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## *off the board*

The institutions, traditions, organizations and publications which make up a good part of any university's *raison d'être* are always fair game for criticism, and one of the sharper and more frequent barbs directed their way is the charge that they are different: different from what is thought to be respectable, decent, usual in the outside world; different in not conforming to the patterns of thought of those too much influenced by the outside world.

We use the term "outside world," not because we feel universities should be ivory towers. Ivory towers do not work in a modern age. But nevertheless, universities are worlds, complete worlds in themselves. They may be built upon and of the stones and forces from the world surrounding them, but the design has been self-executed, slowly, no doubt, but organically. Their standards are their own, developed slowly and carefully through the whole period of their growth. They can only be judged on their own terms, and those terms naturally involve a great respect for the past and a great longing for a future when the ideals of all educational institutions will, perhaps, be attained.

But in the present, it is the duty of a university to itself to examine all the various kinds of experience that come along, keeping what is worthwhile, discarding what is not.

And this inevitably requires a certain amount of experimentation.

University clubs, organizations, and publications are the most important media of experimentation. Dramatic societies, for example, or literary magazines, are probably criticized for novelty more often than any other student activity. The critics must remember that the standards by which they should judge the researches of university minds are no more conformable to the standards of the outside world than are the researches themselves.



This is not to argue complete impracticality in everything that goes on at university—that is, complete impracticality in terms of the lives we are now preparing ourselves for. The very fact that the university is based on and built of the solid matter of the outside world means that everything we do will have an application somehow or somewhere in that outside world.

But in experimenting, we must take up and examine those ideas, attitudes, *genres* of thinking and acting which the outside world, in its basic conservatism, is too cautious to approach. We become scientists who perform the basic research in order that others will go on to invent, construct, develop new “products” from our results.

Without university drama groups, for example, too many lesser known plays in a long tradition of literature would go unseen and unread by too many students, and too many novel theatrical forms would go untried and would perhaps, never find a place in that long tradition. For example, a Hart House production last year of John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was an excellent example of the kind of Jacobean grotesquerie that developed out of Shakespearean tragedy and became something else. A new form of music-drama, initiated in a production of one of the oldest pieces of theatrical literature, the *Agamemnon*, demonstrated possibilities for the future of the theatre.

So too with a literary publication. If the modern “way-out” school of poetry and prose is to be allowed to make its contribution to our literary tradition, it must be given a hearing. It must not be critically attacked by unsuitable standards. It must not be outrightly condemned just because it is new or experimental. It makes an appearance in the first place because it is experimental.

This is not meant to be a justification for the extremes or vagaries or faults of the present issue of *The Review*. We feel there is enough of the already accepted forms of poetry and prose included to quell unjust criticisms made on the basis of the age-old prejudice against “artsy-craftsiness”.

But we ask you to give what novelties there are a serious second reading. Literature is moving ahead whether traditionalists like it or not, and university students have a duty to themselves and to their university to at least acknowledge, if not approve, literary progress.

It is all part of the never-ending search for knowledge, knowledge to be followed

like a sinking star  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

So what if our contributors are not Tennysons or Conrads?  
Shakespeare was not a Marlowe.

## A FALL

*Sweet spirit, look towards the sky  
I may teach thee how to fly  
Icarus fell to the sea  
But no one falls who flies with me.*

*Devil-talk seductive notion  
Luring flight above the ocean  
Satanic choirs triumphant sing  
He seeks the sun on waxen wings.*

*Fishermen adrift at night  
See on high the tragic sight  
A lovely boy with burning hair  
Falling, falling, through the air*

B. R. METCALFE



It  
Seems  
The rose bush  
Had notions of its own  
And I who came to gather roses  
Must needs console myself with cutting grass.

OREST W. HRYNKIW

Be still! Look!  
Beauty is not dead,  
Only hiding  
From her mourners.

A. D. MORGAN

*page eight*

# AIR VENT

Mae awakened and looked quickly at the alarm clock on the narrow shelf beside her. The luminous dial showed six-thirty plainly. There was no other light about her, only thick shadow and the knowledge of the cement-block walls like a coffin around her.

"Dawn," she thought, "and no sun to tell us another day has begun. No sun now for six days—six endless days and six endless nights."

She remembered how the sun rose an eternity ago, how the warm rays came through the bedroom window of her house which now probably lay in a pile of ruin about this lightless basement-shelter.

Lying drowsy in bed with Cliff asleep beside her, she would watch the grey sky lighten to blue over the swamp outside the window. Above her husband's steady breathing she would hear the swamp life croak and chirp the new day in an ecstasy of life. How she loved that swamp, loved and yet feared it. It was a strangely beautiful piece of country to lie so near the city, but there was a dark side to its loveliness, a terror which she felt. She was sure there were slimy, crawly snakes there and she continually warned the children about them.

"But there are no mornings now. No sun rises here. The swamp is still as death. There is nothing but darkness and four thick cement walls pushing closer and closer."

She heard Rodney waken and begin humming quietly to himself. Then he stopped and uttered a tentative whimper which grew to a full-fledged cry. He was only five, but he demanded food as persistently as his fourteen-year-

*page nine*



old brother. Mae switched on the battery-operated light on the bunk shelf, rubbed her red eyes and ran dry fingers through her lifeless hair. The four walls pushed tighter still as the feeble light illuminated them. In the upper bunk, Rodney's persistent crying caused Peter and June to squirm and protest.

"Can't you make him shut up, mom?" wailed Peter drowsily. Cliff muttered and rolled over in the bunk. Mae Windler got up and walked across to the cupboard.

As she scanned the meager store on the shelves, her mind went back to the day two years ago when Cliff had suggested building a basement shelter for a weekend project that would also teach Peter the rudiments of carpentry. Mae laughed and said that was okay by her. Men, she thought fondly, could find more ways to waste time. A basement shelter was the last thing they would ever need, even for a fruit cellar. Cliff and Peter worked enthusiastically for five months before their interest waned. In that time, the walls, air vent, bunk and shelves were finished. Mae furnished the ten-foot-square room with an old table and moved two chairs from the attic to the cellar. She stocked the cupboard with an assortment of canned and dehydrated food and for three months even remembered to change the water every two weeks. Then she too forgot.

When the radio incredibly announced that "a missile attack has been launched on this country and all persons are warned to take refuge immediately," all the family snatched up whatever bread, water and other food they could carry and rushed to their cobwebbed cubbyhole. The door closed; silence fell. Living on the outskirts of the city, they had not heard the bomb's blast. They had felt no shock, but the transistor radio which they kept tuned had said that a missile had hit the city. It warned over and over that no one should venture out of shelter until told it was safe to leave. Mae thought the voice had sounded uncertain.

Six days had passed since then, six days in which they had tried to adjust their lives to this mole-like existence. But Mae was rapidly becoming convinced this was impossible. She hated the cramped quarters, the lack of conveniences, and her family's incessant demands.

Now as she shook dry cereal into the bowls and resented the fact that the rest of the family was still in bed, Mae wondered if they would ever get out of what she increasingly regarded as "their grey prison." Cliff sat up at last and turned on the radio. It purred the usual hopeful hints and reassuring platitudes: all was well, the war was won, the radiation was diminishing rapidly, they would all be able to leave their shelters in a few days. And as she listened, Mae thought that if the radiation were really less, why couldn't they leave now?

Peter thumped to the floor and disappeared behind the entrance wall where the toilet was, looking faintly embarrassed. It seemed that none of them could really get used to plastic bags. When he came back, Rodney was finished

breakfast and was playing on the bunk. June was sitting at the table eating. She watched her brother return.

"Well, do you think maybe I can use the bathroom now?" June said.

"Sure," replied Peter, "you need it. You should see your hair. Boy, if your boy friends could see you now."

"You can't talk. I'll bet the girls would find you even more repulsive than usual."

"Yea, well at least my hair doesn't look like a bunch of snakes."

June was framing a retort when Rodney's loud voice demanded attention.

"I want a snake," said Rodney. "June's got a snake. Why can't I have one too. I like snakes. They're fun. Can't I have a snake, mom?"

Then May blew up. The tensions of the past days had worn her temper thin.

"Rodney, be quiet. You can't have a snake. You can't have anything. We're here in this damned shelter with nothing. No snake, no clothes, no light, nothing. I want out. Cliff, I can't stand it. Let's leave. I hate it. I..."

Her outburst stilled them into shocked silence. She felt Cliff's hand on her shoulder. "Easy," he was saying, "take it easy, honey."

"I'm sorry Cliff," she gulped, "but I can't stand..."

"It's okay honey; we're all a bit on edge. Just take it easy. Relax."

That was Cliff, thought Mae, the conventional cliché line. Just like the husbands in a dozen T.V. shows. Strong and noble until you felt like strangling them. So what if her nerves were shot? Any woman's would be trying to look after a family in a two-by-four sewer—a handmade grave.

She choked back her sniffles and grew quiet in her husband's arms. The children watched in awed silence. There was not a sound anywhere, not a sound except—startled, she raised her head. What was that, that faint, shuffling noise, that scraping sound completely out of place among the usual, experienced sounds of the shelter.

"Dad, what is it?" whispered June.

"It's trying to get in," Mae said.

"It can't be, mom. There's nothing out there," said Peter reassuringly. The shivering sound grew perceptibly closer.

"Listen," ordered Cliff.

The eerie, whispering noise continued for several agonized moments while their strained ears searched for the source—now louder, now almost gone. Peter tiptoed to each corner, listening intently. Cliff cocked his head and followed his ear toward the cupboard, then along the wall. Mae caught June fiercely in her arms and sat on the bunk comforting her in whispers. Rodney industriously crawled under the bed.

"I don't hear it here, dad," he reported.

"That radiation," Mae whimpered. "It's getting through the walls." She was thinking that now they would all die. That dreadful, invisible radiation



the radio was always talking about would kill them all at last. She didn't want to watch her family dying, to die herself in this tomb in their own basement.

"No honey," replied Cliff, "the shelter is safe and tight except for the vent, and radiation can't get in there. Besides, it wouldn't sound like that." While he was talking, he had approached the air vent and was now listening to the sound with his ear against the vent.

The air vent which he had built into the shelter was of the simplest type—merely a steel pipe four inches in diameter, curving outside the wall so that it pointed toward the cellar roof. Over the open end, a hood of cone-shaped metal had been fashioned. This horizontal stovepipe had been described in the construction manual as the simplest, workable air intake. It was meant to let in air from outside with a minimum of fallout particles. There was no real filter, and in fact, it was a small, direct connection with the outside.

When Cliff put his ear to the vent, the sound became louder. Then as he listened, it decreased and disappeared. Cliff turned and looked at his family. He was puzzled.

"Did you hear anything, dad?" asked Peter curiously. Even though the sound was gone, something was happening to break the routine of the day.

Suddenly Mae broke in: "There must be someone out there. I know it. We could all leave now if you'd let us, Cliff."

"I'm sorry, honey, but there can't be anyone there. The radio said the radiation is still fatal."

"Well, then, what's making that noise we heard?" Mae was frantic inside, and her face showed it. She hated the war, she hated the shelter and she hated worry. Right now there was too much worry to cope with. "I'm going to get lunch," she said. For Mae this was a good way to forget her troubles and to show Cliff that she had faith in him and in his ability to solve the problem.

Peter was not certain that the noise was not coming from inside the shelter. He spent the rest of the day searching for some source for the sound in the shelter. Once, in the afternoon, he thought he heard it again when he turned on the burner, but it was merely the hiss of the oil starting to burn. Mae worried the afternoon away watching her husband thinking and her son prowling. They had all learned to pass the time doing nothing, for there was very little else to do. And if one sat and gazed and thought about before, the time passed quickly.

She thought of her house and whether it was still there. Had the blast blown it down? Or would it be there to receive them afterwards? Would the swamp still be there in its lush, green glory? Or would it be brown stumps and black ashes in brackish, poisonous water? And the animals—would they be dead? The quick birds, and the frogs. They couldn't be dead. It was all right for the snakes to be dead, but not her birds.

And then it was night. The clock said so. There was no sun in the shelter.

As they prepared for bed, the sound came again. A soft sound, as of skin against metal. Again it came from the vent. Cliff went and listened and Mae thought: "Oh God, please let it pass. Whatever it is don't let it harm me or my family. Let us survive this hellish war to start again."

But as the day died outside their grey, cement shelter, so did the sound. Cliff came to bed. The kids went to sleep. When they were all soundly asleep, he spoke to Mae.

"Mae honey, I think the blast burned and broke the house. I think it has collapsed on the shelter and that debris is falling around the vent. Some earth or dust is clogging the intake. If we can't clear it, we'll have trouble breathing."

"You're sure."

"It fits the facts."

"Cliff, tell me it will be all right."

He took her in his arms as if to drive her fears away with the irresistible force of his body. She clasped him and forgot for a moment the cement walls, the close air and the war. Later, when she was asleep, Cliff looked at her and the sure light in his eyes vanished.

Morning, but no sun to brighten the dusty interior of the shelter. Only the last, small candle and the battery lamp on the table. Mae opened her eyes with a smile. Everything was as it should be. The wood of the bunk framing the end of the cupboard and the vent opening, beneath it, the clock endlessly ticking with a juicy, mechanical sound. No other noise. Wait! Mae's mind screamed. Yes there is. The soft, scraping slither. She wakened Cliff. Together they listened. Then Peter slipped onto the floor and went across to the vent. He bent and looked at the floor.

"Hey, dad, look at this." Mae and Cliff both leaped up and looked. There on the floor beneath the air vent were several dried, grey flakes. Peter picked one up and examined it.

"What do you think it is, dad? A dried leaf?"

"No, it looks like . . . no, that's silly . . . but still, it does look like a scale from some sort of reptile," replied Cliff rather dubiously.

"You mean a snake?" wailed Mae.

"Oh goody, I like snakes, I want one for all of us." Rodney had scampered across to the group and upon the mention of snakes, was anxiously hoping for one to appear.

"Rodney, snakes are bad, they bite and hurt you," warned his mother.

"Mae honey, don't give him wrong ideas. Most snakes are harmless, son, and besides, there are no snakes around here. If there were, the radiation would have killed them. No, this is an old scale from the ground which fell through the vent when the basement collapsed."

"How do you know it collapsed, dad?"

"Because, Peter, the air is slowly becoming stale. Something is partially



blocking the air vent. Somehow, we'll have to clear it, or we'll have trouble breathing. I think the bomb wrecked our house, and debris and earth is falling into the vent."

"What about the cover we built?"

"That must have been bent or broken so that it no longer covers the intake."

"Then that sound is dirt falling, dad?" asked June.

"I think so because the sound stops when no earth is falling. Now, Peter, you and I'll clear the vent."

"Sure. How?"

While he was talking, Cliff had been trying to wedge his fist and hand into the opening of the vent. It would not go. Finally he stopped and drew out his bruised fingers. He turned to Peter.

"Well, Peter, it's up to you. My hand won't fit. You'll have to reach up into the vent as far as you can and see what you feel. It's less than two feet long so you should reach the bend easily. Now, put your hand in. That's it, as far as you can. Do you feel any dirt?"

Suddenly Peter jerked back his hand with an expression of hurt surprise on his face.

"My finger's cut," he complained, showing Cliff his hand with two red marks on his middle finger.

"That doesn't look too bad, old fellow, it must have been a stone in the vent. Did you feel anything?"

"Just a bit of dirt, maybe."

Meanwhile, the scraping sound continued. Father and son took some wire from the spring mattress and rigged a probe out of cloth and stiff wire. With this they investigated the hole and decided that it was not completely blocked, but since the cloth was pulled back a little dirty, there was some earth in the vent. However, they had no fear of suffocating. Cliff told Mae that everything was okay and she relaxed a bit. While she was getting lunch, she thanked Heaven that they would see dawn again soon.

Peter didn't want any lunch. He said he felt sick. After lunch, he went to bed, pale. Mae and June cleaned up and the afternoon passed normally. Rodney played under the table and Cliff listened to the radio. Mae worried about Peter. About two-thirty, he complained that he could hardly breathe. Cliff and Mae went across to the bed and looked at him.

"How do you feel, old man?" asked Cliff.

"My arm hurts and I can hardly breathe."

"Let me see your arm, Peter," said Mae. She pulled it out of the blankets. It was red and swollen.

Cliff looked at it in disbelief, hoping it was not so. Then he turned to Mae and put his arm around her. Into her ear he whispered: "Mae honey, his arm looks like he was bitten by a snake, but don't . . ."

Mae turned to the far wall and cried.

"It's all right, honey, I learned about snake bite up north and Peter will be fine. We'll just have to work fast is all."

Cliff's lips were tight as he talked with her and his eyes were red. Mae stopped crying but looked miserable. June came over to the bunk and asked what was wrong.

"Peter's been bitten by a snake. It's not bad, though, and there isn't any need to worry. June, you help your mother get a tourniquet," ordered Cliff.

They had no snake bite kit, but Cliff quickly washed the bite on Peter's finger and put a tourniquet of string around his upper arm. But he knew it was at least four hours since the snake had bitten him and that it was hopeless. Still, he worked to make his family think all was well.

And inside, Cliff Windler slowly died with his son.

While they worked, the radio talked. It said that no one should go outside for at least three more days. It said that the radiation was diminishing as predicted and that all was going well with the war. It said that there were fewer casualties in the city than the army expected. It said there was no need to worry.

Peter screamed in pain as Cliff made two small, vertical cuts in his finger. Mae and June sat in chairs and cried. When Cliff put his lips to the cuts and gently sucked, it was a futile gesture. He knew that the poison was already through Peter's system, but he was working for his own sake now.

Peter worsened and his breathing became harsh and laboured. Each painful breath penetrated to Cliff's heart. Mae was crying loudly and Rodney joined in the dirge. Then she stopped and went over and kissed Rodney to quiet him. She came to the bed and put her arms around her husband.

"Isn't there anything we can do? Can't we leave this miserable shelter and find a doctor? Please, Cliff, save our son!"

"Mae honey, the radiation would kill us in a few hours. There's no car and how could we ever get to a doctor over the ruins, anyway?"

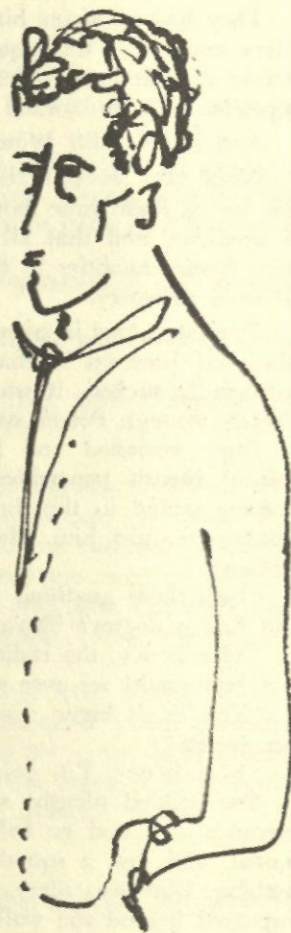
"You don't know everything is ruins. Maybe the bomb didn't damage our streets."

"Mae honey, I'm going to look outside and see how things are."

She nodded silently, sadly. Rodney and June watched him cross to the entrance wall and go behind it to the door. They heard the heavy hinges squeak and saw a square of light on the opposite wall. Then there was nothing. Cliff was silent. Rodney ran to the entrance to see. He too disappeared behind the wall. Mae and June stared. Then they heard Rodney pipe cheerfully: "Here's a snake for daddy. Here are snakes for all of us."



## THE ROMANTIC IN THE WOOD



The forest floor  
Was soft beneath the feet  
And as I wandered  
Underneath tall trees  
Tossing like soft seas  
In the sleeping depths of the wood  
Where little sun could  
Penetrate, my merry thoughts  
Began to deviate. For although in summer  
The woods may seem to slumber  
Through an endless succession  
Of brilliant green days  
One knows the intercession  
Of autumn—warm haze,  
Burnt leaf, bare earth  
Is imminent in April.  
Just as living implies dying  
So laughing implies crying  
And he who never laughs is dying  
But he who never weeps is a fool.

So I wept as I walked  
Passing over in my mind  
Remembrances of divers kind



Some sweet; and some indeed that mocked  
With visions of shattered fantasies and dreams.  
But then did any silent pine  
Its green and lofty head incline  
To ask — *Who weeps beneath?*  
*What dismal passion brings this grief*  
*Beneath our boughs, breaking the calm*  
*Of wilderness, of wind and forest balm?*  
Or did some rock or did the earth  
In gentle sympathy with me  
Abandon that unspoken mirth  
(For natural is comedy)  
And whisper, so that I might hear  
*What is this tremor, come so near?*  
*Why does he weep, from love or fear?*

Why weep indeed, young heart?  
Why wander and remember  
Through the dying mists and embers  
Of long forgotten passions and despairs.  
It's April. And April implies August, that's true,  
What idle fool talks love to trees,  
And pours out his heart to a passing breeze?  
A romantic and unoriginal child  
Who worships the green and aboriginal wild,  
That's what kind of fool. But never mind.  
It's April. And April implies August, that's true,  
And August December, but why rue  
So simple a thing as the passing of the seasons.  
Nature, like the heart, has her reasons.  
So laugh—It's April now—laugh  
At least till the summer's end.  
Be merry, sing high.  
Walk the land lustily,  
And swell the lungs gustily.  
Fear of joy, though joy leads to crying,  
Hastens the process of sinking and dying.

B. R. METCALFE

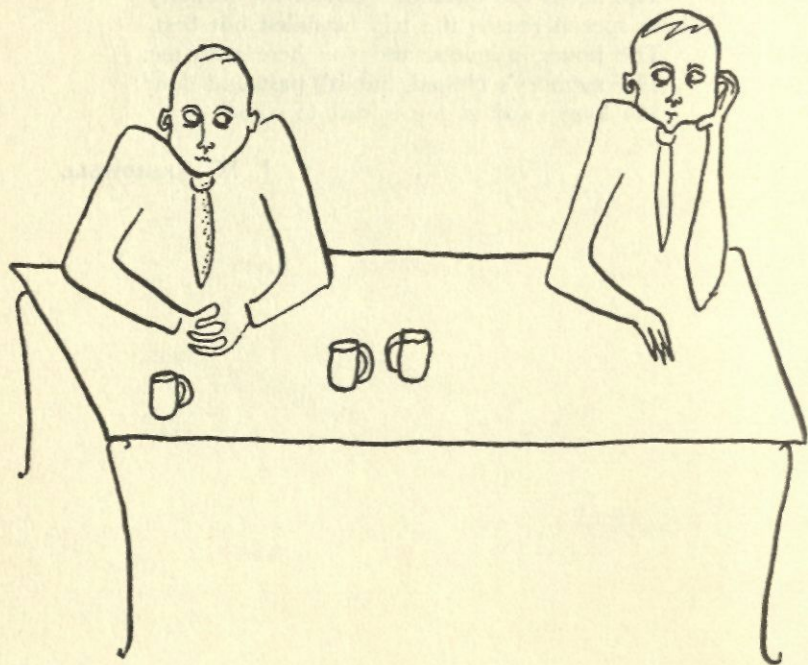
## STOPOVER

The lights come on dim-dazzling in the dark;  
The bus like some gigantic beast gone lame  
Draws up; and in the throbbing, frosted ark  
Heads rise from sleepless cushions once again.  
Three hours gone, three ages still to go—  
I'd grudge the truant time unmourned, unreflecting  
Did I not know what wise men's sons do know,  
Were it not that journey's end is lovers meeting.  
The bus puffs off and heads sink back to rest:  
The lights are dimmed—Enters the memory  
Whose speech recalls the trip bewailed but best,  
The hours, minutes, and you here with me.  
The memory's blessed, but it's past and done;  
My long awaited joy is still to come.

J. M. TREADWELL



Every  
in  
the  
buttery



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## HIS LAST WISH

Reckon ah'll be leavin' you purty soon, Maud.  
Hush now . . . don't cry . . . it makes me feel poorly . . .  
Likin we had summat fer regrettin'  
An' you know we ain't.  
Hush now Maud.  
Ah ain't feelin' no pain.  
Lord's bin good to us,  
Land's bin good to us,  
An' a body ain't got no right spectin' to live after his time.  
Maud . . .  
Jus' one more thing ah wanna ask of you, afore ah go.  
Maud . . . are you listenin', Maud?  
Fetch me mah ol' varmint gun standin' in the corner yonder.  
Bin with me fifty year or more, ah reckon . . .  
Pa bought it fer me, when ah was just a boy . . .  
Ah wanna heft it one more time afore . . .  
Hurry Maud, ah'm feelin' mighty weak.  
Bless you woman, you bin a good wife to me.  
Now stand out o' the way a piece Maud.  
Ah'm sorry . . .  
But ah swore ah'd kill that goldarned cat o'yourn afore ah died . . .

OREST W. HRYNKIW

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## A ROOTED

Jim was older by then and he worked in the Stores shack, handing out shovels and pipe-wrenches and the like to the men who needed them out on the job, always with a sharp reminder to return the articles before closing time. ("You won't forget to bring it back now, will you laddie?," he'd shout, long after the man in question was out of hearing.) The Stores shack was where they put a labourer—just prior to his final dismissal—who was too old or too weak to handle a pick and shovel any more, or work the cement vibrator.

It was pretty lonely in that Stores shack during the day, and I guess Jim was pleased to have any company even if it was only me, stopping by from time to time to get bags of lime for the surveying crews. Later he was more pleased to have my company than that of anyone, for he grew to like me and I for my part took his ramblings and his eloquent dissertations seriously.

You see, Jim, now a labourer and a failure even at that, was once senior English master at one of the best public schools in Britain. I didn't believe him at first when he told me—nobody else did—but then I saw that it must be true. He had had a good education somewhere along the line, that was obvious, and his fine English accent indicated at least a middle-class background. But best of all, his knowledge of English literature and English authors was phenomenal. He had one of those memories that can retain anything, absolutely anything, after one reading, and he used to hold forth for me in the Stores shack, quoting at great length and very emotionally from Shakespeare, or Milton, or the Bible. Standing there with his arms folded across his chest and his eyes (or rather, his eye, for the left one was blind) gleaming and moist as he once more held a whole classroom spellbound, he was entirely believable. He was a wonderful man, and one could not help but be fascinated by him, drawn to him again and again to hear his orations. Then, too, he looked so much like an English master is supposed to look, like something by Ronald Searle, thin

## SORROW

and slightly stooped in his shabby workman's clothes, with his one good eye peering sharply at you from under bushy eyebrows over a pair of rimless glasses, with his long hooked nose like a beak, with his very English voice and his constant gentle reproofs. ("Have you ever read the Book of Job then, Terence? Ah, but your education is sadly lacking!")

It was a long time before I got the courage to ask him how it was that he was no longer a teacher. But all he said was, "That's old history, lad. You see, someone very dear to me died, that's all—I couldn't seem to ride it over." And that's all he would say.

But there came a day when, without any prompting whatsoever, he just began to talk about it: "I was in love once, do you know—very deeply. I was younger then, nearing thirty I suppose—still a bachelor of course—and I was teaching at a school in Bristol." He paused a moment, then started to move restlessly about. "She was a bad sort, I suppose, by the world's standards anyway. She was—I swear to God it's true—she was a Chinese prostitute from the slums of Glasgow. But we were young and we were alive, and what she was, or rather, had been, didn't matter to me, for I loved her very much—she was the kindest and best girl in the world—she truly was. We lived together, co-habited—does that shock you?—for four months and for four months I was in love and happy. I hope you never know what it is to love—know what it is to hold in your hand for one brief, golden moment a pure lovely joy that transcends all that is base in you and makes everything glow for you and be yours, and the world seems peopled with a race of wonderful, laughing, jolly heroes . . . Because then you lose it. I came home one day and they told me she was dead and that I was wanted down at the morgue—to identify her, you see. So I went down to the morgue and there she was. She died of drug addiction."



A long pause. His eyes were pleading.

Presently he went on, "It took me a long time—about two years I think—to face up to that—even partially—and, do you know, it troubles me yet. One cannot 'pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow' . . ."

He stopped again, embarrassed now.

"There were other women, of course, but I never did recover 'that first fine careless rapture'—do you recognize that?" And without warning we were off again in another world.

But the story was still incomplete. A few days later he abruptly took it up again: "I tried to carry on my work for a while after that, but it was no use, no use at all. I had no patience any more with the silly little fools who were supposed to be learning from me—they didn't care. Then one day a boy—his name was Griffin, I remember—stood up to recite some Kipling—you know, 'East is east and' . . . [his voice suddenly rose] by God, that damned little blighter couldn't remember the second half of the line! Can you imagine? I was standing beside him and I could feel my blood rising and my hands tightening and all inhibitions fleeing from me, and I said to myself if that blasted idiot can't remember what comes next, I'll strike him down with one blow of my fist. He couldn't and I did—I hit him—hard. So they dismissed me. I didn't care. I didn't want to teach any more. I didn't want to do anything any more. I had no future—no family—nowhere to go . . . I began to drink too much—have, ever since . . . I went away . . ." His voice trailed off, sinking into mumbles—Australia—South Africa—America—always drifting, always drinking, always dragging himself down and caring less every day, and finally, one time about ten years ago (this I found out later from one of the labourers), he lost his eye. He never knew what happened—he just woke up one morning in a hospital and his eye was gone. He supposed he had lost it in some brawl—this was not unlikely.

He didn't want to teach any more and he was fitted for little else. But it was then that he made the decision to stay off liquor, at least as much as possible, and maybe settle down a bit.

It didn't work entirely; Jim still drank, I knew. It was easy to tell when he had been at it before work, for on those days he delighted in spouting off in my hearing various obscene little verses and stories that he had picked up on his travels. And then the poor old man would watch me, amid fits of cackles at his own humour, to see if I was shocked or embarrassed.

There were times too when his drink made him bitter. "Only a fool would ever admit that he loved a girl, Terence," he would say savagely. "Why, you're sure to lose her, it's only a matter of time just like you'll lose everything else that ever did you any good in this cheating world, including in the end life itself, not that that ever did you any good, don't you believe it."

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But he didn't drink that much, and he still had his beloved literature to comfort him. Most of the time he was a fairly serene, even cheerful individual. Once I asked him why he didn't go back to teaching since he obviously retained the training and the knowledge. He replied that he longed to do so many times but always rejected the idea in the end. "I just wouldn't have the patience any more, lad—or the strength." And looking at him I saw that this was true. I could see the poor old man trying to control a class of forty young devils, all of them out for blood, all of them highly skilled in the righteous sport of baiting masters, particularly those who show some weakness—I could see him trying to impart to *them* something of his gentleness and understanding and I knew what the result would be. They would have him weeping with frustration in a day.

But there was one place where he was sure of himself. I wish you could have seen him in that Stores shack—what a wonderfully inspiring man. He would often assert, for example, that he had "a deep and abiding love" for the poetry of Walter de la Mare and Thomas Gray in particular, and then go on to show exactly why. Always he was able to throw new light on old themes. I remember him alleging that two lines, just two lines by William Blake,

"When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven with their tears,"

were enough to assure any man of immortality. I remember his moving reading of Ecclesiastes 12:

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them . . ."

I remember his love of the King James version ("Do you know, some of the finest lines in the English language are to be found in the Bible?"). I remember his enthusiasm for learning, his generosity—and his wretchedness.

I remember many things about him but chiefly I remember the last time I saw him. They finally fired him—he knew they would—and so I went on that last day to shake his hand and wish him luck. But I had to work late, and by the time I got to the shack, I think he was already convinced that I had forgotten him, for there were actually tears in his eyes. There were many things I wanted to say to him—we liked each other very much—but he didn't give me the chance.

"Don't say good-bye, lad, for each time we say good-bye we die a little."

So I just shook his hand and walked out the door and came away, and left him alone in that Stores shack.

TERRY PRATT

*page twenty-five*



# Saturday Night, Sunday Morning and Monday

a week trilogy

## I the end

wood heaped high for funeral pyre,  
the druid performs his liturgies.  
sober folk round watch the fire,  
pronouncing terse death-elegies.  
the folk their teeth-tongues exercise,  
while gulping down a tonic.  
the druid for all attention vies,  
ubiquitous, platonic.  
now the drunks in one great spate  
descend on druid vicarious,  
holding out a trembling plate,  
demanding gold-red carcass.  
    using fingers—belching, too—  
    they gobble scrumptious barbecue.

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## II the beginning

Blessèd is he who cometh in  
the name of the Lord. Hosannah  
in the highest. attendance lowest in  
the Presence Highest. Hosannah?  
negligent, negligeed, into the bed  
climbs hostess along with her host.  
the party is over. no Host  
do they now know, nor daily nor Sunday bread.  
devouring desires, she oft soon palls.  
she'll greedily upward push and bawl  
little caring till she falls  
whom she'll trample, cheat or maul.  
    now everything precious or good is made few.  
    Miserere, O Jesu, please do.

## III the elevator

up it rose. and then he froze:  
the doors opened on a wall.  
his trapped spine tingling to his toes,  
in white hands he began to bawl.  
the grille asked, "why thus masked?"  
but he just snapped, "I'M J.B.  
in modern luxury I have basked.  
you've heard of ME!" the grille just pined, "maybe."  
then the glutton stabbed the buttons.  
the grille laughed out, "unfair."  
"SHUT UP!" . . . the grille clicked off . . . then never on.  
he screamed and wept, "why? who? when? where?"  
    in cage's corner now he cowers  
    worshiping god Grille and all his Powers.

ALEX GLOBE

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