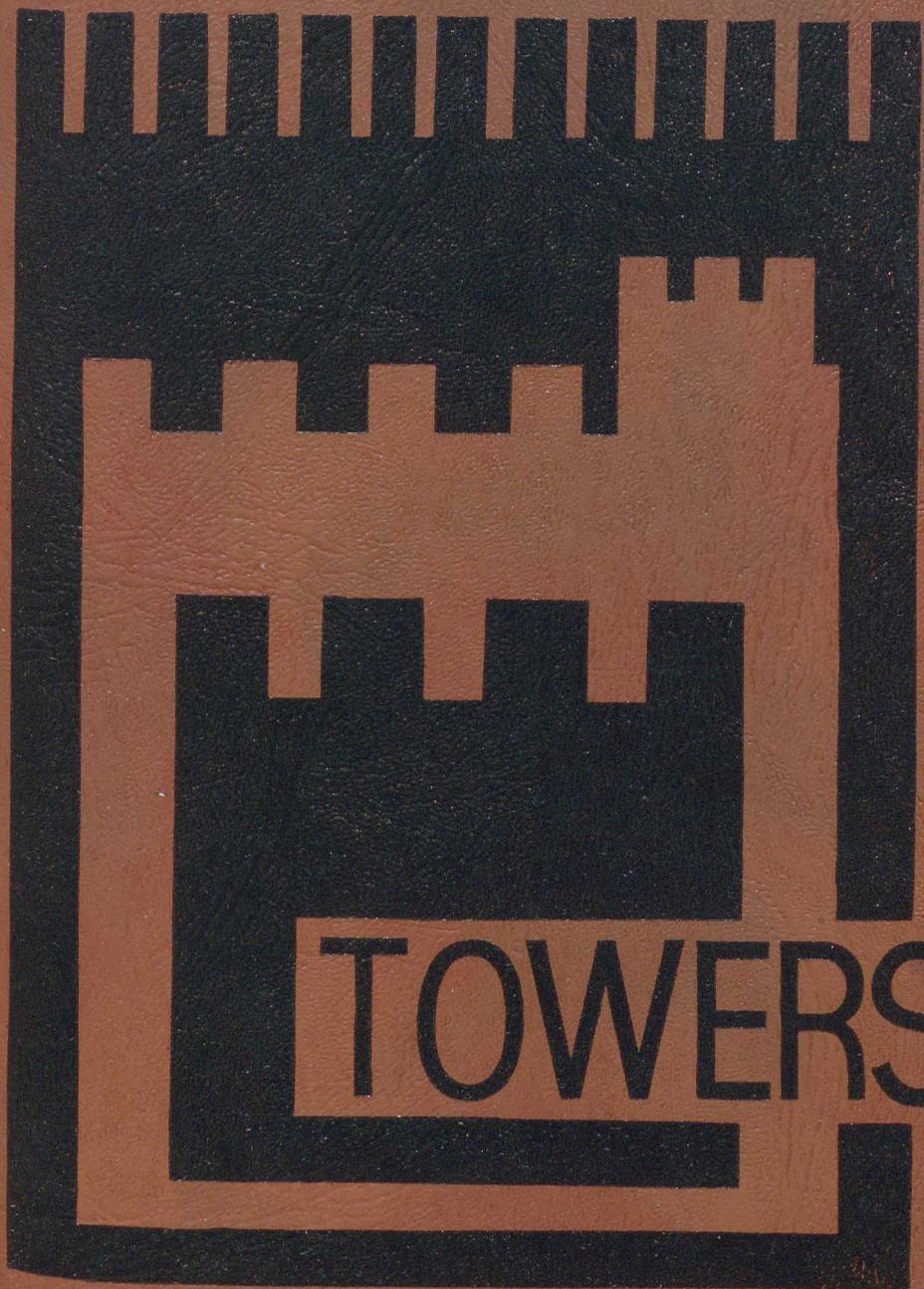


1959



TOWERS

# Towers

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## THE CALL

*The river twists as the  
Old man with the lame leg  
Stands by the frothing water;  
The open spaces between his teeth: pleading-*

*The call is clear and loud  
but most have  
Wax in their ears  
and Mud in their pens  
and that  
Early morning fur on their tongues.*

*I have stood in the rain (unfiltered by smoke)  
and the wax melted.  
I have walked on the road (where there was no cement)  
in the hot sun,  
with the mud  
Turning to dust.  
I have faced the wind (where there were no buildings)  
and the wind  
Cleared my tongue.*

*My ears hear the call,  
loud and clear,  
My tongue answers  
loud and clear  
And my pen writes  
what they have asked to be written.*

*They, whose ears and pens and tongues are clear,  
But are like the blind who perceive  
but cannot see,  
like the dumb who have the words  
but cannot talk.  
Their pens have no ink,  
Their tongues have no words.*

*The river twists as the  
Old man with the lame leg  
Stands by the frothing water;  
The open spaces between his teeth: pleading-  
The answer strikes his ears and  
The river straightens.*

— garon Parker

## STAGNANT TRANSPLANT



After surveying the kitchen, basement, and backyard, her usual habitats, I gave up the search. She was out — shopping again. That woman was as addicted to shopping as an alcoholic to his booze.

Exasperated only for a moment with her shortcoming, I resignedly ambled to the bay window in the living room. Peering down Plainfield Avenue, I caught sight of her portly figure wrapped in a drab green coat, shabby from wear. She snailed down the street, trucking her shopping bags. Her arms, actually stretched from hard, manual labor, hung much too long for her squatty body. Her gloveless hands glowed pink from the winter wind.

Soon she rapped on the door, and I opened it abruptly; the figure in green stumbled in. She was the picture of practicality — her flower-printed babushka bunched under the chin for warmth. Her cold hands passed the twelve-pound shopping bags to me, and she manage to blubber, “I so tire,” in her thick Ukranian dialect.

Knowing she wouldn't, I said, “Sit down, Mama, please. Rest a minute.” But all too soon the belligerent words escaped me, “What did you buy *this* time, Mama?”

Ignoring my last query, she murmured, "Ah, I so tire, but I don't got time to rest. I rest nuf when dey put me in grave." Finally answering me, she sputtered, "Never you mine. I buy what we need." Motioning toward the bag, Mama said apologetically, "Look in dere. I got you couple pair socks."

Shrugging my shoulders, I managed, "Thanks, Mama." I already had thirty-three pairs, but it never would accomplish anything by telling her this. Leaving her to clean her kitchen the right way, I trudged upstairs to add my new socks to the collection. Returning an hour later, I found *her* room immaculate. And Mama was out again — this time at the side of the garage burning the papers that had covered our groceries. Her large stomach protruded under Dad's plaid sport shirt. She held a cigarette close to her side, and I smile, amused and saddened. Mama was sneaking again. She thought it immoral to smoke, and she wouldn't smoke before her family — or anyone. I imagined her horror in knowing that all but Dad shared her secret.

Dragging her feet in tired effort, she entered the house via the back door. Swiftly extracting a stick of Dentine from the cupboard, she began to chew frantically. "What you want for deener, Helen," Mama began hurriedly. "How about kapusta and cabasa, you don't get dat at school."

I agreed with an "Okay" when the familiar blast of Dad's horn announced his arrival. He was early for a change. What had happened? I answered the door, still wondering.

Before I realized what was happening, Dad and some unexpected visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Alton, were entering our unfashionably mediocre house. Dad seemed appalled and then grimaced as he usually did when Mama greeted her guests smiling and unconcerned about wearing his old pants cinched at the waist with a necktie.

Almost immediately, Mama made the Altons comfortable before the television set, providing pretzels, potato chips, and an offer of Coca Cola. The soft drink offer wasn't at all successful, and fortunately Dad came to the rescue with some potent martinis. Then, ever naive, Mama excused herself to change into more appropriate clothes; Dad had given her the sign. Shortly, she returned wearing a bright turquoise faille dress with a sweetheart neckline and two gaudy rhinestone broaches. Her smile glowed the confidence that she felt. On being complimented for her fine taste by Mrs. Alton, Mama gushed, "I sent for dis trough catalogue. I was downtown to Sears and Wards, but I don't find nuting, so I order it. I can' dial on telephone, but I call lady, an she help me. So nice people, that lady." Excited and nervous about relating the episode and impressing the

Altons, Mama began to laugh, "Ka,K-k-k-k-ka," like a hen. Dad's brows met and he bit his lips white. Our guests flushed, laughed mildly, and turned away. I closed my eyes and damned her, silently.

Our friends were to stay for dinner. Dad had invited them. But they developed headaches and had to leave early. In all, we had survived forty-five minutes of reciprocal torture.

As the Altons drove out of sight, Dad turned to Mama and stared coldly. "Oh, Mama," I whined and turned my back to her so she wouldn't see my tears of shame. The three of us stood in the living room immobile. Only Mama's face was animated; her forehead was wrinkled into a frown. She appeared to be asking if all this silence were her fault. Unable to play God any longer, I forgave her and held her close. She could have been so happy — this simple creature — on a farm, near Nature. Yet this poor woman's lot was relentless condemnation because she lacked formal education and knowledge of the social graces.

Surreptitiously I glanced at Dad. His anger, though partially controlled, had not subsided. He finally shouted at Mama, "Do ya always have to parade around the house in my pants? What's the matter? Don't I give ya enough dough to buy your own clothes? . . . And did ya have to offer Howie a Coke? Ya know he drinks like a fish. Ya want him to think I'm a Christian Scientist or somethin'? And will ya shut yer mouth till ya learn how to laugh, please? I don't like ya sounding like ya just laid half-a-dozen eggs." He added with a flourish, "For Chris' sake, I'm sick a yer ignorance," and plopped his bulky frame into the fat man's special, a lean-back chair with an attached ottoman.

Mama's eyes were glassy with unreleased tears, but she shouted her rebuttal with equal vehemence. "Everybody too smart 'round here. Kids go to colletch and come home to torture muder. You tink I'm dumb, but you not so smart youself. You be sorry someday. Wait an see. All I'm good for is wash an iron. You be sorry when yer 'nigger' not here to clean up for you no more." Her loud cries were muffled into soft sobs by her big hands. Her cheeks were glazed with tears that tobogganed the wrinkles of her face.

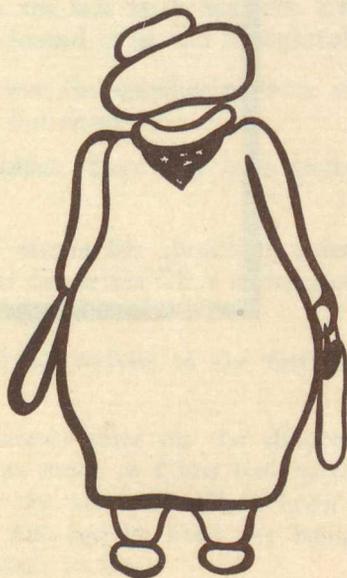
"Mama," I tried weakly. To myself I said, "Hell, not this again. Mama, no one takes you for a fool . . . How many times have I told you not to do my washing?" By this time my hands waved wildly, and my voice rose to a shout. "I bring it home to do myself. I'm capable. You wake up at 6:00 a.m., wash my things, iron 'em, and by 9:00 a.m. you're on my neck about the favors you're doing for me. Stop doing my work, and stop complaining. I'm sick of your harping."

Now it was her turn to storm. Her face became pale and then red from her fleshy neck to the ugly mole at her right temple. "Don't sass me, kid! Is dat what dey teach you in colletch? I know you tink I'm dumb. I don't have no chance for school like you. I work for my bread since I was seven." She was trembling, even audibly.

What could I say to her? I love you? You're not dumb? Don't cry, Mama? They were all such empty words. I had repeated them without conviction so many times before. Dad and I had been ashamed of her again. That was it in a word. We would gladly have disowned her as wife and mother tonight and many times in the past.

Where did she go? So busy with myself, I had forgotten about her. I ran to the window. Peering down Plainfield Avenue, I saw the drab green coat and two empty shopping bags waving in the winter wind.

— Suzanne Kohut



One, two,  
Buy it new,  
Three, four,  
Buy some more,  
Five, six,  
Buy for kicks,  
Seven, eight,  
Don't buy late,  
Nine, ten  
Makes mod-ren men.

NURSERY RHYMES  
FOR THE MOD-REN CHILD

Let's dose the baby-o:  
Vitamin drops,  
Calcium pills,  
Hay fever shots,  
To cure his ills.  
Sunday school  
In a mod-ren church  
So industrial age  
Won't leave him in the lurch  
Readers' Digest  
In every class  
To make him grow up  
A mod-ren ass.

— Jill Huntley



## SYMPATICO

Two tiny faces peered at him from within twin amber globes. Two slender-cheeked, brown-eyed faces. Then they splintered apart as Tinka blinked her eyes. Chris ran his finger over the cat's whiskers as though he were playing a harp. Her nostrils winged out in annoyance. Heavy and warm, Tinka sprawled on his chest, her striped body limp with contentment. Putting the tip of his nose against her moist one, Chris gazed into golden eyes, trying to see back into her thoughts. Suddenly the slap-slap of loose-fitting shoes coming down the hall shattered their silent conversation.

"Hi, Chris."

Dressed in her usual costume of tight black pants, white shirt, flat shoes, and blue poplin jacket, Anne looked too young to be his big brother's wife. Chris liked Anne. She was nicer than either a sister or an aunt because she treated him like an adult. When she was with him she was always happy and gay. Today, though, Anne looked upset and thoughtful.

"What does Tinka say today?" This was the opening sentence of their secret talks, heard and shared by no one but them.

"Oh, she's been thinking about your goldfish. Says they look pretty good."

Anne would come to Tinka now, and stroke her throbbing sides. Then she would ask the cat her thought of the day while Chris interpreted the rhythmic purrs and mews.

But rather than continue their game, Anne walked to the farthest corner of the room, her back to Chris.

Tinka sat up, and tried to strike a queenly pose on the slippery quilt. She hated spending every day in bed as much as Chris had hated it those first few days in the hospital after the accident. Chris hadn't wanted to stay in bed when he wasn't hurt nor had he liked not being allowed to see Ronnie who was in the room next to his.

Now that he was home, and would be back in school soon, his mother had let him make his bed on the cushion-covered window seat in her sewing room. "You'll just love it here," she had said. Well, he didn't like it at all. His few books had been read, he'd colored twenty-million pictures, and he was tired of being told what to do. His mother, his brother, and Anne could go to the hospital every day to see Ronnie, but he had to stay home. In fact, he could tell that Anne had just come from visiting his friend.

"Did you see Ronnie?"

Anne had moved to the window at the end of his make-shift bed. Jangling a set of car keys in her jacket pocket, she gazed in silence through fluttering curtains. At the sound of his questioning tone, all of her muscles jumped.

"See him? Oh. Well, yes. I saw him."

Suddenly she twisted around, and flopped onto the squashy cushions at his feet. The afternoon sunlight filtering through the bay window was warm, but a shiver twitched Anne's body.

Her hands wouldn't lie still. She picked at the threads of her pocket, then ran her fingers up and down the knees of her pants.

"Chris?"

Tinka's head turned toward Anne at the harsh note in her voice. Returning her amber gaze to Chris, she questioned him with her eyes. He nodded to show that everything was all right.

Leaning toward him, Anne tried to hold his thoughts with hers. "Chris," she repeated. "You've started second grade, haven't you?"

What a silly question. Was Anne getting as stupid as the rest of the grown-ups in his life?

"I'll bet you've learned a lot of things. I mean, about the world, and things like that."

Chris could feel the points of Tinka's claws through his pajama top as she kneaded her paws impatiently. This sort of foolishness always upset her.

"Sure. Our reading book has all kinds of stories in it. And our science book tells about rain, and grass, and how to grow plants. Ronnie told me. He reads ahead, and he says he's going to show me how to read fast, too.

Anne bit her lip. Her eyes looked dark and deep.

"Now, Chris. In those books there are all kinds of happy stories. Everyone always gets what he wants, and no one is ever sad in the end, isn't that right?"

"I guess so. I haven't read all the stories yet. They might have read some while I was gone, though."

"Well, MOST of the stories are like that. But they're only stories, Chris. Sometimes in real life things aren't always so nice."

"THESE stories are about real life. My teacher says so."

Anne pressed her hand over her eyes, then rubbed her palm back and forth across the nape of her neck. She seemed to be thinking thoughts Chris could never understand. Standing, she poked her hands in her jacket pockets as she stared at the floor. Chris sat quietly and waited. He didn't like to see her upset, but how could he help her when she wouldn't say what she thought.

Tinka waited, too, but her tail was lashing. She didn't like grown-ups; didn't trust them, though Chris had told her again and again that she must be patient with them.

Finally Anne looked up. A forced smile was trying to bend her lips. Turning to a straight-backed rocking chair, Anne pulled it close to the window seat where Chris lay on mounds of bright cushions. She perched on the low seat, clasped hands between knees straining at their covering.

"You and I usually understand each other Chris, but today we're having trouble. Maybe it's because I'm trying to tell you something you're too young to understand. You will try, won't you, to make sense of what I'm going to say?"

Chris nodded. At last she was getting ready to say something. Good. He was beginning to get bored.

"Do you remember Johnnie? Remember, he visited here for a while, and then went away and never came back? And do you remember that spotted puppy who lived under the porch for a few days, then disappeared?"

He didn't remember, but he slowly bobbed his head to please Anne. He was starting to feel like a puppet. His glance fell to her hands, squeezing together tighter and tighter.

"Well, Chris, in our real life, in our really-real life, people often go away and never come back. They live with us for years and years, and then they go away."

This was beginning to sound like the start of a good story. He hoped that it would be interesting.

"Why do they go away?"

Anne's bones seemed to dissolve for a moment. Then, sighing, she shook her head rapidly, and leaned forward, her hands spread in an attitude of explanation. Her voice sounded low and controlled like his mother's when she was angry.

"They go away because they have to. They go because someone tells them to. I mean, not someONE, but someTHING. They're old or sick or something happens, and well, they just . . ." She struggled for words, her hands and face in motion. "Let me say it this way. What would happen if Tinka went away, and you never saw her again?"

Chris glanced at Tinka whose ears had jerked forward at the sound of her name. Crouched on his chest, whiskers quivering, she looked like a pale tiger about to leap at Anne's throat. Before she could pounce, Chris thumped her tensing haunches. Twisting her neck, she glared back at him. With his hazel eyes that looked so much like the cat's, Chris cautioned her. After a pause, Tinka sank back onto his chest. Chin on paws, long tail curled about her, she was innocence itself.

"Why would she go away? She likes me."

Chris had never seen Anne with this far away look in her eyes before. He almost felt like laughing at her confused expression.

"You see, Chris, she wouldn't WANT to leave, but she'd have to. Do you understand?"

Understand. Understand. What was all this business about understanding? It was true that other grown-ups thought people his age couldn't understand anything, but Anne had been different. She had always known that he could make as much sense of his own world as an adult could of his. There wasn't much he didn't know. For the past few days he had been listening to the conversations swirling about him. He had heard them whispering and whispering about Ronnie. Maybe they felt he was too little to think about anything except school work and games, but they were wrong, as usual.

Anne waited for his reply. She looked as though she might start pacing around the room.

"Do you know what I mean, Chris? Do you know what I mean about Tinka's leaving?"

Anne seemed different suddenly. She was no longer a member of his

secret world, but an adult; a stranger. It was too bad because they had enjoyed each other. But now that she had changed, their little game of "what are you trying to say" would be easier for him to play. He was finding it harder and harder to keep from smiling.

"Why would Tinka go away? Let's see. Well, I don't know. Could it be because she would get mad at me?" It was fun, this playing cat-and-mouse.

"Is that the only answer you can give me? I don't think you're even listening." Her cheeks were becoming streaked with splotches of red as she grew more and more angry.

Chris looked at Tinka. With eyes widened into rounded mirrors, the cat appeared ready to burst into laughter. "Poor adult", she seemed to say. "If you don't get what you want you lose control. Too bad you can't be calm like Chris and me. Between the two of us we know more about life than you'll ever learn."

"Are you listening?"

Chris turned to Anne. "I hear you. You've been talking about Johnnie and a puppy and Tinka, but mostly about Ronnie. Are you going to tell me a story about Ronnie?"

"Do you really think I've been telling you a story all this time?"

"Yes."

Her face crumpled. Tears rose up from her lower lids.

"Oh, Chris. Can't you see what I'm trying to say?" It was a moan. "Don't you know what I mean? How can I tell you about Ronnie's being, . . . about his being . . . How can I tell you?"

Elbows propped on knees, forehead cupped in hands, Anne was as helpless as any adult.

Chris wished she would go away. Continuing the game she had first interrupted, he drew the cat's face close to his own. He could see his eyes reflected in Tinka's. Both pairs were golden trimmed with black; both pairs were glowing with sparks of boredom and contempt. Let's end this stupid conversation, Tinka almost said. Chris's lashes flickered in agreement. Expressionless, he looked at Anne.

"Tell me about Ronnie's dying, you mean? Oh, I know about that," he said, and turned back to the wisdom smirking in Tinka's eyes.

— Dee D'Isa



## THE APOCRYPHAL

*Shades of green flood the grayness,  
Flood the grayness.*

*Lean Jack with his flat glass  
Surveys the subtle tome  
Smiling smugly at words in bold face.*

*Thelma—poured-in-gores,  
Swings her leg in time to Kenton artistry  
Sipping hoggishly  
Specious truths about.*

*Hooded, bearded, tonged Sidney  
Shorted by a third dimension  
Breathes heavily—  
Letting wine-pot fumes  
Destroy the world he makes.*

*Besppectacled in plastic masks,  
The youngish pedagogue  
Expounds freshly-read Joyce,  
Eulogizes shapeless, artless sculps,  
Sits entranced by strains of "1812,"  
Practices proficiently euphues.*

*Cigarette hanging from thin lips,  
Sunken eyes staring at the blankness of the bar,  
The witch in tights sits pensively—head on knees.  
Existentialism-Dostoyevsky to Sartre closed beside her—  
Cover burned by an indifferent ash.  
Swirling fast on the stool,  
She wraps her leg about a Negro drummer.*

*Slowly, sporadically, the drum emits sounds.  
The Negro keeps unconscious rhythm—  
"Bu-ba, bu-ba, bu-ba, bu-ba,"  
His thick, black lips "bu-ba," disclosing pink gums,  
White, laughing teeth, widely spaced.  
Big feet—primitive in their healthy glow—  
Slap the floor singly,  
Then with the blonde—toe to toe.*

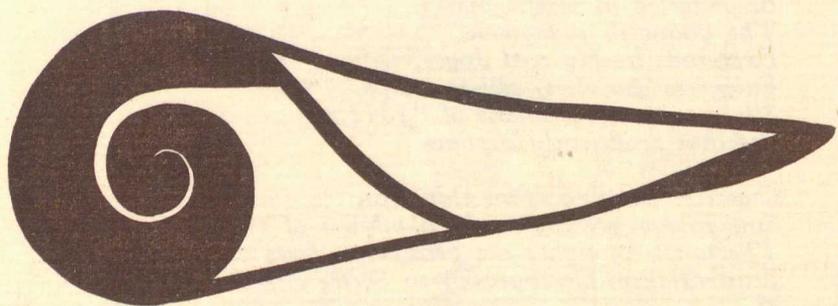
*Withered gray-beard, bunched in baggy pants,  
Bought from the blue-capped lady in an old shop  
For a smile,  
Shuffles about the den—observing  
With faded eyes.  
Seeing Black Jack, Thelma, Sidney  
The pedagogue, existentialist, Negro,  
He mocks the timeless smile of the Sphinx—  
"Gimme a shot, Harry," his behest.*

— Suzanne Kohut

## EBB TIDE

*You were like a carefree wave running wildly in the sea of life. You rested a while in the shore of my arms and then disappeared, leaving only a trace of sorrows in the sand of my heart.*

— Helen Lasseville



## THE WALK

A long while passed as the girl stood on the sandy shore. Up above the gulls dipped and swooped and soared. The shadows of their moving bodies cast lacy patterns on the sand. She pretended to watch a single wave from the time it appeared on the horizon till it lapped at her feet, a tiny ripple. For all that long while she stood there alone; she always stood alone. He had gone a long time before.

She took a step forward, digging her toes into the wet sand. He would have laughed, had he been there, knowing she was unconsciously hiding the strange and intense hatred she harbored for her feet. How well he knew all her secret hopes and fears.

Children, running and laughing, splashing past her through the water as she took a long step forward. She watched them and remembered wistfully. "We'll have twelve or thirteen," he would tease and smile gently as she blushed and dropped her eyes.

She moved forward, gazing at the water as if seeing it for the first time. Waves were calm and gentle and softly caressed the trusting swimming bodies. But near the rocks, huge, powerful, masterful waves emerged from the calm; they were white with anger, curling backward and roaring with fury. The temperamental water reminded her of him. She took a step forward.

The water was cold against her thighs as she strode forward again. The chill reminded her of how the first brisk wind of autumn always revived his summer-dulled spirits. He romped like a young schoolboy, grabbing handfuls of the frosty air and pelting her with them as though they were snowballs. Then the somber afternoon would ring with their youthful laughter — his deep and rich, hers only three or four tones higher.

His image seemed as if it were etched inside her eyelids; she had only to close her eyes to see him very plainly. He was tall and very broad and had always reminded her, strangely, of a baby whale: young and frolicking, yet massive and strong. The space between his shoulder blades was vast. His muscles were hard and his skin stretched taut over them. His eyes were blue, the faint blue of a robin's egg, but with an odd Viking intensity. Another step.

Rain began to fall slowly. As the drops met the water, they mingled indistinguishably with the tears that dropped from her cheeks. She looked around, and the shore seemed so far away and so empty. Straight ahead there was nothing but the vast and empty expanse of water. The sky was bleak — and empty. She looked within herself, and she found nothing but a deep emptiness and the dull ache of despair. She stood there alone, as she had always stood alone. And now, with the tears not yet dry on her cheeks, she took the last step forward.

— Diane Dite

## A MEMORABLE WEDDING

Have you ever attended a wedding you couldn't forget? In mid-summer of 1955, I did. The invitation had brought me to the Poor Clare's convent in Rockford, Illinois. As I entered the walled courtyard, the blaring horns, squealing tires, and busy hum of the world seemed to be hushed by the whispering trees and the velvet lawn. Here and there, bright patches of sunlight frolicked. The brick wall of the courtyard, roughened by protruding mortar and colorfully capped with red tiles, continued back in ascending sectional steps until a height of over six feet enclosed the cloistered section of the grounds. The high walls came right up to the sides of two brick buildings connected by an enclosed passageway. The walls and the building concretely translated the saying inscribed there on the left front of the building to the right — *Ego vos semper custodiam* — I will protect you always. Behind the cloister walls, twenty-seven ladies lived with that protection. My heart gave a strange flutter as I approached the building on the right. It was the chapel, and I had come to witness a most unusual wedding.

Opening one of the sturdy brown doors, I stepped into the small, shadowy chapel. The stained glass windows on both sides of the lofty room were jeweled Gothic panels. Reverently, I walked toward the illuminated altar, which was flanked by tall, smoky-grey and white marble pillars. The angelic figures on the tile mosaic at the back of the altar seemed to be waiting as expectantly as I for the ceremony to begin. Flowers for the bride banked the altar. There would be no human bridegroom.

The ceremony I was about to witness had its historical precedent set in the year 1212. At that time, Clare Sciffi, a nobleman's daughter, had just convinced St. Francis of Assisi that she was able to renounce worldly comforts for a life of poverty and devotion to God. For days, dressed in sackcloth, she had begged alms on the streets of Italy to prove that she could live upon the providence of God and good will of her fellow men. Knowing that Clare had been prepared to contract a marriage arranged by her father, St. Francis directed her to come back to him dressed in her wedding gown. On that day, then, instead of marrying the young man chosen by her father, Clare married Christ, so to speak. She became the founder of the Second Order of St. Francis, choosing to devote her life solely to God. As He gave up his life on the cross to expiate the sins of the world, she, as His bride, was giving up her life in the world to live in absolute seclusion at San Damiano so that she could pray as further expiation for the sins of man. She believed her prayers were needed. So many prayed not at all.

My thoughts about Clare were interrupted by soft organ music suddenly filling the dim chapel. Several Roman Catholic priests in luxurious vestments came out and stood majestically in front of the altar. When I heard a flurry of movement at the back of the chapel, I — with the rest of the visitors — stood to honor the bride. The clatter as we rose seemed almost sacrilegious. Suppressing a feeling that it might not be in good taste, I deliberately turned my head toward the back. A young girl, dressed in a lovely blue dress and hat, was strewing rose petals as she came down the aisle. She appeared as pleased and as proud as any flower girl at any ordinary wedding. Behind her came an older girl in sunny yellow. And then the bride. The ivory satin gown and filmy white veil heightened her dark beauty. Graceful curls peeped out around her slender neck. Her eyes were lowered demurely to the full white bouquet she carried. Fascinated, I watched her closely as she passed me. I had not expected to see the little smile that played on her serene face. Sadness, desperation, fanaticism — yes — but not happiness.

Later, I learned that at that time I was witnessing the second step in becoming a Poor Clare. If a girl is interested in joining this order, she presents herself to the cloister with a dowry of \$200 and personal supplies for a year. During that year as a postulant, she wears the characteristic grey-brown serge dress of the order and a white bonnet. The year of postulancy parallels the days St. Clare spent begging. At the end of that year, if she has not been discouraged by the ascetic way of life, she asks to be taken for another year as a novitiate. Like St. Clare, the girl is then formally accepted into the order by means of the symbolic wedding ceremony. The wedding ring is a silver band with a crucifix on a heart-shaped center. Her dress during the second year is changed only by a white hood and veil replacing the bonnet. As another step in the renunciation of vanities, her hair is all cut off. At the end of the second year, if she still wants to go on, the girl takes temporary vows for another three years. Her white veil is replaced by a black one. After the fifth year, the girl then takes her final vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and enclosure symbolized by a white waist cord with four knots. A long panel of grey-brown serge, called a scapular, worn in front and back, distinguishes a permanent member. The protracted process insures that acceptance of this vocation is not a rash act in an emotional moment. How many secular marriages have such a cautious, realistic prelude?

The young "bride" I was watching, then, had spent one year in the cloister. Considering the rigorous discipline of the life, I marveled that this girl chose to go on. She had spent a year observing the demanding rules of the order. All must observe the "great silence," which descends at the compline, or evening service, at 7:00 p.m. No word can be spoken.

Silently a Poor Clare retires at 8:00 p.m. Her room is a cell with an army-cot type bed, a table, and a chair. On the wall above her head is a crown of thorns. On the wall to her left is a crucifix. She rises from her bed, padded with only a ticking of straw, at midnight to pray in the chapel until 2:00 a.m. After three hours of sleep, she again rises at 5:00 a.m. for the conventual mass. She gets a total of seven hours sleep, but it is interrupted. Although the "great silence" is lifted at the morning mass, the nun may speak only when absolutely necessary. The day is spent in prayer alternated with manual labor — a total of eight hours each. Work includes gardening, cooking, sewing vestments, and baking the sacrificial breads used in communion at masses. One hour a day (except Fridays) is allowed for recreation, during which the nun may speak freely. Recreation consists of making articles like rosaries, religious dolls, and greeting cards, which are sold to visitors of the chapel. Even their recreation is selfless. The order owns no property and is supported by its own efforts and by voluntary donations. Vegetables are grown by the nuns. No meat is ever eaten, and a perpetual fast is maintained; that is, a limited quantity of food is consumed. A Poor Clare goes barefoot at all times except while working out in the convent gardens. Whenever I hear complaints about hours and working conditions, I recall these conditions and smile.

And now, after a year of such existence, here was this girl willingly assuming its discipline for another year. The stately ceremony of acceptance progressed as I watched in wonder. Along the wall to the left of the altar was a long grille behind which a beige curtain hung. Gradually I became aware of shadowy figures moving behind the diamond-shaped lattice. Then the sound of ethereal voices, chanting musically, floated through the curtains. It was as if angels were singing. The priests escorted the "bride" to the door of the inner sanctum behind the grillwork. The chapel ceremony was over. Kneeling there, I pictured the nuns behind the curtains cutting off the young girl's hair and dressing her in the garb of the novitiate. I felt that she was being mutilated somehow. With a start, I realized that one of the priests was inviting us to go to the parlor to give our best wishes to the girl.

I followed the others through the passageway, which connects the chapel with the convent of the extern sisters, who live separately and conduct the business of the order. Their sash cords have only three knots, for they cannot observe the vow of the enclosure. One of these nuns explained the process of becoming a Poor Clare, deluging me with booklets, for which she refused payment. She let me peek through a back window at the house and grounds of the cloister proper. The convent house was modest and simple in line. The grounds were charming but certainly not ostentatious. Rows of vegetables patterned the far reaches. As the obliging nun closed

the windows, I thanked her and took my place in the line of guests going up to speak to the "bride." Her smiling parents stood at the left of a grille behind which the girl stood. I felt an urge to see her bare feet, as if they could convince me that all this was really taking place. There seemed to be no sorrow in the nicely-dressed man and his motherly wife over the fact that they would get only one letter a month from their daughter; that they could see her only four times a year — they on one side of a grille, she on the other; that even if they were ill or dying she could not leave the cloister; that she herself would be buried, not with them, but in the Poor Clares' cemetery on the grounds where four white crosses already gathered at the feet of Christ crucified. I looked at the girl intently as I stepped up to greet her. Her soft brown eyes seemed to pity me. To congratulate her under these circumstances struck me as monstrous. Almost as though Divine inspiration came to me, I suddenly knew the right thing to say.

"Pray for me, Sister."

Her young eyes seemed infinitely wise as she softly said, "May God protect you."

Leaving the parlor of the extern convent, I walked down the long passageway in a daze. I could not put myself in her place. It wasn't that I felt such a life was useless as some had said. My objections were based on my sensuality, not my social conscience. I believed in what Victor Hugo says in *Les Miserables*: "They do well who pray for those who do not pray."

I accepted the principles set forth by the Jesuit father, Charles Plater, in *The Social Value of the Contemplative Life*. I could see that the contemplative embodies the Christian element of prayer and restraint in the Platonic idea that the state is the individual "writ large." They perform a specialized function that some men find impossible or just don't care to perform for themselves. They choose solitude as the proper atmosphere for devotion to God as the surgeon chooses the sterile field of the operating room.

In a sense, they are teachers too, for they show by example that the material things of the world that most of us struggle for as though we could not live without them are not absolutely necessary. We all learn that lesson at death, but monastics learn it sooner. They counter-balance materialism with spiritualism. Their vision of the meaning of life beyond this world enables them to live a life so different from ours that anyone who does not have such a vision cannot understand this pattern of living. But that doesn't mean that it isn't necessary. I find that I cannot put myself in the place of our garbage collector, but I can appreciate his function and am glad that someone has the requisite nature. It is simply a question of com-

patability — in work, in marriage. Each function performed will benefit all of society.

I left the convent envying the new nun's serenity. As I joined once more the hectic life outside the courtyard walls, I recalled the parting, "May God protect you."

The walls of the cloister are protecting her. I believe now, however, that I am protected too. It was a memorable wedding. I wish you could have been there with me.

— Jeanine Blomgren

## TRADITION

*I journeyed to the home of wisdom  
Hoping to find near the door  
A stately oak  
Whose branches would bear  
The trophies of those who came before,  
Whose heavy branches would invite me  
To share their memories,  
Whose deep roots would grow in my thoughts.*

*In its place I saw  
A young maple  
Stretching tall and proud  
To heaven,  
Its sweet blood pouring life  
Into the young leaves.*

*I watched friends strain  
To place emblems on its branches,  
But they were too young to bear the weight.  
The foreign things fell.*

*I shared their disappointment.*

*In time we saw the tree  
Grow into a great and shady arbor,  
Aged and scarred by the seasons,  
But heavy with memories,  
With strength enough  
To give them life.*

— Jane Gertenrich



## LEAVES

*His voice was cool, unhurried, and he spoke  
As though discussing how crisp the day had grown  
Or how the leaves were turning dry and brown.  
I listened; but my heart could not accept  
The autumn chill that crept into his words.  
I thought instead of laughter we once shared,  
Desire felt, and love that once was new.  
Had it been so very long ago?  
Not really. But now it seemed to fade away  
Into the past, forgotten as the seasons.*

*A gust of wind returned me to his voice.  
I watched the turning leaves die on the bough.*

— Katherine A. Soelke





MOUSEY

## HAY DAY

Shadows of the fence posts stretched long oblique fingers across the stubble of the field. I sat cross-legged by the side of the hay wagon, stuffing occasional dry spears through the vents in my straw hat, and glancing at them as they dropped to the ground.

Haying time was done. The stacks, scattered over the field like squatty chessmen, were half in shadow, half in sunlight. The men had covered them with the dusty green tarpaulins which, I had been told as a child, were "umbrellas for the hay."

A grasshopper whirred and dropped on my knee. The sudden touch made me start, frightening my visitor off again.

It was that time of the day, just before supper, when peace settles like a soft blanket over the countryside, and responsibilities melt away. The fragrance of the hay was deliciously thick in the air. I watched the sky above the mountains turn the most delicate lavender and felt all my tired muscles relax.

A cool breeze passed through one sleeve of my blouse and out the other, sending a chill down my back as it went. Reaching for my hat, I pulled myself to my feet and reluctantly started back to the house. Up at the barn, I could hear the dogs yapping to be fed. This sound was punctuated by the crunch of the shorn stalks under my feet.

The sun was almost down now, and I could look at it for a short time without squinting. It glowed a brilliant red-orange, and, looking over to the east, I saw that the mountains were on fire with this same orange glow.

— Janet Strader

## CONSPIRATORS

*Fog intermittently mingles with smog  
Monoxides and dioxides play atmospheric games  
Smoke and haze form a bleak blanket  
All are engaged in the same activity . . . .*

*. . . . Air pollution.*

— Gerrie Jackson

## SEMANTIC DELUSION

*Cloudy illusions,  
    Obscuring the vision;  
Clever elusions,  
    Impeding decisions;  
Varied allusions,  
    Submitting to fission;  
Countless oclusions  
    Embarrass the mission.*

— Tom Maypole

## THE MISTY MUSIC OF MAKE-BELIEVE

From many accounts I have heard, I have come to understand that the subjects of Shakespeare's romantic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* have some basis in fact. Whether they have or not is completely irrelevant to me, for I, along with thousands, perhaps millions of others, have found the play enchantingly filled with those elements that make for a good fairy tale. There is the feud between the two Veronese families, there are moon-drenched nights, there are old castles covered with flowering vines, and then of course, there is the all-conquering love, the most important thing of all. With all this romance it is easy to see why Shakespeare thought it a worthy story for a poetic tragedy.

But according to my own theories, there are places where even poetry is insufficient. Then only music can suffice. The balcony scene is beautiful, but imagine how much more beautiful it is when it is enhanced by the soaring liquefaction of fifty or sixty violins. The news of Tybolt's death and Romeo's banishment is tragic and overpowering, but how much more so it becomes when the strings are in a sad and minor mood. The Queen Mab speech is sly and light, but it becomes foxy and gay when it is a scherzo.

Because Shakespeare's play is so beautiful, and could be even more so when music is added, it is small wonder that many operas have been written around the story. They have been written in almost every major European language, German, English, Italian, French, by composers in almost all of the major musical eras: Steibelt, Barkworth, Marchetti, Zandonai, Zingarelli, and Dalayrac. The two most famous operas are *Romeo et Juliette* by Gounod and Bellini's *I Capuletti e i Montecchi*. Neither of these is performed very often because of their basically undramatic nature. Since the mere word, even married with music does not really bring out the deep beauty of this work, perhaps it is logical that music alone can do the job. And this it does.

Only pure music, or if you prefer, programme music or concert pieces, seems to go beyond the beauty of the spoken word. Many composers have tried it, but to narrow down the discussion, let me examine four of them: two Romantics and two Contemporaries, in other words: Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Prokofieff and David Diamond.

If we take them in historical order Berlioz comes first. In the spring of 1839 and in the Romantic Era of music, he wrote what he called a dramatic symphony based on the famous love story. It was scored for

orchestra, chorus, and solo voices: a tenor and a contralto. The orchestral movements of this work, which is neither opera nor symphony, are what interest me at the moment. Berlioz seems to have had the idea that when the story mounts to the height of musical intensity the orchestra should take over. He proved his point by writing his orchestral "scenes" in approximately the same tone as Shakespeare's dramatic ones. The first part of second movement is like a mirror held up to the verbal and sad Romeo at the beginning of the play. The end of the same movement is a colorful picture of the fete at the house of Capulet. At this point the music seems to have run away from Berlioz a little, for the party scene turns into a revel or even an orgy, which it does not in Shakespeare.

Berlioz probably couldn't resist the famous balcony scene and his picture of that is full of moonlight "that tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops" and vine-covered castle walls. The Queen Mab speech (one of my favorites) becomes a brilliant and mischievous scherzo that sounds like the flittering of "little atomies."

But all of Berlioz's Romeo and Juliet music, brilliant though it is, seems to be not much more than a mirror held up to Shakespeare. Each of the scenes is pictured perfectly, but it does not rise too much above the level of the poetic text. The music reminds me of a well-kept formal tea garden where every hedge is exactly the same height as all the others. The cause of this is probably the period. Berlioz composed this work at the beginning of the Romantic Era. Although the work has many Romantic sounds in it, it still seems strongly influenced by the former and more formal classical period. The ground bass used to symbolize Romeo's sadness, the short intervals in the composition, and the uses of woodwinds and brass in the orchestration, are all hold-overs from the classical period. All in all, the work lacks the wild inhibition of the true romantic music and therefore it does not move me with the intense emotion of that inhibition.

Thirty years after Berlioz, at the height of the Romantic Period, Tchaikovsky wrote his first important work. It was an overture-fantasy based on the play. As an overture-fantasy it reminds me a great deal of a tone poem. That is, it is based on a story but does not strictly follow it. Tchaikovsky, rather than following the plot, follows the moods of the play. A tone poem usually has one main theme supplemented by minor ones. Tchaikovsky has three themes. The first part of the overture-fantasy is the slow, moody Friar Laurence theme. It is vaguely reminiscent of Berlioz's theme of Romeo's sadness, but from here on Tchaikovsky is entirely original. The second is a feud theme. The awe-inspiring two part love theme seems to grow out of the feud theme just as it does in the play.

Tchaikovsky moves me more than the play. The Friar Laurence theme

makes me sad and pensive; the feud theme makes me crave physical action; and the love themes lift me spiritually.

Tchaikovsky uses many of the romantic techniques to make his music so splendid. His orchestra seems to be made up mostly of strings. There is great variation in the dynamics and longer intervals between the notes. There is an extensive use of minor chords and even some pizzicato. Tchaikovsky's music enchances and even surpasses the moods of Shakespeare's play so well that I have only one criticism for it. The work is much too short.

Sixty-five years after Tchaikovsky's triumphant gift to the world appeared, another Russian, Prokofieff, wrote a Romeo and Juliet ballet. The music was later arranged into a suite which is soft, expressionistic and at times very moving. The suite seems to be based mostly on character sketches. We see Romeo again as being sad and moody. Juliet is pictured as a beautiful and graceful young girl. A scene between them is filled with quiet emotion. "Romeo at the tomb of Juliet" is a high point. The many violins cry, minor dissonances are apparent, an increase in the volume intensifies the sadness, the vague character themes are repeated in a heavy manner. The whole scene is like a modern expressionistic funeral march, quietly hysterical with grief. All the music is easily connected with the color blue.

But the music is perhaps too subdued. There are no hints of the violence or the humor of the play. They are necessary to Shakespeare and I don't think Prokofieff can justifiably leave them out. Then too the dynamics are not varied enough and so do not convey the feeling of intense emotion.

In 1947, David Diamond, the American composer, wrote an orchestral suite for the Little Orchestra Society and meant it "to convey as fully and yet as economically as possible the innate beauty and pathos of Shakespeare's great drama without resorting to a large orchestral canvas and a definite musical form, such as we find in the music of Tchaikovsky and Prokofieff on the same subject."

Diamond, like Berlioz, seems to follow Shakespeare's scenes closely. His overture is at first sprightly and then moody. It has much romantic feeling in it and even some brief exotic passages. His orchestra has a good balance between woodwinds, brass and strings.

The balcony scene is disappointing, for it is leisurely and seems to lack any profound emotional sentiment. It is like a game of "Scrabble" between two good friends. The scene between Friar Laurence and Romeo is pensive and reverent without being heavy. It sounds like someone thinking serious

thoughts in the early morning sunshine. The music for Juliet and her nurse is jovial, busy and even humorous if you keep the scene in the play in mind. The death of the lovers has heavy music with light touches since most of it is in major tones. Dynamics are used to show some emotion. The violins soar with a sad, romantic sound and then the whole thing ends . . . quietly.

Diamond's music is casual and really unlike most contemporary classical music. It is more like the music I have heard as background to a movie or have heard played as a "semi-classic" on a juke-box. It is disappointing because it doesn't come up to the intensity of the play; in this way it is much like the Prokofieff music.

Shakespeare's work is a great one; a giant in the drama world. The poetry has a music all of its own, full of themes and dynamics. But Tchaikovsky's and Berlioz's works are great too. They enhance the play where it is weak and glorify it where it is strong. As for the modern works, I'm afraid all I can say is that there is no moonlight mist here; there is no great romance. All that seems to have been captured is the light from blue stage jells and the clicking of wooden swords.

— Kenneth Swanson

## DEATH OF LINCOLN

*I think of the springtime of '65  
as it breathed through Boston streets.  
The streets were restless—  
The meeting of the seasons condensed itself  
to blackness roundabout the dawn of April 15th.*

*I was fairly to go in shame  
of its being my birthday.*

*These would have been the hours of the streets  
if none others had been—  
When the huge general gasp filled them  
like a great earth-shudder  
And people's eyes met people's eyes  
without the vulgarity of speech.*

*Even this was part of the lift and the swell.*

Poetic arrangement of passage from Henry James', "THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR".

— Betty Irwin

## READY AIM FIRE ART!

Roman artist Alberto Burri gulped down a beer, then plugged the empty can full of holes. The result was . . . art. Some critics have exclaimed on the "pure jagged emotion" of the "sculpture"; others have called it a "subtle interpretation of space."

*O Modern Artist mend your ways.  
You leave me in a constant daze.*

*The Art of Beer is in its brewing,  
Or, consumed, Beer's art is stewing  
Artists such as those who blast  
Holes in cans, then stand aghast,  
Amazed at what they think they've done,  
Although the work was of the gun.*

*Yet, maybe I should stand aside,  
I, the student, you, the guide,  
Leading me to realms of beauty,  
Doing that which is your duty,  
Unconcerned with your obsession  
For entire self-expression.*

*And yet, I ask, "Does gulping beer  
Make things more beautiful or clear?"  
And, "Does a can shot full of holes  
Reflect what's in your holy souls?"*

*Perhaps, some day, you will see,  
When your brain from beer is free,  
And your hangover's abated,  
Beer and Art are not well mated.  
And a can shot full of holes  
Is a can shot full of holes  
Is a can shot full of holes.*

*So Modern Artist mend your ways.  
Do not leave me in this daze.  
However, if it pays . . .  
It pays.*

— John Brinker



## THE FOIL

This damn sword is always getting in the way. Nearly put my eye out that time. More trouble to get my typewriter out of the closet . . . crazy kid! Only Kathy would think of a fencing foil for a Christmas present. "Every Harvard man should have a fencing foil to put on his wall," she told me. Lots of other poor dopes are doing fine without one. But they don't know Kathy. I can see her standing there pointing the foil at me. She looked like Joan of Arc with her short, straight hair in fringes over her forehead and the foil in her hand. A laughing Joan of Arc with her sneakers untied.

When Kathy laughed her whole body laughed too. It started with her eyes. They used to scrunch up, almost closing. Her nose wrinkled like a rabbit's and her shoulders shook with choking gulps of laughter until her whole body was bent over . . . a little girl when she carried off a prank so funny she couldn't stand it . . . the apple cores in my shoes that time at the beach . . . cold, wet, hard. She used to laugh like that when I teased her about not tying her shoelaces. I can still see her — untied sneakers and her sister's U. of Chicago sweatshirt that came down to her legs — and a wisdom all her own.

We talked about the strangest things sitting there on the beach with sand in our hair and sun in our eyes . . . I'll never forget those wild, beautiful times . . . Lake Michigan . . . Oak Street beach with its bohemian characters. We were a little like them. I used to tease her about her Bohemian nationality — small "b" was different, she used to say — but I don't think she minded the thought of being one of them. She liked those nuts just because they were different. She liked a lot of people just because everyone else didn't. Prejudice used to make her shaking-mad. We talked a lot about that — and politics, and James Joyce, Beethoven, bull-fights — she loved the music — and Life and religion and Death. Kathy wasn't always a laughing kid. She got serious too. Her low voice used

to tremble with emotion — with caring too much about things. “Ohhh, I wish I could do everything,” she used to say, her fists white-knuckled at her sides. “Write, play the piano, teach swimming — I want to do it all now.”

She meant it too. Her poetry . . . she used to write it when she cared terribly about something. Some of it was pretty good, but always about death or groping in the dark — always frightening, unhappy things. Some of that was my fault. I should’ve talked about baseball and dances and cars like the other guys instead of the crazy ideas I had then. But she didn’t like those conventional things any better than I did. She liked those off-beat Mexican restaurants too, with their grease spotted menus in Spanish, and the stubby, grayish candles — that waiter with his broken English, the sobbing beats of guitar music. She loved the music most, I think.

It was a new world she found when I took her to that concert . . . Beethoven, Ninth Symphony . . . dark, powerful music. No sneakers then . . . high heels and a white suit — sophisticated, lovely, like a thoughtful queen. The little girl still bubbled over when she laughed. The big, green eyes under the arching eyebrows that were dark and pointed . . . her eyes shining and faraway when she listened to the music. The laugh wrinkles went away when serious thoughts smoothed them over . . . shadows under the big green eyes.

I put those shadows there. I was different from the other guys. I took her to concerts and talked about everything under the sun. Even fencing — she probably got the idea for this darn thing from me. I bet no other girl would think of a gift like that — but Kathy was different.

It wasn’t anything you could describe. She didn’t try to be different — she just was. It was a feeling you had when you listened to her. She was honest — always frank about her ideas, but not brutal or stubborn. She wasn’t afraid to say that she preferred Gershwin and Chopin to Rock and Roll.

The time she shook the coke bottle and then sat Indian-fashion watching the bubbles. “Streaming protoplasm” she called it, her voice higher-pitched with delight, dimples showing. Everyone looked at her as if she were crazy. Except me. I knew what she meant. I understood her. Then I didn’t care what the others thought.

She saw so much in everything. It was an experience just to sit and watch her. It used to be fun just to talk and see how she reacted. When I used to call her “Brat” she laughed. I teased her about being afraid of the dark. Strange, but she really was afraid — of the dark — thunderstorms.

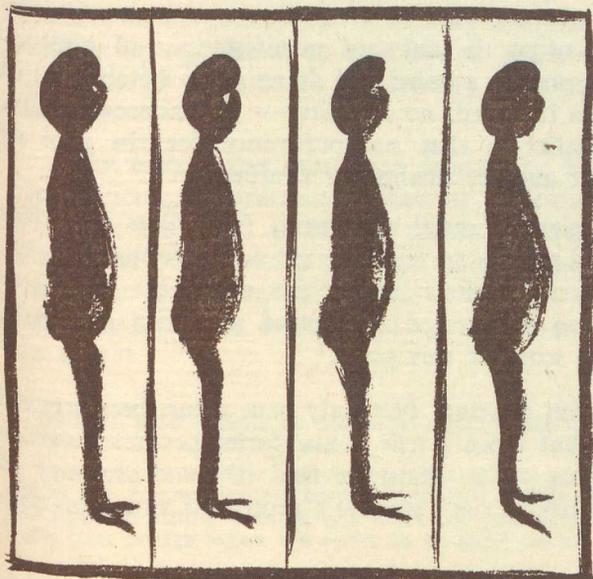
That time we were on the beach during a storm she trembled and held on to me so tightly her fingers dug into my arms. After the storm she whispered, "I was so afraid of the Unknown that was shaking the clouds." The Unknown — Kathy never knew what she was looking for. I think she was afraid to look ahead. Kathy was a wise child with the perception to find an answer but . . . I better forget about her. My kind of friends would never understand a girl like Kathy. She wouldn't fit in. She'd look lovely at a dance, but she wouldn't say the right things. They wouldn't understand . . . I better get this philosophy typed. I ought to get rid of this darn thing. The guys will think I'm nuts to have something like that around. Hate to throw it out though. Think I'll hang it up on the wall anyway. Could be dangerous lying around loose like that. Could get broken. It won't bother anyone on the wall. I think I'll hang it up and get it out of my way.

— Jane Gertenrich

## IDENTITY

*I saw her drag her doll across the floor  
In wanton disregard of all  
And sit down quite content to draw designs in air  
Or cast expectant gazes at the door.  
She was then, whatever wonderment aspired,  
Burning incandescent flame.  
She was an image or a shadow of the sun.  
Inside or outside: she was neither.  
I saw the sea wash up and drench her  
Dress and hair, and she just smiled  
To wish a wave to me.  
I saw the sea recede and leave her there  
Alone.  
And running,  
She came home, crying to know  
her name.*

— Larry Jacobsen



## THE CONFORMING NONCONFORMIST

The subject of conformity has become almost as bad as the subject of satellites — one can't turn around these days without tripping over one of them. And as a result, we have more experts in these fields than we have populace to listen to them. Everyone, in fact, who owns a slide rule, smokes the "thinking man's cigarette," or is just full of hot ozone has become an authority.<sup>1</sup>

For years now, these authorities have been telling us in commencement addresses and magazine articles that conformity is unhealthy, and that we are becoming a nation of sheep. Many have simply replied, "Bah!" Others, however, like the fine responsible citizens they are, have taken these charges to heart and have set out to do something about it. So they find a likely-looking nonconformist<sup>2</sup> and say, "Okay, Charlie, I am going to be a nonconformist too! Where do I start?"

<sup>1</sup> Mind you, I have nothing against authorities *per se* — I'm one myself.

<sup>2</sup> One can usually tell them by the beard.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Except the females, who generally are not bearded. But one can tell them, anyway.

Not knowing how to nonconform, or even what true nonconformity is, these *pseudos* can only adopt the outward manifestations of nonconformity. So they start by growing a beard and doing other suitably weird things.<sup>4</sup> There are no Ideals involved, no Protests — just nonconformity. But what they do not realize is that nonconformity for the sake of nonconformity is really just another method of conformity.

This is all part of a gigantic social movement. The *Outs* in society are trying to become *Ins*, and the *Ins* are trying to get *out*.<sup>5</sup> Values, it seems, are always greener. The actual reasons behind this movement are pretty complicated, harking back to deep-seated feelings of insecurity and such, and are therefore out of the scope of this paper.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the problem remains. Not only have values been screwed up six ways from Sunday, but when a *true* nonconformist comes along — one with Ideals and Protests — he finds the field of nonconformity so crowded with conformists that he can't squeeze a protest or an act of nonconformity in *edgewise*!

The situation, then, stands thus: with everyone nonconforming these days to be *in*, *out*, or just fashionable, all of the nonconforming methods are being used up. What can one do these days that is new or different? People have been deep sea divers and aerial acrobats; have lived in caves, trees, castles, and packing cases; have danced the Black Bottom and the minuet; have scaled the Matterhorn and gone over Niagara Falls in barrels; and have eaten grasshoppers, toadstools, and other people — you name it, somebody's done it. How, then, can a true nonconformist nonconform?<sup>8</sup>

There is actually, however, a very simple solution to this problem. Since everyone is conforming these days to nonconformity, the only course left open by which to nonconform is *conformity*. If everyone is out of step, the only way to be out of step with them is to be *in step*. I propose, therefore, since it is generally agreed that nonconformity is desirable, that everyone should conform as much as possible. We should choose several models of conformity and copy them as exactly as possible.<sup>9</sup> We should initiate a coast-to-coast conformity campaign to sell the idea to the public.

<sup>4</sup> It often turns out that the nonconformists which these pseudos are using as models are merely pseudos themselves — and when a pseudo copies a pseudo, the product is a square pseudo.

<sup>5</sup> One of the factors behind this particular movement is instincts.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> (A pun.)

<sup>7</sup> The whole thing is very Freudian, and you **know** what **Freud's** all about!

<sup>8</sup> Of course, the field of actual **thinking** has been so far relatively uninvaded, but this in itself is generally unsatisfying, and can often be downright dangerous.

<sup>9</sup> Your author, for one, would be proud to serve in such a capacity, being a very model conformist, and needing a little extra spending money.

There will, of course, be conflicts in tastes and standards, but with the stability of the nation as a whole at stake, such personal considerations can easily be relegated to a secondary position.<sup>10</sup> *We must all, in short, conform!*

Not only is this solution a simple one, but it serves a dual purpose. First, since nonconformity is healthy, if everyone conforms according to plan, not only will individual personalities benefit, but the strength and moral fibre of the entire country. Second, the balance of conformity will eventually be thrown back where it belongs, and a decent, self-respecting, true nonconformist will be able to nonconform once again in the good old way.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Besides, most people do not even realize that they have tastes and standards, until they find them opposed.

<sup>11</sup> There is the danger, of course, that when everything is back in its proper place, the nonconforming conformists will decide that the field of conformity is not nonconforming enough and start the pendulum swinging again, but we can burn that bridge when we come to it, can't we?

— Donald Abramson



## THE WAY OF THE BEAT

*We are the beaten; we are the Beat  
Who turn away from life.*

*We are unique.*

*We do not seek the solace of the sword,  
Nor rouse the restless Rebels with discord.*

*Ours is the best way.*

*We are unique.*

*We scorn the weak ones; we scorn the weak  
Who masquerade among us;*

*They are not ours.*

*They tilt the tankard tainted with disgust,  
And serve the numbing weed of sorrow.*

*Theirs is the fool's way.*

*They are not ours.*

*We bow to the Nothing, we bow to the None.  
These symbolize the Cool.*

*We are the Cool:*

*We push aside the painful presence of emotion,  
For we forsake intensity and joy.*

*Ours is the safe way.*

*We are the Cool.*

*We are the safe ones; we are the safe  
Who crouch behind our credo.*

*We are secure:*

*We search for sanity by shutting out the world.  
But can we fight the future with escape?*

*Ours is the bleak way.*

*Are we secure?*

— Dee D'Isa

## WORKER'S BUS

*They're going home on the worker's  
Bus, these railroad workers.*

*It's an orange bus that seats twenty  
And is driving through the sleet.*

*Cundari chops ice around switches  
So that they may be thrown.*

*Big, black, Backer washed engines in  
The roundhouse.*

*Guzlolek squirts oil in the journal boxes  
As the boxcars are put over the hump.*

*For eight hours a day Guzlolek squirts  
Oil in the journal boxes!—*

*Perhaps someone must do it.*

*The driver goes on; the men sit as  
Lumps of coal.*

*Grimy, greasy, cold.*

*Coughing, spitting, smoking.*

*A vomity laughter from way down.*

*Going home.*

— Paul R. Spivey



## THE WATCH

A sudden gust of wind shook the branches up above and sent drops of water that had clung to the leaves falling to the ground in a miniature rainstorm. Down below, the soldier shivered and pulled the collar of his heavy coat closer around his ears. It didn't help; the material was soaked from the rain and sent icy shivers down his back where it touched his neck. Silently the soldier cursed the rain and the darkness; he hadn't been able to see more than a few feet in front of where he was standing for an eternity, it seemed.

The glowing dial of his watch showed that he still had forty minutes before he was relieved. Without thinking, he fished in his pocket for a cigarette, then remembered how he had finished the last pack two days ago. Sighing, he cradled his rifle in both arms, and leaning against the rough, wet bark of the tree, studied the sky. The great black clouds were still churning and boiling, slowly moving north with the wind. Directly overhead, through the branches, he could see a small spot of brightness where the clouds had parted, and the space was slowly getting larger as he watched. Soon a few small, glimmering stars were revealed, and then more; and as the clouds rolled by, the soldier felt as if the whole earth on which he stood was moving, and the stars with it; only the clouds were standing still in the heavens. For a few moments he let himself believe this illusion, enjoying the strange dizzy feeling it brought him. Then he closed his eyes, and when he opened them again the feeling was gone.

In a short time the sky had cleared almost completely, and now the cold blue light of the full moon made myriads of tiny diamonds sparkle in the drops of water that clung to the leaves and branches around him. As he looked at the sky, his memories flashed back across time to a night not unlike this, and once again he heard a wonderful musical voice counting the stars, and the soft laughter echoed in his memory; again he could almost feel the soft cheek against his and the gentle touch of tender lips . . .

So it happened that they found the soldier near the great tree, its dripping leaves reflecting the myriads of tiny diamonds, and the soft blue light of the moon casting a pattern of shadows across his figure; the enemy bayonet in his back.

— Rosalind Carr

## APPLE PIE

Marian fell heavily into the deep lounge chair. The springs protruded and hit her back at odd angles, but she was too tired to care this afternoon. From her worn black purse she took a rumpled package of cigarettes, jabbed a cigarette in the corner of her mouth, and lit it. She heaved the smoke out in a sigh.

Absently her eyes stared at the black marbled tile of the floor. A long ash dropped from her cigarette. Smoke made her eyes water and run, staining her make-up.

The dingy pink washroom was lonely, and Marion required the presence of people, if not their conversation. Hauling herself out of the chair, she crushed out the glowing stub of her cigarette with the well-worn heel of her shoe. Catching sight of herself in the wavering mirror that typically graces the office washroom, she ran a comb through her frizzy hair.

The door slammed after her and the echo blended with the sound of her footsteps in the empty hall.

Joan, the receptionist, hailed her as she came through the office door. "Mr. Howard said don't forget to leave your address and phone number, in case he hears of a place that can use you."

"Yeah, O.K."

Marian passed through the big office to her desk and began clearing off the papers that littered it. Most of them she deposited in the waste basket. Finishing that task, she began on the desk drawers and scooped handfuls of gum wrappers, tissues, and crumpled second-sheets from them into the round green can. Finally she covered her typewriter and rolled it to the side of the desk.

"Are you going now, Marian?" asked the redhead behind her.

"Yeah. No sense in sticking around till five o'clock."

"Well, come back and see us when you have a chance."

"Sure, I will." Both of them knew she would not.

She took a folded paper bag from her purse and stuffed into it the old green sweater she always kept in her desk. Tying a scarf under her chin, she picked up the bag and started for the door. A few half-hearted good-byes followed her. She returned them, handed Joan the slip of paper with her phone number and address on it, and walked out into the hall.

The elevator banged open and emitted a too-blond girl with large gold earrings. Marian had time to notice the run in the girl's stocking before the stranger entered the office that Marian had just left. The new girl stopped at Joan's desk and asked for Mr. Howard.

Marian walked slowly down the street for several blocks, peering now and then into the windows of small dress shops. The sight of a Horn and Hardart's Automat inspired her to go in, and she pushed her way resolutely through the revolving door.

"Nickels, please." She plunked a fifty cent piece down on the marble cashier's counter. The smooth hollowed surface told of the millions of dollars that had passed over it. Ten nickels tumbled one after another into the metal change cup.

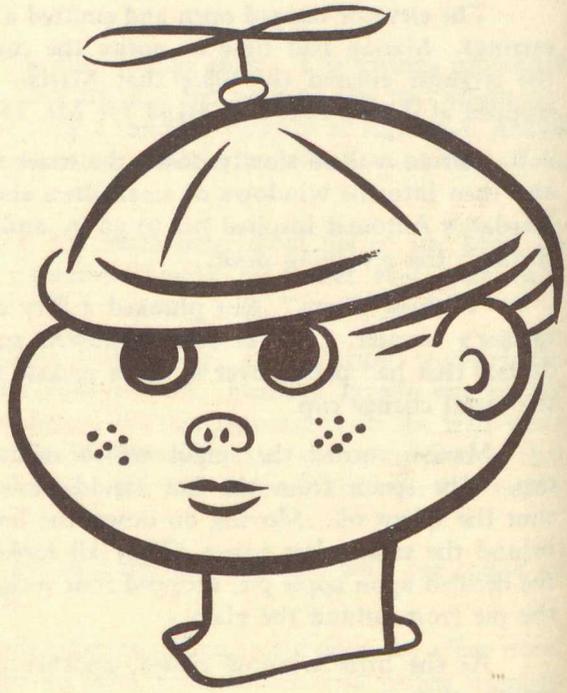
Marion turned the spigot which released a flood of coffee into her cup. The steam from the hot liquid moistened her hand. She quickly shut the spigot off. Moving on down the line, she surveyed the cuts of pie behind the small glass panes. They all looked rather ordinary, but at last she decided upon apple pie, dropped four nickels in the proper slot, and took the pie from behind the glass.

As the little window closed, another piece of pie slid in to fill the empty place.

— Janet Strader



## MO'S WHIXED UP



Tommy Green was one of those rare specimens of a schoolboy in the first grade. He did his schoolwork with an enthusiasm that astonished his teacher and parents alike. He always read his books and did his lessons with an open mind, which was not characteristic of the other students in his class.

But this sort of thing could not last — and sure enough it didn't. It was bound to come, and it did. One day Tommy was watching the last few moments of his favorite Western on television. After the show, the commercial came on. Now Tommy, being open-minded, always watched the commercials too. Evidently the announcer was having one of those days when nothing comes out right. "Mell your tom to whet Geaties — the eat cereal ready to wheat," spoke the announcer just before being cut off. Tommy, who had been listening carefully, caught every word.

"Whom, bease ply some Meaties. Will you?" pleaded Tommy.

"Wes I yill. I mean yes, I will," said Tommy's mother with a confused and rather worried look.

"Good!" said Tommy without any difficulty.

Miss Baker, Tommy's teacher, was having her pupils recite poetry in class. Miss Baker announced that Tommy would begin the recitation, confident that he would move his audience to tears with this stirring poem.

"Lary mad a little ham,  
Its sneece was white as flow,  
And weveryhere that Wary ment,  
The Wamb las gure to sho,"

began Tommy.

"Stop!" yelled Miss Baker. "Rat's thot night — that's not right. Gy atrain — try again."

"O.K." said Tommy meekly.

"Hary lad a little mamb,  
Its whe . . .

"Nat's etough — (pause) that's enough," shouted Miss Baker. "O to the goffice and pree the sincipal. And nive him this gote!"

"Rall ight," said Tommy as he obediently marched toward the office.

Once there, he unfolded the note and handed it to the principal. "Ty meacher gaid to sive nou this yote," said Tommy rather fearfully.

Mr. Long, the principal, read the note carefully, cleared his throat, and said gently, "This note says that you are langing a havage difficulty."

"Yes" murmured Tommy, "Ty meacher toesn't dalk right."

"I see," said Mr. Long thoughtfully. "Bo clack to your gass."

"O.K.," said Tommy.

The storl of this mory is, "Won't datch wommercials after cesterns."

— Harold Joiner

## THE KINDLY PHARMACIST

Professor Parry heard the report when he returned to his office on the first Monday in September. The new Dean of the Pharmacy college, who was coming from New York, would be in the following week. Professor Parry thanked his secretary and entered his office.

He closed the door gently, holding the knob until he knew it would click with a minimum of sound, and then releasing it slowly so that he could shut out the noises from the outer suite of offices. His eyes staring blankly at the plain pattern of his carpet, he walked rollingly on his flat feet to his desk. He sat down, not looking to see if the chair was there, not even thinking about the chair. He sat in an extremely tight, upward position. Thinking:

This is the third time they have passed over me. Three times. Three. First time was in '35. Too young then. Hadn't been teaching long. Well, damn it, it wasn't my fault. A lot of drug stores folded then. Who would make me a Dean? I wasn't of the high muckalorum who taught for the glory and higher sanctification of pharmacy ethics or the Profession. I needed a job. Pharmacy was the only thing I knew. Well, I taught, and I taught hard. They don't see me when they come back to the school and go to those damn alumni dinners. Not even me, and I'm the only one left from the whole damn crew. But, by God, they learned. This damn state is full of pharmacists who still talk about ol' mortared-down Parry, the only pharmacy instructor with flat feet. Let 'em laugh at my bald head and my pig eyes and my paunch. There are a lot of people in this state who are working as salesmen or teachers or chemists who don't laugh *now* about ol' Parry. By God, I showed 'em. Serves the bastards right . . . no one messed around in my classes.

'45. That was the second passing. Or should I say Passover with all these Kikes in a pharmacy school, trying to get that professional aura about them, the stealin' bastards. I complained that time. Oh, they were nice and saved me any embarrassment. Sweet and Gentle. "Unfortunately, the last time you earned a degree was in 1918."

That was a year. Damn few Jews got through school then, and *they* looked like white men. Yeh, they told me about the guy they were bringing in then. Ph.D., M.I.T.; engineering-pharmacy, Purdue; publications, everywhere; thirty-second degree Mason, Shriner. Well, damn it, I didn't have enough time to become a Mason. How in Hell could I memorize 1800 words for that damn Blue Lodge. But this guy was O.K. Let me have first crack at the freshmen. Had 'em good for the full year. Then 'ol Ronley died in '50. So I had to take over the Pharmacy Management Course. Yep, got 'em coming and going, freshmen and seniors. They don't come back to see me.

Old Ronley. They started to go pretty fast after him. There was that bastard, Wilkenson, in Pharmacology. Glad to see him go. How in hell do you let a nigger teach a Junior course. And the damn doctors loved him. Taught in the Med School too. But that's doctors for ya. Damn doctors and niggers loused me up at my second store. Saved enough money from teaching those low-class polacks and bohunks and those loud-mouthed Jews and bought me a store. Got me a good location too. Right in the middle of the Black Belt. Where I could screw 'em good. Ya think they would come to me . . . teaching in a pharmacy school. That damn Beadrattler, Grady, got the business. Had the doctors sewed up too. Tried to get the doctors, the pimps, but they stick with their own. Christ, with all the Micks, Jews and Blacks, a white man don't stand a chance.

Now Seeley has just popped off. Ya think they would give me the Dean's office. They got one of the best schools in the nation because I don't let the crap get through. Bringing in this creep from New York, huh. See how long he lasts.

Just then Professor Parry's secretary buzzed him. Two students wanted to see him. They entered. Both were seniors.

"Professor Parry, would it be possible for us to get into the other Pharmacy Management section? Dr. Berg's class?"

"No, absolutely not. That section is overloaded now."

"Well, blast it, I'm not going to take any guy for Pharm Man who's ruined *two* drug stores," said the taller of the boys.

Professor Parry paled. "Get out ah here!" His voice was barely audible.

The door slammed shut.

"Those god-damn Swedes."

— George Mishkin



## DAY DREAMS

I walked out to the loading dock, picked out the softest looking crate, sat down and lit a smoke. It was 7:45 p.m. and the sun was setting. I watched it play tricks with the low lying clouds above the San Gabriel range. Just a little more than four hours and the world would again be mine. One whole weekend without work, without the smell of sweat mingled with dirt. One whole weekend with her close to me, loving me, teasing me with the implications of what her body was capable of. Just four more long hot hours.

From inside I could hear the machines start again, their low, dull roar filling my mind. Even with the severity of the work and the rotten hours I was glad to be alive. Just four more hours and I could go home to her, watch her sleeping, feel the warmth of her body radiate outward to burn at my soul. I could find in her quiet expression the reason for my life.

A breeze came up quickly from the ocean, and the daylight ebbed away. In the distance I could see the fog starting to come in. I threw away the butt and walked back inside to the machines.

— J. William Rusche

## TRAPPED

The weary coal miners trudged home, half-heartedly discussing the day's work. At the window of each old house there was at least one child eagerly awaiting his father's return. Jed Stone's house was no different. As he turned down the walk to his house, he saw nine-year-old Timmy peering out the streaked window. When Jed reached the door, Timmie greeted him with a slap on the back and a hearty "Hi Jed."

When his mother died, Tim's status changed from that of son to that of buddy to his father. While Jed was at the coal mine, Tim had to go to school. After school it was his job to sweep the floors and cook dinner. But after dinner the boy and his father often took walks together. During these walks Tim would ask his father dozens of questions about his work. It would not be long, Tim thought, before he would be accompanying his father to the mines, and he was determined to work as well as any man there. The man and his son had spent many happy hours hunting, fishing, and hiking together. The past two years had been passed in this fashion, and Tim eagerly looked forward to spending many happy times with his father. Tim worshipped this brawny, grimy man who was to him the symbol of strength and security. Their walk this night was short because Jed seemed to be preoccupied with thoughts which he preferred not to share. Tim, having sensed this, went to bed early. He was eager for the next day's arrival, for Jed had promised to take him down to the mines to see the new equipment that had arrived that week.

The day went surprisingly fast. One hour before he was to meet his father, Tim heard voices outside screaming, "A cave-in! A cave-in at the mines!" Tim ran from the house anxious to know the details, but fearing to know. Being the first to arrive, he was the first to be told to go home and wait for news. Rescuers had already started work. Tim stayed near the scene until he was forced to go home by cold, hunger, and fatigue. Five long days of waiting passed. Tim spent every waking minute at the mine, anxious to hear word of the rescuer's progress and of his father's safety. On the sixth day the men were brought out of the mine. One of the big men who had been on the rescue squad sat on the ground to rest near Tim. "Well, Kid," he said, "eight men out of nine got out of that mess alive. Pretty good, eh? Know any of those guys?"

"Yeah, my dad — I mean my buddy Jed Stone—was with 'em."

"Jed Stone, huh? Seems like I heard that name mentioned . . . I gotta go back and check the guy's name that got it. Sure hope I don't have to tell his family. Say, you got a family, Sonny?"

— Stephany Ball

## NEW YORK

*Ah! yes-*

*This is the dawn and the silhouette of the skyline.*

*A city is rising?*

*The city that never slept.*

*Its blood is ever flowing in its veins-,  
its trains-!*

*Bustling-,  
hustling:*

*a living thing-, a dying thing-*

*To the top of its summits-,*

*in its jungles-, and valleys,*

*tamed and untamed,*

*shamed and unshamed,*

*it lives-pulsating*

*and dies-, brigading.*

*43rd Street., Lexington Station.*

*Downtown;*

*uptown,*

*— all town.*

*Ely Station; Times Square.*

*Downtown;*

*uptown,*

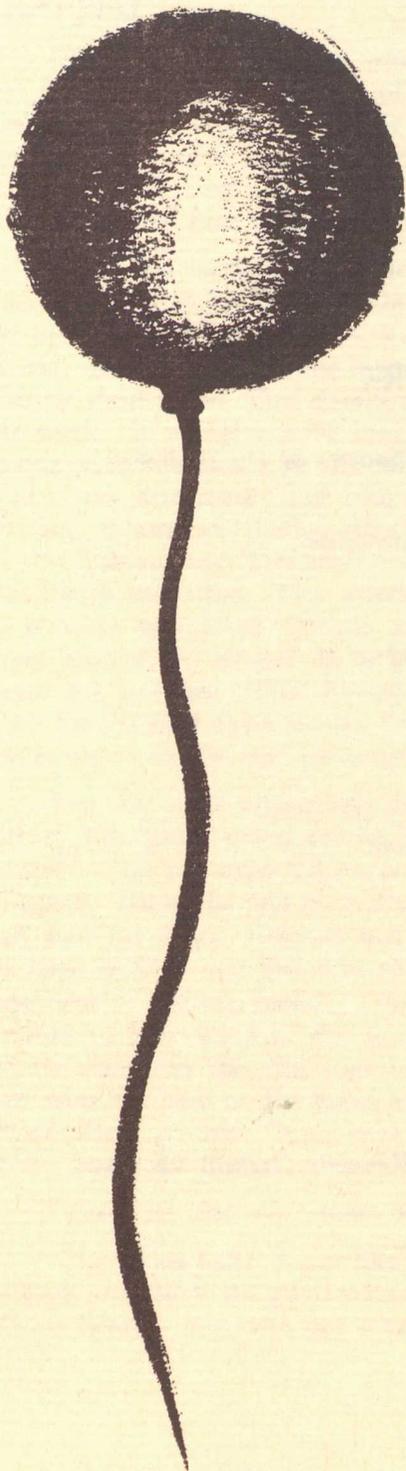
*— all town.*

*Ah! yes—*

*The city is rising?*

*The city never slept . . .*

— Kenneth Garfield Clayton



## BALLOONS

Reflected in the red balloon, the merry - go - round circles jauntily, its prancing horses bearing wide - eyed children, and its crowded guard - rails sagging under parents, eager for a glimpse of a waving youngster.

"Balloons! Twenty cents. Hey, Mister, your little girl — she like a balloon. You got twenty cents. Only two dimes."

A roaring motor signals the rolling of the towering ferris wheel with its swinging chairs thronged with squeaking passengers who rock carelessly and point gaily at the rows of lights and fluttering moths. Up and over the top sails the blue chair. A pink balloon soars from it. A shriek of pleasure follows. Earthbound eyes rise to watch a pink dot being sucked into the black.

A tiny blond boy sloshes by with a paper cup of orange and a blue balloon. A cigarette reaches out. The balloon disappears. Standing with string and limp blue, he cries, dropping his paper cup and running off.

"A balloon for the kids. Only two dimes. Ball-o-o-ns!"

A shrieking toddler in pigtails throws down her cotton candy and pulls frantically at a resisting hand. "Balloon, Mama. Balloon!"

"You'll only let it go, dear." She carries off a kicking child.

"Red balloons . . . blue balloons . . . green balloons . . . yellow balloons. All color balloons. Ball-o-o-ns!"

Dirty overcoat over stooping body, shapeless black hat over white hair and a gaunt stubby face, he shuffles to the balloon man. "Green one!"

"Thanks, Mister . . . Balloons! Twenty cents!"

Taller than the others, the green balloon waits in line at the merry-go-round.

Around and around the green balloon goes, up and down. Beneath the green balloon, a worn man sits placidly on the rising and falling wooden horse with its broken tail and jeweled saddle. The hurdy-gurdy blares out with "Strawberry Blond"; he sits not hearing it. Bright blue eyes surrounded by wrinkled bags — and a green balloon. Gnarled hands and a silver harness — and a green balloon.

One by one, the short balloons disappear from the lighted lot. on the edge of the light, a yellow balloon escapes from a stretching child. There is a cry and then tears.

"Last call for balloons. Take balloon home for kids. Ball-o-o-ns!" Rasping noises follow as one by one the balloons collapse and return limp and wrinkled to the box.

Falling gently, a drizzle patters on the canvas awnings. The odor of sawdust permeates the lot. Soon, a heavy rain beats on the canvas, and one by one, the canvas fronts drop down. But still the green balloon goes around and around, up and down.

Slowly grinding to a stop, its horses suspended and the hurdy-gurdy dying, the merry-go-round stands motionless in the rain.

"Sorry, Mister. We're closing now."

Down drops the canvas on the merry-go-round. The lot is dark. The green balloon picks its way slowly through the puddles.

— Peter Davies

## AN OLD MAN BEING

*Brown days are everydays when the sun is out,  
And old men are warming the greyness  
of their age*

*On long benches that stretch inviting  
Arms on green surroundings.*

*Brown days  
Come in long rows and follow thoroughfares  
and alleyways and  
Garbage on the lawn.*

*Yellow lights that form  
The chartered avenues of parks  
Keep the old men coming one by one  
To sit and stare*

*At black and  
Never question why the sun is out or  
If the somber clouds mean storm.*

*They live a brown day  
With their feet perched on the sky  
And their white faces beneath yesterday's news.  
Tomorrow will come someway in, go*

*Someway out,  
And brown may change to browner  
While the old men*

*Feed the squirrels out of pity  
And tip their hats to ladies on the lawn.*

— Larry Jacobsen



# AWARDS

## POETRY

Identity

by Larry Jacobsen

Leaves

by Katherine Soelke

Adagio

by Margene Swanson

## PROSE

Stagnant Transplant

by Suzanne Kohut

A Memorable Wedding

by Jeanine Blomgren

Sympatico

by Dee D'Isa

## JUDGES

S. Orville Baker

Paul S. Burtness

Robert M. Rodney

