he had finished his meal in the kitchen of the little apartment behind his store, polished the worn linoleum, brushed the rag rug, dusted the three plates and the big mug that had come from his valley, and struggled furiously with his English grammar book, there was nothing to do but listen to the ticking of the clock and the drip of the water from the tap—and think. This he could not bear to do and so he was driven to stand beneath the lamp and watch the night and the occasional strollers.

For he was an exile in a land where few knew his tongue and whose tongue he could speak only in slow gutterals, straining over each word in an agony of embarrassment as he saw the gathering
impatience in the faces of those he wanted so to make friendly. He had come to this town weeks ago from the city in which he had first landed—the city where there were people who spoke his tongue and knew his customs, who had once lived in his narrow valley before war had defiled it, before "they" had set fire to its houses that had been as solid and alive as these houses, and killed all his people, or taken them away into slavery. Only he was alive and free, he who had come back from the hills a few days later to death and ruin.

His mother's only brother had wandered years before to the small American town with his wife, settled, bought the shop. He had remained, still an outsider, but accepted as a familiar sight, as time went on. It was he who had sent money for passage after the valley's destruction. He had died before his nephew had arrived, leaving the shop to him, for the wife had long since died.

Thus he had come. The people tried to be kind, but he was still numb by his grief, and was shy and suffered so from his lack of fluency that after a few attempts, he simply withdrew. Night after night he stood, watching the people pass, hungrily, not daring to risk the torture of making himself understood.

Suddenly, as he stood, with the night noises around him, and the smell of summer, something surged up in him until he felt he would burst. He must be with people! He must drink and laugh and talk again!

He ran into the apartment, took a few bills hastily from the hiding place in the mattress of the big, carved double bed in the little bedroom off the kitchen and stood
for a moment, listening to the ticking of the clock in the midst of the thick silence. The low laugh of someone passing on the walk in front of the shop drifted to him. He rushed through the shop, banged the door shut behind him and began to walk swiftly up the street.

He strode boldly through the open door of a crowded, noisy dance hall, but shrank into a small table in a dark corner as people looked around at him. At once, a girl in a gay flowered blouse and a black skirt squeezed over her hips approached. She was saying something. He concentrated feverishly. She repeated, "What'll it be, mister?" frowning down at him.

"Oh, whiskey," he stammered. She nodded, and waddled away. Soon she returned and set down the small glass in front of him. "How much?" he asked slowly, holding up his fingers, one by one. Suddenly the girl smiled, her rather heavy, sullen face seeming almost pretty for a moment, as she touched six of his fingers. She began to say something, but then someone called over to her and away she went.

His momentary elation at her response disappeared and he sat there miserably. All about him in the smoky, harshly-lighted room, he saw couples or groups of them sitting close to each other, whispering intimately, laughing and lighting each other's cigarettes, swaying to the music that was sharp and jangled and so unlike his own. He sat and sipped and watched them from his corner. As they felt his gaze, their eyes slid indifferently over him and returned to each other's eyes, and to the bright, weaving patterns their friends made. The
music from the box in the center of the floor went on, the smoke haze grew, the voices rose higher, the couples whispered more intimately and kissed each other now and then and put their arms around each other. He ordered four drinks one after the other, sipping slowly, each time playing the same little game with the waitress, each time trying to speak with her, but always she waggled away to attend the orders of others. A knot began to grow at the pit of his stomach.

Finally he rose to go. The girl smiled brightly on him before she turned away again. He went unsteadily toward the door, for he had found when he rose that his knees wobbled as they used to after wedding parties in the valley.

He walked, still weaving slightly, down toward the shop. Behind him, the sounds from the ball grew fainter and finally he heard no sound but the ringing in his ears, and the knot that was his loneliness crowded from his stomach to his throat until he could taste it on his palate. He began to cry softly as he staggered through the shop to the apartment.

He groped for the light, turned it on and sat down heavily in the chair beside the kitchen table. He put his hot face down on the cool, worn oilcloth and listened to the clock ticking, and tasted his loneliness through the whiskey and the salt tang of his tears.
I'm Tellin' Ya

Everything you need you can buy

at the

Associated Student Store

YELLOW CAB

PHONE

PARCEL DELIVERY 6644 BAGGAGE TRANSFER

Florence Hotel Building
$1,670,642.

1944 Taxes paid by The Montana Power Company to the State of Montana alone

$1,235,351.

1944 Tax levy for the Greater University fund which includes colleges at Bozeman, Billings, Dillon, Glendive and Havre as well as the University at Missoula.


The Montana Power Company

. . . an investor-owned utility.