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HOMeward

by Wayne Treece

Pratt is a small, sleepy town in central Kansas. It, like most small towns in the Mid-West, has a main street with several stores, an elevator, and a park. The town is surrounded by mile upon mile of rolling fields that raise millions of bushels of wheat yearly. Yes, this is what the average onlooker sees as he drives around Pratt on Highway 33. But to a student at Yale, this is the most beautiful sight imaginable.

The student vividly remembers every small detail about the town from which he departed in September. The candy counter in the corner drug store, the windswept fields glistening in the sunlight, and most important, the place where his family stood on the railway platform as the only eastbound train pulled away from the station. The train that took him clickety-clack, clickety-clack across Kansas, clickety-clack, clickety-clack on into New Haven.

Now, only two weeks after Thanksgiving, Pratt occupies all the student's thoughts. It makes no difference what the topic discussed is, the student has but the thought of the train taking him clickety-clack, clickety-clack over twin ribbons out of Connecticut and across the Catskills of New York. Clickety-clack, clickety-clack. The student's papers are all written of Pratt, of family life, or the rails taking him across hilly Pennsylvania, clickety-clack, clickety-clack. The student's roommate, a true Ivy-League man, tries to console him, but to no avail. His attention is focused on Christmas vacation and the train taking him clickety-clack, clickety-clack homeward. Onward over the steel ribbons, clickety-clack, clickety-clack. Onward through beautiful Ohio. Twelve-hundred miles of snow-covered countryside rolling by.

Slowly, as the days before Christmas vacation come and go, come and go, the student cannot eat or sleep for want of those familiar sounds and voices only twelve-hundred clickety-clack, clickety-clack miles away. How he wishes to be on that train going clickety-clack, clickety-clack through narrow Indiana. He starts marking the remaining seven days before Christmas vacation off the calendar. He divides the days into hours, the hours into minutes, and the minutes into seconds, each second being an eternity in itself. Each second that could take him clickety-clack, clickety-clack to the stopover in "The Windy City."

No longer is the student the tall, shy fellow with the strange Mid-Western accent. He starts missing classes. His grades are falling lower, lower every day. He stays in his room dreaming daily of that train taking him clickety-clack, clickety-

clack. out of Chicago. Only six more days before that train could take him across the mighty Mississippi clickety-clack, clickety-clack. That train that will eventually take him over the rolling prairie of Missouri clickety-clack, clickety-clack. Homeward, homeward. Clickety-clack, clickety-clack. The stop in Kansas City. Then clickety-clack, clickety-clack into Kansas. Clickety-clack, clickety-clack toward home. The home he remembers so well.

Yes, Pratt, Kansas, is a typical small Mid-Western town known only by its inhabitants and the few people driving along Highway 33. The train is rolling over the steel ribbons, rolling into Pratt clickety-clack, clickety-clack. Christmas will be celebrated as usual in Pratt this year, except that the boy voted "most likely to succeed" in high school is missing. The train that should have brought him clickety-clack, clickety-clack homeward went clickety-clack, clickety-clack on through Pratt on its daily trip. His Christmas is being spent twelve-hundred long miles away from his beloved home. Twelve-hundred clickety-clack, clickety-clack miles away in the psychiatric ward of General Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut.

THE STORY OF MICHEL

by Ronald L. Botts

"Chapter seven will be discussed tomorrow," Dr. Henri concluded, closing his worn notebook.

The class broke silence and a hum of individual conversations filled the classroom and hallway as the students began to empty from Bessie Hall and make their way toward their respective housing units.

Summer school hadn't been my idea of a pleasurable venture although I was enjoying the smaller classes. The first four weeks had gone rather fast and had been most interesting. However, the hot, dry Missouri weather made studying difficult and swimming a much more pleasurable pastime. Traveling the twenty miles to the old, abandoned clay pit was not only well worth the time and expense, but it also served the purpose of allowing us to get away from it all. The traditional spring retreat to the "quarry," had quickly become a veritable everyday habit this summer.

For some reason today was different; the air was cooler; a light breeze, creating "goose-bumps" on my exposed arms, was pushing light grey clouds across the cold, blue sky. It smelled and looked like rain. Reaching the dormitory, I noticed that some of the other guys had also realized that swimming might be a bad venture today. But then, what else was there to do?

"You goin' to the quarry, Rich?" shouted Ken from his third floor window.

"I don't know. Is anyone else goin'?"

"It's pretty chilly to swim and there's little chance to catch any rays," offered Dale as he opened the door to his car.

"You're right there. I think I'm going to take a bye on it today." I walked upstairs to my room where I lay down to ponder the pending problem. Stretching out on my bed, day dreaming, I realized that it would, indeed, be a long day unless something were to come up. I rolled off the bed and walked into Jim and Tom's room where I found them discussing the same problem.

"What's happening?" I asked as I positioned myself on the lower bunk.

"Nothin', I guess," answered Jim. "We were just discussing the pros and cons of going up town for some coffee. Wanta join us?"

"Let's go!" I replied eagerly.

No sooner than we had gotten inside the cafe, Tom ordered for all of us. "Three coffees please, all black," signaled Tom. Before long the waitress had our cups filled and at the booth.

"Let's see what's happening in this roaring metropolis today," remarked Jim sarcastically, reaching for the local paper . . . "Mrs. Martin's out of the hospital . . . Mrs. Kirby and her niece, Mrs Ray Koontes, had dinner at the Keatons' last night . . . Mr. Williams, brother-in-law to John C. Harper, was picked up at home and rushed to the . . ."

"Any auctions comin'?" I inquired, interrupting Jim's local news headlines.

Turning to the classified section, Jim remained silent for a few seconds. "There's no auction listed, but here's something that may be of interest . . . \$500 First Prize . . . Demolition Derby . . . Friday Night . . . 8:30 . . . Raceway Park on the northeast edge of town."

"Real interesting," I replied trying to sound sarcastic.

"I think it could be interesting if we were to enter a car in it," Tom offered.

"What are we goin' to use for money? I mean, like, I'm broke!" Jim replied.

"I don't know yet, but if we can find an old used car or even a junk, we sure as hell can get the other guys to help pay for it," Tom retorted.

"Here, let me see the ad," I demanded, finishing the last of my coffee, and reaching for the paper.

Only after debating during our ride back to the dorm, we finally agreed that the issue warranted merit and that it should be presented to the rest of the guys.

"I know it sounds stupid," began Tom, when we reached the house. "But look! If everybody chips in a couple of bucks, it wouldn't be that expensive and besides, we could have a lot of fun!"

"I'm all for it!" said Ken, handing the now well-worn ad to Tom.

"Me, too!" signaled Dale, raising his hand.

"All right!" exclaimed Tom, organizing his thoughts. "We've got five guys right here. Let's go and see if we can find a junk that will run well enough to win this thing."

Reaching the car grave yard, we caught the proprietor about to leave and pulled up next to his car.

"You gotta' car that runs?" Tom inquired, opening the door and stepping out.

"Well, . . . there's that '54 Buick." He pointed his thumb at a dusty, rusted heap sitting in the corner of the lot. "Tires aren't much."

"It's gotta be cheap!!" someone added.

"It's yours for sixty dollars."

"Sixty bucks!!"

"We just wanted something to enter in the demolition derby Friday night," commented Tom. "We didn't really want to spend that much money."

"Well," replied the owner, "I'll tell you what . . . if you let me have the car back after the race, I'll sell it to you for forty-five dollars. Now, how's that?"

"It's better! Does it run?" asked Tom.

"Sure! I'll get the keys," and he went back to the office.

"Hope it runs good," said Ken.

"We'll have to wait and see," said Jim. "If we can get some of the other guys, it wouldn't be that hard to pull off."

The owner returned and started the car with surprisingly little effort. We checked it out and it seemed to be in real good running order. We wanted to go ahead and buy it, but decided it would be better to try and raise some money first. We left the owner of the junk yard and returned to the college in time for lunch. It was a unanimous decision that we would take money from anybody and if we should win, the prize money would be used for a party, a motivating stimulus.

The cafeteria buzzed with the conversation of the hour and the reaction of the students toward our proposal was beyond the scope of our imagination. Everyone wanted to help out. Even the girls offered. We formed a corporation and actually

raised fifty-six dollars in less than two hours. It seemed as though the entire student body had gotten psyched for the demolition derby.

We bought the car and I got to drive it back to campus. It seemed to drive well and the engine still had lots of power.

Then the remainder of the day was spent trying to dismantle the car which had been affectionately christened "MICHEL". The windows were knocked out with a jack-iron and several guys were cut in the effort. The determination of the "pit-crew" was already apparent. Everyone wanted to do something. An atmosphere of suspense hung like a wet cloud over the campus; interest and intrigue kept the students from their studies.

Immediately after class the next morning, Tom and I met and began to dismantle the interior of the car.

"Everything that moves—goes," stated Tom infallibly.

We worked feverishly until noon. A pile of interior components, lying beside the car, was visual evidence of our efforts. The radio was out. The rear seat, the door panels, the ceiling liner and each and every thing that was held down by a bolt or screw, was removed. Exhausted, we drove "MICHEL" to lunch. The guys went wild. They loved it.

"There's only one thing missin'," said Ken.

"What's that?" I inquired.

"It needs a paint job!"

"Where are we going to get enough paint to paint the whole car?" asked Jim.

"Why we'll . . . Well, we've got eleven dollars left from the money we took in," suggested Tom.

"Yea, but we've got to buy gas and oil," remembered Ken.

"And beer!" added Dale.

"O.K.! O.K.!" shouted Jim, subduing the small gathering.

"We'll go get the paint now. Dale and Ken are going to work on the engine," said Tom.

"It's twelve-thirty," said Jim, "just eight hours till derby time."

"Let's get goin!" I said.

We all went to work and succeeded in getting more paint on us than on the car. We painted the top yellow and the body green. The letters MICHEL were printed neatly on the passenger side in black paint. The wheels became silver and looked remarkably like real racing "Mags." The tires were painted with iridescent paint, creating a psychodellic effect as the wheels revolved.

We reread the rules and installed seat belts. The doors were chained shut. Padding for the driver's window was made from cloth and tape. The car was ready and we were ready to race.

"Who's goin' to get to drive?" asked Jim as we stood around looking at our masterpiece.

"We'll have to draw straws at dinner. O.K.?" offered Tom.

We all agreed and went to our rooms to clean up for dinner. There, Dale drew the longest of the five pieces of coat hanger and he got to drive. Tom drew the second longest and was satisfied with being back-up man.

Fear of a last minute mishap prompted us to tow the car to the track, where we were greeted by a pit crew of thirty, anxious to prepare the car for the first race. We were also met by one of the officials who gave us a three-foot wooden slat and instructed us to tape it to the side of the car by the driver's window. This was explained as a safety measure. In the event that a car was to have trouble, or, in fact, wished to withdraw from the race, by breaking the stick, the driver would notify the judge, as well as the rest of the drivers, that he was no longer a participant.

Looking around the pit area, I noticed that there were perhaps, twenty to thirty cars preparing for the race. Most of them were running, as was Michel who purred as though anxious to get onto the track.

Some of the other cars were beginning to make their way to the ramp which led to the track itself. Dale, sensing this movement, started to inch Michel in that direction.

As Michel appeared to the crowded grandstand, a roar of approval came forth from the stockholders' section. This was their car and they were anxious to see it win.

The track, itself, had been shortened to about a hundred yards and the secondary, figure-eight track had been opened, thus creating a rounded oval effect to the general area in front of the stands. The cars were parked around the outer edge and were all anxiously awaiting the sound from the starter's gun.

"They're off!!!" shouted someone standing between me and the outside of the track. Almost immediately I became unaware of the cold and chilly night. The roar of the engines and the crash of steel against steel had frozen me in a smokey world of drama.

Michel was still moving and had done some damage to two of the other cars, but as yet had not been hit. Suddenly, from out of nowhere came a big, blue Plymouth, smashing the right front fender, forcing it against the tire. Michel couldn't move and Dale wisely broke the stick, and sat out the remainder of the heat.

The "pit-crew" arrived the instant the first heat was over and pushed the injured Michel back to the pit area for repairs. By determination and brute strength, the fender was pried off the tire and Michel was ready for the next heat. The field had been narrowed to eight cars and Michel was as big and healthy as any of them.

Again the gun sounded. The drivers, being more cautious in this race, chased one another around and around, avoiding contact. Then Michel made his move. Dale drove into the side of

a blue Plymouth and the stockholders all shared in the sweet revenge. Backing now, Michel found a radiator on the front of a Ford and smacked hard into it, causing it to crack and spit steam over the course and several of the spectators. Two down, two more to go to qualify for the final heat! Dale spotted an antique Studebaker and ran it down, locking bumpers. He tried and tried, to get away but could not . . . Michel was out of the second race.

The "pit-crew" managed to free Michel from the Studebaker and push Dale back to the now crowded pit area. Ken found a man who owned a cutting torch and asked him to remove the bent section of the bumper. Finally free, Michel was ready to try for the last time to qualify for the \$500. We had to win this one. It was do or die!

"The clutch is shot; push me back on the track," yelled Dale. Reaching the track, we backed Michel against the retaining wall in front of the grandstand and hoped that the car would be able to roll fast enough for Dale to get it in gear. We would have to wait.

The gun went off. Michel was beginning to move . . . inching its way down the track . . . Too slow . . . it stopped, it was smoking now . . . it was too late . . . it died as did our hopes for the big prize. It was over now. We left Michel where it had stopped, not sure of its place in our academic endeavors

THE SIDEWALK

by Nancy Ash

Paths of concrete,
here to there,
continuous,
leading to and
from,
which way?

Footsteps heard,
clicking heels on surfaces
hard and
bare,
angry, hurried,
gone.

Is there any other path
than the one I
chose . . .
hard, cold, bare?



VICTORIAN FANTASY

by Barbara Dugan

The witch!

Who
is the witch?

Does she live down the street
in a
pink-gardened
house;
the stone Tudor eaves
filled with screechy
owls,
all colored like
cardboard Halloweens?

Does she
live in the grassgrown, muddy,
squat shanty
down by the tracks
where the train goes by:
"WH-O-O-O!"
in the night,
and the red light turns
and shines upon her
black, bad
face,
as I watch from my
little cot
at night?

Or is she
in . . .
the kitchen
stewing something
as she laughs,
looking down into the
bubbling pot,
from which,
dark-tinged,
a child's finger
protrudes stiffly?

Or is it **he**
who sits
beneath the green-painted slats of
the back porch,
happily slapping
mud pies
with plump hands,
humming as he
straight-pokes
the poison
berries
into the
center of each sandy
cake,
hoping his
sister will
eat them.

A JOB IN WHICH YOU START AT THE TOP

by Dennis Desmond

That summer, I was working in a drainage ditch on the farm, resetting some posts which were railroad ties that had been washed away the night before by a heavy rain. The day after the rain was extremely humid. The hot sun was up early and the sultry heat made it feel like it was over a 105 degrees. After I ate breakfast, I drove down to the ditch to see if the fence and posts had washed away during the heavy rain.

I was not surprised when I got there. There were no posts and the fence had stretched until the tension was so great that the strong wire had snapped. I went to the post pile and loaded fifteen two-hundred pound railroad ties and my post digger into the wagon. I drove to the ditch and shut the tractor off. Then I started digging a hole in which to set the first railroad tie.

I was already roasting from loading the railroad ties but I kept on digging. Gee, it was hot that day, and it was only early morning. I thought it would take forever to dig the hole. I was so hot my shirt was soaked with sweat, and I could taste the little salty beads coming from my forehead and burning my eyes. There wasn't anything dry that I could use to wipe my face, so I kept on digging.

I had dug about three feet and had two to go. Sweat ran off me faster and I decided to take my shirt off. My jeans were saturated with sweat and mud. Inch by inch, gravel, mud, and rotten wood came up out of that deep hole. As it came up,

more of it managed to get on my saturated pants and aching hands, sore arms, slick sweating back, and throbbing head. As I plunged the digger into the hole for the last time, I gave a sigh of relief and was glad to be finished with digging this hole. But I knew I was only partly finished and that this was the coolest part of the day.

I started on another hole and found it to be softer than the first. The mud stuck to my post hole digger, and I had to clean it off by hand. I was getting discouraged and went to get help so I might get the posts set as soon as possible to keep my dad's livestock from getting out on the road and the train tracks.

It took me about fifteen minutes to get help. My neighbor Kenneth and his brother, Tom, helped me. My brother soon came down when he saw that I was beginning to tire, and had brought them. We all pitched in and started digging and setting posts. Kenneth was digging hard, and he, too, was getting tired. He plunged the digger into the soft gumbo and pulled out the grayish black matter and with it several water moccasins. He threw the digger about ten feet, and with such force that the blade stuck in a tree leaving the handles sticking straight out. He ran, but it was too late. A snake had bit him.

"Get away from there," I yelled.

"I'm already bit. Get a knife ready!"

I got the knife ready and he slowly walked up the bank.

"I can feel my leg swell," he said. He lay down and I took out my knife.

"Greg, give me your lighter. I have to sterilize this. Then go to the house and get the pickup." I sterilized the knife and let it cool slightly. I pulled his pants legs up and saw the two little holes over a blood vein.

"Hurry, Greg," I said. I began to cut across the two holes and could see the blood coming out fast.

"I hope this will let you keep your mind for awhile." I let it flow for a minute and then applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding.

Greg came back immediately and helped him into the truck and took him to the doctor.

"Bob, let's get the guns and kill these snakes."

Tom and I went to the house and picked up the guns. It was not yet noon and we had set five posts.

"We'll have to really work this afternoon, Tom. When Greg and Ken get back maybe they can help."

We started to shoot the snakes so we could get back to work. They were everywhere. We even shot some in the trees that lay on each side of the ditch. We killed all we could see, and then we went back to work. Tom wasn't nearly as big as his brother, but he could work just as hard.

"Bob, let's set one more post before we eat." I shook my wet head and we kept on digging. We set another two-hundred

pound, creosoted post and headed up to eat. Neither of us could eat much since we were so tired. We saw Greg and Kenneth coming up the road and went to see how Kenneth's leg was.

"Did he say you could work?" Tom asked.

"Yes. He said I could work. It would be good for me to sweat the rest of the poison out of my system."

"I don't know how I'm ever to pay you guys. A \$10 doctor bill already and we haven't started the longest part of the day. On the money I make, I won't retire a possum in eighty years."

Kenneth and Greg ate, and then we started back to work. It was now twelve-thirty, and the sun was blaring down, straight at our heads. We picked up our tools and went to work in the drying mud.

While working, we talked about our fathers' farms. I knew Kenneth's dad quit farming about five years back because he couldn't make enough money and was going in debt. He went to work for the government and had to start at the bottom after being on the farm for forty years.

Tom said, "I can't understand it. It looks like the farmers should have a fair price, doesn't it, Greg?"

"Yes. They should since they are the only ones who are holding up the economy of the country. They have been the mainstay of their country throughout history and have contributed to the salvation of their country through their products and while all the unions keep striking for higher wages. We go on selling our products at the same price."

"Yes," Kenneth agreed. "The buyers don't ask how much you want, but tell you what they'll give you. Every day it's a different price. The farmers are today the only people who are getting less than most people got during the war, and up till now."

We went on working while talking about farm problems.

"If it hadn't rained last night, I could have been preparing the land for crops today." Then I thought, "That's a big set back, but we are used to that." I looked at Tom. "Your family is earning a steady salary, but it's not like dad's. We had equipment breakdowns, and it's hard to spend \$100 in one day and lose a day's work because a part broke or wore out."

We kept on digging, and then decided to take a break and go to the house and get some water. We could hardly make it back to the ditch, because we were so tired. We hopped the truck and went to the house. The cool water tasted so good we almost drank ourselves sick. But we went away from the house still thirsty. Our mouths were dry but we couldn't drink any more water.

Back at the ditch, we realized we were about done. That was the first break we took since the noon hour, and it was five o'clock when we got back to the ditch.

"I guess us farmers are the only ones who work long hours

during the day and don't have much to show for it except tiredness and bills. What do you think, Tom?" Greg said.

"I was thinking about farming, but I never would have the money to start. I've been checking into investments on the farm, and it would take about \$100,000 to get started. If I grossed \$25,000, I would net about \$5,000, because I would have to have new machinery, paint for sheds, fertilizer for the soil, seed grain, feed for livestock and much more expense. I would be in debt after the second year. It's very discouraging, since dad couldn't make it. But I like the farm better than the city."

By this time, we had all but one post set, and Tom and Greg started putting up the fence, while Kenneth and I dug the last hole. It was getting dark when we finished setting that last post. We had to get the flashlights out of the truck so we could finish stretching and steepling the fence. We finished about an hour after dark, and picked up our cool tools and put them on the tractor.

"Well, Tom, I guess I owe you for fourteen hours, and Kenneth for twelve and a half hours."

That amounted to \$37.10 for them together, and I had to pay the \$10 doctor bill. That day came to about \$50. I took the tractor back to our run-down barn to get it out of the weather, and Greg took Tom and Kenneth home. At least they had something to show for the day's work. All we had was a lost day's work in the field, \$50 paid out to keep our livestock from being killed by a train or car. And tiredness which I have never felt before. As I was coming into the house, Dad came up the road. He came in and we sat down to eat a hot meal along with my mother and brother.

Dad said, "I broke a piece on the mixer wagon. I hope tomorrow is a better day."

I'LL TAKE IT!

by Arlayne Marie McManimie

"I don't know about this one," said Mrs. Constant as she removed her sweater and hung it over the back of the chair. "I'm just not too sure I go along with the church when it comes to having women ministers. I just can't picture a woman in such a demanding position. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes, I know very well what you mean," said Mr. Habit. "I definitely don't favor the idea at all, but sometimes it's better to just go along with the Ministerial Relations Committee to please them. We don't have to take her on. We've got some available men on the list, too, and I'm sure any one of them is more capable of handling this job. After all—they are men and

that means they are stronger, and you have to admit this job takes a strong person."

"You are right, Mr. Habit. I'm afraid that even though I am a woman myself, I still think the job could only be handled efficiently by a man. Besides, I just can't picture listening to a woman preach to me every Sunday morning."

"Ha! Now that you mention it, that would be kind of funny. I can just see it all now. It'd probably end up a real gossip session!"

"That wasn't very nice, but I'll overlook it this time," said Mrs. Constant. "By the way, where are the other five members of the committee at?"

"Oh, four of them called in to say they couldn't make it today. It looks like it will just be me, you and Mr. Charm. He said he would definitely try and be here."

"Well, I do hope we can cut this a little short today. Johnny's home with the flu, and I hate to leave him there by himself for very long. Poor boy! I guess the other four will get it, too. Boy, do I dread going through that! Here comes Mr. Charm now. Knowing him, he'll probably be all for this woman. His wife has a pretty important job out at the big Science Research Center from what I hear. Poor man! I'll bet he has to fix his own supper every night."

"Hello, everyone! How are you all today?" asked Mr. Charm as he entered the church office. "Are we all ready with our questions for Miss Athena? I'm really looking forward to meeting her. Her ideas and training are good or she wouldn't have been sent to us in the first place. I'm mainly interested in seeing what kind of a person she is in general. Her personality is really one of the most important things in a job like this. What do you think about her, Mrs. Constant? You're a woman yourself so you must have some feeling about this."

"Well, truthfully, Mr. Charm, I kind of think a man would be better for the job. It always strikes me as the woman's job to stay home and raise the children. Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but that's just the way I feel about it," answered Mrs. Constant hesitantly.

"Well, now! I can see your point," replied Mr. Charm, "but, on the other hand, a woman's job can be what she wants it to be. Maybe some women do not wish to marry and raise children the rest of their lives. They don't have to now-a-days. They can get just as much training and education as any man can, and I'm sure some of them are much more capable than some men in the same fields of work. Don't misunderstand me; I have nothing against marriage and the raising of children. I am married myself and have a daughter in college. But my wife is also a director at the Cancer Research Center and she manages to keep the house clean, the meals on the table, etc. Like I said, some can do it and some cannot. Many would crack up under the strain, but others aren't happy unless they can really

dig into something besides dishwater and a mop bucket all the time. I'm mainly interested in seeing if Miss Athena is going to be the strong type or not. I really am hoping she lives up to my expectations because I think it would be good for the church to have a woman minister. We have gotten into a rut over the past few years, and you can always count on a woman to pull you out if no one else is able to!"

"I'm still not sure I agree with you, Mr. Charm," said Mrs. Constant. "What do you think, Mr. Habit?"

"I think I definitely have to agree with you, Mrs. Constant," replied Mr. Habit. "I know what it's like not to have my wife around since she died two years ago, and I can't see being married to a woman who would never be around because she was so wrapped up working outside the home. My wife never had to work and never seemed bothered by it. She was a good wife and mother and she stayed right at home and raised our three sons. They are married now, and none of their wives work either. Goodness knows a woman has enough to keep her busy in the home alone. I can't understand why she'd want to go out and look for more work!"

"I agree with you there, Mr. Habit," replied Mrs. Constant. "I don't know how to get it all done now as it is. I could just see me working besides! I'd be going around in circles!"

"Oh, here comes Miss Athena now," said Mr. Charm. "I do hope you two will at least give her a chance today. I can tell you have already made up your minds but you should at least listen to her and be friendly. After all—it wasn't her fault she was born a woman!"

"Thanks a lot, Mr. Charm," replied Mrs. Constant. "I don't think I like the way that came out just then."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Constant. I didn't mean to offend you. I guess that didn't sound very nice did it?"

"No, but I'll forgive you this time. I just can't figure out why you men always have to be picking on women though!"

There was silence in the room as they waited for Miss Athena to enter the office. Mr. Charm was excited about the prospect of having a woman minister at his church. Mr. Habit on the other hand, was an older and much more conservative man. Over the years, he had become very attached to the church and the traditions which he had grown accustomed to, and he was not easily persuaded to change his ideas about these traditions. One of these traditions was that a ministerial position was to be held only by a man.

As soon as Miss Athena entered the office, the three stood and introduced themselves. Mr. Charm pulled out a chair for her and they all sat down, exchanged a few words about the nice weather outside, and finally got down to the real reason for her being there.

"How old are you, Miss Athena?" asked Mrs. Constant.

"I'm not trying to be nosy but I'm just curious. You do look so young."

"I am 25, almost 26. I would have gotten out of school sooner but I had to take a break after college and work to put myself through Seminary. My father wanted to help very much, but he did not quite have the funds for such an undertaking. My four brothers and two sisters are a lot of mouths to feed, and he is only a factory worker. He has trouble stretching his money enough just for that, much less for college or graduate school. I did get a full tuition scholarship for college and I had a part time job which gave me enough for extra expenses. I had to stop a year and work to raise enough money to go on. But I finally made it. I have to admit that I was about to burst on graduation day I was so happy."

"It sounds to me like you really deserved to be happy on that day," said Mr. Charm. "I think anyone would be under the circumstances. I know I would!"

"How did your parents feel about you going into the ministry, Miss Athena?" asked Mr. Habit.

"Well, at first they were a little surprised. Around where we lived there weren't too many women doing any kind of work other than housework and raising children. It was something new to them, and it took them awhile to get used to the idea. My father did a lot of research and soon found out that it was fast becoming common for women to enter vocations previously occupied by men only. He also found out that they had been very successful in their new undertakings and had also contributed a lot in each of their individual fields. He had told me earlier that he wasn't sure that this was what I should do, but that if it was I would have his blessing. Later on he became enthusiastic about it."

"It sounds like your father was quite a man," said Mr. Charm. "Not many fathers would take the time to really find out about his daughter's choice of a vocation. Most would say yes or no to it and let it go at that."

"How did your mother react to all this, Miss Athena?" asked Mrs. Constant. "Being a mother myself, I am naturally interested."

"Oh, please feel free to call me Ellen."

"Okay, Ellen," answered Mrs. Constant. "Please go on."

"Well, my mother was always active in church work herself and she was very happy that I decided to choose such a vocation. But she had one fault and one thing which she could never quite forgive me for. You see, Mom was a Southern Baptist and raised all her children as Southern Baptists. But when I was in high school, I told her that I was no longer going to be able to keep going to that church. I told her I had done a lot of questioning and researching and had found another denomination which held beliefs much closer to mine than those which the Southern Baptists did. This was the Presbyterian Church and I became a

member there shortly afterwards. My mother was never quite able to realize why I did this and still views it as almost the act of a traitor. But she is good, too. She knows I am happy now, and she never says anything to upset me or anything against my church."

"Well, I guess we all run up against situations like that at times," said Mr. Charm. "In the end, we just have to make our own decisions as to what we feel is right and whether we will be happy or not."

Miss Athena and Mr. Charm continued to carry the conversation while Mr. Habit and Mrs. Constant listened with half-hearted interest. From time to time, one of them would ask a question that was answered on the job application form, and Mr. Charm would politely point out that it was in such and such corner on page two. Then he'd continue talking while they turned to the page and pretended to be reading the information.

Ellen was not blind to the fact that Mr. Habit and Mrs. Constant were not really interested in what she was saying or in her qualifications. She knew that they had already made up their minds against her for reasons she was also reasonably sure she knew. She had been through this before. But she continued to answer the questions asked of her, mostly by Mr. Charm, until Mrs. Constant interrupted and said she was going to have to leave and get home to her children.

"I'm afraid I have to go, also," said Mr. Habit, as soon as Mrs. Constant finished speaking. "It was nice to have met you, Ellen. I hope we will meet again. You are quite an interesting girl."

"It was very nice to have met you, also Mr. Habit," said Ellen politely. "I do hope I haven't kept you too long."

"Goodnight, Ellen," said Mrs. Constant. "I do hate to run but Johnny is home sick today and I must check in on him."

"I'm sorry. I hope it is nothing serious," replied Ellen. "I know it is hard on mothers to get everything done when a child is sick. I hope he is well soon. If there is any way in which I can be of some help, please let me know."

Mr. Habit and Mrs. Constant left the room together and the atmosphere seemed to clear up a little.

"Would you like to have a closer look at the church, Ellen?" asked Mr. Charm.

"Oh, yes! I'd like that very much," she responded. "Churches are in so many ways the same, but they all have their own little different and unique characteristics, some of which never cease to fascinate me."

Mr. Charm held open the door for her and she walked through the doorway, knowing that was probably the last time she'd ever walk through it again.

Ellen quickly patted her face with a big fluffy pink towel. She hung it up neatly and went into her bedroom closet and

took a pale blue dress off a hanger. She slipped into it quickly and sat down in front of a small table with a square mirror hung behind it. She patted some powder onto her cheeks and put on a little light lipstick. She stood up, dabbed a bit of "Evening in Paris" cologne behind her ears and gave herself one last look in the mirror. She moved quickly through the living room and pulled the curtains, fluffed up the pillows on the sofa, and straightened out the ends of the small blue rug under the coffee table. After seeing that all was in reasonably decent order, she sat down on the sofa and picked up a book she was in the process of reading—I Found God In Soviet Russia by John Noble. She thumbed through the pages but couldn't seem to concentrate on the book. Maybe I really have a chance, she thought. At least this was the first church member that ever invited me back a second time for any reason. Maybe Mr. Habit and Mrs. Constant were not representative of the average members of this particular church. Maybe it's all going to work out after all. This could be just the beginning.

Suddenly Ellen was awakened from her thoughts by the shrill sound of her buzzer. She quickly stood up and went to the door and let Mr. and Mrs. Charm in.

"Well, are we all ready for the biggest ice cream social this town has ever seen?" asked Mr. Charm boisterously.

"All ready and just starving," replied Ellen enthusiastically. They all left the apartment and got into the red Chevy in front of the house and drove off.

By the time they got to the church ice cream social, it had been going full swing for an hour. There were children running around the tables and around the individual groups of people standing talking. Everyone was happy and seemed to be enjoying themselves. There were several lines formed which led to a long table where different kinds of ice cream were being dished out. The whole thing seemed to be a great success from the beginning.

"Mr. Charm! Mr. Charm! Mrs. Swell wants you to run up to the dairy and get some more ice cream. They're running out real fast and there ain't going to be enough if you don't get some more! Will you go get some? Mrs. Swell is in the kitchen. She'll tell you what she needs." Jimmy was really excited about the prospect of running out of ice cream and he pulled on Mr. Charm's sleeve to lead him to the kitchen.

"Please excuse me," he quickly asked Ellen, as he was led away by the pull on his sleeve.

Mrs. Charm had already been drafted into sprinkling the nuts on top of the ice cream and now Ellen was left standing alone. She wandered through the church yard watching the children as they ran around. Finally she decided to get into line and get some ice cream. She went to the end of the first line and took her place behind two elderly women. She smiled and said hello; they mumbled something back to her, and then

turned their backs to continue their private talking. Ellen stood there in a world of her own thoughts when she was suddenly caught up in the conversation of the women in front of her.

"She won't get the job," stated the heavy set lady positively. "That's no job for a woman and I think most of the people in this church realize that."

"Oh, I definitely go along with you," agreed the second lady. "I just wish they, a quite wasting time with her. Everyone already knows she hasn't got a chance."

"Is she married?" asked the first lady.

"No, I don't think so," was the reply. "I heard that she was 25 years old. I think Mrs. Constant told me. She also said that she was very cute and did have a nice personality. But she still isn't going to vote for her I don't think."

"I'd be afraid that even if she was capable of handling this job that she'd sooner or later want to marry and quit and then we'd have to go through this all over again. I think we should get someone who's a little more certain."

The conversation soon drifted on to other subjects. Ellen just stood there as if held by a spell. The elderly lady's words kept going around in her mind. Finally she got hold of herself and walked over to a small deserted table and sat down. Again her mind drifted. Why hadn't she listened when she had been warned about this? She was told she'd not be accepted. She had been through this four times before now and it was the same everywhere she went. But how did other women do it? Was she really that inferior to them?

She suddenly stood and walked over to Mrs. Charm and told her she didn't feel very good and that she would call a taxi in order to go back to her apartment. She thanked her for everything and started walking down the street. About two blocks down she came upon a small cafe. She went in and asked if there was a phone she could use. She was directed to one and she called a cab. After twenty minutes she was back home in her own apartment.

She sat down on the sofa and picked up her book. Her eyes wandered around but the words on the page were not registering. She was thinking back over the things that had happened to her since she graduated from seminary. Finally, the light dawned; she put up her book, and went to bed.

Early the next morning she was awakened by the song of a bright red cardinal outside her window. She got out of bed, stretched, and went to the window. The sun was bright and warm and there was a soft breeze blowing. She felt warm inside herself and had high hopes for the day. She went into the bathroom and bathed. She walked to her closet and took out a flowered cotton dress. She slipped it on and went to her table, ran a brush through her hair, and put on a touch of lipstick. Grabbing her purse, she walked outside and down the sidewalk to the north. She walked happily, humming a tune to herself,

until she reached a quiet park. She sat down on a green painted bench to watch the squirrel scramble about. They seemed as free and happy as she felt.

Finally she stood and walked five blocks up to the big church on the hill. She went inside and into the church office. "Is Pastor Goodfellow in?" she asked.

The lady behind the big desk shook her head yes and pointed for her to go in. Ellen walked in and was cheerfully greeted by a tall, pleasant looking young man.

"Sit down, Ellen," he said. "I've been wanting to talk to you."

"I figured you did," replied Ellen. "I've been doing a lot of thinking lately and last night I finally made up my mind about something. I am not going to make it as a minister in a church around here. I know that now. I've seen people's reactions, and I've heard what they say about it. They don't stop and really think. They are caught up in tradition and won't give anyone a chance. I'm not the kind of person who can fight it. I was thinking last night about other women who have made it as ministers of churches and they all had one thing in common—either they all had a lot of money to use as influence in getting their positions or they had some kind of pull to get where they are today. But I am caught because I don't have anything like that. Even if I did have, I'm not sure I could put it to that use. So, I decided that I'd come see you and find out what you think I should do. I've got to find something pretty soon because I am almost out of money."

"What did you have in mind?" asked Pastor Goodfellow. "There are all kinds of possibilities as you well know."

"I also decided last night that I was going about this all wrong. I've been trying to force myself into a church because that has always been my real goal. But last night I realized that wasn't what I was really cut out to do. I could never force myself on people and that's why I haven't gotten a job yet. I decided that the only way I'm going to feel like I'm doing any good at all is to just have you tell me where I can be of the most good. So, just tell me where, and I'll go."

Pastor Goodfellow had been listening intently as Ellen talked. When she finished, he sat quietly for a time and finally said, "I'm glad you have made this decision, Ellen. I knew you would eventually, but I felt it best if I let you find out for yourself. I just hope and pray that you won't regret it later on."

"I don't think I will, Pastor," replied Ellen. "I know I'll think a lot about it at times, but I don't think I'll ever regret it."

"Good," replied the pastor. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get the other members of the Ministerial Relationship Committee together this afternoon and we will see what we can find for you. I will call you tonight and let you know what we find. Is that okay with you?"

"That's fine with me. I'll be waiting for your call," answered Ellen. "I will leave you to your work now. It sure was nice talking with you."

"Good to see you, too, Ellen. Just don't stay away so long next time!"

"I won't," promised Ellen. She picked up her purse and walked out of the office. The rest of the day she spent window shopping and just walking around in the warm sun. That evening she finished reading her book. As she laid the book down on the coffee table the phone rang. Good timing, she thought. "Hello!" she said, as she picked up the receiver.

"Hi, Ellen! It's me. We had a meeting this afternoon and came up with a few choices for you. One is sort of a pastoral job in that you would be a traveling pastor for several small churches in a small town. None of them alone can afford a full-time minister, and they won't unite. It would be a lot of work in moving around, but it could be interesting. Another possibility is working in the inner city area. We have a lot of workers there already, but they can always use another. The last one is working on an Indian Reservation in South Dakota. This is where you could be of the greatest help. We have been trying to fill this position for some time but no one is interested in going into such a pitiful situation, which is understandable. But, the fact remains, we've got to find someone. How about it? Which do you think you'd like to have?"

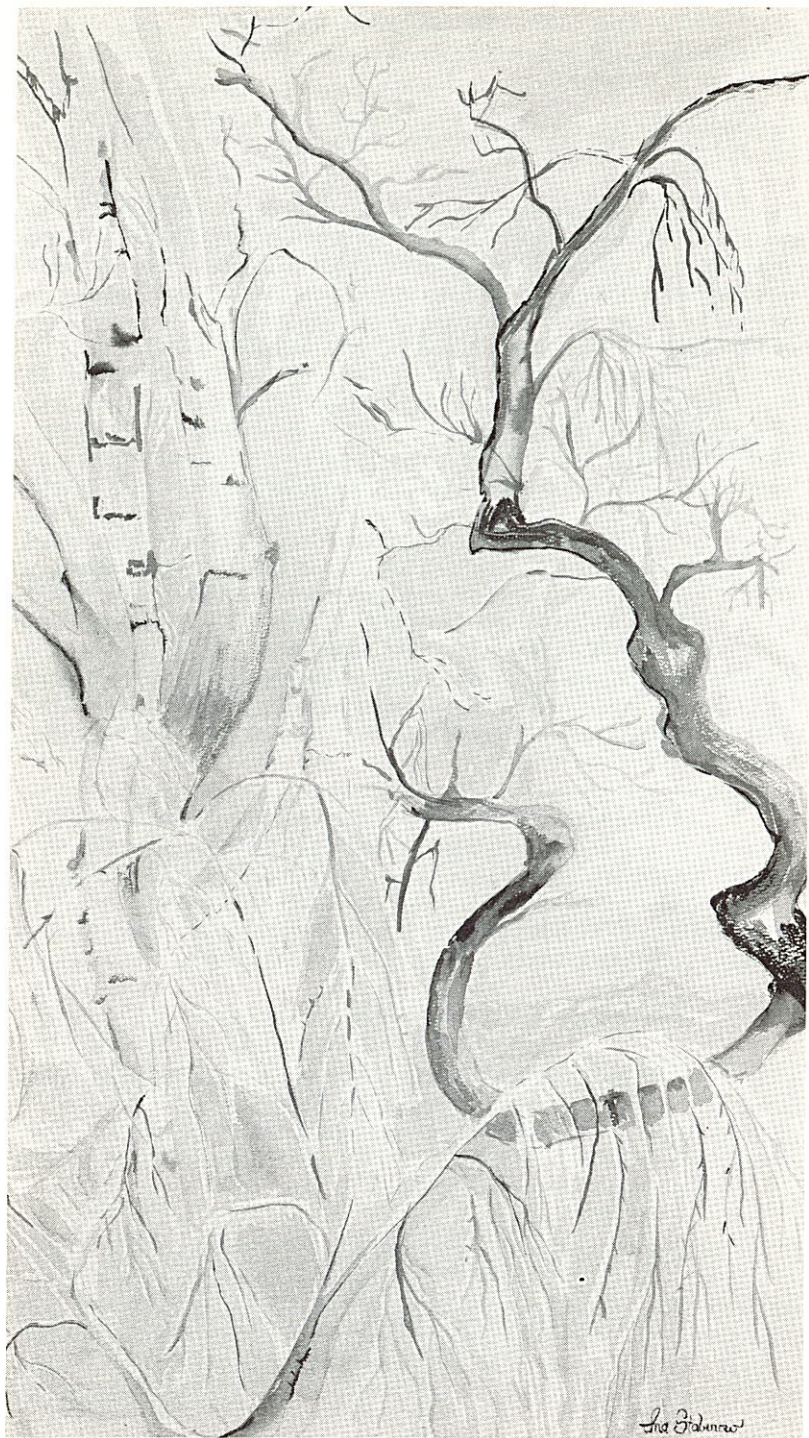
"I get the impression from what you said that the Indiana Reservation is in the most need at this time. So I'll take it!" decided Ellen.

"Are you sure? It won't be an easy job by any means, and you sure won't get any thanks," warned the pastor.

"I'll still take it," repeated Ellen.

"Okay! Come to my office tomorrow and we'll talk more about it. I will show you what to do to go about getting this job. We will have to submit your name to the National Missions Committee to start with. But don't worry about that now. I'll talk to you more tomorrow about it."

"Okay, I'll be there!" said Ellen as she hung up the phone. It was only nine-thirty but she decided to go on to bed anyway. She crawled between the sheets and tried to go to sleep. But she didn't really feel like sleeping. She kept wondering what she was getting into, but she felt good at the same time. She whispered a secret prayer to God and finally drifted off to sleep.



DON'T STOP THE MUSIC

by Anne Tyner

The sun dipped low over the top of Long's Peak, and we decided to give up our search for a cabin site, and head back to town. The road down the mountain side is not an easy one to travel in good weather, and now, late in October, we were a little wary of the icy stretch between us and the lights of the town.

The few leaves left on the aspen trees shivered with a sudden gust of wind, and the spruce glistened with an icy blue. "Wouldn't you like to spend the rest of your life right here?" I asked, looking around me, and then up at Tom.

"Yeah," Tom answered, "in a house."

We took another lingering look at the little clearing in the midst of the pines and spruces, and then headed for our car. The heater worked well, and soon we were on our way down the mountain, looking forward to dinner and a hot bath.

"What's that?" Tom suddenly began to ease on the brake and peered forward into the dusk. "It's moving, whatever it is. I can't tell." We watched in silence until Tom stopped the car completely. "My God, it's big."

The dark shape came closer. Suddenly I realized that it wasn't one shape, it was, rather, two merging into one. Two great stags, horns locked in battle were slowly moving toward us, completely oblivious to the humans in the little metal box.

"This isn't the season to mate, so why would they be fighting?" Tom showed his confusion. "I can't understand it."

"Maybe they're stuck together. Can't we do something?" My innate fondness for animals triumphed over the fact that angry stags are hardly tame deer to be fed in a city park. "Oh Tom, they see us. Look, they're unlocking their horns. Would they . . . I mean, deer don't attack or anything, do they?"

"Shut up and sit still, will you? They're going to investigate, and they're big enough to tip this Volkswagen over if they decide to try it. I'm afraid that if I try to start up now, they'll turn on us instead of each other."

Ten minutes passed. The animals walked round and round the car. One put one foot on the bumper, then decided that a Volkswagen wasn't meant to be climbed.

"Tom, aren't they ever going to leave? It's starting to snow, and we'll never be able to get back to town. The road was nearly covered up when we came up here. What are we going to do?"

One of the stags suddenly gave a low cry—whatever you call the noise that a stag makes—and rushed, his head lowered, at the car. It rocked back and forth. I was thrown forward to the

windshield, and as Tom grabbed me, he hit the radio. Music blared forth, and we both fumbled for the knob. "Oh Tom, I've dropped it on the floor. That knob always did come off easily. No, no, let me get it. It's under the seat."

"Wait, don't move. Let the radio alone." Tom's voice came low and urgent.

I looked up to see the stags slowly backing away from the atrocious noise of a "soul" record that humans, lacking taste as they often do, had placed high on the record charts. Tom turned the noise up as high as possible, and rolled down his window. One of the animals shook his heavy head and started back into the trees. The other approached, turning his head from side to side. Then at a blast of especially loud noise, he leaped with easy grace over the front of the car, and was gone into the woods.

"Well, I guess we'd better try to find the way back to town." Tom's voice shook.

"Yes, maybe we can still make it for dinner at the lodge. Anyway, I guess we're lucky that we're on our way, and not somewhere in a snowbank."

Tom started the car and we rolled gently down the slope, the engine humming, and the radio blaring with music that suddenly sounded very good to both of us.

"PERNE IN A GYRE"

by Dennis Desmond

Over the pasture
short grass and a giant oak tree
not moving in the warm, summer breeze.

I stared,
thinking of a girl,
small
but gigantic on occasion
because of
dynamic speech,
yet sometimes quiet,
radiating warmth
like a mature bud
expressive of so much
on the pedestal of a branch
robed in the
absurdities of
nature.



(only No. 2 does not call a floor)

No. 2 to No. 1: You have to gather control! The only way to get that is to crowd through the people. Push the others out of the way.

No. 1: Don't you break people that way?

No. 2: Well . . . yet, but . . . Man, ya got to get control, power, position.

(All the people suddenly become stiff. No. 1 opens the gate. No. 3 walks forward to a point directly between No. 1 and No. 2. He turns toward No. 2 swinging his mop in back of him. No. 1 puts up his hand and blocks the swing so that it doesn't strike his face.)

No. 3: Y'all's right, ya know! (turning to No. 1 he hits No. 2's hat with the mop and it tumbles to the ground. No. 2 is apparently unconscious of the loss.) Y'all lissen to what dat boy done told y'all cause he's cool. (No. 3 exits)

No. 1: (nods his head as if in thanks, reaches across and shuts the door. He then reaches down, picks up the hat and gives it to No. 2) Here, you lost this!

No. 2: Oh really! I wonder how that happened? And another thing! Remember to barge right up with your ideas. Don't mess around with a little one; go only for the big ones. And another thing, if you hear anybody else's idea **take** it. You'll get more that way.

(Everyone in the square becomes stiff. No. 1 opens the door.)

No. 6: (walks forward, wraps her arms about No. 2 and kisses him) Honey-baby, can I have a cigarette?

No. 2: Oh, sure! Here! (He gives her one. She stands holding it in a clenched hand not even near her mouth or even looking at it. She still gazes at No. 6) Here, can I light it for you? (He raises his own to his lips)

No. 6: Oh! I don't smoke. (She stands in front of No. 2 not moving, just staring at him. After a pause she addresses herself to the others) Have a cigarette?

No. 5: No, I don't. It's kind of funny! Anymore I get more pleasure from just dreaming about it than I do from actually smoking.

No. 4: They won't let me. Even when I'm alone they won't let me.

No. 1: Thanks, but I don't care for a cigarette just now.

No. 6: (perplexed) I see.

No. 1: (after a long pause) Did you want to go to another floor?

No. 6: Oh, no! This is my floor.

No. 1: Then you **do** want to get off here?

No. 6: Yes! I guess I want to get off here but he doesn't!

No. 2: But . . .

No. 1: I realize that he doesn't want to get off here but how does that prevent you from leaving?

No. 6: **Me** leave! I don't want **him** to leave!

No. 1: Tell her that you have to leave. (to No. 2, though not said aside)

No. 2: You see, Sugar . . . Well, I . . .

No. 6: (throws down cigarette, turns and runs off stage) I've been jilted. I've been jilted . . . jilted . . . and on my wedding night!

(No. 1 shuts the door.)

No. 2: That girl's got something!

No. 1: What?

No. 2: You mean you couldn't see it? (at this point No. 1 places one finger of his left hand in his left ear as if to block out part of what No. 2 is saying)

No. 1: What were you saying?

No. 2: Yea. And if you can do things for the men on top, like let them know what's goin' on and who's doin' their work and who's makin' too many trips. You know the things they can't see.

(Everyone in the square becomes stiff again. No. 1 opens the gate. No. 4 turns to both No. 1 and No. 2. He speaks in a monotone after which he turns and walks slowly away)

No. 4: These guys never give me a chance to show myself. They always hold me back with rules and never really let my true ability come through. You can't do anything as far as they are concerned except quit. I did that even before I started.

(No. 1 closes gate)

- No. 2: Man, ya got to watch for those kinds of people. Then there are some people who do anything to stay above you, like steal, and act big to bluff you down.
- No. 1: What do you do once you see them?
- No. 2: You out **lie**, out **steal**, an' out **act** them!! What else?
- No. 1: Well . . .
- (Everyone in the elevator becomes stiff. No. 1 opens the gate. No. 5 steps forward and faces both)
- No. 5: You need something more, you need to . . . to . . . (pause) Well you can't do it with out **it!** You know! (exit)
- (No. 1 closes door)
- No. 2: You have to take him for what he is worth, a senile old man!
- No. 1: (looks at No. 2 with a very caustic expression on his face. He then places a finger of his right hand in his ear.) Oh, really?
- No. 2: Just how do you think I got where I am? Just how? By doing the things I told you to do! Man, that's the way to go. Everybody does it! Everybody! Just everybody!
- No. 1: (Appears senseless to the words of No. 2. He removes the hands from his ears) Do you want the light on?
- No. 2: No, I don't need it! I got all it takes to go.
- No. 1: (Reach up and turns off the light as he and No. 2 become stiff) Good bye! (No. 1 opens the door, steps out and closes it behind him. He then walks away)
- No. 2: See you later! (Reaches out as if to hit the buttons but misses and hurts his fingers. He then proceeds to grope around the inside of the enclosure as if searching for the buttons. He does this three times but is unable to find them. He shrugs his shoulders and just stands there)

Curtain



DOORS

by Shirley A. Miller

A door has remarkable versatility and defining it is ambiguous. It may close in your face or open to opportunity; it may serve as an entrance or an exit. An occupant of a room may close the entrance to his room and, provided with an escape from the world, there, in his solitude, develop a world all his own. He has the ability to control the entry of others into his world. Upon opening the door he has available to him admittance to the outside.

A kind of gateway greeting, the open door of a home welcomes those who wish to visit within. The slammed door may prompt indignation. A quietly closed door expresses thoughtfulness. Retreat is signified by a locked door, and carelessness may be indicated by a squeaky, sagging door. A church door may open to receive a bride or may close behind a casket.

A child must stand on his tip-toes and stretch his fingers around the knob to open that door which separates him from the playroom within, and with time and a piece of string carefully attached, the door may slam shut with a triumphant noise to provide a tooth for the good fairy who lives under the pillow.

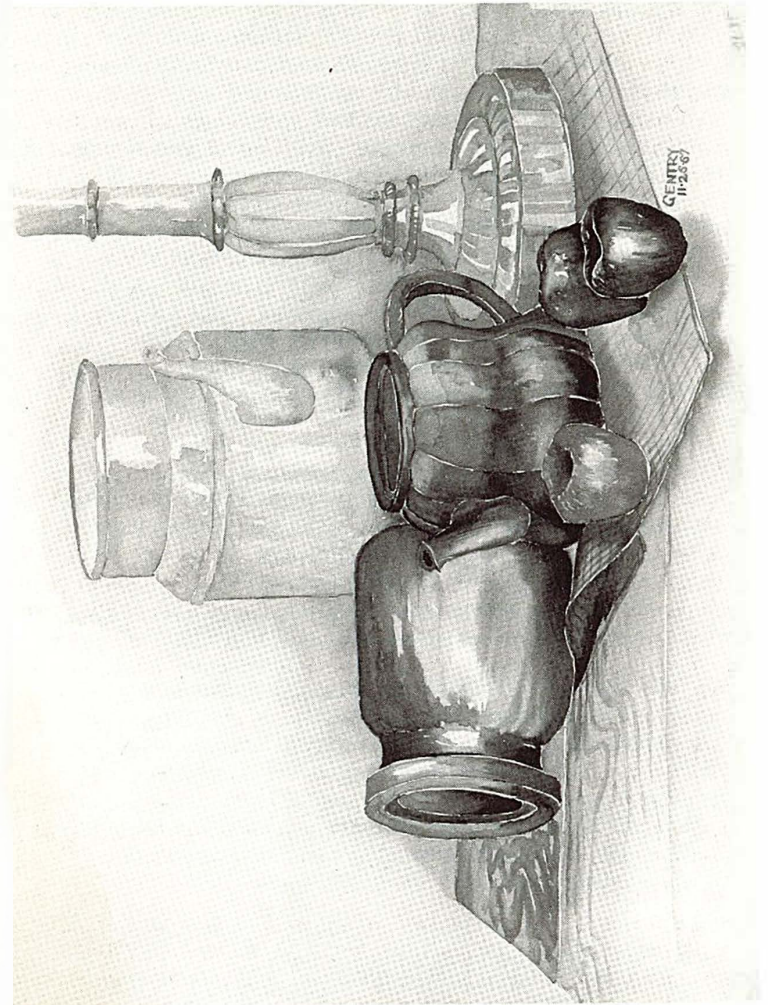
Just as Beoumont said, "Death hath so many doors to let out life," and even so life may have many doors to admit fate.

Schizophrenia is a disease of doors, especially the Dutch door, which is constructed in two sections. The upper half may be open, permitting a glimpse inside and the lower half closed forbidding entrance. The schizophrenic door is an entrance, an exit, a barrier or an escape. Each of us has had the experience of its versatility.

There are certainly probing thoughts which accompany an echoing journey through a dim hallway toward a closed door. An almost hesitant knock is appropriate to begin the endless wait which reveals that no one is home. And in the profession of door-to-door selling, it is necessary to have only one asset: the ad, "Help wanted, no experience necessary, must wear size 12 shoes." But a swinging door offers no threat unless you are the waitress with the tray of dishes who has bubble gum on the sole of her left shoe.

A door is often a subject for poets. Emily Dickinson suggests, "The soul selects her own society, then shuts the door." And Robert Frost was of the opinion that doors ought to be shut. But who is it unlocks these doors? Since a log was first pushed in front of a cave opening, man has been searching for his key. The key may be lost, stolen, hidden or imagined, but it's certainly not impossible to find. You just have to know where to look.

The strange thing is it's really very simple, "Knock and it shall be opened." But take care you don't hurt your hand.



THE GYMKHANA

by George Blatt

When you enter your car in a **Gymkhana** at the starting line, you are very much alone. Nothing exists except the forest of pylon before you. No one exists except you, and for a brief second a man beside your car holding the starting flag. As you sit in your car you are welded both by the seat belt clenching your waist, and by the same power which a hunter feels with a rifle cradled in his arm, or an artist must feel with brush in hand. Sitting there, not just in, but within your machine, you wait; your heart races, your motor races, your grip tightens, your steering wheel reassures you.

A **Gymkhana** is an automobile racing event which lasts for approximately four minutes and the experience of which lasts all through the week. The **Gymkhana**, deriving from the Hindu word for sporting contest, has been accepted by the American racing enthusiast as an amateur auto-skill contest pitting almost any kind of car and driver against a set course, and against the stop watch. A **Gymkhana** is usually held on a Sunday afternoon in the parking lot of some shopping center thanks to the kindness of local merchants. There is a wide variety of automobiles taking part in the event, usually foreign sports cars, but with the ever increasing presence of larger American cars. The **Gymkhana** course is set up as a series of small radius turns and alternating twists, each contortion set up to test the driver's reflexes and his judgment under pressure. The course is usually between one quarter and one half mile in length, and each driver covers it twice for time, staying between the flags or pylons.

When the flag drops—you leap. A surge sends you flying into the jungle, fighting for your path as you leave civilization behind. As you round each corner your tires screech, drowning out the whine of your tortured engine. You wrestle your transmission for every ounce of power needed to draw you out of a skid, perhaps never getting any higher than second gear. You race with time, your entire consciousness focused on each turn as it approaches you.

As you race, the crowd watches. Everyone starts as a watcher. The **Gymkhana** course is roped off and behind the ropes are clustered the children, wives, and girl friends of the drivers. There is also in the crowd another group, male and female, who study each move on the course, wondering if they could have made a corner better, or whether their old M.G. can still beat a Triumph. These observers stand and fight their nerves. If they can overcome their tensions for a few minutes, they approach the timing booth and register. After registration, a simple test of brakes and safety equipment is made, sweating

hands place masking tape numbers on their cars, and suddenly these people become racers.

The straining metal stretches forward, and the sliding tires claw the pavement; the mind reaches for the checkered flag before the eyes. Each foot and each tenth of a second is fought for till you lunge for the line, and you are across. Then the awareness of the world floods back to you. You are among people, and suddenly your automobile has alienated itself from you. You feel the confines of civilization, and realize that there is no turning back. Today's race is over, or is it?

Can it be possible that as you drive home you find yourself speeding up for turns that on Saturday afternoon you would have slowed down for? Has your car suddenly become more powerful, or have you just developed more respect for it? Could it be that your Monday morning isn't quite as blue as usual? Is it because you have acquired a sense of challenge, something that gives you a little more self-respect? If the feeling of being wild, the utter dependence upon your own reflexes and judgment has lasted with you and entered your blood, then you are still racing. Throughout the entire week you keep the thrill and challenge and when the next Sunday rolls around, you are ready to once again leave civilization, and enter a **Gymkhana**.

DUST OF DESTRUCTION

by Michael Dillon

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

ALMONER A. AMALGAM—
a typical middle-class citizen of Chicago. SETTING—Psychiatric office.
DR. T. A. ZUNIGIERBONITO—
a grey-haired psychiatrist. TIME—Spring afternoon.

(When the curtain rises, Amalgam is stretched on a couch at the right of a psychiatrist's consultation room, and the doctor enters from the left, crossing to his side.)

DR. T. A. ZUNIGIERBONITO:
Hello, Mister Amalgam. How are you?

ALMONER A. AMALGAM:
Hi Doc! Not any too great!

DR. T. A. ZUNIGIERBONITO:
Why? What seems to be the problem? I am here to be of service to you. I want to make you healthy again. Do you want to tell me about yourself?

ALMONER A. AMALGAM:

Well . . . (pauses for awhile) I don't know, Doc. You see I don't think I'm insane or anything because . . . (pauses again) What I'm going to tell you, I saw. I saw it with my own eyes! (with a hysterical voice) I know it's got to be true! Doc, please believe me. Please help me!

DR. T. A. ZUNIGIERBONITO: (in a cool, calm, collected voice)
Now, now, calm yourself! Lie down on the couch and tell me about it.

ALMONER A. AMALGAM: (calmly)

Well Doc, it's like this. Last Saturday I decided to take a walk along the lake. It was such a beautiful day, with the birds singing. The sun glistened on the leaves of the trees and the fish slid through the waters over and around the rocks on the lake shore.

It was such a beautiful day that I really couldn't believe anything could go wrong.—(Pauses, hysterical voice) It happened! Out of the sky there came a burning disc which landed, or I should rather say plowed into the shore. Out of this disc there came these funny looking people. They had red bodies, blue-green toes and fingernails, silver with green tinted hair, and one large black eye right in the center of their foreheads. They, both men and women, were naked, and all except the leader were armless. He had two sets of arms.

DR. T. A. ZUNIGIERBONITO:

Now, (in a calm voice) don't get excited. Try to calm down!

ALMONER A. AMALGAM:

But Doc, (excitedly) how can I be calm? Don't you understand? No one can understand!

DR. T. A. ZUNIGIERBONITO: (in a pleading, soothing voice)
Please continue. I'll try my best to understand.

ALMONER A. AMALGAM:

Well—(long pause) as I was saying, he, the leader of these strange people had four arms.

Usually I'd have run, for I'm a coward at heart, but, I couldn't run for there seemed to be a magnetic pull holding me. The leader walked up to me and, after looking me over, said that I would do well for the job his people wished of me.

I couldn't speak because I was so filled with terror. I just stood there and watched and listened to him. He said: "We are from the planet Tombria

which is located, or rather was located nine hundred million light years away from here. We've decided to make this planet earth our home, and have decided that **you!** shall be the one to destroy all the people who live on it. You! You will be our instrument of destruction. Every human being you come into contact with for more than fifteen minutes shall be destroyed. He will disintegrate into dust. You will be condemned to seek constantly companionship and thereby will cause the whole of mankind to be destroyed. And until they are destroyed you will be indestructible. Now I have this power placed into you.

He called one of the women and gave her one of his sets of arms. Then he told her to make love to me. (voice rising and becoming very passionate). Her hands began to move over my body, inflaming me with such a lust that I was soon rolling all over her, and eventually fainted of pleasure. When I awoke, I had a craving to see more and more people. I wandered back toward the center of town and entered the first bar I came to. There I stayed for fifteen minutes and when I got up to leave I only saw little piles of dust where before there had been people.

I kept going from bar to bar the whole night until all were emptied and all were covered with dust.

Then I went home to my family, hoping to be able to spend a cozy evening watching TV, and talking with my wife about our next child which was to be born in two months. But I had one of the most horrible experiences in my life. Have you ever seen your loved ones crumble into dust? . . . Of course not . . . you've always lived a safe, sane life.

I'll always remember that night. There sat my wife, well rounded because of her pregnancy, dressed in a blue calico dress, seated in a blue rocking chair with her feet propped up on a stool knitting a pair of baby socks for the "expected." By the glowing fire, my oldest, Tom, was reading an essay for English. He had a pencil in his mouth which every now and then he bit into.

Then there was Mary, my only daughter, washing the dinner dishes in an effort to be on time for her date. She had planned to go with her class to the lakeside that night for a beach party.

And, of course, in his own little chair, my youngest, Billy, watching "Gunsmoke," all the

time yelling at Marshal Dillon to watch out for the bearded man in the black suit.

We were a typical family until—it happened. Right before my eyes Claudia, Tom, Mary, and Billy, slowly turned into little piles of gray dust. Death descended on the house. I was alone.

Ever since last Saturday when I met those aliens some perverseness has been driving me to see more and more people. I can't help myself! I just keep seeking more and more people and wanting to talk to them.

If you've been reading the newspapers or listening to the radio, you'd have heard of the claim of the sharp rise in missing persons. There were over two hundred reported to the police, Tuesday alone. Oh! Doc, am I the cause of all of these missing people? Am I? Oh God! Please help me. (as he was saying this, he turned toward the doctor) Help me! Help me, please! (But there was no answer. Where the doctor sat before, there was now only a pile of dust.)

Curtain.

FOOTBALL HAZARDS IN THE STANDS

by Nancy Ash

Maybe most football games are battles on the grid but the contest can be as fierce in the grandstand, as I found out at a recent game between Missouri Valley and William Jewell. It was the last game of the season and the two schools are notorious rivals. I had looked forward to it for a long time.

When I arrived, football fans were streaming in from every possible entrance. I felt excitement in the air as soon as I passed the gate. But I got lost in the crowd and finally by pushing and elbowing, I found the place which I had reserved a month before. Being much relieved, I failed to notice the giant support pole directly in front of me. With considerable effort I could see the goal posts on each end of the 100 yard field; the mid-section of the field was completely obscured from view. Naturally, I was a little disturbed, but I was sure it was nothing more than a slight nervous breakdown. I moved to a vacant seat across the aisle.

The kick-off was seconds away, the crowd was on their feet, and BOOM! the game was on. Being carried away by the first play, I failed to notice a sophisticated blonde come prancing up the bleachers and perch right in front of me. I must admit she

was quite an eye-catcher, in her red wool suit and that hat with the twenty-two inch pheasant feather. She was young, unattached (I checked it out quickly) and obviously man hunting. I tried to ignore her but I began getting dizzy from her over indulgence of Chanel No. 5, and from watching that flitting bird feather. There she was, the picture of sophistication; there I was the typical fan. I had a box of popcorn and a program in one hand, and my purple and orange shaker and a glass of coke in the other. To my dismay, our team scored the first touchdown. I jumped up, completely forgetting the burdens in my hands and sang "The Fight Song." Not until I had finished and sat down again did I realize that my soda was not in the cup but on Miss Sophisticate in front of me. Her hat had a few splotches on it but the feather on the hat was demolished. It didn't stand up straight and tall; it looked more like the moulting feather of a pheasant. Of course, I apologized but she was as mad as a banty hen. For some reason the thought of the hen and the pheasant struck me and I almost laughed in her face. Catching myself in time, I slipped away into the crowd.

Spotting an empty seat, I walked over and sat. After my previous experiences I was ready to settle down to some serious game watching. Our team was really moving the ball down the field. The crowd roared, "First in ten, let's do it again." All of a sudden I heard, "Harry, what's a first in ten?" I turned to see a couple that I assumed were newlyweds, but I could see wedding bells weren't ringing for good old Harry at that specific moment.

"Harry, I said, What's a first in ten?" whined his wife in rather an irritating manner.

"Quiet, Mildred," her loving spouse replied.

"Well, excuse me for living."

This went on for another quarter and finally there was the supreme blow-up. Mildred and Harry were yelling their heads off at each other. She ran off crying something about going home to mother, and he left running after her. I strongly suspected he was cursing under his breath.

At last, peace and quiet for the fourth quarter. The score was tied; our team hero recovered the fumble; I was elated. I was about to jump up and yell for the team when I got a swift rap between the shoulder blades. Before I could recover from my shock, this rambunctious fan began pounding on my back. I turned and smiled wanly. Of course he was too absorbed to notice me, so I meekly left my place again.

I was too exhausted to find somewhere else to sit so I found my way home. I didn't realize until I got there, I never knew who won the game.



JEEPS FOR PEACE

by Kip AtLee

One of the favorite predictions of science fiction writers is that man will one day create a pleasure machine capable of negating worries and supplanting them with happiness. The strange thing is that this was accomplished a good many years ago by Henry J. Kaiser and his company when they introduced a short, squat, rather ugly machine on four over-sized, independently powered wheels.

The Jeep, as it was called—supposedly in honor of a cartoon character, Eugene the Jeep, who possessed extraordinary powers—was designed to last until eternity, go through anything to get there and give a friendly tug or two along the way. Its original purpose was purely practical: to work hard and perform dependably. The very qualities which enabled it to do so elevated it to an even higher plane and earned a unique respect and curious affection.

If ever a vehicle possessed charismatic qualities it is the Jeep. There is something about its untamed ruggedness that draws people like a lodestone. It makes them want to find out how far they can go and what obstacles they can overcome. For the space of time that they sit in the undernourished driver's seat, they're infused with a spirit of adventure that never touches them in another place. All other concerns dissipate and the "Muse of Jeep" sits on their shoulders questioning: How much? How far? How?

The Jeep sets its own standards and challenges men to meet them. No one can be taught how to drive it; they must serve an apprenticeship in the rugged school until their hands and feet respond to peddles, levers and wheel, as naturally as a logical extension of steel. When this is achieved the reward is an almost savage exultation as mind matches an implement's potential and wins a skirmish with nature. The learning process follows the honored tradition of education by mistake. A person's pride frequently suffers in order to acquire a lesson. An acquaintance of mine and owner of a new Jeep took some friends for a ride to demonstrate that it could go anywhere. It took sixteen men and blocks and tacks to pull that machine out of a mud bed where he mired it. My younger brother drove my Jeep through a stream and stalled it in the middle. It took him an entire day to clean and dry the brake drums after we got it out. I was driving the same vehicle and hung it up on a good-sized rock. It took me two hours of rocking and blaspheming to finally get it clear.

Each of us profited from our mistakes. My friend knows now that when the wheels of a Jeep are tractionless, powerful though it is, it's helpless. My brother learned to shift into a lower gear and use more gas when fording a stream. I learned never to take a rock that high straight on but to climb over it with the wheels. All three of us are better drivers now and, as a result, get an ever greater thrill.

The magnetism of the Jeep has been sufficient to create what amounts to a cult. All over the country there are "Jeep courses" that consist of some of the roughest ground in the countryside. At one course on Long Island, especially after a rain, Jeeps and drivers wait in line to take the run. You climb hills that threaten to tumble you over; you thread your way through trees so close together that an extra coat of paint would get you stuck; rocks, water, sand and mud pass under the wheels—each requiring a specific gear position and speed. Occasionally you make an error and get stuck but you can count on the driver behind you to stop and help you out of your difficulty. Later you have the chance to return the favor for still another driver.

This quality of friendliness is characteristic of the breed. It seems to be cultivated by the Jeeps themselves and, perhaps, is part of the timeless custom of the strong and capable helping the weak. Whatever the cause, if you want to see a friendly world all you need to do is drive a beat-up Jeep. That hood held down with hooks, as all proper hoods should be, seems to generate a warmth greater than any degree of engine heat. People smile, a great many whom you've never met wave cheerfully, and little children's eyes light up with a special glow you usually see but once a year at Christmas time.

Perhaps the United States would do well to trade in large quantities of gleaming limousines for grimy Jeeps and send its ambassadors about on productive friendship missions. The United Nations could set up a commission for the distribution of "Jeeps for Peace." Regardless of any official action, it seems sufficiently obvious that what the world needs is jumbles of Jeeps. It may not make it a safer place to live but everyone would die happy.

DREAM MAN

by Barbara Dugan

On nights like this, when the wind howls loudly through the dark pine trees, blowing snow across the flat places, and piling drifts by the side of the road, it is almost impossible for me to communicate my feelings to the human race. The sound of the wind fills my conscious thoughts, and somewhere inside my own soul I find a similar wail. If I am awake, I must travel on to another town, as I am doing now, and if I sleep during a storm, I will dream dreams which will waken me. However, tonight I feel somewhat nearer my destination, and so, I will try to relate to you, my fellow traveler, the story of the things which drove me to roam, though no doubt, they will seem unbelievable.

There is an ancient legend of the Swedish people that if a child is born at a time around Christmas Day, goblins will come and try to exchange one of their babies for the human baby. Goblin babies seem deformed by human standards, or at least this was the myth by which Sweden in those days accounted for their deformed offspring.

Perhaps this is as good an explanation of what happened to me as can be arrived at, for at any rate, I was born with almost the same physical appearance as that which I have at the present time. I was born in December, during a howling blizzard. Safe and warm within the walls of a run-down hospital, I must have listened to the sound of the wind howling at the corners of the building even then. Christmas trees glowed, church bells pealed out that the season of love and peace had arrived, and I was born—a strange new person with large green eyes, a pointed nose, and attached ears which curled into points flattened against my head. I was ugly to my parents and to the people who viewed me from the other side of the glass nursery wall, but still, at this particular season, they did not dare show their disappointment.

My early childhood was as happy as could be expected. I was so ugly that people felt sorry for me, and brought me presents of every description. I received a great many books. By the time I was a year old, I had taught myself to read. Whenever anyone read me a story, I simply memorized it word for word, and matched the spoken word to the printed word. Of course, no one suspected my precocity. Indeed, my parents were relieved to find that tests proved I was not retarded, as they had expected; however, they did protest, when I was required to begin public school at the age of four, that I could not possibly compete successfully with students so much older than myself.

Naturally, after I was admitted to the first grade, I excelled at reading, although I became rather bored with the slow pace at which the rest of the class progressed.

Perhaps it was my boredom with the elementary school and with my home that first stimulated me to read so much fiction, and perhaps the fiction started my dreams. Whatever happened, it appears that by the time I was nine years old, I had chanced to read the word "unicorn" in some fairy story or myth, and my imagination began to develop an attachment for that word. At that time I also began to do a number of other strange things.

First, I stopped growing. At the time that this happened, I weighed fifty pounds. My family doctor said that I just had small bones. Since then, I have decided to grow again, but for a long time, I was only about four feet tall.

During that same year, my blond hair began to turn black. I had read a story in which the heroine was a brunette, and decided that I would have black hair. It turned black, and grew very fast until it was long, and thick enough to cover the points of my ears entirely.

I also began to dream a strange dream. The dream never changed very much, and when I dreamed it was most often this dream which my subconscious mind seemed to select. Sometimes there was a white unicorn, and sometimes I was alone. The dream was that I could fly. The unicorn taught me how. I could spread my arms and speed away over all the white fences in front of me, and as I flew the wind whistled around my body, pushing me higher and higher.

After several years had passed, and I had dreamed this same dream over and over, I was ready to try flying in reality. So, one day, during a violent thunderstorm, I left the house and went outside, much against the wishes of my mother, who was always afraid that I would be struck by lightning. She didn't see me go, however, and I soon found a secluded hill. I stood at the crest, with my back to the wind, spreading my arms and stiffening my legs until they gave almost no support to my body. I moved approximately three feet across the ground, before I became frightened and relaxed. I tried to fly time and time again after that, with the same result.

Then that winter, something happened which took my mind off flying, and stopped my dreaming for awhile. I met Satan. Satan was a large black cat, who simply appeared one night, perched on the outside sill of a window I was sitting by. As he

paced the ledge and howled in at me, I quickly named him. It was cold outside, and snow had frozen in his fur, so I went to the door and opened it. Satan came in and decided to stay.

During the years that followed, I remained contented with no other close friend than Satan, until my last year of high school, when I began to notice that other people found me strange in more than just my appearance. My thoughts were different. I had an uncanny ability to penetrate the pretence of others and see through to the bottoms of their minds, as if they were pools of clear water. Most of the time I knew what someone else was going to say before he said it. Feeling that I was so different, I began to date, and eventually became engaged to, a blond young man of a well-esteemed family, an alliance which provided me, among other things, with protection against criticism.

One of the other things which aided the cause of my romance with this young man, whose name was Bob, was his new white sports car, in which I loved to ride. I had discovered a passion for speed. His car was very fast, and in it, I almost felt as if it could leave the ground.

Satan always went wherever I went, when I was not in school, and he soon took his position in the sports car upon the console between Bob and myself. Bob was fond of animals, so did not mind having the cat along. He was especially nice to Satan, because he declared that when we both looked at him, the color of our eyes and the expression in them was the same.

Satan, however, despised my fiance. If Bob made the slightest movement in his direction, Satan began to hiss and bare his claws. So my engagement, as could have been foreseen, did not end in marriage. We began to argue, and Bob began to date another girl, a blonde, in an adjacent town. I fumed and vowed revenge, but I never expected what happened.

One cold snowy night, as Bob was driving home after a date with my rival, he hit a patch of icy highway, and his car slid over an embankment, where it overturned. The car was completely demolished, but he escaped without serious injury, receiving only some burns on his face and hands, and a deep scratch on his right shoulder. His accident took place on my birthday.

Meanwhile, as the time for graduation from high school had arrived, I produced test results for my parents which proved my intelligence to be far superior to their own, and they agreed that I should be allowed to enroll at a college or university.

They approved, but Satan didn't. I could not take him with

me. He became very restless, and one night before I left, he dashed out the back door, and disappeared into the forest behind our house. The next time I saw him, he was dead, his black body lying stiffly upon one side in the snow. There was no sign of a wound on his body, so he must have either starved or frozen to death.

I buried him in the yard. His grave was exceedingly flat, as if there were nothing in it, and I would not have known where it was if I had not marked it with a wooden cross. Everytime I came home after that, the wind had blown the cross down, and I had to raise it again.

That summer passed by uneventfully, except that my parents, who were pleased with my grades, bought me a new cat. She was a Siamese, and I despised her. She was very placid and spiritless, after Satan. My old flying dream began to recur.

When I returned to college that fall, I was still dreaming about flying unicorns. But then just before Christmas, something changed my life and my dreams. I met my future husband for the first time.

I was in a small place I liked to go to on Sunday nights, because not many people were there then. I disliked crowds, and as I sat slumped in a booth, brooding into my cup of coffee, he came into the room. I only glanced up from curiosity.

He had just came in from outside, and the snow had blown into his black hair. His hands must have been cold, for he took off his gloves, and stood by the door, rubbing them together, and blowing upon them, while he stamped his feet. His eyes skimmed over the other end of the room. I did not think him handsome, as he stood there, because I had noticed about a week's growth of black beard on his chin. Also, he was of about average height, and slender in a wiry sort of way. I usually preferred taller men.

He must have noticed me watching him, for he turned and I looked straight into his eyes. I felt a shock travel the length of my back. He had beautiful eyes, large, green and somewhat slanted. Hurriedly I looked away in embarrassment. He walked slowly toward me.

We were married that spring, although we had known each other for so short a period of time. If either of us had had any friends, there would no doubt have been some doubts expressed concerning the success of our marriage, but as there was no one else concerned, no one but my parents considered the mar-

riage precipitous. We lived in a small house near the campus until the end of the winter semester, when we planned to move east.

At the last moment, I found I was pregnant. My husband seemed somewhat alarmed when I told him. I presumed it was because we had little money as it was, and could not easily afford another mouth to feed. I was surprised myself, and not altogether pleased.

Deciding to hitch-hike east, in order to leave our car with me, my husband left on foot. To the best of my knowledge, he did not return. At the end of that month, he sent money for the rent, but not even a note with it. The envelope was post-marked with the name of some small town in New Jersey. At the time I received the money, he had been gone so long that I was becoming more lonely every day, and I decided to go home to my parents.

It was dark by the time I had reached the lonely country road which leads through the heavily-wooded hills in which my parents' home is located. A full golden moon was shining brightly through the branches of the pines, and the falling snowflakes stood out sharply against the shining white already covering the ground.

My mind twisted and turned with painful memories. Things my husband had said to me during the months of our marriage rang in my ears. My eyes filled with tears.

Suddenly, through my tears, I saw the distorted blur of white headlights approaching my car from behind. When I had completed the next turn, the other automobile was directly behind me and coming closer. It was going very fast. Instinctively, I speeded up. The other car continued to follow close behind me, blinking its lights. I knew that this might be a signal to stop, but somehow I was afraid to.

The other car was still following me too closely when I entered the curve. I knew that I was going too fast, and tried to slow the car, but it had already started to slide. Frozen stiffly at the wheel, I watched the headlights of my car swing out over the snow covered fields in the distance, and felt the rear wheels slide out into empty space. The jolt knocked me unconscious.

I am not sure what happened next. There was a smell of something burning. I was not cold, although I realized that I must have been thrown from the car and was lying in deep snow. There was someone standing above me, but I could not tell who

it was. All I know is that he bent down, and I, fighting to keep back the blackness which was pounding from my temples, thought that I saw the green eyes of my husband. When I awoke and knew that I was still alive, I was being carried on a stretcher. My head throbbed, and I felt nauseous.

But then, I heard a sound that startled me into forgetting my pain. It was a whimper, more like the mew of a newly-born kitten, than the cry of anything human. I realized that there was a warm, soft bundle cradled with inexorable firmness in my folded arms.

They put me and my bundle into the ambulance. The light of the flashlights and the flares on the road cast shadows around me, but gave enough light for me to view the creature which I held. He was wrapped in black velvet. His eyes were large, green and somewhat slanted, and profuse silk-like strands of black hair already adorned his head. About his blanket hung the odor of smoke.

Now, I know that it is impossible to have a fully developed baby in only one or two months. So, I'm not sure myself what happened. I have left the child, or whatever it might be called, with my mother, and now I travel all over the country looking for my husband, or for an answer to my questions or at best, because I must do something since I cannot sleep without dreaming.

The dreams have changed. Now it is the child and I who are flying, flying in the darkness, with the sound of the wind turned into a devilish scream from which we must escape. So, you see, I must find my husband, if he can be found. I still receive money every month, but each time it is sent to me there is a different postmark.

I thought I had found him last week. I was just getting on a bus for New Jersey when I noticed someone who looked like him boarding the express for San Francisco, which was parked parallel to the bus in which I was a passenger. People must have thought I was crazy, as I ran across the aisle and stared out into the windy blackness.

I saw nothing but strangers in the heavy snow that was falling. I was clutched so close in its whiteness and cold that now I don't know whether I'm searching for a man or a unicorn.

GLORIA'S REUNION

by Ray Kalthoff

By stretching her neck, Gloria Fitch could see over the wing of the T.W.A. jet. She wanted to glimpse Long Beach from the air so that she might tell her husband what it was like when she met him at the airport. She found that by pulling her right shoulder to the left and stretching her neck she was able to see over the gigantic wing to her left. Since there was a haze enveloping the city, she settled her five-foot-five frame back into the seat, patting her short brown hair into place and laying her head on the headrest.

Gloria didn't like flying. Her safety belt was still fastened, as it had been since she boarded in Portland. The pressure of the tight belt around her hips and over her stomach helped, she thought.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the stewardess announced, "we'll be landing in Long Beach, California, in five minutes. The noise you hear now is the engines being reversed to slow the jet to landing speed. As we near you'll hear another rumble from below the plane. This is the landing gear being put in place. Do not be alarmed. We hope you've had a pleasant trip and will fly with us again. Thank you."

Gloria had flown before, but these words of comfort and thanks never seemed to help. She prepared herself for the landing gear to be put in place, but it always made her stomach drop with it.

"What if Bill's not at the airport to meet me?" she thought. "What will I do then?" She shook her head trying not to think about it. She felt a slight chill run down her spine. She could feel the plane descending and soon the wheels touched the ground.

"Whew, I'm glad that's over!" she whispered. A slight sweat broke out on her forehead. Not until the plane had taxied to the terminal and the door opened did she attempt to unfasten her safety belt.

"I can't get it unbuckled," she whispered after attempting again and again. Realizing the futility, she thought, "I'll just wait until the passengers have all gone out and then get a stewardess to help me." She settled back and took a guide book about Long Beach out of her purse on the floor under her legs.

"I won't have to look at the people staring at me if I keep my mind on this book," she thought. She tried, but she did turn her eyes to the right every once in a while to watch passengers. "Can't they hurry? What's taking them so long?" she moaned. "Welcome to Long Beach, California," she read for the fifth

time from the first page of the book. She closed it and put it back into her purse. "No use trying to find out about Long Beach, I'm never going to get off this plane." She glanced back over her seat after a few seconds passed and saw that the passengers were about gone. Then she settled back and waited.

"Is there something wrong?" asked the stewardess.

"Yes, I can't seem to get this belt unfastened."

"Well, let me try," said the stewardess, kneeling on the seat beside Gloria. After some effort she shook her head. "I suppose we'll have to cut it, but I'll have to speak to the Captain."

"Well, please hurry! My husband is waiting for me and he might leave if he finds I don't come off the plane with the other passengers."

"If you give me your husband's name, I'll tell the Captain to have him paged."

"His name is Bill Fitch."

"Now, don't worry! We'll have you out of there in no time at all," the stewardess consoled.

Gloria looked out of the window again. She could not see the entrance of the terminal for the wing spread out before her. "I hope they catch him in time." She placed her hands on the arm rest on either side of her and tried to wiggle her hips to free herself, but to no avail. Looking up, she saw the stewardess and a man in uniform approaching. She assumed he was the Captain.

"Young lady, I hear you have a little problem. Let me see what I can do with that belt." He tried but couldn't relinquish the belt's hold. "I haven't anything on board that will cut the belt. I'll have to get one of the maintenance men. Excuse me a moment."

"Please hurry! I'm sure my husband won't wait for me."

"Just relax," said the Captain. "We're having him paged right now." He turned and walked toward the rear exit of the plane.

"Pardon me for seeing the humorous side of this," said the stewardess, "but this is the first time this has happened on one of my flight. Lots of interesting things happen, but it's my first unfastenable safety belt."

"I know it looks ridiculous," Gloria remarked. "Crazy things like this are always happening to me." She looked sadly out the window, as the stewardess walked away with the smile still on her face.

A man in blue coveralls was approaching with a metal tool box. As he came to Gloria's set of seats he tugged at the belt and then remarked, "I'll just loosen the bolts under the seat and release the belt. Maybe I'll get a letter of commendation for saving the company twenty bucks." He set his tool box in the aisle and opened it. He unscrewed the paneling on the front underside of the seat and removed it.

"Please hurry," Gloria pleaded. The man's sleeve brushing against her right leg made her uncomfortable, so she moved her legs to the left toward the bulkhead of the plane.

"Just a second, ma'am," the man answered. He took out a wrench and with a few deft movements the belt was loose. He took hold of the belt on Gloria's right hip and pulled it out from between the arm rest and the cushion of the seat. "There, ma'am, you're free."

Gloria breathed a sigh of relief. "Now I must hurry." She bent over, grabbed her purse, and hurried to the rear of the plane.

"Sorry about the belt," said the stewardess at the door.

"I just hope my husband's waiting," Gloria retorted, as she ran down the steps, but she found the terminal deserted, except for a few people who rushed by.

"What now?" she wondered, standing by the door and trying to collect her thoughts. "I must go to the information desk to see if Bill is there." She saw an arrow with the word "Lobby" printed on it and pointing to her left. "I'm going to remain calm," she said aloud. "Oh please, please be there, Bill," she whispered over and over to herself, as she groped her way through the milling people in the long corridor.

The lobby was as crowded as the corridor. "The place is packed," she thought. "Now where's the T.W.A. Information Desk?" Her head moved across the names of the airlines on the signs above the continuous counter to her left. Finally she sighted T.W.A.

"May I help you, Miss?" asked the young man behind the counter.

"Yes, I'm looking for my husband, Bill Fitch . . ."

"Then you must be the Mrs. Fitch who became attached to one of our seats," the young man said smiling. "We've been paging him, but he hasn't answered yet."

"I knew it," Gloria gasped, "I knew he wouldn't wait for me. He couldn't have gotten back to his ship by now. Chances are he won't even go back."

"There's always the chance," replied the man. "In any case we'll call his ship and leave a message for him. What is its name?"

"The U.S.S. Princeton; I don't know the number," she answered.

"No problem!" the man smiled. "Please have a seat over there," he said, indicating some vinyl seats on his right.

"Thank you. My legs are about to give out," she replied moving away toward the chairs. She hadn't realized how tired she was. Leaning her head back, she closed her eyes . . .

". . . Mrs. Fitch," came a voice from a fog.

Gloria opened her eyes. Had she heard her name called?

"Mrs. Fitch," the voice came from the left. The young man was calling from the desk. She walked toward him.

"We left a message with your husband's ship and asked to have him come get you when he arrives," said the young man. "Sorry about this mix up."

"Thank you. I'll just wait over here until he calls or comes for me," she replied walking back to the chair where she had been sitting. As she sat down she grabbed the purse which she had left lying there when she had gone to the desk. She placed the purse in her lap and gazed about the large lobby of the terminal. Her eyes came to rest on a sign blinking "Cocktails" in blue neon. "That's what I'll do to kill some time while I'm waiting for Bill." Rising, she went once again to the man at the T.W.A. information desk. "If my husband should inquire about me, I'll be in the cocktail lounge over there," she said pointing to the sign on the far wall.

"O.K., ma'am, I'll tell him."

Gloria turned and walked toward the lounge. It was very dark and smokey, but cool. Music played in the background. The tables about the room were all full, but there was one seat at the bar. She walked over and placed herself between an older gentleman to her left and a young man to her right. The bartender approached her. "I'd like a gimlet, please," she ordered before he had time to inquire. Opening her purse she reached in to get her billfold. "Now where is that thing?" she asked herself as she searched around in the contents of her well stuffed purse. "It's not here!"

"Did you say something, ma'am?" asked the young man on her right leaning on his right elbow and staring at her.

"I can't seem to find my wallet," Gloria repeated, continuing her search into the purse's contents. "I know it was in there

when I left Portland two hours ago, because I bought this guide book about Long Beach at the terminal." She was still staring at her purse when the bartender returned with her gimlet.

"That'll be fifty-five cents, please."

The young man on her right got his wallet out and placed a bill on the bar. "I'll get that," he said.

"Oh no, you really shouldn't."

"There now, take it easy," said the young man. "Don't try to drink it all at once. Those things are powerful. A couple of those and you'll find yourself on the floor."

"I know it, but I'm rather shaken," she replied. "Nothing seems to be going right for me today. I think I'd just as soon be out of it on the floor." She took another swallow finishing the glass.

"It's been one of those days, huh?" he inquired, indicating with his right arm that the bartender should fill her glass with a second gimlet.

"I shouldn't impose upon you, really," she said as she reached for the glass. "Thank you very much," she added, before taking the drink.

"You're quite welcome," he replied. "Are you waiting for another plane?"

"No, I'm waiting for my husband to come and pick me up. Does it seem to be getting warmer in here? My husband was supposed to pick me up, but I was late getting off. He didn't wait for me."

"Oh, I see."

"But the problem is I don't know where he is. The ship has the message that he should come pick me up, but I don't know that he'll go straight back to the ship. I may be stuck here for hours."

"He's on a ship is he?" asked the man. "I see you are in a predicament."

"You damn well better believe I am," she replied slapping her left hand over her mouth. "Oops, 'scuse me, didn't mean to say that."

"Maybe you'd better slow down a little. You've finished your second already and you may have some time to wait before your husband gets here," the young man suggested as he indicated a refill for her. By the time he'd paid for the drink, she had it in her hand.

"The first one burns, the second one is smooth and warm, but the third one, WOW! You're sure it's not getting warm in here? I'm starting to sweat." She brought the glass to her forehead and rubbed the side against it.

"No, ma'am, I think it's comfortable except for the smoke. What's your name, anyway?"

"Gloria Fitch," she replied in a slightly slurred voice.

"I'm Dick Harold," he said.

"I'm pa-leased to meetcha, Dick Harold," she replied gazing intently at him. "Do you have a last name?"

"Harold is my last name," he quipped.

"Oh, sorry," she apologized. "I thought that was your first and middle name."

"Richard Henry Harold is my full name."

"Well, let's settle for Dick. O. K.?" she inquired.

"Anything you like."

"Right now I'd like another drink." Placing her glass on the bar, she had to grab hold of Dick's arm to keep from falling off the seat.

"I feel like a cup of coffee," inserted Dick, helping her settle herself. Gloria began to laugh.

"You sure don't look like a cup of coffee," she scoffed.

"Let's go for a walk. I think maybe that would help cool you off and clear your head," Dick suggested.

"Wait about five minutes until I know you better. I want another drink right now. In five minutes I won't know whether you're a stranger or not."

Dick got the bartender's attention. The drink came and he paid. Gloria was somewhat unsteady as she reached for it, but controlled herself by holding on to the bar with her left hand. The dizziness was increasing and she could hardly hit her lips with the glass. She turned quickly in her seat and stared about the room looking for the ladies' room. "I'm afraid I'm going to be sick," she said turning toward Dick. "The ladies' room is over there," she said slinging her arm out and back to point toward the far wall, in the process knocking the drink from the hand of the elderly man next to her. She turned the chair around, stopped with her back to the bar and slid off the stool. Pushing herself away from the seat, she staggered toward the ladies' room, catching the door on the ball of her hand and shoving it open.

When she came to herself a few moments later she stood up, sweat pouring from her forehead.

"No more of that stuff for me," she thought. She was more steady now and walked to the water basin, surveying herself in the mirror. "You don't look quite as bad as you feel," she said to the reflection. She washed her face with cold water and dried it with the cloth towel. "I left my purse in the bar," she thought. "Might as well strip myself to the world and get it over with. I'm doing it slowly but surely, anyway." She patted her short hair down as best she could, checked to see that there was nothing spotting her dress and walked back into the bar. She approached her seat, but before she could speak, Dick spoke to her.

"Feeling better?"

"Yes, thank you," she replied. "I got a little carried away, didn't I?"

"You might say that," he said smiling. "Now how about that walk we were going to take?"

"Sorry," she said as she picked up her purse and walked toward the door. The air in the lobby seemed fresher than the bar room air.

As she headed toward the T.W.A. desk, she saw Bill coming toward the desk also. "Bill!" she yelled waving her free hand and picking up speed as she ran toward him. As they met they embraced and kissed. Bill asked her what had happened and she told him.

"At least you came," he said, kissing her slightly on the forehead. "Did you get the money from the bank at home?" he asked. "I have a room reserved for us at a motel near the base, but I'll need the money to pay for it. Pay day isn't 'til Friday and I'm broke."

"Oh no," she gasped. "I lost my billfold. I had three hundred dollars in traveler's checks and some bills in it when I left Portland, but I looked in my purse when I was in the cocktail lounge and it was gone. I don't know what could have happened to it."

"Do you have the numbers of the checks?"

"No. I left them at home in my dresser drawer. I've never lost the checks before, so I didn't bother to bring the list of numbers.

"I'd relied on your having that money, Gloria. I don't have enough gas to get back to the base, as a matter of fact. I spent my last two dollars on gas yesterday."

"What are we going to do, Bill?"

"Do you still have your return ticket?"

"I think so," she replied, shuffling through her purse.

"Good! I'm putting you on the next plane back to Portland."

"Surely, Bill, we can find some way of getting some money."

"How do you propose we do that?"
"Couldn't you hock something?"
"I've hocked everything worth hocking. It's hard for a sailor with a wife to make it here in California," he chortled.
"Now don't blame me for that. It was you who wanted to get married in such a hurry last year, instead of waiting until you were out of the service. What could cause a married man to have to hock anything, unless he was running around all the time. Is that what it is? Is there some other woman?"
"Since you brought it up, there is!" Bill spat out sarcastically.

"Oh. Bill," she cried, tears beginning to run down her face, "did you have to tell me? This trip has been a complete mess, but now it's ruined." She walked past him and went to the T.W.A. desk.

"I see by the reunion that you and your husband finally got together," said the young man behind the counter.

"What time does the next plane leave for Portland and can I get a seat on it?" Gloria inquired.

"The next plane leaves at ten twenty-five. I'll check to see if there's room," he said as he picked up his phone and dialed. "Your reunion doesn't appear to have been a happy one."

"Let's leave it at that," she said looking back at her husband who hadn't moved from the spot where they had stood together.

MIRROR . . . MIRROR . . . !

by Rickey Finks

An hour this day
I stood before
a mirror that I know,
unflattered by the special glow
of "homely" fused with
"plain."

Blue eyes, high cheek bones,
Ashen skin —
I find that I displace
somewhere within my heart
the features and
the charm.
I asked a blemish,
and a flaw,
a foolishness today.
If love is selfish,
I am vain,
and mystery is
law.

HAIKU

by Barbara Dugan

1

The morning glories
climb over my cottage door.
My eyes grow bluer.

2

Under grape arbors
I locate a plac. to lie
and think of the real.

HAIKU

by Anne Tyner

1

All alone, the branch
taps at the greying window
of the crowded room

2

by Nancy Ash
Fireworks display
red, white, and blue, on night skies:
America speaks.

HAIKU

by Shirley A. Miller

1

The dog stands quiet,
feet in fields of flowing grain
from which the quail rise.

2

She whistled and walked,
then halted for a moment
to catch the echoes.

3

Spring made her feel young.
She walked out into the air,
wrinkles bathed in sun.

TIME'S PARADOX

by Anita Wright

His faded jeans are patched with scraps of cloth
and for a shirt he wears a hand-me-down;
upon the grass still wet with morning dew,
his bare feet seek the lake within the woods.
A straw hat shades his freckles from the sun;
between his teeth he holds a piece of straw.
To those mature, he images their youth,
but to himself, he represents a man.

Time has a subtle way of playing tricks
on those who try the human game or race;
the little girl plays house with clothes and dolls;
the little boys play war with plastic guns.
But when these games become reality,
responsibility evokes dispute.
And so the vicious circle will remain
with no one brave enough to face the truth.

OF ENDINGS

by Russell E. Saltzman

The wise, the foolish,
sinner and saint,
will be consumed by its wrath,
what is living be dead,
what is green become black,
and mountains,
once lords over the earth,
crack into dust in the hell of heat.
Yet she, so charred and desolate,
will hold to her orbit
although destroyed!
. so goes the sun!

Other stars, too,
will ride this appalling road,
Rigel and Deneb
more quickly go,
and the brightest of lamps
one
by
one,
while we who have been of stars
"too fond,"
will not be
"fearful of night."

