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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.”



"guitarist"

Dorothy Webblett

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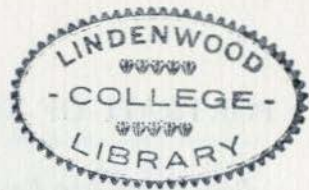
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FAITH

Jo June De Weese is a senior English major from Hugo, Oklahoma. She is doing an honors project in poetry this year and is president of the Poetry Society. Jo June has been awarded a Woodrow Wilson fellowship for next year and will do graduate work in English at the University of North Carolina.

Jo June De Weese

LIGHT falls triangular
Through a three-cornered tear
In the green-backed shade,
Immobile in windless wanness
Of August afternoon. Bright dust drifts,
Suspended in heat, then disappears
And is replaced by replica.
The mind, fallible, follows
To the edge of dark and mourns,
But turns slowly again
To light that remains,
And the three-cornered tear
In shade.

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG GIRL

Deane Keeton, from Kansas City, Missouri, is a junior English major. In addition to her interest in writing short stories, Deane is also a member of the Poetry Society. She gathered her material for this story from her experience in the East as a Washington Semester student.

Deane Keeton

ONE of those Danish pasties—is that what they are?—with cheese, cafe au lait,—no, tea! hot tea and lemon and grape juice—yes, grape juice will be fine, thank you.”

She knew Barb would really like this place. This place could be only in New York. This is what she had looked forward to for so long—the atmosphere of one of thousands of unique little places that were separate in themselves, where all the people were characters. Like that mustached gentleman with the black velvet collared coat. Black velvet collar?—in the morning? She'd never seen so many black velvet collared coats; at theatre time you'd expect it, but in the morning? Well, that was New York—the wonderful, eccentric individuals in New York.

She hoped Barb and Jim liked their breakfast at Thompson's. Thompson's, of all the mediocre breakfasts in the world. There were Thompson's in every city in the United States. Some people had no imagination. She looked appreciatively at the copper utensil by the fireplace and the brick oven. Of course, at Thompson's you could feel a *different* aspect of New York than you could find here. There, with all the cafeteria girls used to hurrying people during the morning rush, they fairly slung your food at you and pushed you along like so many cattle. This was part of the pressure, the pace, the dynamics of this BIG, this mass-production, mass-everything city. She thought, Whitman-like, of the honor and the strength of the determined, working mob. But with no imagination, what could you see at Thompson's?

II.

“Greek salad—pastromi—p-a-s-t-r—, here it is on the menu, number nineteen—yes, on rye bread, please, and have you Riesling?” Was it white or red wine you had with pastromi, she wondered. Beer would probably be most appropriate, but she hated the taste of beer and she might as well—while she could . . .

“No Riesling? I wonder about your imported Spanish sherry . . .” Did Spanish sherry go with pastromi? What was *pastromi*, anyway?—? Italian, maybe. Chianti would be better? She didn't want Chianti today.

“. . . well, I'll have the port, then, I think—yes. Thank you, I'll order dessert later.”

What fun to eat these different things! They wouldn't cost too much either. Of course, the wine would make it a little more expensive . . . *Pastromi*—obviously imported . . . cheap! She took in the room filled with tiny dark tables and much dark wood—eyes momentarily arrested by her own reflection in a mirror. She wondered if she were obvious. She wondered if she looked

eastern. She wondered if she looked like a part of this crowd—this 52nd street and Broadway crowd. She wondered if she looked sensitive and intellectual. She wondered if she looked self-contained—looked as if she were really at home here. She wondered if she looked like she knew where she were going, or if she looked like all the other college kids on weekends in New York. She couldn't. She wasn't. Barb and Jim were. Let them spend their five dollars on the Grayline tour—the *scheduled* tour of (1) the bowery, (2) the Bronx, (3) Brooklyn, (4) the docks (5) the Empire State. That's it—they had to be entertained. They hadn't the initiative to find the real city—the “personality” of the city—the real cosmopolitan flavor that was here. They wouldn't find it on their own. They had to have a set-up. They would just know what every one else knows.

But they wouldn't know the preciousness of the small shops on 56th Street full of strange garnet and amber beads strung into fantastic earrings—not the unexpectedness of finding that art store—the outlet for the artists in the Village—not the thrill of turning a corner to confront actual concert bills plastered on the front of Carnegie Hall, the formidable, smoked brick cube with dark doors and brass. The posters were there—actually. Huge, garish,—red, yellow, black and white—with the hands of Zino Francescatti and of Rubenstein. Bold, on cheap paper. In her mind they were all tied up with Toulouse-Lautrec for some reason,—and with some movie biography about a famous concert artist. She remembered posters in the rain, with carriages and Victorian women passing by. She marvelled and laughed at her own reflections.

She sampled the port—too sweet for noon. Wine, anyway—maybe the Chianti would have tasted better. Then the pastromi came. She took a bite of the ordinary looking sandwich. Just spiced sausage. She tried to detect some other elusive flavor worthy of the name—she tried it with the port. Strange. It was good, of course. She decided that the sweetness of the wine provided a foil for the spiced salt of the pastromi. A *foil*—that's what it was.

She wondered if, on their bus trip, Barb and Jim would have noticed the pale, lovely young woman sitting in the window in the pink-painted brick house. Such a strange, sensitive woman reading in her window on that block of abrupt, consecutive connecting, one-room apartments,—in her apartment of pink brick, next to the one of live green, next to the one of slate grey, next to the one of white . . . all with high doors, all with gingerbread facades. Left-overs from another era to enrich our own, she thought. The gleams of polished brass at the doors—the satisfyingly complete image of the strong faced, sad-faced young woman at the window.

The woman was one of those about whom she had thought this morning as she looked out of her window (thirteenth story, it was—) looked out upon the roofs and wondered what people, what personalities could be here, what they could be doing beneath those roofs.

She wondered if Barb would notice how the mob on the avenues—the viscous movements of the mob on the avenues—was temporarily halted at the corners. Then the great dammed-up flow of people would be suddenly released, to run across the street. At the corner, a transformation into vertical, linear order as the crowd met itself, quadrille-like, in the center of the square.

She thought no more of Barb and Jim. She finished her wine, conscious of the picture she made with the wine glass. She thought of herself—one of the crowd—unidentifiable, unknown, but persently, consciously a part of the

full-living crowd. She was proud to lose herself—to be able to forget completely who she was.

But it was hard. It was hard to assume the blase indifference of the crowd which swept her along at the torrent's own pace—too fast to absorb the windows of Cartier's, George Jensen's and I. J. Fox. Yet she was unencumbered by reservations that she and Barb and Jim held in common . . . reservations that restricted them from ventures into the unknown Village last night, in favor of the nationally famous Rainbow Room. Hell with "nationally famous." Alone she felt her own potential and strength and individuality. Alone she dared test and try her own unrestricted, uninhibited nature. Alone she could drink deeply of this city as a complete, matured individual.

She paid the check—calculating carefully the amount of the tip. She joined the flow of people at 52nd Street, self-consciously viewed the crowd's components—and stepped in, to become one of them. She coursed on with the current, not daring to get out, but enclosed and carried with it so fast that images of what she passed were blurred—the record shop, the art store, the bar—one of many dark squares lit with gaudy beer signs and neon, dribbling coarse music convulsively as the door opened and closed.

Things slowed up as she approached the less cut-up, less lit-up buildings nearer the Modern Art Museum. She saw it down the block—a relief, in its clean, pale grey simplicity, from the smoked red buildings—the aged, dirtied apartments and storehouses. An old dancing school was here, with a poorly drawn picture of a dancer's legs on the sign. The block seemed decayed—like much of New York. It was a direct contrast to the new and fantastically shaped Modern Art Museum, standing in the dark valley it created.

She entered into the atmosphere of the museum through its huge, heavy invisible glass door—with brass pulls seemingly suspended in space. The crowd was different here, but not different enough. She couldn't find the artists; they were not obvious enough. The place was choked, instead, with curious, conventionalized people and too many tourists . . . full breasted women in well tailored suits—fur draped—tricky hats and high-heeled, well turned pumps, leading subdued, impeccably dressed husbands. She got her ticket for the experimental films, and then began to get the feel of the place. She tried to become interested in the displays, interested, instead, in the people around her. She chose her way among the displays, hoping to react with seeming authority to what she observed. The chairs with plastic seats turned into kidney shapes supported by twisted wrought iron, she thought "interesting" . . . the ridiculously expensive drapery fabric traced indiscriminately with black marks (*imported slub linen*, the sign said)—she was about to wonder how such crude, burlap-like fabric could enhance any interior, when she remembered the term "subtle." The ultraism of silver flatware was un-beautiful, but it looked quite modern—"functional," she decided. She was momentarily puzzled by many things—then she would save herself by remembering applicable expressions she had read somewhere.

She confronted a table.

"Interesting combination, brass and marble." She turned her head to find the voice. The man was slim, dark, older—with a thin face.

"Yes, isn't it?" Damned reserve! What to say next?

"You're a musician, aren't you?—a violinist, if I remember correctly." Obviously, *he* was a musician. Very slim face, deep eyes—striped shirt and rough tweed suit.

"I'm studying. I play the piano—" She exaggerated. She was really in her element now. She had been recognized. It was happening as it should happen. She knew it would. Here, in the Museum of Modern Art—of course.

"Were you at Interlochen, then? I was sure I remembered you. I'm Julian. Two summers ago. Fantastic time!" He was prematurely gray. Of course, she hadn't been there, but if *he* had—

"No, I was never there. Friends, though . . ." She threw out some names—attempted to remember teachers—tried desperately to relax and fall into the situation. . . "Whom did you meet from Ohio?"

Things kept going. He was sure he had seen her, though. She was a musician?—now in New York? She threw out bits of information with varying degrees of reserve. She pried. *He* hadn't been at Interlochen either, probably. Couldn't have, from what he said and what she knew.—And his hair was too long.

"Just a weekend," he admitted, "but there was a lovely young woman whom you resemble so much." He was showing his age—*lovely young woman* . . . really! And a man his age should cut his hair.

She was relieved when they moved from the household furnishings; she was running out of reactions,—out of things to say.

"But you see, I knew you were a musician. You look like a sensitive person who would have to be a musician or an artist."

This wasn't going too well. An impression wasn't something you talked about. This was too obvious.

". . . I know that this shouldn't happen in New York. In any other city, maybe—but please don't think I'm forward . . ."

It was all wrong. Why did he follow her around with this kind of talk? He was talking too much.

She tried to understand a white alabaster form that was identified as a woman by a pair of horns below a suggested shoulder. It was disgusting. Maybe it was because of his stupid talk. She didn't like the sculpture. In pictures she had seen it as beautiful—as expressive and subtle. But now it was all wrong.

"The thing is, you meet so few sensitive people these days. I really think we should know each other better. I think we'd find we had a lot in common. Have you had dinner?"

That killed it. Damned pseudo. Just another pick-up with an unusual prologue. Just another pick-up, smacking with culture because it happened in the Museum of Modern Art.

But what was wrong? This was the place that she had wanted to see—the place that she knew would appeal to her. This was the place where she would really be at home, and where she would meet someone really interesting. And here he was, but it was all wrong. What a line! "Sensitive, probably a musician . . ." she had thought. If he was, he probably didn't know any more than she did. She headed for the Picasso collection. If she could just ease away . . . She wasn't encouraging him any more. This was all wrong. If she could escape to the other rooms. She didn't want to see any more. This modern art was no fun. She was tired of puzzling—of failing to understand. She was tired of reconciling with the terms: *subtle, creative, expressive* when it all meant nothing. Rooms emptied into rooms of chaos. She could surely lose him here . . .

He and his well-appointed dialogue came along. Glimpses of familiar prints come-to-life were blurred by his empty comments. "My apartment is not too far. You'd like my records of Casadesus . . ."

Where did he pick that up? The whole farce was becoming ridiculous. What a hypocrite to come to the Museum, throw around his categorized culture to impress some unknowing pick-up. He was such an obvious pseudo.

She needled her way through a group of students toward a Mondrian. She stopped to appraise the students. She wished—but they seemed to understand what they saw. They were oblivious of her—her and her cleverly chosen, purposeful appearance.

"If you're a pianist, you probably know Casadesus well—" She attempted to excuse herself from the conversation by losing herself in the study of black and white and red. She couldn't. It was merely a canvas sectioned into black and white and red.

She hadn't excused herself well enough. Her attention was completely divided by attempting to see—one at a time—this chaos of agonized color and black tracery—this nightmare confined to exposition in rectangular shape—windows into a baffling world where she should have been at home, but where she was, instead, terrified. And the affected voice of this semi-cultivated leech persisted. She was losing consciousness of everything; her eyes saw only a tangle of distorted shape and twisted bulk; her ears were full of him—both stimuli merged in her brain to produce nausea from the aborted situation.

They wandered on from room to room. The rooms, with their macabre, stain-glass-window-like rectangles emptied into more rooms. You couldn't see the end. It was a grotesque labyrinth, veneered by this traumatic burlesque of beauty . . . it was hateful, and she was surrounded by this art, by him, and by this inescapable place. Eluding him in turn after turn in the labyrinth wouldn't work. She tried to concentrate on a face-saving exit, with words, this time.

"You see, I'm from out of town—just here temporarily."

"From where?"

"From Cincinnati . . ."

"I've been so interested in music in Cincinnati. The summer opera there, you know—the conservatory. I love the city—go there sometimes on my job . . ." He was determined that this shouldn't appear to be a pick-up.

Nothing worked. She couldn't tell him her address: Women's dormitory, the University—not after what she had suggested before about her life. She wasn't up to thinking up a false address. She faltered. She limped. She couldn't quite carry through the story.

"I'm usually quite busy. I've night classes . . . and . . . practice hours, often. I'm usually rather tied-up . . ."

All the chaos altered, funneled into this awkward scene—with the silence, his questioning persistence, her hot cheeks.

". . . and, of course, I work on week-ends. I was really very lucky to get off this week-end." That was wrong. Now he would be more persistent about this afternoon.

She wasn't in control of the situation. Something happened to the poise

she had in store for New York and for special occasions. The absence of conversation became an unbearably loud silence. She turned, mumbled something, and headed for the ladies' room.

III.

"Just a minute, please. Yes, now I'll order. Chopped steak and fries—is there an appetizer included?—tomato juice, then . . . All right, I know you're in a hurry. Vanilla ice cream . . . no wine list? (of course not) . . . coffee and cream. Yes, that's all."

She wondered where he was. She wondered where they would have gone—his rooms of course, under one of the roofs—dark, intentionally Bohemian—but maybe with good books and his records. He had mentioned good records. It might have been—no. Obviously, a typed lecher that had picked-up how many other aspiring, artistically inclined single girls. That he would *presume* when he knew so little. Pseudos were inexcusable hypocrites.

She looked, disinterested, at the hamburger and the rest of the greasy meal. She looked beyond it to other other occupants of this functional eating place; she established herself with them all. All the single, tired, resigned, rushed, routined women who occupied tables by themselves—or were grouped—talking as women anywhere else. Women—lonely, single women—more pitiful because of their obvious misplacement. Women, whose clothes reflected the smart atmosphere of New York—chunky jewelry, smart taupes and blacks and olive greens—eye shadow. All these things reflected, here, a conformity . . . not the individuality she had at home. Lonely women who came with the same love of independence and the same aspirations to be different were here—obviously alike, obviously stereotyped. They huddled together—or stubbornly remained alone, in the conventions and restrictions and habits they had brought with them. Their acquisition from this city and this atmosphere was the familiarity with the shops and avenues which led them to disregard the glittering wonders—to be blase. She thought of the hundreds who outgrew the wonder of the bright-lit maze—the components of the crowd who could walk by—oblivious of fantastic windows—probably hating it because of its association with coldness that made them lonely. She thought of their indifference to the thousands of unique little eating places—even of the Art Museum, if going meant going by one's self. She thought of their fear of taking a dare; she thought of her own dare, and suddenly hated herself for not taking it. Then she remembered the reservations that confined her to this sad group.

She paid her check. She walked out of the nondescript beanery—past the pink brick whose quaintness had turned, somehow—tarnished, discolored, distorted. She remembered the woman at the window. She thought of her, not as mysterious, but, merely, as lonely.

She walked into the building, carefully named Tatham house. The stark interior—the unimaginative pale green, the shabbiness of overstuffed chairs in the uncomfortable lobby (the lobby which pretended to be place to relax) with purposely placed magazines on Christian living—all these things betrayed the place as a branch of the Y.W.C.A. She took her key from one of the two shriveled females behind the late desk—obvious spinsters who resented her intrusion in their moment of derisive gossip.

She followed a drab woman into the old elevator. She assumed the mien that people always assume in elevators when they're alone—a consciousness

that other people in the elevator wonder who you are and what you are and where you are going. She felt the guarded eyes of the other passenger appraise her clothes—her carefully chosen fantastic earrings—her dramatic, simply cut expensive coat. She concentrated her eyes—determinedly—on the falling floor lines. The other passenger got off; her show was over.

When the man called thirteen, she stepped from the elevator—a small, rather lonely person. She took the key and put it in the door, but she got no satisfaction out of opening her own door as she had the night before.

She took off—piece by piece—the selected components of today's important costume. She was brushing out her hair when she remembered Barb and Jim. Where were they tonight? Staten Island Ferry, maybe. Just like them. Barb probably wouldn't be in until about 1:00. It was 10:00 now; she wouldn't wait up. Ten o'clock in New York and she was turning in. She went to the window. There they were—the same roofs. She looked at the squared light under them. She thought she knew what the people under those roofs were. At 10:00, in New York, they were lonely.

She stepped into bed and took up the *New Yorker*. She wondered what Barb and Jim would do tomorrow. She found the pages in the front to decide what *she* would do . . . if she woke when Barb came in, she would ask about her plans for tomorrow. Cinema in New York didn't mean too much, this week. There was a Chaplin movie, but she didn't know how to find the theatre. She didn't dare go very far by herself . . . If Barb and Jim would go to the session at the UN . . . She turned to the stories. That's where the cartoons were. She liked the cartoons in the *New Yorker*. There were always some by Charles Addams. People were always talking about Charles Addams.

THE REPRIEVE

Carol Mahan was graduated from Lindenwood in 1953. She is teaching English now in Jennings Junior High School in Jennings, Missouri. Carol was the editor of the 1952-53 GRIFFIN.

Carol Mahan

THE shades were drawn to push away
Intangible voices and cricket sounds
Of shapeless, scraping symphonies.
The knife was cut with blue-steel slash
The old brown blinds which change the room
Into a curious, packaged dream . . .
The knife was thin and sharp, and left
A void to gaze into the night
With eyes half-closed against the light.

EVENING

Barbara Gelman, a freshman from Oak Park, Illinois, is interested in radio and dramatics. This year she has had two parts in campus plays.

Barbara Gelman

THE moon hangs saffron,
The exposed yolk of an over-sized egg.
I stand and wait.

The owls and the wind
Bewail the burden of man.
I sit and wait.

The night air blows sweet
With newly-budded rose.
I hear a step.

CHURCH

Pat Owen from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is a freshman and may major in English. Her poem, "Church," won first prize in the 1953-54 Poetry Society contest.

Pat Owen

THE loud clanging of a near-by bell,
Fervid warnings of repent or hell,
Low prayer benches and creaking bones,
Hushed giggles and childish moans,
Flies buzzing about the vicar's head,
Prayers chanted for the dying and dead,
Stained glass windows tinting faces,
Enumerator counting empty places,
Wasp flitting from pew to pew,
All of this and a sermon too.

THE HEAV'NS ARE TELLING

Janet Elser is a sophomore English major from California. She is treasurer of the campus Poetry Society.

Janet Elser

I wonder why
The sky's so high.
It goes on up
Half past July.
And still it stretches
On past Mars
And past the sun
And past the stars.
And there is simply
Nothing there
No wind, no rain,
No light, no air.
And so you see
It seems to me
A gross waste
Of infinity.

STUDENT OF ETIQUETTE

Jo June De Weese

IT takes years of faithful adherence
To the fine print in the rule
For the ordinary idiot
To become an accomplished fool.

THROUGH THE CLASSICS IN THIRTY DAYS

Barbara Gelman

ONLY the home of the Automat, the juke-box, and *True Confessions* could have given rise to the classic comic, an intellectual triumph which reduces Dickens to fifty colored pictures—with captions—and Shakespeare to a hundred. Just as the American adult bolts his canned orange juice and instant coffee to nourish his body, so the youth of this country attempt to nourish their minds on the bare skeletons of the world's greatest literature. There is just one small difference—the canned orange juice and instant coffee are sufficient substitutes for what they replace, while the classic comic is merely a nibble from the meat of a great classic.

It is not the bare plots alone which have made these books memorable above others. Stephen Crane's Civil War plot for *The Red Badge of Courage* is merely background for his sympathetic probing of the transformation of a boy's fear into a man's courage. Shakespeare's plots are simply coarse and common burlap on which he waves a tapestry of brilliant words and memorable characterizations. In the classic comic *Macbeth*, the eerie spells of the witches' chants are represented in a few gory pictures filled with hags conducive to nightmares in four exciting colors. Is this the purpose of *Macbeth*—exciting nightmares? The authors of these great books did not write their books toward such an inglorious end.

Most great books have several minor plots strung along one main thread of action. The editors of the classic comics must have confidence in their literary ability to suppose that *Ivanhoe* to which Sir Walter Scott devoted over four hundred pages, can be condensed into less than twenty-five pages. Of course, it is almost impossible to compress the contents of such a book into a comic version, but then the effort is better not made. There is no merit in a slipshod and careless product. Scott gave his characters many adventures to keep them occupied for those four hundred pages, but when the classic comic gets through with them, these dashing adventures have become puny. The expeditions of the evil Bois de Guilbert and his cohorts are completely overlooked in the classic comic *Ivanhoe*, while in the full-length book, they serve to make you well acquainted with their vicious characters. The editors manage to push an entire chapter into three conversation balloons and two lower captions. Many parts of the plot are completely eliminated in an attempt at extreme condensation. In versions of Dickens' novels, many of the subplots which are so interesting in the novel, just never appear. Between complete elimination and inadequate condensation, the story hops around with the continuity of an early silent film.

The classic comic's list of missing persons would challenge that of the F.B.I. In the few pages allotted to each book, only the very important characters can be shown. Thus many of the small but gaily flickering lights have to be eliminated. These characters, although they appear only briefly, are usually amusing and charming acquaintances to make. Their loss is particularly noticeable in the comics dealing with Shakespeare's plays. The nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* provides a pleasant bit of humor to brighten the unhappy scene of this tragedy, but in the comic version she appears only as a shadowy,

somewhat villainous figure. The small light of such characters is also often a great aid in piercing Shakespeare's complicated schemes. Prince Hal's character takes on much more meaning as his ideas and actions are interpreted through the comments of Falstaff. Because of the practice of making small parts minute and completely eliminating some parts, the veil of subterfuge is still, in many cases, hanging over major characters at the fall of the comic curtain.

Plots without well-written characterizations are like ghost towns waiting for inhabitants, and the classic comics seek pitifully for their missing populations. The characters are given only a brief description on the title page, a description which brings no life to the character it describes. Hamlet seems merely a fugitive from a psychiatrist's couch, and Mowgli of Kipling's *Jungle Book* becomes a junior-grade Tarzan. Character development is ignored in the classic comic. In *The Red Badge of Courage*, a book whose sole *raison d'être* is to trace the development of a boy into a man by probing his thoughts, one finds a collection of battle pictures lacking continuity and purpose. One vividly red-spattered picture after another fills the pages, with only slight captions and conversation balloons to give the reader any notion of an intelligent idea. Balloons of conversation do not allow for a sensitive narrative.

Such conglomerate composites of literary odds and ends combined in this mix-master technique could not possibly result in a product worthy of the memorable classics on which the classic comics are based. Even the ancient alchemists could not create gold from garden mud! The editors of these paper-pulp horrors themselves have been forced to admit they are not attempting to emulate the great classics, but to create a desire to read the original book. I cannot comprehend this reasoning, for if I had not read some of the originals before reading the classic comic versions my reaction would be complete disgust with such a hash of incompetent characters and sketchy plots. What, then, is their value? Perhaps the best evaluation of the classic comic is one given by a small boy who, on being asked that question, replied, "They're good for keeping busy between Howdy Doody and Milton Berle."

ESSENTIAL NATURE

Jo June De Weese

OMNIPOTENTLY staring Sun
Creates transparencies of trees,
Cuts covers of ruffled frivolity,
Futility of leaves that strive
To distract the eye with green,
To show stark shadow shapes both naked
And strong, assailable in the essential
But standing, white-boned and sturdy,
Structure of trees.

COUNTRY SEPTEMBER

Dr. Sibley is a member of Lindenwood's English faculty. She returned to Lindenwood this year after teaching at Bishop Otter College at Chichester, England, during 1951-55.

Agnes Sibley

ALL ghosts of things are beautiful:
The Chinese lantern's golden net
Is frail as down of willow herb
That floats on autumn wind, and yet
Glory of skeleton is theirs.
And on the thistle's spiky frost,
On satin coins of honesty,
No radiance is felt as lost.
For changed and muted by September,
The hoary fluff of old-man's-beard,
The stiff brown cowslip mummified,
Do not insist that we remember
Any green loveliness that died.
With russet, mauve, and palest gold
Transfiguration is complete:
No whisper stirs among dry leaves,
"Appalling to be old, be dust."
No terror here; no flower must
Endure dishonour. Wind blows cold
But with it grasses bend, are kissed
By yellow evening light that slants
On the seeds of love-in-the-mist.

DRIFTER

Jane Graham is a freshman from Memphis, Tennessee. She plans to major in either English or modern languages. Jane is a business manager for this year's GRIFFIN. "The Drifter" is based on an experience she had while on vacation in Colorado last summer.

Jane Graham

WOODLAND PARK is only a block long—and all on one side of the street. Just once a year does it ever come to life, and that is to celebrate the Ute Trail Rodeo. One afternoon late in August the last of the performers had moved on, taking with them all the color and gaiety that only a rodeo can produce. The town appeared almost as silent as the mountains that surrounded it, after all the excitement of the rodeo had died down. The night was black and cold, with intermittent stars dotting the universe. The moon, as if ashamed to show its thin crescent, had temporarily gone behind Pike's Peak.

At ten o'clock the only establishments that ever show any life are the drugstore and the bar two doors down the street—and the bar had long since shown its superior staying power in outlasting Mr. Peck's Pharmacy every night. Now, the drugstore looked even more dead than usual—with all the gay bunting taken down and put in mothballs for next year. Only Mr. Peck was inside plying the broom with unenthusiastic strokes. Usually he had no inclination for this job, but he had given Jim the night off.

In the silence the opening of the door sounded like a thunder clap, but the young man who entered was welcome company for the lonely pharmacist.

"Howdy, Pop—you all alone here?" asked the stranger amiably.

"Yep, it's getting pretty near closing time. How come you're not down at the saloon?"

"Oh, I'm just passing through—don't know anybody—don't like to drink alone," replied the stranger, moving toward the soda fountain. He walked as only a man who has ridden for many years will—with that rolling, slightly hesitant gait which is a symptom of more hours in a saddle than on the ground.

"Well, what can I do for you?" asked Mr. Peck, looking at the young man for the first time.

"Give me a cup of coffee and a couple of those ham salad sandwiches."

"Okay. Mayonnaise or mustard?"

"Both—and some pickle."

The stranger was obviously a young cowhand, without much money, if one judged from the clothes he wore. His jacket, which was open, covered a shirt faded beyond any possible recognition of the plaid it had once been. His jeans looked as if they couldn't stand straddling another horse. While Mr. Peck fixed his sandwiches, he strolled around the store, the heels of his boots making a dull racket on the wood floor boards. Up and down the aisles between the counters, he carelessly inspected the pot-pourri of merchandise—everything from snake bite remedy to Evening in Paris.

On the far counter were all those ingredients so necessary to a woman's complexion. For a while they fascinated the cowboy, but the look of wonder soon faded from his countenance, and he was off to inspect other marvels. Taking a turn around the center counter, he learned that "fine stationary" in pink, blue, yellow, tan, grey, or white, was only fifty-nine cents; and that chlorophyll toothpaste "keeps your breath sweeter longer."

However, the magazine rack at the front of the store seemed to hold his interest more than anything else.

"Say, don't you have any more movie magazines than these?" he called.

"Sorry, son," said Mr. Peck. "New issues don't come in 'til day after tomorrow. Aren't there a few left?"

"Sure, these'll do for a while."

"Your sandwiches are ready. Want cream in your coffee?"

"Nope," muttered the cowboy, moving toward the counter already engrossed in a magazine.

Seated at the counter, he continued reading as he ate.

"How about turning down that radio, Pop? I want to concentrate on these magazines."

"Can't hear it if I turn it too low. That too loud?" Mr. Peck turned the knob slightly.

"That's okay."

Polishing the innumerable glasses, Mr. Peck moved closer to the shelf on which sat the ancient little radio that was his one companion most nights when he was behind the counter. Suddenly his coveted music was interrupted by a coldly excited voice—

"We interrupt this broadcast to bring you a special news bulletin. The Rod and Gun Store seven miles south of Woodland Park on Highway 67 . . ." Mr. Peck came to attention, and remained motionless, forgetting the glass in his hands. ". . . was robbed of two high power rifles and five hundred and fifty dollars in cash an hour ago, by two young bandits. The owner of the store shot and killed one of the men as they were making their scape. The description of the escaped bandit is as follows: about six feet tall, dark hair and complexion, and wearing a brown leather jacket when last seen . . ." The cowboy, who had been listening calmly, swung around with a jerk and faced the pharmacist. They remained staring at each other through the remainder of the bulletin. ". . . This man is armed and considered dangerous. He is believed to be headed toward Woodland Park."

"Gosh!" ejaculated the young man. "That sounds like something from the movies. Say, what's the matter with this burg anyway? There wasn't a picture show in sight when I drove up. Don't you have one?"

"Nope. People here never felt like they needed one. Although the youngsters sure do gripe about not having a—"

"Well, I sure agree with them. That's terrible not having a show in town. Why even where I come from we—"

"Where are you from, son?"

"Me, I'm from Victor. I just quit down there—don't like to stay in one place too long. I'm on my way up to Wyoming looking for a job. Ought to be easy enough finding an outfit that needs an extra hand around round-up."

"Why'd you quit down in Victor?"

"Oh, that foreman and I didn't get along real well. He didn't like my target practicing in my spare time, and I figured what I did with my time was my own business—none of his . . . Say, you mind if I put my gun up on the counter? It's kind of heavy on my leg."

"Not at all. That's a mighty good looking pistol," marveled Mr. Peck, as he cleared away the dishes.

"I'm mighty proud of this baby—she's gotten me out of some tight scrapes. There was the time a horse went crazy under me when I was breaking him. You remember how John Wayne handled that one in one of his shows,—well, anyway, I hated to shoot him. But, I just couldn't see letting him wipe his feet on me."

"Sounds like you've had an exciting time," put in Mr. Peck, eyeing the gun a little nervously.

"I wonder how that guy feels seeing his partner get killed right beside him," mused the cowpoke. "It must be odd driving like mad and having your buddy get shot in the seat beside you. I saw it happen in a movie once. The guy that lived nearly went nuts, afraid he might get it the same way."

"The announcer said the guy was headed this way. I hope he keeps going right on through," remarked the pharmacist as he drained the coffee urns.

Each went back to his previous occupation—Mr. Peck to his glasses, the stranger to his reading. Outside the darkness seemed to muffle any sound. A car passed by, probably someone home late from Denver. The moon had finally risen above the Peak, and in its uncertain light the stable and corral across the street looked like things haunted. Inside the store the silence was almost noisy. The clock above the drug counter at the rear ticked like a motor. Mr. Peck, his back to his customer, was watching him surreptitiously in the mirror. Once in a while, as he arranged the glasses in crystal pyramids on the shelf, his hands would slip, causing a slight rattling of glass against glass. Try as he would, he could not keep his gaze from the gun. It was a well-made fire arm—that was evident; and it looked like it could shoot straight.

Again the grating of the bell as another customer entered the store—"Hey, Bill, you got my paper?" he called to Mr. Peck.

"Right there behind the counter, Sam. Aren't you a mite later than usual tonight?" continued Mr. Peck, moving from behind the soda fountain.

"Yep," spoke the newcomer, sauntering over to the candy counter. "They've put up road blocks between here and the Springs . . . stoppin' everyone who comes through."

"Road blocks!" injected the cowpoke, swinging around on his stool to face the man who had just entered. "They must want that fellow pretty bad."

Mr. Peck, who appeared not to be listening too closely, stepped behind the candy counter and began removing candy bars from some large boxes on the floor and putting them up in the display case.

"They sure do," answered Sam disgustedly. Sam was as dry and thin as his voice. A chronic complainer, he always made the most of a situation that promised even to be slightly difficult. "I had a lot of talking to do before they'd let me come on. Seemed to think because I was all alone that I was the fellow they wanted." He removed his hat, uncovering a wispy grey thatch that, with his sharp features and piercing eyes, gave him an almost mean look.

"The last time them movie detectives put up a road block, their man ran his car right through it. Of course he got killed, but it was sure exciting," returned the cowboy taking a swallow of coffee.

"Bill, gimme some of those five cent cigars." Then returning his attention to the man at the soda fountain, "It may have been exciting in the movies, but I was d— scared!" snarled Sam. "Besides, I was in a hurry to get home. The wife's going to wonder—" He picked up his paper from the rack in front of the candy counter.

"Anything new down in the Springs, Sam?" inquired Mr. Peck, handing him the cigars. "That'll be a quarter," he added, glancing at the clock.

"Here you are, and that's for the paper too," said Sam handing over a half dollar. "Nothing new down in the Springs. Don't see why you're askin'— you never were interested before," remarked Sam. "Come to think of it, you're staying open late tonight, aren't you? How come?"

"Oh, can't close up on a customer, you know," laughed Mr. Peck nervously. "How about some coffee, Sam?"

"What's the matter with you, Bill? You know I don't drink coffee. Anyway, I gotta be going. Boy," for the first time noticing the gun on the counter, "that's a handsome pistol you've got there, stranger. Like to sell it?" Sam asked as he walked toward the counter.

"Nothin' doin', mister. I'd part with my arm first," replied the stranger, reaching toward the gun protectively.

"Sorry. I wish I had one like it. Be seein' you, Bill—" he called as he went out the door, which slammed shut behind him with a disconcerting finality.

"It's a little hot in here, isn't it?" asked Mr. Peck, wiping his glasses on his apron, and then applying it to his face. "I think I'll check the thermostat."

"Bring me another cup of coffee before you do," ordered the cowpoke, who had gone back to his magazines.

"Here y'are."

"Say, what you goin' back there for?" the stranger called after Mr. Peck.

"Just to check the thermostat."

"Well, hurry up," answered the cowboy.

The phone rang, and when Mr. Peck answered it, he found that it was his wife wanting to know why he wasn't home yet.

". . . Now, Bernice, I can't help it. There's a stranger in here having supper, and I don't like his looks. He says he's from someplace down near Victor—a young cowpoke on the drift." Mr. Peck held the phone away from his ear and took a deep breath.

". . . Just a minute, Bernice. Ring up Dar Elder, and tell him to get down here to the store as soon as he can." The pharmacist took a look around the partition which separated the stockroom from the front of the store, and saw the cowboy get up from the counter.

". . . Nothing for you to worry about, Bernice," said Mr. Peck soothingly. "Just be sure and tell him to hurry. Goodby, I've got to get back up front." He hung up hurriedly, and mopped his damp brow, from which, with the passing years, his hair had receded until there remained a bare half-circle of white bordering his glistening scalp.

Back in the front of the store, Mr. Peck had time to observe his customer more carefully without being noticed. The stranger was again standing before the magazine rack—studying its contents intently. Every few moments he glanced out the window at the street. He wasn't much more than six feet tall, and his leather jacket made the bones of his shoulders appear even more angular than they had seemed at first. The smoke from the cigarette in the corner of his mouth kept getting in his eyes as he read the paper in his hands. As Mr. Peck walked forward, he spun around quickly.

"Took you a long time to look at the thermostat," he said, staring at the pharmacist steadily.

The ticking of the clock seemed even more ominous than ever. In the silence, it measured the inexorable flight of the precious time needed for the sheriff to arrive.

"My wife called—wants me to bring home some milk. Seems she can never buy enough over at the grocery," returned the druggist, moving back behind the counter.

"Sounds like one of them movie wives always phoning their husbands at the office for something. You know," he continued, walking back to the counter and sitting down, "I was in a play once."

"Were you really? Where?"

"In high school. I played the villain. Sure was fun—I've wanted to do something like that again ever since. Never got beyond the tenth grade, so I didn't get another chance. But that's why I like these movie magazines so much."

"I guess they can be pretty interesting," acknowledged Mr. Peck, glancing out the window. "Where'd you say you're headed, boy?"

"Up to Wyoming."

"Where in Wyoming?"

"What you so interested for, Pop? Can't see as you should worry about me," said the cowboy, shoving his hat back, and leaning forward on the counter.

"Oh, I just wondered. Got some friends up near Wheatland. Know anybody up there?" returned Mr. Peck, pulling the syrup jugs from the cupboards, and beginning to fill the dispensers on the fountain.

"Afraid I don't, Pop. Never been up there before. Sort of want to see if all them movies are right. 'Cording to them, there's no mountains like the Grand Tetons. And I want to see for myself. I—"

"You sure are charged on the movies. Never thought I'd see a cowpoke who wanted to be an actor. That's—"

"What's wrong with it? You got some objection to actors? If so—"

"Nothin' wrong with actors, son. Don't get peeved," spoke up Mr. Peck hurriedly, as he put the last syrup jug away, and walked over to straighten up the candy counter. Changing the subject, "I wonder if they've caught that young fellow yet—"

"If he's smart he doesn't have to get caught. I've seen 'em get away in the movies before," swinging around to face the pharmacist. "They just sort of disguise themselves a little, and take someone with them in the car," he mused, studying Mr. Peck.

"But that might not be too smart," answered the pharmacist. "What if the person re—"

"Oh, he wouldn't with a gun aimed at him," stated the stranger, reaching for his wallet and getting up.

"What's my bill? I gotta be movin' on," he said.

"Let's see—two sandwiches—\$.60, two coffees—\$.10—"

"Make it snappy, Pop. Will this cover it?" he asked, abruptly putting down a silver dollar.

"Sure, I'll get your change. Wish you'd stay a minute longer," muttered Mr. Peck, glancing at his watch and stopping to run a wet rag over the counter where the cowpoke had eaten.

"Hurry it up—I've a long way to go," his voice rising impatiently.

"You can't travel in the mountains at night. Besides, I've remembered some movie books I've got stacked in—"

"Never mind!" snapped the stranger, his hand straying toward his holster only to find it empty. He walked back to the counter, picked up his gun, and stood examining it as Mr. Peck counted out his change—

"\$.70, \$.75, \$1.00," counted the pharmacist.

The cowboy picked up the change, shoved the gun into his holster, and turned toward the door.

"Sure you don't want to see those magazines?" Mr. Peck tried again, starting toward the back of the store.

"No, thanks Pop. Got some territory to cover before I can stop." With that he was out the door and almost sprinting for his car . . . as Mr. Peck grabbed up some magazines and started after him.

In his automobile, the young man stepped on the starter and shifted into reverse. As he was backing out into the street, the pharmacist rushed out, calling, "I found those magazines. Don't you want to see 'em?"

Even as he was talking, the druggist noticed Sheriff Elder's car turning the corner and coming toward them. He stepped down off the curb and hurried toward the cowboy, who seemed to be having trouble shifting gears. The sheriff pulled up alongside the drifter in time to hear the cowboy laugh as he finally got his gears shifted and slowly pulled away, "Nope, Pop. You read 'em. They sure tell you how to act out a good story . . ."

HARLEQUIN

Dorothy Neblett is a junior art major from Norfolk, Virginia. She is editor of this year's GRIFFIN and a member of the Poetry Society. A member of Kappa Pi, Dorothy designed and printed the block print in this issue of the GRIFFIN.

Dorothy Neblett

NAKEDNESS

dons
trapezoids of
pink,
green,
and blue,

dances
with rhythmic days,

Then fades
leaving
the mask
of fearful eyes.

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

Jo June De Weese

THE day is gray, the gods are gray,
The gray stone gods of law,
Worshipped without ardor but correctly
By spectacled priests of the briefcase
Who scurry along to the rites
Of moderation and liberty—
To be correct—and across the street
Flaunting an excess lawlessly,
Is a wind-worn stand where autumn,
In violation of quotas,
Is liberally dispensing chrysanthemums.

WHERE THE WINDS BLOW

Cissy Weeman, a freshman, is from Fort Worth, Texas. She may major in English; in addition to her interest in writing, she is active in the student council.

Cissy Weeman

IN the very heart of the southwest lies a wide windy expanse called the Great Plains. It is dry and barren, this land where the wind blows. Human life knows it not; its only inhabitants are scrubby mesquite trees, fat prickly cacti, scurrying varmits, and the dancing tumbleweeds.

Hurried motorists speed by, wearied with the montony of the landscape, seeing nothing but the hard flat concrete road before them. Their lives, like their cars, forge urgently onward, but time stands still on the lifeless desert. It is neither ancient nor new; the prairie simply exists.

The plains are empty, but not motionless, never quite silent. Sound, seemingly from the earth itself, issues from these great flatlands in a moaning, sighing whisper. The ever-constant wind boosts countless tumbleweeds high into the air and then drops them by the shrugging of a mighty shoulder. Gnarled mesquite trees, like weazened little old men bent with age, sway in the wake of the wind.

Perfectly-marked snakes slither across wind-worn rocks to sun their dull bodies. Spying a small rabbit or prairie dog, they begin to buzz their tails ominously, and soon one fatter and sleepier snake warms himself in the hot sun. A deadly vinegaroon goes shuffling across the sifted sand and lazily falls into his subterranean home. Buzzards circling high in the hot blue sky relate their morbid tale while their beady eyes press downward in search of their next meal. A venturesome horned frog scuttling across the busy highway is ground into the sticky hot pavement by the wheel of a heavy truck.

High in the sky the brilliant sun continues to scorch the wind-swept plain and forms a ghostly mirage on the distant shimmering sand. Civilization races on at a feverish pitch; the desert alone remains the same, fixed by the everlasting montonoy of wind and sand.

IN SAMSON'S EYE

Miss Littleton is a member of the Lindenwood English faculty. She was graduated from Lindenwood in 1951 and has done graduate work in English at Stanford University.

Betty Jack Littleton

HER hand upon the fence, she stood and watched,
Tracing the wrinkled sky as if bewitched
And spell-struck by the vacant hum of night.
And apron like a charm, wound round her tight
Incredulous flesh. Her eyes kindled into clay
With incantations of a town forever at the solstice of decay.

She saw the rutted town, beyond, the brown
Fields, pitted, barren, still. Saw down
The night thin spindled derricks, spun
Steel against the sky, heard the spin,
The sudden earth-beat of shuttled sound.

(She spoke.)

Now watch, yonder, round that bend
The train will come. If I could send
Myself, like a pack of goods, I might.
But where? and even why? It seems each night
The train that chains us and our minds to all
The world sets me to recollection: tall
Thoughts, wide as a crescent moon that looks so small . . .

We came here green and growing, like the winter wheat
That gauzed the field that fall. The town was what
You'd call a prairie junction. But planted
Here, like black-jack oaks, we took for granted
All the world was hardy. Crops in the fall,
Friends on the porch, the kitchen full of all
We needed in the green valley of the giver.

And then the boom came (as it always does,
Turning our eyes back into dust).
We stayed. It seemed the whole world came
To anoint our fields and place the sacrifice
Upon the altar of our steps. Its face
Was real enough: the muddy, cursing streets,
And boasting fields, the spangled rigs
And candle of waste burning night and day,
The solid, steady smell of oil, the helmeted
Armies of men and boys, boots and singing.
And it was good enough, for it was real.

He passed away, telling me which leases
I should keep. Our hands were stained with oil,
Not blood. By sacrifice of a golden egg,
A barrel of oil, or of this earth, now
Curdled, silent? I can see, now, what Samson
In his eyes saw, blind. But the temple of this earth
Is close around me; and being me, I cannot touch it.

And directly, yet directly, that train
Will come, plowing round the corner
As if by a furrow of smoke it would
Cover up our cares. And yet, directly
I'll go in. The prairie sings, its wounds gaping.
And yet directly, and directly, I'll go in.

SHADOWS

Phyllis Steinmetz is a freshman from Hammond, Indiana. She is a member of the Poetry Society and has an interest in art.

Phyllis Steinmetz

MOVEMENT

Captured on pavement
By the inconsistencies of wind.

Patterns
In constant shuffling
Painted in black by brushes of light.

Shadows in an endless dance
Till diffused light erases the effects of pinpoints
And starts a brighter variation of the theme.

THE STEP-CHILD

Jane Graham

IT stands alone,
Surrounded by glowering,
Disapproving elders.
Lonely and censured
For its youthful assurance,
It attempts in vain
To appear unassuming:
This diminutive modern dwelling,
Forever reproached by its towering,
Gray-bearded neighbors.

THE BUSINESS OF THE MONKEY

Agnes Sibley

From a letter received by the Principal of Bishop Otter College, Chichester, England, on November 27, 1951:

"My brother-in-law tells me that the Biology Section at the College might like the stuffed monkey that was brought home by my late husband from Singapore. I have left this at 'Brookleigh,' Manor Way, Aldwick, Bay Estate, if you would care to collect it sometime. The house is now empty and the key may be obtained at Messrs. Childs and Smith, High Street, Bognor Regis. It is in the East front bedroom."

NOVEMBER in England,
And the rain falls.
On the Bay Estate at Aldwick
Where the fog sifts down,
In an empty house called Brookleigh
In the East front room,
Sits a stuffed monkey,
Brought from Singapore.
The days draw in. Mortality is ours.
More swiftly than the dropping down of night
Our great perplexities are stilled:
We hurry through Novembers
And are lost in misty rain.
But in that East front bedroom,
Where no one ever goes,
That monkey still is sitting
As the days draw in.
Should we find our way to Brookleigh,
Should we ask for the key
From Messrs. Childs and Smith
In the High Street, Bognor Regis?

ODE TO THE MISUNDERSTOOD
PHORADENDRON FLAVESCENS

Jo June De Weese

IT'S really too bad
That people feel the way
They do about the mistletoe.
So it is a parasite.
So—haven't parasites
Their place in the satisfying smugness
Of do-gooders and go-getters?
If there were no mistletoe and
Similarly inclined organisms in this world,
What load of sorrows would scrub oaks
And ladies' aids have, to stand up under
And feel virtuous about being forbearing with?
The parasite, along with the Scotch and Kentucky-stilled fifth,
Is probably more conducive to good humor
Than anything or anybody else.
We should celebrate the tramp
And give the mistletoe
A more prominent place in psychology
Than it holds as a plant which has
A pleasant superstitious significance
To amorous adolescents
Once a year.

THE RASH WIDOW

Patricia Owen

KNITTING needles click to the rhythm of iron wheels on rails, as the humming little matron busies her blue etched hands with a doily that never seems to come any nearer completion than it was when she first picked it up. The corners of her mouth take up the rhythm by various twitching motions—some of mild discord and others of sheer delight—as do her blond, unplucked eyebrows that bob up and down in time. An expression of one who has just made a momentous decision interrupts this motion, however, as she shyly raises her pale blue eyes to the indifferent occupant of the same seat and continues a conversation begun an hour before, which she had almost forgotten in her deep concentration.

“Yes,” she continues in a rather aspirate tone of voice, “the funeral has been very trying for me as it was so far away from home and I was amid so many cold strangers. But that’s the way Pete wanted it, and who am I to interfere with the wishes of the dead?” After a brief silence she adds, “Of course I will remarry—in due time, you know, but I don’t want to rush things.”

This was ten years ago, when she was “just going on forty-nine” and had barely approached “the summertime of life.” And while time has perhaps added a few more crow’s-feet to the network that she already had, and several pounds of material to the hourglass she was then molding, the widow remains virtually the same—unmarried, but willing.

No, she did not rush things indeed, although she would have, had it been possible, for the very next week after her husband’s funeral she was looking up her “old acquaintances” and inviting the few that remained single to a good home-cooked dinner and an evening by the fireside.

These cozy little get-togethers were more like a meeting of the spider and the fly, for while she didn’t immediately fall upon her prey to snare him, she did try to enmesh him with the romance of a delicious meal lighted only by a few strategically placed candles. Too, she felt that the dim candle-light enhanced the depth of her eyes and perhaps blotted out the colorless mole on her left cheek that seemed to migrate as she talked.

After bustling around to stack up the dishes she would lead him to a dismal seat where only the faintest rays of light could penetrate—in fact, it looked as though all of the objects that could be sat upon had been shoved into the darkest corners—and taking out her unfinished doily would cast her eyes shyly downward (because of the darkness, perhaps, or maybe she didn’t want him to know how poorly she saw without her bifocals).

Her monologue—it may duly be called that, for her gentleman caller had little opportunity to open his mouth—was filled with *him*—what he should wear, what he liked to eat, his hobbies, and above all, the things she could do for him. As she pearled a stitch she would cast a hungry glance in his direction and say in a voice that she lowered by degrees, “That *is* a lovely stickpin that you are wearing—I’ll bet it is a rare antique.” Here she allowed a short pause—one that was long enough to permit her to recross her legs and too short to allow him time to say anything worth-while. “You know—I always did like your selection of jewelry and—umm—that diamond is almost big enough for a—ring.”

At this point it was inevitable that she would begin on her old refrain of how two could really live as cheaply as one and how cruel it was to live alone. Even more inevitable was the fact that her evening's beau would yawn, look at his watch, and remember that it was time to go put his aging mother to bed.

Strangely enough, though, these men of leisure would return, especially when times were lean, and "Eat, drink, and be merry, for it's all free" became a standing motto for each in his turn.

Thus, the unsuspecting little widow, who could see through the best laid plans of mice and women, would let a man put anything over on her, while she, with her slight bird-like feet and legs that were unproportioned to her buxom small-boned body, bustled about the kitchen like a hen on ice. This was often done at a sacrifice to her personal appearance, for she usually greeted her guest at the door with a powdered face stained by tears of perspiration, a house dress dotted with grease spatters and pie juice, and with corn-silk-like hair that fell all too readily about her dripping temples.

Each changing year brought a new love, and while she has never received the proposal that she is after, she appears undaunted. There was Irving, the accountant, for whom she would bury herself for hours at a time under voluminous ledgers doing his tedious sums—because she "loved to do it"; there was Harry, the book collector, whose entire Lincoln library she catalogued—for the "sheer joy" of it; and the most recent was Andy, the lover of literature, for whom she collected forty-eight different expensive character plates—so they could eat out of a different face for twenty-four different meals.

They have all come and gone—a few have married, the rest have just disappeared. So there she sits—alone in her lair with her unfinished doily, twitching her mouth in deep concentration, and sometimes unconsciously breaking into a grin—for to her, life is a merry-go-round—an unceasing whirl of men, blurring in the rapidity of time and engulfed in the Calliope music of the heart.

MUST YOU REALLY?

Jo June De Weese

LEORA stood for a moment to appraise her setting, then sat down on the blue sofa, relaxing gracefully like a siamese cat. Lewis put their coffee cups on the table and moved his chair closer to the sofa. "When I was abroad . . ." He interrupted himself, tapped a cigarette against his hand and began again. "When I was abroad . . ."

The momentary flare of the match highlighted strong lines around his mouth. Leora smiled and leaned back against the soft pillow, luxuriating in the prospect of an evening with this new man. He is attracted to me. Jane said that he would be. How odd to think that Jane would choose the right type for me when she is so unfeeling . . . I wonder if he thinks it obvious, my being invited to dinner. But he must not; he didn't have to drink his coffee with me—John would have been glad to; John picked up the cup but Lewis took it from him . . . and Jane saw it; her eyes were *black* with anger—silly thing, as if I would be attracted to *her* husband . . . he is getting fat. I would never allow my husband to gain weight. . . Lewis wears a black tie. I like men who wear black ties . . . I have done well tonight. I look well—what is he he saying? Oh, something about what he studied. Psychology . . .

"Do you know," she broke in abruptly, "I have the strangest feeling sometimes. In crowds, I'm suddenly all alone. I see people and I know that they're talking, but I simply can't communicate." Lewis's eyebrows lifted slightly then came together in professional concentration. "Yes, I've—"

"Isn't that Freudian or something? A friend of mine told me that it meant I was above most people . . ." she smiled deprecatingly.

He moved his chair even closer. "I know what you mean. One is lonely; I feel it so many times. It is the penalty paid for thinking. I get so bored with the ordinary line of chat—with endless talk of business—that my mind simply refuses to listen . . ."

Leora retreated behind her eyes . . . No one wants to talk about ideas at home; only me. I get so tired of personalities. They're so ignorant . . . dough-faced, white blobs of . . . what is that word? Pro—protoplasm, that's it! Like Jane who talks about her children. She didn't say a word about my dress . . . jealous, I suppose. She's lost her figure. She does look like a glob . . . Leora smiled at her simile. Lewis, seeing the smile, stopped suddenly as if recalled from the scenes of his conversation.

"Most people," Leora said with emphasis, "are nothing but white globs of protoplasm!" Pleased with the sophistication of her sentence, she leaned back and half closed her eyes that were mascaraed to resemble those of a siamese cat.

Lewis's head jerked. Protoplasm . . . what on earth is she talking about? People are boring through. But they can sting; Professor Schwartz, always said that I was too sensitive. They hurt me too much, and lately I haven't been able to dismiss them. Perhaps I should get away. I should rest from people—is she still talking? He re-crossed his legs impatiently then picked up a Chinese figurine and examined its painted features with care.

“. . . and it hurts me dreadfully. Loneliness is at a times a high price to pay for having a mind.” Leora made a gesture of futility, and her enamelled nails flashed jewel-like in the shadows.

“As I said to my assistant the other day,” Lewis began, “I must somehow get away from people. They are so real to me that their problems get to be my problems. The company is afraid that I might even have a breakdown. I am not too robust physically and . . .” Is she listening? Leora leaned forward suddenly and opened her mouth, waiting to speak. She is listening.

He heard his voice again “. . . must watch myself to keep from working too hard. But one who can help others must forget himself. As I said to Dr. James, I don’t matter. I am dedicated to others.” He flicked the ash from his cigarette with a definite gesture and looked seriously off at the other side of the room, facing his selfless future with courage. Then he went on talking. Leora shut her mouth and leaned back against the pillow again. The flicker of interest that had seemed to bring life to her eyes disappeared, and the beautifully opaque mask covered them.

Now what was I going to say? He talks a lot. And now I’ve forgotten about it. Oh yes . . . I was going to tell him about when I was a little girl. Pathetic now when I look back . . . I thought too much . . . she turned restlessly and stared, for a long moment, at the wall on the other side of the room. I could do a lot more with this room than Jane has. But she has no imagination. As I said, a glob. This figure for instance. Leora too picked up the Chinese woman and looked critically at her glazed face. Determinedly, she broke into Lewis’s carefully constructed sentence. “I don’t see how Jane could bear to keep this dreadful thing in her house. It would drive me to absolute insanity. But then I’ve always been especially interested in the *decor* of homes.”

Lewis frowned, and drummed his fingers impatiently on the table. Women’s minds are so limited. They seem quite unable to think in terms of the abstract . . . they must always go back to the home, to *decor*! Idiotic . . . does she think that I would be interested in such trivia?

“. . . so I took it up to take my mind away from Father’s death. I suppose that psychologically, my feeling of aloneness would date from that . . .” Leora shrugged philosophically and regarded her nails with interest. She smoothed the cuticle of the little finger carefully, then looked up. “One must never let one’s interests wane, must one? I think that’s what is wrong with so many women. . .”

I was wrong, though Lewis. The home is not even thought of. It’s just a setting for the body. *Decor* must match skin-coloring, a couch the colour of her nails. Everything she says is really of her body. He nodded portentously, pleased by his thought, then folded his arms, waiting for Leora to finish so that he could put it into words.

“. . . Jane, for instance. She was once a very pretty girl—Oh, of the pink variety, you understand, but pretty. And now look at her.” Shaking her shining head slowly, as if in sympathy for Jane, Leora considered her own slim body with pride. “I—” she resumed speaking, but Lewis was already in the middle of a sentence.

“. . . especially women. I have never found one who would talk of anything that did not in some way affect her body. And that is what a man is least interested in, really. Men speak in terms of the intellect. I must, I know.

I abhor the personal, the trivial. I must have a wife who can stimulate my mind . . ."

Could anyone? Can anyone remove a man's mind from its loving attention paid to himself? Leora asked herself. One can only flatter men's egos. And I refuse to lower myself. My mind is as brilliant as any man's. And I refuse to lower myself to the level of argument. I will ignore this. She continued her story firmly, her nasal voice rising above Lewis's beautifully modulated baritone. "And in school I took up interior decorating. My teachers said that I had a definite flair . . . it was a godsend, really. I was so terribly unhappy, you know." She lifted one corner of her mouth; its red lines curved wryly. Lewis looked depressed. Ah, thought Leora. I have penetrated. It takes women to make men feel. After all, what are men without women. . . I could make him go far . . .

Lewis shuddered to himself. She's just like the rest. Only worse, because she thinks that she has a mind. If women would just stay where they belong, and use their bodies and not try to think. But they call their self-attention thought . . . she uses her mind to lick her body. It is nothing more than a caressing tongue. Am I the only one who is unselfish, who thinks of others as something besides meat, to be eaten for the beauty of the one body? For the ego?

Pleased by the evidence of the impression that her words had made on Lewis, Leora talked on. "Willi's—you know that decorating firm, of course—offered me a position immediately after graduation, but I told them that my health simply wouldn't allow it—"

Lewis brightened and grasped eagerly at a chance to enter the conversation. "Oh, do you have poor health too?" Obviously not. You're simply neurotic . . . you build on misfortune to satisfy a picture of yourself. "One doesn't have to let it affect one's own existence, you know. Get an interest outside of yourself." See, the smile that comes when one speaks to her about herself? "When I was dreadfully ill a few years ago—nerves, mine aren't at all steady—I'm too intense, the doctors say." And now her lips are straight . . . she can't stand reference to another personality . . .

Leora's face was sullen, and the muscles twisted around her mouth. Unable to listen. Am I only to sit at your feet and praise? Listen, my fine intellect, I refuse to be the slave, red meat thrown to a leopard. I am not subject to anyone; I have my own mind. I am I—

"It was then," Lewis went on blandly, "That I undertook a study of golf. Not the tired-businessman golf, you understand, but a scientific sort . . ." He warmed to his subject, forgetting Leora momentarily, in the vision of his balls flying over the green, exactly where he had planned that they go.

"But I find that I think too much for my own good. If I could only be content to be someone's *slave*. . ." Leora said with emphasis, continuing her thoughts aloud.

But you wouldn't be, my dear, Lewis said to himself. You are slave to nothing but your body. To the walls (not to Leora, who was herself talking) he said, "Golf is perhaps the most taxing of all sports—"

"Red meat for the leopard—men are like them. Heavy, but they move fast—to pounce on the unselfish, the slaves—"

"A game in which one uses one's intellect—"

Leora stopped at "intellect," feeling that perhaps he had mentioned her.

No . . . Talking about himself! This is really too much. My nerves will be upset if I stay any longer—

"In which every nerve must be—be—" Lewis stumbled and stopped. He made a half articulate sound, then both began to speak again, to regain the poise lost by the moment of silence. Lewis's voice won this time, and he said slowly, his interest destroyed by momentary desertion of his narrative . . . "and when my ball . . . flies over the green, I—"

"I refuse to be a slave!" Leora's voice was shrill.

"I wasn't speaking of—"

"All men want of women are their bodies."

"Isn't that all they have?"

"Really, I refuse to continue . . ."

"I agree with you. As I told my assistant, one should never continue a conversation when a party is emotionally aroused—"

Their eyes caught, the shell of courtesy fell away, and hostility was naked in each countenance. That painted mouth—words, words, words—his eyes . . . his staring eyes, cold, cat-like, unblinking, self . . . only self . . . I, I . . . Leora jerked her face away from his gaze abruptly. Lewis, realizing that he stared, looked down. The after-sound of their words seemed cacophonous in silence. They hit against each other and shattered, bright bits of coloured glass that tinkled to the floor. Only the I remained, roared on the silence, shaking the concave fragments on the floor so that they rocked with the vibration, slowing down gradually until silence was regained. The Chinese figurine still smiled from the table, her eyes opaque, quite content as if nothing had happened. Embarrassed, Lewis cleared his throat.

"I am really going to have to—"

"Yes, I was just about—"

"My doctor makes me get quite a lot of rest—I—"

He stopped as if he could not think of what he had planned to say. Leora rose woodenly and began to pull on her gloves. In a voice devoid of regret, she said, "I wonder where John is—he must take me home—"

Lewis turned his watch around on his arm, so quickly that it caught the fine black hairs on his wrist. He too arose, with studied slowness, "Must you really?"

GROWING UP

Willa Gleeson, a freshman from Wahoo, Nebraska, is a member of the staff for this year's GRIFFIN. She may major in English.

Willa Gleeson

WAS it a long or short
Kiss?
Is it—
(Be quiet, Charles, I'm talking!)
It is fun to have
Dates?
Do you have anything that's
Strapless?
I like to talk
Don't you?
But Mama says you shouldn't
All the time;
Did you know
I'm often mistaken for a twelve-year old?
But
I'm only
Nine.

CRISP MOMENTS

like a dried orchid
are lavender veined,
delicate,
to be held in lustful hands,
crushed.

jagged edges
shatter.

Dorothy Neblett

RETURN TO PROSE

Jo June De Weese

I feel myself grow roots again to earth
And know once more the finite fear of sky,
Forgotten when we saw day's clean-washed birth
And watched the fire-touched sparks of sundown die.
Unfettered then we wandered down the night,
Walked hand in hand through canyons of the moon,
Hair blown by high sky winds that held no fright
For us who helped unwind each day's cocoon.
But now I build a fence around my mind,
And train new vines to climb the earthen wall,
Afraid to face the sky where I might find
Our moon a myth of dream-darks after all.
For fragment stars I picked with careful hand
Have crumbled, trickled through my mind like sand.

REALIZATION OF POETRY

Jo June De Weese

THE night has gone, and now we must arise
To face the dawn that touches sleep-drugged eyes
With gentle fingers. Dark-dreams disappear
In mist that cloaks the fields as day draws near,
And scraps of cloud that flecked a windswept night
Are gone; the sky is drenched in pale gold light
That shapes reality. A cock crows sun;
The moments of awareness have begun.
No longer may we live alone in seem—
The truth requires that shadow thoughts we dream
Be—that I hold their image in my hand.
We felt the truth; now we must understand,
Remembering, in day, night-wandered land
When mists curl up from dimly outlined sand.

NIGHT-WALK

Every year the GRIFFIN staff looks forward to a contribution from Dr. Betz. He is known not only for his poetry, but also for his wit as revealed in his lectures and private conversations.

Siegmund A. E. Betz

In the ambivalent sympathy of stars that taunt us,
symbols or sharp twists of light,
touching our souls limb by limb
to ease or humbleness, sight,—
in the mysteries that haunt us
we walk and dream

harsh paths. The patent wind, dim
sounds in ravines unpeopled
(there, left!), the nigh whisper (right!)
of mathematic bats whim-
flying, and rumbling might,
thunder far off, and steepled
churches we collate.

“INTENSE FRAGILITY”

Dorothy Neblett

GLIDING through mechanical days,
We follow rotations of sun-dial shadows,
But in the morning
While curtains are speckled with diaphanous light,
We look into our green valleys—
The leaf flutters;
The wind blows,
And we sit transfixed by a delicate truth.

POINTS

Carol Mahan

POINTS,
Stops,
Here is now,
Not gone is past,
To come will be now.

There are pinpoints
Of pain-etched stops—
Silver light diffused
Through tears
Between two nights.

Wrapped in brown slumber
In forest-green of nothing—
Silver gleams slowly
Into something—
Into
Points,
Stops,
The now
In eternity.

