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CONTENTS

Material by writers in Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration.

Good Christmas, story................................. John Stahlberg (Montana) .................. 73
My Father Has Brown Eyes, story...................... Charles Hayes (Illinois) .................. 81

Poems—Mill Wife ........................................ Verne Bright (Oregon) .................. 87

We Thank You All the Time................................ Norman Macleod (New York) .............. 88

Webfoot Whoppers, tall tales............................. Federal Writers' Project (Oregon) ........ 89

The Sterner Part of Grief, poem......................... Lola Pergament (Georgia) .................. 94

Water Hole, story.......................................... Eric Thane (Montana) ................... 95

Louisiana Loup-Garou.................................... Federal Writers' Project (Louisiana) .... 100

A Difference Between Friends, sketch.................. Leon Dorais (California) .................. 105

Poems—April; I Shall Not Tell You New................ Eleanor Plummer (Montana) ............... 108

Silence, poem.............................................. Opal Shannon (New Mexico) ............. 118

Material by writers not in the Federal Writers' Project.

The Red Ball, story....................................... F. V. Mayberry (Nevada) ................. 109

YOUNG WRITERS

Thunder on the Water, story............................. Marie States (University of Oregon) .... 119

HISTORICAL SECTION

Virginia City: 1864, two letters edited by Clyde McLemore (Montana) ............... 129

BOOKSHELF—Reviews of western books, edited by V. L. O. Chittick (Oregon) ....... 134

LITERARY NEWS, edited by Grace Stone Coates (Montana) .................................. iv

Covered WAGON, notes on contributors........................... vi

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FRONTIER AND MIDLAND is a member of the Missoula Chamber of Commerce.
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, MINNEAPOLIS
Ground for a museum to house relics of the Ozark mountaineers has been donated by Miss Elizabeth McDaniel, who owns most of the Missouri Ozark regions immortalized by Harold Bell Wright. The Taney County Court has authorized a museum in this "Shepherd of the Hills" country to obtain a WPA grant.

Tourists on highway 40 in Central Missouri will have their attention called to the historic significance of the region by a bronze plaque and huge red boulder presented to the Missouri State Society by Mrs. John Weinman, national president of the Daughters of the War of 1812, four miles east of Boonville. The plaque gives the locations of five forts built by settlers of the early 1800's, who learned that here in this "Farthest West" they were beyond the protection of the Federal troops. The inscription reminds the reader that the war of 1812 touched this region when British-inspired Indians swept against the few score hardy settlers.

Bennett & Wadovick, 7338 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, Ohio, call attention to their newly established literary agency. Joseph Wadovick is on the Cleveland Plain Dealer editorial staff and Miss Bennett is doing special promotion work for Philadelphia, Boston and New York publishers. The agency handles only book-length manuscripts, fiction and non-fiction.

Two old and rare volumes, translated into English at the University of Washington, will make available to students of northwestern U. S. history valuable data hitherto denied them except at high translation costs. One tells in cumbrous idiomatic Russian of a century ago a romantic story of the white man's efforts to colonize Alaska; the other, with the literary excellence characterizing the French Jesuits, describes missionary work among Indians of the one-time Oregon-Washington Territory. The work is being done by "white collar" employees of the Works Progress Administration.

Dr. L. G. Van Loan of Reading, Pa., archivist and translator of the Association of Blauvelt Descendants, advertised for old paper. In a bundle sent him he found a document written in Dutch, which is purported to be an original document giving terms and details of the sale of Manhattan by the Indians. A. J. F. Laer, New York State Archivist at Albany, is trying to identify the document.

Mrs. Mary A. Beard, historian, is collaborating with American Indian Women in preparing an exhibit to portray contributions of Indian women to the life of their tribes, as a part of the collection in the World Center for Women's Archives. Mrs. Marion E. Gridley, chief story-teller of the Indian Council Fire of Chicago; Miss Mabel Knight of Boston, an adopted daughter of the Sioux Indians, and Miss Gladys Tantaguidgeon are helping her.

The Indian Council Fire of Chicago is an organization of Indians, those of Indian descent, and whites interested in Indians. To encourage work of outstanding tribesmen an Indian achievement award was instituted in 1933. Two Montana Indian artists, William Standing of the Assinniboine tribe and Albert Racine of the Blackfeet were this year's candidates for the award. Racine worked his way through high school by painting and selling small pictures, and is now doing research work on Blackfeet myths. Standing has exhibited at Great Falls, the Washington club, the Colorado Art exhibit, and the Colonial exhibit in Paris.

Paul Ader, editor of Fassett's, a new literary quarterly published at 708 Buchanan Rd., Durham, N. C., announces prizes totaling $1,250 in a short story and poetry contest closing Feb. 1, 1939. Prerequisite to entering, $1.50 subscription to the magazine.

Raymond Kresensky, director of the Iowa Federal Writers Projects, spent a vacation on the west coast, meeting writers of Portland and Seattle.


Mrs. Hughie Call of Bozeman has an article, "We, the Living," in a recent American. She is the author of "Sheep Bought It," in the Saturday Evening Post, and "A Telephone in Eden," reprinted from Scribner's in the Readers' Digest.

Frederick A. Stokes company are publishers of The Schoolma'am, by Mrs. Frances R. Donovan of Chicago, a former resident of Great Falls, Montana. On a recent visit to Great Falls, Mrs. Donovan was feted by literary clubs. Her teaching experience in Great Falls and Chicago, and her work as manager of a large teachers' agency gave background for her latest book.
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James B. Rankin, 423 West 118 St., New York, made an appeal through Frontier and Midland for information re Charles M. Russell’s Columbia River trip. Mr. Rankin now writes: “Mr. Ralph Budd, President of the Great Northern Railway during Russell’s lifetime, has given me some facts about the Expedition. The chief clerk of that line has sent me pamphlets with more complete data.”

COVERED WAGON

John Stahlberg, American of Swedish parents, grew up on a farm in brush country; now editor of the Montana Project; poet and novelist. Opal Shannon, native Iowan, married, one child, has been school teacher, saleswoman, waitress, newspaperwoman, W. P. A. writer; has published in a dozen magazines, including FRONTIER AND MIDLAND. Charles Hayes, Colorado born, now living in Chicago with the ambition of owning “a herd of goats—somewhere out West.” This is a first story to be published.

Verne Bright, Oregonian though Missouri born, visited during the World War Hawaii, Philippine Islands, Japan and Siberia in service; has published over a thousand poems in magazines in the United States and England, many of them in FRONTIER AND MIDLAND. L. W. Feher, Cleveland born, attended college, sold flowers, drove a truck, reported on a New York paper; a poem by him was published in the N. Y. Times in 1928 with two lines identical with two in Arizona. Norman MacLeod, Oregon born, world rover; attended universities of Iowa, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Southern California, Columbia, and, in a summer session, Mount Holyoke; has been either editor or associate editor on the staff of FRONT (Holland), THE MORADA (France), LIRICA (Italy), Moscow (Russia) DAILY NEWS; is now Promotion Director of the Connecticut Federal Theater, Hartford.

Lola Pergament, born in N. Y. City and has lived in Middle West, New England, and the South, attending Washington University; has had poems in AMERICAN MERCURY, POETRY, NEW MASSES, SAT-REVLIT, and other magazines. Eric Thane, educated in Washington (state, not D. C.) and taught in Montana; has been a pulp writer; has published in this magazine before. Leon Dorais, California born and Director of F. W. P. for Southern California, has had stories in NEW REPUBLIC, PRAIRIE SCHOONER, AMERICAN STUFF, and other magazines; now sends an excerpt from a novel for publication here.

F. V. Mayberry, Nevada, sends his first story to FRONTIER AND MIDLAND. Marie States, is a student at The University of Oregon, working on short story writing under Professor W. F. G. Thacher. Clyde McLemore has edited many articles of historical value for this magazine.
Missoula Offers YOU

Montana State University

On February 17, 1893, the state legislature met to decide what it should do about establishing a system of higher education for the state of Montana. At that time Montana was but three years old, distances were long and travelling facilities were poor. The state had hardly begun to exploit that wealth in its mines and farms which later was to place it among the leading producers in the country.

Montana legislators meeting on that bleak February 17, 46 years ago knew, as Montanans know, that such a sparsely settled state would have a hard time financing a first class university system. The legislature created the State University at Missoula, the State College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts at Bozeman, the School of Mines at Butte, and a State Normal School at Dillon, which were later combined into what is called the Greater University of Montana. Ten years ago the legislature created the Eastern Montana State Normal school at Billings and the Northern Montana college at Havre, which with the original four institutions now make up the Greater University.

Back on July 1, 1895, Dr. Oscar J. Craig stepped off a train at Missoula to organize the University as its first president. There were no buildings, there were only 50 students who would soon enroll for the fall quarter and a faculty of five was to be selected to take care of those 50 students. The growth of the university since that time has been phenomenal.

But the greatest growth of the institution has come during the past six years—during the depression years—when the university has been anxious to keep its doors open to admit the hundreds of young men and women who through education might find opportunity for work. The enrollment leaped by over one thousand students during the past 10 years, and seven buildings have been constructed on the campus. Two of these have been opened for class use since the autumn of 1937, one, a women's dormitory, open this fall, and a Chemistry-Pharmacy building and a natural science experimental laboratory will be completed this year. Corbin hall, a dormitory, was constructed in 1927 and the Student Union building, built by the students with student funds to centralize their activities on the campus, was finished in 1935. A fully equipped Journalism building was added in 1937, and an art gallery and studios in 1938.

In spite of the fact that the financial situation at the university has been critical for the past six years and in spite of the fact that retrenchment in every field has been the rule, nevertheless, substantial improvements and contributions to the welfare of the
students and the state in general have been made. NYA aid, sponsored by the Federal government, has been given to several hundred students. The Montana university administrative NYA setup has been called one of the best in the entire northwest and serves as the model for the state of Montana.

During the past two years the university health service has been completely reorganized. On the permanent staff of the new health service are two physicians and a nurse to administer the health needs of the students. The improvement in service has been so outstanding as to make the reorganization of this department among the outstanding events in recent university history.

A year ago last fall an ably conducted course in hygiene, required for all freshman students, was organized under the direction of the health service. As a consequence of the growth in practical science work, the university has instituted courses in medical technology, wild life technology and pre-nursing, meanwhile strengthening forestry by adding a course in wild-life. Curricular changes have strengthened most departments. Faculty committees have been appointed with an idea toward improving the general standard of university work.

The creation by the last state legislature of the Montana Forestry experiment station that serves as a laboratory for the students taking zoology, forestry, wild-life technology, botany and related subjects, gives Montana State university the largest forest land holdings of any educational institution in the United States, and one that compares favorably with the largest tracts of experimental forest land in Europe.

Perhaps the factor which distinguishes the Montana State university of today is the increasingly important place that it has begun to take in state-wide planning and in activities that have a direct and immediate bearing upon the welfare of citizens in all parts of Montana. Several weeks of work by faculty committees in 1936 on the then-proposed social welfare legislation resulted in a thorough study of the subject by the state committee of 12 (the president of the university was a member) and by the state legislature. Thus the university specialists were able to perform a research function which was of immediate practical good to the people of the state.

The appearance of faculty members on lecture platforms in all parts of the state is another demonstration of the growing recognition being accorded the university. The continued participation in state enterprises such as the Associated Merchants of Montana, the State Pharmaceutical association and the State Press association by the faculties of the business administration, pharmacy and journalism schools, is another indication of the co-ordination of the university and state effort. The forest school nursery, which was established in 1928, has added approximately $916,700 to Montana's farm real estate value through tree plantings, according to figures released at the extension offices. "Montana's Production," an economic survey published last year by the
The economics department and School of Business Administration has been termed the outstanding contribution yet made to the study of Montana economics.

The great growth in the enrollment has naturally brought with it many activities which a smaller institution could not enjoy. The Student Union building, which has facilities for meeting rooms, a lounge, three dance halls, a theater (which serves also as an auditorium) and a lunch fountain and book store, has achieved results in the centralization of student activity on the campus. The administration of this student enterprise with faculty-student control has been an experiment but has worked out entirely satisfactorily. The reports of the manager of the building indicate that financially it is meeting its obligations while at the same time it has given efficient service to the student, faculty and alumni groups. The Union building is not used for classes.

The annual Interscholastic meet, a state-wide competition for high school honors in track, field, debate, oratory, declamation, press, and dramatics, is held each spring at the university. It has become the largest endeavor of its kind in the world.

In athletics, the tremendously successful 1937 season of the "Grizzlies" marked a highlight in football which has overshadowed even the surpassing triumphs of the university’s teams of the early twenties. The appointment of a manager of intercollegiate athletics and of a director of athletics marks another outstanding event in Montana history. The appointments meant that at last intercollegiate athletics at the university would be properly handled in an administrative set-up that for years has been acknowledged at leading institutions.

In other sports, notably in tennis, basketball and track, Montana has done well during the past few years. Of primary interest is the minor sports program for both men and women. These sports provide recreation and physical education for every student. Montana’s riflers at Fort George Wright, Spokane, Washington, last year not only took the riflery cup for the third straight time, thus retiring it, but in so doing the Montana men won the bronze trophy "Doughboy of the West," for the first time in history. This trophy was won in competition with schools from six states in the Army Ninth Corps area.

Scholastically the university has maintained a high standard. Its graduates have continued to garner scholarships and fellowships at other institutions throughout the country.

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Our Promised Land

by

RICHARD L. NEUBERGER

WHAT is the land, and who are the people, of the great Columbia River Basin—the "sanctuary" forecast by President Roosevelt for refugees from the Dust Bowl and the crowded Eastern tenements? What are the political, social, economic currents that set it apart?

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GOOD CHRISTMAS

JOHN STAHLBERG

My memories of the problems of daily life in the raw brush country are many and vivid; and equally vivid are memories of evenings when I sat raptly listening to talk of ships at sea and of stars whirling on unimaginable courses; of Norse bards and heroes as great as Homer and Launcelot, and of God ruling the universe from a throne beyond the limits of vision or knowledge.

I don’t know just when I began to be especially aware of God, but it was early.

God was very big—bigger than my father, though otherwise much like him—and he wore dresses, like a woman. He sat in a great house somewhere in the sky, watching through a window in the floor to see that I did not do sin. It was hard for a little boy to know which of his impulses constituted sin, and which others were good from the point of view of a grown-up like God; but I soon learned that father and mother knew practically all about it, and were eager to instruct me. Indeed, they seemed almost too alert; sometimes scarcely a day passed when they did not catch me casually and quite unknowingly offending God.

Once I laughed and said something thoughtless during a thunderstorm, and mother warned me with a story about a boy who mocked the thunder, which is God’s voice, and God got awfully angry and sent a bolt of lightning, and it burned that bad boy to ashes, and his soul was lost for ever and ever.

Another time I discovered something interesting about my body, and spoke to mother about it; but she was talking to a neighbor woman and looked so startled and said “Hush!” so impertiously that I never dared mention it again. Later she told me in a cross and suspicious tone that God could see me even under my bedclothes at night, and if I so much as touched any secret part of myself it would be sin.

Life for a little boy seemed a somewhat dangerous and complicated business. I could scarcely refrain from reflecting that God was—well, a trifle touchy.

Until I was nearly seven I did not attend Sunday school except when it was held at my home, once every six weeks or so, for I was not strong at all in those days, and a tramp of a mile or more through high grass and brush in summer or deep snow in winter was not easy. Besides there were too many children in our family, and we younger ones were not adequately dressed. I had a knack for language, however, and had learned to read elementary Swedish well enough to win the teacher’s approval—not that the teacher ever regarded any child with disapproval. This teacher was a bent old man of great dignity, deep-voiced but soft-spoken, whose lined and gray-whiskered face had a
Frontier and Midland

strange, still beauty; whenever he spoke to children—even on the rare occasions when he spoke reprovingly—his tone was tender, as if he loved each one of them. Old Hokanson, he called himself carelessly, always; but no one else, to the best of my knowledge, ever ventured to use this familiar name in any other way than with deep respect. His lightest suggestion was law to all but his least tractable pupils; in my own reverent eyes he was wisdom made flesh.

The two-story log house that father and my two eldest brothers had built in a grove of young poplars had four rooms, two up and two down; and all except the kitchen were bedrooms. We children called the downstairs room in which father and mother slept, the "pretty-room," to distinguish it from the others. In practice it shared with the kitchen the status of living room. On a small shelf fastened to one of its walls were a few books, among them a Swedish Bible and a semiscientific treatise called *Skapelsens Under* (The Wonder of the Creation), which father, at that period, read in evenings when he was not too busy with other matters, letting the book fall occasionally to look about him with a strange, intense gaze that seemed to pass beyond the walls of the room and sweep along horizons that none of us could see. As the Bible and *Skapelsens Under* were both too abstruse for me, I was more interested in a picture that hung on the wall above the bed. It was a cheap reproduction of a painting called *Kristus infor Pilatus* (Christ before Pilate). I had already gathered that the man who had his hands tied with a piece of rope was God's son, himself a god, and that he had been badly treated and at length killed to save me from my sins. This was difficult stuff, and I asked many questions in the effort to get the matter straight in my mind.

"Mamma!"
"Yes; what do you want?"
"Mamma, was it just for me?"
"No, child; it was for all of us, for everybody."

"For Emil and Albert?" Emil and Albert were the eldest of the children.
"For all of us. Even for Agnes and Teddy." Agnes and Teddy were the youngest.
"For you and Papa too?"
"For me and Papa and everybody else."

"Oh!" Silence a moment. "For the Danielson boys?"

I remember mother's smile, only half-concealed behind her knitting.

"For all the people in the world."

I pondered this.

"But why did they have to do it?"
"Do what, child?"

"Why did they have to be so mean to him?"

"Because we had sinned and he took our punishment. Therefore we must be good and try to deserve his love that did so much for us. You will understand when you are older."

I hoped so; the puzzle was much too hard just then. But I noticed something that impressed me deeply: when my elders spoke thus piously, they were uneasy; they seemed half ashamed of their piety, yet bent on concealing their embarrassment. I caught this embarrassment quickly, so that when mother sometime later tried to teach me a prayer, it was, I fear, with foolish face and a stumbling tongue that I repeated after
her: "Dear God, help me to be a good boy."

Despite the help of God and the best will in the world, I soon did something that mother would not have thought good. One autumn day my eldest sister, Ida, had a caller—a fortyish bachelor known to the neighborhood as Pete Gadde, though his right name was Anderson—and to get us youngsters out from underfoot she wrapped us up in the warmest things that happened to be at hand, and sent us out to play. The light first snow was thawing, and my feet got wet. In the evening, with shoes put away and stockings hung up to dry, I found that the moisture had puckered the soles of my feet into a pattern of small furrows and ridges. This was so interesting that when next day the weather turned sharply colder and the snow would not melt on my shoes, I was reduced to stepping into a large black iron pot full of swill for the pigs, to obtain the desired effect. Mother was never able to understand why my feet had got so wet on such a dry day.

As the grim northern winter descended on huddled homesteads, a starthing flamed across the sky, flinging back from its head a luminous stream of dust and vapor.

"Have you seen it? Have you seen the comet?" demanded neighbor of neighbor; and after the weekly prayer-meeting they stood together, stilled and awe-struck, staring at the ominous heavens. When the cold drove them indoors they crowded up to the fire without their usual grumblings and exaggerated shiverings, and sat silent while the old men told sinister stories of past comets and the wars and pestilences they had presaged.

"Ett tidens tecken," said father. A sign of the times. And the others nodded.

I knew what they meant, and it damaged my delight in the beautiful wanderer. The comet was a sign that a prophecy shouted at Holy Roller meetings was about to come true: Jesus was coming and the end of the world was at hand. Whether the coming of Jesus would or would not be the happy event some of my elders said it would be, I was certain that I did not want the world to end.

Thereafter, when the weather was mild or I could elude the watchfulness of the family, I slipped out in the evenings and gazed anxiously at the sky, lest a truculent and thunderous-voiced god approach without warning, riding a suddenly hideous comet. Had it been summer I should have hidden among the poplars, to do my watching more secretly. The poplars always seemed to me the most friendly of trees. I loved them profoundly—the strangely trembling broad leaves on flattened stems; the silvery dust on bark which, when bruised, showed wounds of a deep green, but healed to black scars; even the taste, bitter as gall, of the bark. But the poplars stood bare now, their trunks colder than the snow around them.

That winter a wave of religious feeling swept the brush country. Sin and doom and redemption, with emphasis on the first two, crowded all other topics into insignificance in the thoughts and conversation of the sober settlers. I found most of the talk of the grown-ups only sufficiently intelligible to be disturbing. The subject of sin, in particular, was wrapped in awful mystery. We children were permitted to hear
only generalities about it; if, in our presence, the talk promised to approach definitions, it sank at once to guarded whispers.

I got pretty worried about the whole thing. Every word of warning or prophecy I had ever heard came back to plague me; I thought of all the little things I had done that had later been described to me as sinful, and I wondered just what would happen to me when these prophecies began to be fulfilled. Sometimes I went to sleep at night only to struggle with confused but terrifying dreams of Judgment Day; sometimes I was almost ill with fear of suddenly hearing the Last Trumpet.

As soon as word of the revival in the brush country got about, itinerant preachers hastened into the settlement to snatch credit for it. One day, about two weeks before Christmas, I was in the cellar filling a pail with potatoes when I heard a strange voice in the kitchen above. As I climbed up through the trapdoor I saw sitting beside the stove a small man with an enormous curving nose, and eyes that darted everywhere but seemed incapable of looking at any object more than a moment. They darted at me and darted away again. A funny little mouth opened beneath the threateningly overhanging oversupply of nose, and while I watched with the appealing thought that the nose might fall of its own weight into the mouth and plug it up tight, funny little words began to issue from it.

The man said in Norwegian, "You have a nice little boy there. What is your name then, little boy?"

He said, "It is cold now. It is good to get near the stove now."

He said, "I am a preacher; my name is Tandberg; I want to conduct some few meetings here during the Yuletide, if God is willing."

He said his home was at Tiff Reever Foals—which was Norwegian English for Thief River Falls.

He said he knew Wilhelm Bergstrom, also of Tiff Reever Foals, who had visited here two years before. But the devil had now led Brother Bergstrom astray. A wicked book called *Millennial Dawn* had been the instrument. Poor Brother Bergstrom had become a Russellite.

He said he believed, and God's word clearly showed, that the Second Coming would occur almost any day now.

At supper he said, as he helped himself to more mashed potatoes, brown gravy and fresh fish served with hot melted butter, that what we Christians plainly needed was to practice self-denial, forsaking all to follow Christ.

We children watched and thought it must be nice to be a preacher and live a life of sacrifice. Father's land was undeveloped, and we were a large family; it was not often that we had as much as we wanted of butter and fresh fish.

Three days later the Reverend Brother Rogstad came to the brush country. He was a colorless fellow, of whom I remember little except that he coughed continually; beside the heroic nose of his colleague, his peculiarities were trivial. Brother Rogstad and the man with the nose established themselves in our home and appeared to consider staying permanently. Father butchered a yearling steer and many chickens, and almost daily mother went down cellar after another jar of the wild strawberries and dewberries that she and we had
laboriously gathered the summer before. Marvin and I turned the crank of the churn, for mother now had to make butter regularly; preachers could not be expected to eat their bread bare. Emil and Albert made weekly trips to town after supplies. Ruth and Esther had to leave school several days before vacation began, to help with the housework, since mother and Ida were almost constantly occupied at cookstove and cupboard. Harold, Agnes, and Teddy sat about stiffly in a horrible unnatural quiet, lest they break the delicate thread of pious meditation. At night some of us slept in makeshift beds on the floor, so that the anointed two might rest in comfort. At mealtime the preachers and the older members of the family ate first; the rest of us, from Marvin down, were herded into another room, for mother could not let us stand by, gazing hungrily, while the best of the food disappeared.

The Reverend Brother Tandberg and the Reverend Brother Rogstad ate heartily, slept soundly, read their Bibles faithfully, and wrestled mightily with the Lord in prayer, pleading for strength to sacrifice themselves even more fully and gladly in the service of the Lamb.

Though meetings were held nightly in the schoolhouse and in the homes of the neighborhood, we children attended few of them, for the weather was very cold, and driving even one mile with ox-drawn sleighs was slow and uncomfortable. There had been no Sunday school for some time; it was even said that the julfest might have to be postponed until milder weather should come. I was glad that we could not go to the meetings, for the preachers (by Christmas there were four or five more of them scattered about the neighborhood) and their pious roarings were growing less and less attractive. But the julfest was another matter. I had never attended a fest, but the older children had told me about it. Old Hokanson would be in charge, as he always was when the children were to be made happy. There would be apples and candy, whole boxes of them, and a Christmas tree of heroic size, hung with the handsomest and most fascinating decorations ever seen in the community. I didn't want to miss my first julfest.

On the evening of the day before Christmas, something happened that focused all our interest at home for the moment. Pete Gadde, or Anderson, who was now accepted as Ida's beau, drove triumphantly up to the door with the door with horses he had borrowed for the occasion. As he climbed out of his sleigh, he looked like some great Arctic animal in his fur cap, fur mittens, and heavy fur overcoat reaching nearly to his ankles. He and Emil unhitched the team from the sleigh and led them to the stable, Pete talking in slow, strong tones, the bells on the harness tinkling.

We younger children liked Pete. He had large blue eyes that looked solemn except when they suddenly twinkled; they were marked with curious minute blotches of reddish brown, and at their corners were little networks of wrinkles that seemed to smile even when the rest of his face was quite serious. He had been farmer, carpenter, and lumberjack, and his hands bore the record of his labors in scarred skin and broken fingernails. Emil and Albert were critical of him; Ruth and Esther were slyly and shyly curious about him; father thought
him a little frivolous; and mother was inclined to distrust all men less than seventy years of age.

As Pete came in, wiping the frost from his eyebrows and his reddish mustache, a faint air of mystery entered with him, but I suppose we youngsters were too excited about seeing horses on the homestead for the first time to notice it particularly. At any rate, when we were herded upstairs after half an hour or so, we thought nothing of it. Presently we were called down again, and at the foot of the stairs we stopped, with a chorus of delighted oooohs; then we tumbled headlong into the pretty-room.

A bit to one side of the center of the floor stood a young spruce, all silvery with tinsel, golden with candlelight. On its perfect boughs hung bulging bags of candy, glistening ornaments of marvelous shapes and tints, and colored angels with trumpets and harps. At the top was a great Star-of-Bethlehem of some transparent stuff, with a lighted candle behind it.

At the foot of the tree lay a heap of apples and nuts and tinsel-wrapped packages, and beside the heap sat Pete on his haunches. I had never received a Christmas present, because father and mother were so poor and had so many children to feed and clothe, and I was overcome with confusion and glad surprise when Pete handed me one of the packages and said, smiling, "Go' jul, Johan! (Good Christmas, John!)" Mother nearly spoiled it by demanding, "Shan't you say 'Thank you' for the pretty gift?" but the understanding Pete quickly turned away.

I'm afraid I must have seemed greedy, for my fingers fumbled with eagerness as I undid the wrapping and opened the little box within it. Covered with a fold of tissue paper lay a little watch with a dial and hands—and a little milled cap at the top of the stem for turning the hands—and a little ring over the cap to fasten a chain to—and a little chain with a tiny snap at one end to snap on the ring! And when I took the cap between thumb and forefinger and turned it, the hands went round and round! At that moment it seemed just about the grandest gift any little boy ever got.

When the candles had burned low, a feast was spread on the table, with mashed potatoes and creamy gravy, lutfisk and hot melted butter, great thick slices of brown bread with raisins in it, and so much dark cake and wild strawberry sauce that even after the preachers had finished we all had a share. When we returned to the tree after the meal, we were so full of good things that we paid almost no attention to Brother Tandberg's somewhat belligerent Christmas talk on peace and good will.

Next morning the older members of the family rose early and attended the julotta service held at the schoolhouse before dawn. They returned without the preachers, who had been invited elsewhere for a day or two.

At once we abandoned the strained good behavior that had been imposed upon us. Albert and Pete took especial delight in saying scandalous things about the absent ones, while we youngsters changed Tandberg, which means tooth-mountain, to Nasberg, which means nose-mountain, and thought the change very funny. One of the older children called our reverend guest
näsprästen (the nose parson), and another referred to the nose itself as the Rock of Ages. We all laughed immoderately as we sang an old Swedish lullaby about a woman whose bucket floated out on a stream when she tried to fetch water for her horse who had the hiccoughs; and about an old man who, while she sat weeping, caught the bucket with his crooked tooth and brought it back to land. But we sang "nose" instead of "tooth." Mother, laughing in spite of herself, protested that this was no way to act on Christmas Day.

On the Sunday following Christmas Day, Emil and Albert and Pete spent two or three hours in rigging a framework of boards and light rails over Pete's sleigh, and then covering the frame with blankets and quilts. When the job was done, the sleigh looked like some strange ark. That evening, to my speechless delight, we were all dressed in our modest best, bundled into the ark, and seated on improvised benches, while Pete climbed in at the front of the sleigh with the reins in his hand and stood ready to give the impatient horses the word to go. Emil got in last, and then we were off over the snow, the bells jingling, the sleigh making sudden plunges as it crossed hard drifts, the runners hissing softly as they sped through fresh snow, or creaking slightly in the packed and frozen tracks made by other sleighs, the breath of the horses drifting back like clouds of thin mist to silver their flanks with frost.

When we reached the schoolhouse father hustled us out of the ark and into the building, while Pete and Emil drove to a homestead a quarter-mile away to stable the team.

The schoolhouse was full of people—so full that some of them were standing. Old Hokanson, however, had seen to it that there were seats for the children on benches drawn close up to the Christmas tree. The tree was magnificent—a straight spruce reaching nearly to the ceiling, covered with long ropes of tinsel that drooped from branch to branch and glittered in the lamplight. Green, blue, red, yellow, and white candles perched all over it, waiting to be lighted. All the decorations that had seemed so beautiful at home were here in greater abundance, and there were others beside them, larger and brighter and more clever. At the top of the tree, which was so high that the candles there had to be lighted with another candle fastened to a long stick, was not only the usual large star, but an extraordinary silvery four-armed thing that started turning when the candles were lighted and kept on turning until they had burned out. As it turned it tinkled like tiny sleigh bells.

The lamps were turned down while the candles burned, and to provide some light at the back of the building there were candles along the window-sills as well as on the tree. As soon as the candle-light faded, the lamps were turned up again, and then Old Hokanson rose and began the Sunday school lesson. Each child read one verse from his Lesson Quarterly, rising to do so. There were several before me, and as I waited for my turn to come I became more and more keenly aware of the amused grown-up eyes that were staring at the children from behind. When my turn at length came, I read so rapidly in my haste to be done, that the words fell over one another. My verse happened to be:

"And this shall be a sign unto you;
Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

As I climbed back to my seat, which was a trifle high for one of my size, I could not help sighing deeply with relief. A girl near me giggled, and I felt more uncomfortable than ever. But Old Hokanson smiled at me, as heartening a smile as I have ever seen, and touched my hair gently with a big hand.

"Yes," he said, and repeated the verse in slow, calm tones. "That child was a little boy, and his name was—"

"Jesus," I managed to whisper.

"Yes," said Old Hokanson. "And that little boy, what sort of a boy do you think he was?"

I wasn't entirely certain that it was the expected answer, but I said at a venture, "A good boy."

"And when he grew up he became the savior of the whole world, and soon he will come again and take all the good little boys and girls up with him into heaven. Do you want to go with Jesus into heaven when he comes?"

This time I had no doubt about the expected answer. "Yes," I said, hoping secretly that Jesus would not come for a long time.

The lesson droned on down the line of children. But now I felt uneasy again. The mention of the Second Coming reminded me of all the fears I had forgotten in the excitement of Christmas. I wondered, with a sick, helpless feeling, whether it might not even be very sinful to be so afraid of the Second Coming, so repelled by the thought of it. While I wondered, the lesson and Old Hokanson's explanatory remarks ended, and he went back over the line and asked each child for his "golden text," a Bible verse previously memorized.

Mother had selected my text for me, a favorite with the Sunday school because it was easy to learn and quick to dispose of: "Se Guds Lamm, som borttager världens synder" (Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world).

Again the gray old man smiled at me. "What," he asked, "is meant by the sin of the world?"

I shook my head hopelessly. Sin was such a mixed-up subject. I did not feel that I could venture to interpret it.

"It means the world's disobedience to God," said Old Hokanson gently. "We sin when we do things that God has commanded us not to do. But God's commands are not hard. He only wants us to be good; and if we do our best, God understands."

He turned to the next child.

For several minutes I sat mouse-still, tingling to my fingertips with gratitude. So that was how it was! Then God was not just a policeman spying through far-off windows! I exchanged one childish conception for another: God was a teacher with a gentle voice and a wise gray-bearded face, who was glad when you did your best and sorry but kind when you failed. One needed only to learn what his wishes were; and the Bible, I knew, was full of such information. I felt buoyant with relief.

Old Hokanson announced that Sunday school was over, and sat down. Brother Rogstad prayed. Then Albert and Ida played guitars and sang a hymn to a lovely melody:

\textit{Ara vare Gud i hojdene}  
\textit{Ara vare Gud i hojdene}  
\textit{Frid, frid, frid pa jordene}  
\textit{Man'skor all' en vilja god}
Ida had a pleasant soprano voice, Albert a firm baritone. Their song and the warmth of the room made me drowsy... Soon the apples and candy would be handed out; I remembered that the apples Pete had given us had been particularly good... Ida's fingers plucking at the strings were long and white, not like mother's; mother's were fat and reddish. Some day, I thought, I'd like to have a Bible like Old Hokanson's, all gold at the edges, with pretty pictures in it.

I heard later that Brother Tandberg's sermon on sin and redemption was very good that night; but I didn't hear it. When the brother rose to begin, I was asleep.

MY FATHER HAS BROWN EYES

Charles Hayes

We got to the station an hour before my train was due, so I suggested to father and my brother Ray that we might as well go to the chili parlor across from the station and have a few beers before train-time. I dreaded to think of an hour's wait in the depot. Depots have always depressed me.

This station was particularly dingy, and an extremely disagreeable odor pervaded it as if all the ferment and decay of the town of Lathrop were centered in its grimy age-scarred structure. Its very appearance boded ill. Yet people of the town wept good-bys and kissed greetings in its shadows and minded it not at all. But to the travel-weary passenger, who gazed at it for a moment with tired eyes before the train jerked forward and rolled over the bridge into the flatlands of Missouri, it perhaps symbolized all the poverty-wrung hamlets he had passed, from the great wheat plains in the west to the northeastern part of Kansas.

This country was my home. I had been nourished on its sun-withered breast. My grandfather had drenched the raw prairie with his sweat, and after his death, my father had carried on. So you see, I was part of this land, by blood, by dust, by tradition.

I was thinking of this kinship as the three of us crossed the street to the little chili parlor. Like all such places that play Lazarus to more opulent competitors, the place was none too prosperous looking, and as for cleanliness and ventilation it was but small improvement over the station. Several railroad men were at the counter. We seated ourselves at one of the half-dozen tables in the place, and gave an order to a young, wasp-waisted Mexican girl, whose dark features were illuminated by a pair of limpid black eyes. Her light graceful manner contrasted with the gloom as she fluttered back to our table with three twenty-ounce schooners of foaming brew.

My glass felt cold and wet to my hand, and for some strange reason its chill entered into my very being. Maybe it was because I was leaving. You know what going-aways are like.

As if we were motivated by the same impulse, we bumped our glasses together in a silent toast and drank. In that short space of time all that had
happened during my visit passed before me. You know what I mean. Things happen like that sometimes. On certain occasions, little actions that we perform unconsciously tend to symbolize deep fundamental changes in the pattern of our lives.

We were waiting for a train—a train on which I, who had two days ago returned home after an absence of ten years, was to leave this country. Strange, is it not, that we should sit, drinking beer, saying nothing about those things we really wanted to talk about. Words weren’t forthcoming. Only thoughts—and thoughts without words are torture.

Father was nearing sixty-five, and as I looked at his large calloused hands, holding his glass against his lips, I saw how relentlessly age had stamped his face. Only his hair had retained the fresh vibrant blackness that I remembered, and the bald-spot on top of his head—the result of typhoid fever in his youth—was no larger. Yet the frame of his body had shrunken so that the blue denim shirt billowed emptily, and the bib of his overalls fell outward in pouchy folds.

I glanced at Ray. Ten years ago he had been a slender, white-faced boy, whose deep-sunken eyes had synchronized their sparkle with his laughter. Now, although he was only twenty-five, his eyes lacked lustre. I thought of all the time he must have spent looking at arid stretches of land. Had he been blinded by the wasp-dung of the earth? And where was his smile now? In the last two days he had smiled but seldom, and even then his smile had come from behind a cloud of wistful moodiness. His hands, gripped around the heavy schooner, looked as large and as calloused as father’s. His shoulders were no longer held squarely erect, but drooped from perpetual weariness.

How can I express how I felt then? How can I tell you what thoughts kept creeping into my consciousness, leaving me numb and cold?

We drank. It was Ray who broke the silence.

“You’re lucky to be going away from here,” he said bitterly. “I wish I were going.”

“Yes,” I said, “but things are tough back there too.”

“It’s not like it is here,” he argued, almost angrily. “No money, no friends, starving half the time.”

Father looked at Ray anxiously. In my mind I could hear pent-up waves beat angrily against a wall. You see, it was something like that. Ray, young but old, was seeing his position so clearly, and realizing his helplessness.

“It’s bad,” Father was saying “... help all you can ... save your money ... try to send us a little now and then if you can spare it. Your mother is in a bad way. Her teeth are poisoning her system. The doctor said she should have them taken out, but there’s no money ...” He stopped short, looking at me.

“If you could get me a job ...” Ray was saying. A job. Oh, yes. I thought of all the lies I had told them the last two days. “I’m a coffee blender,” I had said. “Great future ... big money ... In time I might get into the importing end of the business ... Go to South America, you know.”

It was all lies. All the money I had in the world was in my pocket. Twenty dollars. Six beers at ten cents a drink
left nineteen dollars and forty cents. What was the difference?

"Tell me," I said. "Did mother take losing the place hard?"

"Of course," father answered. "You know how people talk. We didn't get a dime from the foreclosure. There wasn’t enough to cover the mortgages. That's what made it so hard. If the bank had let me keep the stock and tools, Ray and I could have rented a place. But everyone I owed came for his. The bank forced me to cover my notes with a chattel mortgage. It squeezed with the rest. We were stripped."

"Try living through a foreclosure sometime," Ray rasped. "You feel like hell. You know how it is around here. Everyone knows everybody’s business.” He drank. His deep-sunken eyes appealed to me over the rim of his glass.

Again the silence. I looked at the Mexican girl behind the counter, and she flashed me a quick smile.

"Write home more often," father was saying. His face was framed in a background of gloom. "Your mother isn’t well. Ever since we’ve had to move to Morley’s old place, she sits around worrying. She cries all the time. If you don’t write, she begins to imagine things. She thinks you’re sick or in trouble."

"It’s that goddam house," Ray snarled. "It gives a person the creeps. It’s worse than a nigger shack. You can’t invite anyone in to see you. The damn porch is halfway off. Mother almost broke her neck several times going out before bed-time."

Our glasses were empty. I nodded to the Mexican girl. When she came back with our beer, I closed both my hands on my cold wet glass. Father was looking at me mutely. Something in his bewildered glance seemed to garrote me. I shifted one hand to my throat and loosened my collar.

Thoughts came . . . When I had come home two days ago, I was filled with all the regret of a prodigal son. I really wanted to see how things were. I wanted to feel my kinship with the country and its people. Ray met me at the station. It was the change in his appearance that first began to sap my illusions. He didn’t talk much, and it seemed to me at the time that he was half resentful of a certain eagerness in me . . . I remembered his bitter statement: "We’re living in the old Morley house,” he’d said.

During our childhood that house had been occupied by a tenant and his family. The men had worked for old man Morley, who, despite his drunkenness and woman-chasing, and thanks to an inheritance, was considered to be a pillar of the countryside, in whom all the virtues conducive to respectability resided. I could never think of the house without associating it with old man Morley’s red face, which was unseemingly garnished with a scaly bulbous nose. Father once said, “If it wasn’t for his inheritance he’d be worse than a bum. He’s already squandered one quarter of land, and if he lives long enough he’ll squander the other three. You mark my word.”

This old house of the man he despised had become a sanctuary for my father. How cruel the gods are! How hilariously they must chortle over life.

My father, who was thrifty, honest, sincere, and moral to the core, had seen all the virtues he esteemed flouted by old man Morley, who had remained, de-
spite economic storms, a success, the largest property-holder in the county. That old Dick Morley was a drunken wastrel, who had never worked a day in his life, no honest person could deny. But what did that matter. That his success rested upon the exploitation of other land-hungry men, who were forced by uncompromising necessity to till his fields, didn’t matter. He had weathered the period of crop inflation, which had ruined so many farmers in the west, and which had filled that land of opportunity with sorrowing landless men, whose only crime had been the patriotic fulfilling of the nation’s dictum—grow more wheat. The war had ended, but not the war of men with the earth.

Now my father, son of a pioneer, was living in the old Morley shack. I remembered how proud we’d been as children, and how we had looked down on the tenant’s children because they had lived in that same old house. Remembering this, I could understand Ray’s bitterness and his desire to flee anywhere, to do anything, in order that he might escape the opprobrium of living in such a place.

The old Morley house was a two-story frame structure, scarred by the winds and suns of time. The porch was half-torn away, the weather boarding was stripped off in spots. It stood on a small, barren elevation, which accentuated each of its gaping scars. Plumbing facilities consisted of a roofless outhouse, and a not too good pump into which, during the rains, surface water would seep. On Saturday nights the wash-tub would be pressed into service as a bath-tub.

The thought of it made me mad.

I drank long and deep, looking at my father and Ray, but not seeing them; instead picturing my mother, sitting alone, in that god-awful place, alone, mind you, looking out of the window into the gathering dusk. A fit of shuddering seized me. I drank until my glass was empty.

The Mexican girl glided through the gloom and refilled our glasses.

“’We ought to get our groceries before the store closes,’” Ray said to Father. Father nodded, and said, “We’ll get them after Frank’s train comes. It doesn’t close till six.’”

“‘Tell me,’” I asked, making conversation, “do you still trade at Stillman’s?” I remembered that father used to run a charge account there. Mr. Stillman had occasionally visited at our home. When father would pay his grocery bill, which was every ten months or so, Mr. Stillman would give him a present of some sort for the house.

“‘No,’” Father said, a grating bitterness in his voice, “he cut us off just like the rest when the foreclosure came. We have to pay cash for everything.’”

“‘That’s why you should help us during the winter months,’” Ray burst out. “‘You know, we work around by the day, and some of these bastards don’t pay much. After the corn’s out in the fall, there’s not much doing. Last January and February we had to get help from the county.’”

I was looking at my father when Ray said that. He flushed, and looked down at his glass. Reminding him of charity was like twisting a knife in his heart.

“‘That’s why you should help if you could,’” Ray repeated, looking straight at me. “‘It’s no fun, let me tell you, to have to take a county order to the
store. It . . .” he stopped, then burst out, “It goddam near kills a fellow!”

I can’t tell you how I felt then. But it was as if someone had gripped me by the arms and lifted me over a dark precipice. It was that consciousness of falling down, down, into a dense, deep blackness. It left me breathless and weak.

“How’re you, Johnny.” Someone had come in and seated himself at an adjoining table. The place was so gloomy, I could not get a good look at his face. I heard father say, “Hello, Gus,” then in response to a question from Gus, father explained, “We just came down to take Frank to the train. He’s going back to Chicago tonight.”

The burly stranger leaned forward and peered at me. His heavy jowls lapped over on either side of his face, reminding me of a swine looking upward at a stream of pouring slop.

“Frank, eh!” He reached out a pudgy hand. It was moist and clammy. “How’s things in Chicago?”

“Not bad,” I replied. I recognized him then as Gus de Vries, one of our old neighbors.

“Been there a long while, ain’t you?” he asked evaluatingly.

“Ten years or so,” I said.

“What are you doing? Making any money?”

I told him the lies I had told my people.

“Humph. Humph.” The jowls wobbled flabbily as he scooped spoonfuls of chili into his mouth.

I had never liked Gus de Vries. I loathed him now. I sensed a certain deference on the part of Father and Ray to him. If he were a friend of ours, why hadn’t he taken the empty seat at our table? Instead, he sat like the boor he was, at the adjoining table, talking in a half-shouting voice. His family was looked up to as one of the most successful in the county. That meant one thing as far as we were concerned. He could never talk to us as equals. All his words, as he wolfed his food and talked, rang with an opinionated air that lashed our spirits. It is funny how environment affects a man. How the standards and values of a community can be used to measure and place a man, even a total stranger, into a specific category. It is a beautiful system. To its adherents, it must seem to be the acme of perfection. All that is necessary is to know the judged one’s material wealth.

Gus de Vries symbolized that system perfectly. I wanted to jump up from my chair and beat my fists against his face with its wobbling jowls. I wanted to watch him sink bloody and sobbing to the floor. Then I wanted to throw my arms around Father and Ray, and to feel their shoulders straighten up as we walked forward together over the moaning body of Gus de Vries.

But instead I sat there and listened to him talk to my father in his patronizing way.

“I came to town for some lumber,” he boomed. “I’m building a new barn.”

“Is your housekeeper still with you?” Father asked.

“No, she left two weeks ago. She wasn’t any good nohow. It’s hard to get help that’s worth a damn nowadays. They want too much.” His voice was very definite. It contained all the boorish ignorance of two generations of successful land-owners.

“Yes, I guess you’re right,” Father
agreed. Both he and Ray were listening attentively, almost submissively. He finished eating and got up to leave.

He nodded curtly to Father and Ray, and extended the pudgy hand to me once more. "Take care of yourself," he said. He went out. Ray and Father drank, thoughtfully.

"I guess he'll think it's funny, our being in here drinking beer," Ray said, speculatively.

"The hell with him," said Father defiantly. "I'll go wherever I please." But his voice sounded hollow and lacked conviction.

The Mexican girl came again for our glasses.

"No more," Father said, pulling out his watch. "We'd better be going. It's almost train time."

The girl smiled at us as we went out. The train was on the track loading. I picked up my suitcase and the three of us stood silently watching several bustling knots of people going through the ritual of farewell.

The station looked even more ghastly in the glow of approaching dusk. Soon the sun would be setting. Already its rays were a cold yellow.

"Well," Father said, and shifted on his feet uneasily. The heavy calloused hands looked strange and cumbersome, hanging limply by his side.

Ray stared at me glumly.

"Don't forget to write," Father said; then added, "Come home often, if you can. Your mother's always worrying about things, you know."

I nodded. I felt terribly upset. There was something I wanted to say, I was sure, but I couldn't just then think of what it was. I could only see Father and Ray against that ghastly back-

ground. They merged into the scene so completely that there seemed to be some kind of kinship between them and the station. Perhaps it was the ugly barrenness of the station and the ugly barrenness of their lives. Father and Ray stood there, listlessly, Ray with his toil-rounded shoulders and Father with his shrunken, wasted frame and enormous hands.

The knots of people were breaking up.

"You'd better get on," Ray said gruffly. "It's about time."

The conductor called, "All aboard!"

I picked up my bag and shook hands with them. Our goodbye was a wordless handshake. But as I released my father's hand I thought, "I'll never see him again." It was as if I were watching his body sink into the grave. It depressed me. I wanted to get away.

"Here, take this," I said, impulsively, handing Father a ten-dollar bill. One of the large calloused hands closed over it. Just at that moment a dying yellow ray of the sun was reflected from the train window. It lit up Father's face with an incandescent brilliance. It was at that moment I discovered that my father had brown eyes. I had never known it before.

I turned away and got into the train. As the train jerked forward I looked back. Father and Ray were merging into the dinginess of the station, and soon they were lost in its black shadow. It was strange, I tell you.

The train crossed the sluggish Missouri, and plunged on over the darkening flatlands. I thought of my father, of my people, torn and bruised, dying for the nourishment of the earth. They were like uprooted plants, shriveling beneath a midday sun.
I thought of them through the roar and shriek of the rushing train, as it sped on through the purple dusk. It grew dark. I placed my head back on a cushion, but I could not forget. I was still thinking of them as I had last seen them there at the station. My father's face. The face of a dying man, lighted by the reflection of a sinking sun, and I, his son, discovering for the first time in my life that my father had brown eyes.

MILL WIFE

Verne Bright

Her soul is a pool of sad black water
Where dreams are whelmed in the sodden mire;
Under the ooze the eft-things harry
Her bitter heart to a dark desire.

Haunted by faces of dead men broken
On the whirring wheels, stilled from cries,
Flesh immured in a blood-red fury,
Dead souls coffined in grave-deep eyes,

Weary of giving without obtaining,
Of shattered songs, of lips whipt dumb
By living, she scans the bleak horizon
For death, the savior, who will not come.

ARIZONA

L. W. Feher

The burning mountains fade
and the dark moves down the land.
The moon's red climb beginning
brings the kyote to a stand.

The hours ascend like veils
and mountain trails are bright;
and paws in moon-filled lanes
tread out the stealthy night.

And the moon, a pale monk, leans
above the desert sounds
and the wind's cool sigh
through the morning towns.
WE THANK YOU ALL THE TIME

Norman Macleod

The Dance Before the Turkey Hunt

Talkative turkey gobblers east from here
Close their feathers into black clouds,
Keeping completely out of sight;

But we have quick arrows—white
As the shooting stars where turkeys are.

Talkative women are not good, they say;
Nor are turkeys who stay in the woods.

But people pray in their best language
For these clouds to be nice to them:
"Thank you, turkeys" they say,
Courteously, "And thanks again!"

Song While Working In the Corn

We are working in the fields where crops are growing,
For we are helping the Corn People,
Whose ears turn yellow in the sun.

An Indian makes his fire at noon and says,
"Come over and have lunch with me"
And the others say, "Let's go over there
And have lunch with him."

But first of all the spirit must be fed,
Or else the Corn People might feel bad.
"I wish it would rain!" they say.

We hope the clouds in the west will come our way,
For we are working for the whole people
And not for ourselves alone, we say.

While into the turquoise sky
The yellow cornstalks climb—

We thank the clouds. We thank them all the time.
WEBFOOT WHOOPERS

Edited by Howard McKinley Corning, staff member of the Oregon Federal Writers’ Project. Tall Tales in this article were selected from project material collected for a study of Oregon folklore.

The Falling of the Waters.

Eons before prehistoric man first carved webfeet on cave and canyon walls, together with images of a sun they seldom saw, Oregon was making a moist tradition for itself. Except for the Siskiyous in the southwest, and the Blue Mountains in the northeast, its regional area was deeply awash in the planetary flood. It was still raining when the Cascade Range emerged to air and sky, dividing the waters of the Pacific from those of the Inland Sea. Thereafter, the change was gradually from salt water to fresh. Flood surface was as high as nine thousand feet, but on such protuberant spires as Mount Hood, the rain forests took root.

As the land lifted and the waters receded, scarcely discernible through the mists and miasma, the giant sloth and hairy mastodon, camel, three-toed horse, and other moisture-living beasts of enormous size slithered through the marshy valleys. In the air, or where at a later age air came normally to flow, flew or rowed the tooth-billed bird, the original scissor bill. In a land so foggy that animals could not see where to stop growing, it was hardly inconceivable that the spirit of exaggeration should be born, and that its characteristic manifestation should be a moisture-laden one.

Synonymous with the emergence of the giant land and its giant life, was the birth—a colossal cerebral conception—of its hero, Paul Bunyan. From Mount Hood’s crater this hereculean infant cooed and gurgled in his first lava bath, from which he crept forth to pasture his pet, Babe, the blue ox, on the alluvial meadows of the Cascades. Skidding down the glaciers, the two ran to play under the dripping trees that even then were growing too densely to permit the easy movement of those swelling torsos. It was then that Paul determined, at some near-future time—as eons go—to log off the mountains for a freer playground. Impulsively mowing down a choice area of the rain forest, over which he spread the debris of his infant cradle, he left the felled trees to petrify, as evidence to future man that trees had once grown upon earth. Then heaving Mount Hood up to even higher altitudes, he went about his manhood’s job of giving Oregon a fixed geographical expression.

Volcanoes gurgled with a death rattle as Paul, striding behind the giant blue ox, who bellowed gently but stupendously, scooped out the gorge of the Columbia and released the waters of the Inland Sea. These rushed headlong to the Pacific; eastern Oregon emerged to a view of the sky, and immediately the sun smiled through. Gratified with this feat, Paul strode jubilantly over the plastic area, and wherever he lifted a huge foot the imprint immediately filled with water; thus were lakes formed. Thereafter, the hitherto almost-perpetual rains, discouraged by the impartial enforcement of the laws of gravity, fell less copiously; while Oregon, its western shore-
line retreating far into the Pacific, dried itself sufficiently to meet the coming guests of its history.

A fine feathered land it was, rich clear down to its bone of bedrock, covered with pinfeathers of gold and a super-abundant plumage of fir and pine. It was still periodically washed clean by fogs, mists, rains, cloudbursts and floods, that came from a sky whose prevailing countenance looked as if it had sufficient moisture for any emergency. The elements had no intention of letting the land forget that it had once been totally submerged.

The coming of man to the Oregon country is veiled in the murky light of the age of mists. It is readily conceivable that the curtaining fogs and rains made for a limited communication among individuals and tribes, causing the genesis of regional man to be forgotten. Certain astute minds of a later age believe that the aborigines waded, swam or boated across the north Pacific, from Asia by way of the Bering Straits and the Aleutian Islands. Tramping south along the coast, sun-seeking adventurers straggled into every life-sustaining valley, gouged the mammoth creatures of the land from their sheltering grottos, and on the moist basaltic walls of cave and canyon, chiseled, carved, painted and otherwise inscribed the facts of copious rainfall, of seaward rushing rivers, and of the occasional shining of the sun. Those that ventured eastward across the hump of the Cascades found that the Sun God beamed on those high drying levels more often and with greater beneficence than on the green west-lying valleys. However, many of the scattered first families had already so thoroughly dug in that these had only to multiply to become tribes, which they forthwith did.

In time each rain-shrouded nation had its own creation myth, its legends of the Sun God and the Great Spirit, and its word-of-mouth stories of all that walked, swam, or flew. Into these were copiously mingled the elements, water, air, thunder, fire, light and darkness. The story tellers themselves were but crouching pigmies among giant creatures, they were of small avail against the elemental powers; consequently their meaningful fictions were freighted with wonder, with terror, and with exaggeration. Little in their stories had normal or proportionate size, while the attributes of protagonist and antagonist alike were usually something to test credulity.

Emerging from the age of stone carvings, or pictographs, to oral tale telling and to lodges under the open and slightly less-dripping skies, the art of communication grew. Barter and social interchange among tribes were periodic, sometimes frequent. Imagination and tongue were whetted. In the telling of tales the salt-chuck tribes along the shores of the Bitter Waters seemingly vied with their inland neighbors, for originality and exaggeration of incident and experience. The symbols were basic but the borrowing of characteristics was sometimes so flagrant as to be sheer plagiarism. Only the treatment varied. But the conception prevailed. In the pure definition of things, most of these tales were whoppers. Not a few concerned Oregon's prevalent wetness of sky and earth.
Moisture on the Red Tongue.

In the long ago days, when animals roamed the earth, the coyote Talapus, the changeable and mighty God, and that water animal the beaver, started their first spring flight, a brawl of epic proportions. In the scrap that began up near Lake Cle Elum, the contestants knocked each other all over the States of Idaho, Washington and Oregon. From the magnificent footwork of the combatants were the mountains and valleys of much of the region created; the beaver’s tail threshing out a lake here, and the coyote’s claws fetching up a river there. Finally the two sparred themselves to a dead standstill at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Hungry from this vexing harangue, the beaver flung himself into the Pacific and caught a salmon for lunch. But unfortunately for the beaver, what he found pleasing to his belly fairly gorged the intellect of the hungry and watching coyote, and with a cannibalistic grin he perceived that the beaver was now ready for the salad course. Transforming himself into a succulent tree branch, the coyote threw himself into the water and drifted into the beaver’s jaws. With great relish the beaver set about taking his roughage. And literally it turned out to be that, for almost immediately the coyote began boring from within. In less time than an Indian can shoot an arrow, came the end of the beaver.

The coyote, however, was not one to let an adversary off with mere death. He set about tearing the beaver limb from limb, and tossing the parts back onto the land. The head, flung with vengeful force, fell in Idaho and became the Nez Perce tribe, famous for their wisdom; the arms became the Cayuse nation, skilled with club and bow; those swift and powerful runners, the Klickitats, sprang from the sinewy hind quarters. From the animal’s hair and blood came those far-wandering, blood-loving warriors, the Snakes; while from the ribs, Eve like, came the friendly Yakimas. The belly stayed where it was and became the hearty fish eating tribes of the Pacific coast.

In this creation tale of the tribes, however, the most vital part of any webfooter—the mouth—was missing. But the Chief of Travelers heard of this deficiency and set out to remedy the lack. Passing among the tribes he made incisions in all creatures where the mouth should rightly be, and mouths were. The first few he made in the most logical fashion, straight across. As the whim struck him he varied the design. But after hearing these creatures talk, from sheer boredom with tales all told the same way, he cut some mouths caty-wampus and others just plain cockeyed. Some he made as small as willow buds and others as large as muscle shells. Again, with a deft stroke, he carved one in scallops. All of these mouths, in time, assumed a natural similarity, but something of the whim of the maker remained with each one, for never thereafter, in all webfoot land, were there two mouths that could tell the same tale in the same manner.

In those days, when the rain fell straight down and there were as yet no winds to drive it, a thoroughly wet giant with a cane of human bones came begging shelter from a dweller at the mouth of the Columbia. The cane
so stirred the suspicions and fears of the hut dweller, that during the night he evacuated his home in favor of the giant. One precaution he took before fleeing: he instructed his dog to tell the giant he had gone east, along the river. The dog, a liar at heart, but agreeable, accepted this obligation, and in the morning, without batting an eye, glibly told the inquiring giant this untruth.

The giant, nevertheless, detected a tremor of insincerity in the dog’s tail, and promptly devoured the liar for his breakfast. Thereupon he followed his fleeing host’s tracks southward over the wet beach sands. At the mouth of the Necanicum he encountered a second giant. The fleeing host, said this giant, had just passed over the river, doing so in such a frenzied manner that he used the river-keeper’s toes for stepping stones, thus avoiding a canoe fare. Because of his anger over this he would have been only too glad to assist the pursuer had it not been for the cane of human bones. Now the bones of the dead were a cause for mortal fear among all living men, save only the boldest; merely to touch them meant to invite instant death. Only when the cane-carrying giant promised not to forget himself and touch the river-keeper with his cane, was that individual willing to give the traveler a lift across the river.

Whether by accident or malicious intent, the cane of bones struck against the accommodating giant. In a frenzy of anger, although not without surprise that he remained alive, the boatman spilled his passenger into the current, where he forthwith drifted out to sea.

Thereafter, whenever a storm wind came racing along the coast, it was, so the Indians said, the evil giant, risen from the bellowing waters, retracing the tracks of the fearful host. Likewise, on hot summer days when the spasmodic breeze promised a coolness it never produced, it was, they said, the panting dog still undigested in the giant’s stomach.

In that day, Talapus, the smiling Coyote God, the Friend of Man, went journeying from the coast country of the Tillamooks, northward to the country of the Clatsops. It was raining and through the mist ahead Talapus saw a sheltering cedar tree. To it, with proper godly eloquence, he gave the order to “open.” This, with true Oregon hospitality, the tree did, and Talapus, stepping inside, found it warm and snug. But when the rain had ceased and he desired to leave his shelter, he found he could not do so without again using the power of eloquence. This magic, he happily found, worked; the tree opened and Talapus stepped out.

Pleased with his powers over the natural world, but not content with his single escape, he asked the cedar to open once more. This it did with the greatest of eagerness. Again inside, Talapus requested the tree to open and release him. But this time the tree refused.

After a long and unresponsive appeal Talapus called on the birds of the air to aid him. Not knowing who was in the tree, they came to his assistance. First a wren came and pecked and pleaded, but in vain. The birds that followed her did little better, until the woodpecker came and started building a doorway for the prisoner. Soon the
aperture was large enough to reveal the occupant, whereupon, seeing it was Talapus, the woodpecker called it a day. In a rage, Talapus tore himself to bits and threw the pieces through the hole. But before he could collect his wits and his scattered members, and make himself whole again, a crow took Talapus' eyes home for his feathered youngsters to play with.

Sightless, the Friend of Man wandered on northward toward the land of the Clatsops. In the slow journey he plucked two wild rose buds, placing these in his face where his eyes had been. He had not gone far before an old woman ridiculed him for his optical dudishness, and succeeded, as a result, in arousing the Coyote God’s spirit of barter. His roses, he assured her, were far superior to the ordinary eyes of mortals and, if she did not believe him, why, have a look. She agreed, and while she was having a look, he took her good eyes and fled. She never saw the Friend of Man again, for he had traded her out of her eyes. But, as a beneficent gesture, Talapus transformed the old lady into a snail, and to this day the sightless snail is fond of Oregon roses. None of this would have happened had it not been raining.

At about this time aboriginal Oregonians, peering at the sun which now emerged more often, were first intrigued by the phenomenon of altitude. This reached its zenith when Talapus was called to the Willamette country, to release the people from the terror of a nocturnal dragon, who was devouring them. Talapus, knowing the dragon came from its covert only under darkness, shot an arrow into the sun, then another into the first arrow, then another and another, until he had a chain of arrows from sun to earth. Down this chair he pulled the sun, submerging it in the Willamette River. The dragon, thinking it was night, came from hiding, whereupon Talapus destroyed it. It rained less after that. The sun, released, returned to the heavens.

Now it happened also that a tribal member had his head cut off by Those That Live Above. These upper spirits, in a sportive mood, took the head with them, leaving the body on earth. This man had two wise sons, who weren’t to be baffled by such an act, and who, without any ado began shooting arrows straight up, where they stuck in the fairly solid weather and formed a climbable pole. Straightway up this pole the sons clambered, securing the old man’s dismembered head. Bringing it back to earth, they made his body whole again. The altitude, however, had so affected the old man as to make him light-headed, and stay with his body his head would not, but instead floated off into the sky.

Finally, after repeated and tiring climbs to recover the obstinate head, the sons spliced head and body together with red cedar bark. This was successful for a while only, for their parent, still beset with light-headedness, in a moment when his sons were not looking, turned himself into a red-headed woodpecker, and took to the sky again, there to remain.

Following this, the fear of high altitudes diminished in the primitive breast. A few of the bold ventured to climb mountains. Thereafter, the tales of Oregon man were even taller than before—an incurable tendency they have never outgrown.
Meanwhile, the moisture in the air continued to condense and spill over Oregon earth as mist, rain, and snow. The great cold whiteness piled up in the mountains and the wild floods surged down the rocky watercourses. Whenever these natural furies prevailed, the red tribesmen, apprehensively eyeing the growing webs between their toes, crouched under their bark and slab shelters, or in their tepees of skins. Sometimes when the giant wind rose out of the sea, the local inhabitants were obliged to sit on their roof-tops, to hold them in place, so as not to let the unwelcome visitor with the cane of human bones break through. In such seasons some of these children of the rain went attired in huge hats, like umbrellas, and all smeared their skins liberally with salmon oil, the better to shed the chill moisture.

This too was the time when Paul Bunyan, that contemporary of all ages, rising from a prolonged lethargy in the Cascades, went striding south along that serrated backbone. He trod so heavily that a few additional lakes formed in his footprints. Only when he rubbed the fog out of his eyes and peered with widened sight to the east and the west, did he see how shaggy with forests Oregon had grown. This so infuriated him that he smote Mount Mazama on its conical summit, with such a wallop that the great peak telescoped. Only the tip of the crest stood visible above the blue fallen sky that surrounded it. Thus was Crater Lake made. This jewel of beauty, his own handiwork, so impressed Paul that he felt less incensed with nature for having garmented Oregon with a maze of forests. Nonetheless, he would have to log off, blow down, burn, or otherwise destroy the whole lot—not just those along the Cascades—before his buried and petrifying trees would have any meaning. But now it was raining again, and that was enough to think about.

**THE STERNER PART OF GRIEF**

*Lola Pergament*

Tell the embattled heart in pitiful time of grief—
the tree acquits the leaf
that gave it beauty born of a long denial.
Say, in your personal grief admit the seasonal trial.

Tell the embattled heart, there burns no fiercer fire
to ashes in the breast
but it must leave an ember clamoring for rest.

The sterner part of grief is not the heart accepting grief
with quick compassion or slow.
The sterner part of grief is letting it go.
WATER HOLE

Eric Thane

The windmill stood gaunt and lonely, reared from the level monotony of the land into the lonely sky, with the prairie swinging away to the four points of the compass, lonely like everything else, flat, harsh, unyielded to any geologic variation except to the northwest. There, faint against the watery-blue horizon, the ghosts of hills lifted feebly, almost apologetically, as if in the immensity where everything was unbroken plain they felt themselves interlopers. The gaunt old man whose mummy-tight face was the epitome of all the loneliness sighted the windmill first. He urged his horse to a lope, and as the miles went by the mummy mask altered ever so slightly, until at last there appeared a look which, though the leathery skin seemed practically incapable of expression, was satisfaction.

"Everything's all right, Son. Them Lantzy boys ain't bothered the well any!"

His young companion, with a faint smile more cynical and humoring than anything else, replied, "I guess not, Dad!" and added, "I guess this is what you call a feud, isn't it? First you and old man Lantzy fall out over possession of a water hole, then old man Lantzy dies; and now you hate his two sons because you hated the old man! And all over a water hole that doesn't exist any more."

He stared ahead to where the windmill lay traced in silhouette, the one object of civilization in this flat, lonely land, unless you excepted the score of steers that grazed nearby and had left hoofprints in the trampled mud around the galvanized watering tank at the windmill's base. The smile on the young man's face deepened. He was an alien in this land, of manifestly the rankest sort. Nothing was more indicative of this than the awkward way he wore the heavy revolver in his belt. In the belt of his father, the gun seemed at home; it lay there, sheathed in tooled leather against his thigh, and the old man rode unconscious of it but in some subtle way dependent upon it, and you got the impression that without it there he would be helpless. But the young man squirmed the heavy holster around with frequent motions of irritation, which culminated in an outburst.

"What's the idea of making me wear this gun, anyway? There's nothing around here to shoot, especially over here by the windmill that you only keep up because there was a water hole here once. Dad, if you'd pull down that windmill you and the Lantzy boys would get along. I call it silly—neither of you run many cattle here, and there's no necessity for water."

The old man returned, without emotion, "You've been raised in the East, son. Mebby it might have been better if I'd raised you out here!" For a time as he rode steadily forward he was silent and then the only sound was the snarl of iron hoofs over the rocky soil and the creak of saddle leather and the faint, uneasy moan of the wind. Presently, there was the clatter and whine of the windmill; the ungreased squeak of the wheel, the grind of the broken vane, the pound of the pump. Then,
'Water!' said the old man slowly in a voice that seemed to come from the past, an echo of the time when he sat straight and hard in his saddle, and did not slump as now, "There was a big water hole here. Me an' Lantzy, we fought for it! Men have been killed here, son."

"But the hole has dried up. Why couldn't you leave it dry, instead of drilling a well? Here, of all places, where it would always be a bone of contention between you and the Lantzys."

"Sure the hole dried up—just as the country has dried in the last years. But, son, I held this hole from Lantzy until it dried, an' then I drilled the well an' built the windmill, an' I've held that against Lantzy for years more an' against Lantzy's sons. An' I'll hold it against Lantzy's sons until I die."

The young man said, "Bullheaded old fool," but he said it under his breath, for the temper of his father, when unbridled, was a wild and senseless thing which the years had made the more violent—a storm of colorful and lurid vituperation that left the old man trembling and affected his son chiefly because of its disagreeableness. So the young man, tolerantly, as he thought, characterized his father in a whisper, and dwelt no more upon the matter. He was a very superior young man, this son of the mummy-masked senescence, and in a land where the vastness of space and silence had the effect of subduing human egotism he was by contrast the more superior. His father had noted this fact, and the son, aware of his own habits of thinking but ignorant that the would have been designated as egotistical, glimpsed the disapproval of the old man, though not in the least disturbed. His father was old, and—he hesitated to use the adjective which he felt compelled to admit—childish.

"Yes, sir!" the old man said, "Water! It don't mean much now, what with drillin' wells an' having artesian fountains right in your front yard, an' not runnin' thousands of head of cattle, but there was a time when the water that windmill is over meant life."

"But it's all over. Why not tear it down? Then there'd be no more trouble with the Lantzys."

They were right before the windmill now, and they dismounted to walk forward to the drinking-trough. The galvanized metal of the receptacle was stained and muddied; within there were patches of slimy growth in the water, and some of these the old man scooped out with a quick motion of his right arm. He did not remove his ornamented leather cuffs, or roll up his sleeves, and after he had withdrawn his arm the fabric of the shirt clung to the stringy muscles beneath, and gleaming droplets flashed from the brass studs in the cuff.

"Water!" he repeated. Now there was in his voice an emotion which his son decided tolerantly was enthusiastic eagerness, "An' I've held it against the Lantzys for sixty years now. An' they've never given up trying to get it. First the old man, an' now his two sons. But I've bucked them every time. I've kept this water hole, son."

The young man said under his breath, "Next you'll say you've been keeping it for me." The heels of his
polished riding boots were in the mud which the overflow of the trough made from the prairie alkali; now he stepped back to dryer ground, and in the dusty grass carefully wiped the muck away. The wind had freshened, and with an accentuated screech of sound the wheel of the windmill began to accelerate, the pump throbbed to a harsher cadence, and out of the pipe which led from mill to trough the trickle of water increased, murky-white water that was bitter with alkali. Not even decent water, the young man thought. The wind whipped fine particles of earth into his eyes, and with his gloved hands he rubbed them irritably but not wisely, so that when the sting ceased there was yet a blur across his vision. Tomorrow, he decided, he would go back to his own land, to the cities, where you saw people and the land was not vast and lonely and unbroken from dim horizon to dim horizon; where things were done in the manner of civilization, and old men did not rave primitively to keep alive fires which decades before should have died out.

Then the old man said in sharp alarm, “Horsemen! The Lantzys, as I’m alive!” His son felt a quick thrill; it throbbed through him for an instant, and then was gone, leaving only a vast amusement that he should have felt as he did. He followed his father’s outstretched finger and saw a pair of riders approaching at a gallop. They halted a hundred yards away, then, dismounting, came forward with a stiff-legged walk and unsmilng faces, while the young man watched in quiet amusement. As a lad, when first his father had sent him East, he had been addicted to wild-west literature, but that stage of boyhood, the stronger in him perhaps because of his original environment, had passed, leaving only memories and dreams of tough men who shot at the drop of a hat and died hard as they had lived hard. Somehow at this moment, perhaps because of the unsmiling mien of these two middle-aged men who stalked forward, perhaps because this was the year it was and such things no longer happened, his mind reverted to those lurid magazines in whose pages he had eye-witnessed a thousand killings and a thousand deeds of impracticable courage; his amusement deepened and he had the impulse to laugh, though he could not seem to rid himself of the impression of drama here.

Abruptly the wind died altogether, and then you realized the immensity of the silence of the land, the utter density of it and how, though it was silence, it seemed to have a sound, until you knew that the ringing was all in the ears of the listeners. The trickle of water from the pipe ceased, the sharp splash of it upon the surface of the trough ceased, and the skriek of the windmill ceased. The water in the trough lay quiet as oil, and as smooth, except where here and there floated specks of the green growth which seemed endowed with some motion of their own, so that they swung in slow circles. And into this silence the click of boot-heels intruded harshly, with a sound all the louder because of comparison with the silence.

“Keep back, son!” the old man warned, “I’ll take care of this. If any shooting starts, you duck behind that trough.”

“Well, if there’s any shooting over
a dried-up water hole, you’re a bigger fool than I thought, and those Lantzys are as bad,” the young man said.

He uttered his thoughts aloud this time. His father did not hear, evidently, for he made no retort, and his son knew that had he heard and comprehended he would have been moved to sharp answer. The mummy-mask was absolutely without expression now as the old man went forward a few steps, to pause there and wait while the Lantzy brothers advanced until only the space of a few yards separated them from the silent figure that stood with hand on the gun that fitted there upon his hip and without which he would have seemed undressed.

“Howdy, Gordon. We saw you comin’ an’ we aimed to talk to you,” the young man heard the foremost of the pair of middle-aged men say. Young Gordon reached in his pocket and drew out a cigarette case, from which he took a monogrammed cigarette and tapped it upon the case’s polished surface. He heard his voice break out in quiet amusement. These things no longer happened—this was no drama, which was the impression he had, but a comedy embellished with the heroisms of the past. These men, these three, would talk loudly and with much vituperation, and then go their ways. The guns all three wore were merely the props of a stage play, an atmospheric aid to accentuate the menace. Such things as appeared about to happen were no longer consummated, because the year was what it was and men did not now meet in the manner of the patterned heroes of the wild-west stories.

He was tempted, as he lighted his cigarette and flipped the match, hissing with a thin sound imparted to it by the twirl he gave it, into the trough, to call his father away and have this useless talk over with. The hour of the day was nearing noon, and he was hungry; he did not know how long these three men, imbued with an enthusiasm conceived in decades past and nourished through the years, might argue pointlessly over what had once been here but was here no more, only an ideal and at that a useless one. But, tolerantly, he decided to wait. If his father enjoyed himself, that was well. He would wait the space of time required for him to smoke his cigarette, then break up the affair.

“I fought your father for this water,” Old Gordon was saying, “An’ I’ve fought you two scum of the prairie for it. This water is mine, an’ I’m holdin’ it as long as I’ve the strength to lift my gun.”

“You’re old and cracked,” one of the Lantzys jeered.

“Shore I’m old. But I’m still whole an’ strong enough, an’ ready to fill you two so full of lead that daylight will shine through you.”

The passion that enlivened a voice which as a rule was monotonously hoarse with age interested young Gordon. He puffed, still with quiet amusement, and into the air blew a smoke ring. You had to hand it to the old man, he thought—that was stick-to-it-ive-ness when you clung to an ideal, if ideal it was, for a period of time that was the total of half a century and a decade. Perseverence or madness. But if it was madness, it was just as much madness on the part of the dead father of the Lantzys and the two Lantzys who lived. Young Gordon began to take a cynical interest in
the case; he had never been much for probing into human complexities for the purpose of a better understanding of them; what men did they did, but here, with the immensity of the prairie all about and the silence of the prairie and the three grim men there, he began to wonder what this powerful urge was that could rouse their passions even after the cause and necessity for it had disappeared. He forgot to puff at his cigarette, and slowly his body tensed to some subtle force that was a combination of the personality of the prairie, these three men, the dry water hole, and the well and windmill which had superseded it.

Then, when he discovered that his interest was roused, he again relaxed, with a laugh. His hunger, for the instant stilled, returned. He recalled his promise to himself that when his cigarette was finished he would end this comedy. Now his cigarette had burned down to cork tip; he took one last puff, dropped the butt into the dust and ground it out. Then he opened his lips with the intention of calling his father. He was surprised when his command of “Dad!” was drowned in the crash of guns. The Lantzys had drawn their weapons together, only an instant after the old man’s hand had fled to the Colt revolver hanging at his hip. Instinct, modified by the warning of his father when the Lantzys had first appeared, hurled the son down behind the trough, where by peering around its corner he could glimpse old Gordon huddled safely in a depression a few yards from him, and the Lantzy brothers seeking cover in a similar depression some distance beyond the windmill.

There was another fusillade of shots, followed by a single explosion marked by the fact of its singleness. Then the silence of the prairie descended. The single explosion had smashed lead into the galvanized side of the trough, and torn there a jagged hole through which the water dripped. It dripped upon young Gordon’s face, and he did not move to avoid it though it flowed down his cheek, soaked his silk shirt, stained his grey breeches.

It was stinking water, and it stank in his nostrils; it was putrid water, and the taste of it upon his lips sickened him. But he did not move to avoid it—he lay there in the mud, without the sensation of slime against his flesh, and let the water run over his face. The loneliness of the prairie and the silence were no longer loneliness and silence—through the haze of the water he conjured images: cattle, thousands of them, crowding about a lonely water hole; hard-faced men with guns in their hands, death in their eyes; dead men lying alone by the water hole, live men fighting, fighting for water that was life; a young man growing old while he clung to possession of water that had disappeared, and with its disappearance the going of the big herds, so that now only a remnant wandered out there on the scrubby grass; and then the windmill to raise the water, though there was no need for it any more, and the man grown so old that his face was a mummy-mask. Then the images went and the prairie was again silent and dim and vast.

Young Gordon was on his knees, crouched behind the protection of the trough, and in his hand was the heavy gun which he had never used before. It was flaming towards where the Lantzys lay, and it was flaming with murderous fury.
THE loup-garous of Louisiana hold their biggest balls at Bayou Goula. If you are a brave man and are armed with a bag of salt or some live frogs—guns won’t help—you may see them for yourself; but it is wiser, if less brave, to take someone else’s word for it—especially if it is the time of the change of the moon. For “you never know who has it in for you and can change into a wolf and come suck your blood.”

Bayou Goula is the oldest settlement in Iberville Parish and is named for the “bayou or river people,” an Indian tribe who were living there when the French first came down the river. It is now a village of some one thousand persons, in the midst of a fertile sugarcane country. The bayou itself is a sluggish, hyacinth-covered stream bordered with cat-tails, wild iris, and moss hung oaks. The village has been moved back four times to avoid the inroads of the Mississippi.

Bayou Goula is not the only place where the loup-garous hold their dances; there are many werewolves in Louisiana and celebrations are held all around this section; some come all the way from New Orleans to participate.

The legend of the werewolf was first brought to the State by the French and Spanish settlers, whose own countries abound with beliefs in the nocturnal meanderings of animals with devil-riden human souls. When they heard the Indian legends of transformation, they concluded, and rightly, that they were still liable to the power of the loup-garou.

The Atakapa, for instance, told how Sartaria, the daughter of their chief, was wooed by Loosa, chief of the Tusca-Loosas, and Homa, son of a chief of the Tusca-Homas. She agreed to marry the one who brought back the heart of a White Doe that roamed the banks of the Red River. The doe was enchanted and Loosa returned as a wolf, Homa as a coyote, to howl in vain outside the village of the Atakapa. The next year Pasca, of the tribe of Pasca-Goula, was set the same task. Pasca was wise. He first dipped his arrow in the juice of the Love Blossom and, thus prepared, shot the White Doe. From the dead and dissolving form of the White Doe arose, living and beautiful, Melabena, with whom Pasca immediately fell in love. Sartaria, jealous, attempted to murder Pasca; but he loosed another arrow, this one dipped in the venom of the Yellow Death Vine, and she, turning into a strange animal that looked like a cougar, bounded howling into the woods.

The Acadians brought other tales out of France by way of Nova Scotia. And with all of these—French, Spanish, Indian, and Acadian—the mind of the Negro had full play.

Today, the Creoles, descendants of the original French and Spanish settlers, remember being warned as children that the loup-garou would get them if they stayed out after dusk; but to them, for the most part, the loup-garou has come to mean a sleepwalker, a victim of insomnia, or merely someone who stays up late. Among the Negroes the tales have had a longer and fuller life, though again “most of the old folks is dead now,
and the young 'uns don't pay no 'ten-
tion.'"

I.

Loup-garous is them people who wants
to do bad work an' changes theirselves
to wolves. I ain't never seen one but my
sister lived in the country an' she seen
plenty of them. I think there was more
of them in the country than in the city.
They had big red eyes, pointed nose, and
everything jest like a wolf. They even
had hair on the inside of their hands, an'
long nails. They went around snoopin',
jest like cats.

They would rub theirselves all over
with some kind of grease, that would
make them shed their skin an' turn into
wolves. No one could ever find what
kind of grease it was. Guess it was some
secret stuff like the Voodooos used. They
would never change theirselves until
twelve o'clock at night. That was devil's
work; 'cause when they would change
there was a ball of fire an' they would
shoot out of de chimley, leavin' a cloud
of smoke behind. Whenever you saw
smoke comin' out a chimley at night you
knew that a loup-garou had gone across
the river. I don't know why but they
always liked to go on the other side of
the river. To stop them from suckin'
your blood, you had to wear your
clothes on the wrong side an' make
crosses with nine pins. If you wants to
catch one of them loup-garous you hang
a new sifter in the tree. When they sees
this they stops to count the holes in it.
They have to count every hole in that
sifter. Then you catches them. Men
an' women was loup-garous. They would
sit in trees an' throw all kind of things
at you when you passed. My paw saw
one an' he was so scared that he ran
two miles before he stopped.

I knows of a gal that was engaged to
be married but she an' her maw was
loup-garous. They never told the man
but he found out an' they broke up.

The loup-garous used to have big balls
at Bayou Goula. My sister saw them.
They used to dance under the platform
where the hay was tied in bundles for
dryin'. They used to dance an' carry
on like animals. When they would make
too much noise the people would throw
a frog at them an' they would fly away.
A frog would stop them from doin'
anything. Sometimes they would stay
across the river so long that it was too
late to come home an' they would have
to stay there until the next night. They
had to git home before the first crack
of dawn so they could change back.

II.

My paw was raised around Plaque-
mines an' he used to tell me about them
wolf mens. He said they was turrible
people an' worked for the devil. No,
they was entirely different from the
hoodoos. I never seen any 'cause I was
raised in Alexandria.

Them loup-garous used to hold meet-
in's or balls not only in Bayou Goula
but all around that section. They say
that's where they started from but the
loup-garous would come from the city,
too. They was all sizes, even children
changed into wolves. You could shoot
at them an' the bullet would go right
through their skin an' they would turn
back an' laugh at you. One of my paw's
friends tried to shoot a bunch of about
twenty when they was havin' a meetin'
but he couldn't do it. A few nights
after that that man disappeared from
his house. Everybody knew that the
loup-garous took him off an' kilt him.
They used to have bats as big as people
in the field where the loup-garous met. Those bats would pick up them wolf mens an’ carry them where they wanted to go. They would come down the chimney with a ball of fire an’ stand by your bed an’ say, “I got you now.” You could have fire in your grate an’ they would come down anyway an’ not burn themselves, not even singe a hair. I don’t know what they would do or put on themselves to change. I thinks they jest would call on their friend the devil an’ he would change them.

III.

Yeah, I knows about loup-garous. My grandmother used to tell us about them. There was a man livin’ on St. Roch (New Orleans). He lived in an old wooden shack that sat way in the back yard an’ there was lots of grass and weeds in his yard. He never went anywhar in the daytime, jest at night. My grandmother says at night he turned an’ looked jest like a wolf.

One night this man or wolf, like you might call him, grabbed two wimmens right here on Kelerec an’ Claiborne an’ nobody never did find them. Another night he sprinkled some powder on a house an’ it burned down. The people didn’t know what to do. He was killing people right an’ left. The police tried but they couldn’t do nothin’ either. They even shot at him. He disappeared jest like that.

This wolf man had a fight with a man one night an’ cut his neck plum off. Sometimes he drank blood. Maybe he was freakish to drinking blood.

Did he look like a ghost? No! A ghost was dressed in white like the Klu Klux Klan dress but they don’t have no head or feet. Ghosts walk on air but this man was purple-looking with red eyes; his nose and head looked jest like a wolf. I think my grandmother said he had a tail, even.

An’ when this old man died he even buried himself one night, under his front doorstep. Come it was the longest time ’fore anybody could live in his house.

IV.

Them people drank something to make themselves change into any kind of animal an’ they was the biggest hoodoo people I knows. All that kind of stuff was around Villere between St. Louis and Conti (New Orleans). I remember a woman who couldn’t die until she got one of them animal people to give her some powder. You see she used to go with them people. All of them sold themselves to the devil.

You could see them at night. Sometime they was dogs, cats, wolves, mules, an’ everything. I don’t know what they used to change themselves but they sho did.

A man named Jim Bailey killed a fellow named Pete for nothing, absolutely nothing. Jim ran away; the police or nobody could find him. So one day Pete’s mother went to some old gray-headed man somewhere downtown. This old man locked himself up in a room an’ at night ’bout midnight he shot out his window like a bolt of lightning. He looked jest like a wolf. He flew around in the air; everybody saw him. They say he had wings. This old man flew in the window of a house on Conti Street an’ dragged Jim Bailey out by the neck. He flew ’round with Jim an’ dropped him in a crowd of people. ’Fore long the police came an’ put Jim in jail. He confessed guilty an’ got life.

There was an old woman on Allen between Miro an’ N. Tonti Streets who
turned to a long black dog. She ran everybody in that neighborhood. She hid under steps, in alleys, behind trees an' posts when people passed she would jump at them. One night a man hit her with a stick an' drew blood, then she came back to herself an' never did do that any more. She said that she had sold herself to the devil an' couldn't help but change when night came.

The only way to git any freak, ghost, or anything to be itself is to draw blood. All of them will come to themselves if you can git them close enough whar you can hit them on their back with a big stick. The blood will come pouring out of their nose an' mouth.

V.
Willie, my husband, met one of them things comin' home from the station at Convent one night. Lord, I never forgets how scared he was. He runs in the house all out a breath an' makes me lock all the doors. He said in French, "Anna, one of them wolf mens is after me." We got a candle an' lights it to the Blessed Virgin right away. Then I went out an' sprinkled salt all over the steps an' under them to keep him from comin' in the house. Willie he was too scared to go out an' do it, so I had to go. He said he was jest a walkin' down the road peacefully when all of a sudden this thing jumped out in front of him. He had a hairy face, chest an' hands jest like a wolf, but feets an' legs like a man. He wore pants but nothin' on the top of his body. I tells Willie that it was the devil after him because he hadn't made his Easter duties. Bright an' early next mornin' Willie went to church an' when he told the priest about it he said that it was jest Willie's 'magination an' not to pay any 'tention to it. That didn't do Willie no good; he was jest as scared an' it was a long time before he would walk that way again.

When I was a child there was an old woman that lived near us. She lived alone an' everybody called her Cracka (Gombo for crazy) an' was scared to pass her house cause they said that she was a loup-garou. She sho was mean an' did all kind of bad work. Cracka's husband fooled around a lot an' one day she heard about it. A week after he was found dead in the cane field all scratched up, an' people said that Cracka had changed into a wolf an' killed him.

My maw told me somethin' about the loup-garous meetin' in Bayou Goula. At the change of the moon she said you could jest hear them hollerin' and carryin' on in the cane field. In the mornin' lots of the cane was down. On All Saints' Night they would go in the cemetery. Long time ago before the priest stopped us burning candles in the cemetery on All Saints' Night you could see an' hear the loup-garous jest a carryin' on. My may said you could see them jumpin' on an' off the tombs, knockin' flowers down, an' laughin' an' dancin'.

VI.
I knows 'bout a man who was killed by another man right around the corner on Gasket Street over thirty-five years ago.

The man that killed the poor man went to jail and to court but he got out through money an' politics. Everybody says that it was a shame to kill a man in downright murder like that. But nuthin' could be done about it. Nuthin'!

One night a woman saw a big black dog with big red eyes scampin' 'round the murder's house. His tongue was
hangin' out an' he was spittin' some-thin' blue out of his mouth. This was late at night. An' every time you would look at him he would disappear right out of your sight.

One Friday night 'bout one o'clock in the morning, I was sittin' on my front gallery an' I heah lots of hollerin' an' screamin'. The dog had bit the murder' an' he died right on the spot. Then the dog disappeared.

But he kept on comin' round on every Friday night till he bit everybody right out of the family. They all died, an' after they all died the dog stop comin' round.

VII.

Those loups-garous was bad people an' I thinks they was spirits. I never seen one but my maw an' grandmaw saw one, an' they told me that they came like a ball of fire. That ball of fire would come through the keyhole an' stand by your bed, then change themselves into a wolf. They would take you into the woods an' lose you. They would make you pass through water an' all kinds of things. They would 'specially take lit-tle babies. If you would throw a hand-ful of salt on them, it would burn their skin an' make them change back an' you would know who they was. The loups-garou that came to my maw an' grand-maw didn't do them no harm 'cause they knew who it was an' called their name. My maw knew that the one that came to her was old Suzanne.

Suzanne was the ugliest woman I ever seen. She was black, black an' had red eyes jest like fire, an' skin that was wrinkled an' scaly; jest the kind you knew could change an' look 'zactly like Lucifer the devil. I seen her when I was a little boy. She lived on Ursuline and Decatur, near the Sarazan tobacco factory, an' sold pralines in the French Market (New Orleans). Everybody around there knew her an' she was so mean an' ugly that people was afraid to buy anything from her. Well, one night Suzanne changed into a ball of fire an' went to a old couple's house, I don't re-member their name, stood by their bed, an' changed into a wolf. They was prepared an' threw a sack of salt on her. It burned her so that she screamed, "You is settin' me on fire."

She started to shake an' that wolf's skin jest fell right off her. They was so mad that they stripped her naked an' took her in the yard an' cowhided her. The police came an' took Suzanne to the horsepital. She stayed there a month an' came out. Jest after she come from the horsepital she died.

They says that them loups-garous had a turrible death, worse than the Voodoo people who used to do bad work.
A LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FRIENDS

Leon Dorais

"How's it go, Dave?" Julian asked after he had given their orders to the waiter. After work he had met David at his hotel and even the walk afterward through the chill early evening air had not taken the stink of the lobby out of his nostrils. He had taken David to a quiet bar he knew on Kearney Street just off Market and now at six o'clock there were but three customers besides themselves in the place and the radio was not playing. The waiter came with the martinis and Julian paid for them as unostentatiously as he could. David took a big swallow of the cocktail and then chewed slowly on the stuffed olive. When he spoke his voice was expressionless. "All right," he said. "I'm getting by, I guess." His suit was worn and old but it had been pressed and he had on a new shirt. "How're things at the office?"

"Oh, just the same," Julian said. "It's just like working on an assembly line. One right after the other so fast you don't get time to breathe. . . . You through? How about another one?"

"It's too late in life now to start saying no," David said, smiling a little.

After they had finished the second drink and were on their third they felt warm and friendly and a little of the old close feeling they had had a few years before came back to them. David had said something that required no answer and Julian was sitting back in his chair being conscious of the pleasant almost bitter tingle in his mouth from the drink when he remembered something and sat up straight again. "I almost forgot to tell you, Dave," he said. "There's a friend of mine . . . a very nice girl; she's a social worker but don't let that prejudice you . . . she called up the other night and of course I would have to be out. She wanted me to come over and bring you along. I told her about you the day you were out at the office and she thinks she has a chance to get you into the social service division. Through a friend of hers. As a matter of fact he's the man who got her the job in the first place. That's the way one gets jobs in this philanthropic organization . . . just in case you were in any doubt."

"I had rather suspected that was the way it was done," David said.

"Really. Well, I was talking to her today on the phone and she tells me she's seen this fellow and she thinks he's weakening. It won't be much of a job, probably only twenty a week but that's better than they start most of the people. I've got this girl, Katherine Weems is her name, all sold on you . . . gave her a rough idea of what a bargain you were. She's all excited about you."

"I can imagine."

"The only thing of course is she'd like the privilege of meeting you. I told her I thought I could fix it up."

"Bargain," David said snorting. "Bargain. You said it Julian. But . . . did you say twenty a week?"

"That's just to start, of course. There might be a chance of getting more a little later."

"That wasn't what I was thinking about. Jesus, twenty dollars a week. My god, that's a lot of money. . . . But then
I probably won’t get the job so what the hell’s the difference. What’s the use of worrying about it?”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if you really did get it.” Julian emptied the last drop from the glass and then said, “How about just one more before we eat?”

“Somehow I can’t get used to sponging, Julian. I feel guilty seeing you pay for all these. It’s not right for…”

“Suppose we just forget about all that. You wouldn’t want to interrupt me in the midst of one of my infrequent moments of liberality would you? . . . But what I was saying . . . it wouldn’t surprise me if this job did come through. This gal is a very stubborn lady and a very good egg indeed.”


“For about three days. Then you’ll wish you’d stayed on a budget.”

“You ever live on a budget, Julian?”

“I’m sorry, Dave. As a matter of fact I never have. I’m not eligible for relief and I got into this thing through the back door. How in god’s name people get by will always be a mystery to me.”

“I’ll let you know when I find out.”

“You through, Dave? Let’s go then . . . I’ve never been so hungry before in my life. Where would you like to eat?”

“You know where Joe’s is up in North Beach? Where you sit at the counter? I’d like to go there, if you don’t mind. God, the steak I had there once . . . ”

“Let’s go to Joe’s then,” Julian said, tasting the steak.

No street car was in sight and they walked fast against the wind that had come up while they were in the bar. There was a little fog, but they didn’t feel the cold: they kept in step as they went along, anticipating only the food. The dingy grey walls of the Hall of Justice were left behind before a car caught up with them and they let it go and kept on walking.

Joe’s was smoky and hot and crowded and they had to wait for seats. The customers were eating too fast to talk, but the waiters and the chef kept up a steady cross-fire of encouragement and wisecracks in whooping Italian: like the infield and the catcher talking it up. But it didn’t make the service any faster and it was a good fifteen minutes before Julian and David could grab chairs ahead of other people who would have taken them even though they had come in later. They each ordered a huge bowl of salad drowned in dressing that seemed three-quarters olive oil as the waiter poured it on out of a gallon can. Almost before they could finish the steaks appeared in platters that looked at least a foot long. It was after eight-thirty when they finally got outside again gorged and belching red wine.

“Want to walk a little?” Julian said.

“I’ll try to,” David answered, laughing as he spoke. Julian was startled: he thought all at once that it was the first time he had heard David laugh since he had seen him again.

David quieted down quickly. “God, that was good,” he said.

They crossed Broadway and turned down Grant Avenue in the direction of Chinatown. At Washington Street Julian said, “You remember Yee Jun’s? The next time we have dinner together we’ll have to eat there.”
"Let's talk about food some other time," David said.

"All right," Julian said. "Dave," he went on, "I just thought of something else. I meant to tell you earlier but it slipped my mind. How would you like to go to an office party?"

"What kind of a party?"

Somebody's getting up a party for the administrative staff. Everybody's invited. I think I can get you a ticket all right if you'd like to come."

"I don't think so, Julian."

"Why don't you? God only knows what it'll be like... they're going to rent a big hall and get a good band and there'll be some kind of entertainment... you can't tell, it might be pretty good. Either that or it'll be a complete bust. But you can't lose anything."

"I don't think I want to go, Julian."

"Why not?"

"Listen... I haven't any clothes that are fit to wear to begin with. Look at this suit. You want me to go to a party looking like this?"

"Ah, you look all right. What's the difference anyway?"

"No, I don't want to go, Julian. That's final... let's not argue about it."

Julian had his mouth open about to answer but something in the way David spoke made him close it again. Grant Avenue widened out all at once: they were downtown and Chinatown was left behind. They walked a few blocks farther and then Julian said, "What'll we do, Dave?... I've had enough walking around for tonight."

"Go home, I guess," David said.

"Christ, it's only nine o'clock. That's too early to go home... How'd you like to go to a burlesque show?"

David thought a moment. "No," he said, "I don't think I do. Burlesque is a little too rich for my blood."

"I see."

"Do you?"

What's the matter now? Julian thought. Then he said, "Let's go somewhere, though... There's a pretty good picture at the United Artists, I think. Want to go?"

"Sure... if you do."

"I guess we can walk that much farther."

The picture wasn't good and it wasn't bad and by the time they had left the theatre and walked a block in the direction of David's hotel they had forgotten what it was about. Julian suggested a drink before going home, but neither of them felt like having one.

"You're sure you don't want to go to that party?" Julian said after a time. "I meant what I said, Julian," David said. "Thanks just the same..."

"It probably won't be any good, anyway."

"Look... I turn off here. There's no point in your walking down this way and then having to go all the way back. Besides, your car'll stop running pretty soon. It's after twelve now."

"Oh they run for another half-hour anyway."

"What do you take... a Geary?"

"Yes... a D."

"Well, Julian," David began, "thanks a million."

"What for?"

"Don't be ridiculous. All the fine food and drink... and everything. God, I haven't had a meal like tonight for months."

"Wait till you get this job. You can buy me one then. I'm always hungry."
"No kidding, Julian. Thanks again."
"Forget it, Dave. It wasn’t anything
. . . And I won’t forget about that job.
I’ll keep after that girl and as soon as
I get something definite I’ll let you
know."
"I know you will."

They had run out of words and were
standing on the curb, each of them a
little uncertain of the other when David
abruptly said “Good night” and
walked on. As he waited for the street-
car at Union Square Julian couldn’t get
the bothered feeling out of his mind.

TWO POEMS

ELEANOR BRENNAN PLUMMER

APRIL

White mountains penciled on the sky
Gray where the gaunt rocks show,
And green and darker green and blue
Where forests go.

A gray lake lying in the sun
Where ice is breaking
And soft and slow among the trees
A young wind waking.

I SHALL NOT TELL YOU NOW

Know this, I shall not tell you now
What I had thought to say—
The old slow wound that would not mend
Was healed today.

Your quiet words—how strange that words
Have power to hurt, and power to heal—
Left me with nothing much to say,
Nor much to feel.

Nor much to feel—except a sense
Of gratitude for one hurt gone;
God knows there still is pain enough
To carry on.
I am again a little boy seven years old. It was thirty some years ago when I was first that little boy, but today is Christmas Eve, and I belong to the Elks, and I wish I could go out and get drunk; but I cannot because I am going to play Santa Claus for the Elks, and when Santa Claus and the Elks and I are together on Christmas Eve I can never get over being seven years old.

I am a child whose instincts are to be as young as seven years; but I cannot because my mother is a widow, a washwoman, and has ten children whom my father was strong enough to procreate but not to support. He died because he went duck hunting. He liked duck hunting better than anything else except begetting more children, although he did not really want more children. But my parents were very young when they were married. They were pioneers, and they were religious. They knew nothing of scientific love-making. My young, good and stupid father whispered to my mother many times each night; even after he had consumption from going duck hunting—lying in soggy marshes, leaving wet clothes on all through the night. Duck hunting, with its reward of consumption and shot-gritted birds. I am the first product of father's cough, a cough that weakened his body and made him too idle, tickled his blood into racing defense, made him feverish and demanding.

There was a boy after me, but my mother was so tired from defiance of poverty and sickness and hopelessness with her soap-welted hands in a wash-tub that she could not make up with her strength the lack of my father's strength. That boy died. And after him was another child who was never quite a child and was never really born. Then there was Eda. Three years went between my birth and Eda's and in those three years was the boy and the not-quite-a-child; but my mother was fighting more slowly when Eda was born. She was resigned and she had fitter herself into a groove which grew smooth from daily sliding down it, and she was not too tired to give Eda strength. Eda lived. Eda, myself, and seven older children lived.

I am a little boy seven years old and there is not any Santa Claus. Even though my teacher, and my older brothers and sisters, and the rich and middle-class and not-so-poor children at school, and my little sister Eda, and the stores, and the stories, and the Elks say there is a Santa Claus, there is no Santa Claus. My mother says there isn't.

My older brothers and sisters take me to one side and say, Now look, Morton, there is a Santa Claus. Maw says there is no Santa Claus because she is poor and Santa Claus does not come to poor folks like they do to richer ones, and she does not believe in Christmas. She ought to believe in Christmas because she got you for Christmas seven years ago, and it is your birthday and Christmas right together, and a little boy like that ought to believe in Santa Claus. Maw told some of us there was no Santa Claus and we never had no fun at Christmas, but now the Elks
give away presents from Santa Claus on Christmas Eve, free, to poor children, and you ought to believe and take Eda and go down this afternoon and get a present.

I believe my mother more than I believe my brothers and sisters because she is my mother, and if a little boy seven years old can't believe his mother, who can he believe? My mother says there is no Santa Claus, that fathers and mothers are Santa Claus, and I am seven years old now and go to school and I am old enough to understand that there are no fairies or Santa Claus. Mothers and fathers are Santa Claus, and I know my father is dead and my mother is too poor to buy toys and nonsense, except maybe a little candy. I ask, Is a red ball nonsense? And she says, Yes, it is nonsense. Only overalls and dresses and clothes are not nonsense, because we have to have those anyway. And I believe her, and go outside and kick the bottom step on the porch and pull the cat's tail until it yowls, because a red ball is nonsense. I have never had a red ball. I have never thrown a red ball and watched it skim in exciting redness across our dusty, brown, bare yard. I have a worn-out tennis ball I found near the schoolhouse. It squubsbs when it hits the ground because there is a hole in its side. It is a dirty grey and it has no bounce. Mostly I throw rocks. In winter I throw snowballs, but my next older brother and I hide a little pile of rocks in the barn where the snow can't cover them up, and we are better off than other kids because we have both rocks and snowballs. But I have never had a good ball, or a red one, and I want that more than I want anything else. But it is nonsense.

My brothers and sisters say again, Morton, today is Christmas Eve and the Elks and Santa Claus are giving presents to little children like you and Eda; don't forget now, go there and take her with you this afternoon. Then I say, Mother says there is no Santa Claus. She is too poor to buy things so that damned Santa Claus can say he climbed down our chimney and brought us presents. Nobody don't need to tell me—I'm seven years old tomorrow—that a fat-bellied, damn, lying bastard like Santa Claus can climb down a little chimney into our stove! And my oldest brother Barney says, Listen to the little devil cuss; he cusses as good as I cuss; maybe we ought not to cuss so much around him and Eda; I heard Eda cuss the other day too and Maw slapped her. Now listen, Morton, you're too young to act smart; you got to take Eda and go get some presents. The Elks'll prove there is a Santa Claus. They got one down there today, and this Santa Claus gives out the presents. And I say, Mother says there is no Santa Claus and no sonsabugger Elks can tell me there is. So Cleba, next to Barney, slaps me and I do not cry because tomorrow I am seven, and I run around the corner of the house and wiggle my fingers at my nose so she can see.

Eda tags after me and whines, Morton, I want to get some presents. I want to go to the Elks. I want to see Santa Claus. And I say, Sissy, you ain't got no sense. You're only a baby. You ain't got no sense. You think there's a Santa Claus. And Eda opens up her mouth and bellers. Then she
opens her eyes blue and little at me and I want to beller too. I want to scream and kick and yell and holler and keep it up until after Christmas is over, and maybe if I do that all the time I won’t know it is Christmas and that I didn’t get a red ball.

I go to the kitchen where mother is rubbing clothes. The kitchen is steamy and soap-smelling, heavy and wet. It does not smell like the Christmas-kitchen the teacher at school read us about. It smells like any day smells, because my mother washes every day. I squirm around and lean against the washstand. Soap suds flick off mother’s hands as she pulls them out of the water, fly onto my cheek and stick there. I listen to their sizzle as they dry up, and try to act like a seven-year-old who understands that Christmas is not for the poor, and try to get up more courage than I know I will have when I ask what nothing will keep me from asking. Mother, do you think Eda and me should go to the Elks party this afternoon? Do you think we ought to get some presents even when there is no Santa Claus, because they are giving things to poor kids? They say there is a Santa Claus down at the Elks today. And mother says, I don’t know why grown people lie to children. They will find out later they lied, and I am too poor to make good that lie and have my children hate me for lying when no Santa Claus comes around this house.

Cleba is in the house now making fresh starch. She says, Maw, why do you talk like that? Let Morton and Eda go to the Elks. Tell them Santa Claus is coming there tonight instead of coming down our chimney. Mother straightens and smooths at her back where it always hurts after she is old. Hurry up with that starch water, she tells Cleba, you got to make some pies for tomorrow. It’s charity going to the Elks, Cleba. I don’t hold with charity. I wash hard for my money. I don’t want anything for nothing. I don’t want my little children and me to lose our pride just because it’s Christmas and I’m nothing but a washwoman. Eda starts bawling again, I want to see Santa Claus. Cleba says, Aw Maw! I stub around like I don’t care one way or another, and kick at a rock I have brought in the house and say, Wisht I had a red ball. And Cleba says, Aw Maw!

Mothers says, It’s charity. I don’t hold with charity. Then she straightens again and goes to the dresser. Here, Morton, she tells me, Here are some clean overalls. And wash your neck and ears. We may be poor but we’re not dirty. Cleba, put a clean dress on Eda; I won’t have people saying we’re dirty poor-trash; we can be clean even if my children do have to go to the Elks to get Christmas presents.

I don’t hurry. I act like I don’t care if we hurry or not, but the inside of me is racing ahead of what I do. My mind is already far beyond what I will do; it races even beyond the red ball I will get at the Elks and is at home again, even before I have gone; it is at home again where I can think of nothing but that I have a red ball. I have a red ball. I am rich. I have rocks and a torn tennis ball for playing with the others, but I have a red ball all for myself. The red ball and I will play alone with each other. I am rich. I am going to the Elks!
Eda and I are dressed and clean. She puts her hand in mine and I yank mine away, for I am a little self-conscious about going to the Elks when I am poor and seven years old, and I do not know for sure now whether there is a Santa Claus or not. I do not know for sure, for part of me has not raced ahead to the Elks and I am a little afraid that the part that has is a liar the same as mother said grownups were who told Christmas stories. I pray and yet I do not pray, because I do not know how to pray. My mother has not taught us to pray, because by this time she is tired of the religion that gave her too many children. My prayer is without words, without "Dear God"; it is only great hoping. When we are out of sight of home I take Eda’s little hand that seems little even to my little hand, and we are careful of the dirt road not to get our shoes muddy; for we are clean even if we are poor and I think that if there is a Santa Claus we ought to be clean for him. I cannot be dirty when I get a red ball; I must not get the red ball dirty. Later, perhaps, I will get it dirty, but at first I shall keep it very clean and all alone except for my careful playing.

As we come onto the main street we smell Christmas. It is a feeling more than a smell, yet it smells. It smells Christmas. There are not many children; there are mostly grownups, and they are all doing Christmas things and look Christmas and they make the street smell like Christmas. So I think, perhaps Christmas is for grownups; perhaps Christmas belongs to grownups and they can lie about it if they want to. Santa Claus is a grownup and he is the same as Christmas and belongs to the grownups too, and they can lie about what belongs to them and perhaps he is a true lie. A lie is a lie, but it seems to me there could be a true lie. I don’t know, but I am so excited it seems to me there could be a true one.

I want to stop and look at Christmas on the street, but Eda pulls me on. I want to get my dollie, I want to get my dollie, Morton. There’s dolls at the Elks, Morton, I’m going to get my doll. I lag back and pinch her hand to make her slow down for I am not sure I will find Christmas at the Elks and I might as well get what Christmas I can on the street.

I’m going to tell Maw you pinched me, you’re a mean old boy! But I am not a mean old boy. I am a scared young boy, and I am scared I will not be a young boy any more after I get to the Elks but an old boy who will never be young any more. I do not think that out. I feel that, which is better than thinking, for after I think I feel, and sometimes a lot of time is lost by thinking before I feel when I could just feel.

There are children milling about before the Elks building. Some go up and down on the sidewalk like they are not sure whether they should go in or not. Some lag in the doorway, some walk inside, some push inside, some run inside. I squeeze Eda’s hand and we walk up and down the sidewalk with those who are not sure whether they should go in. I see some children go inside who are not poor. I know them and I know they are not poor. I know they have new overalls and dresses and candies and tops and marbles and balls when they come to school. There is Tony. He yells and
hollers and jumps up and down and pushes other kids out of his way as he jumps up and down through the door that leads to Christmas. Tony’s father works every day on the railroad. He is a section hand and Tony’s mother is a washwoman besides, although she is not as good a one as my mother, and Tony is almost rich. He had a nickel at school one day. He is almost rich because both his father and mother work and give Tony nickels. He should not be at the Elks because there will be Christmas at his home—he said so at school. But maybe he was lying like I lied when the teacher asked us all to tell the class about our Christmas trees and how we would hang up our stockings, and how we would go to sleep early so we would not hear Santa Claus coming down the chimney and what we were planning in our homes for Christmas Day. I told the best lie of all, if the others told lies like Tony must have done, since he is here at the Elks, and the teacher told me I was a lucky little boy with all that Christmas at home. And out in the school yard at recess the kids said, I bet he’s lying; he can’t have any Christmas like that; his mother is a washwoman; she is as poor as Job’s turkey, my folks say. And it was true it was a lie, but it was the best lie, and it made me happy while I was telling it because I told it so right that it seemed true—a true lie. And true lies are sometimes not lies but true, because they are so true they have to stop being lies and come true.

Gerda Ahlkenfleck is near the door. She is poor, too, so it is all right; it is better for her than for Tony to be near the door. Gerda has no father, but her having no father is different than our having no father, for she never did have a father and our father died. But I cannot see what the difference is, because neither us nor Gerda have a father now, and it makes no difference to us whether we ever did have a father because we don’t have one now and Gerda is no poorer than we are. Gerda’s mother does housework when people will let her work in their houses, for sometimes people say, I will not let a woman like that touch my things, my house is a godly house; I will not let Mina Ahlkenfleck touch my house. And that I cannot understand, for Gerda is kept clean as we are kept clean, and Gerda’s mother is clean as my mother is clean. Their shack is clean, but even my mother says we must not play down at Gerda’s shack. Why? Because I say not to; if she comes here don’t you children run her off, but you must not go to her shack to play; her mother is not a nice woman. I ask my mother, Is nice the same as clean? And she says, In a way; and so I cannot understand how Gerda’s mother is clean but she is not nice, so she is not clean and yet she is clean.

Some older children laugh loud at the doorway and fidget about and they go inside to the Elks party too. And some of them are not poor. And more of all ages go inside, and some of them are not poor, and more and more go inside until only the ones who walk up and down the sidewalk are left outside. These who walk up and down are the poorest of all except for Gerda, who has pushed inside too because she has learned pushing from going inside other children’s yards so she can have someone to play with. Even when they try to run her off she still pushes her
way inside their yards. So Gerda, who is one of us, is inside and we are still outside from the party because we are too bashfully-poor to push inside until we fear we will not be of this party if we do not push now. An electric fear of not being of this party shocks us poor now into action and we straggle to the door and wait a minute there, half fearing we will be told there is no party, this is not Christmas, there is no party, there is no Santa Claus and what are we small poor ones doing at the Elks because the Elks is a man's club, the Elks is for grownups and what are we, the small poor, doing there? And Eda and I, we are at the very back of these last party-goers, for we are the poorest of the poor except for Gerda, who does not care if she is the poorest and unwanted.

A man is inside the door. There are several men inside the door and they smile Big at us. Big, their smiles smile, we are Big and you are little and you are poor, and we are very Busy and Important and Big because this Christmas party is at the Elks and we are the Elks. Hurry up, children, these Elks say, hurry up, they are already giving the presents out. It is so strange. These men are Elks; these Elks are grownups; grownups are Christmas; grownups are Santa Claus; grownups are mothers and fathers who can be oddly poor or rich so that they can give or not give Christmas presents or make the grown-up Santa Claus give or not give Christmas presents. Everything and everyone are grownup, and we are children who are the only not-grownup things in a grownup world; but we must live in grownup ways because there are no children's ways but only grownup ways.

So we hurry politely because we realize more deeply now that we are only the poor little children and these men pointing out our way are rich grownup Elks; and we have never had rich fathers and mothers to teach us rich ways of hurrying and not caring in what way we hurry. We hurry with polite, bashful feet toward a big room; and again we hesitate just outside the door because there is a Christmas tree inside that room that reaches the ceiling. It is almost too much the way it reaches the ceiling. It reaches the ceiling with sparkly branches that do not point upward and so touch the ceiling, but there are so many of the branches that all together they reach the ceiling. Even though these branches begin near the floor, shorter down than I am tall, and even though they are so heavy and filled with Christmas that they should be pulled down to the floor on which I am standing, still these branches do not reach toward the floor on which the children are waiting. They reach up and up so that it would have to be a very grownup grownup who could feel at ease with the tree, who could claim the things it shone with. I want to cry when I see that tree. It is so big and beautiful and I am so little, and I know it does not care if I am in the room or not, and it can never belong to me but I can belong to it the way children always belong to grownups.

Most of the children already have their gifts. They are running about on the polished floor, sliding and making dark rubbed marks where their heels touch, and others are scooted against the walls in grinning, uneasy joy. Gerda has a doll and she is edging into a bunch of little girls, flipping up the
doll’s skirt, trying to make the other girls look at her doll. Some of them do and take on a snippy grownup look, and you can see they think Gerda should not have a doll at all. I look at Gerda; I look at everything; and there are so many presents in the hands of children that it does not seem that even Elks can give more.

An Elk calls to us and we get into the line that ends in a fat red-and-white-suited Santa Claus who stands at the foot of the tree. Eda is just ahead of me and I am the very last one in the line, and I am glad because no one can look at me as I watch Santa Claus. If I can look at Santa Claus alone that way, I can believe in him. I can believe in him because no other eyes are looking at me because I am the last in line and no one has any reason to look my way. No other eyes will pull at my face and make me laugh and shuffle and stir around in the everyday way of little boys who are too excited. I can look with all of me and forget there are everydays, only Christmas, and at the end of Christmas, at the end of a long line of boys and girls there is a Santa Claus. Mother is not right. There is a Santa Claus! There is a Santa Claus because I see him! I see him giving presents to boys and girls just as everyone but Mother told me he did. Soon he will give me a present! I am glad I am at the end of the line because I can think longer that soon Santa Claus will give me a present, and it will be a red ball! There are one—two—three—there are fifty children between me and the girl who is now getting a Teddy Bear from Santa Claus. I will have fifty times as much Christmas as that girl because I must wait fifty turns until I get my red ball.

Suddenly I am anxious that there will not be red balls at the foot of the Christmas tree. Now I am not thinking of Santa Claus except to be frantic because his fat, red-and-white body keeps me from seeing plainly whether or not there are any red balls. I crane my neck. There are dolls, Teddy Bears, little wagons, covered up packages that do not show what is in them, bats, baseball gloves; there are baseballs. And among the baseballs are three red balls, a blue one and one that is marbled all over. There are—there are forty more children and only three red balls. But they do not seem to want red balls. They pick and choose from the other lesser gifts; they do not want the only thing that I want, and I tingle and breathe hard because I am so different as to want what I can get.

The line cuts down and down, and I will soon be to Santa Claus. Eda is shivering like a puppy when it gulps milk and bubbles little greedy sounds. But there are so few presents left. It almost seems there will not be enough; I do not think there will be enough; how could there be enough with so many children and the Elks already richer with their gifts than it seems even Elks could be? There will not be enough; surely just this once there could be enough. I have never had a red ball; this is the first time I have come to the Elks’ Christmas; surely this once there could be enough! There is only one red ball left now, and the blue one, and a few other things; I do not care what they are. There are ten more children, and I am the last in line.
And then that last red ball is gone! I see the girl walking out of line with the red ball and a sack of candy and an orange and she does not look happy. She frowns at the other girls who have dolls and bounces the red ball as though it gave her pleasure to hit it; and I am so shivery and nervous as I watch that red-ball-of-mine-that-is-now-a-girl's that I am afraid I am going to wet my pants—and I am seven years old and in public. I squeeze and draw inward and shudder as I fight and win over this so-awful thing. But I think I should run outside quickly now with Eda so that I will not cry or wet my pants, because if that girl bounces my red ball again so that I can see it I will do both of these things. I squeeze tight my eyes and legs and cannot see or walk right, and stumble forward by holding to Eda.

I hear Santa Claus speaking to Eda, but I still am afraid to open my eyes. Little girl, he says, have you been a good girl? I know you've been a good little girl; you look like a good little girl; here are some building blocks and here is some nice candy. Eda trembles and when she speaks Santa Claus has to stoop down near to both of us so he can hear her. I want a dollie, Eda whispers. What did you say, little girl? And Santa Claus comes so close I can smell the warm man-smell of him. He smells just like any grownup man except that he has besides a sharp smell of wool that is not a clothes-wool smell, and of mucilage. What did you say, little girl? he asks, and I am sick as I remember that voice. It is not the voice of Santa Claus; it is the voice of the fat preacher who visits our school sometimes and listens to us say pieces and says some himself and tells us that he is a little boy too just like we are little and must say his piece nice for the teacher, and his voice booms out grownup and he is a fat preacher and not at all a little boy. And this is not Santa Claus' voice but the fat preacher's! I have my eyes shut and I can hear it altogether as a voice and not be bothered with seeing whiskers and a red-and-white suit and be so bothered with that seeing I believe it is really Santa Claus.

What did you say, little girl? I want a dollie, I want a dollie. There are no more dolls, little girl; all the dollies are gone; Santa Claus had so many little girls here today and all the little girls wanted doll-babies to take home with them. These are nice building-blocks; you can build lots of things; blocks are more exciting than a doll; you can make all kinds of things. Eda’s body jerks; she snubs little, bigger, bigger, big, raising her shoulders higher each time, until at last her first howl comes out. I am ashamed. I open my eyes and try to drag Eda away, but she is rooted to the spot and bellowing. I am glad she is bellowing, for now I can cry through her and I will not disgrace my seven years by doing it myself. I am glad she makes a fuss, because there are no red balls left and I hope she yells so loud I won't have to talk to that damned lying bustard of a Santa Claus who is the preacher and have him give me a box of building-blocks! Yet I am ashamed, for Mother will think Eda's fuss makes us look like poor-trash because Eda screams in public at a charity party. There is excitement. Some Elks rush around the fat preacher who is Santa Claus and they look
around the tree, but there are no dolls, and they try to trade other little girls out of their dolls, but that does not work. One of them says, Let's go out and buy her a doll; a kid ought to have what it wants on Christmas. But the others say, That's right, Bill, but suppose about a hundred more of these kids didn't get what they want, then we have to buy them what they want because we give this kid what she wants; it won't work, Bill, we've got to be fair; she ought to be glad she's got anything; after all, this is a charity party. And Bill says, I guess you're right; we'd have the whole bunch on our necks, only I wish she had a doll. So after that I could not say to the fat-preacher-Santa-Claus, Please, haven't you got one more red ball? Give these building-blocks to some other kid who doesn't want a red ball anyway; nobody really wants a red ball except me. Only, I could not even say, Give these building-blocks to some other kid, because Eda got the building-blocks and that was the last present there was. The Elks feel bad about this. This Bill says, We ought anyway to go buy a present for this kid; he is the last and there are no more presents. And the others say, No, it will set a precedent; it will look to the others like we are doing something special for this one, and after all we have already done a lot—given presents to two hundred or more kids; and we will give him two sacks of candy and two oranges.

I do not feel anything as they give me the two sacks of candy and the two oranges. I do not often have candy and never oranges, but I do not feel anything. I am numb because at first I did not expect to have any red ball for Christmas because my mother is poor and there is no Santa Claus; then I did expect to have one because I came to the Elks; then I did not expect it because there were only three red balls; then I did because no one else wanted red balls; and now I know I cannot have a red ball and I am worn out with expecting and not expecting. I do not feel anything.

I pull Eda out of the Christmas tree room. She is still squawling, and in the hall she sees Gerda with the doll in her arms and she snatches at Gerda's doll. Gerda pulls and Eda pulls, but Gerda is eight years old and she gets all of the doll except one leg. I hurry, dragging Eda after me, and already she is coming to a snubbing stop with her tears because she has a leg of a doll. And when we get outside the other kids are outside too and they yell, Yah, he didn't get any Christmas present; he's so poor he can't even get a present from the Elks! Santa Claus don't even like him, he didn't get no present! Rage bubbles within me; rage at everything is in me. I want to hit and beat this world before me until it is flattened into a path for my stomping feet. I could kill, because I have no red ball and I am tormented and there is no Santa Claus, only a dressed up preacher, and Eda didn't get a doll and we are poor, poor, poor! And what can I do about it? I cannot beat them all. There are too many. My weakness makes my rage the stronger. With snarling fury I yawp at them, Yah, there ain't no Santa Claus, he's Preacher Steele dressed up; there ain't no Santa Claus; go in and yank off his whiskers and see if there is! He's Preacher Steele! I didn't want no old present! Yah, charity kids taking presents, charity kids taking presents!
I stand there on the sidewalk and yell at them, but they do not fight me because we are in front of the Elks building where there have been presents and I am taking care of my little sister who would get hurt if there were a fight. I stand there and yell until they all go home with their presents, their damned charity presents, with their damned lying presents they got from a Santa Claus who does not give presents to all children but only to the ones who are up front.

Yah, there ain’t no Santa Claus! Yah, there ain’t no Santa Claus! Yah! Yah! Yah! I wiggle my fingers at my nose, thrust out my tongue and waggle it. I jump up and down and shriek and wave my fists until the last one backs off down the street.

Eda’s eyes widen in horror and she points to the ground. Look, Morton, look, you’ve wet your pants! Maw’ll whip you; she whips me and I’m littler than you. I look, and it is hard to believe it is true. I did not feel it before, but now the clamminess of my clothes stings and grips my flesh and I realize that when I was not thinking I wet my pants, and I am seven years old. I am seven years old, and it is Christmas, and I wet my pants in front of the Elks!

We stumble home, Eda and I, through the darkness and I can hardly see my way because it is dark and I am crying. It is dark and I am crying, and when the yellow, steam-splotched windows of home are before me I cry harder.

SILENCE

Opal Shannon

Away from town
silence draws close
as sky and hills;

lingers transparent
and palpable
at road’s edge:
glass.

Enamel the blue-door house,
blue-dress flutter
of woman drawing water.

Poplars up-thrust
spear-like against blue.

I have heard
the lavender gravel
beneath my feet
and the creak of the windlass
saying this is real.
THUNDER ON THE WATER

MARIE STATES

University of Oregon

VERNA Richardson picked up a small rock, and with sure aim sailed it over the back of her favorite duck. Laughing at his frantic squawk, she passed out of the afternoon sunshine into the startling coolness of the barn. She stood a moment waiting for her eyes to grow accustomed to the shadowy interior, breathing in the pungent tang of corn silage.

"Well, did your college thug get back into town?" Her brother looked at her as with long unflinching fingers he cleaned the straw and slime out of one of the automatic drinking cups attached to the manger.

Verna smiled at him from behind a narrow streak of dust made luminous by sunshine entering through a crack above her head.

"Yes," she said. "Robin's back. He called me from the depot. He's coming out tonight. *  ' He felt a little sorry for Angus; he would miss her after she was married. Walking over to him, she put her hand on the sleeve of his striped coveralls and asked seriously, "Why don't you like him, Angus?"

"Bob's all right. I haven't any reason for not liking him."

"You always say that," she said, a lump rising in her throat. Watching his face intently, Verna thought Angus looked uncomfortable. His long eyes were somber, his sensitive mouth stern.

He faltered. "You always said you'd never marry a farm and a herd of cows."

"Yes," Verna replied, "I always said I wanted to be a jewel thief when I grew up, too. It will be all right, Angus. Since Robin's grandfather left him the farm and he majored in Agriculture . . ."

"He had to major in something, I suppose," Angus answered. "Oh, uh, Jim's back," he continued, happy to change the subject.

"Jim," she said absently. "I had forgotten about old Annie dying.

Certainly death left only the lightest shadow with its passing. Old Annie was Jim's grandmother, one of the Indians that lived across the river. She had been a robust, courageous old soul who had clung tenaciously to the habits of her people throughout her hundred and ten years of life.

"How is Jim?" she asked. "Did you talk to him?"

"Only for a minute as he went through, Verna; he's changed. Well, you'll have to see for yourself. You always understand people better than I do. But you remember that half-starved, kind of wolfish look he had about him?"

Verna remembered. There had al-
ways been a yearning, hungry look in Jim’s sharp black eyes. That the Indians’ diet of smoked salmon and potatoes had been inadequate she well knew, but her pity for Jim had gone deeper than that. As she had grown older she had come to understand something of the two irreconcilable sides of his nature—the dreamy indolence of the native that dragged so heavily on the fierce urge to rise in accomplishment that had been characteristic of him even as a boy.

“Maybe he gets enough to eat now,” she said, wondering what Angus meant.

“Sure, he gets enough to eat, but he’s worrying about the rest of them. Ever since that ratty Kilburn gang tried to dynamite salmon last fall, the sheriff’s had it in for the Indians. Jim says they’ll never get any proof on the Kilburns, and this suspicion is a serious threat to the Indian’s fishing rights.” Angus lifted a box of silage and dumped it into the manger.

The sour stench of the fine drifting particles stung Verna’s nostrils and she wandered outside still thinking about the Indians. She knew about the fish dynamiting during the salmon run. A half-stick of dynamite set off in the water and a hundred humpies turned their bellies to the surface and could be skimmed like flies off the top of the water. Easy money, with salmon prices so high. Verna sighed; then, remembering Robin, her face brightened, her step became buoyant.

That evening Verna rode with Robin through the sweet smelling dusk of the valley, the white dirt of country roads settling on the shiny coupe that had been Robin’s graduation present. There was a coolness and a dried grass smell about the air, and that feeling of summertime. Verna loved the neatness of long even-rowed orchards, the barns that rose out of broad fields, hugely tunnel-shaped against the faded wallpaper blue of the sky. And Robin was a comfortable companion; he talked easily, constantly, making little demand on her attention, leaving her mind free to analyze as best she could this strange ecstasy of having him back again. They drove by the small cream-colored house that was to be theirs in a brief two weeks, and wound back home over a sloping hill.

Standing on the porch, looking over the neatly squared-off fields of her father’s farm, Verna thought of Angus’s words. “You said you’d never marry a dairy ranch and a herd of cows.” Suddenly she was angry; why should she care what Angus said? She loved Robin.

He was looking down at her. His eyes shone black at night although they were clear and grey in the daylight. Verna put her hands on his shoulders, heavily muscled, firm, football shoulders. College thug, Angus had called him. She bit her lip. His face looked gentle, softened by the moonlight, and his fully carved mouth was set in an unfamiliar seriousness. He and Angus had known each other all their lives, yet there had never been any friendship between them. They were different, that was all. Robin with his directness, confident, undismayed; Angus somehow tentative, feeling his way through situations.

“Honey,” Robin spoke with his lips against her hair, “You can’t know how much I’ve missed you. It’s swell to be back again.”
Robin was so rarely serious, even in his love making. She always felt a little puzzled, a bit uncertain of her understanding of him. Tonight, even after his long absence he seemed closer; there was more real intimacy between them.

"Heck, who’d ever dreamed I’d be marrying you?" he said standing back to look at her, white teeth flashing in his familiar smile.

"Yes, I know," Verna acquiesced. "You were the biggest big shot at Hornton school, and the kid with the most freckles. I was just a little red-headed pest in bloomer dresses."

For a time they talked of the valley, its people, its past as they had known it.

"Robin, Jim’s back," Verna remembered. "You know his grandmother died."

"Jim—oh, sure, the Indian kid that lived across the river. Is he still as towheaded as he used to be?"

"I don’t know. I haven’t seen him. He’s only a quarter Indian so he could very well be towheaded," Verna replied.

"That’s right, his father was a white man. Swede, wasn’t he?"

"And his grandfather was a white man too, Old Tim says."

"Yeah, just any white man." Robin lit a cigarette.

"Well, his mother was married, anyhow, and his grandmother was an Indian princess." Verna felt resentful of Robin’s attitude toward the Indians. He was silent a moment. She looked at his face as he blew smoke over her head, his eyes on the far-away outline of the hills, black against a light sky.

"Verna, we belong to the valley,"

he said huskily. "It’s the way it ought to be, for us to marry, raise our children here, send them to the same schools we went to."

"The bus hauls them into town now," Verna broke in irrelevantly. Her gaze followed Robin’s out over the light and shadows of the fields. She felt suddenly breathless, inarticulate. Fine to be so happy, she thought.

* * *

It was Saturday, and Verna had spent a most unhappy day. She was moody and irritable. She abhorred trying on clothes; it made her neck ache and her feet go to sleep. Besides, the scratching of pins across her skin always infuriated her. Robin had come by for her to go swimming, and she had glared crossly at his flippancy over the burning sand. Now, free at last, she headed for the Island, Spoons, her gold blond collie dog racing at her heels. She walked quickly along the road that wound between fields of fresh clover until she came to the bank of the river. Holding up the skirts of her culottes, her shoes in her hand she waded across, the speckled rocks feeling cool and sharp as they slid under her feet. Spoons raced by, shooting a spray of water across her face. Verna shook her hair loose. This was really fun. There was a quiet isolated spot on the other side of the Island below the place where the Indians lived. She went there and sat on her favorite rock, chin cupped in her hands.

A fish flipped up in the air and dove smoothly back into the shaded green water, making circular ripples that died gradually away through patches of sunlight and shade. Verna waited for another fish to jump. Everything
was still; and everything seemed to wait. There was something monumental and significant about the stillness and the waiting. Verna felt frightened at the intensity of the silence and at the sensation of expectancy that seemed to swallow her.

Abruptly she looked up, startled. She saw the Indians' boat coming down the river. In it stood Jim, erect, pole in hand, easily shooting the boat across the current. As he passed along, patches of sunlight that filtered between the trees lighted metallic glints in his hair. Verna recalled how slim he had always been. He looked more rugged now, in boots and breeches, his shirt open at the throat, his bare brown arms skilfully poling the boat.

She waved at him, laughing at Spoons' startled yip as he jumped up from his sleep. Jim edged the boat in to the bank and laid down his pole.

"How are you, Verna?" he asked.

His eyes were black and quick, yet he had a quiet way about him. It was odd that his hair had remained blond now that he was fully grown, Verna thought, and his skin so brown, though not bronze like an Indians. She looked at him curiously. Angus said that he had changed.

"Jim, it's good to see you back. There's something so familiar about the sight of you and the boat and the same long pole." Verna leaned forward smiling. It was good to see him. Here was something that belonged intimately to past summers of her girlhood. Year by year she and Angus had spent successive school vacations on the river, fishing, swimming, floating logs down with the current, and much of the time Jim had played with them. She laughed happily. "Do you know what's wrong with the picture?"

"I suppose you mean I've got some clothes on," Jim returned.

She had forgotten for the moment some of the sweet silly adventures of those early years—times when she and Angus and Jim had run stark naked under the stern old trees of the Island, lifting prickly brown spruce needles between bare toes, their young bodies stinging from nettle venom. Verna felt her face crimson as her eyes met Jim's.

"I meant those chopped off overalls you used to wear," she answered lamely.

Suddenly they were both laughing, Verna giggling irrepressibly, Jim guf-fawing in the same old way. Vern and Angus had always maintained that they could pick out Jim's laugh in the Metropolitan Opera House.

"Tell me what you've been doing since you left here," she asked, her voice easy, her cheeks still pink. "You know, it's been five years. Old Tim told us you quit school and went to work in a fish hatchery."

"Yeah," Jim said quietly, his gaze following the sandy bank of the river. "I went to the state college for two years, then got this job in the fish hatchery. I've been there three years. Like it more than anything."

Verna watched his face intently. Angus was right in saying that he had changed. The high-geared nervous manner of his high school days was gone. He was, well, more like his own people. She felt both pleased and disturbed. She was curious about Jim. Her eyes grew narrow, calculating. Angus' mannerisms were like a powerful lens that magnified his motives un-
til she could read them plainly. Robin—well she could never put her finger on anything about Robin that was not perfectly obvious to everyone.

"Jim," she said, "the river is so lovely here, so quiet. I sometimes wish I were a fish myself."

Jim’s quick eyes took in the live warmth of her copper-colored hair. There was a sort of strange conservative vividness about her as she sat there against the green background of the Island.

"I could use some more fish up at Long Salmon Lake," he said. "Verna, it’s a nice quiet sort of life up there."

Verna looked up, her mind alert. He was going to tell her about it.

"I work pretty hard. There’s a lot to do about a salmon hatchery, but it’s not bad. I like that sort of work. And then living there—it’s almost inhumanly beautiful. When it rains there are mists and the scent of the woods and the rain calls of the birds." He laughed self-consciously. "Maybe I’ve gone back to the ways of my people."

He looked across the river where a thin wisp of smoke was curling up above a ramshackle dwelling.

"I think it’s swell for you to do what you like to do," Verna encouraged him.

"That’s the point," Jim continued thoughtfully. "When I was a kid I wanted an education, a background, a family like other kids. You remember how ambitious I used to be. I wanted to be so important that people would have to accept me. Well, after I went away to school I got what I wanted. I made the football team. Well," Jim smiled slowly, "I stuck it out for two years, living like other people, being one of them. Then I got this job in the fish hatchery and when school started I didn’t go back. I’m not ambitious any more. I don’t want anything. I write a little, work, and get along." For a moment he hesitated, his eyes resting wistfully on Verna.

She sighed. That was it: Jim had a new poise, a sort of peace. He didn’t want anything. He took time to observe, to enjoy, to live simply and a bit primitively.

"I’m sorry about your grandmother," she said. She knew Jim had loved old Annie.

He was silent, his face gentle, sad, but showing no trace of bitterness.

"There are so few of them left now, Verna," he said at last. "Guess there’s no place for them in the world today. The funeral is to be Monday, in the old mission up above White Horse."

There was a shout from across the river, and Jim picked up his pole. Walking slowly toward home, Verna realized that she had not mentioned Robin. She wondered if Jim knew she was going to be married, and if he would care.

She and Angus went to old Annie’s funeral, although it was on the same day that she had planned for her party. She was to have a small home wedding with only relatives present, so she was giving the party for school friends.

At the White Horse mission she sat beside Angus on a slivery slab bench, her eyes stinging, her heart aching. On all sides were the round solemn faces of Indians—fat, lazy, pitiful in their miscellaneous clothing and their shagginess. She had never heard anything so mournful as their singing. Certainly an Indian funeral was a sad occa-
sion, another milestone in the death of a people. Old Annie had been an Indian princess, and her people had revered her above anyone in the valley. There were so few really fine Indians left. Verna looked at Jim and felt comforted. There was nobility and fineness in the set of his head.

He met them at the doorway of the church and thanked them for coming. Verna gasped when she saw his face, so stony and stiff, so pale under his tan. His eyes blazed with a sullen passion and tiny beads of perspiration dotted his forehead.

"Whew!" Angus said as they were climbing into their shabby car. "Did you ever see old Jim look like that? He thought a lot of his grandmother." "Funny," Verna mused. "He wasn't like that yesterday. We talked of old Annie and he was entirely composed." "Maybe the sight of his people affects him that way," Angus suggested. "Those Indians are a pack of lazy bums, but God, there's something pitiful about them!"

Verna clenched her fists tightly. Horrible, she thought. What was the matter with Jim?

The party was going fine, Verna decided, surveying the exuberant guests. Some of them were dancing to the strains of a fine eastern orchestra that came in clearly over the radio; others were grouped around Ted Vichmann, who was spinning one of his 'Miz Pettibone' yarns. She stood apart for a moment. Her head ached and she felt giddy. She knew that she laughed too much; she shouldn't have drunk any of the punch that Robin and Angus had spiked. Earl Hilton came over and asked her to dance. As Verna followed his light rapid steps across the floor, Earl looked at her with a challenge in his laughing blue eyes.

"Let's do that nigger dance for the gang," he suggested. "You know, the one we did for the Tanglefoot Club Play last year."

Verna assented dubiously, her head reeling. Her hair flopped against her face and the filmy skirts of her dress swished madly as she and Earl cut the pigeon wings and buzzard loops of the crazy darkie dance. The crowd clapped time with the music, stamped their feet, and yelled. Finally they all started to dance, and Robin cut in on Earl. Looking down at her flushed face with disapproving eyes, he guided her out onto the porch. She could see that he was angry.

"What's the matter with you, Verna?" he asked shaking her roughly. "Have you blown your top?"

Verna felt suddenly tired. "You've been drinking too much yourself, Bob," she tried to fight back. "I can hold my liquor. And don't call me 'Bob'!"

She stood there leaning against him, feeling suddenly contrite. "I'm sorry, Robin. Let's not quarrel."

He pushed the tousled red hair back from her face and kissed her. "Honey, it's only three more days now till we're married. Wish we were on our way to Canada tonight."

Verna smiled and looked up over his head. "Do they have as many stars in the sky, up in Canada?" she asked, feeling more like herself. Robin loved her. It would be fun, going to Canada with him.

He started to reply, stopped suddens-
ly by the clutch of her fingers on his arm.

"Robin, what was that?" she asked, sure that she had heard a low muffled boom coming from the direction of the river.

"I didn’t hear anything," he replied uneasily, looking into her startled eyes. "What makes you so jumpy Verna? Probably thunder way off somewhere."

"I know I heard something," she said defiantly. "And it wasn’t thunder!" She looked at the sky. "It came from the river. Robin, it sounded like somebody dynamiting fish." Her hot hands were pulling hard at the lapels of Robin’s coat.

"Honey," he said drawing her hands down. "You mess up all my suits this way. What are you so excited about?"

"Oh, Robin, it’s because of the Indians. The white people dynamite the salmon and the Indians get the blame for it. This new sheriff hates them anyway. He told Angus they were a pack of lying, sneaking, horse thieves. And if they’re blamed for any more dynamiting they’ll lose the privilege of netting fish in the winter time. They’ll starve, Robin. It’s all they have to eat some winters. Let me go, I’ll have Angus slip down and see what it is."

Robin held her tightly. "No you don’t," he said in a strange stern voice. "You and Angus keep out of this. I’ll tell you, Verna, but you keep still about it. I was down there myself last night, and I’d be there now if it were not for the party. It’s my brother and the Severson’s. We can clean up four or five hundred dollars apiece in just a few nights. Verna, we need this money, you and I. The old man got me the car, you know."

Horror struck Verna. She leaned back against the porch railing, her face pale, fists clenched.

"But Robin, if anyone hears the explosions—"

"One of us keeps watch. We won’t get caught," he reassured her.

"Yes," she replied slowly, "if anyone hears it you’ll get away. It is the Indians who will pay for our joy ride up to Canada."

She didn’t mention it, but she knew that if any suspicion drifted Jim’s way he would lose his government position at the hatchery. Verna felt panicky. How could Robin do this thing?

There was a strained silence between them as she and Robin reentered the door. Verna recoiled as a group of laughing, shouting guests gathered around them. She faced them with an aching dread in her heart, her hand trembling in Robin’s. The party was getting tiresome, she thought. A few moments later she saw Angus go to the window, looking out at a car that had just entered the yard. He put down his cigarette and went outside, and she saw Robin slipping through the front door. Verna followed Robin, her heart beating fast.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"Looks like the sheriff’s car. I’ve got to let them know," he answered quickly. "They may be a little short-handed tonight without me. Wonder if they’ve got anyone watching." He looked down at her, his face anxious. "Sorry this had to happen. See you later."

Hurriedly he ran down the steps, slipped along silently under the cherry trees, and disappeared through the fence.
Verna stood trembling where he had left her, her mind churning furiously. Robin would warn them,—they'd get away all right. And the sheriff would pin the blame on the Indians again. Verna decided quickly. She might be powerless to do much under the circumstances, but she could warn Jim that the sheriff was here. She wished with all her might that she could see Angus, but he was out talking to the sheriff. Gathering up her skirts, she slipped down the porch steps, grateful that her dancing sandals were flat heeled. Verna headed north toward the creek. She knew she could easily reach the river before the sheriff if she took the short-cut. Gasping breathlessly, her lungs burning, she ran through the moonlight, her dress catching on blackberry briers, her shoes full of sand. Reaching the woods, she stumbled along in the heavy shadows and almost lost her way. She came out lower down the river than she had meant to. It would be necessary to go up farther before she could wade across. The bank was high here, and soft. Robin's gang would be up by the dam where the shore was sloping and graveled. She ran along the bank until she came to a small clearing, stopping short as the shadowy bulk of a truck loomed close ahead. Verna slipped behind a tree. She could smell fish. She watched closely for a moment. There seemed to be no one around. She must have got here even before Robin. She stood waiting a moment, undecided what to do. Here was her chance to stop trouble. Let the sheriff catch the right party. But did she want to do this to Robin? Cautiously she approached the truck and felt across the dashboard. They had taken the keys. She knew what Angus would do if he were here in her place.

“Oh, Robin,” she moaned, “I can’t do this to you!” Then she remembered him standing on the porch . . . When she had protested in behalf of the Indians he had not even heard her. With shaking fingers she raised the hood of the truck, grasped a tangle of wires, determinedly yanked them loose.

There was a sudden sound of running feet and Verna scooted headfirst over the steep bank, half sprawling into the shallow water along the shore. Sick, exhausted, guilty, she waded into the cool water, not stopping to look back. Once across the river, she ran wildly toward the other side of the Island. The night air felt cold against her flying hair and wet dragging skirts. She ran fast to keep from thinking. She hated herself for what she had done. At last her mind cleared and she stopped running. Lonely and frightened in the darkness, she walked between bare slender trunks of tall trees. There was not much need of warning Jim now; but she wanted to see him.

Arriving at a point opposite the Indian shacks, she yodeled shakily. From a cove down along the bank she heard a light sound on the water, and a boat emerged from the shore's shadows. She might have known that Jim would be watching. At the sight of his tall figure poling the boat in toward the bank, Verna felt more confident of what she had done.

“Verna!” he looked at her bedraggled evening dress. “What are you doing down here? This is no place for you!”

“’The sheriff’s coming,’” she told him
quickly, climbing recklessly into his boat. "I don’t think they’ll get away. I pulled some wires loose in the truck."

"You what?" Jim gasped. "You don’t know who it is then?" he asked pointedly.

Verna hesitated. "Yes," she said. "I know. But I can’t have Robin doing things like that."

"You may not always be able to stop Robin from doing things like that."

They were both silent for a moment. Waves slapped impatiently against the side of the boat, and a train whistled from far off.

"I’d like to get it straight, just why you did this. You’re a little fool, Verna, in the first place for loving Robin, and in the second place for fixing it so he’d land in jail."

Verna moved restlessly in her seat at the end of the boat. Jim stood above her, his eyes piercing through the darkness.

"Oh, Jim, don’t let’s talk about it now. Can’t you see? I’m so tired and confused I don’t know why I did anything."

"I know," he said, his voice still hard. "But you don’t love Robin, or you wouldn’t have done that." He pulled her to her feet, the boat rocking dangerously. "Verna, I’ve been crazy about you all my life. When I was a kid, I dreamed of doing big things so I would be important enough for you to notice. Then when I grew older, I realized that nothing I could ever do would change my background or my blood. That’s why I left here before I finished high school. Then I just went on until I found something I liked to do. It didn’t need to be important." Abruptly he released Verna, turned and picked up the pole. "‘Let’s go down and see what happens,’ he muttered. ‘God, I think I’d have killed Robin last night if I hadn’t heard that you and he . . . I didn’t know it till yesterday, you know.’

Verna sank back on her seat, too confused to reply. So that’s what had ailed Jim at the funeral this afternoon, she thought wearily. Yesterday he had found out she was going to marry Robin, and last night he had seen Robin down here dynamiting salmon.

She and Jim were floating down stream. A breeze blew over the river, and smidges of clouds drifted across the moon, casting strange quivering ripples on the water.

They approached as close as Jim thought advisable and waited in the shadow of the trees.

"Two of them got away in the boat," Jim said, his voice quiet again. "See, they even took their net. It was stretched across down there between those two rocks."

"Isn’t the sheriff here yet?" Verna asked.

"Verna, old Andy and Tim and the rest of us, we won’t forget what you’ve done for us tonight," Jim said gently. "Robin must have hurt you terribly. I’m sorry I popped off about my car-ing for you, but it was my one chance to speak."

"I have to think about it all, Jim. I don’t know about Robin, yet," she replied huskily.

Jim was silent a moment. The boat plunged restlessly back and forth against a log, and a bird called from somewhere back in the woods. All around them floated the dead salmon, white bellies flashing in the moonlight.
"Damn fools," he grunted. "They have killed hundreds of my finest humpies."

A tall form appeared on the beach on the other side of the river. Recognizing Angus, Jim poled the boat across with long powerful strokes.

"Angus!" he called as the boat scraped on the gravel.

Angus walked up quickly. "Jim—and Verna! My God, what are you doing down here?"

"Was Robin—" she began.

"No, Bob wasn’t arrested," Angus returned shortly. "He just didn’t show up. They arrested the one Severson kid in the truck. He couldn’t get it started. The other two got away in the boat. I was just coming over to tell you, Jim. The kid told who the others were, so—" he hesitated.

"I know," Jim said, his face grim. "They won’t blame us this time."

"You’d better go hunt up Bob," Angus told Verna. "He’ll need somebody’s shoulder to weep on. I saw him down here just a minute ago."

"I don’t feel like hunting up Robin just now," Verna answered slowly.

"Well, come on then; you’ve got to get back to your party. What in hell were you doing down here anyway?"

Verna looked out over the river. "The party’s over," she said. "Angus, you remember when we used to build a fire on the beach and sit around and talk? You and Jim and me? Why don’t we build a fire tonight?"

Their fire blazed brightly from a small, intimate cove below the dam, spreading a rosy glow out over the water. Once more there was peace on the river. The dead fish had all floated away with the current.

Leaning her head against Angus’ shoulder, Verna watched Jim narrowly across the blazing driftwood. The voices of the two men were a low vibrant drone in her ears as she drowsily tried to set her mind straight about the events of the evening. Jim, loving her all these years, and she not knowing it; going away because of her, finding his happiness alone. Verna wondered what it would be like to live at a fish hatchery. She didn’t want to marry Robin, not now. Robin was different, anyway. There were many sorts of people in the world, she reflected, but she and Angus and Jim, they were one sort.
HISTORICAL SECTION

Old letters, diaries, journals, and other materials relating to the Old West will be welcomed. They will be carefully handled and, if desired, returned. Accepted material cannot be paid for.

VIRGINIA CITY IN 1864
Edited By Clyde McLemore

These letters, transcribed by the editor from the columns of the Denver Rocky Mountain News and the Denver Commonwealth of the dates mentioned, respectively, were included in my On to Beaverhead which appeared in weekly instalments in the Great Falls, Montana, Tribune, Sunday edition, January 5 through March 1, 1936, and are reprinted by permission of the Tribune. Annotations have been added.

I.

Virginia City, April 27 (1864)

Editor News:

This gulch is now being torn to pieces in good earnest.1 Ranches are springing up in this valley at every crook and turn of the road and are held at high figures by the owners.

[Bannack] is a little burg located between a dozen or more sierras on the Atlantic side of the continent and is situated on one of the branches of the Jefferson Fork.2 The Bannack diggings were first struck by a prospecting party from Deer Lodge valley, and was at the time inhabited by the Bannack tribe of Indians, therefore the name of this world renowned city of Idaho Territory. The buildings . . . are principally of logs covered with poles and dirt and destitute of any floor save a ground one.

The majority of the former inhabitants of Bannack has emigrated from there. They are seen daily arriving here with merchandise, boarding house and saloon fixtures, etc. There are few claims at Bannack that pay anything more than wages. The Dacotah Lead is the brag thing there, and is all that keeps that city in existence.

Moving along the Jefferson Valley, the emigrant next comes in view of the Stinking Water mountains and after crossing the stream which bears the same name, we come in sight of several gold gulches, running into Stinking Water river.3 There are five of these and one or two are paying something more than expenses. The Bivens gulch4 produces the most and largest nuggets, and a dozen or fifteen claims pay handsomely.

An hour or two's drive from here we are at the mouth of Gallatin Canyon, or Alder Creek, and now known as the Stinking Water diggings. There is very little fall to this gulch and therefore it is not difficult to ascend. At the mouth it is wide, probably 300 feet, and at first sight bears no evidence of gold whatever. The valley was originally covered with a thick growth of willows, but in later days the whole surface is torn to pieces.

After passing up this gulch a mile or two the bluffs separate and form on the north or east side a rolling prairie, that is, for a distance of eight or ten miles up the gulch, and is entirely destitute of timber save the willows on the creek.

Nevada City is the first town of any note we arrive at. It is situated six miles from the mouth of the gulch and is a place of considerable importance. It is in the center of as rich a paying district as is found in these diggings, and is inhabited by a very respectable number of families and does its share of trade in this region.5

Next comes the great city of Stinking Water notoriety, Virginia City. It is sit-


2The Bannack diggings, a mile above the canyon of Grasshopper creek, were discovered August 23, 1862, by George W. Stapleton, who suggested Bannack as preferable to his own as a name for the mines.

3Now Ruby river.

4Ten or twelve miles northwest of Virginia City, named for William Bivens (or Bivins?) who installed the first sluice boxes in that gulch.

5About four months prior to the date of this letter, that is, Dec. 19-21, 1863, George Ives was tried and executed by citizens at Nevada City.
uated about midway between the mouth of the gulch and its extreme source and is a town of large dimensions and big anticipations. It is represented by men from all parts of the American continent, and every profession and trade. It is full to the brim of gentlemen of the law and medical profession. The former I think are making their piles, while the latter are about to peter out, and will soon become extinct. The merchants who have goods on hand are doing well. There are probably more goods sold here than in Denver, but the profits are not as certain, owing to the large arrivals from Salt Lake, and the sudden and very many stampedes from here to other points and humbugs.

While I am speaking of stampedes, I will tell you of the king of all stampedes, which has proved, like the others, a perfect sell. About a week ago we were all in a state of delirium, caused by the report of the biggest thing yet, found over on the Prickly Pear,* near the head of Deer Lodge. It was circulated that about $4 was taken from a handkerchief full of surface dirt, and when it was told it was only on condition that it must not go any further. Finally one went, then another went, and in a day or two this gulch was nearly depopulated. It seemed as if men had been born natural lunatics, or as if what little sense they ever did have in and about them had vamosed. Old crow-bates of nags with three legs and a sore back, old saddles, straps, buckles, bridles and all such truck, were sold at enormous prices. On they went to the new discovery. Grub was freighted there, mining tools, clothing, and all kinds of goods were sent over; contracts were let for building stores, saloons, hotels, cabins, for sawing sluice lumber, etc. All this originated from one report. Who was the scoundrel. He ought to have been hung! The new discovery proved to be an old hole sunk two years ago, without the shadow of a prospect in or about it. Most of the stampeders this time were day hands from this vicinity. They left $5 to $7 a day to do better, and now many of them are out of employment. So the world goes.

Many men of families are hourly arriving from the states, Colorado, California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada and Utah. Some come with goods, and others without. Some like the prospects, and more think the chances rather slim, and are already leaving.

It [Alder Gulch] is being worked now a distance of over twenty miles, and generally speaking with profitable results.... A company has been organized here for the purpose of bringing in 150 or 200 inches of water from the head of the summit, which has only very recently been found there, in the shape of a lake. When this work is perfected, great will be the saving of gold in these diggings.

Claims that are known to be good are sold at enormous prices. As high as $10,000 per 100 feet is sometimes paid. Prospecting for leads is carried on to a large extent. Men are seen climbing the bluffs on every side, looking for quartz. Dozens of leads have been found and recorded as real estate.

Selling goods here this season, in my opinion, will be a mixed up mess. Already there is a decline in every article for sale in this market. A week ago coffee was selling at $1, now it can not be sold in quantities for 75c. A few days ago glass of any size could be wholesaled at $40 to $50 a box. Today it is selling for $25 to $30. Sugar is selling at 70c, candles at 80c and tobacco at $1 to $2. ... Cattle and mules are bringing about the same as in Denver in 1860. Lumber 10 to 12½c per foot. Board weekly in advance $16 to $24, and poor grub at that.

The city is filled with saloons, gaming houses, and club rooms. The Mammoth, kept by Burch, Clark & Co., on Jackson street I* the largest of these houses. It pots one forcibly in the mind of old Denver Hall in '50 and '60. "The game goes on," "off and around she goes," "give us a bet," etc., "shove me a pile." Faro, monte and other games are dealt in this ball, and by beautiful, nice young ladies. That's so! Valley Tan."

*From the Denver Daily Rocky Mountain News, May 19, 1864. Valley Tan was a name popularly applied at Salt Lake City to an illicit alcoholic beverage. It was also the name of a gentle newspaper published there about 1860-61.

*In the present Lewis and Clark county.
Virginia City, I. T. June 5, 1864.8

We have had our first city election. About two weeks ago a caucus was held in this city for the nomination of a mayor, a marshall and city council. Candidates for the respective offices were as numerous as the birds in the air, and puts one forcibly in mind of old times in Denver. An election was called by the miners and citizens of the town. . . . Election day came, the polls were open and forty rod whisky carried the day. Judge Bisseir of Colorado Territory was elected mayor, but refuses to take his seat in the council chamber, as the city has never received its charter. . . .

Oliver's express arrived here today with a large U. S. mail, but no papers except a few copies of the News, thirty days after date. It was a great disappointment to many, as all are anxious to hear the result of the big battle between the North and the South. It is hoped by this people that ere many days a regular tri-weekly mail will be in active operation.11 The gentlemanly manager and acting agent for Ben Holliday [sic], Nat Stein, Esq., arrived here a day or two since, and is busily engaged in finding a suitable location for his office.12

On the average I think this gulch is paying well. I hear of a great many big runs, as high as $1,500 to seven men, being made; but from actual observations in and about here I am sure that where one claim pays that amount at least twenty claims are not paying over an ounce to the man, and many I know of are barely paying expenses.

Speculation in claims runs high and many are changing hands. Old settlers here who have tested their mining property satisfactorily and found them destitute of the "rhino" above expenses only are selling. Many make it appear as if their means were limited, and they could not get valuable property in a condition for sluicing without money; and others say they want to go home; while still another possessor of 100 feet square scatters an ounce or two of gold in his rocker, while the "capper" ropes in the sucker from Pike county, and literally drains him of his last rag. It is in this way that many sales of mining property are effected.

It is amusing to old settlers here to witness the new comers from America going up and down this gulch, with a hundred or two dollars of nice new Lincoln's in their pockets, asking all sorts of questions in regard to mining, and crazy to strip themselves of their last red, by purchasing one of these salted claims. When a piece of ground is opened, and paying well, the owners of that ground know exactly the money that can be taken out, and if a sale of this kind of property is made there is not a cent of clear money in it, for a Missourian, or any other man.

Prospecting for gulch mines has petered. Old prospectors are discouraged and come in from a big stampede with their under lip sticking out a foot. . . . Many who have the spondulix to buy grub have turned their attention to quartz. Hundreds of lodes have been found. . . . When a new lead is discovered a rush is made to the spot, and in an hour it is filed on and recorded, and in many cases [at] the distance of a mile where there is not the shadow of a prospect for a lead . . . but as there is no water, wood, or the necessitites to work these discoveries they are preempted and held as real estate, for further developments, and the arrival of capital and crushers to work them out.

The town is full to the brim with new comers, and still they come from all parts, and every nation—young men, old men, lame

News of the creation of Montana Territory by act of Congress approved May 26, 1864, evidently had not reached Virginia City. Virginia City was incorporated by the first Idaho legislature, at Lewiston by an Act approved Jan. 30, 1864. Laws of Idaho Ter., First Session, pages 626-628.

Dr. Edward Bissell, among the earliest settlers at Bannack and one of the early stampeders to Alder Gulch, as judge of the miners' court. Fairweather Varina City as the name of the big camp and in his court records substituted Virginia City. Varina, the name originally selected by the miners, was the name of the wife of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America. N. P. Langford, Vigilante Days and Ways, Chap. 22.

Leonard I. Smith, U. S. mail contractor, was carrying the mail between Salt Lake and Bannack, and between Bannack and Virginia City it was carried by private carrier. A. J. Oliver and Company, an express service. A new mail contract Salt Lake to Virginia City, tri-weekly service, to begin July 1, 1864, was let to E. S. Aivord and by him assigned to Ben Holliday of the great Overland Mail Line. Salt Lake City, Utah, Deseret News, March 30, May 4, 1864.

Stein set out from Salt Lake City May 16th to establish stations. Idem, May 18, 1864.
ones and cripples, young maidens and old ones, women and children, and that kind of stock are arriving hourly, and if this flow of emigration continues a month or two longer it will be difficult to estimate the population of this Territory, and it would be a more unpleasant task to arrive at the very many who will most certainly be in want and destitution the summer passes. Already we see men of some means at home working by the day, and families who were comfortably situated in Colorado and the States who are glad to get a cabin with a dirt roof and destitute of a floor to live in, so they can stick out their shingle for washing done here, or start a new boarding-house, or if they have a team haul wood to town, or any other legitimate employment. ... They get here with a few treasury notes, which pass for goods at sixty-five cents on the dollar, and board is $18 per week. They are forced to dig, whatever their profession, occupation or employment was at home. ... Here it makes nix difference; they have to come down to their regular digging for gold or graybacks, and live on "olf Ned" or "Russell veal."

The city is improving rapidly, good frame buildings are going up for stores and other purposes, and property is about to run as Colorado mining stocks did in Wall Street. As high as $8,000 is asked for a little one-half story log store room, with a dirt roof. The cause of this is easily accounted for; there are so many goods arriving and the city being limited for space and no material for building purposes, and as every nook and corner is already occupied, it is impossible to rent at any price. Men who bring in large stocks from Denver or the States are afraid of a decline and are anxious to sell but cannot; they are therefore compelled to give the prices asked for a "shebang" of this kind, in order to get a sheltering place to job off their traps.

You will perceive that there is a material difference in the price of goods now, to that of my last report to you, and still they are falling every day.

Flour is jobbing today at $20, for Salt Lake. It goes off slowly. Customers expect a still greater fall, and dealers are not anxious to purchase. Ten days ago bacon was firm at $1.25 per pound, and today is selling for 65c, lard at wholesale sold at $1.50 per pound and now is for sale at 60c. Thirty days ago meal was scarce and in demand at 36c; there is no sale for it now; hams sell readily this week at 75c; brooms none for sale; beans 25c; butter sold a week ago at $2.25 to $2.50, now it is retailing at $1.50; dried apples and Salt Lake peaches are in demand at 50c; star candles are a drug in this market at present—everybody has them and the demand is very limited. They can be bought here today at 35c.

Coffee is lower here in dust than at New York. Every freighter has from ten to thirty sacks, and the demand amounts to nothing. Tea, good young hyson and imperial, is closing out at $1.60 to $2; sugar is scarce and in big demand. Nobody has any at wholesale—It is retailing at 30c; Belcher's Sugar House, in kegs, 35c; tobacco is selling cheap—good brands of natural leaf—no regular price; glass, all sizes, $20 per box; linseed oil would readily sell at big figures, but there is none; coal oil, $7 and $8; powder FFF, in kegs, from $95 to $110; boots are slow sale. Heavy oak tanned double soled iron-clads bring good prices. Coarse hip and other styles don't sell at any price; oats and barley, 80c; German and pale soap 25c and 30c; canned fruits and oysters, $20 and $25 per case; soda 28c to 30c; pepper grain, $1.25, ground, 57c to $1; picks and shovels are plenty in market; sluice forks, 12 inch, bring $72 per dozen; axes, by the box, $50; whisky, Derby and Day's Double Distilled "Rot Gut," is selling at $4 and $5 by the gallon; Missouri whisky brings better prices when sales are made, but the demand at wholesale amounts to nothing; brandy, Stinkingwater manufacture, $7 and $8; rum, $10 and $11.

Large stocks of clothing have arrived and merchants in this line of trade will find it difficult to job off at a profit. Grey shirts, $24 and $30 per dozen, fancy, do.; cassinet pant, by the dozen, $45 and $50; prints, 25c and 40c, and dull sale at that figure; hos- lery [sic] and ladies' fancy goods bring a large profit.

The demand for stock is not as great as
was anticipated a month ago, prospecting having played out, and no dead certainty of the boats reaching Fort Benton with goods this season, stock is forced on this market at prices below cost. Good mules, large size, sell at private sale for $230 and $300; cattle in order, $100 and $125; wagons for freighting, no demand, a few sales are made at from $50 to $60. I think that in two months from now many articles will sell twenty per cent cheaper than at the present report.

Among distinguished arrivals from Denver and St. Joe are found the Hon. Ex-police magistrate, P. P. Wilcox, Esq. He has sold his entire outfit and at good prices. The Squire is now fitting up for a trip to Colorado, and intends going in heavy on mining stocks. Hamman Riddle & Co. from St. Joe have arrived with a tremendous big stock of goods, and are closing out at the store of Wm. Kiskadden & Co. Count Murat and all other folks are here, some doing well and others talk of trying Colorado again.

Nothing of any exciting character has transpired since the last letter to you with the exception of a murder or two in Biven's gulch. The names of the parties I have forgotten. In one case a French gentleman thought another Frenchman was making very free without any just cause or license with his better half, and for revenge in the gross injustice done him he laid him out. Since then matters and things go smoothly on, and with peace and harmony prevailing. Respectfully, Valley Tan.

"From the Denver Weekly Commonwealth, June 22, 1864. Shortly before this date a flood at Denver destroyed the Rocky Mountain News plant, wherefore, for a time, communications addressed to the latter were published in the former newspaper.

A WESTERN BOOKSHELF


This book discusses a series of separate problems of the Pacific Northwest—the migration of the dust-bowlers, hydroelectric development of the Columbia River system, direct legislation in Oregon, Dave Beck's business man's labor system in Seattle, Harry Bridges' water front organization, the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. conflict over the control of workers in the lumber industry, politics in the State of Washington with the clowning "Vic" Meyers in the title role, the Wheeler-O'Connell clash in Montana, the politics of General Martin and Senator Charles McNary in Oregon, a character sketch of Borah of Idaho, wilderness characteristics and frontier survivals in the region, and (dragged in for good measure) the Mormon "Security Program" for those luckless Latter Day Saints recently on the relief rolls.

The book is a reporter's enterprise. As such its best chapters describe the regional labor conflicts and interpret the leadership of Dave Beck and Harry Bridges. The Seattle businessman-teamster system of trading wage boosts for price fixing and restriction of competition, under the implied sanction of physical force by the teamster organization, is well presented and interpreted. The account of the physical characteristics of the hydro developments at Grand Coulee is well done, despite the sustained use of superlatives. But the book as a whole is a genuine disappointment to me. Written to sell, it seems to have been given a title which is converted into a slogan that makes it necessary to fit the selection of facts to that slogan regardless of the many points at which they doubtfully match. It has completely omitted discussion of the most basic current economic problem confronting the Pacific Northwest, namely, that of stabilizing the forest industries by the adoption of sustained yield practices. It has likewise passed over another crucial current difficulty, the question of wheat production for a foreign market that has disappeared almost completely and is most unlikely to revive. Why these problems, upon the solution of which the economy of the Pacific Northwest greatly depends, were omitted from a book which purports to paint the problems and opportunities of this region I can only guess. My guess is that they would have been too sour a note for the title selected to sell the book—a title lifted from the speeches of President Roosevelt, whose policies and personal enthusiasms for the region are used to give the book such unity as it possesses. Mr. Neuberger has not the excuse that these problems have not been delineated, especially the dangers to the regional and national economy implicit in the
rapid liquidation of the regional timber supply. That critical problem has been amply portrayed in the publications of the state and regional planning bodies, most recently and fully in the special report of last March on “Forest Resources of the Pacific Northwest” by the Regional Planning Commission.

But my disappointment goes further. Running throughout the story is the thesis that within this “Wilderness” there is still a vast frontier furnishing easy opportunity, as with past frontiers, for the luckless and landless to enter, wherein to find an American standard of living. Constant changes are rung upon the fact that the region has such vast area with so few inhabitants per square mile. Thus the author opines: “As long as there are five hundred and twenty-eight people to the square mile in Massachusetts but only five to the square mile in Idaho, the nation has a population outlet westward yet to be actually used.” But what does this kind of statistical legerdemain mean? It assumes a relative equality as between the two states in the cultivability of their lands and in the markets for their industries. This is absurd.

How recklessly figures can be used when a thesis has to be sustained is shown by the statement that, “only eight per cent. of a potentially fertile region of 253,000,000 acres is devoted to agriculture.” This huge figure is actually the entire land area of the four states, including the eastern two thirds of Montana that lies within the drought-striken middle west!

The Regional Planning Commission estimates that the four states contain about 26,000,000 acres of land under cultivation (or about 10 per cent. of the area), and that perhaps 10,000,000 more may be made cultivable by irrigation, drainage, and stump clearing. The remaining 217,000,000 acres are unfit for cultivation. This is a far cry from the frontier opportunity of the prairie states, notwithstanding the fact that the 16,000,000 potentially arable acres will support a considerable additional population. But, as Mr. Neuberger knows, the cost of bringing it under the plow puts it beyond the immigrant not possessed of considerable capital. While his picturization of the dust-bowl migrant shows cases unable to get a foothold because of the lack of capital, it apparently is not in keeping with the main thesis to point out how dominant is this difficulty. The Resettlement Administration reported in July 1937 that only one quarter of the immigrants had been able to find adequate farming opportunities, either by lease or purchase, in “Our Promised Land,” and that the seventy-five per cent. were in serious straits, resulting in “high relief costs, poor living conditions and sanitation, displacement of local farm operators, forcing down of wages by an over-supply of farm labor, settlement in sub-marginal areas, and attendant additional high cost for roads and schools in these areas.”

There is promise in “Our Promised Land” provided we solve the difficulties alluded to above, and provided collective effort is used to make available new farming opportunities and to increase industrial employment in those industries with a steady and high demand for labor. It is at this latter point that the possibility of using the new hydroelectric energy from Bonneville and Grand Coulee comes into the picture.

Neuberger’s discussion of hydro, (which he mistakenly declares to have been the chief political issue for two generations) overlooks the important bearing of the kind of industry, stimulated by cheap power, upon the volume of employment. The great electro-chemical industries that consume enormous quantities of power, do not use workers in proportion to their power consumption. If these huge public power projects are to furnish opportunity to the underprivileged of the West or the East, the use of power must be carefully planned to bring this about. When the Bohn Aluminum and Brass Corporation publicized its proposal for buying the entire output of Bonneville Dam, it was reported in the press that its plants would employ only 5,000 men.

The clash over rate theories involves more than two theories and two interest groups. It is not solely bus bar versus postage stamp or city versus country. The regional versus the localized interest and the maximum stable employment versus automatic and chemical processes are also in the picture, and lie behind the recommendations made by the National Resources Committee to the President concerning the rate policy, the kind of transmission system, and the organization for operation, for these Northwest hydro projects.

I have room for only one comment upon the distortions achieved in presenting the “Cock-eyed Politics” of the region. To play up Vic Meyers, the clowning Lieutenant-Governor, who wisecracks over the Washington State Senate, without noticing the quiet but effective leadership in the State legislature exercised by George Yantis, Speaker of the House, is hardly good reporting of legislative behavior. There is a similar superficiality in the portrayal of the “Oregon System” of direct legislation, which the author declares has not been a success. The adjective “cock-eyed” might with some justice be used to characterize the account of the origin of the Initiative and Referendum. Fells, the soap man, had nothing to do with its adoption; the Direct Legislation League, not the People’s Power League, put over on “I. and R.” In even a journalistic account of its use ought not some mention be made of the adoption, through the initiative, of a direct primary system in 1904 which smashed machine politics in Oregon (this law and not
“frontier” newness, as asserted, explains the present difficulty of operating machine politics, or the home rule charter system for cities, or woman suffrage, or the first comprehensive corrupt practices act in the United States, or one of the first “blue sky” laws, or workmen’s compensation, or the income tax? Mr. Neuberger is still entitled to his view that none of these off-set sufficiently the “humorous, the ironic, and the tragic results of direct legislation” in Oregon, but as reporting there is something defective when they are not mentioned.

Since it is my business to pay some attention to political behavior throughout the United States, it comes with some surprise to learn that the frontier public in the Pacific Northwest accepts a “seemingly shell-slicked public official” as “merely a typical ingredient in the wierdest political goulash ever stirred with the ladle of democracy.” My impression is that the voters of the region felt humiliated by the behavior of Congressman Zioncheck until they were convinced that he was insane, when their emotion was tinged with pity. Are the “politics on the last great frontier” any more of a “snarled and uproarious hodge-podge” or a “wierd political goulash” than in Chicago with its rat-cage demonstrating, regal “snoot punching” Bill Thompson, and his patent-medicine fakir associate Lundin? But why multiply the illustrations of exaggeration and distortions with which this book abounds? Even had Mr. Neuberger held up a mirror not constructed to produce distortion to titilate the appetite of the supercilious reader, the picture of regional politics like that in all democracies, would have shown stupidities, shams, intolerances; and yet these are not all. As a good reporter Mr. Neuberger owes the democratic process a fair break.

Charles McKinley

And If Man Triumph. By George Snell. Caxton. $2.50.

Vagabond Voyaging. By Larry Nixon. Little, Brown. $2.25.

Travelers’ journals make tedious reading for many people because they generally lack continuous and directed narrative movement, visualization of persons and scenery, and specific revelation of human character. For such people Mr. Snell’s narrative of the journal of Lewis Manley, written when he was an old man about his trip to California in 1849, will prove a moving tale of hardship and heroism. To any reader its human sympathy and its simple acceptance of human nature as it shows itself under privation and distress will bring a glow of admiration. Mr. Snell has used his materials with understanding and restraint. The drama of the tale is strong and true.

Larry Nixon knows all about freighters on the seven seas, their accommodations, meals, wines, entertainment, ports of call, officers, departure wharves in New York and elsewhere, and passenger fares. The book convinces the reader that nothing can equal in delight at low cost a tour round the world on a freighter. Mr. Nixon entertains and instructs, and serves as a source of knowledge where to find information. If you have been bitten by the travel bug, consult this book or if you wish to be bitten.

H. G. Merriam


The editor’s desire in this book was “to salvage and give to the world, in this centenary year of his birth, the best of John Muir’s writings yet remaining in his unpublished notes, and thus make available that intimate understanding of his life and thought which may be gleaned from following his journals down through the years, from early mountain raptures and painstaking scientific investigations to the mature reflections of a man dwelling on the plain and laboring among his fellow men to bring to them the Reality he has known.”

Mrs. Wolfe’s selections begin with the journal of 1868-69, in which the thirty-year-old Scottish-born naturalist recorded his first discovery of the physical wonders of California, and end with random notes belonging to the last few years before his death in 1914. Arranged in ten “chapters,” the selections are concerned mainly with Muir’s wanderings in the California mountains and several of his trips to Alaska; briefer passages have to do with his ramblings elsewhere in the West, and still briefer ones with visits East and South. The editor regrets being obliged to omit the journals of foreign travel altogether. The volume is illustrated with photographs and with sketches made by Muir in the midst of his notes.

Any reader who is already familiar with Muir’s own books, with the later books made by other hands from his journals, and with Bade’s Life and Letters of John Muir will find in this product of devoted, conscientious editorship a welcome prolongation of the feast. Any reader who is not yet well acquainted with the “patriarch of American lovers of mountains” may find here a continuously delightful and often exciting revelation of the natural world, especially in its grander aspects, as described and interpreted by a man of great powers and of most winning personality.

These journals contain much of particular interest to the botanist, the ornithologist, the geologist. But in his notebooks Muir was
not lecturing to the systematic student; he was writing primarily for his own gratification, and at the same time composing a message of salvation for "those who toll or dwindle or dissipate in crowded towns, in the sinks of commerce or pleasure." In the midst of nature, where he became "like a flake of glass through which the light passes," he himself constantly felt "an agony of joy." “Heaven knows," he declared, "that John Baptist was not more eager to get all his fellow sinners into the Jordan than I to baptize all of mine in the beauty of God's mountains.”

If the reader be religiously inclined, he may see much in these journals to confirm a faith in a benign deity. “God's love covers His world like a garment of light.” In Muir’s view even coyotes, though "cursed of man," were "loved of God." Many of the notes are also permeated with a Wordsworthian philosophy. “These beautiful days,” wrote Muir in the Yosemite, "must enrich all my life. They do not exist as mere pictures—maps hung upon the walls of memory to brighten at times when touched by association or will, only to sink again like a landscape in the dark; but they saturate themselves into every part of the body and live always.” And Muir expresses the mystic's belief in a fundamental harmony, an essential unity, of all things.

An outstanding feature of these journals is their prose style. It is "poetic" in being highly subjective, imaginative, and rhythmical. When Muir came to write his books, late in life, his "literary task" proved to be "the hardest of all work." "Cold writing is a feeble medium for heart-hot ideas.” But he encountered no such difficulty when he was penciling his freshest observations, thoughts, and feelings at his solitary campsite among the mountains or on the glaciers. It was in his journals that he did his best writing—the freest, most glowing, most moving. Therein lies the principal value of this book.

G. R. MacMinn

Marcus Whitman. Crusader. Edited by Archer Butler Hulbert and Dorothy Printup Hulbert. The Stewart Commission and the Denver Public Library. $5.

This volume of the Crusaders Overland to the Pacific Series, upon which Archer Butler Hulbert was working at the time when death interrupted his labors, has been completed for publication by his wife, Dorothy Printup Hulbert. It is part two of a work dealing with Marcus Whitman, and includes an account of his life during the period of 1838 to the end of 1843. The first 127 pages constitute the biographical sketch. As the authors utilized most of the material available on this phase of his career, the biographical sketch is a distinct improvement over that in the preceding volume. It is, perhaps, the best interpretation of this period of Whitman's life that has appeared. The Hulberts have emphasized the fact that Marcus Whitman, although a layman in a group which included several clergymen, had become the leader in the Inland missions through his abilities for that leadership.

In attempting to explain the causes for the internal quarrels which convulsed the Whitman missions they admit that they found difficulty in tracing the origin of some of these dissensions, and assert concerning Henry Harmon Spalding and Narcissa Prentiss Whitman that, “There is no definite record of any romantic interest in each other.” Dr. Clifford M. Drury, in his biography of Marcus Whitman, gives evidence that Henry Harmon Spalding was a rejected suitor of Narcissa Prentiss, and includes evidence which links these quarrels with things which occurred before the missionaries left the States. If the Huberts had possessed this evidence they could have given a better explanation for some disagreements which do not yield to an explanation on any other basis.

The book contains sound interpretations of relations with the Indians, of the complications arising through the appearance of the Catholics upon the scene, and the conditions and causes involved in Whitman's celebrated ride to the East in the winter of 1842-1843. The authors marshalled facts to indicate that there is a high degree of probability that Marcus Whitman went to Washington in that journey to the East.

The second part of the book contains documentary material. The correspondence which took place between Whitman and the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is published. This has frequently been cited by writers, but has not been previously printed. Some of Mrs. Whitman's letters and Doctor Whitman's letters to his brothers and sisters are submitted. The letters of the missionaries concerning the advisability of William H. Gray's establishing a new mission site are also included.

In perusing the documentary part of the volume one can form his own opinion concerning the problems and complications which confronted the Inland missions in the crucial years covered.

Melvin Clay Jacobs

This Passion Never Dies. By Sophus Keith Winther. Macmillan. $2.50.

Works of fiction seem frail things in these days to bear up under tragedies caused by economic and political collapses. It is obviously not the fault of our novels that the daily papers furnish us with more exciting and moving material than we can digest. What this book attempts to boil down out
of the American post-war mess doesn't get clarified because the problems are so complicated that the author has to keep talking about them, beyond what he has to say to create his characters. All but one of the people in this book are portrayed as failures. The two most moving examples are the failure of a giddy girl driven to suicide because of her inability to be a farmer's wife when that meant slavery from morning till late at night, and the crack-up of a twenty-year-old dirt farmer who could battle every natural hazard to growing his crops but wouldn't fight back at land speculation and foreclosure by finance companies because he couldn't see them.

Hans, the character in the book to whom things happen, is the son of an immigrant Danish farmer, whose childhood is dealt with in Mr. Winther's two previous books, *Take All to Nebraska* and *Mortgage Your Heart*. He is here a son of the soil become frontier and Midland of the American post-war mess. He is a student and teacher, of and yet not of his academic career. Deeply involved in Mr. Winther's conception of Modern Tragedy, man's struggle for existence against a new kind of Fate that prevents people from being what they want to be.

Hans is a self-conscious prig, a student who never quite participates in what is happening about him. His wife, true, is already defeated when he marries her, but he, though an idealist and a questing soul, hasn't the humanity to do the little for her which would have given her a chance for a new life and love. She has no "mind," and acts only when some deep physical impulse overwhms her. Hans wishes his life to be ordered, and constantly finds it to be a contradiction of his logic. At first he can't accept this in relation to Karla, but later he feels he doesn't need logic since he is in love. Karla kills herself; his father dies of a worn-out heart after foreclosure; Hans is exposed to people made primitive and at the same time he takes her to bed with some broken down machinery, some old furniture, and a few cattle accumulated in year after year of denial and semi-starvation. He has had a sweetheart in Weeping Willow, his country home, but she has left him to marry somebody else. At school he meets Karla, a disillusioned girl with a sickly past of affairs with men, abandonmment, attempted suicide, and all that sort of thing. His desires make him suspect and hate her, and at the same time he takes her to bed with him. Regard the abyss between our desires and what we get. This is Mr. Winther's conception of Modern Tragedy, man's struggle for existence against a new kind of Fate that prevents people from being what they want to be.

Hans wishes his life to be ordered, and constantly finds it to be a contradiction of his logic. At first he can't accept this in relation to Karla, but later he feels he doesn't need logic since he is in love. Karla kills herself; his father dies of a worn-out heart after foreclosure; Hans is exposed to people made primitive under emotional strain and fear, but it doesn't seem that he changes at all. He finds another woman, one who "understands" him, according to the text, but who seems more commonplace and no wiser than the first. He is content that Karla should die because of what she was inherently. He observes his father's death, but is not moved even to anger, because of his father's preachments about doing your best and being proud of it. So he concludes that open rebellion at any point in the whole scheme of exploitation is futile. He has a series of wistful desires which are not realized; he has, and can't explain away, a multitude of fears. We leave him to go back to the class-room with his student wife, seeking the answers to questions answered for him over and over again in the tragedies that have interrupted his academic career.

If this isn't the way Mr. Winther points his story, it's the way it comes out. I find the things he borders upon saying extremely interesting, but I wish he had struck a little deeper and had been content to suppress his belief that cultivation of the mind and not the land will solve a farmer's problems. The hailstones that broke the hearts of Hans' "maw" and "paw" and the windows of his farm home didn't ever break the glass window in front of his mind so that we could get a good look at it all around. Nor did they break the glass in front of his creator's mind either.

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Paula Smith

Mark Twain's Western Years. Together with *Hitherto Unreprinted* Clemens Western Items. By Ivan Benson. Stanford University Press. $3.25.

Letters from the Sandwich Islands Written for the Sacramento Union by Mark Twain. Introduction and conclusion by G. Ezra Dane. Stanford University Press. $3.

*The Washoe Giant in San Francisco*. Being Heretofore Uncollected Sketches by Mark Twain Published in the Golden Era in the Sixties. Collected and edited, with an introduction by Franklin Walker. George Fields. $2.50.

The publication of these three books, all in the same year, all from California, and all dealing with the career of Mark Twain in Nevada and California, indicates that the West, or at least California, has put in a claim for the honor of being the most important stimulus to Samuel Clemens the writer. This vogue for emphasizing the frontier influence upon American letters which began when literary historians discovered Turner's thesis about the frontier has now reached its flood tide.

No doubt it was given impetus by the Western reaction to interpretations of Van.
Wyck Brooks. Many others besides Bernard DeVoto were irritated by the Greenwich Village provincialisms of Mr. Brooks. Was the genius of Mark Twain thwarted by the barbarisms of American life and in particular by the frontier?

This question has been answered in considerable detail by most of the writers on Mark Twain since the publication of Brooks’ *Ordeal of Mark Twain*. The boyhood days in Hannibal have been studied and reassessed. With the publication of these three volumes the work of re-examining the career of Mark Twain in the West is now well under way.

The most complete account is given by Mr. Benson in *Mark Twain’s Western Years*. Not only does he re-tell the story of *Roughing It*, but he checks it against a considerable body of fact supplied by investigation of the material published in various newspapers which has not been available to the public. The other two volumes come as timely supplements to Mr. Benson’s work because they add Mark Twain material of the same period.

On the basis of this work the extent and the nature of the Western influence can now be determined. It is evident that Mark Twain came West of his own accord in the spirit of wanderlust and never wanted to go back to piloting on the river. It was only in later years that piloting became an idyllic memory, and Van Wyck Brooks took it too seriously when he elaborated the thesis that Mark Twain only once found full satisfaction with life and that was during his piloting days.

Mark Twain became a part of the boom mining days on the Comstock Lode. He became a frenzied prospector and when his miner’s hope waned an equally frenzied speculator in mining shares. He went into journalism as he went into piloting, because the chance opened up, because he had tired of prospecting and badly needed money. Like most people and certainly like most Americans of his time he had tried a variety of jobs. The free lance writing on the Virginia City *Enterprise* was a turn of good fortune. It gave him the opportunity to write with a maximum of freedom and it provided contacts with competent journalists and a broader world of journalism than he could have found anywhere in the Mississippi Valley.

Another factor which must not be left out of consideration is the opportunity that came to Mark Twain because of the nation-wide interest in the far West. The early writings of Mark Twain that were reprinted “back East” show that Eastern interest was in the colorful West, not in literary excellence. The contacts with Artemus Ward, with Bret Harte, and the chance to publish in the *Golden Era* were a valuable part of the education which made Mark Twain into a competent journalistic free lance.

The western years gave him the material and the opportunity. In the history of American letters he became the voice of the frontier. No man before or after him ever had the opportunities that he had to express that frontier in literary form. All its strength and its weakness is epitomized in him.

These three volumes provide valuable material for the story of Mark Twain as a part of the Western frontier. The interpretation of that material still remains to be undertaken.

E. H. Eby

**A Mark Twain Lexicon.** By Robert L. Ramsay and Frances Guthrie Emerson. University of Missouri. $1.25.

A one-hundred-and-nineteen-page discussion of Twain’s Americanisms, new words, archaisms, and other matters prefaces this thorough two-hundred-and-sixty-page lexicon, and a twelve-page “finding list” for quotations concludes the paper-bound book. The lexicon “makes no attempt to include the whole” of Twain’s large vocabulary, but “merely those elements . . . that seemed best to illustrate the man and his many-sided genius, the America . . . he loved, and the English language to whose development in America he significantly contributed.” One does not find, for instance, examples of Twain’s colorful expletive language; “durn” is the nearest approach to it. However, some of his “profanity and substitutes therefor” appear listed on page 10. The book, nevertheless, is full enough, and its scholarly handling of words and phrases will mightily help students both of Twain and of the use of English in America.

H. G. Merriam


The non-fiction writings dealing with the West have in recent years not set any high standard. Uncertain scholarship, sensationalism, slovenly sentence-structure, and a general pompous shoddiness are prevailing characteristics.

The *Big Four* is not such a book. Its Foreword is modest. Its style is in the best tradition of English prose, much too good to be described by that double-cutting word “brilliant.” As for scholarship, the present reviewer, who is familiar with the general background of the story, did not find more than half a dozen minor points upon which
he would care to raise an issue and for most of these he is inclined to grant Mr. Lewis the benefit of a doubt. (He will, however, insist that the east slope and not the west slope of the Sierra Nevada is the steep one).

Mr. Lewis states in his Foreword that his aim has been "to select for emphasis those events that most clearly reveal the personalities and motives of the controlling group [i.e. Crocker, Huntington, Hopkins, and Stanford]. For the book is primarily biographical. Readers will find, therefore, some phases of the road's story but sketchily presented, and others related in much fuller detail than strict regard for historical proportion can justify." One might suggest here that Mr. Lewis has been needlessly apologetic and needlessly fearful of offending some conventionally set historical canon. There is, I think, no Mosaic or otherwise God-given law as to what constitutes historical proportion, and if Mr. Lewis writes an honest book according to his own lights, the present reviewer at least will be ready to defend his right to do so, even to the last ditch.

The book is, then, the story of the personalities behind the building of the Central Pacific Railroad. Concomittantly, of course, the story of the personalities supplies much information about the building and operation of the railroad itself. The author is also more liberal than his title indicates, for in addition to the central quadrumvirate he supplies chapters on Judah and Colton and others and in some instances probably suffered great agony in the process; but the presentation in the book is such that not one reader in a hundred would read the passage with any other reaction than amusement. I do not say that this should be otherwise; certainly you will find death sometimes treated lightly in Shakespeare's plays. And I believe that the passage quoted (although extreme) is in general an honest demonstration of the author's comic approach.

I cannot leave this discussion without a comment upon Mr. Lewis' extraordinary skill at rapid characterization. Surely no one can forget Hopkins after reading:

Uncle Mark Hopkins hunched his thin shoulders forward when he walked, and he had an odd, unhurried stride (which carried him over the ground with deceptive speed), and when he spoke he stroked his beard hesitantly with a long, skinny hand.

Like a character from Chaucer's Prologue, Huntington comes alive with his terse remark: "Young man, you can't follow me through life by the quarters I have dropped."

Undoubtedly this is a book which almost everyone will enjoy and which for anyone especially interested in the West is one of the most definitely important books of several years.

George R. Stewart


The value of anything must be judged from the standpoint of how well that particular thing fulfills a particular need or desire. Thus Irving Stone's biography of Jack London can justly be called good or bad depending upon what a reader is looking for.

Sailor on Horseback is certain to win the praise of those who read for "entertainment," who desire to be caught up in a stream of events and rushed on to the conclusion. It will also satisfy those readers eager to get the inside stuff on the private lives of public figures. This biography has not the sweep and volume of a river, but the dash of a mountain brook that will carry
a chip dancing and swirling on a lively surface, but will never permit transportation of a real cargo.

There is real cargo in Jack London, and in the time and culture which produced him. But in discussing him, Mr. Stone apparently fell victim to the Superman complex with the result that it is London, the person, instead of London the product and the producer who is presented to the reader. This failure to handle a subject in conformity with what modern scientific knowledge makes obligatory in scholarly biography is particularly noticeable in Stone's unscientific treatment of London's inheritance. To write in defiance of the scientific commonplaces of biology, as Stone has done relative to Professor Chaney and Jack London, his son, is to cast doubt on much of the other material.

This fault must certainly have some connection with the generally superficial character of Stone's excursions into criticism where bland assurance takes precedence over thoroughly substantial conclusions. For example, London's absorption with the Nietzschean Superman is regarded as a compensation for an illegitimate birth rather than as due to the fact that there were giants in the earth, and that California had her share of the mighty rich who bludgeoned their way to supremacy.

Such weaknesses as the book possesses, however, do not take away the solid virtues of enthusiasm for the subject, and the recording of much valuable biographical data. One is bound to be impressed by the uncongenial circumstances under which most of London's work was done, particularly the harassment of debt and the uninterrupted blood-sucking of the parasites that fastened themselves upon an open-hearted and magnanimous man.

The corruption in the society against which Jack London struggled is exemplified in this herd of harpies and vultures that fed upon him. And if London had been a wiser Marxist instead of a charitable Socialist his life might have been far otherwise and better. Socialism can be built in one country, provided the country is big enough, but it cannot be built on one farm by one man, not even if that man is a Jack London.

Californians will see irony in the way London's dream of a scientific agriculture has turned out. Instead of enriching the common man's life, big scale, mechanized farming has become another proof of the banker's triumph. Vigilantism,peon wages, and strike-breaking are as essential a part of today's bank-owned agriculture as is power machinery.

But the dream of Jack London remains. Some day it will be realized, and come as the result of many contributions. Among these can be counted this biography because it records, though scantily, a great man and a great dream.

Garland Ethel

The Long Valley. By John Steinbeck. Viking. $2.50.

This volume contains twelve miscellaneous short stories and sketches besides "The Red Pony," which is Steinbeck at his best, and the longest piece in the book. The short stories and sketches are of uneven merit, marred occasionally by their too neat patterning.

Steinbeck's craft is careful, his touch sure and economical. He is at home with the country he is writing about and with most of the people, if not always with complex human and social situations. He is at his best when he is treating a situation of one dimension, wherein motivations are natural, simple, and indubitable, and the expression of them in action is direct and free from fretwork of symbolism. In Steinbeck's method of handling such situations every objective incident becomes eloquent without the exertion of any felt pressure.

But this method loses its fine edge when it is employed on the neat and classic sort of short story which pivots prettily and in a sweep of climax brings you up against something horrible or otherwise striking. Here any eloquence of incident is too obviously deliberate to be effective except as a neat-fitted piece in a pattern. Simple and natural flow gives place to artifice and clever mechanism. Steinbeck does this sort of thing very well, perhaps, but it is questionable whether it is worth doing, especially when the doing of it involves sacrifice of true focus. Also, Steinbeck cannot be said to succeed in his attempts to focus his tale through psychological symbolism.

In "The White Quail," for instance, we are shown something of the mindworkings of a probably schizophrenic woman, whose husband, a dull-witted, good-natured man, quite ignorant of the implications of her mental condition, is in a kind of frenzy of frustration and loneliness because she, absorbed in her escape-symbol, shuts him out of her life. The story turns partly upon the bitterness of this frustration, partly upon the intrinsic development of the woman's symbol-pattern. We are brought to realize with a sense of horror the woman's utter self-centeredness, the man's dull sort of pain at being kept out of her cunning private world. But when we realize the fact that the woman is not only monstrously egocentric but possessed of the dreadful coyness and evasion of the sexually mad, that she can only end in an asylum, the thing begins to go off the track. Steinbeck makes the
story turn on the contrast between the beauty of her symbol and its consuming dreadfulness of effect upon the man. The woman is monstrous, but in a manner responsible, so that it remains legitimate to employ her symbol-pattern at its face value responsible, so that it remains legitimate to see her action as something she does. When she is realized as insane it becomes simply grotesque and unfeeling to do this.

The story "Johnny Bear" is perhaps the best-manipulated in the book. But beautifully done as it is it is left at melodrama. It rests in the first place upon the mere shock and impact of horror. It sacrifices essentials to effect, even though the terrible self-struggle in the central character between her puritanic conscience and the strength of her sexual desire is fairly well brought out and understood. This only makes more regrettable the melodramatic burking at the end and the atmosphere of trickery which pervades the story. Steinbeck attempts to pile horror on horror, that is, by a sort of Limehouse Nights effect. The woman's conscience loses the struggle. She has an affair with a Chinese laborer, and this circumstance is supposed to be the very apex of the horror-effect. Surely Chinese are not really the monsters nearly every little boy on the west coast believed them to be up to about twenty-five years ago. It is too bad Steinbeck does this. It is not only false in itself. It draws attention away from the powerful simple tragedy of the woman's life with its terrible background of a social morality which tries to deny life and ends by killing or driving mad its supporters.

"The Red Pony" stands up far above the rest of the book. Its greater length lets it naturally spread out and assume depth with recourse to synoptic trickery. It is simple, intimate, familiar, and sympathetic in treatment and mood. Some of the other stories possess this touch, but too many are tricky and patterned, neat but thin.

Laurence Hartmus


In Old Haven, a story of North Holland, readers of the Atlantic Monthly will recognize a familiar De Jong subject: "A Hans Brinker Boyhood" (December, 1935); "Only Fools Go to America" (March, 1938). Friesland is, of course, the native home of David Cornell De Jong. He knows the romance of it, the winter skating along the canals, the network of dikes, the twilight hour when families gather reverently about the tee-pitten, and he has given liberally of his space in describing it. In fact, his original intention to be intolerant of Dutch conservation is lost in a spontaneous enthusiasm for Friesland's unhidden beauty.

Witsum, the Old Haven of the book, is a nest of red roofs clustering at the foot of the mountainous dike which holds the North Sea back. Here Tjerk Mellema grows up. Through his eyes we see the varied life of the village spending itself as monotonously on one side of the dike as the sea spends itself on the other. The story opens with a flood. Tjerk is awakened in the middle of the night by the sound of water splashing on his bed-room floor. With the rest of the village he escapes to the church which stands on a high mound. And from this position he seems never to descend. Even on this dark night, when blinking lanterns reveal the terror behind the dikes over which the water is flowing, he is conscious of the gray church tower "which broods over the village as a hen over its chicks." He comes to hate its staunchest pillar, Pake Hannia. His own sister, frugal and devout, nauseates him. The climax, however, comes when he returns from the wars with Antoinette, the "strange flower" from a neighboring province. All the venom of church and family are aimed to wither her. At the reception Pake Hannia blasts her with double-barreled righteousness. Everyone resents her, Tjerk's family, the whole village. And in the end Antoinette is forced to "retreat from before the town."

The book, a Houghton, Mifflin Fellowship Novel, merits a better reception than that given to DeJong's earlier work. Belly Fulla Straw. Old Haven is a first rate novel. And it is to our shame, I believe, that DeJong has heretofore found a more appreciative audience abroad than at home.

Duonce D. Stuurman

On Sarpy Creek. By Ira Stephens Nelson. Little, Brown. $2.50.

On Sarpy Creek is the first novel of a Montana man, whom the publishers announce as a "new discovery," and launch with a jacket blurb by Bernard DeVoto. It is not a farm-problem novel; it is a human-tragedy-against-nature novel concerning dryland farmers in southeastern Montana. In neither form nor content is it anything new or startling; and why it should be hailed as a discovery is something that only the blurb writer knows.

More and more as I read these first novels, I miss that definitive study, yet to be written, of what has happened to the novel in modern times. Some critic should set himself to the task at once, for without it I am embarrassed by having to explain again and again that the traditional novel of English and American literature is a dead form. Its being a dead form does not stop thousands
better doing something else. His work was evidently intended as serious literature, for it is sprawling and dull. The characters are wearying because they are built up for the most part by pages and pages of indirect discourse, until the reader wonders if they are unable to speak for themselves. The trouble, of course, is that the author doesn't know the insides of his characters as well as he knows the physical qualities of the hills around Sarpy. He fills their mouths with platitudes and endless philosophizing; and he writes almost the whole of his narrative in a kind of pants-hitching vernacular that neither rings true to the native speech nor creates a common psychological mood for the story.

That the novel is written with sincerity and complete unaffectedness, no one can doubt. Its first chapter is dramatic and powerful beyond anything else in the book. There are other individual passages that show narrative competence and skill with prose, but mostly this author dissipates or neglects the tremendous wealth of his material. The novel runs its traditional course and has its resolution, but we have never profoundly entered the lives of the characters, and we are not sorry on parting with them.

It seems to me that uninspired, fumbling author and dead novel form are mutually causative, and explain each other. The few writers who are really growing are transforming the novel.

By the task it attempts On Sarpy Creek calls to mind another first novel of dryland farmers, Vardis Fisher's Toilers of the Hills. There are no other points of comparison, but the fact of recollection reminds us that Fisher's novel is still the high point in Western novels about farm life.

Richard Lake

State of Montana. County of Missoula—ss.

Before me, a notary public in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared Harold G. Merriam, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor, publisher and owner of the Frontier and Midland, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 34.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, H. O. Merriam, State University, Missoula, Mont.; Editor, H. O. Merriam, State University, Missoula, Mont.; Business Manager, Grace Baker.

2. That the owner is: Harold G. Merriam, State University, Missoula, Mont.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

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H. O. MERRIAM, Editor and Publisher.

S. J. THOMAS,

Notary Public for the State of Montana.

Residing at Missoula, Montana.

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