



# 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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# Shalom, Shalom

CHERYL OGDEN

*Cheryl Ogden, a freshman, is from Alston, Ohio. She has lived in many different countries, including Israel, which is the scene of, "Shalom, Shalom," the winning short story in the Freshman Writing Contest. Cheryl is interested in travel, speaks Spanish fluently and also is interested in art.*

IT WAS A HOT AFTERNOON, with the summer sun glaring down fiercely from a still sky. Mona sat perched precariously on the edge of a curved plastic chair, trying not to slide back into its cupped recess. She looked around the bright room with an air of suspicious disdain. The sunlight bounced off the bare, pale yellow walls, tossing tiny particles of dust to and fro in its clear path. The furniture was typical for a modern Israeli home, rather sharp and angular, vividly colorful, and not especially comfortable. Braided rugs were rolled up and stacked in a far corner. The floor was strewn with bits of shredded newspaper, wood shavings, tissue, and other packing stuffs which overflowed from the many boxes and barrels which were marked:

David E. Kurtz  
Via Tel-Aviv- Jaffa,  
Israel.

She tossed the limp dustrag indifferently onto the coffee table and pushed back the tendrils of pale blonde hair that had escaped from the powder-blue hair band and fallen in her eyes. She closed her eyes and began to bite her nails,

slowly, thoughtfully. She relaxed for just an instant and, losing her balance, slid backwards with a plop into the deep seat. A soft "Goddamnit" broke the stillness of the room as she squirmed out of the slippery wings and began pacing the floor in front of the sliding glass doors which opened on a small garden there on the top of the sea-cliff.

As she paced, she glanced out through the doors and tripped on a stray lamp cord, pulling the lamp off of the low sofa table onto the hard tile floor. She made a futile lunge to catch it, but her fingertips slid off of the glazed surface, and the rich blue porcelain base shattered violently, hurling splinters of brittle china all over the floor.

Mona went to her knees in her effort to rescue the lamp. She knelt there for a moment, head bowed, her hands on the floor in front of her. Her slim shoulders began to shake, and a tear splashed on the dusty floor between her hands. She opened her eyes and stared at the wet spot for a second; then her head came up and the tense rigidity returned to her back. Even if David had gone off to work this first day here and left her to unpack and clean up their newly-purchased house by herself, she wasn't going to buckle under and cry. She'd do it. She had to show him that she was just as capable and self-reliant as his sister Sara, even though she wasn't a "Sabra" woman. Even though she was only a "pampered American girl," she had just as much grit as any young wife starting a new life, whether she'd been born in Israel or any other country. She would prove to them all that she was just as hardy as any of the confident, striding, pioneer "Sabra" women. But it just wasn't fair of him to go off and leave her like this . . . it just wasn't fair.

She stayed there a minute more, her lips set in a resolute line. Then slowly her eyes softened, and she sighed deeply as she rose to her feet. Of course, she knew he'd had to return to work today, and that it wasn't David's fault that the others were reluctant to accept her into their lives. She was a stranger, lonely, in this strange, high paced, yet exotic country, with a foreign language to learn and speak for the rest of her life there, and with a "Sabra" husband who loved the land too much to leave it.

Resignedly, she picked her way through the mess of boxes, pausing beside one to pull a small glass from a shiny plastic wrapper, then went over to a small, neat, mahogany-finished liquor cabinet and pulled the doors open. A lone bottle greeted her; a bottle of the local wine, sharp and deep red, called "Carmel" by brand name. The mirror fixed on the back wall of the cabinet reflected the image of a young woman in her mid-twenties, blonde, stylish, and attractive. She had deeply-set blue eyes, a rather angular nose, and a generous mouth. Tiny lines near her mouth and eyes told of a person who smiled a great deal. But now there was no smile. The mirror showed trembling, nervous hands pouring wine from the tall bottle into the glass. She dropped a few ice cubes from the tiny built-in freezer compartment absent-mindedly into the drink, then picked it up.



The reflection was cut off by the cabinet doors as they slapped shut. She raised the glass and took a sip, then made a wry face at its coldly sour taste.

Once again she stepped through the maze of papers and boxes to the glass doors, and, pulling them back, she stepped out onto the slab-stone terrace. It was a shade cooler here, under the tall pines. She wandered between the shrubs and rosebushes, up to the garden wall. The wall had fascinated her from the start; it was built of the ruins of ancient Roman walls, columns, and buildings from the surrounding area. She traced a tiny crack down the side of one of the round marble pillar insets with a pink-polished fingernail, and looked out over the quiet Mediterranean Sea coast. The sky was cloudless, and the sun beat down with unrelenting energy. There was no breeze now, and all along the shore not a thing was moving; only the waves washed with hushed splashing up onto the empty shore. A tiny footpath led down the steep hill, through a rocky passageway, and out onto the beach. Mona pushed the little white picket gate open and walked gingerly down the rough trail. Passing through the craggy archway, she found herself on a wide strip of sunbaked sand. The loose soil seemed to swim with the heat waves which wavered around and distorted the forms about them. This was the "hamsein" season, the time of periodic hot desert winds blowing over the land. Gusts of the hot, dry air mingled with the sea air, pushing the cool breezes far out to sea, and the atmosphere seemed steamy and unbearably hot. The burning sand oozed into her low sandals and seared her feet. To shake the sand out and avoid picking up more, she pranced her way down to the shoreline, below and directly in front of the house. There was a small rocky promontory there, and a few sections of an old Arab or Roman wall had fallen from above and had come to rest near the water's edge. The constant pounding of the waves had worn them fairly smooth, but the surf was still today, and the ruins stood silently and majestically on the dry beach. She explored them carefully, noting the unusual stones that had gone into their construction. In one she found a seemingly enormous aquamarine in its center. It glowed coldly in the sunlight, impassive to her interest.

"Like a 'Sabra,'" she thought.

She tried to chip it out with a shell, but the shell splintered on the rock, so she threw it away, disgusted.

Mumbling something about the "lousy rocks in this lousy country," she sat down on the remains of the sea-wall and began inspecting her chewed-off fingernails, frowning at the way she had allowed her frustration to show itself. She figured that if they didn't want to accept her, she'd just go it on her own. Israel—what an exciting word that had seemed back home. Home—that was a far more exciting thought now. Home, in Myrtle Beach, where her family and friends and past were.

The waves lapped softly at the sand, depositing and sucking back tiny shells and pebbles, playing a never-ending give-and-take game with the shore. The



foam here looked soapy; further out the waters were a deep blue-green, stretching out further than one could see to meet the horizon, stretching towards America, towards home.

She sighed again, and, switching the glass to her left hand, she slipped off her loafers and began brushing the crumbly sand from her blue bermudas and white blouse. She was so intent on removing every last speck that she didn't notice a movement beside her. A puppy peered curiously around the corner of the wall. Big brown eyes took in every movement that Mona made. When it was sure she meant no harm, it stepped out from the shelter of the rock and faced her. It was a small puppy, lithe, quick, brown and white in color, and looked strikingly like the wild jackals that range the countryside, but its eyes were friendly and curious. It yipped a shrill, testing bark; Mona jumped up from the wall, only to slip and sit back down again, only this time in the foam at the water's edge. When she saw the little dog and realized what had happened, it all seemed so slap-stick and funny that she began laughing helplessly, sitting there in the water and wet sand.

At the sound of her laughter the pup crept back around the edge of the wall again, encouraged. It minced up to her and sniffed at her foot, then snuffled its way up to her knee, never taking slightly suspicious eyes off of her hands and face. Its whiskers tickled her leg, and she laughed even harder. The glass in her hand sparkled in the sun and caught the pup's attention. Mona saw this and held it out to the pup; its dark eyes twinkled as it nosed closer, and a tiny pink tongue responded with a steamy kiss on the frosty glass. Surprised by the cold touch, the puppy bounced backwards, yapping playfully. Mona forgot her problems and where she was sitting, and found herself giggling at its antics as it became engrossed by the foam curling around her feet, pawing and snapping at the bubbles, bounding in and out as the water alternately swept in and recessed. After a few moments, another movement in the shadows caught her eye. She stared hard into the darkness at the source of the movement and made out the shape of a child behind the craggy outcrop.

"Hi," she called. "C'mon out."

Realizing it did him no good to stay hidden, a young boy stepped into the open and called "Chumit!" Chumit gave a final victorious snort at the conquered surf and padded to his side. Mona was puzzled by his taut silence as she looked him over. He was about eight years old, with curly black hair, a sun-and-sea tanned face and body, and snapping black eyes. He was dressed simply, in the typical Israeli khaki shorts and shirt, with a faded blue sailor's or "village idiot's" hat perched cockily on the back of his head. He matched the pup in his quick movements and lithe body. He stared at her openly, but not really hostilely, just with an uncertain curiosity.

"Do you speak English?" she asked.

He shook his head and retreated a step. Then he became uncomfortable in

the silence that followed, and, commanding the pup with a snap of his finger, he began sprinting up the path behind the rocks. Mona watched him go, not knowing how to stop him or reassure him that she only wanted to be friends. He emerged from the archway on the path above her; he stopped, turned, and looked back down at her. Then he broke out in a wide grin, and pointing at her, he began laughing in the high, happy, contagious laugh shared by all children. It dawned on her just how ridiculous she must look, sitting sprawled in the water, fully clothed, with an empty glass in her hand. She found herself laughing along with him and was surprised how easy it was to laugh with this "Sabra." At his ease now, he waved and yelled "Shalom."

"Goodbye," she called back.

"Ma?" he asked.

"I said 'Shalom.'"

"Ah! Shalom," he repeated. Then he smiled, waved, and, hands in pockets with Chumit bouncing beside him, he sauntered over the hill.

"Son of a gun . . . so that's a 'Sabra' child, hmm?" she said to herself. "Just like any kid back home; just gotta speak his language, that's all. 'Shalom,' 'peace.' Hmm."

A fat gull flapped to a landing on the rock and peered at her, its head cocked at a haughty angle. "Oh, and are you going to laugh at me too?" she asked it. She flicked a pebble at it, and it scrambled into the air, screeching indignantly at her. She heaved herself out of the water and was standing there examining her wet seat and shaking the sand out of her hair when a deep voice behind her said, "Did you always swim with your clothes on at Myrtle Beach?"

She wheeled to find David standing behind her, leaning on the wall, trying hard to keep a straight face.

"Why, of course. Doesn't everyone?" she answered, keeping her expression as serious as possible.

Then his lip twitched and they both gave way and broke into laughter.

"Hello, hon," he said.

"Hello, ah, 'Shalom,' David."

The gull drifted above them as they walked back to their home, its wings catching the sea breeze that pushed back the "hamsein"; the cool air blew up the hill through the tall pines.



## A Sonnet for a Southern Lady

IN MEMORIAM: FAY MCCABE PROFILET

PETER L. SIMPSON

*Mr. Peter L. Simpson is an Assistant  
Professor of English.*

**I**F burnished angels could confederate  
to find a lost ideal of human grace,  
they'd stop long on a dour, judicious face  
that makes a nephew's blood coagulate  
in hardy pain to see her rest in state  
so calm, so pure, so safe beneath the lace  
of finer, older mysteries. A trace  
of lilac weighs upon a heart come late  
to do her honor. She, still, has more to give  
this humid evening that we come to wake  
her soul and kiss her flesh goodby awhile.  
I love the shock that sees in how I live  
so much of her, and courtly comfort take  
in how God's grace was all her human style.

# The New One

JULIE BAUER

*Julie Bauer is a junior majoring in economics and minoring in art history. She enjoys painting and hopes to be a fashion coordinator or go into advertising when she graduates.*

IT WAS A GRAY, GRIM DAY IN OCTOBER. The heavy downpour had stopped suddenly, leaving small pools of water standing in the sunken areas of the front lawn.

Through the humid veil, Twelve Oaks looked like two red corn-flake boxes joined in the center by a dried soup box. The corn-flake boxes were riddled with small square windows and the soup box had two large glass doors in its middle and nothing more. The old men lived in the right box and the old women occupied the left one. There was only one mildly interesting aspect to the depressing appearance of Twelve Oaks and that was the crooked, half-blighted oak near the entrance and the eleven stumps that lined the driveway.

Mrs. Applebee was looking out of her first floor window at the dismal afternoon. She had occupied this same room for twelve years now, and therefore had the most seniority, except for Old Mrs. Collins, who was ninety now and confined to her bed. She eyed the stiff brown lawn with dread. Soon it would get very cold and she would not be able to spend those lovely hours outside in the sun. Sitting in a lawn chair listening to the birds sing and reading out of doors were very pleasant indeed, but in the winter she could brush up on her bridge game, so it was not so bad after all. Then, as she watched the graceful flight of the geese passing overhead, she was startled back to earth by the sound of a car motor. Well, of all things, a large blue car was hurrying through the gate and



up the circular drive. A strange car, so it must be a new one just arriving. She craned her neck for a better look at the car that had just thrust a pound of gravel from its back tires as it came to a grinding halt. Yes, it was a new one. A tired-looking man and his hard-faced wife were now very solicitously leading their charge toward the doors behind which Mother Superior and her big oak desk waited for the new ones. This scene was all too familiar to Mrs. Applebee, for she had witnessed it many times. Of course, no one brought her here because she had no one left. She had wanted to have a friendly place to live away from the loneliness of the city, so she had sent herself here. It was very kind of Mother Superior to allow her to come, because she was not Catholic and, well, there was a waiting list, but it all worked out and Twelve Oaks was a very nice place.

She did not get a good look at the new one, for the youngsters hurried her along too fast and she had her head down. Mrs. Applebee creaked up from her chair at the window and creaked to her door that opened right onto the hall where they were now standing. She opened the door a little and poked her white, fluffy head out just enough to take a peek at the new one. That was all she wanted, a peek.

Mrs. Applebee could hear Mother Superior give her well-practiced speech with the regular voice inflections. "May I welcome you to Twelve Oaks. I am sure you will grow to love it here. We have many lovely men and women your own age here and we have a large recreation area, parties, and several active clubs, so you will get to know everyone in no time."

The new lady raised her head for the first time, and Mrs. Applebee leaned out into the hall at quite a precarious angle. The new lady had piercing brown eyes encased in wrinkles and a very long nose. Her mouth was sunken under thin lips and—that chin! Well, it was so large and pointed that it stuck straight out, giving her whole face an angular look. She was mopping her eyes with a handkerchief. Such a pathetic soul.

"I don't want to stay here, Janet. You know I didn't want to come."

"Now, Mother, you promised not to make a scene."

"But I will just die here, I know it. I can feel it in my bones."

"Mother, you know Janet and I have thought it all over for some time now and we were lucky to be able to get you in here. It is a very good home, and you will get to know lots of nice people your own age and will have many good times together. We will both come to visit you often."

"I don't want people my own age. I want to go home. I want to go home right now. I don't belong in this place."

Out of nowhere came two nuns to escort the poor thing and her suitcase to her new room. "We will take you to your room now. You will like your new room. It is a cozy green room with a sunny exposure. It is on the third floor so we will take the elevator."

"I don't want to go. I like my room at home." That was the last that was



heard from the thin, tear-drenched voice as the new lady was propelled down the corridor. She looked over her shoulder all the while at the youngsters, who were now speaking to Mother Superior in muffled tones.

They did not talk long and as soon as the old lady was out of sight, they hurried away from the dry soup box with the two glass doors in its middle. The gravel on the drive crunched, the car door banged, and then the car motor coughed dryly as it started slowly down the drive.

Mrs. Applebee pulled herself back into her room and thought about the new lady. All that she could remember from her long peek was that the lady had a very prominent jaw and chin and her skin was as dry and wrinkled as parchment. She won't want to see anybody today, she thought, so I will wait until tomorrow when she has had time to get settled. Then I will visit her. That is what I will do tomorrow.

Mrs. Applebee woke earlier than usual with the new one on her mind. She was glad to see that the sky was blue and promised some sun later on in the morning. She dressed carefully and deliberately, making sure she looked her best. She had her breakfast and ate another helping of cereal, for she had much to attend to today. She always read the morning paper to Mrs. Collins the first thing after breakfast. The Literature Club met once a week and today was the day for her book review. After that she would welcome the new lady properly.

It took longer than she had planned, but she was finally ready for the welcoming visit. It was ten thirty and the sun was up. She walked out to the garden in hopes of seeing the lady. It was a beautiful, dry, sunny day and she would surely be feeling better. The breeze was playing tag with the dry, fallen leaves on the patio. Mrs. Applebee greeted all she passed, but this morning she was too excited to talk long, for she had to find the new lady. She caught sight of the very long chin and the same navy blue dress of yesterday. She was sitting in a lawn chair and Mrs. Applebee was glad to see an unoccupied chair next to her.

As she approached, the lady pretended to read. She was only pretending though; it was easy to tell because her eyes did not move. She is probably shy, thought Mrs. Applebee, the poor thing.

"It is a lovely day today, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Would you like some company?"

"It does not matter."

Mrs. Applebee sat down, feeling that her task was going to be more difficult than she had thought. The lady was still staring at her paper without reading it. She looked like a cross between a goat and an old English bulldog she once owned many years ago, except that Snoot's brown eyes were warm and hers were chilly. Her skin is so very dry and wrinkled, she thought. Mine does not look like that and I'll bet I am a good bit older. She must have had a hard life, such a pity.

"I am Mrs. Applebee. You arrived yesterday, didn't you?"

"Yes, how did you know?"

"Oh, I know everybody here; you will too in a little while."

"Humph . . ."

"Are you all settled in your new room now?"

"Yes. It is green and I hate green."

Mrs. Broom rearranged her crinkled hands in her lap, and did not take any notice of the newspaper when it slipped to the ground. Mrs. Applebee was happy to see that Mrs. Broom looked as though she wanted to say something for the first time.

"This is an ugly place. It has a name like Twelve Oaks and it has only one, and even it has the blight."

"That is true, but we do not use the front anyway, and the back lawn is very pretty with the garden and all. We all have flower boxes at our windows, and when it gets cold, we can have them moved in if we like. Then we can have flowers in our rooms all year long. You have to water them often when they are on the window ledge, or they will dry up, but it is such fun to watch them grow. What is your name?"

"My name is Mrs. Broom."

"Mrs. Broom, hummmm. Your name sounds familiar. Did you once live in Akron?"

"Yes, I lived there once.

"Where did you live in Akron?"

"I lived on Randolph Street."

"I thought you looked familiar. You must be Mildred Broom. I am Kate Applebee. I lived down the street from you, remember? Our boys were always playing in the vacant lot, and getting into fights over their baseball game."

"Yes, I remember. My boys are dead now. My daughter, Janet, is the only one of the three left."

"They were all good children. I had four boys, remember? After Herb died, I raised them as best I could. They were good boys, but they all died in the war. I have never forgotten Randolph Street. We were all together then, the boys and I. It was a nice street with so many old shade trees."

"I never liked Randolph Street. It was an awful place and the neighborhood was running down. I was glad when we moved away to a nicer place."

"Wasn't your husband's name Robert?"

"Yes, Robert and I lived there with our three children."

"I remember Robert very well. He was so nice to the boys and me after Herb died. He helped us sell the piano, and he played football with little Tom sometimes. But didn't you have someone else living with you?"

"Just Robert's mother."

"I remember now. Her name was Marie. She once brought me some home-



made jam and showed me how to cut down the food bill by using some of her old cooking tricks. I didn't know much about cooking and I sure appreciated her help. It must have been nice to have all that help around the house."

"Nice! It was terrible. She was an impossible woman. She was just terrible to work with. She always got in the way of everything. She was European and was always telling everybody about the time the queen came to visit at her house when she was a little girl. I had to hear that story a million times."

Mrs. Broom's prominent chin was jutting out even further than usual. Her dry, reedy voice kept rising higher as she became more and more unstrung. Her eyes looked like burning coals set deep in the sagging frown wrinkles that surrounded them. She kept rubbing her crinkled hands together, as though any minute she was magically going to produce the spirit of her mother-in-law for her to see. Mrs. Applebee was very uncomfortable and tried to avoid her piercing eyes. It was strange that she should meet Mildred Broom after all these years.

"Nothing I ever did could suit that woman. I could not cook as well as she could, or keep the house right, or take care of Robert properly. She was always concerned with things being proper. I was not strict enough with the children, she said. She was always prowling around the house looking for my typical American mistakes. I told her that if Amsterdam was such a fine place she ought to go back there, but that would make her cry and then she would tell Robert that I was a disrespectful shrew when he got home. I could not even cut up potatoes correctly, as far as she was concerned. All she ever talked about was her coat of arms and her fine family of which Robert was a part, but I was definitely not. She got steadily worse and not better. I could hardly stand the sight of her towards the end."

"What ever happened to her? I didn't see her in the last year before you moved, but I was working then and I did not have the time to visit anymore."

"I finally talked Robert into sending her to the old folks home. Naturally, she did not want to go; she thought it was not proper."

Mrs. Applebee could not help noticing that she kept rubbing her hands together in Lady Macbeth fashion, but she did not slow her racing words in the slightest. It was amazing, but Mildred Broom seemed younger and stronger the more she talked.

"But she did not think anything I did, or anything that meant progress beyond her old European Ideas was proper either. But we always went to see her once a month until we moved away. Robert was hard to convince, but he was always slow to do anything that meant a change. I always had to push him into everything. Even when he got the better job, I was the one who had to talk him into taking it, then I had to take charge of the moving. He never had a head for business. He was some like his mother in that way."

Poor Mrs. Broom looked exhausted now and even dryer than before. The light in her eyes was gone and her hands were still. The breeze was still playing



with the old brown leaves, but the game had changed to leap-frog. Now it was battering the heavy heads of the brown dahlias back and forth like a punching bag. She thought Mrs. Broom looked a lot like one of the dahlias as she sat staring down at her crinkled hands without really seeing them.

"Please, let me introduce you to some of my friends over at the card table. I remember you liked to play cards, so you will enjoy them. They are always learning the latest card games."

As they got up, Mrs. Applebee couldn't help feeling sad. Time had been so cruel to Mrs. Broom, and now she looked like a shriveled white raisin. Poor thing, she has had such a hard life, she thought. I must remember to water my flowers when I get back to my room.

## Piscatorial

*Janice Adlersfluegel is a senior from St. Louis, majoring in English and minoring in speech with an emphasis on broadcasting. After graduation Janice hopes to do work in continuity. During her years at Lindenwood she has done both production and continuity for the campus radio station, KCLC.*

JANICE ADLERSFLUEGEL

HE glides  
Into the seaweed,  
Shimmering fish.  
He circles,  
Gulps, gasps.  
He screams  
In silence;  
In blindness  
He watches.  
Passively turning  
Into the seaweed  
He glides.

# No Time

NANCY HAMILTON

*Nancy is a senior from El Dorado, Arkansas, majoring in art and English. This year, among other activities, she is a member of Poetry Society and Linden Scroll. Like Elizabeth, Nancy spent her summer in Europe, and we can't help wondering if she did not see that connoisseur's buffet at the captain's party.*

HE HAD FOLLOWED ME MOST OF THE DAY, off and on anyway. Short and heavy set, he seemed to perch on first one deck chair and then another, finally standing straddle-legged in the wind stream pretending to watch the porpoises in the wake of the boat. It wasn't that he was obnoxious. Mother had said that it took at least ten minutes of conversation to determine this, and I had spoken only briefly to him at tea Tuesday afternoon, asking him for the lemons. So I suppose I really had no grounds on which to object at all. But he was there, just there, and I had found just that to be odious. I should care. I scrunched down lower in my deck chair.

Maybe it was the way they all acted—acted, or just were naturally, I couldn't decide. They seemed to be so proud of everything—even their mismatched clothes and bundles of string-tied suitcases—proud of the fact that they were traveling tourist class. God, two classes below first, and they were *proud* of it. It had to be an act. My father had reminded me one night as I clambered up from the pygmy-legged ladder to my top bunk that most of the Italians on this trip were immigrants and a “relatively poor lot, on the whole.” I couldn't decide whether he meant poor financially, or poor, you know. Subconsciously, I think I combined the two ideas, and labeled them all. Of course, there was always the fact that we were traveling tourist class, too, but only, as mother assured me, “because



first and cabin classes were filled, and we had to get back to New York no later than the fourteenth of August for the parties." You know.

They would all be evening parties. Evening parties—well, with an occasional early breakfast. Miss Watson had promised Mother that since the Wainwright, Bledsoe and Kerr boys would all be on the bachelor list, this season would be "just right for Elizabeth Anne."

I guess I was excited about it all—the big party at the Randolph's anyway. It was to be a beach party and probably an all night thing, and only two days after we were due to arrive. It would all be a rush, no doubt, but everything seemed always to be a rush. That was part of the problem.

The other part was all Miss Bradford's fault. Miss Bradford was my sociology professor, fresh out of graduate school and overripe for teaching. She was crammed to brimming with sociological data about her favorite subject—peoples and cultures. Most of us at Parkwood found her humorous—"amusing," according to Marcie, my best friend.

Miss Bradford wasn't attractive. In fact, she cut a rather ludicrous picture as she angled her gazelle-like frame behind her podium and stared myopically into the far corner of the classroom for a moment before launching into one of her theories. Miss Bradford had been the butt of most of the gossip at Parkwood for nearly a year. Her hypothetical conjurings, as my father had dubbed her theories, were matters fit only for the left-wingers—extreme left-wingers. This bunk about some people never having a chance in life was "merely an excuse for their downright good-for-nothingness, and it's people like us," he went on, "that put up, and fork out, and support the whole damn bunch."

Yet there was something about Miss Bradford. Her eyes maybe. Or perhaps it was the way she carried herself. That's what started the whole problem, for me, anyway. I had stayed after class one afternoon to check on the assignment—something about interracial housing—and had brushed up against her desk. My elbow caught the corner of the desk ashtray, and although it was only a small one, its contents made a grimy smear down the side of her skirt. She turned smoothly and asked, "Yes, you wanted to see me?"

I was hot all over, red, too. I could tell. Bending down I tried to brush off the ashes and heard her urge, "Don't worry about it, Elizabeth, it was due for a cleaning anyway." She looked up and repeated, "Now, you wanted to see me?"

I had seen blue eyes before, lots of them, but hers were more than just blue. I could see blue and then deep down, too. And it was the depths that fascinated me. Hers was an eager gaze, eager, and yes, sure. Sure of something that seemed to come from deep down with all the blue.

Jerking up from the Seminole squat position at her side, I hurriedly explained myself. A brief reply, so concise. I turned to go, then watched her as she moved slowly out the door—slowly and rhythmically as if she knew exactly what



part of her lanky body would respond in what way, and when. Everything about her at that moment seemed to accentuate that sense of rhythmical sureness. She bothered me, made that funny lumped feeling high in my stomach that I always got whenever I was upset. She made me unsure, almost afraid, and I didn't like it.

That was weeks ago, and now . . . I checked my watch. Not time. The silly man in the crimson striped trousers came tapping around the corner and up the steps to A Deck. He was some sort of bellboy, I guessed. Tapping he came, pecking out a monotonous chiming melody on a tiny xylophone—the “harp-si-zil-i-chord”—my father called it. First sitting already. Well, I wasn't going to dinner tonight. My parents and I had been invited to the captain's dinner later in the evening, and it was still two hours away. I stretched further down in the deck chair, screwed my head around to look for sea gulls and saw the same scrubby Italian lounged against the railing.

Plump. No, he was fat and short. So unlike John, even though they did have the same coloring. But John had flair, something that I couldn't quite put my finger on. It was that quality (even a bit suave) that made me feel completely at ease no matter where we were. I suppose it was because he was never caught off guard. I often wondered if he knew what nonplussed meant. “Cool,” Marcie would have classed him.

Five-thirty and time. I was thinking about my white sleeveless Arnel when the Italian flipped a cigarette over the rail, glanced back, and clambered down the B Deck ladder. Shivering, I shuffled into my leather sandals and plop-popped my way to our cabin. I noticed for the hundredth time the green and orange murals along the corridor and hated them even more. One corner. Green door, orange, two greens, then ours.

I found the note tucked under the door when I flipped on the light:

Anne,

Sorry about this afternoon, but the nice lil' doctor insisted I take it easy until tonight. Ten to one it's not ptomaine after all, but felt like HELL all day. Tonight for sure; it's a promise. Seven-thirty in the bar? Looking forward to the evening.

John

I was excited about the night, too, but wondered as I spread clean underclothes out on the bed if I wasn't being overly sentimental about it all. You know, last night aboard, and it seemed to be the end of something. Oh well. I headed for the shower.

Mother was high—just happy—when she bounded into the cabin two hours later. “Elizabeth Anne, I've been talking all afternoon to the NICEST couple from Cirencester. Why, they've got a son in the Navy just about your age, and he's . . .”

“Mother, I've got to rush. See you in time for dinner?” She was poking under

the bed looking for her green satin slippers when I looked back down the corridor. I started up the steps.

"Good evening, Miss Gillmore. May I have the pleasure . . .?" Standing three steps from the top, he bowed with a flourish.

"John, you . . ."

"Hey, Anne, that one I really like," he said as he eyed the white Arnel. "Even better than the blue, too."

"Thanks. How did the pills go?"

"Taking them every four hours, but washing 'em down with Scotch. Much better. Now, something before dinner?"

"Tom Collins. Weak one, please, John."

The bar seemed more crowded than two nights ago. People were weaving from table to table, slapping backs, gesturing. A dull noise permeated the whole room.

"Henri, fix Miss Anne one with lots of cherries, and a double Scotch . . ."

He was back "Hey, it's almost time." We took the green elevator up to the captain's lounge. The green was faster, and there was so little time. One slight bump and we were out, clutching our drinks. The corridor was almost filled with little groups of people, bunched up together, laughing and waving their cocktail glasses.

"What a madhouse," John whispered.

"I know. 'Pack 'em in and push 'em through.' I'd at least like time to see who's here."

I noticed that Mr. Pinnochio, the steward with the oversized nose, was Miss Black's escort. What a twosome, I thought; he hasn't been off the ship for thirteen years, and Miss Black owned one-third interest in a shipping agency. How nice.

The receiving line was just beginning to break up as the captain called us all to a hush with, "Ladies and gentlemen, it's such a pleasure to have you all with us this evening. The crew and I feel that this voyage has been one of the most enjoyable ever, so in honor of this special occasion, I'd like to request that our chief steward bring out a few more cases of champagne!"

His announcement was met with shouts and applause. I wondered how many times he'd made this same speech.

"My gosh, Anne, look. All seafood!"

Crabmeat and lobster, flanked by platters laden with jumbo shrimp, oysters and pickled herring filled the center of a three-piece buffet table. Colored dishes edged with crepe paper ruffles displayed whole portions of red snapper, flounder, and sole, fringed with rosettes of lemon. Dozens of smaller plates were filled with hor d'oeuvres of black Spanish olives—sweeter than the Italian variety—and pickles and celery were lumped amid mounds of caviar.

"*This* I've been waiting for all day." John nodded in the direction of the



tables, and we slowly moved through the crowd. The eight-piece orchestra was playing at one end of the adjoining room, and couples were already scattered on the floor. Miss Black led Mr. Pinnocchio onto the floor and half flopped into his arms as she waved a partially-filled champagne glass in her left hand. They stumbled through a few measures, then she glanced up at her partner, met his gaze, and dropped her arms.

"Just a minute, Honey. Let me find my shoes first."

Mr. P. trailed off toward the large double doors as Miss Black lurched across the room muttering, "Just a minute, Honey, a lil' ol' minute."

I watched her as she stooped double under a white-linened table and knocked over the empty bottles. They crashed to the floor as she lifted a corner of the tablecloth and stuck her head underneath the table.

"Honey, I can't find . . ."

She groped farther and gradually inched her tanned body underneath. Another bottle, then a glass fell to the floor. I knew that what she was looking for she'd never find under any table.

I looked up to see if John was watching. He was fingering an olive, staring semi-squint-eyed at an oil abstract that practically filled one entire wall. He looked good, sick or not. The grey sport jacket that he said he had "picked up in Cherbourg" made him look five years older. Even his profile was good—narrow nose and high cheekbones. His grandfather was part Indian. Or was it his grandmother? I wasn't sure it was Indian, either. Something foreign, though.

He nodded toward the wall. "Picasso and Monet all rolled into one. Don't you think. Bright geometric shapes, but they're all fuzzy."

I looked. He was right. Splotches of intense paint were superimposed upon each other making the edges indistinct. Nothing was definite. Nothing clear.

"I don't like that abstract stuff, John, do you?"

"Yeah, a little. I took a couple of courses at the university last quarter in art. One in French Impressionism, the other in modern. Good, too. Have you ever taken any?"

"No. I just don't like it."

He glanced up, then slowly put a cocktail onion in his mouth. I finished my champagne, aware of an awkward silence.

"Anne, what say we go up for some air a minute?"

Twice in the green elevator, and then we were alone on deck. "Perfect," he mused as we leaned against the rail.

"Have you noticed, tho', no moon."

"Um. Probably a late one, 'specially after last night's big show. Cold?"

Perfect comment and perfect time, but something wasn't. I suddenly wanted to walk, to move in some way. It's not the time, Anne. Stop it. Fixing myself at the circular rail I looked below us to B Deck where couples lounged from

chairs to railing, and the loners stared fixedly at first one spot then another. Boxes and packages stood ready against the doors, string-tied and ready.

"I can't quite figure out . . ." John began.

I wasn't listening, just watching. A small girl raced across the deck and fell laughing into her mother's arms. Twin boys were leaping like trousered frogs in and out among the coiled ropes lying wet-soaked on the deck.

"Can you?"

I jerked back to his question. "Yes, I . . . I'm sorry, John. What did you say?"

"About those two people swimming the other day. Can you . . .?" he started again.

A strikingly pretty girl opened one of the iron doors from the captain's salon. Music floated out with her, then faded as the door heaved shut. An under-current of noise was everywhere, but there was nothing definite, only a general murmur that seemed to swell and fade, grow, then lapse into brief aphonic nothing.

I smelled fish, fish mixed with a salty champagne odor. No dessert. I couldn't have eaten too much, but my stomach was knotting. I reached for the ebony rail and thought of New York. Twelve more hours, and it would be time. But I wanted time now—time to turn each thought over slowly, break it open and see the inside. Jumbled patches of thoughts seemed to stumble over each other like mammoth blocks pushed down a flight of stairs. I pushed. My stomach tightened. There was no need to push. Let the blocks fall slowly. It was no time, no time at all. I had to push; the blocks were falling. But I had waited too long. My stomach was jerking.

"Here, put my jacket on; you're cold."

I stood shivering against the railing, then slowly reached out for his coat.

"Thanks, John."

"Anne, listen. Everything's getting quiet, but someone's . . ."

I turned and faced the wind and heard a deep masculine voice—a beautifully-trained voice—swell louder and louder in a lilting Italian folk song.

Pulling the oversized jacket tighter around my shoulders, I leaned over the railing and searched the deck below for something—possibly a radio. The fat Italian finished the chorus, plucked a pencil and folded opera brochure from his shirt pocket and made a brief notation in the margin of the enclosed program. My stomach hurt. I guessed I was only tired.



## Night Walk

NANCY HAMILTON

**E**BON splotches dance berserkly,  
Forms play, impose selves  
One  
Upon  
Their counterparts.  
Frisk,  
Then merge  
Altamira-like—  
One gross transformation.  
Know the wind—  
Wind that cares not to play,  
But comes,  
And fills  
    And grows.  
Then spasm-like, I again then time again  
Double.  
I am two.  
Shrouded in ebon wind shadow  
See multi-mosaic bodies  
Splatter cross walk.  
Ebon play.  
Quick slivered, silver cylinders  
Go black,  
    Quick white  
And splash crashing to the walk.  
Form, only, of a former self.  
Duple now.  
That one—  
    Then me.

## From the Other Side of the Alley

*A senior from Keokuk, Iowa, Joan Hiserote is the author of two short stories in this issue. Both were written as part of her creative writing courses. Joan is majoring in English and art, and she is a member of Poetry Society and the GRIFFIN staff. When asked if she wished to add anything to this sketch, she said, "Say I like to travel—that's original."*

JOAN HISEROTE

THE LITTLE GIRL WATCHED THEM INTENTLY. She was fascinated by the children who were walking up the alley. There were several of them and they were laughing and talking. They didn't notice the little girl as she peered out at them from behind the white slats of the fence that bordered the alley. She stared after them as they passed, her huge brown eyes watching and her ears straining with longing as she tried to catch their shouts. When they had gone she sat down with her rag doll and began to play.

"Please come put your toys away," said the mother. She stood in the doorway, wiping her hands on a cotton apron. Her face had shiny planes of sweat upon it. Gentle gray-blue eyes looked down at the small daughter who was tying a hat on the rag doll. The woman smiled with pride because she had made the doll herself. She made many clothes for her family. She was a good woman. Her mother was a good woman too. The chairs and sofa in the living room had been in her home as a child, and they were still covered with the delicate lacy doilies and colorful afghans her mother had made. The woman followed closely in her mother's ways. She watched with quiet joy as her daughter obediently picked up her doll and went into the house. The kitchen was bright and clean. The sun filtered through the yellow and green paisley curtains above the kitchen sink. The green-flecked linoleum was polished so that the mother's shoes mirrored on the floor. The woman kept everything in the house spotless.



"Mommy is going to have some ladies over this afternoon," said the woman.

"Are they the same ladies that were here last time?"

"Yes, they're the same ones."

"Well, I don't like those ladies, Mommy. They are all fat and noisy."

"Why, shame on you," cried the mother. "Never say mean things about other people. It isn't nice to call people names. It isn't nice at all. Why, if they heard you, they would think you were a very bad-mannered girl."

The little girl tilted her head down a little and wiggled her toes in her shoes.

"Why don't you like them?" asked the mother.

"They aren't very nice."

"How do you mean, they aren't very nice?"

"Well, Mommy, they say mean things too. About other ladies. Then they shush each other and then they laugh and say mean things all over again."

"Why, dear, they don't mean those things if they say them. Besides, even if they do, at least you can be a good little girl and not say mean things. I want my little girl to be a very nice lady."

"Well, all right," the child said slowly. She turned to go down the hall. Then she turned and looked up at her mother with sober eyes.

"I am a good girl, Mommy. Aren't I? I want to be good. I promise never again to say mean things."

"That's a good girl," said the mother, and she watched her daughter go out of the kitchen and down the hall. "Don't go in the living room. I've just cleaned it for this afternoon. You go play with your brother."

The little girl skipped down the hall to the playroom. Her four year old brother was sitting on the floor, coloring a clown. She picked up a crayon and a coloring book and began to color too.

"My color! You broke my red color," cried the little boy.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," begged the sister.

"No, you're not, you dumb bunny!"

"Don't say mean words to people," said the sister. "It isn't nice. Mommy says so. I am sorry I broke your color. Here, I'll give you mine."

"Okay, you're not a dumb bunny," said the little boy. They colored some more, then, bored, the little girl went outside to look for her girl friends.

The edges of the sidewalk were broken and she jumped over the kinky cracks which straggled across the sidewalk squares. The street was narrow and dipped toward the endless line of asphalt down the center. The little girl turned at the end of the block and went around the corner following the sidewalk cracks. The houses on her left were grimy-looking and the paint was fading. They had an empty and unused look. The yards were mottled with patches of dirt and struggling grass. Tricycles and wagons sat in the middle of the yards. She came to the middle of the block. Before her lay an alley. She had passed this

way before, but only with her mother on the trips to the grocery store. The alley slanted downward and grew narrow at the bottom. At the bottom of the alley a barefooted boy was dragging a stick, and a dog was sniffing a garbage can. The girl looked across the alley. On the other side, seven neighborhood children were sitting on the edge of the sidewalk, with their legs sprawled out into the alley. They were the same children that she had seen from her back yard. She heard giggling. One of the children saw her standing there and called out.

"We're playing a new game!"

"Yeah, it's a game," yelled another gleefully.

"You can't come over until you say the word."

"What's the word?" asked the little girl, wanting to come over. She squatted down on the sidewalk.

They looked at each other. Then one of them said it.

"What's it mean?"

"Don't you know?" laughed the oldest boy.

"No."

"It's naughty," said one of the others.

"I won't say a naughty word," said the girl. "It's not nice."

The faces of the children changed. A cunning thought ran through the mind of the oldest girl. She laughed.

"You have to say it or you can't come over!"

The children sat there waiting, staring across at the girl. The group sat in their grubby T-shirts and baggy slacks. They sat and stared across the alley. Strange, callous eyes looked out of unwashed faces. It was no longer a game.

"Say it! Come on, say it!"

"Yeah, you scaredy-cat," sneered the smallest boy. The children sat across from her snickering, giggling and making faces. The oldest girl, who did most of the talking, cupped her hand over her mouth and rolled her eyes in mock horror.

"Oh, shame, shame!" she mocked.

"Come on, come on!"

The little girl squirmed and curled her feet in.

"No, no! I don't want to."

"Oh, just one itty bitty word," urged another, and threw out her hands in a wild despairing gesture.

"But I don't want to."

"But I don't want to," mimicked a chubby, barefooted girl.

The little girl's fingers clutched the protruding edge of the sidewalk, her knuckles whitened. Her legs were pulled back tightly and her arms were stiff at her sides as if they were ready to shoot her up and help her run away.

"You can't come over until you say it. You can't come over until you say it," they chanted and laughed.



A freckled boy pointed his finger, and shaking it toward her cried, "You're a big fat baby!"

"I am not either," quaked the little girl, smothering a sob in her throat. Her mouth trembled.

"Yes, you are! Yes, you are!" they all shouted.

"A baby!"

"A big, fat baby!"

"Baby . . . baby . . . baby!"

The little girl turned pale. Her whole body was shaking. Her ears heard "Baby!, baby!" They screamed. The little girl flung herself up. Tears blurred her eyes. Shaking with hate, she screamed the word. Over and over she screamed it. The naughty word. The terrible, naughty word!

"I said it! I said it! I hate you!" She choked on her sobs. "I hate you!" Tears slid down both cheeks.

The children laughed and pointed. Shaming her with their fingers they yelled, "You're a bad girl! You're a naughty girl! You're awful!"

"Yeah, you said a bad word."

"My Mommy told me never to play with bad girls," yelled the fat girl.

"You said a bad word."

"You're not nice."

The little girl turned and ran. The sobs cut short her breath and her chest filled with sharp pains. Up the street and into her house she ran. She flung herself across her bed. With hands curled up in tight fists by her face, she sobbed. Her head almost touched the wall and her feet hung over the side of the bed. Two small holes showed in the little brown oxford shoes and one cuff of the slacks was smeared with dirt. Small, bony shoulders jerked from each pillow-muffled sob. Her little brother appeared at the door. His eyebrows slanted up in a troubled look.

"Why are you crying?" he asked.

Hatefully, she turned on her little brother. "Get out of here, you stupid baby."

He stuck out his lower lip and looking straight at his sister, he said, "I'm not a baby."

"You're a baby and you're stupid both," said the girl in a tight, low voice.

"Then you're a baby too!" and her little brother stomped out of the doorway and down the hall.

# The Hypocrite

JOAN HISEROTE

“WELL, I CERTAINLY CAN'T FEEL THAT SORRY FOR THEM,” Kristin said, emphasizing “that” and giving a hard flick of her cigarette which hovered over the ash tray. She crossed her legs.

“Kristin . . .” Leah started to speak, but her voice trailed off in what would have been disapproval.

“Oh, Leah! You're overly sympathetic. Everyone was clamoring around them before. Practically worshipping them. How ridiculous. Matthidis just wasn't the kind of man who had the ability to hold the office and do anything. I mean, he was the type, at least it seemed to me he was the type, that just sat up there in his lovely little office and signed every paper that they put down in front of him. As for his wife, well, I don't hold a very high opinion for her either. And they were so smug. I could see right through the whole business at the very beginning, but of course I couldn't say anything.”

Kristin recrossed her legs and pressed back into the cushion of the chair. Leah sat quietly in her chair. Her face was almost that of a youthful fifteen, and her eyes glowed with an innocence that was a surprising jolt to those who met her for the first time. She was looking at Kristin, and the expression on her face was hurt and puzzlement. Kristin gave a small, upward jerk of her head and looked at Leah.

“You know,” she said, “in a way, I can't help feeling sorry for the Matthidis's. It is rather humiliating for them. They were rather nice. I mean, you could bear them, and their parties were so gala. Would you care for another drink?”

“Yes, I think I will have another one.” Leah was hesitant about another



drink. She didn't drink as much as Kristin but tried to keep up with her anyway.

Kristin walked smoothly to the liquor cabinet, her movements quick and efficient. She returned with the drinks, handed one to Leah, and sat down. She crossed her legs and took a sip of her drink. The ice clinked against the side of the glass. As she looked at the drink, her eyes stared, half-clouded over as if not seeing the topaz-colored liquid. She shrugged her shoulders.

"My! One's throat can get so dry when you're talking." She laughed and took another sip. Leah was twisting out her cigarette, her head bent to the ash-tray. They both were quiet.

"Have you read Carson Lloyd's new book *Judas*?" Kristin asked. "I've heard it is quite good. For him, that is. Which reminds me, our dear friend Carson doesn't seem to be around lately. In fact, I think I heard he's taking a trip out to the Coast soon. He was always such a good friend of the Matthidis's. I believe it was just about right when the elections were going on that he announced his trip. Just about when everyone had decided Matthidis wasn't going to make it. 'Getting away from it all' was what he said. Rather interesting way to put it."

"I think that is horrid," cried Leah. "He's a hypocrite. He just used them to get his name around. Then when he can't use them any longer, he drops them just like that. I can't stand people like that."

"Well, you certainly couldn't get much more of a name than Matthidis. Carson was licking the top rung of the ladder there."

"Those poor people," said Leah, staring into space. "What are they going to do? I would be so lost. So humiliated."

"Oh, stop it, Leah. You've been brooding all day. They're not on their last legs, so don't make it that way. They've got plenty left and don't think Matthidis won't use everything he's got to make another go of it. It's dog eat dog up there and he'll be right back up there barking in less time than you'd think. It's not his fault he was a victim of circumstance. He may have been stupid, but he won't be stupid again."

"But, Kristin, that's not what I mean. It's how they feel now. It's what people will say and people can say so much. They can be ripped apart and never have a chance. Mrs. Matthidis is so sweet."

"As sweet as cherry pie," mumbled Kristin.

"She is sweet. A very nice person, and now this. It just isn't fair what people will say. They don't need support for up there, its moral support, from us. I know how it is. You don't know. You don't need others so much. When Harold died, I felt so much alone. No children, not anything. I needed support then and it's the same way with them now. You just can't cut them off from everything." Leah's eyebrows tilted up. Her forehead was wrinkled with concern.

"Leah, stop it. You make it sound so pitiful and it isn't. You're exaggerating beyond words."

"I'm not exaggerating." Her voice was sudden, apologetic and defiant. "You

know everyone is laughing at them. Mr. Matthidis is a good, honest man. He believed in the commissioner and stood up for him when they accused the commissioner of using his authority for his own personal gain. Matthidis didn't know and now he has been laughed out of a second term by one misjudgment. It isn't fair."

"There isn't anything unfair about it in the least. It was Matthidis's mistake and his fault. He was the one who hung himself, not us. Leah, I really don't care to go on with this bickering. What's done is done."

She took another sip and tipped her drink back, staring absent-mindedly at the straight plane of liquid against the tilted glass.

"There's more that's going to be said and you know it. Just because he isn't in office anymore doesn't mean I'm not going to be their friend."

"Whose friend?"

"The Matthidises' friend. I'm not going to drop them like a lot of people are doing just because of one mistake. I'm going to go on being a friend whether anyone else is or not. People are making him into some kind of crook, and I'm going to let them know that there are some who don't feel the same way."

Leah stood by the phone. She sat down on the chair and placed her hand on the receiver. Putting a cigarette in her mouth, she took a book of matches and struck the match with a quick, hard jerk. She lit the cigarette and dialed.

"Mrs. Matthidis, this is Leah. . . . How are you? . . . Well, yes, I thought I'd just call and see how you are. I haven't talked to you in such a long time. . . . Well, no . . . Yes, these past few weeks have been trying. . . . I was wondering, that is if you have time, if you could stop by tomorrow. It's been such a long time since we've sat down for a nice . . . Oh, would it be better if I came over? . . . Oh, I see. . . . Oh . . . yes, I understand. Things do get piled up. . . . Yes, well then, perhaps we can get together for awhile some other time. Will you be at the Baur's party this Friday? . . . Oh, I'm so sorry. Yes, well I guess I had better be going. I have a few errands to run yet today. Do call me sometime and let me know when you're free. . . . All right, goodbye. Bye now."

Leah hung up the phone. She got up and went into her living room. Her cigarette dangled unnoticed between her fingers. She paced the room and her forehead wrinkled as she thought. She went back to the phone and called Kristin.

"Hello, Kristin? This is Leah. . . . I'm not doing a thing. . . . No, I just talked to her. . . . No, I called her on the phone. . . . That's what bothers me. She seemed so different. Sort of distant. I got the feeling as if my calling her seemed to bother. . . . No, she wasn't. Just rather cool. I asked her to come over tomorrow, just to chat, and she said she was too busy. Then I asked her if they were coming to the Baur's party Friday, and she didn't say anything for a minute and then she said no. She almost sounded nasty. . . . They weren't? Oh, I didn't know that. I didn't know. I feel just . . . Oh, Kristin, no." Leah rubbed



her hand over her eyes, pulling the skin together in the middle of her forehead. "I didn't mean . . . No, I'm not. She just doesn't know what to think. I think she's really upset. . . . Well, yes, that's what I mean. She needs someone to talk to, to let her know that she's still got her friends behind them and that this whole thing hasn't changed our friendship. . . . No, Kristin. It's not the same thing. Even if you don't want any part of it, then I still feel as though I should keep on anyway. It's a personal thing. It's the principle of the thing. Harold would have done the same thing. I know. He was like that, and I have to do it, for him as well as myself. . . . It's for myself! I am not. How can you say that? I live my own life now . . . That's okay. . . . Yes, I know, I suppose we really shouldn't talk about it, but it upsets me so and I have to have someone to talk to. See? It's the very thing I'm trying to do. I need someone to talk to and I know Mrs. Matthidis does too . . . I'm sure she does. No one wants to go through something like this alone. Mrs. Matthidis can't take this by herself. . . . Kristin that was catty. She's a very human person. . . . Kristin . . . Don't talk like that. You sound like you hate her. . . . Well, I know you don't, but you sounded like it. Kristin, you really confuse me, you really do. I just feel as if I'm caught between two different forces, but I am not going to change my mind. I'm going to go over there. . . . I don't think it will. A little kindness can't hurt anything, anyone. I'm going to drop by tomorrow . . . Yes, that is what I'm going to do. . . . Kristin, don't start in on me again. . . . Okay, I will. . . . All right now. . . . Okay goodbye . . . Bye now."

Leah got up and walked down the hall to the kitchen where she began to fix a sandwich.

"If only Harold were here," Leah thought. "He'd know what to do." She sat down and nibbled on the sandwich, and looking through the hall into the living room, she saw Harold's picture on a table. "Yes," she thought. "He'd be proud of me."

Leah hummed as she drove along.

"She'll know the moment I greet her at the door that I am her friend," Leah thought, "A good one. She'll probably be a little shy at first because of all she's gone through, but then she'll realize that I'm there for her to confide in and then she'll know that I understand." Leah stopped humming. The thought of yesterday's phone call bothered her. "She was awfully strange though," she thought. She drove in silence for awhile. "But of course it's understandable and since she's so upset," she thought, and Leah passed off any doubts of her visit.

Leah drove up the drive to the Matthidises' house. She paused a moment before getting out of her car; then, grasping her purse, she walked to the door and placed her forefinger on the doorbell and pushed. She heard the chimes of the doorbell and stood waiting. The door opened silently and Mrs. Matthidis stood with one hand on the doorknob. For a moment there was no response.

"Why . . . Leah . . . I was expecting. . . Won't you come in?"

"Hello. I just . . . I was on my way home and thought I'd drop by."

"Would you care to sit down?" Mrs. Matthidis asked and she led the way through the entry way into the living room.

Mrs. Matthidis stood hesitant and uncomfortable while Leah placed herself in a chair.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Leah?"

"Well, no, not really. I just thought I'd drop in since I was driving past."

"Yes . . ." said Mrs. Matthidis and there was a tightness in her voice, almost a question. She eased herself slowly into a chair opposite Leah. Her manner was cautious and she watched Leah.

"Mrs. Matthidis, I just, well, you seemed upset over the phone yesterday, and I thought if there was anything I could do."

"I sounded upset." The words were a statement touched with disgust.

"Why, yes, you did. I mean, I know you have been through a great deal lately and if you would like to, to say anything, I would do all I could to help you out. In a way, it's similiar to what I had to go through once and I think I know how you feel. Talking to someone can mean so much." Leah's voice was soft, almost whimperish. Her forehead was wrinkled and her eyes were wide with concern. This visit was not going as she thought it would.

Mrs. Matthidis settled back in her chair, her body heaved from a deep, silent sigh. It was the manner of a tough businessman preparing to say a few disconcerting words to a young employee.

"Leah, my dear, I'm afraid that what I'm going to say to you will come as a surprise. It may also hurt your feeling to some degree, for which I am sorry, but I hope you will be able to understand and not change any opinion you have of me. I get a feeling you have come to me with sincerity and not some phony sympathetic concern I somehow thought you had from our telephone conversation yesterday. Leah, I am sorry to tell you that I do not need anyone to talk to. I am not overly upset by the outcome of the election or by the fact that Mr. Matthidis lost because of certain rumors connecting him with a scandal. He was not involved, and therefore, I am satisfied with that, even though there are still some who wish to ruin him through continued slander." Leah sat still in her chair, her body erect and stiff and her eyes opened wide with the amazement of a child watching a trapeze artist doing a flip in mid-air. "Leah, my husband has been in politics nearly thirty years. I have been dealing with his friends, opponents, even his enemies and with people you sometimes find hard to believe exist. I have heard talk, favorable, and talk against us. Evidently you have heard talk against us and that was your purpose, to come to me and let me know you don't feel the same way. I appreciate that, Leah, but at the same time I cannot accept your offer. Over the years, I have learned to take what stones that have been hurled at my husband and myself and let it go at that. I need no one to talk to, Leah. I feel



there is nothing to talk over. What problems I may have I can handle by myself and for myself. I realize I have been rather blunt to you and I apologize for that, but I am saying what I have to say in the only way I feel I can say it."

"Mrs. Matthidis. . . ."

"Leah, you said I sounded upset over the phone. The only thing that upset me was your calling me. What motive you had I couldn't think of except to see someone at the bottom of the ladder again and hear someone cry about it. Well, we're not at the bottom and you can go tell your friends we aren't. No, not by a long shot we aren't through. I'm sorry to put things so strong again. I guess I've just become rather hardened through the years and forget myself at times. I appreciate your coming here, Leah, but there isn't anything you could say to help things. So, Leah, I really am quite busy and I'm sure you are too. I'm also quite certain you must be ready to go after this brief conversation. Did you have a coat?"

"No. . . ."

"Then, good afternoon, Leah," and Mrs. Matthidis rose in her grand manner and showed Leah to the door.

Kristin stood talking to several people, among them was Carson Lloyd.

"Rather nice party, isn't it?" Kristin said.

"Yes, it is," Carson drawled. "The Baur's have outdone themselves for a change."

"Oh, Carson, now let's don't start getting sarcastic."

"No, I really mean it. It is a very pleasant party. Good atmosphere. Good drinks. Not too many people. By the way, where is Leah?" asked Carson.

"Oh, she is usually late. Can't get organized half the time. She'll be here soon," said Kristin.

"You know, I have a difficult time believing that girl is for real. I mean. . . ." Kristin interrupted the person speaking.

"You mean about the Matthidis affair, don't you?"

"Well, yes. The stand she has been taking on them. It doesn't fit. I get the feeling she doesn't know what she really means."

"I wonder if she ever knows what she really means on anything," someone said.

"Okay. Okay. She may not," Carson said. "But let's leave it at that. She may be sincere, she may not be sincere, but let's not tear a good friend of ours apart." Carson finished his drink and the discussion was turned to the Matthidis affair.

Leah entered the Baur's house. She spoke a few words to Mrs. and Mr. Baur and then moved on through the crowd toward Kristin, who was talking in a small circle of friends. She had not seen Kristin since the telephone conversation. She hesitated only enough to turn her head and smile quickly to greetings.

As she neared Kristin, she heard her laugh and heard the clink of the ice against the glass as Kristin swallowed the last of her drink. Kristin turned and saw Leah.

"Leah!" She smiled.

"Hello, everyone."

"Welcome . . . welcome," a voice said, and the almost spoken word "back" was quickly covered by another welcome.

Leah looked to see who had welcomed her.

"Carson, what are you doing here? I heard you were leaving us."

"Oh, no, my dear one." He put his arm around Leah's shoulders. "I just couldn't bear the thought of not seeing your haunting eyes, your . . ."

"Oh, Carson, really. You'll flatter me to death one of these days." Leah looked up at Carson. Kristin stood watching in a distant way. There was a straight smile on her face and she studied Leah.

"Leah, I'm going after another drink. Shall I bring you one?"

"Yes, do." Leah turned back to the group.

As Kristin watched the glasses being filled she thought about Leah. Kristin returned to the group. She could hear Leah laughing with a laugh that was a little too gay.

"Oh, thank you, dear." Leah continued talking to the group.

"Leah," Kristin said, "just before you came in, we were discussing a friend of yours."

Leah looked up sharply.

"A friend of mine," she asked blandly, a note of suspicion in her voice.

"Yes."

"Well, who is my friend?"

"Mrs. Matthidis. Of course, we were discussing her husband too."

"Did you have anything new to say?" Leah's voice was tight.

"No, not really," said Carson. "Actually, I believe we have run the subject into the ground. Don't you think so, Kristin?" With his last sentence, he looked at Kristin and smiled, his eyes cold.

"Well, we did have varied opinions on that," said Leah, "didn't we? But then, one can change. . . ."

"Oh . . . ?" Carson cocked his head toward Leah. Quiet surprise and careful curiosity showed on everyone's face.

"Yes, I have to admit that I am somewhat agreeing with you. I believe you were right, Kristin." Kristin stood gaping at Leah. "Actually, I really didn't know Mrs. Matthidis, or Mr. Matthidis, that well," Leah continued. "I am beginning to change my mind about some things. They were rather cold. I suppose it was just a stab in the dark. A difference of opinion is challenging. Variety is the spice of life, you know."



"Leah, I really. . . ." Kristin began softly.

"Now, Kristin. Don't you worry. I'm backing you one hundred percent now. As far as I'm concerned they got exactly what they deserved." Leah finished her drink. The ice looked like plastic cubes. There was a silence for a moment. On Kristin's face there was a small triumphant, but bitter, smile.

"Let me get you another drink, Leah." Kristin turned to go to the bar. As she walked away, she heard Carson's voice.

"Here, have an olive, Leah." He was extending the hors d'oeuvre dish towards Leah.

## Alma Mater

### MADEENA SPRAY

SEE the monster  
concrete jaws and  
fangs of steel  
(U.S. high-grade  
assembly-line production)

Vacuum cleaner with  
ivy covered nozzle  
Suck in children  
Bounce them off books  
along the hose length  
Spew them out  
refuse  
adults  
How many tens of  
hundred thousands?  
(U.S. high-grade  
middle-class citizens)

Form a line for the  
Registrar's office  
(Have your yellowcard  
ready for stamping)  
Line to the left for  
Physical inspection  
Fill out Form  
0007  
(Miss two turns  
come back tomorrow)  
Stand in line for your  
Veryown Counselor  
**HAVE YOUR YELLOWCARD  
READY FOR STAMPING**

please

Far above the common people  
Vacuous, not still  
Juts our mammoth alma mater  
On a bulldozed hill  
(U.S. high-grade  
low-bid construction)

Push along  
down the line  
Head 'em up  
Move 'em out  
Watch the signs  
no holding back  
freshman sophomore  
junior senior  
and now you're  
through



## Too Old to Know

PATRICIA MERRILL

*Pat is a junior from Faucett, Missouri. In addition to her activities in the Lindenwood Theatre and KCLC in conjunction with her speech major, Pat is an active contributor to the LINDEN BARK.*

THE SUNRISE MADE PINKISH TINGES on the water in the shallow stream. The bucket made ripples that seemed to be crowned with a dusky rose which gave glints of red as Cora heaved it out of the water. She struggled up the bank, pulling at the bushes which lined the stream with her right hand and yanking the bucket with her left, so that water splashed out of it with each step she took. Sounds drifted to her of people going to the fields. Iron rings clinked as the horses moved under the weight of the harness. Children laughed as they brought in wood for the morning fires. Cora forced herself to walk rapidly toward the double row of brown clapboard shacks that surrounded a low, windowless limestone building so that she wouldn't get behind in her work. The arthritis in her knees, aggravated by the mid-August heat, made her slow her steps, so that once again she was jerking herself along the dusty square toward the cabins.

She had to stop once in front of the cabin next to hers to get her breath. As she set the bucket down she heard some men muttering inside. She listened but could discern no familiar words and so moved on, dragging the bucket a step at a time, into her own house.

Cora dumped the muddy water into a gauzed-topped pail and then piled

wood into the stove. She added a little sawdust and some wood-shavings. The sparks from her piece of flint jumped to the dry sawdust, and orange flames began to twist their way among the jumble of sticks. She slammed the iron door shut and began planning the three cakes she had to bake for Mister Tom's Party.

At the same time she made a note to use enough ingredients so as to have a small cake for Lena. Cora smiled as she thought of Lena. Lena often brought her a small bouquet of wild flowers during the past summers. Lena's face became flushed as Cora told her stories of ghosts and fairies. A sharp pain in her finger jerked Cora back to the present, and she glared accusingly at the red hot stove. She concentrated on her cake.

The rest of the morning Cora mixed the batter for the cakes and placed them, one at a time, into the stove. Then she started washing the wooden bowls, the strong lye soap fighting with the scent of the cakes. Just before noon Lena knocked.

Lena quickly crossed the stoop and shut the wooden door carefully. "Cora, have you heard? Lyon took Boonville! They say he's comin' here next, and then Pa says we're gonna escape an' be free!" Lena's face seemed all eyes, and she was blinking rapidly. "An' I get to help!"

Cora's mouth turned up slightly at one corner and she wrinkled her nose. Lena was always excited about one thing or another, and, when she was, she talked so quickly that Cora rarely understood what she was saying. Cora limped slowly to a chair and, pointing toward another opposite her, commanded, "Now Lena, calm down. Who's Lyon and who's escapin'?"

Lena danced about the room, and rushed on saying, "Lyon's on his way to set us all free. We're goin' to live in a fine house just like Mars' Tom's, and then Pa says that I'll have a satiny blue gown like Mis Sally's," she posed, wearing the gown. "Won't I look fine?" she said as she continued dancing, "An' we'll have big parties and I'll be just like the little boy who killed the tigers."

"Now what would you do with that fine gown? It'd be better if you got that piece of denim over to Agency." Cora crossed to the table by the stove and began cutting the little cake. "Here, have a piece of this cake I made for you."

"Oh, thanks. Chocolate." Lena licked the icing off the top of the thick wedge before she took a bite of it. Stuffing the cake in, she walked over to the stove and began picking up crumbs that were lying on top of the now cold stove. "But, Cora, that reminds me," Lena mumbled, her mouth full, "Pa said I was to get as much food together as I could 'cause Lyon's men need it bad."

Cora was getting impatient as she walked back to her chair. "I'm sorry, Lena," she said as she eased into the chair, "but I can't spare anything right now 'cause of Mars' Tom's party tonight. Maybe afterwards I can scrape up somethin'. Maybe we can have a party, too." Cora's smile became thoughtful.

"Scrape up somethin', Cora, what are thinkin' of? These are the men thats



gonna set us free and make us rich!" Lena rushed to Cora and grabbed hold of the arms of Cora's chair.

Cora was watching her narrowly, the little line between her eyebrows deepening.

"I'm sorry, Cora," Lena pleaded, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelin's. I know it's just Mars' Tom. He just has to have his party." Lena paused and straightened up. Her right hand was playing with one of her pigtails and she sucked on the end of it. "You know," she said slowly, "if there weren't no Mars' Tom or Mis Sally, there wouldn't be no party—" Lena smiled slowly, "and then Lyon's men could have the food, and I could have the blue dress."

Cora stared at the ragged crack in the floor between Lena's feet. The wrinkles over her eyes deepened. She couldn't quite understand what Lena was thinking. "But, Lena, Lyon's men can't have the food, and you don't really need the dress."

Lena pouted. "I'll explain the whole thing, 'cause you don't seem to understand what I'm talkin' about," Lena said scornfully. She enunciated each word slowly. "This morning Pa called a meeting with some of the other men. I was just coming back from serving Mars' Tom breakfast, and they were so busy talking, they didn't notice me when I came in. Later Pa said that the army was coming to set us free, that when we're free, we'll have a carriage and a big house, and I'll have lots of pretty clothes. Better even than Mis Sally's."

Cora pushed herself back stiffly, "But I don't want to go. What would I do? I'm happy here, and safe. You go tell Big Jake to forget all this foolishness."

"Cora!" Lena walked nervously back and forth in front of Cora and then turned to her, hitting at the air convulsively. Then she stuffed her hands in the pockets of her dress. "How can you have been happy, livin' all your life in one place, and never havin' nothin'?"

"But, Lena," Cora questioned, "haven't you always had plenty to eat and clothes to wear? You always have fun when you play with Mis Sally, don't you?"

Lena interrupted, shaking her head violently, "Mis Sally! She's got dolls with real faces and real clothes. And all I have are rag dolls!" She cupped her hands in front of her stomach, pressing her elbows against her sides. "I want more!"

Cora struggled to her feet, and said loudly, "Lena, that's wrong!" She paused and tried to speak more softly, but her voice was strained. "You have a nice home, a kind master. You don't know what's good for you!"

Furiously, Lena jumped back and hissed, "I might have known, You don't understand anythin'. You're too old to know about important stuff!" She wheeled, her pigtails swinging stiffly, and ran out the door.

Cora couldn't concentrate on what Lena had said. Mars' Tom, killing. There'd been rumors about the Northern army and Quantrell's raiders. Quantrell had hit a farm a few miles south. They had looted the place, burned the main

house and killed the owner and his family. The thought of such a raid occurring here terrified Cora. She had lived on the plantation all her life and raised both Master Tom and Miss Sally. Any other sort of existence seemed impossible. "I just can't seem to explain it to Lena."

That night at the dinner party, Cora slid a slice of cake in front of Mister Tom, and then stood behind him fidgeting with a corner of her apron. "I have to wait for them to finish eating," she thought, "so he'll be in a good mood. What'll I say?"

Mister Tom finished eating and took out a cigar. He looked down the table at his guests. The evening sun spilled in through the west windows and sparkled through the crystal water glasses on the ivory table cloth. It had been a successful dinner party. The guests were talking quietly about the war, and everyone seemed to agree that it couldn't last much longer.

Cora stepped to Mister Tom's side and whispered, "Mars' Tom?"

He turned to her with a slightly abstract air.

"Mars' Tom, I've got somethin' I'd like to talk to you about." The guests looked up at Cora's intrusion and then, ignoring her, returned to their conversations. Cora began to tell her story. She spoke softly at first with hesitation, trying to arrange her ideas. When she mentioned the meeting, Mister Tom scowled, but didn't say anything. Table talk ceased and everyone was listening. Cora spoke more rapidly. She was telling about the planned escape as Mister Tom rose and walked firmly out the door. Cora screamed, "Mars' Tom, what are you goin' to do? Lena didn't do nothin'!"

She stopped screaming when Mister Tom was out of sight, and whispered, "What have I done?" Turning she looked at the guests, who were still seated at the long table. The women were quiet and the men looked carefully at each other. In a body they rose and followed the direction of Mister Tom. Cora looked about helplessly and then slipped out the door into the main hall.

An awful quiet pulled her out of the house. Looking down the hill toward the rows of cabins, she saw the slaves circled about Mister Tom and Lena, who were standing in front of the low, stone building. Lena started screaming, begging for mercy. Her cries were quite clear to Cora, and she winced and pulled back from the edge of the hill as Mister Tom gestured to two of his overseers to take Lena into the building. Mister Tom followed them and shut the iron door.

Cora hobbled down the hill and into the crowd toward Lena's father. As she tugged at Big Jake's arm, he turned. His face showed nothing as he looked at her. "She wouldn't tell . . . he's makin' an example of her! He . . ." Big Jake turned back toward the building.

The door opened and Lena staggered out. Her light cotton dress clung to her back in strips. Cora rushed forward to help her.



Lena pushed Cora away and followed Big Jake to their cabin. Big Jake kicked the door shut behind him.

Cora stood with her right hand out. It dropped to her side. She hunched slowly back to her cabin. Her feet raised little puffs of dust that floated in the pink sunlight. But Cora finally found herself in the shadow of her own black shack.

## Sunsets

DONALD MANDELL

*Mr. Donald J. Mandell is an Assistant Professor of Biology. While he was a student at the University of California at Berkeley, he lived at Stinson Beach, California, a remarkable bay twenty-five miles north of San Francisco in Marin County. It was there, at Stinson Beach, that he first played with painting, poetry and mathematics.*

THERE's a cliff-row  
That fingers out to sea  
Seen from one place  
The sun sets there  
First strong and lewd  
Then quiet lavender  
Real fine    Pretty  
Only get up close  
Feel the rough of sand  
The wind  
The brush against your legs  
And wonder where the pretty is  
Wonder why it's always far  
Wonder  
And then move  
Move move  
Forget the tear that says  
Stay  
It is this  
It will always be this.

# The Spot

*Carrie Torgerson, a senior from Minneapolis, Minnesota, has a double major in English and speech. Last year she studied abroad. Her short story, "The Spot," was written for creative writing class. Carrie is also interested in travel and advertising.*

CAROLYN TORGERSON

THE PERFUME BOTTLE slipped from her wet fingers and made a small clanking noise as it hit the hard rounding side of the sink. Before Carol could grab it, three oily drops escaped from the tiny throat opening and she watched them ooze down the white porcelain through the drain, toward the trap.

"Aren't you ready yet?" her mother complained as she walked into the bathroom. "Fix your hair in back. No, no, the left side."

"I can't see the back, Mother." As Carol tried to clip the escaping hairs around the nape of her neck, she watched her mother through the mirror. Their eyes never acknowledged meeting. When her mother turned her head a certain way, it looked distorted. Something probably wrong with the mirror, thought Carol.

"Carol, why doesn't Phil call you more often? What do you do when you two go out? Sit and daydream like you do around here? The trouble is, you don't know a good thing when you see it. His family has money—yes, and a fine name in this town too."

"Family isn't everything, Mother."

"Look, honey, you might as well realize that you marry your in-laws. Fix your eyebrows. Why can't you ever use the make-up I buy you? It just sits there until it eventually dries up. Look at this. It still has the price sticker on it."



"All right, Mother. No one tells you to buy it." Carol's fingers held the damp perfume bottle tightly. She screwed the cap on until she could feel it grind in her grip. She looked at the mirror and wanted to smash the image behind her.

The figure ducked, and Carol could see her mother rummaging through the drawer of hair rollers for a book of matches.

"Now when he gets here, Carol, tell him I'm out." Her mother finally, quickly lit the cigarette. "I look too frizzled." Thick smoke poured out of her mother's mouth. Her hands were busy patting at pieces of thin, oily hair. Just as she'd let them loose, they'd spring out again. Over and over her fingers pushed.

Carol opened a new pack of cigarettes and lit one up. As she lifted her head upward, a thin stream of smoke curled its way around the ceiling light. Her eyes followed the curling smoke until it eventually diffused. She felt dizzy and turned to the mirror again. Her mother's head jerked emphatically as she continued to talk about Phil's parents. The smoke made the room seem tight and suffocating. Carol grabbed for the perfume bottle again but couldn't get the top off. The ridged cap left a stinging imprint on her fingers, and she thought of Phil. He'd probably take her to Cedric's. She'd never been there. She could feel the thick carpeting under her feet as she followed the shiny path of matted foot prints on the carpet in front of her. As she tapped her ashes into the sink and turned the water on, she watched them catch up in the cool water and swirl down the drain.

"This way, please. I hope our front table is all right?"

As Phil and Carol followed the waiter, she couldn't help but stiffen as they wound through the crowded dining area to their reserved table. She was always afraid of making a mistake—not one that others would particularly notice, but one that Phil would see. He was always so particular, not purposely, but rather unconsciously so.

After she was seated, Carol kept her eyes on the clean, white linen and studied the arrangement of silver. As she moved the ash tray closer to her, she noticed a small woven patch of thread by her knife. Probably a mended cigarette hole.

"Carol, the waiter is waiting for you. What would you like to drink?"

"Oh, I'm sorry. I ah . . . I don't know. I guess a scotch and water."

After the waiter left, Phil drummed his fingers on the clean linen and, tightening his jaw, glared at Carol. "For Christ's sake, did you have to order scotch? Couldn't you have at least ordered a cocktail? Of all the . . . scotch isn't even a summer drink."

"I'm sorry. I always forget. I get so nervous and . . ."

"Forget it. From now on, I'll order the drinks. I should have known better . . . scotch and water!"

Carol thought of the mended linen again. It must have been a cigarette burn. She turned to her own cigarette and watched the smoke steadily pull its

way upward. It just kept reaching, reaching for a way out. She thought a moment. She quickly glanced at Phil and saw that he was watching her nervous fingers curl around her cigarette.

"For God's sake, Carol, will you relax? You're making me nervous."

"Sorry. My mind just isn't on things tonight. I feel so awkward when I'm around people and . . ."

"Here's our drinks. Excuse me, what were you saying?"

"I don't know, Phil. You'll just think I'm stupid or something. You always think that."

"Oh, God, not that again. Now would I keep taking you out if I thought that? Use your head for once, will you?"

"See, that just proves it."

"Let's drop it. Did I tell you about Dad's new bank? It's not done yet but . . ."

As Phil talked, Carol thought about the patch again. Of all the stupid things, she just couldn't get it off her mind. Why did it have to be on her side? It was almost as if Phil had planned it. Damn him.

"Carol, are you listening to me?"

"Oh, yes. Go ahead."

As the rhythmic tone continued, Carol put down her cigarette and watched the sweat beads trickle down the side of her glass. As he continued, the beads continued until the glass finally stood in a damp ring on the table linen.

"So what do you think about the name, Carol?" His eyes turned and tentatively watched her face for reaction. "Do you like the 'Yankton State Bank' or the 'Valley State Bank'?"

She thought a moment and looked at the glass. "I think I like the 'Valley State Bank.'"

"Why?"

"It sounds sort of free."

"Free? What in the hell is that supposed to mean? Banks aren't free. I can't figure you out for anything. Finish your drink and we'll order."

As Carol lifted her glass from the damp circle and raised it to her mouth, a drop skimmed down the side and dripped to the front of her green satin dress. She watched the spot diffuse through the surrounding material. As Carol reached for the ash tray, she thought about the name. She picked up her burning cigarette and glanced at Phil. Then she smiled and thoughtfully tapped it out.



## Trees II

SALLY SNYDER

*Sally Snyder is a senior from Rochelle, Illinois. She is a chemistry and mathematics major. Sally has been a member of Poetry Society and the LINDEN BARK staff for four years. She served as news editor of the LINDEN BARK during her sophomore and junior years.*

**B**LACK branches alternate from one straight trunk  
And cast their fruits and shadows on the snow.  
Rich threads, their orifices all have drunk  
From stem's thick sap—life-generating flow.  
Beneath ground—mirror, turning through the loam—  
That rich manure deposit of past trees—  
Roots run, reflecting in blue-covered tome  
Black branches, joining trunk; fused in one piece.  
And playing on the tree, the sun and wind  
Pour on interstices of branches, light  
Bark valleys, pluck the fruits, and finally glint  
Across the trunk itself and scale its height.  
Tree-top attained they pause on one last bend,  
Hover, then move across the branches' end.

## Sacred Fowl

JANICE ADLERSFLUEGEL

**S**ACRED fowl of azure down,  
My trembling finger crooked  
You light of body touch,  
Then turn  
And nimbly  
Soar.

# Stained Window

*Judy, a senior English major from Keokuk, Iowa, is this year's editor of the GRIFFIN staff, and is also a member of Poetry Society. Her story was written for creative writing class.*

JUDY MUNTZ

SPOONERVILLE'S LIKE MOST ANY SMALL TOWN. Most of the folks are a comfortable lot. They do all manner of things—some work in our glove factory, some run the stores in our town where the farmers from around come in on Saturday to do their tradin', there's school teachers and retired farmers. Our children go to the big brick school up on the hill, only through the eighth grade though now, since they consolidated last year. Ruined the basketball team we had too—could have won state with that team. Now they take them in buses to the county seat to high school.

Main Street's down at the bottom of the hill by the river. There used to be a little dam here and a mill, but it closed down. The dam's all gone except for one big hunk of stone out behind the Community Hall. The American Legion has a ceremony on Memorial Day, and they throw a wreath off the stone into the water.

The Community Hall's right at the foot of the bridge that brings you across the river into town. On the other side of the bridge is Morgan's service station, and next to that is Parson's appliances with the funeral parlor in the back, and then Schreck's tavern, and last the new laundromat which Mrs. Fuselli runs. On the other side of the street, going back the other way, there's the Oddfellows Lodge, Eton's variety store, the bank, Doc Simmon's office, Christy's dry goods, the Post Office with the Masonic Lodge above it, and Pollig's Grocery. It's a very quiet street. Mr. Short, the postmaster, has a big shepherd that sleeps in the



road in front of the Post Office, except on Saturdays when there's lots of traffic.

We have a town council to take care of things. They serve as the school board and the cemetery commission too. There's not much for them to do. They meet once a month in their special room in the Community Hall and sit around a long table in captain's chairs with the initials of old council members carved on the arms. The room always reeks of cigar smoke for days after a meeting. Folks always say Homer Eton makes ends meet at the variety store with the cigars he sells to council members. The council's made up of pretty much the same folks whose names we saw on Main Street: Nick Pollig, Doc Simmons, Joe Christy, Mr. Short, Mr. Richardson, the banker, and Mr. Sich, who started the glove factory, is chairman.

If you come straight across the bridge, past the Community Hall and go straight up the hill three blocks toward the school house, you'll come to our three churches: the Methodist, the Baptist, and the Presbyterian. They're all on the same corner. On the fourth side of the corner is the house that used to belong to Miss Bradford. Every town has to have someone odd, and Miss Bradford was the odd one in our town for many years. She's dead now.

She was really odd, there was no question about it. For one thing she lived all alone, and that in itself was enough to make us wonder. She wasn't like most old maids; she didn't even have a cat or a dog or a parakeet. She'd had the house built quite a long time ago. Joe Christy said that he'd been about fifteen when the house was built and Miss Bradford had been queer even then. It was a big brick house, three stories high and oblong-shaped except for a round turret with a stained glass window in it. The window was the scene of Christ's raising Lazarus from the dead. Joe said there had been quite a fuss when Miss Bradford had put the window in. The tomb before which Christ and Lazarus were standing was a bright red. A committee had been sent from the churches objecting to the color of the tomb, and most folks thought she shouldn't even have the window in her house; but Miss Bradford had ignored the committee.

The house itself was a disgrace, paint peeling all around the windows, and the porch at the back entrance was sunken in at one corner. The grass always went to seed in the summer, and the walks were never shoveled in the winter.

Miss Bradford never went out except on Thursday mornings when she went to town. Summer or winter she always wore the same shabby black coat, which hung down to her ankles and had two rows of odd buttons down the front. She would walk very fast down the hill. Everyone marveled that she was so spry. She went to the grocery where she always bought the same order—two quarts of milk, a loaf of bread, and two cans of beans.

"We're having a special on apples today," Mr. Pollig would say, just the way he does to everyone else, but nevertheless she always came away with the same as usual. Then she'd go back up the hill, slower this time and perhaps stopping to pat a stray dog.

Folks that lived around her said they could look over toward her house most any time of the day and see her staring out from behind the red of that window. She gave us all the creeps, staring out of that window that way and never talking to anyone.

Guess it really all started with that window episode and built up through the years. After that folks just couldn't leave her alone. They soaped her windows on Halloween and played all kinds of tricks on her.

She had plenty of chances to redeem herself though—like once when the Women's Community Club was planning the God's Portion Sale. The women decided Miss Bradford ought to donate something like everyone else in the town. When they were phonin' for donations, they sent Hulda Pollig up to Miss Bradford's 'cause, of course, she didn't have a phone. Hulda came back and told it that she had knocked twice and finally Miss Bradford had come to the door. After Hulda'd told her what she wanted, Miss Bradford had disappeared back into the house. She'd come back, Hulda said, with a soiled handmade doily. One dirty doily for the God's Portion Sale. Why other people gave so much more! Even the farmers from around donated at least a whole pig or a couple of sacks of grain.

Then one time our council got the idea that Miss Bradford ought to cut her grass and clean the snow off her walks. It didn't make our town look very good to have such a sight right across from the three churches. So they sent her a note telling her if she didn't clean the place up, they'd have to take action. They sent the note up with little Martin Sich. He pounded on the door, but she never came. He stuffed the note under the door, and when he went away he thought he saw her standing behind the window.

The house remained in the same state, and finally the council called a special meeting to see what should be done. By the time the meeting came around we all knew what had happened. It made us mad too. What right had she to ignore our town council? Most of the town gathered for the meeting, those who didn't care whether or not Miss Bradford cleaned up her place came out of curiosity. We wanted to see how the council would handle this. Mr. Sich didn't even bother going into the council room. He motioned the council members to the front of the crowd, and they talked in low tones in a huddle. We were talking among ourselves too.

"Crazy old hag. She ought to be in an institution."

"She's really a menace. Why, my Tommy almost fell on the ice in front of her house on the way up to the school last winter."

"Yah, hard tellin' what she might do next. She might get violent, she's so looney."

Mr. Sich came out of the huddle then. He raised his hand and gestured toward us.

"Quiet, folks, quiet. We, the council, are going to pay a call on Miss Brad-



ford and settle this thing once and for all." He started towards his big white Buick, and the rest of the council followed him. We all piled in our cars and followed the Buick up the hill. Our procession stopped in front of Miss Bradford's house. Cars were parked halfway down the hill. Teddy Williams, janitor at our school, passed up all the rest of the cars and pulled his car right up on Miss Bradford's lawn.

"May as well get some of the weeds this way," he said when he stepped out of the car.

Everyone laughed. Mr. Sich and the rest of the council got slowly out of the car and pushed their way through to the front porch of the house. Mr. Sich banged on the door several times, but no one answered. He looked at the other members of the council and each one nodded. He opened the door and yelled, "Miss Bradford, we want to see you."

Those of us standing near the window saw her move away from behind it. The council disappeared into the house.

They were in there about fifteen minutes, then they came storming out. "The nerve of that woman," we heard Mr. Sich say, "just standing there like she didn't hear a word we said. She ought to be taken away."

Just then Miss Bradford appeared in the doorway. For a moment she stood there looking at us or rather over us. Then for a minute her eyes narrowed and focused on us. "If you had been where I have been—," she gasped in a thin voice, but she didn't go on. She turned and went back inside.

Mr. Sich and the council walked to the car, shaking their heads and muttering to themselves.

No one's actually sure which one of us threw the first rock, but soon we were all gathering gravel from the side of the road and throwing it at the stained glass window. The glass in the red tomb shattered, and a scream was heard from within the house. Doc leaped out of the car and rushed into the house again. That scream sort of woke us up, and we all started hurrying toward our cars.

The story went around town that night that she'd just been bruised on the head, but Doc found her dead when he went back the next day. He said it couldn't have been from the rock because he'd examined her thoroughly right afterwards. He found her in bed and figured she must have died in her sleep because he said he'd never seen a face look more peaceful.

When the people in the newspaper office were looking up stuff for her obituary, they found that her family had all died in a fire. She had been the only one rescued and had been pulled from the middle of a burning house just before it collapsed.

We did right by her though—like our town always does. We put a plaque up in her memory in the Community Hall.

Now that Miss Bradford's dead we don't have someone odd in our town; we're all just a comfortable, friendly lot.

## Bank Convention

ALICE SCOTT

*Although Mrs. Scott is the mother of five children, she still finds time for hiking and writing. Her writing talents have made it possible for her to attend a writers' conference at the University of Illinois and also to publish several poems in popular children's magazines. Mr. Scott, by the way, is a banker.*

**R**ED velvet draperies drawn in shadowed folds  
Fall halfway over panes of leaded glass,  
And crystal prism-dripping chandeliers  
Reflect the splendid ballroom's candleglow  
And red carnations set in silver bowls.  
Prompt guests arrive, paunched men in black and white,  
Their ladies manicured, perfumed and minked.  
Now welcome to our city, honored guests,  
For you we've decked the old girl out once more.  
St. Louis: regent of midwestern trade,  
(Though long ago the lode-queen sold herself.)  
First National of Dallas, how are you?  
Bank of Nebraska, New York Central Trust.  
Yes, Mr. Stone, I know about your bank,  
The fundamental fact all bank wives learn:  
World's largest bank is Bank America,  
And you, Kentucky's foremost banking son,  
Have risen to be chairman of its board.  
Yes, I'm Kentucky born, too, Mr. Stone,  
And of the Bourbon line, direct from France.  
Eleven generations here, we are.  
Let's drink a toast to Henry of Navarre.



Honduras, oh dear me, are banks there, too?  
How do you do, Amigo, handsome man.  
Ah, Mrs. First Security of Maine,  
Your jeweled stare must rival Maine's bleak coast.  
We're honored that you're here, dear Mrs. Maine.  
Now wide-brimmed Stetson in rough Midas hand-  
Say! Forty million out in cattle loans,  
But Denver's young, and cattle fatten fast.  
Prince Edward Island—do I use my French?  
Silk rustling skirts of Mrs. Bank Brazil;  
Be busy, girls, here comes the ageless one,  
The wolf from Little Rock Security.  
Bank of California: oh shush  
Those ugly rumors, tossing apples gold,  
And what of anti-trust, monopoly,  
Your sunny fresh-air state I'd love to see.  
Dear Memphis belle, magnolia blossoms' scent;  
Saskatchewan's First Bank, its winter wheat,  
Fidelity of Pheonix, polished pearls;  
Sioux City's First; St. Paul Trust Company;  
Debentures, coin shortage, interest rate,  
First National Toledo; Tampa State.

And ever on and on our guests stream by,  
A line of mass-produced rich elegance,  
Their automatic smiles and chosen words  
Like products of the mint, stamped one by one,  
With pre-determined value there engraved,  
Bright, shining charm-coins to be spent or saved.

## The Carob Tree

ALICE SCOTT

ONE hundred years of wandering and still  
We sing. Blunt faith shines deep in youthful eyes  
And prods us in our shadowed wilderness.  
Our tired, black faces search dark evergreens  
For fruit, for sustenance to keep us strong.  
St. John, could we but find our carob tree.

## Arbor

SALLY SNYDER

A CHILD in May's corn  
(water-young, eyes seamed shut)  
wanders barefoot down muddy rows  
egg new.  
He knows that wish-balls  
blown with seamed eyes and grapefruit cheeks  
fall true.  
That raindrops twisting down a pane of glass  
are horses straining in a race  
and lightning bugs were made to be  
his rings.  
That rain-smell runs freely  
through city streets  
and feels cool in the gutters.  
All time is today and will be tomorrow  
and August is unknown.



# The Wall

MADEENA SPRAY

*Madeena Spray, a junior from Paola, Kansas, is majoring in English. She was the winner of the Freshman Writing Contest in 1962 and has previously contributed to the GRIFFIN. Madeena is a member of Poetry Society and Press Club.*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*The Soldiers*  
*The Sentry*  
*The Boy*

*The Nymphs*  
*The Decorator*  
*The Girl*

(A platform with steps stretches nearly across the bare stage, but the steps leading into the wings at stage R and L are visible to the audience. They rise for five treads, uninterrupted; but on the long front expanse the third step from the bottom is a wide platform. Above the fifth, or top step is another platform, wider than the other. It touches the back-drop—or seems to—which is, of course, the sky, a pale blue. In the center of this platform stands a huge letter D, acting as a divider between the two halves of the stage, and angled just enough to be recognizable for what it is. In width it is about two feet; it stretches from the sky to cover about half the depth of the platform; it is at least seven feet tall. This letter is white, and at times it seems to glow internally.)

(Just R of this barrier stands the SENTRY. He may be dressed somewhat like a Roman officer, and he stands in an alert attitude, clasping a spear before him. His back is to the D, and he stares purposefully off R.)

(To the L of this letter is the DECORATOR. She is slender and lovely,

where the SENTRY is stalwart. Her dress may be Grecian, flowers are bound in her hair, and she carries a flat basket heaped with blossoms. She faces L.)

At curtain rise, the sky is deep blue, and the three silent figures are in silhouette. Gradually the sky lightens to brightest day.

(As the SENTRY sighs and shifts to the other foot, the DECORATOR turns and begins arranging her flowers, preparing to place them at the foot of the letter, humming as she does so. She sticks herself, perhaps on a thorn, and utters a cry. SENTRY starts and turns to face the barrier, holding his spear ready.)

SENTRY: Hold! Who's that?

DECORATOR: (Equally startled, she drops her basket) Who's *that*?

SENTRY: (sternly) Never mind: what are you doing over there? How did you get across the Wall?

DECORATOR: (indignantly) I *live* here. How did *you* get— (she stoops to recover her basket, and sees through the letter) Why—I can see you!

SENTRY: Where?

DECORATOR: (urgently) Down here; down here.

(He stoops also. She is kneeling, he on one knee.)

(in awe) You're not one of us.

SENTRY: (equally thunderstruck) I—we—never knew there were people over there.

(Both straighten, facing front. During the next two speeches, they move DC just enough to be able to see around the letter.)

DECORATOR: (softly) There are other people here—

SENTRY: (thoughtfully) And we never knew.

DECORATOR: Other people— (She faces the SENTRY, in wonder, as he stares at her.) How long have your people been here?

SENTRY: (promptly) Forever.

DECORATOR: We, too. Are there many of you?

SENTRY: (justly proud) Oh, a great many. (loftily) More than you could number on your two hands. And yours?

DECORATOR: (humoring him) Perhaps not quite so many. I cannot think how we did not know of you.

SENTRY: (his pride hurt) Nor I.

DECORATOR: (innocently) It is odd. Do you often stand near our wall?

SENTRY: (stung) I guard *our* barrier constantly.

DECORATOR: (gently, amused) It is our Wall, though.

SENTRY: You lie! It is ours—our defense!

DECORATOR: (stamps her foot) Don't be ridiculous! It has descended to us, for our devotion and our delight.

SENTRY: Nonsense! It was dedicated to us, as we are to it. It is our duty, and our defense.



DECORATOR: (thoroughly exasperated) You are making no sense! What are those words you use?

SENTRY: (now he is furious) It is you who speak wildly! I cannot understand you!

DECORATOR: Then you're a fool!

SENTRY: And you are mad!

DECORATOR: (drawing up to her full height) Leave our Wall at once.

SENTRY: (at his tallest; which is a great deal taller) I never leave my post. (He faces R again, his original position.)

(The DECORATOR stands for a moment, then the enormity of her discovery hits her. She whirls and runs to extreme L of platform. She beckons excitedly offstage.)

DECORATOR: Come—come quickly! People! I have found other people!

(Other nymphs enter L and surround her, all talking at once.)

(At the same time another soldier, older than SENTRY, strides up steps R, to Wall. This is the CAPTAIN.)

CAPTAIN: Sentry! I heard voices. Has there been a disturbance?

SENTRY: (salutes) Captain, I have discovered people! Just beyond our barrier!

CAPTAIN: (on guard) People! What sort? Are there many? Are they dangerous?

SENTRY: I only saw one, Sir. She says there are more. (confidentially) But I wouldn't take her word. She seemed quite mad.

CAPTAIN: Mad! Why do you think so?

SENTRY: She spoke so wildly, Sir. And used words I have never heard.

CAPTAIN: You mean she speaks a foreign tongue?

SENTRY: (doubtfully) Perhaps. Part of the time she spoke our language—though with an odd, frivolous accent. But then—she used some words I could not understand at all.

CAPTAIN: What sort of words? Can you remember any?

SENTRY: Well, Sir, one was—I can't recall exactly—but it had "light" in it.

CAPTAIN: (pacing) I see. "Light"—that's not foreign, at any rate. "Light"—some sort of code, perhaps? (He is thinking aloud) Hm, "light": maybe creatures from the sun—"light" (He stops, facing R, hit by an idea)—"Light!" The year of the Destruction! The bomb! (turns L) You know of that, Sentry?

SENTRY: (half fearful: this is a forbidden subject) I—I have heard of it, Sir.

CAPTAIN: (resumes pacing) Have we not been told there was on that day such a light as has never been seen before or since? Perhaps—(this is it) perhaps they are Demons: come to unleash another Destruction.

SENTRY: Oh—Sir! She looked harmless—

CAPTAIN: Looks deceive, Sentry; you have learned that. But let them come. *This time we are ready! Where is this creature?*

SENTRY: (guiltily) I—she—I do not know, Sir. (gulps) She—left.

CAPTAIN: (thundering) You let her go? Well, find her, man! Where did she go?

SENTRY: (points L) That way. But, Sir—you can't mean to go beyond the barrier?

CAPTAIN: (checked for the moment) Hm. Well—Hark! What is that?  
(They listen at the Wall. The DECORATOR, with several NYMPHS, is returning.)

SENTRY: (greatly relieved) She is coming back. And with others, by the sound. I should say—

CAPTAIN: Hush!

(They listen, pressing close to the wall, as the NYMPHS approach, discussing what the DECORATOR has told them.)

YOUNG NYMPH: But, are you sure? How exciting!

DECORATOR: Of course, I'm sure. I saw him, I told you.

YOUNG NYMPH: (fascinated) Was he a horrible monster?

DECORATOR: No—just a soldier.

2ND NYMPH: A soldier! you mean—like— (Dismay of the whole group)

OLDER NYMPH: Hush! We never speak of that. (She evidently has considerable authority; the others fall silent as she addresses DECORATOR.) Did he seem—threatening?

DECORATOR: No, not really threatening. But he spoke so wildly—and he used such funny words, part of the time, I could not understand him. (Ashamed) And I'm afraid I rather lost my temper.

OLDER NYMPH: Oh, my dear! Really, that was hardly wise. Would not a gentle, loving attitude have accomplished more?

DECORATOR (doubtfully) Perhaps—but he was not a creature I could find it easy to love.

OLDER NYMPH: (gently) Nevertheless, it is the law, you know.

DECORATOR: (she can't argue with this) Yes, it is the law.

2ND NYMPH: But what were those odd words you spoke of?

OLDER NYMPH: Yes, what of that? Can you remember any of them?

DECORATOR: Well—let me see. (She struggles to recall) They were so odd! But one was—was—oh, dear—I think—he said, "defense."

2ND NYMPH: (incredulous) "Defense?"

DECORATOR: Yes, that was it.

YOUNG NYMPH: But what does it mean?

2ND NYMPH: It doesn't mean anything. (The OLDER NYMPH looks at her sharply) Well, I never heard of it.

OLDER NYMPH: (to DECORATOR) Do you know if that word has a meaning? Could you understand how he may have meant it?

DECORATOR: Yes—I think so. He—he said our Wall was their "defense."

OLDER NYMPH: (musing) Their "defense." That still doesn't—



YOUNG NYMPH: (shocked) *Our Wall?*

2ND NYMPH: Why, how dare they! How can they say *our* Wall is their—anything!

OLDER NYMPH: (commandingly; but still without raising her voice) Quiet! My dears, we must try to understand these men. Remember, that one said they have lived on their side of the Wall forever. And—without having any idea that we are here, all that time. Now, is it not only natural that they should in time come to regard the Wall as being theirs?

YOUNG NYMPH: (naively) But it is ours.

OLDER NYMPH: Yes, it is ours. That is the first thing all of us learned. But suppose—suppose it is the first thing *they* learned, too? (Overriding their surprise) Suppose they have always regarded our Wall as their property, as their “defense”? (Gradually, the NYMPHS realize the great sense of this)

YOUNG NYMPH: But still—what *is* a “defense”?

2ND NYMPH: (frivolously) I know what a fence is.

OLDER NYMPH: (calmly) You may be nearer the truth than you think. (The others are surprised at this, but never really question her wisdom) “Wall”—“fence”—they are very similar, are they not. And perhaps to these—people—the Wall is divine, as it is to us. (triumphantly) Could not “defense” be their word for a “divine fence”? (The NYMPHS ponder this logic, and accept it.)

DECORATOR: (comes forward and takes the OLDER NYMPH'S hand. Warmly) Wise one, you are right—as always. You make me very ashamed.

OLDER NYMPH: (smiles at her kindly) Let us go talk to these—people. We must arrive at a closer understanding with our new neighbors.

YOUNG NYMPH: (a gasp of fear) Our neighbors! *Soldiers?*

OLDER NYMPH: Why, of course.

2ND NYMPH: (a little defiantly) After all, they're only people.

OLDER NYMPH: Just like us.

YOUNG NYMPH: (shakily) J-just like us. (As the OLDER NYMPH turns to approach the Wall, the YOUNG NYMPH stops her, somewhat panicked) Wait! (The OLDER NYMPH turns to her questioningly) Don't—shouldn't we call the others? I'm sure they'd want to be there.

OLDER NYMPH: You are right. Summon them, will you, my dear?  
(YOUNG NYMPH hastens off L)

DECORATOR: Are you *sure* we should try—understanding—our neighbors?  
I mean—

OLDER NYMPH: Is it not part of our Law? All men can be reached by love, and understanding; even such as—these.

(YOUNG NYMPH returns, followed by others and the GIRL. She is younger than the rest, but not childish.)

3RD NYMPH: What is it? Have you truly found other people?

GIRL: Where are they?

OLDER NYMPH: We are going to them now, child. Come—all of you.

(During the last part of the NYMPHS' conference, the CAPTAIN has sent the SENTRY off R for reinforcements. Now, as the NYMPHS draw near the Wall, the SENTRY reappears with other SOLDIERS. They are followed by the BOY. He is almost too young to be a soldier, but, like the GIRL, no child. Grimly, they approach the CAPTAIN.)

SENTRY: Any new developments, Sir?

CAPTAIN: (still listening) They approach. Stand ready.

(Now the NYMPHS and SOLDIERS are directly facing each other. The OLDER NYMPH and the CAPTAIN are on the platform, very close to the Wall. The others are a space behind. They should not be in a single file, but grouped along the steps, some—perhaps the BOY and GIRL—as low as the middle platform, but no lower.)

OLDER NYMPH: Friends—are you still there?

(The SOLDIERS have difficulty restraining themselves at such naivete.)

1ST SOLDIER: (confidentially, to a comrade) Not very dangerous, I'd say.

2ND SOLDIER: "Friends!" Like Sentry says, they must be mad.

(The CAPTAIN signals them to be quiet.)

CAPTAIN: We are here.

OLDER NYMPH: (ceremoniously) We welcome you, as neighbors. For so many years, we have thought we were alone; but now that others have been discovered, it is indeed a delight—

(The CAPTAIN starts violently; the others are alarmed too: that word, again! OLDER NYMPH is aware of the disturbance; she pauses, then, politely) Did you speak?

CAPTAIN: (prepared for the worst) Go on.

OLDER NYMPH: (somewhat nonplussed) It is, I say, a delight to welcome you, as our brothers. We invite you to join us, on our side of our—of the Wall, to—

CAPTAIN: (tensely) No! (This talk is no longer amusing to any of the SOLDIERS. They suspect a plot behind it.)

OLDER NYMPH: (still courteous) I beg your pardon?

CAPTAIN: (striving to be calm) We never pass beyond our Barrier.

(Some indignation from the NYMPHS) It is our duty to defend it, from all comers; and to do so, we must remain near it at all times.

OLDER NYMPH: (truly puzzled) But we mean no harm. We only wish to get acquainted. What danger can there be in that?

1ST SOLDIER: Hear that? Insidious witches!

3RD SOLDIER: "What danger!" She must be a demon, no doubt!

CAPTAIN: (grimly) We may not leave our post.



(The NYMPHS turn to each other in consternation)

2ND NYMPH: Good heavens! How ridiculous!

3RD NYMPH: What are they afraid of?

YOUNG NYMPH: What are we to do now?

(They continue to conjecture, as we hear the SOLDIERS.)

CAPTAIN: (stepping back a pace, to others) I don't like this.

2ND SOLDIER: What are they up to, Sir?

SENTRY: D'you think they're dangerous?

CAPTAIN: Dangerous? Hard to tell. They don't seem so—I can't foresee an all-out attack.

SENTRY: Suppose they're just trying to get us off our guard?

1ST SOLDIER: (belligerently) Ha! Let them try—we're ready!

CAPTAIN: (cautioning) And we've got to stay ready. Never underestimate your enemy, soldier.

BOY: (hesitantly; he moves a step toward the group) Sir—perhaps if we—

CAPTAIN: (not unkindly) We've no time for you now. Ask questions later.

BOY: Yes, Sir. (back to where he belongs)

SENTRY: But what do we do?

CAPTAIN: Stand ready. Stay on our side of the barrier, and on no account let anyone cross—either way. Remember the Prophecy! (This unites and steadies them. Across the Wall, the NYMPHS are still conferring.)

DECORATOR: But what can we do—if they simply will not listen to anything we say?

OLDER NYMPH: We must be patient.

3RD NYMPH: Patient? But they simply refuse to realize we mean no harm! How can we overcome that attitude?

YOUNG NYMPH: Surely it is obvious that we regard them as friends.

(Anxiously, to OLD NYMPH) Is it not?

OLDER NYMPH: I am sure it must be. However, we must not try to convert them at once. Remember we have our Prophecy to guide us. (The GIRL steps forward, starts to interrupt, then thinks better of it.) We know we have truth on our side, so we can afford to wait. Their conversion is bound to take a little time.

2ND NYMPH: But—how *can* we convert them if we cannot even see them?

3RD NYMPH: Yes; we must get them to come over to our side of the Wall.

YOUNG NYMPH: But I do not think they want to come.

OLDER NYMPH: True—that is very true, my dears. I must speak with them again.

YOUNG NYMPH: (hesitantly) Perhaps—if we told them of the Prophecy—

3RD NYMPH: Good heavens! Our Prophecy?

2ND NYMPH: Why on earth should we do that?

YOUNG NYMPH: I only thought—it might help to convince them—

OLDER NYMPH: You may be right, my dear. We shall see. (She turns back to Wall, where SOLDIERS are still conferring.) Friends? Have you changed your minds?

CAPTAIN: No.

OLDER NYMPH: But my friends—only hear what we have to say. We (includes all NYMPHS) have devoted our lives to loving our neighbors. How could we possibly do harm to you? All we seek is to know each other, that we may destroy distrust and suspicion; and that we may all exist in love and harmony. Can you think there is evil in that?

CAPTAIN: We have heard these words before. We have learned to distrust such sentiments. (with great emphasis) We may not leave our post.

OLDER NYMPH: But—my friends! How can you distrust love?

CAPTAIN: (bitterly) There were those who spoke of love before. They said, do not be suspicious and watchful. They said, love our enemies: show them only kindness. They destroyed us! (pause) It shall not happen again. (The NYMPHS are shocked by this. There is a drawing together of all but the OLDER NYMPH and the GIRL.)

OLDER NYMPH: (with compassion) Oh my friends—you are mistaken. It was not love that destroyed. Love, by its very nature, can only nourish, and strengthen. It was hatred, my dear friends, hatred and distrust which poisoned all the world.

CAPTAIN: You are wrong!

OLDER NYMPH: No, we are not wrong. People have been mistaken before. But now we recognize only the great power of love. Ever since the day of the Prophecy—

(The SOLDIERS react as if a shot had been fired into their midst.)

CAPTAIN: (roars) The *what*?

OLDER NYMPH: (startled) Why, our Prophecy. Ever since that day, we have—

CAPTAIN: *You* received a Prophecy, too?

OLDER NYMPH: (now truly puzzled) What do you mean?

CAPTAIN: (trying hard for control) Our people discovered this Wall, in the year zero. They were puzzled as to its meaning.

OLDER NYMPH: Even so with our people.

CAPTAIN: Then—in the year one—a Prophecy came to us.

OLDER NYMPH: (wondering) And to us, also.

CAPTAIN: About—about the meaning of this Barrier?

OLDER NYMPH: Why—yes.

CAPTAIN: (livid) What was that Prophecy?

OLDER NYMPH: I will gladly tell it to you. We have it word for word, even now: "On the day of the Destruction, all the world was consumed on the altar of the Great Fire. And on that day was the Symbol born, out of the ashes of the Civilization. The Symbol stands for the past, for mankind's



Destruction of mankind. And the Symbol stands for the future. You shall strive to follow the spirit of this future. And there shall come a day when all mankind shall realize this meaning, and shall tremble in fear and awe. And on that day, mankind shall be born again."

(Pause: the NYMPHS stand reverently, the SOLDIERS frozen in disbelief.)  
This is our Prophecy.

CAPTAIN: (stunned) That—is *our* Prophecy.

(Now the NYMPHS are stunned.)

3RD NYMPH: Their prophecy!

2ND NYMPH: How can that be?

OLDER NYMPH: Let me think.

3RD SOLDIER: Witchcraft! Captain, I tell you it is witchcraft!

1ST SOLDIER: Destroy them!

CAPTAIN: Silence!

OLDER NYMPH: (thinking this out) Friends—is it true? That you received the same Prophecy as we?

CAPTAIN: (determined to be on guard) We did.

OLDER NYMPH: Then—then you, too, are aware that this Wall must have a meaning. And that the meaning must be found.

CAPTAIN: We are.

OLDER NYMPH: (joyously) But then—oh, my friends, why do we argue? *We* can show you that for which you are searching.

CAPTAIN: (barks) We are not searching!

OLDER NYMPH: How is that? Do you not wish to know the true—

CAPTAIN: We know the true meaning!

OLDER NYMPH: (very unsure of herself) You—if you know the true meaning, why then, you cannot be against us.

CAPTAIN: Why not?

OLDER NYMPH: Why—why—because of the meaning! The wisest of our people pondered, and studied for years to discover the meaning of this symbol. And one day they did discover the meaning. And it is this: We dare to defy the cautious, suspicious fears of the past. We are delivered from the fears of every other human, and devoted to our new deity. (stretching out her arms) Oh, my brothers, that must be the answer for you, too. And if you have not known it before, accept it now!

(The SOLDIERS are unmoved: puzzled, and more suspicious than before.)

CAPTAIN: What nonsense is that?

OLDER NYMPH: (draws back) What—nonsense? What do you mean?

CAPTAIN: What do *you* mean? We cannot understand your words.

OLDER NYMPH: Did—did you not hear?

CAPTAIN: We heard. But (enunciating as if it were she who could not understand him) We—do—not—understand!

OLDER NYMPH: (to herself) How odd— (to them) My friends—we mean love:  
Love is the answer to the riddle of the Wall!

(Now the SOLDIERS know they face an enemy.)

CAPTAIN: (spitting it out) Love!

OLDER NYMPH: Yes: Love. Love, unrestrained and unqualified, love for all people. You must see—

CAPTAIN: Silence! (forcing himself to speak coherently) You—you are the ones! You destroyed us before—you would again: talking of love—love! Demons! Trying to weaken us all! And that is why— (he manages to force himself to a degree of calmness) *We* have found the answer. We are dedicated to our one duty; and it is defense! Defense—against the dangers of such as you! We dare not let your kind weaken us again. (pause) And that is the true meaning: Defense!

(The NYMPHS are huddled together again, in fear.)

2ND NYMPH: (whispering) What—what does he mean?

YOUNG NYMPH: (whimpers) I am afraid!

OLDER NYMPH: (much shaken, herself) What are you saying? What is this “defense”? What does it mean?

CAPTAIN: (harshly) It means we have guarded our Barrier from the year one, against such as you— (in a fury)—guard: Guard! Do you understand that?

OLDER NYMPH: (she begins to see) Yes—

CAPTAIN: And we shall continue to be on guard. You will not destroy us again! (contemptuously) So—take this—love—of yours, and go. We want none of it. (He turns his back on the Wall.)

3RD NYMPH: (fearfully) Did—did we hear correctly?

OLDER NYMPH: (sadly, but with conviction) We did. They are the same: the same ones who would not listen to our kind before.

YOUNG NYMPH: Then—what is there to do?

OLDER NYMPH: (a deep sigh) Only what we did before. Go on loving; though they do not want us to.

2ND NYMPH: Do not want us to! They are fools!

OLDER NYMPH: (as before, sadly) They are, my dear. Fools—and blind. They do not want love; and they do not deserve it. But as before, we must keep on—

GIRL: How ?

OLDER NYMPH: (turns to her) What is that, child?

GIRL: How do we love those that we feel to be unworthy?

OLDER NYMPH: (not wishing to take time; also, perhaps, a little unsure, herself) My dear, if you wish me to explain to you later—

GIRL: Perhaps you should. I do not see how such a thing is possible.

2ND NYMPH: (aghast) Do you mean we should *not* love them?

GIRL: Oh, no! (Goes to top of platform. Directly to OLD NYMPH) I think we



should love them. I really do! But—how *can* we love someone, and at the same time call him unworthy of love?

OLDER NYMPH: You are very young, child. We cannot expect you to know all of our precepts, or understand them yet. (She steps forward, places a hand on the GIRL's shoulder.) But you must have faith in our way of life. (tilts GIRL's chin up with her free hand) Do you have faith in us?

GIRL: Oh—yes! Only— (she trails off, in confusion)

OLDER NYMPH: (understandingly) Very well. That is enough, for now. (to the others) Come, my dears. (OLDER NYMPH starts L, followed at a small distance by all but the GIRL, who stands just L of the wall, bewildered.)

GIRL: But—wait! Where are you going? (OLDER NYMPH turns back to her) You're not—are you *leaving*?

OLDER NYMPH: Why, yes. Why should we stay here?

GIRL: But—what of *them*? (gestures to Wall)

2ND NYMPH: What of them?

OLDER NYMPH: Is it not obvious? We can do nothing with them, my dear. They will not listen.

GIRL: And so—do we just—leave them?

2ND NYMPH: (angrily) What would you have us do? Stay here forever—hoping that some day a miracle will change their minds?

GIRL: No—but—but—do we just give up?

OLDER NYMPH: We have had experience with such as these before. (sadly) Their kind are completely stubborn, my dear. I fear we can do nothing.

DECORATOR: It isn't as though we haven't tried.

OLDER NYMPH: And we would be foolish if we refused to learn from experience (humoring her) wouldn't we?  
(Reluctantly, the GIRL nods.)

OLDER NYMPH: Very well. Come, then, my dears.

(They leave, rather slowly, as the SOLDIERS, who have been conferring silently, begin to speak. The GIRL stands watching the NYMPHS exit, starts once to follow, then turns and comes back to the Wall, thinking. She absently bends and picks up a flower from the basket left by the DECORATOR.)

1ST SOLDIER: (evidently carrying on a heated discussion) Well, *I* say kill them all!

CAPTAIN: And *I* say you could do with a little more discipline, soldier.

2ND SOLDIER: But—why not, Sir? They're obviously the same pacifists that—

CAPTAIN: Because that's not our task! (to him, directly) We're defenders, soldier—not attackers!

3RD SOLDIER: So—what do we do, sir?

CAPTAIN: (whirls on him) We defend!

SENTRY: You mean, just as we have done before, sir?

CAPTAIN: I mean just that. (harshly, to all) That's our job! Remember that.

ALL: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN: (pacing, downstage of them) So we stand guard—and we stay ready for whatever might happen. And anything *might* happen! Remember that, men. So far, they've done nothing. But don't get overconfident. They *may* make a move at any time!

ALL: Yes, sir.

BOY: (very hesitant) Sir—

CAPTAIN: (brusquely) Well?

BOY: Ah—sir—why are we so sure they are enemies?

CAPTAIN: What? Why do you think they tried to coax us across the Barrier?  
(general agreement)

BOY: (doubtfully) Yes, sir—but they seemed kind; and—

CAPTAIN: They seemed! Of course they *seemed*! That's their very danger! That's how they trapped the fools before! (The BOY is silent.) Well? Do you disagree?

BOY: Oh—oh, no, sir. I'm sure you—must be right.

CAPTAIN: All right. (considering) Hmmm—and I think it's about time you started learning to be a soldier, boy. (crosses to Wall) Our job is to guard this Barrier. And especially *now*, no one goes across, either way. Do you understand?

BOY: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN: Very good. (back R) I don't think they'll try anything, so soon. But we'll have someone within call. Now—stand guard, soldier!

BOY: Yes, sir.

(SOLDIERS exit, following CAPTAIN, in a military manner; but not marching. The BOY hesitates, goes toward Wall and takes a stance like the SENTRY's, when the play opened. The GIRL, still holding the flower, has moved down the steps to the middle platform. She sits on the step above this, with a sigh.)

BOY: (jumps, nervously) Who's that?

GIRL: Oh! (swings to face Wall; remains seated) Oh—it's only me.

BOY: (a step DC) I thought you had all left.

GIRL: They—everyone else did. (faces front, puts her hands in her lap.)

BOY: You're—alone? (nervously)

GIRL: Yes. (pause. She stands, facing R) Won't you—can't you come down here?



BOY: (realizing he has taken another step forward, hastily jumps back) No!

GIRL: Oh, but—what harm can there be in it?

BOY: (sternly) I may not leave my post.

GIRL: But I am all alone, I swear! (caustically) And besides, you can always call for help. I heard them say—

BOY: (springs forward accusingly) You were listening to us!

GIRL: (hotly) I was not! (faces out again)

BOY: You were! (takes a step down)

GIRL: I was *not*! (She turns back R, and sees him. They look at each other in wonder. Softly) It's just as she said.

BOY: (also softly) What is?

GIRL: You're not a horrible monster.

BOY: Did you think I was?

GIRL: I did not know.

BOY: (laughs; he takes another step down) Well, now what do you think I am?

GIRL: (confused, and half afraid, she turns front again) I—I do not know, still. (Goes down a step, slightly L, like a child) But you do not look so very dreadful.

BOY: Nor do you.  
(Pause. They are both uncertain what to do next. He notices the flower in her hand. Pointing) What's that?

GIRL: This? (holding it up) A rose.

BOY: (on platform, curious) A rose! What's that?

GIRL: A flower. See? (holds it toward him; he draws back slightly) Isn't it pretty?

BOY: I—suppose so. Where did you get it?

GIRL: We grow them. In gardens. You should see our gardens—rows and rows of flowers. (warmly) But what I like best are sunflowers.

BOY: Do you grow rows and rows of them, too?

GIRL: Oh, no. The—the others don't like them very well. They say they are weeds. (confidentially, like a naughty child) But I grow some—in my own garden. (hopefully) Do you like sunflowers?

BOY: I don't know. I've never seen any.

GIRL: (incredulous) You've never seen any sunflowers?

BOY: (somewhat on the defensive) No, I haven't! I've never seen any flowers at all. We don't have any.

GIRL: You don't? I can't believe it!

BOY: (stung) Well, we don't. Anyway—have you ever seen a cannon?

GIRL: No: What's that?

BOY: It's a big machine, for killing people.

GIRL: Killing people! Why do you want to do that?

BOY: We don't *want* to. But in case anyone should attack, we're ready.

GIRL: Oh. (doubtfully) And who do you think might attack you?

BOY: Well—I don't know, but—

GIRL: (a sudden suspicion) Surely you don't think *we* would!

BOY: Oh, no—I don't think so. Your people are pacifists.

GIRL: (This sounds like an insult to her) What are pacifists?

BOY: People who want peace.

GIRL: Well, then that's right. But what do your people want?

BOY: Why—peace, of course.

GIRL: (very confused) Really? Then—what are the cannons for?

BOY: Well—because, we— (gives up) I don't know. (trying to gain the offensive)  
What are flowers for?

GIRL: (holds the rose up again) Isn't it beautiful?

BOY: Perhaps. But what is it *for*?

GIRL: Why does it have to be for anything? It's beautiful. We think that is enough.

BOY: (shakes his head) That wouldn't do in our camp. Everything must have a purpose. (studies the flower more closely. Shyly) But—it is beautiful.

GIRL: But not as beautiful as my sunflowers! Oh—do let me show you some!  
(turns to leave, then back to him) I won't be a minute!

BOY: All right.

GIRL: (darts up the steps, pauses on the top platform a moment) You won't go away?

BOY: (all thought of his post forgotten) Of course not! (She leaves. He suddenly remembers his post, turns doubtfully toward it, takes one step, and then makes up his mind and stays on the platform. The GIRL returns with several large sunflowers in her arms. She joins the BOY on the middle platform.)

GIRL: See? Aren't they lovely?

BOY: (reaches out as if to touch one, then shyly draws back) This—is—a weed?

GIRL: That's what the others call them. You do know what a weed is?

BOY: Oh, yes. We have gardens, too. But only for food.

GIRL: (suddenly remembering, and rather embarrassed) I—I brought you something else, too.

BOY: What?

GIRL: (holds out a small paper package) Some seeds.

BOY: (not daring to take it) For—to grow—sunflowers?

GIRL: Yes. (doubtfully) Don't you want them?

BOY: (makes up his mind) Of course I want them. (takes package) But where should I plant them?



GIRL: Oh, it doesn't matter. Sunflowers will grow anywhere. If you plant them now, they'll be grown before long.

BOY: (puts seeds in a pocket, half to himself) If I plant them now—but the others will not like it—

GIRL: Will they not? Why?

BOY: (continuing) They may pull them all up.

GIRL: (laughs suddenly) That won't do much good. The seed will scatter—and some new flowers will grow.

BOY: (half seriously) But they will be pulled up again.

GIRL: Then they'll grow again! You don't get rid of sunflowers just by pulling them out.

(A pause. They smile at each other.)

BOY: (wonderingly) Why did my people say you were dangerous?

GIRL: I—do not think we are.

BOY: (on his own for the first time) I—I don't think you are, either.

GIRL: We don't even have any cannons. Just sunflowers. (She searches his face, as if afraid of what she is saying) And—why did my people say you were fools—and blind? (puts a hand toward his face, tentatively) I do not think you are blind.

BOY: (looking into her face also) I can see your flowers.

GIRL: (meditatively) The others are older than I—and much wiser.

BOY: But they did not see each other.

GIRL: Your people would not come out from behind the Wall.

BOY: We were afraid.

GIRL: So were we, too. (goes down last two steps, again slightly L) I wonder— if that is what they mean by "experience." (turns to him) Are you afraid now—of me?

BOY: Oh, no! (goes down last two steps, as if he would reassure her, also very slightly L.) Are you afraid of me?

GIRL: (gravely) No. (She looks up at the Wall) It is so large— But it does not look so large from here. (pause) My people say it stands for Devotion.

BOY: And mine are sure it stands for Defense.

GIRL: (wonderingly) Can both of them be right?

BOY: I do not think so. What do you think it stands for?

GIRL: Oh—(deprecatingly) I do not know. I have sometimes wondered; but— most of the time I wondered first what was on the other side. What do *you* think?

BOY: About the Wall—I do not know. (haltingly, but now with growing confidence) But I do think—now—that my people are wrong. (The GIRL is surprised.) They must be wrong—to defend they know not what—from people they do not know to be enemies.

GIRL: (a step DR. A great discovery) I—believe you are right. And now—I

think *my* people have been—mistaken, too: to try to love, without trying to understand.

(Now that this has been said, they are both afraid.)

BOY: And—if they are both wrong—(lost) then, who is right? And—what will happen?

GIRL: My people said that they tried loving everyone—before.

BOY: And mine were defenders before. But the Destruction came, anyway.

(bitterly, in anguish) It came, anyway! It came, and they could not stop it! Why do they think they can do better now. They are fools! Both of them—fools, and—

GIRL: Oh, no! (close to tears, she almost dares to take him in her arms) Oh, please—do not!

BOY: (really puzzled) Why? What is the matter?

GIRL: I—I do not know—It hurts me—to see you so—upset.

BOY: (in awe) It hurts *you*? *You* are hurt—for me? (beginning to realize) Is—is that what—love is? (silence) I did not know. Forgive me.

GIRL: It is all right. I don't mind being hurt—for you.

BOY: And that is love—(looks toward the Wall) They told me love destroys. Are they wrong? Or—is there only one kind of destruction? (to the GIRL) I wish I could find out.

GIRL: (timidly) I wish—I could help you.

BOY: (a step toward her) Do you think you could? Do you think such a one—as I could learn to love?

GIRL: (hardly above a whisper) It is so easy—to learn—

BOY: Then—I would like to try—

(They look, almost frightened, at each other. The GIRL holds out her hand to him; and, slowly, he takes it. A very short pause. Then the OLDER NYMPH hurries on L, followed closely by the DECORATOR, just as the CAPTAIN, followed by the SENTRY and another SOLDIER strides angrily on from R. They speak, almost simultaneously.)

CAPTAIN: Soldier!

OLDER NYMPH: Oh, my dear!

(The BOY and GIRL react as if jerked around, their hands pulled apart by the voices. The GIRL drops a sunflower.)

CAPTAIN: (furious) You could be shot for this!

2ND SOLDIER: (afraid) He—he isn't so far from his post—sir.

SENTRY: He—this is his *first* time, sir.

(CAPTAIN glowers.)

DECORATOR: (to GIRL) Where have you *been*?

OLDER NYMPH: We have been looking for you, my dear.

GIRL: I—I—

CAPTAIN: And I suppose there is some wild excuse for this?



BOY: No, sir.

OLDER NYMPH: My child, did we not tell you it was no use to talk to *them*?

GIRL: But—please!—

CAPTAIN: (relents) Very well. I'll let it go—this once! Now, back to your post.

OLDER NYMPH: Come, child.

(The BOY starts to return. The GIRL turns to him.)

GIRL: No—wait! (to OLDER NYMPH) Please, *please* let me explain—

OLDER NYMPH: (firmly) It is no use. Come with us.

CAPTAIN: Soldier!

BOY: Sir—please—

CAPTAIN: I warn you: don't push your luck!

SENTRY: What's the matter with you? Come—quickly!

BOY: (turns hopelessly to the GIRL) What's the use? We can do nothing—  
against them. (goes to middle platform)

GIRL: No! Oh, no—don't say that! Don't go back now!

BOY: Where else is there to go?

CAPTAIN: (almost hysterical with rage) SOLDIER!

OLDER NYMPH: (simultaneously, concerned) My *dear*!

(The BOY and GIRL ignore this.)

GIRL: (a pleading gesture) Is there nothing we can do?

BOY: We need time—if only we had time! Now—

GIRL: What do you mean? (frantic) Must you leave?

DECORATOR: Come back!

SENTRY: (hisses) Are you mad?

BOY: (gently) My people would never allow you to enter our camp.

GIRL: But—(joins him) my people?

BOY: (shakes his head) Would they be more willing to accept me?

OLDER NYMPH: Child, you *must* obey—

BOY: We must go.

GIRL: (stops him; fiercely) We will meet again! We will!

BOY: Perhaps. Not for a great while.

CAPTAIN: Soldier! *On the double!*

GIRL: (pleading) But someday! Someday—we will meet—and talk—and we will  
be together—

BOY: (calming her) Yes, someday.

(She runs up two steps, then stops, and faces him again.)

GIRL: (as if it were urgent) Anyway—you still have the seeds. (trying not to  
cry) And you will keep them—and someday you will plant them—for me.  
Do not forget!

BOY: I will not forget. Go, now.

(She joins the two on the platform.)

OLDER NYMPH: (comfortingly) Come, my dear.

(DECORATOR goes back to Wall and picks up her basket of flowers, as the BOY watches the OLDER NYMPH lead the GIRL off L.)

CAPTAIN: Are you coming?

BOY: (dully) Yes, sir.

(The CAPTAIN and SENTRY leave as he starts to mount the first step. The BOY then pauses, turns front, and sees the sunflower. For a moment he is undecided, then goes down and picks it up. He stands, looking down at it, then slowly climbs the stairs, picks up the spear, and takes his position by the Wall, facing R. The DECORATOR, facing L, is still arranging flowers. The sky darkens until they are once more in silhouette as

## THE CURTAIN FALLS



*This was set in 10 point  
Baskerville with titles in  
18 and 24 point Garamond Bold.  
The paper is Ticonderoga Text,  
polar white laid.*



