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# The Griffin



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# THE GRIFFIN

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## THE GRIFFIN

"This creature was sacred to the sun,  
and kept guard over hidden treasures."

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## WHOM THE GODS LOVE

*Bettegene Nebesnick is a senior from Sawyerville, Illinois. Her stories printed in this issue show not only her creative ability, but also a strong interest in her major field, psychology.*

BETTEGENE NEBESNICK

SHRIEKS of laughter coursed through the air like streamers thrown against a raging wind; collided, kindled, and flared up into a terrifying amplitude of derision.

Elmer, preceding the centennial parade, writhed and twisted as he stumbled onward, until his body became an ever-changing mass of contorted flesh. As the intensity of the laughter increased, so too, did the fervor of Elmer's dancing increase. The flowers on the brim of his battered fedora were jostled about until eventually they escaped the confinement of the pin and fell at irregular intervals behind him. Every child snatched greedily at the dead flowers, so they, too, could run up behind Elmer and thrust the long stems through the holes in his clothing.

He attached himself to the parade until it disbanded in the park. Then the crowd surged about him, quickly multiplying into a vicious horde; mauling, thrusting, pressing, in their frenzy to gain closer observation of him. An old man, triumphantly exhausted, commanded the attention of unblinking, hostile eyes.

He sang for them; gloriously, fantastically; without rhythm, without tune. He sang of the sublimity of death, of the whisper of the sea, of beauty, of life, of love. His voice was lifted to a magnificent roar, and the blood in his veins pulsated and beat violently against his temples. His voice was subdued, and his eyes shone with radiant glory. Like great, gawking children the crowd shuffled their feet and slowly, unobtrusively stole away.

Elmer was alone when he fell to his knees with a solitary movement that was beautiful in its simplicity, its economy of motion. As he prayed so fervently, his lips forming half-oral, half-silent words, a capricious gust of wind blew the lone flower from his brim.

## MR. ADAM

JO DE WEESE

**O**BLIVIOUS of the day,  
Mr. Adam walks to work  
With his eyes on his feet,  
Counting sidewalk lines.  
Over and over his lips  
Chant the silly childhood rhyme.  
“Step on a crack and  
You break your mother’s back;  
One-two, over-the-line,  
Three-four, over-the crack—”  
Fifty more lines to town . . .  
Birds score the sky  
With swooping song;  
Children swing high  
To the sun-rayed clouds  
For joy of the afternoon.

Shadow patterns flick  
The walk with coolness,  
And Mr. Adam walks home,  
Oblivious of the day,  
A tired gray man lost  
In a world of jangling fears.  
“Step on a crack, and  
You break your mother’s back;  
Step on a crack, and—  
You break . . .”

## PHILOSOPHY

BETTY JACK LITTLETON

THE carpets were deep and silence fuzzy about  
The edges; there was time to fold cold hands  
And think about four-sided tables. It depends  
On what you're used to whether you see or doubt  
The need of four sides. Because I like to spiel  
Off a bit about concepts, I say tables  
Are bubbles of the mind and all these fables  
About what is and isn't, the thought and the real,  
Are mold in the mouth. Now it is time to be  
Eating; so we'll draw up chairless concepts  
To tableless sides and chew precepts.  
What to do now?—it's immaterial to me.

## WINTER, FALL

*Jacqueline Cheney is a junior from Linn  
Creek, Missouri. Jackie is majoring in  
English and history and plans to study in  
graduate school after next year.*

JACQUELINE CHENEY

SNOW lying on the  
Arch of a dark limb like the  
Stripe of a skunk's back.

THE red blot of a  
Woodpecker's head outlined on  
A leafless black tree.



## THE BEATITUDES

*Lorraine Peck Remmers graduated from Lindenwood in 1950. Her radio script, THE BEATITUDES, has been presented several times over KCLC and was used this year as a chapel program.*

LORRAINE PECK REMMERS

**CUE ONE:** Something gentle and suggestive of peace and hope. Begins powerfully in volume.

**CUE TWO:** The opposite of first cue; is mighty and crashing in its crescendo. Has an arrogant impression of man moving blindly onward.

**VOICES:**

Both one and two are narrative types; only contrast is between their pitches.

Third voice is plaintive one; belongs to a person who wishes for the dream of blessing, and cannot understand why it is not present.

Fourth voice is brisk and sharp and powerful in its didactic statements.

*BEGIN MUSIC CUE ONE IN BACKGROUND AND WORK UP INTO FOREGROUND BY END OF THIS SPEECH:*

**FIRST VOICE:** In the time before beginning,  
There was but mist, and land, and space, and eternity.  
But from the mist there came form,  
And from the dust of the land, man.  
And from space and eternity, the world.

*MUSIC CUE ONE REACHES CRESCENDO AND THEN GOES OUT:*

**SECOND VOICE:** The structure was there, built simply and well by a master planner—

**FIRST:** Tall standing forests were proud walls,  
And moonlit washed skies, the ceiling,  
And cloud hopping birds, the windows.

**SECOND:** So stood this house of man, this world of God-stuff.

*MUSIC CUE TWO BEGINS SOFTLY AND ALSO REACHES CRESCENDO AT END OF THIS INTRODUCTION. USED THEREAFTER TO EMPHASIZE EACH TRAIT THAT VOICE ONE SPEAKS:*

**SECOND:** But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men;

*MUSIC CUE TWO REACHES CRESCENDO AND ANNOUNCES FIRST FAULT:*

**FIRST:** Intolerance.

**THIRD VOICE:** But blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**FOURTH VOICE:** Lynch that nigger. We'll send 'im to his kingdom in two jerks of a rope! He's shiftless; he sits under trees and dreams of a lost land. He's of no use. Lynch him!

THIRD: But blessed are the poor in spirit . . . (*VOICE FADES INTO MUSIC CUE TWO WHICH INTRODUCES FAULT NEXT MENTIONED.*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men;

FIRST: Selfishness.

THIRD: But blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

FOURTH: Come on, come on, beat him up if he don't give in. No time to wait on tears. Don't pay any attention to his cries. Make him do it our way. He's weak. Beat him.

THIRD: But blessed are they that mourn . . . (*Voice fades into MUSIC CUE TWO*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men:

FIRST: Pride.

THIRD: But blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

FOURTH: Think I'm going to admit I'm wrong? I'll win and show them all who's tops around here. I'll lie and cheat just to win.

THIRD: But blessed are the meek . . . (*Voice fades into MUSIC CUE TWO*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men:

FIRST: Faithlessness.

THIRD: But blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

FOURTH: Smash his statues! Break his windows! Burn his books! Destroy his church! Let's dance instead of praying; carouse instead of singing. Tear down his place of worship!

THIRD: But blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness . . . (*Voice fades into MUSIC CUE TWO*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men:

FIRST: Hate.

THIRD: But blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

FOURTH: No, no extension of time. Pay now or we'll foreclose. Foreclose on you; the end for you. No, no extension.

THIRD: But blessed are the merciful . . . (*Voice fades into MUSIC CUE TWO*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men:

FIRST: Sin.

THIRD: But blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

FOURTH: Who cares about the law? Listen to what the preacher says. Ten commandments—Bah! I can get away with it.

THIRD: But blessed are the pure in heart . . . (Voice fades into *MUSIC CUE TWO*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men:

FIRST: War.

THIRD: But blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

FOURTH: Turn the rain into flames, the fields into waste, the city into ruins. Centuries of art have no communion with bombs. Man has no shelter in war. Let them creep and crawl, even when they're down, kill them.

THIRD: But blessed are the peacemakers . . . (Voice fades into *MUSIC CUE TWO*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men:

FIRST: Lies.

THIRD: But blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

FOURTH: Don't listen to her. She belongs to an —ism. Read a book . . . She saw a play produced by some one who belongs to an —ism. Don't listen. She belongs to an —ism.

THIRD: But blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake . . . (Voice fades into *MUSIC CUE TWO*)

SECOND: But between the structure that was the house and the brotherhood that was the home grew these faults of men:

FIRST: Mistrust.

THIRD: But blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

FOURTH: She claims she was healed by a spirit. Let her produce that spirit. Seeing alone is believing. Burn her. She's a witch. She practices magic. She says there's a God! Burn her.

THIRD: But blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely . . . (Voice fades into *MUSIC CUE TWO*)

*MUSIC CUE TWO REACHES CRESCENDO, THEN OUT. BRIEF SILENCE.*

SECOND: Only silver sandalled hope yet dared creep, like a frightened girl, down the street—past the falling house of man.

*MUSIC CUE ONE BEGINS SOFTLY IN BACKGROUND OF FOLLOWING SPEECH:*

THIRD: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

*MUSIC CUE ONE CONTINUES IN BACKGROUND:*

FIRST: The proud walls of tall standing forests.

*BRIEF SILENCE AND INTRODUCE MUSIC CUE TWO BEHIND FOLLOWING SENTENCE:*

SECOND: One war later.

*PAUSE AND BRING IN MUSIC CUE ONE:*

FIRST: Stood like black-clad widows with arms hanging limp in despair, as at the grave of one most dearly beloved.

*MUSIC CUE ONE CONTINUES:*

FIRST: And the ceiling, of moonlit washed skies.

*BRIEF SILENCE AND INTRODUCE AGAIN MUSIC CUE TWO BEHIND SENTENCE:*

SECOND: One bomber age later.

*BRING IN MUSIC CUE ONE; PAUSE FIRST:*

FIRST: Dropped white moss shadows on the decay beneath, as on a place where nothing living is heard but the eerie scratching-scurrying rodent.

*MUSIC CUE ONE CONTINUES:*

FIRST: And the windows of cloud hopping birds.

*BRIEF SILENCE AND BRING IN MUSIC CUE TWO BEHIND FOLLOWING:*

SECOND: One atomic blast later.

*PAUSE AND SWITCH TO MUSIC CUE ONE:*

FIRST: Were smashed and ragged-edged, as though some careless giant had swung his arms about in sadistic glee.

*ALL MUSIC OUT. BRIEF, COMPLETE SILENCE.*

SECOND: And where the house of man had stood there was only a gash in the land,

FIRST: Over which the mist once more moved lazily, as though it had more patience than in eternity, and no particular place to go in space.

*MUSIC CUE TWO IN AND UP, CONTINUED IN BACKGROUND OF FOLLOWING SPEECHES:*

SECOND: This is the lesson for which an apology may be given too late.

FIRST: Stop, man, in your house, and open it for the blessed.

SECOND: Not the least of which (*MUSIC CUE TWO OUT*) is you, yourself,

Yet the light of the world.

*MUSIC CUE ONE IN AND UP.*

## PHILOSOPHER OF KEYHOLES

*Betty Jack Littleton graduated from Lindenwood last spring with a MAGNA CUM LAUDE for her honors work, a collection of poems entitled BETWEEN THE MOON AND THISTLE. She is now doing graduate work at Stanford University.*

BETTY JACK LITTLETON

**T**HIS was the day—  
Warm as a seashell on the beach,  
As grapes upon the vine,  
Full and ripe,  
Ready to be picked.  
And from his room,  
That cube of silence  
On the corner of the sun,  
He could hear the tones of summer—  
Water-lilies opening  
On the pool of sound—  
And see the pod of sky  
Bursting with light.

In books upon the shelf  
He read the song of summer:  
    "This is the day . . .  
    And shall we walk  
    Together on the stalk  
    Of summer, say  
    Together, litanies of light  
    And liquid sun,  
    Of birds that have begun  
    Their rose-blown flight . . ."  
And so the cube of silence grew  
Into utopian desolation . . .

Roar of day within the shell,  
Wine of unpressed hours . . .  
And still he reads—  
Philosopher of keyholes,  
Empiricist of cubes.

## DUMPING SLAG, KNOWLEDGE

*Wilma McGuire, a senior English major is from Ashland, Kentucky. She is president of PI ALPHA MU and assistant editor of this year's GRIFFIN.*

WILMA MCGUIRE

THE night  
Is dark; the sky  
Lighted only by the  
Occasional flare of red from  
The mill.

VASTNESS  
Of night brings a  
Sense of impotence,  
Of smallness refuted by the light  
Of day.

## THE BIG BREAK

*Bonnie Schmidt represents the freshman class in this year's GRIFFIN with her first short story, "The Big Break." Bonnie is from St. Charles, Missouri.*

BONNIE SCHMIDT

RAIN fell in big spattering drops against the cold plate-glass window. A tall, lanky boy stood with his face pressed against the window, squinting to read the poster inside by the dim light of the streetlamp. A large finger pointed at him accusingly, and a resolute mouth seemed to yell at him through the darkness . . .

Uncle Sam needs *you* . . . join the Marines!

The words turned slowly in his mind at first, then faster and faster, whirling him back through time to 1942. It was Thanksgiving and his brother Mike was home on his first leave.

"Gee, Mike, I wish I could be a Marine like you!"

"Well, let's see. You're nine now . . . that means you'll have to wait eight or nine years or so."

"That's a long time. Hey, mom, look at Mike's uniform!"

His mother's eyes glowed with pride, and satisfaction.

"Oh, yes. Don't he look nice! And it's so good to have him home, isn't it, Nick?"

"Sure is, Mom."

Mike put his arm around her and gave her a little squeeze. "It's good to be home, Mom. Just like old times, eh, Pa? Say . . . isn't it about time to get at that turkey?"

That was the last time they saw Mike; he was sent overseas in January, and the telegram announcing his death followed not long afterward.

Nick remembered it very clearly; each minute detail seemed to be etched sharply in his memory . . . the messenger boy's expression when he handed the yellow envelope to his mother . . . the deep pain reflected in her eyes as she read . . . his father's own bitter tears. That was the first . . . and the last time Nick had seen his father cry. But most of all he remembered the bottomless feeling of loneliness that had overcome him . . . Mike had been more than a brother to him . . . he had been a real pal. And now he was gone . . . there was nobody to lean on anymore.

The sound of shattering glass snapped Nick back to reality in time to see a gang of neighborhood boys disappear down a dark alley. Another street-light gone. As if it weren't gloomy enough around here. A world of brick and concrete, dirty kids and broken glass. Dogs howling and cats fighting. Everybody running and not getting anywhere. Just running.

The sound of his footsteps on the wet pavement was hollow and echoed down the deserted street. A trash can toppled over in some alley, setting half a dozen dogs to barking.

Nick climbed the two flights of stairs to the dreary cubby-hole of an apartment he had always known as home. Even before he had reached the second floor, he could hear his father's gruff voice yelling to his mother. When he reached the top step, he stepped back into the shadows and waited.

"I'll spend my money as I damn please."

His mother's voice was pleading . . .

"Do you have to yell? Do you have to let the neighbors know all our business?"

His father laughed hoarsely. "Huh! They already know our business. They don't none of them miss a thing that goes on around here."

"How could they help but know? Crammed into this filthy two-by-four . . ."

"Shut up! Ain't I told you we're gonna' get our break someday . . . I don't intend to repair shoes all my life . . . Why someday we're gonna' buy us a . . ."

She broke into his dreams with a heavy sigh. "Oh stop it, Joe." Her voice was tired, weary with the years of waiting . . . waiting for the break that would make them rich, waiting for lady luck to knock at their door. She was sick with waiting. "Now clear away from the table so I can lift supper."

Nick moved silently away from the door and walked back to it with heavy footsteps, so that his mother would not suspect he had overheard. He had listened to the same argument so many times before, it seemed to hurt her to think he had to live through it again.

"Hi, Mom, Pop."

"Hello, Nick. You're late."

"I know. I walked. I needed to think."

"Is that all you do . . . think?" his father yelled.

"Let's not argue any more, Joe."

They sat down to a supper of greasy fried potatoes and weak coffee. Pellets of rain hammered against the window, and trickled to a puddle on the sill.

"Rain's coming in again, Ma." Nick took the rag she handed him and began wiping up the water. Through the wet glass he could see the narrow street far below, and he remembered how he used to play ball there. The streetlight just outside the window had been broken again; breaking lights was a neighborhood pastime, it seemed.

He had thrown at it just once. The rock missed, and hit their window instead. It hadn't broken it, but the cracked glass was still there. He wondered how he had thrown the stone that high; it seemed such a long way down to the street. He turned back to the table, blinking at the glare of the bare light bulb that hung from the ceiling above the table.

"What's wrong, Nick?" his mother asked. "You're not eating."

"Nothing, Ma. I-I'm just not very hungry."

"Huh! Probably needs time to think!"

"Maybe we'd be better off today if you'd done a little thinking when you were Nick's age."

Nick left the table quickly and took his coat from the hook behind the door. He knew another argument would follow, and he was in no mood to listen to his father's rash accusations and his mother's weak rebuttals.

He let the door shut out their voices and the darkness of the long hall swallow him.

Nick wasn't aware of how many blocks he had walked . . . he didn't care, just as long as he could get away . . . but it was no good; it was his life, and there was no running away from it. Slowly he turned toward home.

Automatically, without thinking, he turned down the right street, went in the right house, and climbed the same dark, dirty two flights of stairs. It was almost like a reflex action . . . say "home" and his feet automatically carried him there. Just like everything in his life, . . . his job, his home . . . unchanging, mechanical. But, Nick thought, not any more. It won't be like this much longer. Here goes nothing. He pushed open the door with a determined shove. His father still sat at the table, and his mother was squinting to read the paper in the bad light.



"Pa . . . I'm quitting my job at the factory."

The old man looked up, anger burning in his eyes.

"You're what? And give me one good reason why!"

"I . . . I don't like it; it's a dirty place . . . there's no future in it . . . it's just some place people go to work when they can't find anything better."

"And you think you can find something better! That's a laugh!"

"I know I can find something better." He thrust his hands into his pockets and went to the window. He knew his father was waiting for him to go on, but he decided to repay him a few minutes of the years they had waited for the "big break" he kept promising. Nonchalantly he opened the window, and leaned back against the sill, breathing the fresh, moist air.

"Listen, ma," his father said sarcastically, "our boy's really goin' to make somethin' of himself!" He burst into a roar of laughter. "Come on. Tell me more!"

"All right. I'm going to join the Marines."

His father's laughter stopped abruptly. Nick heard the paper his mother had been reading slip to the floor. It was as though he had dropped a blanket of silence over them.

"I . . . I'm going to pick up where Mike left off . . . I think he'd want it that way . . ."

His father gripped the edge of his chair. His voice was not gruff now; it was low and unsteady, but firm. His mother simply stared into space.

"Don't ever mention that name again . . . don't . . ."

"Look, pa, I'm tired of living under the shadow of Mike's death . . . it's been nearly ten years now . . . you just can't stop living because someone you love is killed . . . I loved Mike, too, but . . ."

"Shut up!" He pushed away from the table, and took an unsteady step toward Nick, clenching his fists.

But somehow Nick wasn't afraid of him.

"No, pa, I won't shut up. You and ma have to face it . . . Mike's gone, and that's all there is to it. You can't bring him back . . ."

Suddenly his father was beside him. Nick saw a heavy fist coming toward him . . . and heard his mother screaming.

"Joe . . . don't . . . the window's open . . ."

Nick caught hold of the window sill, but his father fought blindly, not knowing . . . not caring . . . what he was doing. His wife laid a restraining hand on his arm as it flew toward their son, but he pushed her away. She uttered a cry, as Nick fell backward out of the window. His father stood staring at the empty window. Then he turned and looked at his wife, as though he couldn't believe what had happened.

"I . . . I didn't mean to do it . . . you know that, don't you?"

But the old woman couldn't answer; she just stood there dabbing at her eyes with the corner of her apron. There was nothing to say. Joe turned and ran from the room, down the rickety stairs, and outside, to Nick's lifeless body.

He returned in a few minutes, his face dark. Then his tired eyes brightened, his wrinkled face eased a little. He went to his wife's side, to the window, where she still stood gazing out into space, and with pleading voice said,

"Maybe . . . maybe if I call the police myself . . . and . . . and tell them I did it . . . confess right away . . . maybe they'll give me a break . . ."

"Yes, Joe. Maybe they'll give you a break; maybe after all these years, you'll get your break."

Slowly she closed the window.

## ALEXANDRA'S FEAST: OR THE POWER OF MUSIC

*JO DE WEESE*

"I love Beethoven," she murmurs  
To the dazzled young man.  
"He is my soul . . ."  
She caresses the keys  
With her slim white hands;  
Poses them gracefully  
At each pause, gazing  
With rapture at  
The crystal chandelier.  
The young man looks, enchanted,  
At the slim white hands.  
"She is music," he thinks,  
"Silver as a grace-note."  
She bows her blond-haloed head,  
Then looks up, smiling  
With pleasure at her image  
Reflected in the mirror behind him.  
"Beethoven," she murmurs softly,  
"Beethoven is my soul . . ."

## OBLIVION

*Nancy Starzl from Le Mars, Iowa, will graduate this year with a degree in biology. Nancy's interests are not limited to science however, as her poems show. She was on the 1950 GRIFFIN staff, and was president of Poetry Society in 1951.*

NANCY STARZL

BLACK sky reflected in black lake  
With colorless stars thick in each.  
And just beyond the stars  
A pasty moon, sluggish with old age dumpiness,  
Trudges all night to nowhere.  
At the shore a dark shape of tree  
Sags heavily into the water,  
And a gaunt man sits on the bank  
Cradling his head in his hands.

## ALL TIME SINGS AT THE WINDOW

*Carol Mahan, a junior from Ashland, Kentucky, is an English major and plans to teach English after her graduation from Lindenwood. Carol's poem, "All Time Sings At The Window," won first prize in this year's Poetry Society Contest.*

CAROL MAHAN

ALL time  
Sings at the window—  
The crashing rhythms of time-fragments  
Echo infinitely through the hollows  
Of the mind.  
Lost moments sing mysterious songs  
That bring forth strange emotions  
We do not and can never understand.  
Lost time and yesterday  
And the madness of the forgotten  
Play high, unheard notes that torture  
Minds and leave the emotions scarred  
By Time-songs.  
Sounds and time and the echoes  
Lost in space  
Return to us  
When fragments of mad melodies  
Blend into the winds.

## SONNET

*Miss Elizabeth Isaacs, a former member of the Lindenwood English department, is now of the faculty of Cornell College.*

ELIZABETH ISAACS

“Il ne faut pas toucher a nos idoles, car l’or  
brillera sur nos doigts.”

*Madame Bovary, Chapter 6*

“WE must not touch our idols, for the gold  
Will glisten on our fingers”; while the place  
From which it comes will suddenly grow old  
And tarnished, and the blighted spot will trace  
The history of all tragedy unsought,  
The minor melody of all regret.  
The dear-loved idol suddenly is caught  
Up with the anxious clutch, and eyes grow wet.

As these few flecks cling to the eager touch,  
The heart an instant deep within the breast  
Is burned and seared and horrified that such  
A mutilation should destroy its rest.  
What price placidity, that happy dream,  
When with one touch things are not what they seem!

## STORIES WITH MORALS

*Jane Ewing, now a junior at Missouri University, was well known at Lindenwood last year as an honor student and editor of the GRIFFIN. An English major, Jane plans to do library work after graduation.*

JANE EWING

### THE RIVAL GRIZZLIES

Not so many years ago there lived in Yellowstone Park two poverty-stricken young grizzly bears, both of whom were deeply in love with a dainty little cinnamon bear. One bear was a prudent, steady, hard-working chap who was well-thought-of by all the older grizzlies. The other was a gay, dashing, devil-may-care sort of character, with a reputation for extravagance. Both bears, however, were unable to support the little cinnamon bear in the manner to which she was accustomed, and she told them that she would wed the first grizzly who made his fortune. The prudent grizzly immediately hired out as an assistant to the manager of a souvenir shop, and worked well and diligently, even on Sundays and holidays. The improvident grizzly tried all sorts of impractical get-rich-quick schemes, none of which came to anything. He finally went off to the Klondike to prospect for gold.

Months passed, and the prudent grizzly bear, by working nights and cutting down on cigarettes and orange peel, had saved enough money to ask the cinnamon bear to marry him. He put on his good suit and went to her house to propose, carrying a bunch of daisies.

When he rang the bell, he was met at the door by the improvident grizzly, who was wearing pin-stripped trousers and pearl-gray spats, and had his arm around the cinnamon bear. "Congratulate me, old man," he said. "We were married two hours ago. I got home this morning."

"But—but—did you strike gold?" gasped the prudent grizzly.

"No. On my way home from the Klondike I stopped in West Thumb and got in a cutthroat bridge game with some tourists from Long Island and won a small fortune. I'm thinking of buying a small souvenir shop here in the park. Have a cigar."

*Moral:* A penny saved is not very much.

### THE SKEPTICAL OWL

Once upon a time there was a most intellectual white owl, to whom all the birds of the forest were in the habit of coming for advice. One day two orioles came to call on him. "Owl," said the first, "last night a whip-poor-will flew this way and told us of a land many leagues to the south, where a great, park-like forest blooms in a place that has always been a desert. There are crystal fountains, and trees with golden leaves and delicious fruits. We came

to ask you if you would lead a colonizing expedition to this place, because you are so prudent."

"Bah, three times!" replied the white owl. "Don't tell me you believe tales like that. I've seen that desert, and believe me, it's no park."

"Well," said the second oriole, "we kind of think we'll try to find it, anyway."

"Just so you don't bother me about it. Frankly, I think that whip-poor-will sounds like a faker. Golden leaves!"

So all the birds organized a holding company and invested in an expedition to the beautiful forest, and a party set out to discover it. Months passed, and the explorers did not return, but the whip-poor-will sent back glowing reports of their progress. "Faugh!" sneered the white owl. "Bunch of nutty idealists. I tell you there's not a park there. It's a desert. Just wait."

One cold November morning a draggled bunch of birds flew back to the great forest. Sure enough, it had all been a swindle. The whip-poor-will had deserted them long before, taking all the holding company's money, and leaving the expedition to find the long way back.

"I told you so, but you wouldn't listen," said the owl. This made all the cheated birds so angry that they set upon the intellectual white owl, wrecked his home, and drove him from the forest.

*Moral:* He who laughs last may be very unpopular.

### THE FOOLISH TOM CAT

A frivolous, pleasure-loving tom-cat, who lived on Park Avenue and wore a platinum-studded collar, was in the habit of taking an evening stroll through a wooded section of Central Park. One balmy April twilight while he was padding delicately down a gravelled walk, twirling his gold-headed cane and admiring some early daffodils, he noticed a slender, exotic Persian cat, leaning against a small plane tree. She answered his appreciative stare with a languorous purr, and beckoned him to follow her down a narrow path which led to a grove of trees. The pleasure-loving tom-cat, pausing only to smooth his whiskers, followed her eagerly. Half-way down the path, she turned and made a signal with her bushy tail, and two fierce alley cats rushed from the concealing shadows, set upon the unfortunate tom-cat, and knocked him senseless. When he recovered consciousness several hours later, the Persian cat was gone, and so was his gold-headed cane. Much mortified, the pleasure-loving tom-cat returned to his apartment.

The following evening, when the tom-cat was strolling down a wooded path in the Park, he saw the Persian cat, who approached him and said in a husky voice, "*Cherie*, last night was all a terrible mistake, but I can explain everything—please follow me." She purred invitingly.

"Well, all right—you have an honest face," he replied. And the pleasure-loving tom-cat followed her down a narrow path, where he was set on by two fierce alley-cats, and knocked senseless. When he recovered consciousness several hours later, the Persian cat and his platinum-studded collar were both gone.

*Moral:* The burnt child often pulls the same stupid trick all over again.

## COMMENCEMENT

JO DE WEESE

LIGHTNING quivers  
In the black-cloud west;  
Flies buzz in through  
Wide-opened windows;  
The organ gasps  
"Pomp and Circumstance,"  
And cardboard fans  
Stir the sticky air.  
Earnest orators  
Give floral farewells;  
The perspiring glee-club  
Sings *Invictus*  
In a shrill soprano,  
And the outraged gods  
Turn loose their thunder.

## REGRESSION

NANCY STARZL

CATCHING fists of stiff brown leaves  
From an igloo pile.  
Thrusting them up  
For the wind to grab  
And twist around your head.  
Skipping gaily  
Down tarred paths  
To glaring lights,  
With hair pulled back from your face;  
Brown shoes clapping pebbles.  
Slow hand strokes to smooth the dust  
Of clinging bark from wild tweed skirt.  
It's time to go and be a lady.  
Why?

## TWINKLE-TOES

*Although Barbara Luchsinger was the literary editor of the 1952 Linden Leaves, this is her first attempt at writing verse. Her poem won honorable mention in the Poetry Society contest. Barbara, a senior English major, will go to graduate school after this June.*

BARBARA LUCHSINGER

Now Twinkle Toes decided on one crispy autumn day,  
That he would take a little stroll to some place far away  
From street car stops and taxi horns and every day events  
And have a try at country life, that's what he'd do,—and since  
The sun was warm, the sky was blue, and leaves were blowing round,  
Our Twinkle grew so happy that he skipped right through the town  
And left behind the stores and parks and houses that he knew  
Until at last, he came upon a shock of corn with two  
Or three or maybe four fat pumpkins in a row.  
Now Twinkle was a city cat, and so, he didn't know  
That pumpkins were a very special kind of fairy food,  
For they were still and round and yellow only while they grew—  
But when the autumn frosts were thick and Hallowe'en drew near,  
Queer things began to happen, for at this time of year,  
When corn stalks sang and witches rode and strange things filled the air,  
The pumpkin folk became alive as Jack o' lanterns fair  
And threw a friendly beam of light across the bare fields dark  
So that when city kittens came, they'd catch the dancing spark  
Thrown to them by the lanterns, and then they'd find their way  
Across the fields and come at last, when night had changed to day  
Back to their own front doorstep, as cozy as could be,  
And when the children in the house woke up and came to see  
A kitten such as Twinkle Toes curled sleeping on the porch,  
They'd never know he got there by a Jack o' lantern torch.



## CLARA

BETTEGENE NEBESNICK

**B**EDS jutted out like white peninsulas from both sides of the long hall. Hannah worked herself up the hall, scrubbing first the corridor and detouring into each successive inlet like one seeking the solution to a maze; at each effort confronting failure. Clara lay on her bed while Hannah cleaned around her. She lay still and desperately wished that Hannah would clean faster and move onward with the bucket of vile smelling soap fluid. A nauseating odor—nauseating—nauseating. With complete abandon, her foot swooped down and she rested it on the side of the bucket, then pulled. A titanic amoeba of green fluid appeared on the floor; and grew. Hannah's wail was full blown and it never ceased till the room was saturated with it and could hold no more. She continued scrubbing. Clara lay back.

It started raining again. It should stop sometime, but really she didn't know of anything quite so nice as rain. It made her tremble to think of the coolness and freshness of it, and the softness as you turned your face to meet it in some open field. It lapped against the windowpanes as easily as falling thistle. The sun was shining. That didn't happen very often; but it was pleasant for the sun to shine when it was raining. Personally, though, she would—

The bell above the screened doorway gave a series of short, angry burps.

When everyone was out of the room, when no one was there to see, Clara, like a magpie after his cache, darted her hand under the mattress for her purse. She ran into the hall leading to the dining-room. The babble, ideas, and turmoil in the hall was a dynamic confusion which Clara did not join. She was angry at the inconsiderateness of people as they jostled her and used her hands as serpent's fangs to dissuade them from coming near.

Four people were seated at each table in the dining-room.

"Don't you touch that glass of water, it's mine." Clara's vehemence was emphasized by rapping her dining companion's fingers with the purse. Mrs. Wilson screamed, and two attendants abandoned their posts at the door to restore peace.

Clara resumed her characteristic position on the bed after she was escorted to her ward. And it was still raining . . . oh, good . . . not indefinite, gauzy rain . . . that was pleasant . . . but this kind that threatened and attacked . . . this was wonderful. It certainly was going to be nice to leave tomorrow. She had been counting on it for . . . oh . . . a long time. And then she would walk at night, and she could wade, and she could feel the water swirl at her ankles . . . a bracelet of cool water.

"Clara."

Someone to annoy her again . . . well, she wouldn't answer. Yes, why did they bother her when she couldn't hear?

"Clara," whispered the young attendant, bending over her head, "Clara, your family is here to see you."

"I didn't ask to see anybody." Now why did they want to come today when she would be going home tomorrow? They got the days confused. Yes. She would go out and tell them. What an ignorant family she had.

She sprang up; resolute, determined, and fled down the long corridor. The attendant scurried along several paces behind, like a concerned parent trying to overcome his wayward child. She stopped abruptly. Her purse. Would it be safe? She'd go back and get it. No, the room was too full. She couldn't visit very long. She hoped no one would take her purse.

Her family was arranged before the high Gothic window in the visiting room; a tintype study. They were the sole occupants of the room, but they cleared their throats silently and coughed quietly. When Clara entered they rose in unison and waited for her to move toward them.

"What are you doing here?" She cast out the words with stinging force.

"It's Sunday. You know we always come to see you on Sunday. Why, we haven't missed a single time," her mother said.

"I mean what are you doing here today? You know I don't go home till tomorrow. I thought you'd get mixed up. Well, you'll just have to come back . . . I don't see why you didn't understand. Anybody would. Anybody. Not you, you never understand."

Her brother nudged her father and examined the appearance of his nails. Her parents looked at her and said nothing. Then they both began talking.

But really she had important things to consider. If she were leaving tomorrow there was so much to be done. Her box had to be emptied, and she had to pack, and she had to clean out her purse, and she had . . . she hoped it would rain again tomorrow . . . rain.

"Where did you leave your umbrellas?"

"What do we need them for, it's not raining," her brother answered.

Imagine, what did they think she was? Always lying to her. Always. Why did they tell her it wasn't raining? She could see. She could see better than any of them because she could see it was raining. And it would be raining tomorrow when she got out. When she got out . . . there were things she had to do.

"I'm going now. Don't forget to come tomorrow."

"But, Clara, we drove all this way to see you," her father had dared to raise his voice.

"Don't forget to come tomorrow."

"Clara."

She inspected her bed when she got back to the ward. It was the first thing she did. She examined it as a diamond cutter examines a precious gem; no facet was left unobserved. Well, she supposed no one had bothered her bed. Her purse was safe. She certainly was surprised though. She certainly was

surprised. Now there was something, she knew there was something she had to . . . oh yes . . . she had to pack.

She pulled a small box from under the bed and spilled its contents on the top. She spread her meager supply of articles over the top like one trying to frost a cake with insufficient icing. Each article was shaken out and folded; doubled over and doubled over until it was tortured into a small, unrecognizable mass. All these she placed back in her box, and they unfolded, gently, the moment she released them.

Now my purse, she thought, my purse. She was slipping her hand along the bed, slowly, as imperceptibly as a morning mist rises, when the doctor stopped before her. It was his practice to make a daily tour of each ward.

"Well, I see you've been tidying up."

"Yes, yes, I had to. I packed you know. You know I'm leaving tomorrow. Oh, you knew, didn't you? You remembered. I'm glad you came to tell me good-bye because I think I'm leaving early in the morning, very early."

"Now Clara, I don't want you to go, and I don't think you really want to go either."

"Oh, there's something very important that I have to do."

"Well . . . I don't think I should let you leave us like this."

"I'm leaving in the morning."

"No," he said. "No, Clara, you'll have to stay with us a while longer. You can't leave."

"But I just . . ."

"You can't leave tomorrow, Clara, that's final. Now, let's not think about it anymore."

She lifted her feet in a quarter arc and slipped back in a reclining position. The doctor was ignored. He walked on shortly; but she lay on her bed for the remainder of the afternoon. No one disturbed her.

The dinner bell would ring in a half hour.

The rain kept falling; but she would never stand in an open field with rain stinging her face and making it cool and clean, thought Clara. She could only listen to it, and wish, and wish. No one could stop her from hearing it. Her eyes caught the simple and coarse movements of Hannah, who was dusting the corridor.

"Give me the dustmop." Clara whisked the broom away from Hannah and pushed her on the nearest bed in an effort to make her comfortable.

Hannah was bewildered, and lay supine in the same jellied mass that Clara had formed of her.

Clara finished dusting the corridor. She did it quickly and inefficiently. When the dinner bell rang she linked her arm about Hannah's, pulling her to the dining-room, never once looking back to her bed. On her bed, exposed for anyone to see, lay a little, black purse.

## MUSEUM PIECE

BETTY JACK LITTLETON

DON'T look under stones  
If you're wanting a fossil  
Or the prehistoric bones  
Of an ancient colossal.  
Go to tea some late afternoon  
And watch human nature at the end of a spoon.

## COBWEB

WILMA MCGUIRE

DON'T inspect too often  
This fragile convolution of threads  
Enclosed in the glass case of the past.  
The glass might shatter,  
Let in the harsh wind,  
Leave only a silken amorphism of  
Tangled strands.

## AUTOS BY NIGHT

*Lindenwood's English faculty is represented this year by Dr. Siegmund A. E. Betz. Although Dr. Betz has been active as faculty sponsor for the Young Republicans, he will be longer remembered by English majors for his classes in Chaucer.*

SIEGMUND A. E. BETZ

THE glassy street frets under the golden treading  
Of a cool menagerie of headlights,  
A procession of hurried tigers  
Summoned to the darkness at the street's end.  
My eye cannot part to evil and good  
The consummate moments of their passing,  
But I know their destinies have no likeness  
Except in the great sky-wide black generalization of this world  
And the white point-clarities decided for the next.  
I can not know unless by pained analogy  
Their suffered baiting and harassing  
Nor by whom . . .  
And I dare not be vexed by my ignorance,  
Nor their deliberated certitude,  
Of their own doom.

## ALL THE PERFUMES OF ARABIA

*Jo De Weese, editor of this year's GRIF-FIN, is a sophomore from Hugo, Oklahoma. Jo hopes to attend graduate school and then teach English.*

JO DE WEESE

I know you don't want to go, Leslie, but you and Ada were always such close friends, and Mr. Slaton told Dad that Mrs. Slaton particularly wanted to see you while you were home. We won't stay but a few minutes . . . she has been very ill . . .

I consented with a grimace, picking my way over the brick walk carefully . . . Mustn't get these shoes wet. They'll have to do for Easter . . . Mother touched the door-bell with a gloved finger, and muffled ting answered inside the silent house.

The door opened cautiously, and Mr. Slaton looked out.

"Why Mrs. Calvert! and Leslie! Come in—come in . . ." He pulled the wet apron from his waist, reddening under Mother's glance. "I was just doing the—just cleaning my guns—come in, Margaret's in the living room—I thought a change of scene might do her good. She'll be so glad to see both of you." He wiped the suds from his hands on the apron.

We followed him down the dark hall, our heels clicking on bare floorboards. Why, it smells just like a funeral, I thought. Wouldn't Ada howl! *Flowers* just because she eloped! Wish I could have seen Mrs. Slaton's face when that phone call came . . . bet she puts on a show today . . .

"Margaret, here are Mrs. Calvert and Leslie come to visit."

She raised her head from among the plush pillows. "Molly . . . and little Leslie . . . how are you, dear? How is college?" Her mouth quivered, and she buried her head in the pillows. Mr. Slaton hurried to the divan.

"Don't, Margaret, don't. (She'll be all right in a minute, Mrs. Calvert.) Are you well enough to have company, Margaret? I just thought you'd enjoy a little visit . . ." He stroked the carefully waved hair with a clumsy hand.

"It's all right, Robert. I'm fine now." She smiled bravely. "It's just that if Ada hadn't—she would have been here with Leslie, like they always were—"

"If you're sure . . ." He stood hesitantly.

"Yes, I'm quite all right—do stop rumpling my hair, dear. It was such an effort to sit up while Nelly combed it."

"Well, I leave you then . . . wouldn't you like a little sun?" He touched the curtain pull.

"No!" Then, patting her forehead with the handkerchief, she said more languidly, "No dear, I have a little headache. Just leave it as it is. I'll be fine . . . Leslie will tell me all about school . . ."

"If you're sure you're all right . . . I do have to look over the books. I'll be in the kitchen if you need anything . . . That table's easier to work on."

Mother's eyes followed him from the room. I knew what she was thinking. It had always been neighborhood gossip that Mr. Slaton and the boys did most of the housework. "A shame," they'd said, "that with that grown girl just lazing around all of the time, three men have to do housework." It really wasn't all her fault though; her mother made her practice. I suppose that indirectly, Miss Pendleton, Ada's music teacher, had a hand in it, because it was she who told Mrs. Slaton that Ada had great possibilities. After that, her only responsibility was practicing, and her little brothers did the housework so that her hands wouldn't be ruined.

Her piano always had to come first with Ada. Oh, not that she couldn't play with the other little girls. Mrs. Slaton made her do that, for she said that she wanted her to have as normal a childhood as possible. But we would be right in the midst of some beautiful play when she would call, and Ada would have to put her big hat back in the trunk, let the bedraggled hoop clatter to the attic floor, and go downstairs to practice. We would wait upstairs, listening to the faltering strains of "To A Wild Rose" being played over and over and over again, until Mrs. Slaton would say that she could come and play again.

"To A Wild Rose" was all that she knew for a long time, but Mrs. Slaton always had her play for the King's Daughters when they met there. Ada wasn't at all shy about it. She would spread out her ruffled skirt, toss back her curls, and smile sweetly at the ladies, lifting her hands in graceful gestures between measures and throwing soulful glances at the ceiling.

The piano still stood in one corner of the big room, silent now, with a large bouquet of white roses drooping from its top, a memorial to the death of Ada's career.

"But after all, Margaret, she's young, and young people are often thoughtless. I'm sure Ada would never consciously cause you any pain . . ."

Mrs. Slaton's voice was querulous. "But she *knew*, Molly, what this meant to me. Why I've worked my fingers to the very *bone* so that she could go away to school and meet people who could help her in her career."

I glance involuntarily at her hands. They were beautiful hands, long and slender and white; but they were not working hands. I knew that the boys' hands were the ones that had been worked to the bone for Ada's career. They didn't go to college. When the time came for Charles, the older boy, to go, Mrs. Slaton blandly told her friends that boys didn't need to go to school as did girls. Charles could go into his father's business, and besides, they would need every cent they could get to send Ada to Ward's. "It's so much more important for her," she had said.

So Ada had gone to Ward's. She didn't particularly want to go, she told me, but it was the only way she'd ever get out of "this hick town." All of this music stuff her mother talked about was just bunk. The only thing she wanted was to get married so she wouldn't have to work. She put a new

hat into her trunk, I remember, and stretched out a long white hand. "Wouldn't a diamond look good here?" she asked. "Thank God, Mother made me keep them white . . . men notice a girl's hands so . . ."

Ada lasted at Ward's until Thanksgiving. Then the Slatons got a call from the Dean one morning, saying that she was gone. They traced her down, of course. But I wasn't surprised when Mother wrote me that Mr. Slaton found her in Natchez with a husband. She had run away with a boy from Nashville whom she met at a dance.

There was a terrible scene. The neighbor who was with her when Mr. Slaton got back, said she'd never in all of her life seen such a show as the one Mrs. Slaton put on. She disowned Ada, and then started in on her husband. It was all his fault; he was the one who had deprived the boys of an education to send Ada away. People around town were secretly pleased, and said that it served her right, but she belonged to the King's Daughters and the Cotillion Club, so all the ladies sent flowers when she had her "breakdown."

The parlor was still heavy with their scent. I shifted uneasily on the carved chair and listened to the loud tick of the clock out in the hall. Mrs. Slaton was still looking at her hands.

"Yes, just look at them . . . rough, red with nigger work, and all for nothing. They were beautiful once—a boy wrote a poem about them . . ." She sighed deeply, and pushed back the cuticle from a perfect half-moon.

Suddenly, her hands seemed monstrous to me—like horrible boneless things in a nightmare that could wave once in the darkness and destroy me. This room with its odor of dying flowers had no air, and I had to get out—

Mother looked at me and glanced down at her watch. At last! We stood up to say good-bye. Mrs. Slaton called her husband from the kitchen to escort us to the door.

"Good-bye Molly, come back soon . . . you're such a comfort . . . good-bye, dear little Leslie. You must come too. You're my only daughter now, you know."

I shivered as she touched my arm with her hand. She kissed my cheek with cold lips, and we left.

I never heard from Ada. I knew that her mother finally forgave her, and that several years ago, the young couple came to live with the Slatons. Ada had one child, and shortly after that, her husband left her. The bar-keeper told it around town that Jim, her husband, said that he'd made a mistake in Ada all right, but that he'd made a bigger one in her mother.

I saw Ada when I went home for a visit last summer. Her father had died, and Mrs. Slaton now called herself a complete invalid, saying that she had ruined her health in working for her children. Ada still lives with her, and the boys must support them all, for Mother says that Ada has never worked. She came to see me one afternoon.

The smoke of her cigarette wreathed the disapproving portraits of my grandmothers as she lounged indolently in Mother's best chair.

"Yes, he's six now. The usual little hellion, but I'll be damned if he isn't going to be just like Charles. Isn't that a scream? *My* son!

"How is Charles, Ada, and Jack?"

"Same as ever. You know they're both married?"

"Yes, Mother wrote me. I met their wives at the Culpeppers' the other day. Both of them seem to be very nice."

"If you like the type . . . I think they're rather dull. *Bourgeois*, you know. And *nag*—lord! how they nag! They're forever after the boys to make me get a job. But I told them that Mother was their mother too, and they could just help support her. I have enough to do with only one maid in that big house, and I'm not fixing to work *my* hands to the bone for them!"

She flicked the ashes from her cigarette, and frowned at her hand.

"I must get a manicure," she said, pushing at the cuticle. She had beautiful hands—hands that were long and white and slender, and seemed to have no bones.



## EQUIVOCATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

BETTY JACK LITTLETON

NIGHT of pine needles  
And constellation  
Of the winds,  
Orion of the forest.  
Woodsmoke and voices  
Like embers and soft ashes.  
We cross the stream  
Where winter rumbles  
Down the mountainside.  
Night of nowhere . . .  
Above the craggy blossomings  
Of earth  
The moon rises,  
An autumn thistle in the sky.  
Is this the paradox  
That squirms beneath  
The stifled sense—  
That you are human,  
A fallen star  
Standing in globes of flesh;  
Delineations of the man  
Devouring axioms of time?  
Equated wind and pine  
Of dumb creation . . .  
Formulas of water . . .  
Dilemma of the flesh . . .  
Between the moon and thistle  
Creation stirs.