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Montana and the Arts
(An Editorial)

Whenever an educated Easterner finds himself by chance or by design in Montana, he inevitably praises its scenery and laments the cultural aridity of its people. He discovers the magnificence of the mountains, virgin and unspoiled; he enjoys the feeling of space and the smell of clean air, things lacking in the stewing Parnassus of the East. But when he turns his cold eyes from the scenery to the Montana of people, he mentally shudders at what he finds there. He sees in every town the sordid ugliness, the barren amenity of the frontier; he sees the commercialized West, the bearded, embarrassed clerks in colored shirts and jeans, the contented fat men of the chambers of Commerce sucking money from Go-Western Week, draining the tourists and natives alike with a fable nobody believes. He sees in every town the gaucho in his shallow vulgarity, believing the terrible lie of the western movie; he sees the miner living in city-scars in the mountains, close to his work, living a vicious, animal life, a life of liquor and brothels and sickness and despair. And he sees the Indian, the pathetic and ridiculous example of how white stupidity and bigotry and stagnant self-complacency can change men into shambling caricatures of men. He sees failure, futility engrained in the faces of the people; he sees the philosophical fallacies, the underlying tragedy of "a mean, a parsimonious culture."* He realizes finally that the Montanan is not yet learned to live with any fullness because he has never had the cultural experiences which create the impetus toward the full life. He has missed his myths; trapped in a living lie, he gains nothing from his splendid physical environment; all is hard, bitter, and a canker to the soul. This is the outline of our inferno.

Can the whole picture be as dismal as this? Are there no sparks of rowing cultural awareness, of compensating artistic endeavor? Almost every region has its creative minority to counteract in part the non-cultural influences. The South, for all its poor education, its poverty, its decadence, has produced artists who have examined it and made art of it. From this out-

*Leslie A. Fiedler, "Montana: or the End of Jean Jacques Rousseau," Partisan Review, December, 1949. This is a perceptive criticism of our "pseudo-frontier."
wardly unhealthy environment have come writers like Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate and Eudory Welty. Even the Middle West has given creative impetus to writers and painters. But where are the Faulkners and the Wolfes of Montana? Montana is apparently as dead artistically as it is intellectually, as it is architecturally. Native Montana folk are probably spurious simply because the "folk" of Montana is too heterogeneous to produce such art; the commercial folk art of the West we know too well to imagine it genuine. Yet there is some artistic activity; there are in Montana men who write, men who paint, who compose, who play musical instruments. The quality and quantity of their work is immensely important to Montana's cultural future, and we must examine the present situation to see if it is a substantial foundation for that future. We are desperately close to barbarity now; it would indeed be tragic if the artistic beginnings were as inadequate as life itself in Montana.

Unfortunately, Montana art almost meets the worst expectations of the cynic. The literary output of Montana writers is virtually microscopic and unrewarding. Of course every town of any size has its writers clubs (who else would write those "historic point" markers which so blazon our crudities?), of course the women of Montana are passionate producers of literature, and of course here and there a versifier wonders what to write about. But Montana writing has been largely inferior and small in quantity. As Harper's once pointed out, Mr. Howard has almost a monopoly on good non-fiction writing in the state. Among Montana-born writers, however (not counting those who are not native to the state), there has been no sign of any criticism of value any belles lettres. The majority of the successful and nearly successful fiction writers (the number is small) in Montana are pulp writers, writers of western and adventure stories, thud and blunder pop which for all its reflection a Montana might as well be written in New Hampshire or Patagonia. The loco color is fictional on more than one level. These fiction writers are not much concerned with subtleties or character or significance (perhaps there are none of these things in Montana) and their total importance is negligible. The very predominance of westerns reveals the poor use of Montana materials, the lack of a dominant sense of values. Even in the University, where one might expect somewhat modified attitudes, blood on the saddle and brains on the rug are too frequently the accepted topics for narrative. The writers are few in Montana and their work is for the most part insignificant.

In the other arts, such as painting and the drama, Montana reveals more promise. Probably the only Montana painter who received much recognition for his work was Charley Russell, but he was dealing with material rough the same as that of the writer of pulp westerns. He was definitely an influence upon Montana art, but not necessarily a good influence. There are also the landscape painters and the belligerent followers of modern trends, including the infantile, but very little of distinguished nature. However, painting is probably the most flourishing and promising field of Montana art, and the
marked evidence of recent growth and interest, particularly in Great Falls and Helena. Drama also is making some progress with increased interest in a drama and little theatres, but hardly any original dramatic material has appeared.

Probably the least developed art in Montana is music. There is not one professional or civic symphony orchestra in the state; there is no state orchestra like Utah's, for example. With the exception of a few high school bands and orchestras, the University and State College music groups, there is virtually no musical activity. The few composers find little encouragement here; the serious musician who chooses to play an incorruptible instrument like the oboe or the viola must emigrate or play alone. The lack of music is the most unfortunate lack of all, because music can be given to so many at one time. Oneuld hardly count as musical activity the western songs and attendant western dancing." These belong with the commercialized sub-sub-arts, and such have rather too wide a popular appeal in Montana.

The causes of this cultural aridity are complex and varied, but the problem stems from three principle factors: recent settlement and isolation of the land; lack of a broad, continuous cultural tradition and cultural heritage; and the heterogeneity and smallness of the population. Montana has no long history, tradition like that of the South, extending into its almost feudal anteloom society. Montana's people are few and they are diverse, of all races and nationalities, many fairly recent immigrants. The only tradition has been a hard, brutal tradition of the frontier; the only heritage that of the rancher, farmer, and the miner. The physical isolation and the social and economic alienation from the Eastern seaboard have not allowed the cultural richness of other parts of America to penetrate Montana. There has always been sectional imosity, not only within the state itself, but with the outside. The farmer and rancher have had the problem of the railroads; the miner feels he works only to put money in Eastern pockets. Whatever smacks of the East smacks of the dude, a combination of pusillanimity and fraud. The Montanan is proud of his differences; he feels it necessary to his survival to maintain them. His world is a narrow one, and he is defiant of the East in his protection of it. In sealing off his world, he makes it a desert. Montana does not need animosity and anti-semitism, but it does need art and music and increased respect for literature.

Meanwhile, the present situation has not been left to resolve itself unaided. There is now increased awareness of the need for a fuller culture. The Montana Institute of Arts is working within its limited means to correlate and encourage Montana art, to bring Montana artists together for mutual stimulation. MIA groups are setting up training centers to interest more people in the arts; they are attempting to give the creative minority greater scope and recognition. Cently a courageous group even began a poetry magazine in Billings. But, however well these people and groups accomplish their individual work, the task is tremendously difficult; the inertia against the introduction of art in
Montana is immense. But the awareness is here, and such organizations as accomplish much, if only in bringing the pulp hacks and horse painters into contact with men of different ideals.

There remain other unexploited ways to stimulate the arts and the appreciation of the arts in Montana. Part of this stimulation must come from the schools. Of course the University units are playing an increased part in this by presenting concerts and plays and forums and art exhibits. But the response among the University students themselves is disgusting. Apparently the wish to remain undeveloped culturally is very strong and deep-rooted by the time students reach college; certainly the wish for culture is very weak. The major part of the task must therefore fall upon the earlier education, preferably by persons who do not fall into the common error of teaching Bing Crosby music appreciation material. When the Montana educators give less attention to producing athletes, mechanics, typists, and place a proper emphasis on cultural activities (including such basic instruments as reading and writing), an intellectual dawning of Montana culture will be a little closer.

Another important way in which wider culture might be promulgated is in the organization of local libraries, perhaps including consolidation and supervision. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that the whole people will rise after these panaceas and demand art, but the aim is to give instruments of opportunities to those potentially able to do something in art or at least enjoy it. One of the greatest instruments of this kind is the library, but many of the Montana libraries are hopelessly inadequate; they are operated by political appointees with few qualifications and do the work more properly the penny-a-day lending library, having no more to do with the cultural development of the community than the average saloon. It is discouraging to find standard authors missing from the libraries of the largest cities of state when at the same time the stacks are filled with cheap novels and westerns. But changes of this sort require public action and the public is loath to act Changes are impossible until the Montanan decides he would rather be a modern man than a Montanan.

Montana radio could also be used to much greater advantage in bringing art to the isolated regions. The present weekly presentation of two or three hours of good music (and I mean symphony and chamber music, not slow popular music) is totally inadequate. There is no reason why radio stations cannot play musicians as well as cowboy singers. It is indeed a reflection of the ingrained bad habits of a people when its college students listen to scoundrels, and yet this situation occurs — in Montana. The present "public service programs" are anything but public services. The real public service lies in bringing better things to the listener. Radio is in need of radical reformat on a nationwide basis, but the public minded entrepreneurs of Montana's fabulous radio networks might begin a little cleaning up at home. Oriental nations have made their radio a potent instrument for the spread of culture. There is no reason why Montana could not benefit from similar programs.
Reform plans in library and radio to bring more art to Montana are undoubtedly a morbid sort of wishful thinking; one finds around him only the barrenness that strangers remark in us. There are hints of growing interest in art, but it will be a long time before Montana has any artistic stature. Perhaps me and the gradual breaking down of sectional barriers will relieve the present paucity of creative activity. But the process is glacially slow, difficult, and heartbreaking. One need never wonder that the more intelligent young people of Montana go to other states for their education and their living. The cause is not simply the lack of opportunity, the lack of jobs. The principal reason is the non-existence of a necessary cultural and artistic activity in Montana. The materials are in the people, are in the state (in fact in some there is even a gnawing hunger) but the materials and the hunger lie unheeded. The cowboy, the miner, the farmer, the saloon keeper, and the business men don't want art. They are quite happy with the rodeo and the radio; they also enjoy the movies, pitiful and stinking as they may be. The sensitive individual must either fall in with this barren attitude or he must emigrate. He is probably wise to go away without a struggle. It is anticipating hell to roll the cultural stone up the mountain so that the money-grubbing, politically and mentally adolescent Montanans can push it down again. No, wait two hundred years. By that time Montana will either have art or Montana will be in a one age. The latter would require the least transition.

Two Poems by Robert T. Taylor

FETUS IN A FRUITJAR

Every poet, who had to change the formalin, discarding vats of outrageous organs, including one of brains (good grey poet that), returned, returned his nose to thinner air, and the incunabula of man in transparent uteri to the white shelf, the layman's model of limbo. They are nameless and secure, so nothing of man, the dull unknowns of rubber skin and crooked legs; and they are ageless, not that they are young, but rather too old for their breathless dimensions, outliving grief in long unliving being. The last, indeed the largest, is almost human, framed like the old, the fetuses for the grave. They are not pleasant, these creatures — doll-sized, you would not want them used for dolls — and they are too like those aborted on turgid sands, drowned in fluids less preservative, perhaps, fetuses blasted by a fetus in a green fruit jar painted with indifferent images of sky, of flowers.
BRIEF NOCTURNE

Before is shaped within the waking room
Of old discarded angers and the still
Hour-formationed minutes laid in rows
Of tick and tick beside an elephant of jade.
The night-mummed shadows gather on the walls,
Things of rain and city, silent song,
A flute and siren jungled in the dark.
The broken lightning flares upon some sky,
A funambulist’s arc, the thickness of a word,
Tearing from discs of flame a living heat.
The streets are long, bitter in their peace,
Smothered in dull sockets of the night.
Grind, my night, forgotten fear upon the palette,
Remember love that finds necessity in death,
Paint me a slash of life, of hope, of glowing hates,
A raw katharsis, beauty in the horror.

Somewhere the whiteness is a perfect white
Plato’s rose and my desire all confused,
Filling some void, some time of love’s duration.
Desire is brief, oh delicately brief,
Chased by the morning with a silver net,
A butterfly of childhood, only now
And then revealing stark new bones, new bones
That lie beneath the listening hand and eye
Of woman, the love-skinned girl with patient eyes
Who prays alone an eternal woman sadness.
The sleeper’s hands shall feel the pulse, shall feel
The ticking of the heart, the slow, the patient
Ticking mind that burns with swift decay.
There something dances, something that should sleep,
Ignoring the pulse of night, the food of stars.
Our probes crush deep and nightly old gods die,
I hear their throbbing laughter in my skull,
The eyeless void, the atomless despair
Of soul, coarse laughter at a great stone moved,
Whispers of tomorrow’s ruin, tomorrow’s rain.
Brief Penance

By CARROLL O'CONNOR

ILLUSTRATED BY NANCY FIELDS

On a fall evening in 1947 the late train from Nurnberg to Salzburg, via Munich, carried — besides its usual commuters from Nurnberg to towns east and south — a group of eight men guarded by four military policemen of the American Army of Occupation for Germany.

At Nurnberg station, the prisoners had occasioned a few quick, scrutinizing glances, common in Europe then, which sought to find in every stranger in uniform a relative or friend long unheard from. But otherwise, in spite of the guards' grim aspect, the group had aroused no curiosity in a city where grimness was ordinary. The prisoners were obediently silent. Their sallow faces showed fatigue and resignation. Their clothes were limp admixtures of German and American army issue — garments that had lost their national identities in shabbiness, as the well-defined ideals they once represented had become obscure against a background of political confusion.

The eight men were war criminals. They had been convicted, and sentenced to terms ranging from two years to life imprisonment. Two had been found guilty of violations of international law, specifically the murders of enemy captives, and five had been convicted of crimes against civilian populations. The eighth man, one Jacob Rindemann, had been found guilty of having shared in a conspiracy whose aim and result was an unprovoked war against democratic civilization, an aggressive war — a crime known to other times, but which our time had seen fit to punish in a strictly legal way.

Rindemann was a German, a sober man of forty-five, with thin, gray-blond hair, a pale complexion, and a round face notably free of lines and creases. He was of middle height, but appeared short due to a slump of shoulders he affected in order to appear unobtrusive. His manner and bearing might normally suggest illness, and the illusion had been recently fortified by a disabled right knee which caused him to limp.

Before 1939 he had been a commercial artist, but one who — in spite of employing his talents on that traditionally vulgar level — strived to impart aesthetic quality to the merest calendar or travel folder. His reputation had been moderate, commercially, and his income usually adequate.

But since 1939 Rindemann had not been productive. He had never found
recessiveness, which had been casual and unpremeditated during the greater part of his life, in 1939 became intense and deliberate. In that year of war the people of the world about him, whose motives had never been quite clear to him, had suddenly pounced on him. Like boisterous intruders they had collared him and dragged him from his sanctuary. They had thrust him amid a great, moving throng of humanity being driven to a crossroads. Beyond lay two divergent routes from which he had been free to choose his own. But Rindemann had chosen neither. He had felt apart from the whole mass. He had recoiled from both routes, despising each with equal passion. He had placed himself on high, neutral ground which he fervently hoped would be, yet fearfully suspected would not be, spared the rushing tide.

Now, as a stuffy railway coach carried him through the Austrian countryside, he wondered why the one tide that had engulfed him eight years ago had not yet released him. The war had ended and for a moment the tide seemed to have spent itself. Rindemann had watched patiently for its ebb that he might be left to direct once more the course of his own life. But the moment of hope passed, a resurgent wave had caught him up again and swept him into a maze of circumstances whose outlet was the military prison at Salzburg. He often wondered why he should have been harrassed so relentlessly, wondered at the monstrous cruelty of a fate that would place one, alone and defenseless, among strange millions; a fate that would not permit one to withdraw from the competitiveness and conflict of the millions, but in fact impose on one a penalty for their errors.

It was a strange world, he had thought, of strange people and processes, strange causes and results. He had believed that as an artist, he could step into an obscure doorway, so to speak, and view apart the passing process in the streets — that is, when he chose to view it at all. From such a vantage point he had told himself, his perspective would improve, his understanding of the countless pilgrims plodding to their common, shadowy Mecca, would become more acute. This understanding he could record through his art, if ever he should desire to do so.

Yet, somehow that understanding had eluded him. He knew that now He had known it before now, but he never realized he knew it. He had known it in Paris in 1939, but Paris of that year had been like a great stage with players who spoke ordinary words, moved about plausibly, and had performed stage business which was believable, and yet the play had seemed meaningless. It was as if the playwright had given his actors lines to speak which were entirely familiar and at the same time quite unintelligible.

In Paris, out near the Bois, there had been a cafe, a quiet, seldom crowded place that he preferred. He often remembered a warm night when the cabarets artistique had overflowed an unusual number of pleasure hunters and the excess had run like freed quicksilver into every crevice of the town. Strange, violent people had filled his cafe. They had bribed the accordion to abandon Neapolitan nostalgia for Spanish electrics. They sang and laughed...
and danced crazily, and built their wild joy to an ear-splitting tumult. Rindemann had found it difficult to look at them.

"What ails them," he had demanded. "Where have they all come from? What makes them so loud?"

"My dear Rindemann," a companion had replied, "you should go home and paint this crowd, and paint a great, black hole in the floor near where poor Jean stands, his pockets full of money, playing his box. You see, they are all insane, suicidal, and after a while of this sport they will plunge into the hole and be lost, perhaps forever."

"You're as drunk as they are," Rindemann said. "And they . . ."

regarded them painfully. "They are no doubt trying to recover the jazz age. It's tremendous. It's a choreographer's discovery. I could stage it at the Palais to Ravel and become famous."

"I'm going," Rindemann muttered.

"And I," replied his friend, "am staying. I too shall plunge."

But in Berlin, if the setting had been austere, it had not been more comforting. It became the first of September and Rindemann had felt like working. He wanted to be in Paris where the weather would be fine, and he worked better in Paris because it was old and charming. Berlin was not. He despised the new lines that were being affected everywhere one looked. But he could not leave. The clerk had been impudent, Rindemann thought, in refusing him a ticket on the Paris train without a permit. Permit from whom? What for? What the devil was going on? And was the world conspiring to make life for him, heretofore tolerantly pleasant, unpleasant?

He had set out to find an answer to his most urgent problem — travel but had given it up on the morning of September third. Britain had declared war, the radio announced, and France would probably declare war that day or the next. Rindemann had been swept, ruthlessly, off his island.

He had lived through the war, looking forward to a peace that had seemed little more than visionary. Finally, it came, and with it a trial, and a train to Salzburg.

He wondered now if they would allow him to paint in prison. And
they did, what would he paint? The prisoners? He glanced at his comrades in the crime of war. Four lay sleeping, three were silently awake. There was little variety in the faces, they were dull, submissive, fixed, the faces of prisoners. Salzburg’s faces would be the same.

It suddenly occurred to him that the three judges might make a good picture if he could recall them as they appeared a week ago. He might do an impression of them as they had sat in daily judgment of the imprudent. He might portray their obvious physical differences, the realistic elements that made them separate individuals, and at the same time show the similarity of their monotonous black dress, grave appearance and deliberate movement, the synthetic elements that made them at one with each other. The effect might be interesting, not novel, but interesting. The background would be bright, brighter than had been the dark, oak panels of the courtroom—the added brightness to set off the judges’ dominant black figures. The light might come from outside, a broad ray of sunlight perhaps, entering through a tall cathedral window outside the picture, spotlighting the figures and falling no the panels behind in a gothic silhouette. A touch of sanctity subtly implied. There might be another window, within the picture, high up to suggest the inescapability of justice; and outside in the distance an abutment of the Kaiserschloss with high oaks around it. But perhaps not. The idea might appear pedantic. And the trees.

Rindemann smiled suddenly. He recalled a voice, gently scolding, that had once said, long ago: "No, Jacob, don’t put in the trees. They spoil the picture."

He closed his eyes. He invited the voice to come back to him again, and it came, repeating the advice piquantly, yet warmly. It was clear and close for a moment, then began to fade.

Rindemann answered the voice, as he had answered it once before so that it would not, unrecognized and unreceived, pass out of his consciousness. "My darling Edi," he silently objected. "I don’t tell you how to cook.

"And if I didn’t cook to agree with you," the chiding voice interposed, "you would be my loudest critic. Jacob, you rarely paint people, and now you paint a boy and a girl and hide them with trees. Leave out the trees and then everyone will see the boy and girl. That’s what you want them to do, don’t you?"

"I’ll do it over, then," he replied drowsily. "I’ll do it over for you, is that all right?"

The voice did not respond. It had gone. He wished it back again. He seemed to be following the voice, calling to it, running through a forest shouting, "I want to take away the trees, Edi, but they’re all around me, so many of them. Will you help me take them away?" The voice did not answer, and Rindemann ran faster, calling to it over and over, until, all at once, he ran out of the forest onto a high, cleared shelf of land that overlooked a
town and a great expanse of water. "This is Dubrovnik," he cried, "and the water is the Adriatic."

Sitting in the middle of the clearing was a girl at an easel, and as he came closer to her he saw that she was scraping trees out of a painting with a palette knife. "That is my painting," he cried, "and I am going to send it across the sea to Italy."

The girl protested. "Stop. Please, Jacob, stop." But he snatched the canvas from the easel and hurled it high over the town. The wind caught it and carried it out over the water until they could no longer see it in the sun. They girl began to cry, and Rindemann ran back into the forest, through the trees. There were men in the forest now, men who looked at him angrily and fired rifles after him. A bullet struck the back of his knee. There was a city in front of him, and he ran, limping, through its streets until he came to a great, brown building. He entered the building and made his way to a crowded room where people were murmuring and coughing and settling themselves on benches. He thought, "This must be a church." But then he realized it was a courtroom, and he felt for some reason that he belonged there. He limped up the center aisle and took a seat at a table. There was a large stand in front of him and three judges looked down on him from the stand. He heard his name spoken, but he could not place the voice, could not determine who was speaking.

"Herr Rindemann," the voice said, impatiently. "We are waiting for you to answer."

The voice seemed to be directly in front of Rindemann. He stared vacantly "I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't know who was calling me for a moment."

"Better wake up," the voice advised him.

Rindemann opened his eyes. One of the guards was bending near him holding a canteen of water. The train had gained speed and was vibrating noisily.

"Better wake up," the guard said. "Drink some water. It's the last call until Salzburg."

Rindemann took the canteen absently, drank a little from it and handed it back to the guard.

Odd, he thought, that the smallest dream should take him back to the courtroom. Had he known nothing else all these years? Had his life been only four days of bitterness in Nurnburg, that even his unconscious thoughts should draw him inevitably back to the trial? Difficult enough to prevent his waking thoughts from returning to it — the draughty old courts building, the solemn almost unworldly echoes of precise voices, the stoical people in the benches the judges, the prosecutor. Yes, always the prosecutor. Always the American prosecutor dominated the dream picture.

Strange fellow, but probably not bad, Ringemann had decided — not bad under other circumstances. Terrible that circumstances should determine a man's
nature. It would be interesting to meet the prosecutor in two years, five years, other circumstances.

At Nurnburg he had seemed vigorous, ambitious, and stern. Rindemann had thought of the American tourists he had seen in Switzerland and France before the war. This man was very much the same — well dressed, confident, amiable toward Europeans, yet having an unconcealed distrust of them, particularly Germans. Rindemann was vaguely unsettled by the prosecutor. The crowd was harmless and understandable, watching the proceedings without love or hatred because there was nothing to watch elsewhere in Nurnburg, and they had nothing to do. The judges, on the other hand, seemed harmless, indifferent to Rindemann as a special personality, as if they thought him a relatively unimportant part of a whole substance they were analyzing.

But the prosecutor was another matter. He was implicitly fearful. Watching him, Rindemann had thought of the Italian front, of an American howitzer emplacement, distant and invisible, yet immediately dangerous. Rindemann knew he could never put this man on canvas. One might paint him, record him as a lump of matter with human features distinctly his own. But unless one could know the subject he could never paint the subject well. An interesting point. Rindemann had argued it many times with Edi. Once Edi had said: "That's why you paint still life, Jacob. It's easy for you. No work at all. Anybody can understand trees and water and mountains. Work on people, Jacob. Know people. That's work. When you can paint people I think you will be happier, not running from place to place, running away from the most interesting subjects of all."

"Herr Rindemann," the prosecutor was saying. "What we are not yet satisfied about is how you happened to go to England so suddenly. You were in Paris in October, 1938. Is that right?" He spoke in an offhand manner, and thort papers.

"Yes," Rindemann replied. "I believe that is right."

The prosecutor nodded. "And you testified you went to England to sell some paintings to a London dealer?"

"Yes," Rindemann replied.

The prosecutor stacked his papers and stared coldly ahead of him. "Herr Rindemann," he said, "you testified you sold your paintings but we find no dealer in London with the firm name 'A. Carpenter & Sons' as you testified."

Rindemann cleared his throat. "Well, I think I can explain. The next year wrote Carpenter at the London business address and got no answer. A few months later he wrote to me from someplace in Devonshire, but I can't remember where. I've long since lost or destroyed the letter.

"Meaning what?" demanded the prosecutor.

"Well, only that the dealer had gone out of business. That's what he said in the letter. He closed his place and moved to the country. I had something wished to show him at the time, but he said he wasn't interested and recommended another dealer." Rindemann paused. "That was 1939," he continued
after a moment. "Seven years ago. Perhaps that is why you can't find any record of the dealer."

"I rather imagine there would have been a record, Herr Rindemann." The American's voice became brittle. "Besides, even if it were proved that your trip to London was to sell paintings, the fact remains that you spent almost every day of three months at the home of Lady Roth."

"Well, I knew Edi so well, you see, and ..."

"Considering your former relationship with Lady Roth," the prosecutor broke in, "didn't you find it a bit close living at her husband's house?" He stopped abruptly and dramatically, as if reminded of an important fact overlooked. "But of course, Herr Rindemann," he continued smilingly, his voice moderated, "I had forgotten. Lord Roth was not at home at the time."

There was silence as Rindemann and the prosecutor stared at each other. Rindemann knew he should feel acutely injured, if only for Edi's sake. Behind him he heard sounds of amusement from the crowd. They were showing interest, he thought, at the prospect of fleshy disclosures. He should defend Edi, he knew, but he could not muster indignation. His emotions seemed smothered in weariness. He had not been asked a question and so he decided not to answer. The silence continued and Rindemann fidgeted. Outside the sun disappeared around the corner of the old courts building, and the light in the room became poor. The three black-robed men on the dias behind the large bench of justice were diffused in gloom, and Rindemann could no longer make out their features clearly. They were speaking to each other in low voices, exchanging papers. One was a stout, bald Britisher who had done what little talking the judges had allowed themselves. His voice seemed forbearing to Rindemann when he leaned forward and said, "Herr Rindemann, will you tell the court of your acquaintance with Lady Roth, and anything else connected with her that you know of up to the time of her death."

"I met her in Berlin," Rindemann replied. "She was divorced and touring the continent. I met her at a party. We became friends, and when I told her I was going to the Balkans to paint, she asked to go along. That was in 1935. We came back to Berlin in 1936, I forget which month, but it was fall, and after a few weeks here, she left for England permanently. Later I learned she had remarried."

The prosecutor interrupted harshly. "What you mean is that you and she lived together for the better part of a year, and went all over Europe together."

"I fail to see what that particular detail has to do with this matter," the bald, British jurist broke in calmly. "Herr Rindemann is being tried for acts leading to war, which seems to me at least, outside the sphere you are getting into."

"Your Lordship," the prosecutor countered irritably, "It seems clear that the intimate relationship between the defendant and Lady Roth made it possible later for the defendant, as a spy, to worm his way into Lady Roth's household. Since Roth was then active in the British War Office, it would have been highly
desirable for a Nazi agent to wish to do that very thing. Moreover, it is our contention that Rindemann actually got hold of information through Lady Roth that he later transmitted . . ."

"I am aware of your contention," the judge said, "but since it also implies something unsavory about Lady Roth, who is now dead and unable to set it aside, I would rather not hear it again." The judge turned to Rindemann. "Please continue your story."

Rindemann recalled the sojourn with Edi in Yugoslavia, how they returned to Germany when his work had failed to make money. He told of her trip to England, her unkept promise to come back to Berlin in a month. He had seen her again in London in the fall of 1938, more than two years later. He had written to her at that time, and told her he would shortly be in England, and she had invited him to stay with her. He had accepted her hospitality for three months and then returned to Paris. Very soon afterward his bank in Berlin had refused to honor a draft, which forced him to return to Germany for funds. Once there, other matters delayed his return to Paris, until suddenly the international situation made it impossible to leave Germany. He told of his service in the German army, first as a clerk in military intelligence, and later, toward the war's desperate end, as a foot-soldier on the Italian front. He briefly recounted his army service, how he had been wounded in the knee and his subsequent hospitalization for the duration of the war. He produced a letter received through the Red Cross after the German surrender. It had been from Edi. It described London in the throes of reconstruction, and with great sentiment recalled many happy experiences in Europe before the war. She hoped he was well and that, when "things were nice again," he might revisit England. She and Roth had moved to the northwest coast near Scotland during the blitz and had decided to stay there permanently. They had a beautiful home, the letter informed him, with a wild rocky shore on its west side where he might paint to his heart's content. It was dated April, 1946, a month before she died.

That had been his testimony to the court. He was able to find no witnesses, he could produce no proof that it was the whole, true story. Edi's last letter, which had been cautiously read by Allied intelligence before reaching him at last, established nothing in his favor. If anything, it had been his downfall.

It had called him to the attention of Allied occupation authorities, since it had been written to a convalescent German prisoner by the wife of an important Englishman. A thorough cross-check of Allied intelligence files had been made, and a short dossier on Jacob Rindemann was found among French records. When, later, the prosecution read this dossier during his trial, Rindemann was surprised that he had caused so searching an interest. Evidently French intelligence had been watching him in Paris before the war. His occupation was listed, as were his various Paris addresses; a note was included on several quick trips he had made to Berlin (he had been surprised
to learn they numbered four, he remembered only three); and a significantly worded memorandum made known that he had been twice entertained at the German legation. Easily the most interesting information in the French report was an accurate account of his trip to London and his visit with Edi. This account covered a wonderful number of details of his visit, causing Rindemann to wonder how the French knew so much of him while the British knew almost nothing, not even of his trip to London. The amusing thought struck him that French intelligence obviously had been snooping in England without knowledge of the British, or the very type of thing he was being held for at the moment. There could be shown, of course, certain commendable motives in the French spying. But Rindemann wondered if the disclosure had not caused at least one British brow to wrinkle.

During the entire proceedings of the trial, which lasted four days, Rindemann had observed with more interest than anger, how his life during the past eleven years had become distorted. Several times the prosecutor had pointed out that a man of Rindemann’s limited means could not have travelled over Europe as Rindemann had done unless he had had a substantial expense account. “We find him in Biarritz and San Sebastian, in Interlaaken, in Florence, in Paris, and travelling to and from Berlin — altogether more like a successful international businessman than a hard-working artist trying to make ends meet.” Those had been the American’s words. Rindemann had started to explain the vast difference in Europe between travelling third and fourth class, and travelling as foreign tourists were used to travel. But it seemed a weak statement so he had not finished it.

On the fourth day of the trial the prosecutor had asked, “Herr Rindemann, while you were visiting Lady Roth, did you know that her husband was doing important military work for the British government.”

“Yes. She mentioned it,” Rindemann had replied.

“Did you ever learn what it was about, what he was doing?”

“It was some sort of work in the south of England.”

“How did you learn that, Herr Rindemann?”

“Edi got two letters from Roth from Southampton,” Rindemann explained.

“She told me that was where he was doing this particular work.”

“What particular work?”

“I don’t know. Setting up a defense area of some sort.”

The prosecutor became alert. He leaned across his table and said quickly, “That interested you, didn’t it?”

“No,” Rindemann answered. “Why should it?”

“Herr Rindemann, it interested you enough so that you gave that information to German intelligence, did it not?”

Rindemann thought for a moment.
He said, “Yes, but that was during the war.”

The prosecutor smiled. “Quite true, but you did give that information to the Germans.”
"Why, yes. I was one of them."

"It apparently never bothered you that you were giving information obtained surreptitiously while living in an Englishman's house." The prosecutor’s voice grew tense.

Rindemann said, "I never really thought of it that way. I never thought it was important. My superiors asked me questions about Lord Roth, and I answered the little I knew."

"Are we to suppose that if they hadn't asked you, you would not have given them that information?"

"I don't know, really."

"What was your job in German intelligence, Herr Rindemann?"

"I was in a section that worked out color schemes for camouflaging aircraft and naval vessels."

"That's all?" asked the prosecutor, archly.

"Yes."

"You were not connected with German intelligence before the war?"

"Why ... no."

The prosecutor exploded. "You're lying, Rindemann. You spied before the war and Roth's wife helped you. You and she passed information about her husband's movements to the Germans, information that cost the lives of Allied soldiers at a later time. The bombing of installations in the south of England was made possible by the work of a spy who was close to Lord Roth. You were that spy. It would be to your advantage, Rindemann, if you owned up to this. We have enough evidence to positively convict you as a war criminal. Now, will you tell me and the court just how you and Edith Roth operated, and when you operated, and the nature of the information you transmitted?"

"I don't know the first thing about any of what you have just said," Rindemann answered shortly. It had been his first showing of anger. He was very tired. He wished time would revert to a former state that was, in his mind, at once vague and remote and inviting. He wanted to be on the high hill over Dubrovnik again, with the crooked old town below him, and the Adriatic stretching and swelling out before him as far as he could see. There, he would paint an expressionism of seven sickening years, and cast it out to the water as he had done with Edi's young lovers so long ago. Perhaps in an occult way it would destroy his memory of the war, the unending noise, the painful monotony of daily brutality, the physical hurts, the oppressive hospitals, this frightful aftermath. Once a soldier had said to him, "Jacob, the end of this war, and our own defeat will mean intellectual liberation."

The statement had not impressed Rindemann as being other than dangerous. No one wanted to liberate anyone intellectually or otherwise. It was simply a dispute over who was to dominate whom, and woe be to the loser.
Rindemann rose shakily to his feet and said in a thick voice, “Times change little, it seems. The inquisitors want me to confess heresy when I don’t know the meaning of the word.”

The prosecutor twisted his mouth.

“I want you to truthfully admit you spied and cost the lives of good people who stood between decency and the festering ideals that you fought for. I want you . . .”

The British judge pounded his gavel. He was forced to shout to be heard over the prosecutor, whose voice had become extremely loud. “Again I remind you, sir,” the judge cried, “that these implications are without adequate substantiation and that the court cannot tolerate them.”

“Those are no implications.” The prosecutor whirled angrily on the bench of justice. “The Germans’ knowledge of defense and embarkation installations was so thorough and advanced that it could have been obtained only through individuals who were close to Lord Roth. This man, Rindemann, working alone or in conjunction with Lady Roth, was close enough to the information to get it. Furthermore, he was in German intelligence during the war. My government is anxious to get to the bottom of these cases, and if we have to bring Roth himself here for examination . . .”

“Your point is clear and well taken,” the judge interrupted. “I suggest we adjourn for two hours . . .”

Air brakes were suddenly applied with a loud hiss beneath the train, causing Rindemann to lurch forward and to his right.

The other prisoners who had been dozing now came awake, and, ironically, all looked out of the window with the hopeful expectancy of fatigue. They were almost there.

The train banked sharply and flashed across a trestle over a narrow road edged by tall poplars. It was a road Rindemann knew. Once he and Edi had cycled to Pilsen on that road. They had stopped often on the way, to let Edi rest, to sketch scenery, to lie in the grass by the roadside and feel very free and happy. He was almost compelled to rise from the bench and look back. But instead, he closed his eyes, and did not open them again until the train had stopped at last. One of the guards issued a sharp order, and Rindemann stood up, resolutely. He was surprised and gratified to feel no depression, but rather an anxiousness to begin his brief penance. He hoped he might paint the three judges, and paint a scene of the road to Pilsen—not a lifeless scene, but one with two young cyclers riding along, happy and free and quite full of life.

He smiled. The poplars were tall and beautiful on the road to Pilsen, but he would make them small hedges, perhaps, for old time’s sake.
HEGIRA

The hourglass lies upon the shore,
Come watch the sands, come watch with me!
The birth, the death of Time explore,
See how capricious Time can be . . .
Goddess not, but always-serf
To the alloys and the ores
Of the magnet wavered by
The life dance, death dance, choreographer,
Laughing in mute mockery;
Empress imperious, and
Tyrant of Time and man!

She walks with me in pace serene,
The sands are uninhibited:
For now they sift in rhythm to
The waves that pulse the ocean’s rim,
At ninety eight point six they drop,
And throb in uni-harmony
To the beat of Cosmic hearts.
She draws the veil from Heaven's realm,
The sphere of hope made manifest,
The magnet's ores she flashes now,
As Time collapses
    in catastrophic currents . . .
    Strongly I clutch the hourglass
    to strangle the torrents of sands
    through the vortex tumbling
    To keep This Day forever
    Mate to eternity . . .
    But now the crystal hands are emptied and
    This Day becomes
    another night and now this night
    another day . . .

    She wraps me round with the world of sorrow
    Till I am lost in fogs of tears,
    She bares the magnet's alloys now:
    The sands are stilled to Stygian calm —
    Lying in stagnation,
    In frozen lethargy.
    In grief encased,
    In grief unborne,
    I watch each grain,
    Infinitesimal,
    Float downward,
One,
By
One,
Funeral in march.
Madly, I seize the hourglass,
Wildly, beat it against the wind,
To hurry, hurry, hurry on
The sands that stupor clinging to space . . .

Abrupt,
And in a spasm for escape
It crashed upon the coral reef
While Time, in pandemonium
Whirled about the beach.

And in a moment
Time was gone . . .
Washed to the shores
Of invisible worlds.

Mimicking what once she taught,
The moan she gave Medea,
She flung her magnet to the sea
And the mask of Medusa became her flesh,
When beyond the night horizon,
She fled.

**WELTSCHMERZ**

I met her there on Twilight Hill,
And crossed the chasm of Evening Place;
A trio of stars shone on her hair,
A cloak of black mourned round her form.
I raised my hands for wisdom-words
And found them mirrored in her eyes;
Oh! from her eyes there came the light
That frees and fills wild, withered souls,
Dissolved was the veil of her Morning tears,
Horizoned the sun of her Noon-day love,
Hers was the light
Of the Dawn of the night
Two thousand years long.
She turned and gazed into the Past
Then lifted her eyes to Essence Realm—
And the wind became a threnody
In chorus, chanted by the dead:
“The night has been so long, so long . . .”
I heard the tear drops in her heart.
and he could hear one of the *Nachtstucke* in his head, but he could not remember the notes as they appeared when he had played it on the piano. He liked to play Schumann, and, lying in bed, he wished that he could play now. He liked to play Schumann because the music had warmth, a pouring, glowing, sensitive human warmth like the laughter of a half-awakened woman. He tasted in his mind the clear intoxication, the masculine power of his own fingers touching the keys. He could hear the music even when his wife’s voice came from the kitchen, when she said

He saw her walking in the garden, her tall body clean and straight in the sunlight, her eyes brightly the color of lakes, and she turned toward him and her face lit with passion. He waited quietly for her as she turned and ran toward him, but as she flew over the wide, soft lawn, through the smooth trees and the scented flowers, her features grew indistinct and he realized that his glasses were off, but rather, too, that he had a very poor imagination. He thought he could feel the warmth of her body trembling against him. He could hear his voice, strong and tender: “Milly, Milly.” His wife stood in the doorway, and he heard her say resentfully

He stared into the street as he dressed and he could see where his lawn joined his neighbor’s without a mark to show where his own stopped and the other began. It was humiliating, but in keeping with the feeling of the town. A nice, clean, friendly town, he thought. It has simplicity, simplicity like a cloud has simplicity, like a child before it learns to talk too much, like an imbecile has simplicity. A nice town, a place where rearing children, only the vulgar raise them, is safe and respectable, and the superannuated love the place too. The houses are clean and lie on lawns, and water drips from the eaves when it rains. God bless our town, it is quiet. God bless the poor, God bless our home, our garage, new car, God bless our childless lives, our barren lives. God give us our daily bread and money for the movies. The ladies have their clubs, the ripeness is all, all’s right with the world. He tried to forget them, he would like to play the piano and forget them, but he could not forget or forgive his own stupid juggler’s face in the mirror as he shaved.

The hands are a little stiff in the morning; he would have fumbled the
slow rolling tenths anyway. The hands are stiff, but coffee is delicious food, drink some every day, vacuum packed, like the juggler’s little mind, hush, like the juggler himself. And all the time his wife stared out of her puffed eyes and watched him eat the dull simplicity of breakfast and she said

It is over, the ordeal of coming each out from the self in the morning. It is over, face the east, tie the vizor with a green ribbon, the vizor that isn’t a vizor at all. “Goodby,” said leadenly the slattern, said a wedding night, said the scullery maid, said habit and the Goddess Athena. As buss for habit. Goodby said the straight and undeceiving hair. A kiss for the wife and a pat for the little white dog. There is comfort in indifferent moments, goodby.

The sidewalk is hard; it jars the spine. The rubber heels strike and shock up the long column and the soles of the feet are sore in thin leather. And sometimes the souls of men are sore in thin labor. The sky was powder blue and the sun was already hot. The fat man was sweating as he went by. But the air is clear and the moment full of morning hopes before the dull mobs swarm into the streets, before the stores open, full of hopes that someday the stores might not have to open, that someday will be permanent Fourth of July, Bang Forever. Now the air is still clean, and there is dew somewhere on a field, and the long legs are placed one after the other on the sidewalk, the hard sidewalk that jars the brittle spine. “Good morning, good morning.”

The quietness, the peace was even on the dusty face of the building where he worked. Peace was not on the stairs because some of the others came up with him. He couldn’t even hear the music now.


“Yes, George, a little get-together at the house last night, some of the wife’s club. Usual hen party.” He loaded his voice, revealing the proper manly disgust, but he really didn’t care. He had been in the bedroom trying to get some music on the radio; he was an optimist. He heard some of the noice his wife thought was music, he heard a parboiled private eye console a blonde widow, but never any music, never. He tried to read, but the voice beat in at him, beat in through the words and he read the sentences over and over in uncomprehending despair, tired because he was bored. He couldn’t even dream about the garden and Milly. So he listened to nothing told by an idiot, told by collective woman’s tongue. It was maybe worth the disgust he put in his voice.

He sat down at his desk in the corner of the room, and began to look through the papers before him. His hands felt far away, almost disconnected. He saw Milly come in, always a little different from the flower of his garden more real and distinct. Perhaps it was her typewriter, and of course she was wearing clothes.

“Hello, Milly.”

“Hi, Ray. Gee, you look tired. Tough day, too.”

Milly will be fat, he thought, Milly will be fat, but who really cares who Milly will be? Milly is never fat in the garden, on the lawn, by the trees, b
the scented flowers. But accuracy is next to godliness. He watched the full, delightful curve of her buttocks beneath her skirt as she typed. The machines were almost silent; one can forget them as easily as pain in the past.

When all day the fingers move, when the man wears a polite smile because the boss sometimes looks at the employees working, the man grows weary and he must eat. Routine is not a bad thing; routine is not monotony; there must be resistance, thought to make routine into monotony. Routine was only hunger. The belly was empty an hour before lunch. The word, the smile, the figures the man juggles, the fascination of an ornamental flowerpot with curves a little like those of a young, plump woman named Milly. A word, a smile. The moving finger writes and having writ strikes another key. Weltschmerz shrinks to plain Kopfschmerzen, the world does not crumble because of pettiness or even for the shallow smile. The machines made a hungry, angry music, the hard insignificant music of routine, of the hunger that always comes an hour before lunch.

He made some mistakes, so he knew he would have to cut down his lunch hour, and he watched the rest leave, George and Mary and the boss, and after they had gone he sat in the new quiet with only the sound of Milly's typewriter. Milly always ate an hour later and stayed in the office at noon. She stayed in his mind forever, five minutes, ten seconds at a time. He listened for a moment and then went back to his work, trying to finish so that he could go home to eat. He did not bother to call his wife; he was too tired, too indifferent to bother. In his head, just as in the morning, the music plagued him, repeating a fragment over and over in a thin mental orchestration, like an old and imperfect recording. And he could see Milly working, too, and he knew that no music sang in her head, and he knew that she would surely be fat. He could never think in present tense.

He finished up what he had to finish, and took off his glasses. He sat for a moment, thinking of nothing, letting the music flow around him and into him and past him, the music he couldn't hear, the music he couldn't play because his wife wanted a car and not a piano, a dog and not a baby. He let it come, but it was not very comforting; his music was a phantasm, in time, out of space; it was in his brain, but his fingers pressed other keys.

Through the indistinct world he made by taking off his glasses, he saw Milly come toward him, and the music fled from the imposed rhythm of her body. He saw her big and clean and straight, and her fast footsteps struck the floor with the beating of his speeded heart. He was in the garden again and the blood came to his face. And she stopped beside him and her voice was very soft in the quiet room, where traffic noise suddenly became loud and the silence intensified by her warmth and nearness. He smelled perfume, and he closed his eyes for an instant, and looked at her indistinct oval of a face, with a red mouth and dark eyes the color of lakes.

"Roy, dear, will you . . ."

He stood up and without haste, he quietly put his arms around her solid,
big body, and kissed her with all of his dreamed passion, on her lips and on her neck. "Milly," he said, "Milly." She stood there, complete and unresponsive, not even surprised, and the absurd thought came to him that it was a little like kissing a cow, and his empty stomach felt very sick and he was weak. He dropped his arms and stepped back and they stood thinking little thoughts in the stuffy room. She gave a short giggle and her voice was strangely shrill in his ears. She patted his hand absently as though he were a child.

"Gee, Ray, you're a sweet guy at that. Will you stay in the office a while? I want to meet my boy friend for lunch. Thanks, you're a dear." She walked swiftly to the door with her big-girl stride, her hips making a grotesque rhythm through the foggy sea of his eyes. In a moment she was gone, and the office was silent except for the street noise and the sound of a plane somewhere in the distance. He stood in the room and measured silences with his ears. He put on his glasses and stared reflectively at a flowerpot with curves like a woman.

The sidewalk was hard and the sun was hot when he finally went home. He pushed his legs along beside the green lawns and the respectable white houses watched him without wonder. His feet kept time to a vulgar tune by a peasant named Beethoven and his head was full of the music. He listened and marched and enjoyed the warmth of his freedom. He was almost smiling when his wife opened the door and said
The field lay quiet, rolling slow
Beneath the tides of rain and wind and snow.
Loved by damp crickets and one late lark,
The field lay sleeping, rich and deep and dark.

The Plowman climbed up on the hill at dawn
And stood in golden radiance, looking down.
The early April frost was almost gone,
The sleeping field was rich and brown.

The Plowman came, loudly singing, singing,
Swinging his broad hands and bringing
Big horses, the Plowman came with his bright plow
And cut the field in two.

The field lies quiet in the summer dark,
Loved by plump crickets and one late lark,
Healed by the young wheat.
The evening wind is warm and sweet,
But the field lies quiet, dreaming of the brave
Plowman and his cruel love.
The Hill
By DAVID N. LINDELL
ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE GOGAS

The sun had long since left the streets in that pale shadow that meant neither night nor day. Only the uppermost windows of the taller buildings still shone with reflecting light. Yet the streets were not dark and the daylight warmth lingered as it always does in a great city on a summer evening.

It was after six o’clock and the confused rush of people and vehicles which marked the close of the day’s business was fast diminishing. Here in the center of the city the shops and offices were already closed and the crowd along the pavement had grown thin suddenly, almost mysteriously.

Ganan stood in the entrance of a cafeteria from which he had just emerged. Shortly before, he had been sitting before the large window eating his supper and watching with mild wonder the exodus from the city.

He stood, now, in the doorway trying to appear assured and self-confident, only half succeeding. It really didn’t matter. The people passing along the pavement before him seldom looked up to notice the others who shared the streets with them. They had their own problems, their own purposes which had nothing to do with the young man who stood in the doorway. There were many such young men, clean and polished, looking wonderingly about and trying to appear unimpressed with what they saw. They usually came to the city from distant places to see it, to taste its pleasures, to wonder at its magnitude and sound. And when they returned to the places from which they had come, they would say, “I’ve been there. You haven’t lived till you’ve seen the place.”

The truth of this slowly took possession of Ganan and he edged deeper into the doorway.

But, he was here for a purpose, he told himself. He was here waiting for his friend Callahan. This new thought made him uneasy. He hadn’t seen Callahan for a long time—not since his friend had left home to go to the city four years before. But Callahan had written occasionally and told him how he was getting on. Callahan was a floorwalker in one of the big department stores. He knew lots of people and lived a great life. His letters were full of exciting incidents and sometimes there were hints about the wickedness of the city. Callahan was a great guy, boisterous and friendly and game for
anything. Everyone at home said so. Everyone talked about Callahan with great envy.

But all that was just talk. Callahan had done something they couldn't understand. He had gone into a world they didn't know, and to them, that was mysterious.

He remembered when Callahan had left. They had all gone down to the station to see him off. "Good luck, Cal old boy." "Don't do anything you wouldn't do." "Be good. If you can't be good, be careful." And Callahan had winked and laughed and they had laughed, too. That's the way it had been. And when the train had left the station with Callahan grinning at the window and making obscene gestures — "Cal's a hot one, all right." "He's a card. But they didn't understand.

The departure of Callahan had meant more to Ganan than he at first suspected. He almost forgot about it. He was busy himself. There was the work at the bank and there was the lodge — he was always on some committee or other. And his father took more of his time than before. He would read the paper to his father every night because his father's eyes were gradually failing. His father would sit and grumble at the news and stop again and again to make comments — always the same comments. "The government is spending too confounded much money. It'll drive the country into bankruptcy," or, "They ought to put every one of those miners in the army."

And, then, eventually his father would lose interest and in the end fall asleep with his glasses pushed up on his forehead and his pipe still smoking in his hands.

And every Thursday evening he would have dinner with his aunt. She lived alone in a big, gray frame house on Elm Street. The family had tried to persuade her to give up the old place after her husband's death, but she had doggedly refused. Perhaps it was just as well. It kept her busy — gave her something to do, to think about. She had lived for her husband before his death. He had been a sickly little man and had been a burden to her. She had done all the shopping and paying of bills, had cooked especially for his finicky appetite, nursed him and catered to his whims. It was a blessing, everyone said, when he died and she had agreed; for she never really loved him or even respected him. But now, she missed him; or rather missed the responsibility which he had created. Twice a week she would go through the entire house, dusting and polishing, and all day Thursday she would cook and bake for the evening meal when Ganan paid his weekly visit.

The meals were always an attempt at elegance. His aunt would place two slender candles on the big, mahogany, dining room table which was used only on these occasions. It was his job to light these candles. There were also two similar candles in sterling holders on the cadenza, but these were left unlighted. But, on one of these occasions his aunt had said, "Sean, will you light the other candles, too?" Ganan had understood that this was a
important thing in his relationship with his aunt. Every Thursday from that time on the candles on the cadenza were lighted.

To his aunt, these evenings were the one extravagance she allowed herself. She would prepare all manner of foods for her nephew, and Ganan must eat them all and he would always say, "Oh, really, you shouldn't have prepared so much." Then, he would add, "but it really is delicious; you haven't lost your touch, that's plain enough." In the last year, Ganan had made this comment with less and less conviction for, as a matter of fact, his aunt had lost her touch. She often left things out of the recipes and added more and more seasoning not realizing her own tastes were becoming dull with age. And there was always so much and she insisted that Ganan eat everything. This meant that on Thursday nights Ganan would roll restlessly in bed all night and awake the next morning unrested and with the memory of unpleasant and fantastic dreams.

The conversation between him and his aunt on these occasions was always the same. He must tell her everything that happened at the bank and then about all the goings-on in the town no matter how dull or trivial. As he related the week's events in a disinterested monotone, he would be conscious of her withered face between the candles. The flickering light would make her face appear grotesque and at such times he would think her ugly. But, her eyes shine with delight at his narrative and from this he rightly understood that his coming to dinner once a week was all she now lived for.

This knowledge and his decision to never disappoint his aunt had been the cause of several unpleasant disagreements with Katherine. He and Katherine were not formally engaged, but, as his mother put it, they had been "keeping company" for a long while now. Everyone reasoned that eventually, once Ganan was on his feet financially, he and Katherine would be married and would settle right there in town. And Ganan guessed that's what would eventually happen. His aunt had on two occasions hinted that her old place might be his someday if he married a "nice, decent, sensible girl," and the house, Ganan realized, was actually quite a prize.

But, his Thursday night dinners sometimes conflicted with Katherine's plans. The first time was several years before when Katherine had planned a motor trip to a village playhouse several miles out of town. She had been furious when he had insisted that he must give up the trip for his aunt's sake. Katherine had said things, then, that had hurt him deeply. Was he a man or a mouse? Was he tied to his aunt's apron strings? She had gone instead with Mahoney, whose father owned the music shop in town. She had avoided him and refused to answer his phone calls for nearly three weeks after that. But, they had drifted together again. Nevertheless, every once in a while she would plan things for Thursday night — a canoe ride on the lake or a movie she was "just dying to see" or she would call him at the bank in the afternoon and say she wasn't feeling well and would he come over and keep her company that night? He suspected she did these things deliberately, but when
he pointed out to her the plight of his lonely aunt who was depending on him for her only pleasure in life, Katherine, in a resigned and hurt tone would say, "Oh, all right, Sean. But I shall be miserable tonight."

Even so, most of the time, he and Katherine got on well together. He couldn't find (and sometimes he would try) anything wrong with her, by popular standards at any rate. She was from a good family, respected in the town; she taught Sunday school at St. Margaret's and Father Hines was quite proud of her. Everyone said she was a nice girl or as his aunt put it "a decent, sensible girl."

Then, the first letter from Callahan arrived. He had gone home after work one afternoon and found the letter on the kitchen table where all the newly arrived mail was placed. He had been a little surprised for he had never hoped that Callahan would write to him.

The letter had been long and rather crudely written. Callahan wrote as he talked — with a great deal of vulgarity in his thought and language. But Ganan had seen through the haze of crudeness into another world. He pondered a long while over the letter.

That night, when his mother asked him about the letter, he just said, "Oh it was only a note from Callahan. Didn't say much." But, he had put the letter away in a shoe box and had placed the box in a corner of his bedroom closet.

From that day on, Ganan viewed his own life more critically, for he had something to compare it with. And, as the months passed and more letters were placed in the box, he became more and more critical and more and more dissatisfied. This was a slow process and for a while he didn't recognize it. When he did realize what was going on in his own mind, he became uneasy. He knew he was creating trouble for himself. He pointed out to himself that this saving of Callahan's letters was childish. Twice he took the letters from their box intending to destroy them. But each time, at the critical moment, he would grow so reluctant of cutting himself off from the other world that he would relent and place the letters back in their hiding place.

In the last year he had begun hinting to Callahan that he might come up to the city. In the most recent letter Callahan had written, "If you're ever up to the big town, let me know and I'll show you the sights." Ganan saw through the invitation. It was hollow — just the proper thing to write. But, he had seized it as his opportunity. He had told everyone Callahan had invited him up for a visit.

But now, as he waited in the doorway and the opportunity he had waited for so long was realized, he felt very uneasy and he wondered if he'd been foolish.

Suddenly, he wished he hadn't come. What would he say to Callahan? What would he do now that he was finally here? Not daring to ask Callahan to put him up for a few days, he had gotten a hotel room and, that accomplished, he was at a loss.

Perhaps Callahan wouldn't come. He hadn't sounded very enthusiastic
over the phone that morning. If Callahan didn't come, then, he could spend a few days in the hotel room, maybe go to a couple of shows and, then, go home and forget the foolish thing.

Or he could leave — not keep the appointment. Too late. Callahan was approaching. Ganans heart pounded. There was a girl with Callahan.

Callahan, smiling broadly, stepped up and pumped Ganans hand. “Well, well, Ganans old boy, never expected to see you in this old town of ours. Well, well, how you been? Havent gotten into trouble at that bank of yours? Embezzled funds or something?”

Ganan smiled and blushed and his heart pounded and he felt foolish with Callahan pumping his hand and laughing at his own joke.

“Well, well,” said Callahan again. “Just think of it. How long's it been? Four years or thereabouts. Well, well, you havent changed, old boy.”

“Neither have you,” Ganansaid with surprising feeling.

“What are you doing in town? On business or just up to see the sights?”

“Just wanted a little change,” answered Ganans, collecting himself. He became aware of the girl. She was standing a little to one side against the wall. He just saw the upper part of her body. He didn't dare look down at her legs for she was watching him. The contrast of a living body, the body of a young girl, against the solid masonry behind her was startling:

“Oh, by the way,” said Callahan. “This is Marianne. She works in the stockroom at the store. She drives all the boys crazy down there. Marianne, this is Sean Ganans.”

The girl stepped forward. “Hello,” she said.

“Hello,” said Ganans, knowing he should say something else.

But, Callahan was talking again. “Just had supper at the store with Marianne. She stays in town some nights. Had to bring her along to meet you. Can't have people thinking everyone in the home town is as crazy as me.” He winked at Ganans.

Then, he became serious. “Say, Ganans old boy. I got to rush off. Got a heavy date tonight. You came at a bad time. I'm pretty busy these days.”

And he winked again. “You can find your way around okay, I guess. You got something planned for tonight?”

“No,” answered Ganans, hating to admit it.

“Oh well. There's plenty doing. You won't have any trouble finding something to do around here.”

“No, I guess not,” said Ganans, not convinced.

Then, the girl spoke up. “I stayed in town tonight to see a movie. Would you like to come with me? There are a lot of good shows here this week.”

Ganan was bewildered. “Well... Yes... I'd like to. I have nothing in particular planned,” he added weakly.

“Swell,” put in Callahan. “Well, I must be going. Heavy date you know.”

He shook hands with Ganans again and hurried down the street, Ganans and the girl watched him disappear around the next corner.
"Shall we go?" asked the girl.
"All right."
"Let's go this way. Most of the good shows are on Broadway."
They walked slowly along the street. Ganan thought about his walking along the strange street in a strange city beside a girl he never knew existed until five minutes before. Very much like a dream, he thought. He thought about dreams. What does one do in a dream? If you are dreaming and you know you are (he remembered having experienced such a thing) you can say or do anything and it doesn't matter. You will soon wake up. This though reassured him and he decided he would make the most of his dream. After all, he wasn't in his home town now and he could do what he liked. "What's your name?" he asked.
"Marianne."
"No. I mean your last name."
"My last name doesn't matter, does it? Just Marianne."
"That's a nice name."
"You think so?"
"It's pleasant to say. Marianne," he said softly, testing it again. "Marianne."
She smiled slightly, but said nothing.
Ganan looked at her, noticing the smile and her pale face. It was a plain face, he decided, but, rather nice. Her hair was brown and cropped and the whisps of it that fell along her forehead pleased him. He wondered who Callahan had to do with this girl.
"Have you known Callahan long?" he asked.
"Yes. Quite long."
"You know him well?" He was beginning to suspect something he didn't like.
"He works at the same store, that's all."
Ganan was silent, but the answer pleased him.
They turned north on Broadway and walked along in silence.
"Do you like your work?" Ganan ventured finally.
"Not very."
"Why do you continue, then?"
"What else can I do? Jobs aren't easy to find."
"Can't you get an office job or something like that?"
"I can't type."
"What kind of work do you do in the stockroom?"
"Let's not talk about my work."
"All right. Then, "What show are we going to see?"
She walked along in silence for a while before answering. "Do you really want to go to a show?"
"Not particularly . . . Is there anything else we can do?"
"Oh, there are lots of things. But, I was thinking . . . We could go over to the park. It's nice there this time of year. There are trees and pretty bush
and walks and ponds and the lawns are soft and you can feed the squirrels..."

"Whoa, wait a minute," cut in Ganan, smiling. "You like the park, don't you?"

"Yes, I guess so. It's really nice there."

"All right. We'll go to the park then."

They walked down Broadway past elaborate shop windows and under theater marquise with their neon glowing faintly in the half light. They passed hotels and nightclubs and expensive bars and restaurants.

Ganan and Marianne said little to each other until they reached the park. Here were broad lawns and trees, rich with foliage, and bushes and serene little ponds and drives and cinder paths. And there were birds and little, gray chattering squirrels.

"See?" said Marianne.

"It's very nice."

She led Ganan along one of the more secluded paths. Then, she left the path and sat down on the quiet grass. He sat beside her.

"I often come here," she said. "I come alone and I always feel sad because I come alone. Somehow this isn't a place to be alone. It's a place for couples—a boy and a girl. I have been here and seen other girls strolling along with boys and I'd feel so lonely. I guess I was feeling sorry for myself. I'm glad you came. You must think I'm awfully foolish."

"No."

She lay back so that she was stretched full length on the grass. "What do you do back in your home town?"

"I work in a bank... It's very dull."

"Do you have a girl?"

"No," Ganan answered without hesitation.

"I'm glad. I guess it doesn't matter, but somehow it's nicer now if you don't have a girl."

He stretched out on his side, resting on his arm. They remained that way for several minutes without speaking. Ganan could feel her closeness and vague emotions stirred within him.

A little squirrel came quite close and sat on his haunches and chattered at them. They laughed and Ganan shifted position, accidentally brushing her arm with his hand. Suddenly, his heart pounded and a tenseness he had never before experienced swept over him. He touched her hand. She didn't move. Then, he clasped her hand more firmly, forcing his fingers between hers. He held her hand very tightly for several minutes while his mind struggled with the idea of what he was doing. His home town and Katherine did not exist now and he relaxed, accepting this new idea.

Finally, Marianne turned her head and looked at Ganan. "My name is Marianne Baxter."

He leaned forward and kissed her. Then, again, full on the lips, feeling
them part naturally under his pressure. He kissed her again on the cheek and then on the throat. Nothing existed except this. Nothing.

She pushed him back gently with her hand. "People will see us," she whispered, but he could see she was very happy.

They sat, close together, for a long time and talked very little. The darkness settled over the park and the city around it. The loftier buildings, distinct against the sky, gradually faded into the darkness until only an occasional, lighted window betrayed their height. But, the streets were busy with automobiles, people, and flashing neon. An evening breeze moved through the streets, cleansing the city. It moved through the park, rustling the leaves and bringing moisture to the grass.

Finally, Ganen realized Marianne was trembling and he noticed the coolness himself. He looked at his watch. "It's after twelve," he said softly.

"I have to go home," said Marianne, starting to get up.

"No, wait." He pulled her back. "When will I see you again?"

She peered through the darkness at him, trying to see his face. "Do you want to see me again?"

"Yes."

"If you want to, you will."

He kissed her once more, reluctant to leave, then helped her to her feet. They walked hand in hand slowly out of the park. She led him gently away from the glitter of Broadway along a side street toward Second Avenue. Tall apartment houses towered on both sides, potted evergreens guarding the doorways and trimmed bushes separating them from the street. They were cold, snobbish buildings but Ganen knew that inside they were warm and comfortable. Long, black cars, shining under the street lights, were parked along the curbing and there were taxis, too. The drivers leaned against their cabs, puffed on cigarettes and watched the couple pass.

They reached Second Avenue and turned north. This was a wide, cobblestone street — a commercial street with small stores on the first level and rooms above. Most of the buildings were only two or three stories high and were made of brick, long since turned gray with soot and dust.

They walked on, swinging their clasped hands. Occasional trucks rumbled by in both directions setting clouds of dust swirling in the gutters.

They passed bars — dingy little places where shabby old men got drunk every night — and all-night restaurants which emitted strong, greasy odors which forced Ganen to hold his breath.

They passed groups of small boys who were throwing stones at the big trucks and they passed women whom Ganen took for prostitutes.

"What time is it," Marianne asked.

"Five to one," he answered after glancing at his watch.

"Do you want a bite to eat," she asked.

"If you do."

"Let's stop in at Bennies."
"When they got to Bennies, they went in and sat on stools at the counter. There were three youths at one end of the counter.

"Hello, Frank," said the girl.

"Hi ya," one of the youths answered. All three looked at Ganan.

"What'll you have folks?" asked Bennie, leaning on the counter.

"A bowl of chili," said the girl.

"And coffee — no cream."

"I'll have the same," decided Ganan. "But put cream in the coffee."

Ganan watched Bennie dish out the chili from the large pot on the range. He's ugly, thought Ganan. His face is all battered.

"He used to be a prize fighter," whispered the girl. "That's why his nose is pushed in. He's a nice guy, though."

"Some more coffee, Bennie," ordered the youth the girl had called Frank.

Ganan looked toward the other end of the counter to find the three youths watching him. He looked away quickly. They look tough, though, Ganan. Hope they aren't looking for any trouble. He could feel their eyes on him as he waited for the coffee and chili he had ordered. When the bowl was set before him, he knew he couldn't eat it.

"Not as hungry as I thought," he muttered, pushing the bowl away. He didn't feel well. He began to perspire and the smell of the chili was unbearable.

After what seemed a very long time the girl was finished and they were outside again. He shoved both hands in his pockets and they walked down the street.

Ganan looked around several times to see if the youths were following, but they did not appear.

Ganan and the girl moved along the street a little more quickly than before.

He knew the land was flat, but he had the strange sensation of going down a long, gradual hill. The feeling was so strong that he muttered, "I didn't know there were any hills in this city."

"What makes you think there are any hills?"

He didn't answer and she didn't repeat the question, but she gave him a sideward glance and they walked on in silence. They walked past several empty stores with boarded-up windows and then left the brick buildings behind.

They moved along in front of a long wooden fence. There were gaps here and there where the boards had either rotted out or had been torn out, which revealed a shadowy junk yard on the other side. They walked swiftly now past wooden, three-story tenements huddled close together, past rubbish barrels, overflowing their trash onto the sidewalks, past a long row of ominous gray warehouses. In front of a tenement which almost touched the wall of the last warehouse the girl stopped.

"This is where I live," she announced almost defiantly.

Ganan followed her into the hallway. It was small and dingy, lighted
only by a twenty-watt bulb hanging from the ceiling. A narrow flight of stairs climbed steeply up one wall.

"I live on the third floor," she said.

"Is anyone home?" he asked, hoarsely.

"Yes, my folks are upstairs. I want to thank you for the very nice ..."

Before she could finish, he had crowded her against the wall and was fumbling with the buttons of her blouse.

"No, Sean, please," she murmured.

Crudely feathering for her flesh, he broke the shoulder strap of her slip.

"Sean," she whimpered.

"IS THAT YOU, MARIANNE?" a harsh, high-pitched voice forced its way into Ganan's ears. He stepped back, flushed and suddenly ashamed.

"Yes, mother," answered the girl.

"You come up here, you little tramp. It's after two o'clock."

"Yes, mother."

Then, she looked at Ganan who had backed near the door. She opened her mouth to say something, turned instead, and ran up the stairs.

Outside once again, Ganan hurried along Second Avenue, up the hill
A Poem by Cyrus Noe

TWO SONNETS, THREE LIMERICKS, TWO MORALS AND FINIS

I

I may grow lean assailing the years,
If, to you, I wrote "Romance,"
With sonnet forms and penned' tears
And rhyming rules and metre clamps.
I may never know delights of Nietzsche
Or see how nicely dark things are,
If my soul, in to you reaching,
Calls you goddess, calls you star.

But you, my angel, this mud transcend
And turn a dark world on its end;
Your salve of love, of faith, perchance,
Makes surreal our damned "Romance,"
Now cardboard verse and cardboard tears
Live, rhyme and cry beyond dull years.

Chorus:
And he damns the dark hall
With rockets born of more night,
Strung between two horses,
Love and nothing.
I want to love you more than once,
Twice or thrice to give you me;
But earth's unbending circumstance
Gives us ourselves but singly.
Love that's cast for more-than-once
Falls short in one, is incomplete;
What could have had so many rhymes
One couplet gets — two-lined' bleat.

Our bell chimes once, and in the chime,
We must want enough to live enough
To have enough to love enough
To last the both for curving time —
Oh, hard enough to make for ages
Carbon copies on succeeding pages.

Chorus:
   Lo, the love comes flood
   As did the deluge,
   Sweeping a soul ungrimed,
   Perhaps falsely.

Moral: It's hard to keep from bumping into things in the dark.
Turn on the light.
There was a precious young cynic
Who lived in a pattern from clinic.
His knowledge of Nietzsche
Was heavenly, peachy,
And he shone in things schizophrenic.

When love came around to our fellow,
"Libido," he said with a bellow—
He took then look two,
Burned his library, threw
Away his pince-nez and his 'cello.

He now lives in East Orange, N. J.
And hasn’t got something-to-say.
His 32 kids
Put infantile lids
On his wisdom, his gloom and his pay.

Moral: Six of one, half-dozen of the other.

Chorus:
Laugh, children, laugh, for this is good.
Laughter welds
Shattered souls whole.
But don’t forget how to cry.

— finis —
Joey squatted over the gray fur, eyes following the mouse squirming its
tured body across the dust-smothered concrete. Bernie watched, too, his
es glittering from more than the aching sun. The matted-gray fuzz, almost
the shelter of the step, twiched when Bernie, nervous, dirty fingers pinching
tail, jerked it back. He flipped the mouse on its back, giggling at its frantic
juggles.

"Don't!" Joey said. "Don't tease him anymore."

"Just a mouse. You gotta kill it anyway." Bernie giggled.

"Leave him alone!"

Bernie glared at Joey, a sneer disfiguring his thin face. Joey's bone-
ttle fingers caught the hand reaching for the tail, throwing Bernie off
ance so that he fell back on the grass.

"Don't do that, Joey. It's my mouse."

"You're hurting him, leave him alone."

"It's hurt already. The legs were all flat when I took it out of the trap.
side, it's just a mouse."

"I don't care."

"It was in my trap and I guess I can do what I want with it." Bernie
ked the struggling mouse, its twisted body crunching against the peeling
nt of the step, and it ran through the hedge opening. Crumpled on the
iny concrete, the mouse lay still, fur matted, ragged, giving off a musty-
ty smell.

The water sloshed into the clear glass, washing over Joey's grubby hand
d spitting down into the sink.

"Want something Joey?"

"Getting water."

Aunt Roselle followed him out on the steps, watching curiously as the
water cascaded over the tiny mouse body, flooding it for a second
ore disappearing in the thirsty cracks of the walk. Joey stared at the ugly
ape, fur plastered soakingly to scrawny, bony body.

"What is it?" Roselle asked, the heels of her flat, black shoes cracking
on the steps. She stood by the boy, peering myopically at the drenched blob.

"My mouse, he doesn’t move."

“Oh, Joey! Don’t play with that filthy thing, it’s dead and covered with bugs.” Roselle kicked the carcass into the matted hedge growth.

“I guess he’s dead, he didn’t move,” Joey said, brow creased, eyes squinting. “Bernie killed him. In the trap and then he kicked him.”

“Come in and wash your hands, honey.”

The water spinning through the drain sounded like the spring rain gurgling along the gutters. Joey watched as it circled the drain, swirling into a whirlpool, then disappearing with a gulp and the bowl was empty. He wondered what you put together to make water.

Aunt Roselle was nice, like a grandmother would be if he had one. Bernie said everyone had a grandmother but Joey wasn’t sure. He had never seen a grandmother of his own. If you couldn’t see something, what difference did it make if it was there or not? Joey preferred to believe he didn’t have any at all. That way he didn’t have to worry what kind of person his grandmother might be, or if she would like him if she knew him.

Aunt Roselle was Father’s sister, though she didn’t look like a sister. Bernie’s sister, Joan, was little and she was always fighting with Bernie. Joey was glad he didn’t have a little sister always fighting with him. Aunt Roselle looked a lot like father. Her hands were big like his and her arms were big-boned. Her glasses made her big eyes look like they were swimming in water. Mother was little and pretty and had dark eyes that crinkled when she laughed and her hair was black and curly. She wasn’t home very much. She went to a lot of parties. Before he left the washroom, Joey closed his eyes tightly and held his breath. He wished he had a grandmother.

The sun streaming through the kitchen window glittered on Roselle’s lenses, turned the dough stirring in the bowl to flowing gold. Joey watched the pastey mass whip around the big spoon.

“What are angels like?” he asked.

Roselle smiled. “A lot like ordinary people, only they are all very good and wear white robes and have beautiful wings.”

“They’re all ladies, aren’t they?”

“I don’t think so, Joey.”

“Is my mouse an angel now?”

“I doubt it,” she said. “Here, lick this spoon and then you can scrape the bowl. Do you want to take your bath and clean up now? Then you won’t have to hurry before the party.”

Joey swirled his tongue around the sweet spoon, then scraped it across the bottom of the bowl.

“I’m not going.”

Roselle watched the boy intently, then smiled. She talked about the party of the fun he would have, but Joey continued to stare at the bottom of the bowl. He didn’t like parties, he didn’t know who was going to be there, Berni
puldn’t be there. He sat dejectedly on the counter stool, sniffing tears and picking at a scab on his knee.

Roselle sighed and turned back to her work. “I guess that settles it. I can’t force you to have fun. What are you going to do all afternoon if you don’t go to the party?”

Joey was silent. A jerk of one chewed fingernail loosened the scab and watched droplets of blood ooze out of the wound. Licking his finger, he wiped away the blood and pressed the scab tight against the skin.

“Are you just going to sit there?”

“I’ll find something to do.”

Might as well have stayed in bed all morning, Joey thought. Couldn’t keep, though, when the sun was so bright. Nothing to do after breakfast but wait for lunch. And after lunch, nothing to do during the hot afternoon. He wished he had a dog or cat. Whenever he asked Father about it, he was told that they were dirty animals and shouldn’t be kept around little children. Father just laughed and said they wouldn’t have time to take care of a pet properly. He wondered if Bernie was still mad at him. Bernie shouldn’t have fed the mouse. Waiting all afternoon, he had been disappointed when Bernie did not come over to see him. He had given up when Roselle called him in to supper.

They ate together in the kitchen. When Roselle started the dishes, Joey walked out into the yard and sat down on the steps. The sun lay low on the horizon, tingeing the blistered clouds with pink and orange and mauve and uttering sparks of light through the still, dusk-cool air. Maybe Bernie wasn’t mad anymore. It wouldn’t hurt to go see him.

Joey didn’t knock but walked to the back of the house. Bernie was alone, pounding nails into the plank on the old teetertotter.

“What are you doing?”

“Pounding nails,” said Bernie. “Are you mad at me?”

“No. I don’t care what happens to an old mouse.”

“I didn’t like to see him get hurt.”

“I don’t care.” Bernie went on pounding nails. “Why are you doing that?”

“See how many times I gotta hit each nail to get it down.”

“Can I try?”

“Only one hammer,” Bernie said. “I can use a rock if you give me some nails. Where can I pound?”

“Start at the other end. The one who gets to the middle first gets to the hammer,” Bernie said.

The staccato crack of the hammer shook the plank as they moved toward the rusty pipe marking the center. Joey striking with his clenched fist, extending his right index finger over the pipe when he reached it. He turned toward
Bernie, a smile on his face, started to speak when Bernie brought the hammer down viciously on the pipe.

Pain exploded, then a dead numbness flooded Joey's hand. He stared at the torn fingernail and shredded skin, blood oozing from the splits. Joey's lip trembled, eyes brimmed with tears as he stared at the hand. A strange moan and he turned and ran from the yard. Bernie, tightly clutching the hammer, watched Joey disappear.

Joey was crying silently, more in rage than in pain, when he reached home. The finger didn't hurt at all now, just numb. Bernie did it on purpose, was mad about the mouse. Joey sat on the steps, contemplating revenge. The finger felt just like his thumb had when he crushed it in the door and the nail turned black. Mother had laughed, said not to cry over it, that it would be all right when the nail grew out. He wished he could think of some way to get even with Bernie, always doing dirty things like this. Bernie was much of a friend. If he had a sister he would have a friend all the time.

"Joey, what are you doing?" Roselle called from the window.

"Putting mud on my hands."

"Do you realize how much extra work that will make for me? What's the matter with your finger? It looks swollen."

The finger was swollen, nail held by nothing more than a shred of skin. Blood oozed through the mud coating. Shakily dragging him into the house, Roselle rinsed the mud off and examined the wound. The tip of the finger was pulpy and swollen, skin torn, blood spreading out from the cracks.

Joey bit his lip and started to cry. The hand began to ache, sharp needling jabbing the finger when Roselle pushed it into a basin of water spiked with disinfectant. She told him to keep his hand in the water and then ran to the phone.

Joey was fascinated by the finger. He watched the water gently detach segments of bruised skin until they floated away from the finger. Blood continued to spread out from the cuts in lazy threads and the water turned pinkish. It didn't hurt too much and pretty soon it would heal, just like his thumb. But the numbness was almost gone now and the disinfectant bit deep.

Joey wasn't too certain of the events of the rest of the evening, all Roselle crying, Mother, still in party dress, wailing, threatening to faint, Father trying to calm the two. The sticky, sweet smell of the gas at the doctor's office woke to find his finger bulkily swathed in gauze. Mother said they had sewed it together and that there was a splint on it because the bone was split. It still didn't feel so bad but it ached steadily.

Joey didn't mind. Everyone was doing things for him, Mother said she would stay with him all night. Bernie always did dirty tricks, and just because of a smelly old mouse. But Joey wasn't too mad. He thought how nice it was that he didn't have a little sister to fight with and call Mother away the time. And he didn't even mind not having a grandmother. No, he was too mad at Bernie.
A Poem by Edmund J. E. Ward

So like a shooting star is the life of man
One quick flash, an instant spark against infinity.
Previous lodgement in a velvet black
Unobserved, unknown
A quick descent, one roaming eye
And darkness.
No past, no future,
Just . . . “Here am I.
Quick see me before I go”
An instant’s flash, one eye to see
And I am gone.
I took nothing from the black whence I came
I leave nothing when I go.
But an instant’s memory in a roaming eye.

A Poem by Jean Ann Pocta

Sleek leaf-mold crusts the fence-cut stream,
Carving rough furrows in the ceaseless push;
Growing more bold, advancing weeds
Narrow the clean channel with stalk and bush.
Leaping and fighting, the water yields
Against the flood-tide walls, to creep
Slowly through tree-lined parks and anchored fields,
Locked, bridged, and damned.
Yet, underneath, the firm sand
Shudders and stirs; the current plunges deep.
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