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THE INK POT

A Magazine of Freshman Writing

Division of Languages and Literature

Morehead State College

Morehead, Kentucky

1964

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Foreword

The Ink Pot has become a tradition at Morehead State College; but unlike many traditions, it hardly remains the same. This year's collection of Freshman poetry and prose offers the variety expected of **The Ink Pot** while avoiding a sameness of other years.

The publications date is somewhat earlier than usual, thus affording the authors and the readers an opportunity to appraise efforts and results while the year and the class are still in progress.

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The Stars Leaned Close, And Some Lost Their Hold And Fell

By Jen Elizabeth Bohannon

Angela cried into her pillow for the third successive night. She couldn't accept the fact that Danny wouldn't be coming home in a few weeks like he'd said he would. As she lay there sobbing, memories floated over her and engulfed her. Slowly her imagination carried her back to a time that seemed so long ago.

She was happy again. She was in that carefree, childish world of just six months ago. Oh, the excitement of a war! There was going to be a war, and her own brother was the first from Wynnville to enlist for the Confederacy. She remembered the huge party the townspeople had thrown for all the brave lads who vowed they'd whip the Yankees and be home again in a matter of weeks.

Danny was nineteen, and the sun had glistened so on his healthy cheeks as he swung his laughing sister around and promised he'd fire his first shot just for her.

"That first one will be yours, Angie," he shouted, "but all the rest are for the South."

So Danny went off to war and Angela hadn't worried at all. She knew how brave and strong he was. At sixteen she was only a child with a brand new game to play. A game called Civil War.

The game wasn't a game for very long, though. And Angela wasn't a child, either. Weeks and weeks went by and the things Danny's letters told them were horrible, cruel stories of pain and death. The boys she'd grown up with didn't come home laughing victoriously. The ones who came home were sick, decrepid people with sad, old faces. Angela couldn't believe that Danny would look this way when he came home. Why, almost all of them had been discharged because they'd lost an arm or a leg or were somehow injured so they couldn't fight anymore. She was especially shocked when Philip Jacobs returned after six weeks of fighting. He'd left Angela with a laugh and a kiss . . . and a promise to marry her the day he got back. She had smiled up at his handsome young face and thought how lucky she was. But Phil had come back with only two fingers on his left hand. His face was horribly scarred. And his eyes! Phil was blind!

The ravages of the war were coming closer to home now. She would never forget the day the Yankee troops had marched through town. Everyone had locked their doors and peered cautiously through their windows. But as the troops came into view Angela's heart softened just a little. She couldn't ignore the bandaged heads, the ragged uniforms, and the bloody, infected wounds. And the soldiers had that same expression on their faces that her own Rebs wore. It was a lost, bewildered look, and she knew they had folks waiting for them at home, just as she was waiting for Danny.

The war had ceased to be a game long ago. Angela hated the war; hated everything that reminded her of it. She hated the times when a letter came from Danny, and the whole family listened so intently while her father read. But that was better than the lump of fear that began to grow inside her when the letters stopped.

The letters stopped coming so gradually that at first they hardly noticed. Danny had never been able to write regularly, and almost two months had gone by before they really began to worry. Then the fear began to grow in them and soon it enveloped them. A silent dread overtook them. A dread that one day a message would come.

The message came one day. The grim words her father read to them thundered in Angela's brain for hours. When the storm finally quieted, the stillness of death was there. Danny was dead. He would never, ever come home.

The lines her father read were not the typical words of condolence that so many of the families in the community had received. There was more to the message than that. Danny had led the platoon in attack and had saved two

Rebs before he was shot.

The neighbors planned a huge ceremony honoring Danny. They ordered a plaque and argued for days over where it should be put. The town was so proud of its new hero that it forgot a life had been ended. But Angela didn't forget.

She slowly slipped out of bed and tiptoed out into the cold, dark night. She took a deep breath of the crisp Southern air and wondered if the peacefulness would stay. The sky was so clear she could see right through it. And the stars! The stars were leaning so close to Angie she was sure they were twinkling just for her.

"They understand," she thought sadly. "They know that my brother isn't coming back. Danny's a hero. But I'd rather have him alive, and I wish he weren't a hero. I can't be proud that he was so good at killing people. How many families are crying right now because he killed someone they loved?"

Angie stared at the sky for a long quiet moment. Suddenly, a very bright star lost its hold and soared to the ground leaving a trail of sparkly dust behind. Then it was gone.

Silent Servants Of A Library

By Harold Ogg

Let the layman be disillusioned, a page boy is a library aid whose primary functions are not merely those of running errands and straightening books. A page may be expected to temporarily take over any other person's job (except the librarian's) in the library. More commonly included in the page's unwritten list of responsibilities are those duties required of diplomat, parent, detective, bouncer, or janitor, to name a few.

A page must be a diplomat—he must be able to give a patron a valid reason for a certain book not being available. At times he must act as a parent—a page may be required to work in the children's section of a library. Tactfully but firmly he must convince the kiddies that they must keep silent in the reading room and that an overdue book will cost them their pennies. Often a page must do a little police work—he must keep one eye on his books, and the other on patrons who may decide that certain portions (or all) of a publication would make nice permanent additions to their own reference collections. This last item, along with keeping order among the patrons, could also constitute the job of bouncer for the page. And there is always the job of cleaning up after the young patron who "didn't quite make it" to the rest room—the regular custodian being off duty.

But as the name implies, a page, or "runner" as he is often called, has certain other obligations to fulfill to the reading public. References (especially around term paper time), pleasure reading, pamphlets, newspapers, recordings, and art—all must be located, supplied, and refilled after their use. There are also such odd jobs as mending books, issuing library cards, setting up book displays, and keeping the entire library in good order. And there is always that final responsibility for the page—locking up at night. All this in an after-school job—all this for glory and experience and usually about 85c an hour.

The Hero

By Nina Craig

As a young sapling I can remember standing in this exact spot, and how I marveled at the fascinating carriages and the beautiful steeds as they sedately traveled past. Funny how time passes so swiftly, and how everyone changes or dies and is removed by society. When I was young, I was surrounded by my tall, staunch forefathers. They protected me. Naturally, then there were no super highways with which to contend. There really were but few things to worry about as an occasional storm was about the extent of our disasters. Now everyone is gone, and I am all alone. My nearest neighbor could well contain my dearest brother. I remember the day they removed him to the lumber yard. There have been many sad days since then, but I have faced them with strength. After all, I have my good name to uphold. I am an Oak to be admired; I have weathered the years well.

So here I stand, the only tree in a large area of newly developed houses. To my right is the new highway, and day and night I have to tolerate the dull unrelenting roar of every form of vehicle that will exceed the minimum speed regulation of 35 miles per hour.

I try to hold my head up and retain my dignity but I find doing so most difficult when I am the target for the motorist's litter.

Today was the absolute end! After this I can never hold my head up again. I was standing here looking most devastating after an early morning shower when "BAM!", I had a Volkswagen in my lap. The driver, a lady, was simply flying along in her cute little red car when she suddenly had the urge to relieve a bit of excessive pressure from her girdle and in so doing ran off the road. Personally, I think she could have hit one of those ugly telephone poles or even one of the nearby houses instead of me.

The lady was quite shaken up and worried about her "cute little bug." After quickly evaluating the damages, she walked to a phone and called a wrecker. She seemed not to notice my anguish, nor did she discern the grave amount of sap I was losing. Did she even care? Did she call a tree surgeon? No! She sat down in the shade of MY limbs, leaning against MY trunk and calmly smoked a cigarette, which she carelessly ground out on MY root when the wrecker arrived.

When the driver had looked at the little snub-nosed car, which now resembled the face of a Pekingese dog, he smiled and said,

"Well lady, I think your little car will have to have a whole new front end. Just exactly what happened anyway?"

Then she got ridiculous. I could hardly stand her little performance. She batted her eyelashes and walked with an added wiggle to her hips. Finally when she was close enough to count the fellow's whiskers, she smiled demurely and in a honey-dripping voice said,

"That big old mean tree jumped right out in front of me!"

I tried not to flinch, but I think I must have. This was not fair, and there was nothing I could do but stand erect and wait for my sap to slowly drain from my weary body. I tried to hold my head up, but the task seemed to grow increasingly more difficult.

By now he had at least got the insipid little monster off of my feet. I was injured badly: my right side had about three layers of bark peeled off, and from several deep gashes drained my life-giving sap. The agony of the wound I could stand, but the degrading feeling of humiliation got the better of me and I finally gave up; my head began to lower as my leaves drooped and began to turn pale. Suddenly a thought occurred to me. I realized that my deformity could well exempt me from the rigorous inspection of the lumber crews and that I might

live on with a lasting scar of battle as a reminder to other drivers to "Watch out! I have been known to jump right out into the path of the most fierce of all diesel trucks." With this in mind, I slowly raised my head and watched the wrecker hauling the little car away. I was the victor, he was the loser. I smiled to myself, and the sense of satisfaction I felt seemed to sooth my wound and slow the flow of my sap to an occasional oozing droplet. I was a hero.

To Sock or Not To Sock

A great many of the Freshmen on this campus have attracted attention to themselves by not wearing socks. This "anti-sock" attitude manifests itself not only in informal situations, but also in the classroom, and at ballgames. I feel that all male students should wear socks for three reasons: appearance, social conformity, and health.

The most apparent and the most important reason for wearing socks is appearance. I wonder if the boys who don't wear socks ever take a good look at themselves. There is nothing uglier on the human body than a pair of white, hairy and bony ankles showing over fifteen dollar shoes and below ten dollar slacks. The purpose of wearing socks is twofold: appearance and comfort. The latter is a personal consideration, but the former is for others. Socks should be selected to compliment one's clothing—I know of nothing that goes better with bony ankles. When questioned about their fetish, most "anti-sockers" answer, "I do it because I want to." This brings us to my second reason for wearing socks: social conformity.

One outstanding characteristic of the mature individual is his ability to adjust and conform to the dictates of society. Society demands conformity to a point and allows individuality in dress, speech and philosophy. However, society frowns on any extreme in dress, speech, or philosophy. The great majority of the student body of Morehead State College conforms to the rules of good taste and good dress. Any violation of this code of good taste is a sign of immaturity, not individuality. My final reason for wearing socks deals primarily with the individual.

Socks were originally designed to protect the ankle from the cold. With winter coming, many of the "anti-sockers" will catch severe colds and other ailments because of their rebellion. If the non-conformist was the only one to suffer, little could be said against his fetish. However, due to the cramped dorms, one cold could "wipe out" a whole building.

In conclusion, I believe all males should wear socks because of three reasons: appearance, conformity, and health. The bare ankle, on the boy, at least, is neither appealing, sociably acceptable, nor healthy.

By Perry Hartsock

During the preceding summer, a fad has developed over the Eastern part of the United States. Boys are now going barefoot—inside their shoes. There seems to have been a definite decline in the popularity of socks. Not many boys seem to wear them. Look around you. Practically everywhere around you, there is a sockless boy. In class, at convocation, the concerts, and anywhere that "things don't get too formal."

I have grown quite fond of this practice for many reasons. "I think the biggest one is that I don't have to take the time or effort to put on the socks." Secondly, after a hard night's study, I find it particularly refreshing to step outside into the brisk morning air with bare ankles. This helps to wake me up and get me started for the day.

A third reason, although not a very good one, is that one does not have to pay for keeping his socks clean. One simply never wears them. At least there will always be a pair to wear to any formal occasion that should arise!

The choice is up to the wearer. The only possible fallacy I can see in the whole thing is the scorn of unsympathetic professors. This could be the most prohibiting factor to the cause. So, if one wants to be refreshed, and possibly save a little money, let me advise you. Do not wear socks. But, if you wish to receive good grades, sit where the professor can not see you. Then both will be happy, and none the worse for the experience.

By Bill Preston

A November Stare

By Amy Jo Taylor

"We've learned the truth about Jenny." My mother's voice, even in a hoarse whisper, filled the velvet-curtained confines of the parlor, where the family had gathered to hear about Aunt Jenny. We had had a time getting Jenny to see a doctor; we had ordered and asked and pleaded while Jenny ignored, quibbled and flatly refused. Not until we had given up and left her alone, did Jenny don her wide Gainsborough bonnet and sally off to Doc Morrison. Since then old Doc had been a frequent visitor to our house, and today he had called again, but not to see Aunt Jenny; he had talked with Mother today.

"Jenny has a brain block and will never recover. She will become more and more ill, until . . . She paused. "We musn't let her know."

Mother wrung her hands and her words were barely audible. She spoke as though fearful Jenny would hear, despite the two miles and more separating the city from our home. Only for a moment did I see a spark of sympathy on my Aunt Priscilla's dour face, while I felt and did not attempt to hide the startled whiteness of my own. I sat rigid in the straight-backed chair thinking of Aunt Jenny, whom my father, through Mother's discretion, had persuaded to ride to town with the Slones. Jenny loved to ride, and the sights in Chicago, 1912, were wondrous to behold. So now we congregated to discuss her while she was gone, for we never included Jenny in the things that concerned her.

The sternness of Aunt Priscilla's voice was not broken by her emotion. "Jenny's senses are greatly affected; she's like a child, and we've babied her for ten years now. If she is to live indefinitely, perhaps we should put her away in a home."

"Priscilla!" My father worked his mouth as he spoke the word; he had harbored a dislike for my maiden aunt since we had all come to live with Jenny nine years ago. Jenny Chandler had stayed all alone in the massive Victorian house her husband John had bought to satisfy her whim. And when he had left her the last time, Jenny was so old and broken with despair that Mother and Father and Aunt Priscilla decided she must come to live with us. But Jenny would not forsake her memories, nor her watch, for she "knew" John would return. He had always come back to Jenny. If we would see Jenny, we must come to her.

When we moved our things into her huge dwelling on Seventh Avenue, Jenny clapped her hands and jumped with the excitement of a happy child.

"I shall be better now," she said.

Hours after we were settled, she again lapsed into her old, strange state of feeble despair, and was sometimes oblivious of our very being. She was remembering—remembering a social, buzzing as she approached, with the rhythm of happy voices, with the young dandies gathering around and Jenny laughing—laughing at them all.

Arrayed in a pink satin gown, Jennifer Whitcomb hesitated before descending the stairs. She adjusted the velvet sash that girded her tiny waist, and smoothed a wild lock of dangling curl. With head held high, and skirt raised only enough to display a hint of ruffled petticoat, she carefully placed her slipper on the floral carpet and said within herself, "I am a lady."

Then she recalled a face, swarthy and muddled in the flickering light of a burning building, and she saw again the tall, gruff-voiced figure that had entered her chamber, carried her in husky arms through the blazing thickness, and dumped her, nightgown and all, on to the warm spring ground, made warmer still by the hot fire enveloping the house.

"You," Jenny breathed, and ran from the post at her third story window, down the two spiraled stairways to the street door, and without permitting the visitor time to knock, she flung the door open and stared full into the face of a tall, dark man.

"Yes," she murmured, "I have been expecting you."

"Jenny is a fool," she heard her sister Priscilla say. "Waiting for a good-for-nothing who doesn't care one whit for her."

Jenny's heart sank deep within her. Was it through her own fault that people called her fool? No, she could not help her fate, she decided. He had shown affection for her, and then had disappeared before; he would come back this time, too.

When he did return, months later, John Chandler carried a wide flat bundle. The tears stood in Jenny's eyes when, after tearing away the wrapping, she discovered a portrait true to life, and signed: "With All My Love." Or at least, both knew within themselves, as much love as John Chandler was capable of giving.

So on and on their lives continued. John Chandler came sometimes and left often, while Jennifer Whitcomb loved him more each time he came and each time he went. When he was absent, the picture sustained her, and reading the inscription, she knew he would be back.

At the age of nineteen, the lines of Jenny's once gay and smiling face were set and bitter.

"Of one thing I am afraid," John once said. "I am afraid to grow old."

Jenny had replied: "Growing old is your only fear, and my only desire. If I could be an old woman looking back on life from the ease of a rocking chair, the anxiety of living would be, perhaps, over for me." The hard labor of love had taken their toll—and more—from Jennifer Whitcomb.

Finally they were married.

John was away when their baby came; after the child was buried he stayed with Jenny, whose grief over what she deemed her own failure was inconsolable. She never recovered from her loss, but while John stayed, her mind was serene.

In the middle of the night Jenny screamed. She called his name, John, but no one answered. After searching the house, she fell crying before the door, a crumpled, suffering mass. Again she must lean on her faith, hope, and the treasured portrait, which, she told herself to ease her aching heart, could be real if she wanted the image to be.

Jenny's face lit up brighter than the candled tree, for Christmas was here and John was beside her. She had not tried to detain him before; her happiness at his presence was so great that all else sank into oblivion, until she could not remember his ever being gone.

She was old and tired now, when she told him: "You will never leave again—promise me." He made no reply but kissed her tenderly, and she was satisfied.

When months had passed to years, and John had not returned, though Jenny knew he would come, we came to live with Jenny. Realizing that her mind was disturbed and wandering, we treated her as kindly and as gently as possible.

And now Jenny still hoped for her husband's return, though she no longer

sat constantly by the window with her needlework, ready to run out and welcome home the one she loved. "I don't really expect you back until next year—in May when the flowers begin to bloom," she told the picture, and raised a withered hand to her face and touched the dulled gold band to her lips.

We thought that the end was very near, and that even if John did return, Aunt Jenny would not recognize him.

She came home radiant that night, her eyes still bright with the lights of the city, and Aunt Priscilla helped her off with her wrap, fed her warm milk and took her up to bed.

"Poor Jenny, she doesn't realize what she is doing." My mother repeated the words so often heard around the house since we learned of Aunt Jenny's trouble.

Then one Sunday Aunt Jenny's room was quiet, and we wondered at the silence, for the clicking of her needles, or the mournful drone of her voice were constant sounds from her chamber. We crept slowly up the stairs—the dread making our steps heavy. As we entered the room, Jenny stood there, grasping a last torn fragment of the beloved portrait. I could barely hear Aunt Priscilla's gasp: "Jenny." Then she announced: "Jenny doesn't realize what she has done."

Jenny started at the words. Her eyes, fixed on us as she turned, were colorless and staring—a stare like the bleak winds that come in November when the leaves wither and the tree dies. Then we understood that she knew—and had known all along.

Homer, For Fun And Fiction

By Mark Schlacher

Although Jules Verne is generally accepted as the first great science fiction writer, we feel that the title should be given to Homer, the great Greek poet.

Homer's grasp of the techniques of science fiction is easily seen in the *Odyssey*, which is probably the greater of his two major works. The host of phenomena presented in this work ranges from one-eyed giants to six-headed monsters, and from stone ships to boats which make their own way on the sea. We will now name and investigate a few of the major devices and characters used by the master.

One of Homer's favorite tricks is one which the women of America would pay any amount of money for—instant metamorphosis. With one touch of a goddess' wand a strapping young man can be turned into a withered old beggar, and vice versa. Undoubtedly this is one of the most spectacular tricks in Homer's repertoire.

Another effective invention of Homer's imagination is the transformation of a god into a person or an animal. Time after time Athena changes into human form, trades one human form for another, and even changes her sex. We would be amazed at the effect upon the world today if Charles DeGaulle could change himself into Madame Nhu, or even more significantly into Queen Elizabeth.

Homer does not limit himself to the mere sleight of hand transformations and metamorphoses, but goes on to explore the world of the monster, and to create several that make even Mary Shelley's Frankenstein's monster look like a slacker. The most notable of Homer's monsters is Scylla, who has twelve feet and six craning necks and heads, lives in a cave, and grabs sailors from the decks of their ships as they pass. To make things even more horrible, this detestable monster eats the poor wretches she captures. The Cyclopes are another breed of monster created by our Homer. These frightening creatures have but one eye, are of gigantic proportions, and perform feats of strength that would even astound Steve Reeves.

Our author also looks into the "seamy" side of life, and creates an entire

race of dope addicts, which he names the Lotus Eaters. These people are so affected by their constant intake of narcotics that they do not care what they do, or what happens to them.

Homer is also a master at creating freaks of nature. The author's mind devises ways to turn ships into stone, and encircle entire cities with mountains. Fogs, mists, and storms are made to appear and disappear at the wave of a god's finger.

Homer apparently saw the coming of the guided missiles and pilotless craft too, for he writes of ships which make and follow their own courses, and make round trips to and from any point on the earth's surface in one day.

We hope that after reading the *Odyssey* you too will feel that Homer's rightful place is before Asimov, Serling, Sturgeon, and even Verne in the ranks of authors of science fiction.

Buy Me A Dolly

By Gregory Clark

A recent request from the head of our household, my two-year-old daughter, sent me on a shopping excursion that opened my eyes to the loss of a vital part of our heritage. I am talking about what was once the common doll loved and cherished by every little girl. Oh, stores still offer dolls for sale. But have you seen them? If not, then let me enlighten you on the subject of the doll situation as it exists today.

What was once referred to as the doll was a small likeness of a baby that had the strange and wonderful power to utter in clear tones "mama." Today's doll can also say mama but it comes out more like "mutheer." Not only can it say "mama" or "mutheer" it has a vocabulary of between sixteen and ninety-seven words (depending on the price tag). These dolls not only talk; they walk, wet, cry, and sleep.

Let me offer into evidence a doll that is so popular today she has her own club (complete with membership card and monthly magazine). Her name is Barbie. This brings up another interesting point. The little girls who buy Barbie do not even get to name her. Match Toys Inc. takes care of these little details. Anyway, Barbie has a job as a fashion model (and here let me say she certainly meets the "physical" qualifications for a model). Her accessories include three different types of cars, her own dress shop, her own "dream house," blonde, brunette, or red-haired wigs and a wardrobe costing more than one hundred dollars. That's not all; the *pièce de résistance* is a boyfriend. Ken (he is also factory pre-named) has a wardrobe that enables him to be in the army, navy, marines, or air force (country unspecified); or to swim, hunt, or marry Barbie. I guess the only thing left is a companion doll who will obviously be the offspring of Barbie and Ken. But do you know what? With all the popularity Barbie and Ken enjoy neither can say "mama."

Well, needless to say, to save my daughter's reputation in the neighborhood, I bought her a Barbie doll. But I absolutely refuse to buy her a Ken—until she is three.

Her Fondest Wish — To Be Weighed And Found Wanting

By Nancy Loven

A thing like that could only happen to me. At a D.A.R. bingo, other women can gossip, drink coffee, and occasionally complete a row, but I! I have to win doorprizes. And the doorprizes I win! Not mink coats, Cadillacs, and diamonds, but a carpet sweeper, a year's supply of vitamins, or that horrible weight reducing course, for instance.

I'll never forget sitting there breathlessly waiting for N-35 to come up, when Madge Carpenter stood up, smiling her toothy smile, to announce the winner of the evening's doorprize.

"Tonight we have a very special little gift for one of you girls," she gushed as she felt around in the glass bowl with the ticket stubs. "There now! And what lucky little Daughter has #128?" Finally she recognized me, waving my ticket wildly in the air. "Why Sue Arlington. My dear, you can't imagine what you've won." I shook my head dreamily with visions of full-length autumn haze—reducing course at the Bunny North Salon!

My hopes dashed again, I stood up bravely amid congratulatory applause, self-consciously smoothing my midriff bulge.

After the meeting I planned on a hasty exit, but Madge cornered me in her characteristic way.

"Dahling, I know we just can't wait to start our little course, can we, now?"

"No, we—er, I—can't, Madge," I said lamely, "it's such a—such a nice . . ."

"And we can't wait to see the improvement," she said triumphantly, and poking me in the ribs, sauntered away with a smug smile as I fumed inwardly. After all, you can't say nasty things to the president. Actually, I thought I was quite a nice size for the thirty-year-old matron that I was with a husband, two children, and a Saint Bernard.

The next morning at breakfast I casually mentioned my latest acquisition.

"That's just great, Susie," Jerry, my beloved spouse, said heartily. "I believe we all need some form of vigorous exercise to keep us in shape." He winked at the boys and flexed his little finger to a 1-2 count. They laughed on cue, spraying the table with milk and oatmeal.

Jerry must have sensed my sensitiveness on the subject because he blundered on, "What do you need the course for, sweetie? I like you just the way you are, sort of round and . . ." He stopped again as my feathers were visibly ruffled.

"Don't say anything more," I warned with a dangerous glint in my eyes, "I won it and I'm taking it." And I emphasized my proclamation by knocking three eggs on the floor as I turned back to the stove.

Next Monday I made my appearance at the receptionist's desk at the Bunny North Reducing Salon. After I presented my gift certificate, the receptionist smiled frostily as her calculating eyes took in the more noticeable irregularities of my anatomy. She then rose with the grace of a ballerina and escorted me graciously into the exercising chambers.

The first thing to strike my eye was a copy of the famed "Mona Lisa" on the far wall. Under the portrait were these words on a plaque, the motto of the salon, "Her fondest wish—to be weighed and found wanting." What weight reduction and the Mona Lisa have in common is still beyond my comprehension. I always thought her smug expression was due to the fact she was pregnant. But there she was, smiling benevolently, as about twenty perspiring, over-ripe ladies strained to touch their toes.

Miss Bunny herself came gliding over to us wearing leotards and a phony smile that even outdid Madge Carpenter.

"Mrs. Arlington, how nice of you to pay us a visit," she said, as if I'd dropped in for tea. "We'll work out a little reducing plan for you as soon as the prelim-

inaries are taken care of."

The preliminaries were a series of questionnaires to fill out and vital statistics to list, which would be used for comparison and evaluation of progress in the following weeks. Also a photograph was taken of me wearing my newly-issued leotard, which, if anything, was of some value in convincing me something had to be done about my shape. After that she gently pointed out my many flaws of figure and the necessary exercises to combat my particular problems. She introduced me to the many facets of dieting ("Raw Vegetables—101 Different Ways"), and to home exercise (deep knee bends while dishwashing), and brainwashed me in the belief that I, too, had a fond wish—to be weighed and found wanting.

However, after my first bout with sit-ups and stretching my thigh muscles, I would have been content to let the others of my fair sex dazzle men with their alluring curves. But seeing Jerry's knowing, superior look as I limped up the stairs to bed that night gave me the strength to return on the following Wednesday, and learn to love Jello instead of chocolate cream pie.

It was a slow struggle, but I struggled bravely, three times a week for nine weeks. I stretched, pulled, pushed, and pummeled every ounce of fat into a more presentable form. Miss Bunny claimed I was her most promising student (what I promised, I don't know) and that very few people had the inner strength and endurance that I possessed. I basked in such high praise and went on stretching. When my last class came, I felt a sense of gain and one of loss, too. I had achieved physical fitness, but I was going to miss dear Bunny's 1-2-3-4 count to the soft music and the rest of the routine that took me away from routine. It seemed that my reducing days were over but . . .

Miss Bunny glided over to me excitedly with two men following self-consciously behind, dodging fat women right and left.

"Mrs. Arlington, I think we both can do each other a favor," she said breathlessly. "These kind gentlemen are giving me a television show on home exercise, and I'd like you to be on as my assistant."

"A television show," I repeated, in a far away voice. So that was my destiny—television. Mink, Cadillacs, diamonds . . . my name in lights.

"That's right," one of the men was saying, "you'll be perfect as a glowing example—a young matron with a family . . ."

"And a Saint Bernard," I interrupted.

". . . With still time to devote to her own personal appearance. If you can do it, anyone can do it!" He beamed at me and I grinned back in agreement.

I dropped my latest bombshell on Jerry that night, and he took it well, although he was a bit jealous of my success, I do believe. The show would take up no more time than my reducing classes had, so he had no valid argument.

Two weeks later I was making my momentous journey down to the station to my debut on the "Bend With Bunny Show," after spending the previous night telephoning all the D.A.R. girls so they wouldn't miss my rise to stardom.

The television set was as familiar as the salon itself, equipped with mirrors, exercise mats and bars, and the portrait of Mona Lisa and the motto. I had no stage fright. Who could be afraid of three little T.V. cameras. So when the "On The Air" sign lit up, I was quite able to smile as Miss Bunny introduced herself, her assistant, and her program. Things were going to run smoothly as planned.

I should have known better than to believe that. Our first exercise was simple. Stand with your feet apart and rhythmically touch your right hand to your left toe and then vice-versa. Going down for my tenth dip, I felt a slight twinge in my left side. Going down for my eleventh, I stopped dead, frozen in an awkward position, doubled up somewhere between my head and the floor.

"Get up," Miss Bunny hissed violently.

"I can't," I whispered in a strangled voice.

Immediately the cameras were shifted to a commercial, and I was propelled off stage, and rushed to the nearest osteopathic hospital.

By the time Jerry arrived, it had been discovered that I simply pulled a few of my back muscles, and would have to remain horizontal for a few weeks. Rather mortified, I explained my condition to him. He smiled, not sadistically, but with genuine sympathy.

"That's just great, sweetie, I like you the way you are—sort of round and . . ." Well, believe it or not, I gave him a big kiss, and said I liked him pretty well too.

The Moneychanger

By Beverly Lambert

No other mad-made machine is as capable of taking a college student's last dime as a pay telephone. One must sneak up, craftily shove in his well-worn dime, listen to it clink into the belly of the black demon with the ten eyes, and pray for the harmonious music of the dial tone.

The silence of those few seconds is deafening. The only audible sound is the pounding of my heart, laboriously carrying the burden of the extra strain. Beads of sweat slowly roll off of my forehead; my hands tremble with excitement. I wait. I listen. Then the monotone humming blasts into my eardrums like a jet preparing for take-off. Shakily I dial the number; someone picks up the phone, and then the words which bring tears to my eyes sound forth, "This is a recording"

Alone . . . And Waiting

By Cheryl Sanders

Alone, all alone, and waiting am I.
Standing my hands thrust in my pockets,
Looking about at the wonders of nature
Barely seeing them as I stare questioningly.
Slowly I begin to walk, my head bent as I watch
My feet moving upon the soaked leaves,
The moist grass, and the saturated ground.
I glance about at the small pools of water,
Clear and pure with bits of white gravel at the bottom,
And stirring only when the huge drops of rain fall into them.
The huge raindrops fall with more force and consistency
Upon my bare head forcing my attention to them.
Slowly my glance moves upward until—
I stare directly at a breath-taking landscape,
A huge, gray barn in the distance, a small
Grove of trees farther back, an old
Wooden fence with its scant protection which
A cow offers her small calf in the rain.
Then the sky bursts with a flash of lightning.
The huge raindrops fall upon my face and
Blend with the tears falling from my eyes.
Alone, all alone, and waiting, am I?

I Know The Value Of A Dollar: I Ask For Two

By LeRoy Caudill

Much has been said concerning the value of the dollar. In fact, one hears about the value of money as soon as he is old enough to ask for a nickel to buy a candy bar. I can remember times when I would ask my father for money, and he would say, "If you had to work for that money, you would not spend so freely." I have heard many times that in the "good old days" a meal could be bought for a quarter, or a Coke that now costs a dime, or in some places fifteen cents, could be purchased for only a nickel. Just recently, I have seen the price of a pack of cigarettes rise from twenty-five to thirty cents. One feels that he is paying more and more for less and less.

There was once a time when a boy could take his best girl to see a movie and buy a soda for her afterwards for only a dollar. Now a fellow has to have at least three dollars to even think of asking a girl out. The price of a movie is at least seventy-five cents each, and the girl usually wants a meal after the show; and the meal alone costs at least two dollars. This, however, is just what the boy spends while he is with the girl. What about the money he spends in getting ready for the date?

The young man first looks in the mirror and realizes that he is in need of a hair cut. The price of his hair cut is anywhere from a dollar and a quarter to three dollars, depending on what part of the country he lives. Now that the fellow has a well groomed head, he reaches in his closet and gets out his five dollar and ninety-eight cent pin-striped dress shirt, and his fourteen dollar and ninety-five cent trousers. Next he puts on his twenty-five dollar Bass Moccasins. Well, now that the young man has a fresh hair cut and is dressed in about forty dollars worth of clothes, one would think that he is ready. Oh, but he cannot get off that easily. He dashes out and climbs into his six thousand dollar Corvett, only to find that his younger brother had completely exhausted his supply of petrol. Back inside, he rushes and calls the service station and tells someone to bring him some gasoline. The people at the service station are glad to oblige. Right away they send a man over with a can of gasoline that costs our hero thirty-eight cents a gallon. The friendly man with the better brand happily charges the boy three dollars for a service call. Thus we see that our boy has spent approximately forty-five dollars just to get ready to take his girl to see a rerun of a movie that his father had spent a half of a dollar to take his mother to see many years before.

I should think that the young people of America know more about the value of a dollar than most adults give them credit for knowing. In the writing of the last sentence, I have struck upon a very important word. That word being "credit." "Charge it." How many times do we hear that phrase in one day? The art of charging what we purchase is fast becoming an American tradition. We see hundreds of signs that tempt us. One of the best of these tempting advertising schemes is, "Low Down Payment." The thought of a low down payment tends to make one believe that the total price will also be low. This thought, however, is definitely incorrect. Actually when one makes a down payment and charges the rest of the money, the total price is raised. Carrying charges and other such schemes are used to squeeze more money out of the poor fellow that was taken in by the temptation of paying only a fraction of the complete cost at the time of purchase.

The teen ager of today should be almost an authority on the value of the dollar. After all, he is the one who spends most of the money that dear old dad brings home from the office. A father can almost expect to hear, "Pop, I need a dollar for some gas," or "Hey dad, leave five dollars on the table; I have a date

tonight." If, however, the teenagers of the United States stop asking for money, the fathers would probably go out of their minds.

Of course, we are all guilty of wasting money. We see something that we like, and right away, we have to have that something. Some people have no concern for the price of these luxuries whatsoever. They go ahead and make the purchase, and then at the end of the month, they wonder why they do not have enough money to pay the water bill. Most people, however, use their heads when purchasing articles of luxury, and do not have the problem of no money at the end of the month.

The value of the dollar is the most important thought in the minds of many people. They are continually searching for a job that pays just a little more than does the one at which they are now working. People will even go as far as to steal money from others. The largest problem that most people have is that of making the black column turn out larger than the red column. We have often heard the old saying, "Money is not everything." This saying may be true, but in my opinion money is way out in front of whatever is in second place.

Is there any wonder that when a boy asks for money, he does not ask for one dollar, but asks for two? A person cannot get by on one dollar anymore. There is not a thing that a young fellow can do for less than a dollar. I cannot see why a man gets angry when his son asks for a couple of dollars, after all he must realize that he is paying more for articles than he once did. Perhaps it is the adults that misjudge the value of the dollar. Possibly they believe that one dollar will still go as far as when they were children. At any rate, I know how far a dollar will take me: a dollar will take me around town a few times, to Olive Hill and back, and also a dollar is the price of a meal when I am slightly hungry.

Street Lamps Beaming Dimly — Trying To Stay Awake

By Norma Hughes

Small, timid snowflakes started to drift down intermittently at first then gradually, as though encouraged by the thin accumulation of first comers, a steady rain of soft, feathery flakes began. Small town street lamps beaming dimly at each other, trying to stay awake, were casting a golden glow through the lace curtains of floating flakes.

The hour was not late—only eight o'clock—but the streets had been bare since shortly after dark. The town seemed to have tucked itself snugly into bed for the long, winter night leaving only the sleepy, inadequate street lights to keep watch and hint to the few through travelers of the existence of life within the few homes scattered from the edge of town to the one block of business houses at the intersection of the state highway and the one other important street of Liberty. The streets were almost deserted, but not quite. Moving slowly and with a tired but persistent gait, came a bundled figure hunched against the cold. Snowflakes made diamond sparkles on his black coat as he passed under the nodding street lamps. They winked and seemed to brighten a bit as though making an effort to inform the lone wayfarer that they were on duty and well aware that he was a stranger.

A stranger . . . but was he? At Sadie's Lunchroom he stopped, straightened, and peered into the dimly-lighted window of the closed restaurant. The light from the corner lamp fell on his face as he lifted his head out of his turned up collar and revealed a strong young face whose tired lines and weary eyes explained the slow gait that had made the traveler appear to be much older. A smile lit his face, and his eyes took on a tender look which told that they were looking on loved and familiar sights not seen for a long time. A tan bronzed

his face and shone strangely out of place in the light reflected by the fallen snow. The tan spoke of long days under a hot sun.

"Still looks the same," he murmured stepping back in the doorway and brushing off snow from his shoulders and cap. He gazed up and down the street at the few shops, the drug store on the corner, the small dark clothing factory, and the street lights marching in a line to the lighted gas station at the edge of town. "Sure is a far cry from Delamere Avenue."

Delamere Avenue with its bright lights, large modern shops, palm lined sidewalks, up-to-date hotels, and busy traffic of cars driving on the wrong side of the road loomed large in his memory as his mind flew back over the past two years. The truth was that he had not spent much of his time in Nairobi and even less on Delamere Avenue, but that place had been very impressive after months in the small villages of the bush country. The past two years had been strange and busy. He had spent a year in training and preparation, then six months in Kisumu and nearby villages with a holiday in Nairobi before going on to Dar es Salaam.

Dar es Salaam—Haven of Peace—surely this is my Dar es Salaam. There is more peace here in this sleepy little town than in all of Africa. Why couldn't I have seen it before? And Mom! I can't stand here dreaming. Won't she be surprised. I'm not expected for a week."

As he remembered that he was really home, he stepped off the sidewalk with a lighter step and his chin up and headed down the side street to a small frame house whose yellow paint glowed in the light of the lamps which swayed slightly as a breeze sprang up bringing with it more snow.

"Why was it I had to go so far away before I could realize that this place, my home, is so important to me?" he questioned, as he remembered an earlier thought.

"The town of Liberty. Hah! What a laugh," he had said bitterly as he left two years ago. He was older and wiser now, but he had once hated this town. None of his childhood accomplishments had escaped the critical attention of the town's busybodies. They had stifled him with their persistent invasion of his privacy and his right not to excel in everything. He had been prompted on all sides to do things and be things which he was never sure he really wanted to do or be. By college age, he was restless and thoroughly confused. He had searched and searched for the significance of life. He had given his heart unreservedly in love and had it broken. He had worked feverishly for top marks in school and had not succeeded. He had had feelings of inferiority and hated the world, accusing it of insufficiency. In his rebellious attitude he had hated his family and all the people around him because they had all the happiness. Then, in moments of imagined realization, he would turn his violent hate upon himself and pray desperately for God to give him something understandable as truth, something tangible to hold to. Then he would pray quietly only for rest from his torment which he did not realize was self-inflicted. He had thought that by joining the Peace Corps to go to Africa he might somewhere find what he was looking for.

He had been satisfied to see how alike people are in spite of race and environment, and yet—how different because of race and environment. He had worked hard, but there had been good times, also, and he had formed firm friendships with many. Two years could not have been more full of excitement and adventure, but until he had reached the edge of town only minutes ago, he had not been free from the sense of seeking—of searching for something. Now, as he saw the wedge of golden light beam from the little yellow house, he felt he had found what he needed. He began to run realizing in his heart the significance of the moment. His feet sounded on the frozen boards of the porch as he stamped off the snow. The door flew open, and the light radiating from the face of the woman there was the same that has lighted the way home for generations of

wandering children—the light of joy of a mother who welcomes home a son from a far away place.

"Oh, Scotty, Scotty, is it really you? We never expected you. Not yet. Oh, it's so good, so wonderful. How did you get here? Come in, come in. Are you cold? Here, let me take your coat. Where's your bag? How did you get here?"

"Now Mom, one question at a time. My bags are checked at the airport. I hitched a ride and walked the rest of the way. Oh, it's so good to see you. Do you know how beautiful you look to me?"

Had it really taken years and the distance of half the world to teach him that right here at home and right in his own heart could be found peace and contentment? All along this fact had been so near and yet so far from his understanding. It seemed as though he had just stepped from the dim lights of streets into a wondrous brilliance. It must have been the light that flooded within him for only a rosy pink lamp burned within the room, and outside the small town street lamps beamed only dimly at each other, but had no trouble staying awake. They had witnessed something to think about through the long night. They had seen a man find his *Dar es Salaam*.

My Requiem

By Nina Craig

There is a place not far from here
I love to go and stand there still.
As day is done and night is near,
I seek the top of my own small hill.
As the sun is setting in the west

And the clouds are hazy rose,
I leave the world for a moment's rest
In a place that is mine alone.

He Kept Up A Continuous Moanalogue

By Sharon McClanahan

The sky is lovely; the birds are lovely; everything is so wonderful, and I am a part of it. I felt exuberant and free of all cares as I explored my new home. Because I was so happy, I didn't expect to see him.

I knew something was the matter when I came suddenly upon him there in the clearing. No one could look as downcast as the old man did. I saw his hair as white as the clouds, and I wondered what was eating at his heart so strongly. He was mumbling to himself in a most agitated manner.

"Oh, dear," he lamented, "why couldn't they listen to me when I was down there? Now there's nothing I can do—nothing! How sad it is to know that I can do nothing."

He sounded so sorrowful, and I longed to comfort him, but being a newcomer, I didn't intrude into his life. I didn't know his name, but still I wanted to help. Didn't he notice the sparkling river running slowly by? Didn't he see the lone tree which seemed to have golden fruit where the Light shone on it?

The old man hadn't become aware of my presence. I sat down on the grass nearby to rest. He went on with his moanings, and I, young and curious, listened.

"I should be thankful for all the others that have gotten here," the old man scolded himself, "but something will be missing when I only see them for a little while. I am happy, but I yearn to see them, and they won't be able to visit." "Yes," he reasoned, "that isn't my fault. I tried."

He gave a big sigh and made many sad noises that reached my heart. I longed to call his attention to the animals roaming across the river; bid him notice the lion with his fierce mane and haunting eyes; bid him take heart upon seeing the snowy lamb so meekly feeding. It was such a lovely scene, but as I mentioned, I was a new arriver and unacquainted with the customs here. I really shouldn't have continued to listen.

"In a little while I will have to return to the city and attend the council," he said. "I will plead the case, but I fear it will be the saddest day for me since I have been here. I can't do a thing to help. What's there is there."

"What case, what case?" I wanted to ask, but I dared not interrupt the old man. He seemed so lost in his own thoughts; so saddened by some mysterious thing I couldn't see. What could he see coming that I could not. There must be some event approaching, and maybe if I listen . . .

"It's almost here," he said softly; "almost time to go. It came so much sooner than they expected. No one ever suspects that it will happen to them, and then it is upon them, and its too late—too late. I knew it would be this way," he sorrowed, "and I told them. Now I find I was right, and it saddens me." Then resolutely, "Well, I have to be there. I best get going."

The old man got up and still not seeing me set off. Just where was he going? What was taking place? A newcomer is always naturally curious, and I was no exception. I decided to follow the old man.

As I sailed along behind him, I observed the scenery around me. I'd never traveled this same way before. The surroundings were all one could hope for, and everyone looked so friendly. I really had to get better acquainted with some of the people, but not now, just wave and go on. As I traveled along, I couldn't imagine how I'd been happy anywhere else. Had there ever been another home for me? It seemed so hard to remember at the moment. Did the old man recall another time, another era when everything was not so good? Perhaps, someday, he might tell me about it. Maybe I should stop and ask his name. No, I might lose him.

It seemed a vast and long way before we reached the city, and I, only a newcomer, was tired by the time I arrived, shortly behind the old man. I noticed that he needed no pass to enter the gates, and the guards apparently knew him well. I had to present my card, for no one knew me by my face.

As I followed the old man through the clean, shining streets, I watched everyone greet him respectfully. He only nodded as he trudged along toward a large building of white marble. The old man slowly climbed the many rows of glowing steps—glowing because the Light was everywhere. When he reached the top, the two men at the doors greeted him and allowed him to enter. I tried to follow him, but the men restrained me—not harshly or cruelly—but simply and firmly.

Said one, "You're new here, or you'd know that you can't go in. Only he and a few others are permitted to pass through these doors."

"But why can't I?" I asked, but no one answered me.

They only looked at me as if to say, "You'll learn in time how things are done."

But would I, for where was time? It seemed gone, boundless, with no restrictions. Time had forever disappeared; somehow I knew, but dared not say this to the two stately guards.

Slowly I turned and walked down the steps. So, I wouldn't find out what was going on, after all.

As I walked around the building I accidentally spotted a high window in the back. Then the idea hit me to look through this window. It was as easy as flut-

tering in the wind, and then I was gazing through the window.

At first the Light blinded me, and I couldn't see anything but Its brilliance. As my eyes adjusted I found myself looking down into a great hall. The Light rebounded a thousand times off the walls and reflected another million times over.

I looked for the old man, but at first I saw only other men much like the old man. All were seated around a larger seat from whence came the Light. As the old man had said, this was a council of sorts.

Then, I saw him—the old man. He was sitting closest to the large seat on the left, and a fair young man sat on the right. The old man looked radiant, and I thought, "The Light must do that to them," for they all looked happy. Somehow I felt a longing to get near the Light, an uncontrollable impulse.

Before I could consider this feeling, a huge door at the other end of the hall opened, and three people came in. As every noise ceased, the three walked in the dead stillness up the long, white hall. Why did they look so frightened? The Light is kind; the old man is kind. I wanted to cry to them not to be afraid; tell them they would be happy once they got orientated.

But no—the old man didn't look kindly. He wasn't smiling.

Oh, good! the people know the old man; surely that will make him smile.

Questions—the old man asked the people many questions. They looked perplexed and seemed at a loss to answer him.

Then he talked to them. He must be telling them about the river, and the tree, or maybe about the lion, or even the lamb. They must be pleased to see their friend, and to hear him speak to them after so long a time.

I wonder why no one is laughing. This should be a happy day for everyone. The old man looked glad before the people arrived.

The old man then opened a black book handed to him by the young man. From this book acrid smoke seemed to drift. What wonders it must contain—or what terrors!

From this black book the old man read for quite a while. The faces of the people were terror-stricken, and they seemed to shrink smaller and smaller. They made no reply to the things the old man read.

Then the Light reached the old man a book bound in gold from which light was cast all around. Slowly he opened it, and slowly he scanned each page. He didn't find what he was seeking. Then he closed the book.

The old man turned to the Light and spoke to Him, but He would not listen. The old man seemed to plead with Him for something. I wondered how anyone could deny the old man, but the Light did. The fair young man looked tenderly at the old man with an infinite glance that seemed to say, "It's no use; it's too late."

The old man sat down in his chair, and suddenly he looked old and fragile, but wise and as timeless as eternity.

The Light spoke to the people, and they cried and pleaded, but He didn't listen. He only motioned them away, and I couldn't see His face to see the strained lines.

The huge doors once again swung open, and it seemed as if a hundred trumpets blasted as the two stately guards marched precisely up the hall. They bowed to the council, then taking the weeping, wailing visitors, marched out with them.

My eyes couldn't comprehend what they had seen. My senses were numbed with shock and pity—pity for the people, but especially for the old man. Now I understood the mysteries that had so long eluded me. My feeling of wanting to get close to the Light had temporarily vanished, and I longed only to escape with my thoughts and emotions.

I left the city and hurried to somewhere, but really nowhere. At last I ended up at the exact spot where I had been before, but the old man, used to the method of travel, had beaten me there. Once more he was seated and talking to himself.

"I told them; all my life I warned and pleaded," he said. "They laughed and called me a crazy old man and told me to go away. Now here I am, and where are they? I would that they could have been here, but the Light saw the black book. He saw me search the gold book and find nothing. It is as it has to be, I guess," the old man argued.

As I listened I felt suddenly freer than ever before. This was my home, and I was safe. No one could take me away in chains. It seemed, though, as if suddenly I had no right to be spying on the old man, so I sailed off and left him sitting there, as timeless and as ageless as eternity.

Fragments — For Thought

God, help me . . . please, God, please. I have to shut that off!"

Kneeling, he quickly ran his hands over the broken glass until one rested on the brick. Running outside, he cried, "Shut up!" and flung the brick at the unknown. "Shutup!" he screamed again, and finally fled down the alley, tripping and falling over the uneven bricks.

His worn leather soles sent him crashing heavily against the wet cobblestones. He lay there, out of breath, frightened, paralyzed, as the throbbing inside his head increased. "I can't stand it! Stop . . . please stop. Stop! God, please God, make them stop, please dear God, please! Oh God, in heaven, I love you, God . . . please make them stop."

Suddenly there was only the dying echo—and then nothing. There was no sound. Again, trying to flee, his shoes failed to adhere, and sent him once more crashing to the wet stones. Struggling to his feet, he paused for a moment on his bleeding knees, "Thank you." He got to his feet and limped into the shadows and was gone.

A young man, a monk, stirred subconsciously in his sleep, surprisingly winded—and overhead the monastery bells still trembling from the final stroke of the pendulum. It was midnight.

By Larry Dalton

. . . A sudden storm . . . The sky had in a matter of minutes turned from a pale blue to an ebony black. Although it was only about six in the evening, outside it was as dark as night. The dark clouds were moving rapidly across the sky, large and ominous like El Greco's *Eldorado During a Storm*. The noisy birds were silent, and the trees swayed with every rising gust of wind. A death-like silence prevailed. Suddenly the rain poured down.

By Rick Rosenthal

. . .
Christmas is coming, with bustle and hurry,
The cooking and cleaning, gifts and the worry.
Everyone's running quickly about,
I hear a whistle. Do you hear a shout?
The days before Christmas we hope there'll be snow;
The fire in the grate casts a warm, rosy glow.
The Christmas tree's lit; the work is all done;
Tomorrow the laughter, food, and the fun.

By Sharon McClanahan

. . . My high-powered rifle split the crisp, clean air. The large rock uncoiled with a sharp snap as the bullet struck home. Another blast from my weapon sent rock and dust into the night air. I lowered my gun to find my target. Mike flashed his light across the brush-covered ground. From behind a yucca plant, came a silvery glint darting toward my feet. The orange flame of the two small pistols was drowned out by the flash of my "cannon" fired from the hip. We all stood frozen in our tracks until the sunlight revealed our enemy. Stretched at my feet was the biggest snake I have ever seen.

By James Shay

The Close Of Day

By S. L. Royse

At the close of the day when the sun's red glow
Illuminates the trees on the horizon's brow;
And the sky streaked with purple o'ershadows the fields in a haze;
And the clouds are frosted pink in different ways,
Then the moon behind you looks milky white; the stars begin to focus—

It approaches night.

The whispers of the breeze caress each living green,
Gently moving the dewdrops which faintly gleam.
In the moon's soft light from a place above,
The call of a whippoorwill, the coo of a dove,
And a gown of blue velvet with stars on its girth,
Sinks, bending downward, to cover the earth.
And a sigh and a prayer which are thoughts meant to say,
"Thank you, God, for a beautiful day."

An Hour Well-Spent

By Cheryl Sanders

I awoke quite early this morning as the rays of an early morning sun filled my room. I rushed to the window and gazed out upon the majestic world of nature which was beckoning me. Immediately I set out for an hour with my first love, nature. In one short hour, the beauties of nature in all her splendor may be experienced. One exceptionally lovely wild flower growing apart from the rest, a cool stream of clear, flowing waters, a small clearing in the midst of a forest—these are only a portion of the warm experiences which can be had in an hour well-spent.

A Bore

By Pat LaComba

A bore can be defined as an uninteresting, dull, or monotonous character whose primary concern is interrupting any conversation or discussion which might bring attention to him.

He seeks to destroy interest by forcing others to hear his views and his ideas though they be commonplace and unauthentic. Likely the opinions which he expresses will be those he heard over the sandwich counter at Joe's, or at the pool room downtown.

Blind to his own shortcomings, the bore is conceited. He is one who readily corrects the mistakes of others, overlooking these same faults in himself.

This individual is forever pushing himself into the seat reserved for somebody else's friend. He knows nothing of respect for rights of others, but enjoys his rights to the point of unbearableness.

Invariably, the bore also relives continually every "exciting" experience he has ever encountered and every feat he had ever mastered. (This is the type of bore who shows his home movies over and over, given just the slightest chance to do so.)

To the bore, the funniest joke in the world is the "good old Charlie just slipped on a banana peeling. Ha! Ha!" kind of joke. But when the tables are turned, and "Mr. B" slips on the banana peeling, everyone is responsible, and carelessness is their by-word.

The bore abhors an intelligent conversation, for he has no talent in this art. For this reason he makes it impossible for anyone else to indulge in this pleasure.

A bore is a conceited, maddening, detestable creature who has not developed the traits known as understanding and cooperation.

Reflections Of A Pre-Winter Afternoon

By Cheryl Sanders

A gray mist envelops the surroundings;
No ray of sun can penetrate such a mist.
The setting of the sun has come and gone.
And all that remains is a dim, orange horizon,
Just enough to let us know that it has gone.
A calm breeze rustles through the few, remaining leaves,
Never staying in one place, but nonchalantly
Moving from one to another most carelessly.
The grass is no longer green with life,
But instead a straw-brown of unresisting death
With small bits of green tufts fighting their dreary end.
It no longer remains whole when the wind blows through it,
But breaks in small bits and pieces to be blown about forever.
There are a few leaves remaining on the trees,
A few which stubbornly resist the inevitable.
But they, too, shall fall in good time
And leave the trees completely naked,
Pitifully bared to the sapping weather of the world,
Somberly accepting the defeat.

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