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Special Feature

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INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Manuscripts are invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission. Manuscripts of essays, fiction, or poetry, on any topic, may be submitted at any time to GENESIS, Student Services, Cavanaugh Hall, 925 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46202. All manuscripts are considered by an editorial board elected by the English Club and the Philosophy Club. Authorship is not revealed to the board until a manuscript has been accepted. Any manuscript submitted too late for the current deadline will be considered for the next issue. Manuscripts of less than sixteen double-spaced typewritten pages will be given first consideration. All submissions should be accompanied by a separate sheet of paper containing the author's name, address, and telephone number. No manuscripts will be returned to authors. Authors whose material has been accepted will be notified prior to publication.

“Dear Isabella:” A Collection of Civil War Letters

Edited by
The Members of the Fall, 1974,
(H117) Introduction to History Class*

INTRODUCTION

Passed from generation to generation as part of a family stamp collection, the five letters reprinted here are an unusual instance of a light-hearted Civil War correspondence between a young girl and three Union soldiers. The letters were kept through the years for the value of the stamps with little regard given to the content of the letters themselves.

The recipient, Isabella Rothe, was approximately sixteen years old when she received these letters. From the content it would appear that she was still emotionally uncommitted to any particular man. The letters were written by John Duffy, a member of the regimental band of the 81st Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, and by brothers Aaron, later to become Isabella's husband, and Daniel Zimmermann, both common soldiers in the Union army. All four correspondents were residents of Weisport in Carbon County, Pennsylvania.

There is a curiously modern informality of expression in the letters which suggests that Civil War soldiers and sweethearts were more relaxed, fun-loving, and free than our notions about the Victorian era would lead us to believe. The light-heartedness tended to diminish, however, as the reality of war became apparent. The letters make it clear that what these soldiers had once thought of as a Sunday outing from which heroes would emerge evolved very quickly into a terrible struggle in which death and destruction were common occurrences.

The letters were written on rather high-quality stationery as is shown by their present condition. On the upper part of the paper used by Aaron Zimmermann an American flag is pictured with the words “warranted not to run” printed across it. The name of the regiment and commander are also printed on the stationery. The paper used by John Duffy and by Aaron's brother Daniel has no insignia. Four of the five letters were written in black India ink and quill pen; the remaining letter was written in pencil. Of Aaron's three letters, two have the same style of handwriting and rather careful spelling. In the third letter the spelling is atrocious and the handwriting distinctly different, suggesting that Aaron might have been illiterate, or nearly so, and had someone else write at least some of his letters for him.

The letters belong to one of Isabella's direct descendants, Timothy Hoffman. He is a member of the Introduction to History class which has, in studying what history is and how it is written, been considering the different

kinds of evidence historians use. His interest was stirred by a class discussion about the value of letters as historical evidence, and so he removed the letters from the stamp collection and brought them in for the class to examine. This edition is the outcome.

A map of the eastern war zone with all the places mentioned in the letters clearly marked has been prepared and explanatory footnotes have been provided. But the letters themselves have not been changed in any way. They are reproduced here exactly as they were written in 1862.

Camp California¹

Jan the 9,/62

Friend Isibel I recieved your kind Letter today and i was very Glad to know that you was Wel for i had begun to think That you had forgotten me But I see that you had not For i tel you Isabel i am Getting a most durn lonsome Here for their is now girls Here and you now that I Cant stay wheir is now Girls I wish that I could Be home a while to see the Folks and some of the girls And you for the first one I dont see what is the matter With Clara Mayer for i have Wrote to her twice but have never had but one Letter from her so i think That she has not got it For i think that she would Ansire mine you say that you had a good slay ride How I wish that i could Of been their to go along With you but the war Will not last long and then You wil see our boys Back again and then lookout For fun. One of our men Died to day and wil be buried Tomorrow I send you a kiss My Dear and dont forgit To Write soon and let me Know how you are a geting A long no more at present I remain yours With Respect,

John S. Duffy

to his true love

Isibel Roath

* * * * *

Head-quarters 28th Penna. Regiment, Co. E²

Point of Rocks Feb. 19th 1862

Dear Isabella

I recievd your wellcome letter this morning and was verry glad to hear from you, and that you ware well, as I am the same at present, now as regards news we have bully news hear, I gues you know all about it so it is no use for me to say anything about it the war will soon be over the rebels must give up we have glorious times hear the band is playing and the boys are cheering all night on account of the glorious victorys that we have gaind,³ we are still at our olde place but we expect to leve soon thear is about 25 boats here to take us of You have stated in your letter that you have recieved my likeness and that it was first time that you was have the fun to sleep with me but I hope it was not the last Time, when I come home I will turn some of your home gards out of my way, and sparke the girls myself you also stated that you thought thear was plenty of girles hear yes thear is plenty girles hear but they are most all black with the exception of a few, and they are to lasy to kock thear own grub, they have joined the lasy Club now Dear Isabella I would like to have your likeness pleas and sent it to me I have stated in my



Civil War, Eastern Theater (Detail), 1862.

letter that I was well I am well enough only I have the reumitism a little yet, I will now close by sending my love to you, and all the rest of the girles, I have also recieved the nosee Soildier, 4 wich you send to me and we had great fun with him, he has a afull nose, he is purty near all nose, his nose is purty near as big as Paul Solts nose up at big creek above the furnace write soon and I remain your Sincere and tru Friend now and for ever

Aaron Zimmermann

Direct yours as before

* * * * *

Head-quarters 28th Penna. Regiment, Co. E
Harpers Ferry. February 26th 1862

Dear Isabella

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I have seated myself this evening

to inform you that I am well at present and hoping theas few lines will finde you in the same state of helth we are now in Dixy we left Point of Rocks the 24th last Sunday night at 12 oclock and on monday morning we arived at Sandy Hook at about 6 oclock and as soon as we came to Sandy Hook we commanced building a rope ferry and after the ferry was finished our Regiment crossed over on the other side of the Patomac into Dixy, and I am sorry to say that the first company that crossed over the boat upset and six men got drowndet, thear was eight in the boat but two was saved our company got over save, our regiment was the first that crossed the river and after our regiment was across they builded a bridge with boats, 5 and now thear is about 15.000 soldiers on this side of the river, and they are still coming in droves if they keepe coming this way thear will be about 60.000 hear by tomorrow morning, our company is quarterd in a prespertiren charge, it is a firstrate place it is a bick charge thear is pulpit and an organ and evrything in it I often wished I was a preacher I would go on the pulpit and preach for the boys, I have founde a kuble of litle books a hym book and a library and I will send you one this time and when I write again I will send you the other one I must now come to a close by sending you my love, and all the rest of the Freinds my best respects write soon and I remain your true Freind now and for ever so good bey,

Aaron Zimmerman

* * * * *

Head-quarters 28th Penna. Regiment, Co. E

Wite plains Va Abril 13 1862

Dear Isabella

I now take the obertunity to write a few lines to you to let you know that I am well at pressent and I hope these few lines may finde you the same and we hat som hevly marching since we are in Dixey but it is northing torts wat some of our Boys hat in tenasee I Dit here the good noos From tenasee but thay Was a graid number of our man kilt but a graid many more rebels then of ours⁶ and i dont think that we will ged in a battel for we are on gart at the manassas gab Railroad and if thay will kill the rebels as fast as thay bin adit for the last few munth⁷ we want se no rebels anymore and dont know wy i dont get no letters any more so i must bring my Letter to a cloas by centing my best respect to you an all inquireing frands so no more at present but i remane yours as truly

Aaron Zimmermann

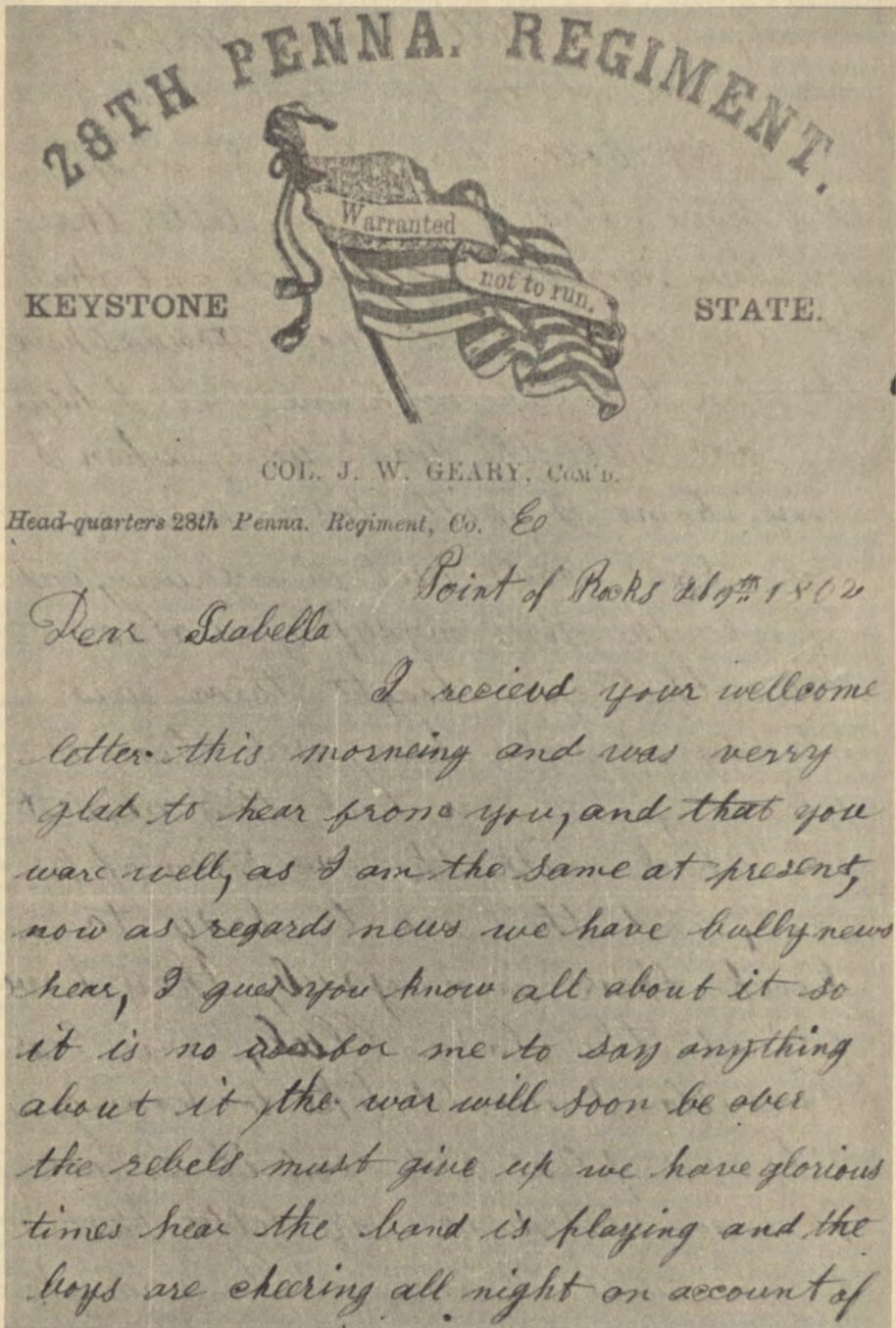
Bleas write soon terect you Letters to Washington City DC
Co E the 28th regt Pv

* * * * *

Annapolis June 25th/62

Dear Isabella

I now take leave to write a few lines to you in order to let you know that I am still enjoying good health hoping this to find you as it leaves me at the pleasant. I recieved a letter from Aaron last wek and he states that he is not very well and he is expecting to get a furlough and come on as far as here and see me and perhaps he will come home the colonel sent out on company



this evening to catch some Secesh.⁸ I have not much to write so I send my love and best wishes to you and the hole family and all the relatives and wellknown friends

Frm your friend true and loving
Daniel Zimerman
write soon and address as before

* * * * *

NOTES

*The members of the class are Sharon Barger, Mark Preston Chandler, Mike Cunningham, Derrick Ford, Natalie Giltner, Greg Glover, Fred Hobbs, Timothy Hoffman, Kevin McGinnis, Timothy Martinich, Steve Mattingly, Danielle Oates, and Greg Williams. Jan Shipps, Assistant Professor of History and Religious Studies, is the instructor.

¹ The location of Camp California (see map) was taken from the "List of Forts, Batteries, Named Camps, Redoubts, Reservations, General Hospitals, National Cemeteries, Etc., Established or Erected in the United States from its Earliest Settlement to Date," in the *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, by Francis B. Heitman (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1903), II, 485.

² The 28th Pennsylvania Regiment of Infantry, the Coldstream Regiment, was organized at Philadelphia, June 22, 1861. It was active until July, 1865, when it was mustered out in Washington, D.C. During the time that these letters were written, the regiment was involved in the following actions: crossing of the Potomac, February 24-25; operations in Loudon County, Virginia, February 25-May 6; occupation of Bolivar Heights, February 26; of Lovettsville, March 1; of Wheatland, March 2; of Leesburg, March 8; of Upperville, March 14; and of Ashly's Gap, March 15; capture of Rectortown, Piedmont, Markham, Linden and Front Royal, March 15-20; operations about Middleburg and White Plains; March 27-28; at Warrenton, April 6; and near Piedmont, April 14; reconnaissance from Front Royal to Brownstown, May 24; and guarding the railroad from White Plains to Manassas until May 24 and the railroad and Blue Ridge Mountain gaps until June 23, all in 1862. During the war the regiment took part in the important battles of Bull Run, Antietam, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg. The regiment lost a total of 284 men between 1861 and 1865. At the time the letters were written, the commander of the regiment was Col. John White Geary. He was wounded at Harpers Ferry in October, 1861, and captured at Leesburg in March, 1862.

³ The "glorious victories" were the surrender of Forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee in which not only the forts themselves, but 12,000 men were captured.

⁴ The "nosee" soldier was probably a cartoon or picture of some sort.

⁵ The "bridge of boats" was a pontoon bridge which, in military usage, is a structure constructed of any number of flat-bottom boats or hollow cylinders used to support a temporary bridge. The earliest known use of a pontoon bridge occurred during the Persian Wars (480 B.C.) when King Xerxes used such a bridge to cross the Hellespont.

⁶ The reference here is to the battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee. This battle was not a decisive victory for either side: Federal statistics were 1754 killed, 8408 wounded, and 2885 missing, while the Confederates had 1723 killed, 8012 wounded, and 959 missing. The battle was called a Union victory because the Northern soldiers lost no ground and had 22,000 more troops than the Confederates engaged in the fight.

⁷ Between January 19 and April 8, 1862, the Union armies captured 19,800 troops, killed 4,128 and wounded 8,756. During this period there were eight major engagements with Southern troops, none of which were Union defeats.

⁸ "Secesh" were Confederate soldiers.

Man Who Sits in the Park Holding Dog

A smile is becoming
dans dans dans
a mouth a fixed zero
apexual astringent streetlights
trading moths men
cleaning up alleys vermouth
in a winestore window
vin vin vin
and the sun is pumped up
bang goes a dawn
shrapnel birds burst
from roosting sleep
peeping
pan! pan! pan!
man who sits in the park
holding dog
who is smiling.

—DANIEL LUCY

The Beachmaster

My shelves were bookcorpulent; those
too are fatted words as I
might use, a Traherne or
a saint: all faces, nonetheless
are painted up
for nights along the avenue in Panama
beneath its beery bleary shore
of sky
(we shall never know how far, nor
in what fury that one galaxy
presumed to go).

Somehow He is ours, and will
belong to us, our genealogy,
snorting in sleep about
some gutted shell of nautilitic
time small t

We moved through a vulturic
scenery of streets, preparations
for feasts sat on stoops,
watched the shocked xipilotes

It is all here in these
sessile volumes, I am sure,
full of gifts, of
interpretation, prophecy, tongues,
and begin to believe
the arguments that walls of buildings
breed by just their balance

Perhaps the infallible
EEG has fallen, a trick
of space or time a slight slip
of astronomy: a gamma where
should be an alpha, omega where
should be a mu, a verbal-scale where
there should be a searing arc
of graphite read and translated:
the wave-lengths on the beach bend
sinoidally toward Heaven.

What, Beachmaster, shall we
tell our friends? when they have seen
your flippers tight around me
whiskers crushed against my temples?
no defense, marine or entological
can save us now
for yes we are too far from land
too far from land;

Floating on a flotsam sea
amid the volvox kelp debris, the waves
tight-timed and synchronized turn
blond out toward the sun:
its shaftless light turns
the jetsam molten gleaming silvery
bombs of chic brilliance detonating
in the afternoon awash—

The Beachmaster laughs at
laughing matter, drifting off
with special ease
among the orangecrate carcasses
the army-issue corpses, barking
irreligious laughter that
explodes above the sea, bursting
in romancandle peals.

From Him I learned how it must feel,
learned: There is Time to play:
I cupped handfuls of wave
and wet His fur, played
steamboat
raft
dog
submarine
gull

turtle
 barge, porpoise, diving bell;

And when the sun erupts
 in bloody evening and light
 begins to crumble east to west
 into a ruin of stars—

it starts to paint our faces up
 for nights along the avenue in Panama.

—DANIEL LUCY

Progressions

I stand on riverbridge
 In soft-hazel post-frost morning;
 Ducks lie
 On still water, plume-
 White pillows. I heard
 The morning moon without looking,
 Saw trees seeming flat
 Against the hillsides, veins
 In loam, august arteries, under
 This puckered sun, patches
 Of capillaries, leaves;

Far away child's are making laughter,
Spun slowly as though from
A laughter gin; I feel
The toothless path of morning
Without putting out my hand
To find its wind;

I stand, pan the river with a look
As hungry as the eyes of taxidermied
Owls;
I make my home wherever evening settles;
I make my way home hopefully.

And I would turn old oaks into
Pianos; and whittle parts of etudes
Into wishes: They are waiting now,
These cluttered cantos,
Inside a practiceroom somewhere, each
Vicious smile acoustically alone, each
Note awaits audition, counting time

So like the old ones
Held in porchswing pendulums
Swinging through the precious
 summer nights,
Striking the hours with sighs.

Missing

PHILIP F. DEAVER

Here came Martin Wolf, slowly walking, head down, hands behind his back, ankle deep in frosty crab grass, the moon chilling down behind. He came across the yard and up the crazy front steps, gone slack because of pure time and intermittent rain. On the porch he worked the key, first upside down, then right, fumbling. He swung open the chipping gray front door and heard the phone, distant and secluded, jangling as though it had jangled for hours, as though this were the home of normality and someone was calling up.

Dropping his field jacket, he bolted into the darkness of the house, skipping over and past things dust-smothered and familiar, cut a sharp, careful turn at the kitchen table, and reached.

"Hello."

"Martin?" It was a girl's voice.

"Who is this?"

"You sound out of breath?"

"Who's calling, please."

"You out of shape?"

"Who am I talking to?"

"Guess," she said.

"Key-reist, do I have to?"

In the name of the father, the son, and the holy spirit, the days had passed, the pimples, wet-dreams, and braces were gone, several graduations had been fully photographed and documented, a couple of nice chevys had gone their way, and of course there had been a little jail at one time, a compulsory death in the family, and what childhood of the sixties was complete without noting that the draft board had exerted maximum pressure and converted a high school joy-boy and college berserk-person into a door gunner. A door gunner. I imagine that being a door gunner was one of the most irrelevant things I ever did. I can't this moment think of one thing I did in college or in childhood that made me deserve being a door gunner. I can't think of one single thing a priest ever said to me, or any one else who ever tried to bolster my morality, to prepare me for being a gunner in the door of a helicopter in the Laotian highlands. When I was a door gunner in the Laotian highlands, I was too young to drink in Camargo, Illinois. When I was spraying down the hills with machine gun fire and ripping at guerrillas in the delta, people my age back home were paying almost double for car insurance because statistically they have wild blood and the bad judgment of youth. Anyway, the draft got me and I became a door gunner. And there have been any number of girls along the way, town to town while running, or in this town after settling down. Any number of girls, and she wants me to guess.

"Hell yes, you have to guess. I invested too much."

"Invested?" He looked around for a chair. "Invested. There's a good word for it."

"C'mon, this is long distance. Who am I?"

"Girl, I can't figure out why you want me to try to guess."

"Because I'll hate you if you guess wrong."

"Look." He sat down on the floor with a grunt and brought the phone down with him. "I'm real sorry about this. But I am not going to sit around here in my own kitchen guessing. I just can't bring myself to do it."

"I'll give you a hint," she said. "I'm calling from O'Hare. I'm no fool. I know you are probably busy down there, but I'm calling up to see how you are. I'm on my way to Omaha."

"On your way to Omaha, eh. That's really a good hint. Bye." He hung up the phone.

Back to normal. Quiet in the house of his extraordinarily fresh-faced childhood, two stories of midwestern whiteness on a formerly pleasant lawn. Rubbing his leg. He leaned back against the wall until he was almost under the kitchen table. Darkness.

Back to normal. He half-wondered. Who, what girl of the sixties was calling him up from the seventies wanting him to guess.

Easy. Sarah.

You crazy girl. You carried me up to Bayless in the sharp, uneven cold, the frozen property of a month in winter when wordless, sunless, gray and possessive Bayless was separated from the world, isolated in birches, bird turd and benevolence, heavy snows and high winds. On curiosity alone we got there, stood in the cemetery on the Ridge of Ivan staring down the mountain, waiting for the priest. I know you, girl. You were 1967.

Don't blame me, it was a berserk time; seventy gnomes, at least, occupied the stone houses, hippies, woodchoppers, daydreamers running; the priest, painting in the winters, burying the dead at the thaw. Bayless, I was there—Sarah in a long dress singing, pure time, intermittent rain; 1967. Yes. Before the burning of Detroit. I remember; I remember in Technicolor.

The phone rang again.

"Hello."

"Hi. Me again. Calling from Chicago's O'Hare airport, from the glamorous world of travel. I wish you wouldn't hang up on old friends."

"Sorry."

"You know who I am, right?"

"Right."

"Who?"

"You threw a glass at me in New Haven once."

"Right! I thought you forgot me."

"No. You invested too much."

"OK, OK. It was the wrong word," she grouched.

She sighed like she was tired or as though she were embarking on something tiresome. He pictured her wearily passing her fingers through her long hair or tinkering with the ends.

After a moment she said, "I'm calling you up to tell you something very important. I really wish you wouldn't hang up on me until you understand."

"I'm sorry I hung up."

"I need to know some things about you. It has been years since I've seen you. I've been worried."

"There's nothing to know."

"Sure," she said.

"There's nothing to know. I'm doing fine. It's a small town. I go for walks."

"Are you alone?"

"Basically."

"Basically?"

"Yes."

"Jesus, I'm calling long distance after seven years and you have to get existential with me."

"Sorry."

"How's your eye-brow?" she asked.

"Fine."

"You really bled," she mused. "You just never seemed like the kind of person who bleeds or I wouldn't have thrown it."

"Sure." He had never really gotten over the incident.

"You know, Martin—it is so sad. In New Haven, they're saying you're a goner. You have to be careful with yourself."

"I appreciate your concern. Sermonettes have always given me inspiration. Go on, please." He yawned into the phone.

Quiet a moment. Then:

"I heard you were drafted."

"Who did you hear that from?"

"Were you?"

"Of course not. I volunteered. Even though I opposed killing, still. I couldn't have communists running rampant on the earth. What could I do?"

"Were you drafted?"

"Of course not. I ran. You remember. I ran to Canada to preserve my conscience."

"I heard you were wounded. Are you OK?"

"Sarah, I need an answer to a question: Who have you been talking to in New Haven?"

"Were you wounded?" she persisted.

"I want to know who you've been talking to in New Haven."

"Guess," she said.

He hung up the phone.

Jesus, what a storm of time. Since Sarah, seven Aprils—birth, rebirth and sprouting—zinging by like islands on a spinning globe. Since birth, well, it had taken only ten or fifteen minutes of severe revelation causing, in the end, a crater of mourning, blood beading like red dew among the capillaries: pain. Under the kitchen table, he squinted.

But he was doing fine, he guessed. He and his mother had collided when he returned from the service. She lurked and worked, finally left. To repair his leg, Martin walked. Also, he wrote letters to Roger (New Haven) and Burroughs (Bayless), worked some on old and new stories, tinkered with a novel. He was doing fine. OK, at least. Eating light, sleeping light. Trying to think. The worker's eight to five skull-cap, accidentally part of his soul, gave him guilt pangs sometimes. And each day he was mortified to see in the mirror his youth fading. Adulthood wasn't near the gas he thought it would be when he was five.

The phone rang again. Martin was startled.

"Hello."

"OK." She took a breath. "I'll be real careful."

"Yes, please do."

"I'm trying to say something to you."

"Just don't make me guess," he said. "I'm almost thirty."

Quietly she proceeded.

"In New Haven they are saying that you've gone flakey. They say you are so far gone that they don't believe you can save yourself, that you are probably shooting something, that you are alone. I figured you are probably writing. Probably writing one of those war-weary veteran things, feeling a little sorry for yourself. Thousands upon thousands were drafted, few of whom had integrity less important than yours. Face it. The whole generation got screwed—not just you."

"Sarah, I need answers to three questions. I want to know who you've been talking to back in New Haven, because I think I know. Second, you said you are going to Omaha and I want to know why, because I think I know. Third, and I don't know this: Where did you get this fancy-assed, know-it-all way of talking?"

In Technicolor I remember St. Ann's, a stone chapel on the Ridge of Ivan, daily mass at 7:00, confessions in the candled din of Saturday night; St. Ann's, linked most intimately to the rectory by the gray stone colonnade occupied just then by Burroughs himself, gray old man storming over his breviary, placing his faith ever on an Almighty and never once shuddering in the hostile high mountain gales that swept the churchyard. The only wise man I've ever met, Burroughs was a life of thought, human ectoplasm not drifting, not flowing, but curled tightly like a liquid living fist around the symbol of Christ dying. 1967, gone by seven years. Even Sarah had changed.

"Omaha was a lie," she said. "I'm not going to Omaha. I'm coming down to see you."

"I'm doing fine down here. You just go to Omaha."

"I'm coming, bet on it. Five-hour trip, see you by morning."

"Sarah, there's nothing to eat down here, nothing for you to do. Omaha is a better bet, take the word of one who knows."

"I'm sorry. I feel crummy inviting myself down but it is your fault. You're full of games. You won't talk to me on the phone. I've missed you, I still miss you. I've got to be sure you are OK." Then quietly, "In New Haven, they are saying you were hurt in the war. I've got to be sure you are OK."

"Actually I fell off a truck in front of a movie theater. I hurt my leg but it is better now. I walk some. It's a small town and you can walk."

"I heard you're on drugs."

"Worry wart."

"One of these days I'll hear you died shooting India ink or popcorn oil."

"Jesus. Who have you been talking to?"

No answer. Sarah sat quietly at the other end, an invisible girl keeping secrets.

"Are you writing anything, Martin?"

"No."

Dear Roger, began the novel (who is serious enough about novel writing to change the names?), I came to Bayless in the sharp cold, the frozen property of a month in winter when sunless, birdless, gray and possessive Bayless was motionless in the dim of day and dead at night. From the Ridge, I can see the stars without glare; I've been here two months at a time when we are totally cut off from the world below. I'm getting a sense of proportion, old friend. I see why Burroughs has stayed all this time. I've learned some things here. Now I'm getting ready to move again. The decision of decisions is made. If the draft board inquires as to my whereabouts, tell them the hunt is on. Yours, Martin.

The novel was autobiographical. The main character was named Martin because nothing else seemed to fit. Three years in the writing, it detailed the days in Bayless, the months running in Canada with nobody chasing, the decision to return and face the draft, the trip home through burning Detroit, then the months in the service. It was a war-weary veteran thing. There were even pencil sketches. One sketch detailed the chopper crash in which old friend Roger lost a hand; Sarah wouldn't understand.

She was a smiler—soft tall lover with long fingers and clear eyes, an open girl, you've never known a more open runaway. In June of 1967 she'd been pacing in front of the student co-op, Yale, and you wouldn't be likely to guess what the sign she was carrying said: Save the Earth.

You crazy girl. In 1967 you had long hair and wanted to save the earth. Was Cleveland so bad? She'd traveled by hiking and thumbing to New Hampshire. She claimed she'd been gone from home two weeks before she realized she was not going back. Eighteen as the new year was rung in, she'd grown street smart with a smile. Freedom would never be her ruin. By that January, we were in Bayless. "Bayless," the novel groaned, "was a time and not a place—the purest days of my life. Stark Spartan January, I long for your vigor."

"Is your hair still long, girl?"

"Forget 1967."

"I'm trying to picture you."

"Invite me down then."

"So Roger thinks I'm a drug addict, eh?"

"You know he does."

"Yes, and I know you cut your hair and I know why you're going to Omaha."

"Omaha was a lie."

"He sent me a picture of the two of you standing in front of good old 100 Whitney where I used to live. New Haven looks the same. He was waving his hook."

"He's well adjusted."

"I suppose."

"You suppose **what?**" she snapped.

"I suppose you should know whether he's well adjusted or not."

"Don't play games, Martin," she said.

"What, lass, do you call 'investing'?" He regretted saying that. It wasn't fair, he knew. "Are you coming down here?"

"Yes."

"On the train?"

"The Panama Limited. It's a flag stop. They'll be stopping just for me."

She hung up. He hung up.

Back to normal. The dark house of childhood quaking. The cool of the kitchen struck the ear that had been warmed by the phone.

Chill. Trying to get to the airfield when the first artillery rounds come in, there had been a terrible accident. The truck had rolled and deposited three helicopter crews on the warm DaNang sidewalk. Everybody was hurt and more rounds came in. The street filled with smoke. It was like Detroit, summer 1967, when Martin was trying to make his way home to turn himself in. His leg was shattered and he felt only the warm red soaking his pants leg. The panicked were curled up in the street or shitting in doorways and the noise and rush were covering the cries of the dying. How could he ever forget the war, he thought.

He tried to think of Sarah. For hours he sat beneath the kitchen table, sort of waiting. She would know that he is different and he already knew she had changed too. We were all different since those days. If we didn't have fleshy scars or stainless steel claws, we had memories. It would be wonderful, he thought, if she could teach him to forget all he had learned. It would be a dream if she could transport him out of awareness—if she could be his escape. If there were such a thing as escape.

Actually it didn't matter, thinking of these things. He sat there and sleep rolled over him; the moon set and moments in the night he would nod awake and fall away again. Once he came awake in time to hear the rumble of the Panama Limited, the industrious crawling clatter of a fast train passing through without stopping.

You crazy girl.

The Road Up

The roadside dust grits up between my toes
 And all the white-eyed cars have passed me by.
 The last sign I could read said "20 miles";
 Crickets count the cadence up the hills.
 From one last silvered rise the glow of Babel
 Mists about the moon-touched silhouette
 Of naked beams adjusted to their neighbors,
 Foot on shoulder reaching for the sky.
 I reach with them; sufficient reason
 For empty legs to ache another mile:
 Just one more chance to build beyond my hunger
 Until the farthest rungs dissolve in clouds.
 One more chance to climb above the clangor
 And talk on the big steel mountain, Man to God.

The Rational Element

RON LAKEY

Foreword

The following is a dialogue in the manner of **The Republic of Plato**. Portions of the paper, while quoted directly from the translated text, were not footnoted in order to preserve the effect. It was assumed that the reader of this paper would be well versed in the **Republic** and recognize any material which had been taken from it. No attempt, on the part of the author, was made to take credit for Plato's works and upon written application to the author, a list of footnoted material is available.

Socrates. I walked down to the Cavanaugh Lounge yesterday with Glaucon, the son of Ariston, to make my prayers to the goddess ARA before depositing my sacrifice to her coin box. I wished also to see how the ceremony of getting ripped-off would be conducted. The prayers were given in vain as I received a carton of sour milk. We were leaving to go back to our bridge game, when from across the room, Ronlakates caught sight of us and asked us to wait. Being the dummy in a three spade contract, I agreed to stay while Glaucon went back to the table to finesse my queen of diamonds. Ronlakates inquired as to how I did on my P-110 paper. With great pride, I replied that Professor Phil O. Soffic had given me an F on my paper. Seeing that Ronlakates was confused by the pride I had exhibited in my grade and being an individual who enjoys inducing confusion, I offered no explanation for my peculiar reaction.

Well then Socrates, I guess you owe me five dollars, said Ronlakates.

How so? I inquired?

Do you not remember the wager we placed as to who would write the better paper?

I do. And may I ask what grade you were given, Ronlakates?

You may. I got an A; therefore, I win.

To the contrary Ronlakates, since you received an A and I an F, mine is the better paper and you owe me five dollars.

It seems that we have a disagreement over five dollars, said Ronlakates.

No, my dear Ronlakates, we have a dispute over ten dollars, do we not?

I do not follow.

Then I will explain further. If I lose the wager, which will not be the case, I would be five dollars less well off with respect to my present position.

Agreed.

And if I win the wager, which will be the case, I would be five dollars better off with respect to my present position.

That seems logical.

And since you maintain that your paper is better than mine, our papers

are not of equal quality since no two things can be equal and different at the same time. And since they are not equal, one must be better and one worse than the other.

You will get no argument from me on that point.

Therefore, it becomes a dispute over ten dollars...the difference between being five dollars better off and being five dollars worse off.

Now I follow, but my paper is still better and you owe me five dollars.

No, my poor Ronlakates, my paper was the better since I received an F and you an A.

Again I do not follow.

What don't you follow?

Well, according to the I.U.P.U.I. Student Handbook, an A is a reward for a superior paper and an F for an inferior paper.

Will you agree that we must denounce worse and praise better apart from the reputations, honours, and rewards they bring?

If you say we must.

Then the true superiority of a paper depends on what effect it has upon its reader when it dwells in his soul.

It would appear.

And did not Professor Phil O. Soffic wear a neck tie to philosophy class last week.

Yes he did. Is that important to know?

Do you mean to say that you do not, as yet, see how my paper is better than yours?

I do mean to say exactly that!

Perhaps then, we should take things a step at a time.

Yes, perhaps!

You will agree that the neck tie is a symbol of the contemporary American middle-class?

I suppose.

And is not the achievement motive a strong value in the middle-class?

Yes.

Would it be logical, then, for a middle-class member to want someone else to do better than himself in view of this?

No, that would seem to contradict the achievement motive.

Exactly! And would it be proper to assume that Professor Phil O. Soffic is a philosopher to the extent that he is a seeker of wisdom?

It would.

And is the goal of a philosopher to become a wise man?

True.

Would it be correct to assume that in order to climb the flight of stairs from a novice philosopher to a wise man one must take the steps one by one?

It may be assumed.

And where would you place Professor Phil O. Soffic on this imaginary staircase of wisdom?

He would, I suppose, be somewhere between the base and the top.

Did we not agree earlier that as a member of the middle class, Professor Soffic would want to discourage the best efforts by others who were also on the staircase?

We did.

Now, my dear Ronlakates, were you encouraged by the fact that you received an A on your paper?

I certainly was!

And is encourage the opposite of discourage?

It is.

And is an A the opposite of an F?

Yes...go on.

Then if an A encourages, an F must necessarily discourage.

I can see no fault in the reasoning, Socrates.

What grade then, my dear Ronlakates, would Professor Phil O. Soffic give to the best effort on a paper?

It would seem, an F.

And what grade did I receive?

An F, so I guess I owe you five dollars.

I'm sorry Ronlakates, but you owe me ten dollars.

How? Our wager was for only five dollars.

But Ronlakates, do you remember when you thought we had a dispute over five dollars?

Yes.

And how much would you have owed me, assuming my paper was the better, under the five dollar dispute?

Five dollars.

And did I not prove that the dispute was for twice that much or ten dollars?

You did.

Then how much do you owe me now?

It would follow that I owe you ten dollars.

Very well, that is settled; I accept personal checks if you are short on cash.

Socrates, I'll pay you the ten dollars I supposedly owe you even though I still think you owe me five dollars, but would you answer one question?

What's that?

How can you condemn the Sophists for accepting money for their speeches?

Simply this my dear Ronlakates: Because they are them and I am me.

November First

Tired Jack-o-lantern
Darkened toothless hollow grin
Linus still believes

Abe

Pup-dog at side bow
 early asks if quail shakes.
 I can't flew at side-bow
 unflew at the pup-dog.

If'n then skate the side-dog,
 my pup-bow wit'll shake and joost'n
 rup in oft merry quils,—lost in the early asks.

Sing:

Flueritt ta roo trutt gassapillobay,
 pub-gone if abe-flew, rab tail qudd.

Shung-a-loo rab belly shung-a-loo,
 Shung-a-loo rab belly shung-a-loo.

Foot-rub in paw-bow
 snink nilly nose.
 Keen on the quill'shook
 gone filly blows.

Ear-bam in eye-worn
 quiss to the bone,
 Rab-tab supp silly bad-nupp
 sap on the rhone.

Curl-frill et tummy-pounce
 scritt on the reeter.
 Sab-nilly pink-nose
 I only pickfleeter.

Oh only in whisk-feels do prick-sharpers punch
 say Abey—Saint Abey on beagles must munch.
 I sit as the prick sharpers crunch.

(As they crunch)*

Not going fir 1st. quils or uppy snills or links of the snail,
 tis none near tab-trilly if pud cran lose nub bone tail.

Soon dup-paw and side-crate
 will cam with a broad swipe
 an mussifer acer-bate in rup ringo (stars)*

“mi hert shill falk oot”,
 ran the dover note bar,
 “sew dog-hog you rute-scrum
 and finalize the jelly-jam-jar!”

Rye pug in the goot now,
 Wher'd bollow ft. walketh sum Abe'r twil't follow.

*Chorus

—GEORGE WILLIAM SCHRICKER, JR.

Attention!

ATTENTION

1900 ORRINGTON WOMEN & FLAWN

in recent weeks

an amazing phenomenon of overwhelming proportions

has graced the planet upon which we now stand

yes

the earth

has been visited by “others”

from planets other than the planet upon which we now stand

outer space is invading

our inner space

deeper than secrets

of love

the poison penetrates and extracts our think-straighting

searching for the inner core

waiting to pounce and shrink it to granulum sanctum

AWAKE SISTERS!

partake quickly of this specially prepared formula

butylated hydroxide

propyl gallate

pressed palm kernel

all await digestion

purification personified

ahhhhh

QUICK

BEFORE

YOU

MELT!

—GEORGE WILLIAM SCHRICKER, JR.

Miz Sparling

SUZANNE PEROZZI

1
Mrs. Sparling didn't hear me squeeze shut the front hall door—her large, short-toed feet resting shoeless on the ottoman, one hand holding the evening newspaper, the other a cigarette, its smoke clouding and curling around her grey-streaked bun. As a housekeeper, cleaning lady, baby-sitter and cook, she'd failed—in at least three of those jobs. She did like keeping house though; one time when she didn't know I was watching, I saw her give the sheets in the linen closet little, almost loving, pats as she straightened their rows. If I hadn't been afraid she'd catch me, I'd have checked her coal black pocketbook, almost big as a suitcase, that hung on the door. But I was supposed to be Daddy's good girl, his faithful "old wagon"—not curious about grown-ups.

She sat reading the **Greenville Times** (the **Daily Disappointment**, my mother called it), but seeing me, she jumped, then stopped in mid-air. "Oh, it's you," she said.

Anxious to avoid her fishy stare and hungry for an after-school snack, I scurried past her, through the dining-room into the kitchen, hunting the cupboards for cookies Mother kept hidden. Her dearest wish was for a daughter who didn't wear a size ten chubby. "Exercise, Mag. Don't eat," she would say, cupping my moon face in her small hand.

Mrs. Sparling should have listened to Mother too; she had a fat, tight belly that stuck out like an over-sized basketball above tall, skinny legs. It was the only part of her that moved when she laughed—rarely—or yelled—often, and now, more often. She really wasn't fat any place else—except she didn't have a neck. Instead, doubled chins joined her wide, paste-colored face to her chest.

How Mrs. Sparling looked wasn't so important. Her whipping tongue could scold hot tears to my lashes, and her tiny eyes, like twin BB's, could chill goosebumps down my back. Her most deadly demands, though, were that I not "story" about her "doings" and that I quit encouraging my brother John—he'd be a year old next month—to walk. To gain my co-operation, she used an effective mixture of threats and bribes: "I'll let yer have all them cookies, and—and," her voice rising, "I'll tell yer mom ya practiced the pie-ano ever' day this week—if ya take yer readin' mater'l to yer room, Miz Bookworm."

Her arguments convinced me, but John cried and wobbled on feet or knees to wherever his curiosity took him. Anxious to make her life even easier, Mrs. Sparling kept all doors shut, confining him to the living and dining rooms. Then she could relax with the paper and still mind John with a vague eye.

Thus tuned to Mrs. Sparling's ways, I cautiously returned to the living room to find her stacking newspapers on the ottoman. She straightened and bellowed, "John, git off thet radiator!" Then wheeling on me, she shouted

hoarsely, "Get'im out from behind thet sofa. Now, young lady!"

Stuffing crumbly cookies into my pocket, I edged behind the couch. John loved being there because he could crawl from the sofa onto the covered radiator over which were three windows, set in a bay. He would sit, looking out at the street. Pulling him away, I noticed marks on the venetian blinds that hung in the windows. "Mrs. Sparling," I accused, "John's been chewing again. The blinds are wet!"

"You hush. Just hush up. Notta word ta yer mom. Tell'er one thang'n I mean anythang, and I'll throw out them cookies. 'N leave the box settin' empty. Then try ta story to 'er—thet ya only et three after school."

I was won over, growing rusty at my arpeggios, and plumper, farther than ever from a size ten regular. Mrs. Sparling enlarged her reading library, and John became the freest eleven-month-old spirit on West Court Street.

II

One evening Mother asked, "Mag, has Mrs. Sparling been sitting and smoking—instead of looking after John?"

"Well, maybe she's been—sitting more."

"And just as I thought," Mother said, focusing on the bay window, "new teeth marks on the blinds. Why, she's probably been reading—those damned movie magazines she keeps in that great black satchel."

"No, not always, she isn't," I answered, remembering the cookies and my pie-and practicing habits.

"She just doesn't want you tattling. But never you mind. Just keep your eyes open. We've got to have someone good for John. He's so active."

"Do you want to know when she isn't working? Or just about watching John?" I asked, warming up to my spy work.

"Both, sweetie, but mainly about John." Then Mother added uncertainly, "I hope it wasn't a mistake."

"What?" I asked, absently. Adult concerns bored me.

"Oh, that we didn't paint the blinds when we moved in here. I was just pregnant, and the idea of workmen—oh, well, the paint on the blinds wasn't chipped."

The next afternoon I hurried home from school, half-expecting, half-hoping to catch Mrs. Sparling, feet up, reading **Photoplay**. But she was in the dining room, talking on the phone to her dear Norval—a tall, bony high school senior with a nervous Adam's apple. Norval must have inherited his neck from Mr. Sparling. Only I was never to satisfy my curiosity on the point, as that man had, in Mrs. Sparling's words, "passed on to God's heavenly blue paradise." Mother, on the other hand, always insisted that Mr. Sparling had gone to an earthly "green" paradise in Chicago.

While Mrs. Sparling talked to Norval, John wobbled shakily to the window seat. Switching the receiver to her other ear, Mrs. Sparling picked up the venetian blind cord and rubbed it along John's cheek, trying to divert his attention from the slats, but I could see he'd already been gnawing. "Now, tell Mom wher' yer agoin' t'night, hon," she said into the phone.

As Mrs. Sparling listened, John fussed, so she picked him up, jiggling him, then motioned me to take him away. "Uhm humm," she murmured over the line, then handed me John.

He felt so wet and hot that I took him back to his changing table in the bathroom. "C'mon, Johnnycake, hold still. Help your sister. There, one more pin to go."

"Y'er adoin' good, girl," announced Mrs. Sparling as she opened the bathroom door. "Do ya thank yer could handle John till yer mom gits home?"

Norval's astoppin'—so's I kin fix 'is supper. 'N git 'im ta the game." Norval was basketball team manager for the Greenville Golden Spurs, a responsibility Mrs. Sparling took seriously.

"I guess so," I replied with little enthusiasm. I had a new library book, a biography of Dolly Madison, and the book jacket pictured a dainty, ruffled lady with an eighteen-inch waist.

"Thanks, hon, and tell yer mom—"

"Mrs. Sparling," I interrupted, rubbing the damp cornsilk on the back of his neck, "do you think John's sick? He feels hot."

"No, hon. He's jist bin playin' hard. Yer brang 'im in the livin' room, and watch 'im whilst I fix Norval a samwich."

Just as I knelt to settle John on the living room floor, I heard our front door. "Norval, Norval, honey," Mrs. Sparling called, running from the kitchen, "is thet you?"

"Yeah—C'mon. I'm gonna be late. Did ya figger out what ta do with thet bratty kid'n 'is fat sis—" Norval asked, stopping in mid-question.

"Norv, honey, don't rush. I cain't relax no more. Not with chasin' this baby and lookin' out fer people who creep aroun' behind ma back," Mrs. Sparling said, shooting me a defiant glance and motioning Norval to the kitchen. "Besides, I foun' yer some cold meat."

"Aw, listen, Ma, we don't have no time," argued Norval, though he followed her to the food easily enough.

Their conversation faded behind the kitchen door. John rolled on his back, studying the bright blocks in his pudgy fingers. Taking advantage of his unusual quiet, I moved to the dining room, sneaking closer to the Sparling voices.

"I ast' er ta stay with 'im. Said ya needed a ride. I hope she'll tell 'er mom. I gotta kid ta look after too. Why thet woman cain't git home. Expectin' me ta stay late. 'N her always at the Rexall downtown, havin' a Coke with 'er frinds. Er it's cards, 'r fancy lunches, 'r a shoppin' trip upstate. I niver seen such enirgy. She don't spend it on the house neither. 'Miz Sparling, put on some chili, would you please? Miz Sparling, we need to clean the chandelier.' Git thet 'we' business. It's me arunnin' with ladders, tetterin' on top o' the dinin' table."

"Well, I'm agittin' ya outa here early t'day, Ma. Now, wher's yer car keys so's we kin go?"

Backing quickly into the living room, I pretended to arrange John's toys as the Sparlings swung open the kitchen door, but neither of them noticed. With spring in their step, they headed towards their shaky-chromed Chevy parked outside. "Bye, kids," Mrs. Sparling said, never looking back. "Tell yer mom I'll be in early t'morra."

III

That evening at supper, Mother was pecky. Mrs. Sparling had left no food ready, and Mother was struggling to time the roast to the vegetables. John was in his chair, lopping sickish green peas on the floor; he was wet again and cross as a Friday afternoon teacher.

Thinking I could help, I picked him up, but he shrieked for Mother. Exasperated, she grabbed him from me. "What is wrong with this child?" she asked accusingly and hugged him close—only to jerk him away. "Why, he's got a fever! And a high one, too."

Neither Mother nor Daddy could coax John to stay in his crib. That

night the last sounds I heard were John's retchings and Mother's woeful cry to my father.

In the next few days, John gradually became hungrier and livelier. Dr. Harry pronounced him well, a normal, healthy baby within a week's time.

And in her relaxed way, Mrs. Sparling continued to be Mother's helper. She still personally escorted Norval to the basketball games, her bright housedress zipped tight over her stomach. I avoided my music and stashed supplies to eat later while reading my beloved biographies. I was up to Mary Todd Lincoln. Mother played bridge and lunched with "the girls." And everyday Daddy walked to his office on the town square and home again at five, a routine that allowed him time for the Elks and the Rotary Club. John scattered toys, crunched Zwieback and moved on the run most of his waking moments.

Slowly some unchecked time between summer and winter, a change crept into our snug world—almost sneaked past—then jerked us alert, like those easy, sunny days that slide unheeding into sudden, frosty ones. John didn't learn words quickly, didn't seem to catch on—not as he had. Dr. Harry said, "Oh well, he's a boy. Can't expect him to progress as fast as Margaret."

Every day Mother began a litany, like the ones Father Heins said at church, only shorter. "Tomorrow I'll make John do it. I know I can get him to do it." But there were many "its" she couldn't get him to do. So, finally, she and Daddy planned a trip for them and John. To big cities like Chicago and Cincinnati. Of course I couldn't go. My Easter vacation was three weeks away. Mother asked Mrs. Sparling and her prized Norval to stay with me while she and Daddy were gone.

IV

"Oh, Norv, am I disturbin' yer work?" asked Mrs. Sparling as she switched off the whining vacuum cleaner.

"Naw. It's okay," he replied, shoving my spread of homework under my chin as we sat at the dining room table. "I'm jist acopyin' some answers outa the book."

"Well, before ya git busy agin, I wanna tell yer the latest," Mrs. Sparling said, leaning on the vacuum handle, lighting a bent cigarette.

"Oh?" he asked.

"It seems we git ta stay here fer awhile linger. Ta keep—"

"Well, la-de-dah," interrupted Norval.

"No, ya got it wrong. It ain't perm'nent. I don't know what's agoin' on yit. A letter came t'day—from the Mister. The'r acomin' back with John," she said, lowering her voice, as if softer tones wouldn't reach my ears. "Some big doc's in Chicago saw 'im. If ya ast me, they awasted thir money. I know'd what's wrong with 'im. He's jist slow. Maybe's gonna be crazy-like, when he gits older. Like John Little."

At the mention of that name, Norval squirmed uneasily, thinking of the other John. Lanky, darting-eyed, stubble-bearded, a grown man who'd ride his bike on the heels of unsuspecting kids, grabbing them hard around the necks, slobbering a big "Hi" in their faces. I sat quiet, numb and scared, wanting to question, but afraid of Mrs. Sparling, of her answers.

"Anyways, we gotta stay on with John'n the girl—with you, girl," she corrected herself, remembering my presence. "Me 'n Norval are stayin' on 'cause yer folks'll be leavin' agin. After they drop John. Leastways, I kin def'nit'ly turn down the gas at our 'partment. 'N I won't hafter pay fer no groceries," Mrs. Sparling added contentedly.

When Mother and Daddy returned John to us, I was aware now of the

change—of this thing that had stolen us from each other—leaving me with the unaffectionate Sparlings and John with his dual obsessions. Tired or exuberant, he would hum two tones—ooh-ahh—ooh-ahh—and roll his push toy, full of marbles and bells, back and forth across the floor. Back and forth, back and forth, stuffing the room with his two-noted song.

V

One noon after Easter vacation, Mother and Daddy told me. Well, sort of told me—about John—but I don't think they planned to. They'd been back and settled, maybe two or three days. The Sparlings weren't staying nights any more, but Mrs. Sparling still came daily, and Norval continued having his noon sam-wich at our house.

We ate our big meal at mid-day. Afterward, before walking back to his office, Daddy rested on the living room sofa. He was lying there when I overheard Mother and Mrs. Sparling in the kitchen. About to swing open the door, I stopped when I caught Mrs. Sparling's solemn question, "Wher'd ya say y'er atakin' the little fella, Miz Bradford?"

"To a special school. John—is—retarded. I know you must have, well, noticed he's slower than—"

"Uhm, yes, but he's sweet," added Mrs. Sparling.

"We," Mother rushed on, "found a lovely place—a school—for him. After we brought him back here to you, a few weeks ago. It's outside Cincinnati. On a farm. And he'll be with—"

"When's he agoin', Miz Bradford?"

"Soon. And, that's the point I'm coming to, Mrs. Sparling," mother hesitated, then swept on, as if rehearsed, "we—won't be needing you since John will—"

I didn't hear the rest; I couldn't even be glad. No more Sparlings. But John would be gone too. No more plump, sticky hugs. Or helping him pat the neighbors' dog. I rushed to Daddy, who sat up, read my face and pulled me down beside him on the sofa. "How—do you get retarded?" I plunged in. "Mother told Mrs. Spar—"

"Oh, Mag, there are all kinds of reasons for it," Daddy answered, looking permanently wounded. "The doctors think John had lead poisoning. Remember the time? He was sick all night?"

"Yes. But will I get, you know, retarded if I throw up a lot?"

"No—"

"Well, how, then?" I asked impatiently.

"You can get it from paint," Daddy said. "Old paint. If you ingest, that is, eat it."

My eyes flew to the marks on the blinds behind me. Daddy slowly shook his head, studying his short, square fingers. He patted my knee and added, "It's just bad luck, old wagon."

Somehow I couldn't look him in the eye. Some of those teeth marks I'd watched John make. Of course, so had Mrs. Sparling. "Daddy, Mrs. Sparling—she really is the one who—"

"No, Mag," he replied, "she isn't, really."

But she was gone from the kitchen when I picked up the homework paper I'd shown off there at lunch.

VI

Through the glass in the outside kitchen door, I could see Mrs. Sparling's broad back, hear her muted greeting to Norval as he came up the

back porch steps, late for his lunch.

"C'mon, Norv. We gotta go, I guess."

"Wha—?" Norval dropped his jaw, breaking the rhythm of his concentrated gum-chewing. "Watcha talkin' about, Ma?"

"I tol' ja. We'r aleavin' here. Fer good. Miz Bradford don't need me ta keep house no more. On accounta the'r asendin' John away."

"Wher' they gonna send 'im? He cain't even talk yit."

"Ta some fancy school. 'Cause he's slow. Some big-city doc tol' 'em to." And Mrs. Sparling listed the facts down the back steps: "The baby et some paint chips, which made 'im sick, which give 'im sich a high fever thet made 'is brain not grow right." She stopped, considering the argument, shook her head, then continued down the steps. "It jist don't add up. Ever'budy knows—craziness runs in famblies. It don't come from no paint."

"Maybe, Ma," Norval interrupted thoughtfully, "ya shoulda tol' thet ta Miz Bradford."

"Humpf! Guess my advice ain't 'xpensive enough ta suit 'er. Well, whatta ya say, kid, how's about stoppin' at the Rexall—'n checkin' for the new **Photoplay**?"

Picture Postcard

A postcard pushed

into my slot
made me know

that you couldn't live without.

God my hand reached for you

pulling keys out to open.

Turned out to be

my aunt and uncle.

Virgin Islands.

Salamandering

Salamander - from Greek *salamandra*; 1) a mythical animal having the power to endure fire without harm; 2) an elemental being in the theory of Paracelsus inhabiting fire (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*).

A salamander was hopelessly throwing his shadow
 against the bright landscape
 to make a shade long enough to fit his shape.
 He looked up at the sun:

How it comes,
 sets itself up in the dark night,
 makes the dark shrink.
 How it, like some glib bird,
 perches in the sky
 singing the heatsong.

He nourished his thoughts with silence,
 perhaps expecting each fold of silence to
 increase the cool shade of immortality.

Dusk, take the Ship of lamps
 to the harbor
 and he will cease his glib song
 on every shore, being the passion
 that destroys us.
 So much sun has asked this flesh
 to wane and die.

Restore us to the dark flame of night's vein,
 this earth to its cool gray peace.

Nightfall and the salamander lay sleeping in the sod,
 unaware that a flame grows elsewhere into
 another brightness
 to rise up, take the face without shadow,
 light, bit by bit, time's constant vigil.

—CHRISTY AUSTIN

Portent

The afternoon has mistaken
itself for a piece of winter.
Balanced on the fence, the naked
squirrel protests.

From windows we watch a sad wind,
while frantic leaves fly premature
courses to decay. No one will
remember that

Today, in summer, tomorrow
arose early to snatch our warmth;
to remind us of autumnal
slumber; or to

Prepare our fall into the dull
incubation of sleepy graves.
The afternoon has mistaken
itself for a

Piece of winter. The broody cold,
in the nets of the wind, bows her
head to the ground where the thin pelt
windily yawns.

—CHRISTY AUSTIN

Hilliard

Hilliard never came home that evening.
Some say he was abducted by the old gypsy.
Some say she took him to her room—
Not like my room,
Empty like a box without surprises.
Her room must be dusty, dark,
With a black cat rubbing its back
Against the sooted pipes of the black-bellied stove,
With books, ragged, torn books in heaps
With fingers printed on bent corners
And prism glass with dust snowing from the upturned dome;
And only one door, on the alley.

One day Hilliard came back.
I chased him round the garden,
Begging him to tell me what the gypsy
Had done to him.
He grinned and strutted,
Then finally opened the gate
And let the alley in.

—CHRISTY AUSTIN

The Martyrdom of Saint Eulalia (December 10, 304 A.D.)

Olalla, Eulalia.
Martyr. Mountain. Merida.
Thirteen years and without breasts.
Lopped off hands dancing one with one
And Romans on the wheel with fire.

According to edict, the Consul attends
A waking red mass
Of soldiery and plumes,
Of rebel-footed horses, or wild mane.
The heretic child assaults the dark.
A primrose dawn. Eulalia descends.

Dacian declares: Child, Terrible
Innocent, take the salt
And spread yourself with incense
Before the sword is flamed and whetted!

The confident nod from shoulder to shoulder.
A shudder breaks the pain.

Nostrils flare, stamping hooves quicken,
Anvils keep time, bellows blow,
The hot coals glow
For the breasts of Eulalia.

The roaring steel slices moaning
Nature from her child...
Breasts and hands and splattered earth...
Anvils singing, bellows groaning;

Sharpened hooks ring their prize,
Hang the figure in the fired breeze;
Eulalia dead upon the Tree.
Consul, soldiery and Merida gloating;
Charred face of glory smoking;
Eulalia black upon the Tree.

In smoke, with the odor of wetted ashes and dogwood,
The saint hangs in the mutilated silence
Blackened; blackened soul of our woe;
Eulalia white upon the Tree.

Olalla, Eulalia.
Martyr. Mountain. Merida.
Thirteen years and without breasts.
Lopped off hands dancing one with one
And Romans on the wheel with fire.

Fable

A serpent undulates over crystal sands
and drinks at hissing tongue's length
from the lapping hem of the sea.
From this mouth with its two great fangs
comes:

Sea, O mismanaged Sea.
You have no command even of yourself.
You are heir to the moon's mad tidings
and the fisherman's meshes of knotted hemp.
You have no liberty and you have no consistency:
rather you come and go—
arrhythmic exhaling
of ragged foam that dries upon the sand,
ragged and ugly.

The Sea replies:

Snake, I cannot deny you who are noble in scorn.
I answer the moon's martial mandates.
I catch myself in the fisherman's nets.
I have no freedom that is mine,
nor power in my breaking breasts.
I am the uneasy edges of the sand.
Come, allow me to reflect your sleek and slender form,
your body's perfect control
in the tranquil tide of my clear water.

The serpent nears the calmed surface,
stands erect on his tail
and admires the handsome mirrored image:
 Watch how I move, I'm careful to be taut.

In this moment of perfect beauty
an unflung swell comes roaring in
(It should be wrong if beauty should be caught)
and he is caught by the watery trident's might.
How stealthily the sea with her three teeth
has devoured the foe!
The savage dominion of that roar
echoes in the harbor still
where remains a thin glittering fossil
in the sand
that the singing, laughing sea
wants never to erase.

Sonnet #3 (Spenserian)

In silent swirls falls snow of purest white,
Sifting from the sky like silk smooth flour.
It rests upon the ground through starless night
And grows from inch to foot with every hour.
Thickly spread on boughs of trees that tower
And lacing glassy ice on frozen ponds,
The snow commands her nature-rendered power;
Stiff grass, iced lakes, bowed trees—each one responds.
Then morning comes in spite of night's dark bonds,
And sunshine lights a fire in the East.
It pours forth radiant warmth on glistening fronds,
While bathing a scene that is glittered and fleeced.
But the snow melts slowly, the sun sinks low;
A cold land is mellowed by evening glow.

—*SUSAN M. de ROX*

Another One For The Road

Beneath this stone
Lies the Tennessee Rocket
His beard got caught
In his motorcycle sprocket

BURMA SHAVE

—*WILLIAM D. NOLAN*

The Fire of Life

PHILIP F. DEAVER

We had set fire to his house earlier that night, and the firelight from his burning house played on his once powerful, but now gaunt figure, making him appear more like some tenacious spirit than a real man. I studied his features as I sat listening to him play the harmonica. His frame was a little taller than average, with broad shoulders and narrow hips, but the muscles had grown stringy with the years.

He was a strange old man. His face was very plain, the kind you could never pick out of a crowd, except for his nose. It was very straight and prominent, standing out like a landmark and immediately capturing your attention. His dark eyes glowed with a strange ferocity—reflecting the flames of his burning house, I guess. In the flickering glare, his gnarled hands and wrinkled face captured my imagination. Even at the inexperienced age of 16, I understood that his hands had been twisted by pulling on the reins of a thousand plow horses, by cutting firewood for uncounted winter nights and by all the other chores required to wrestle a living from this land. His face was wrinkled from squinting against the fierce summer sun, but his eyes sparkled defiantly through the wrinkles.

The night was in control by then, but it all began that morning. He came trudging up the lane that balmy June day just as I was finishing chores, and said to Dad, "Morning, John. I was hoping your boy could help me today."

Dad said, "I reckon so, long as he's back in time for chores tomorrow morning."

Then he told me, "That's Bob Davis. He's got the rolling 80-acre farm about a mile down the road."

As they continued talking, I remembered it was that well kept place bordering the creek—a bit rocky, but pretty decent over all.

As soon as I gulped down my lunch, we started out for his farm. At first, I slung my tennis shoes by the laces across my shoulder, but some of the stones on that old gravel road were pretty sharp, and my feet weren't as tough as they would be later in the summer, so it wasn't long before I was wearing them. On the way to his farm, he explained why he wanted me to help burn down his house. He said that it was beginning to fall apart anyway, and the new owner didn't want to be bothered with it.

My neighbor was too old and tired to struggle with the farm anymore, and his son had finally persuaded him to sell out and go to the nursing home where he would be properly cared for. Although he obviously didn't relish the idea of living at the nursing home, he really had little choice.

So we began preparing for the fire. First we cleared all the brush and rubbish away from the house so the fire wouldn't spread. He kept his yard in good shape, but there was some leftover firewood, and a reasonable collection of junk to take care of. Next we cleaned out the house. The old man told me to take anything I wanted, but he'd already invited several others to

do the same, so there wasn't much of value left. Then we piled a bunch of broken chairs and stuff in the middle of the kitchen to set on fire.

Since evening was settling over the area by then, the old man suggested we have a bit of supper before lighting the fire. He didn't have to twist my arm; we'd been working pretty steady all afternoon and my stomach was starting to contract like it always does when I am hungry. Besides, that big hot sun had been pouring down on us all day, and I was sweaty and tired.

The old man was a real woodsman. He had a little "Indian" campfire blazing in a minute, and it wasn't long before we had all the hot beans and coffee we could handle. Night was creeping up fast by the time we finished, so we hurried and lit the fire before it got too dark for us to see our way around.

I took a pine branch from the campfire and went in and lit the big woodpile in the kitchen. Then I fired the four corners before I walked back to the campfire. That old house had been drying out and collecting dust for years; the flames spread quickly. We had to watch closely for a half hour or so to make sure the fire didn't spread; but as the flames burned down, we could relax. I just had to walk around it occasionally to make sure.

For a long time, the old man played his harmonica while I just sat on the other side of the campfire and listened. I'd never heard anyone who could make a mouth organ cry like he could. When he played songs like "Green Sleeves" and "Beautiful Dreamer," my throat got so tight I could hardly breathe, but a sixteen year-old couldn't cry.

Finally he slapped his old harmonica against his palm to shake the spit out of it, and looked over at me.

"There's quite a history to that old house," he said, studying me.

"Oh?" I encouraged him.

"Yup, take that corner over there that's still partially standing," he said, nodding to the one corner that hadn't burned through yet. "I reckon you noticed that corner was built of logs. Well, sir, my grandad built a cabin there over a hundred years ago. Then when he built the rest of the house, we just kept that for a family room. No wonder it's still up; those old oak logs burn a lot slower than them flimsy poplar boards do."

"Did your grandpa homestead here?" I asked, captivated by the fierce glow of his eyes.

"Yes sir," he nodded. "Got snowed in and nearly starved to death that first year; but that's the way this land is; it won't let you take it for free. Ya gotta get down and fight for it. Grandpa had to fell the trees and burn the stumps before he could even plow the land. It cost him his youth, then his health, and finally his life; but he'd do it again without blinking an eye."

The old man stopped fondling his harmonica and methodically slid it into his hip pocket. A gentle smile rippled over his face, and then he continued.

"When I was a young lad, Grandpa used to sit me on his lap and tell me how he built this farm out of the wilderness. He'd tell about the good years when there was so much corn he had to pile it in the fields; and the bad years when there wasn't even enough to keep the breedin' stock alive.

"Why that one year, I believe it was Gramp's third, he was just getting off to a good start anyway, things got so bad he had to eat tree bark, just to stay alive. Course he knew which trees to peel, and it didn't bother him none.

"But that was a long time ago," the old man added distantly. "He caught pneumonia and died when I was still just a little feller."

Just then that corner of the house collapsed in a shower of sparks, and the old man glanced at the fire.

"You better take a look around," he suggested. "Make sure the fire isn't spreading."

When I got back, he was just lowering a jug of home brew from his lips. I'd seen him bring it out of the house earlier, but hadn't said anything. He must have seen the look on my face this time, though.

"Want a pull?" he asked me with a grin.

"Sure!" I answered, reaching out for the jug.

"Go easy on that now, boy," he cautioned. "It's got a pretty good kick to it."

"OK," I said.

Then I proceeded to gulp the stuff as any sixteen year-old would on his very first drink. The first swallow burned everything it touched from my mouth to my belly. The second numbed everything, and the third never did anything. I was coughing and spitting all over by then.

The old man laughed so hard that he rolled sideways off his log. I could feel the blush creeping up my neck till it got lost in my hair, and I'm still not sure whether it was from the whiskey or just because I was so embarrassed.

"You looked kinda chilly," the old man grinned. "Did that warm you up?"

"Whew! I guess so. I'm sweating like a fat lady in July!"

"You know, I could watch the fire for a while if you wanted to get some sleep," he said.

"No, I'm not sleepy," I lied. "Tell me more."

"All right," he smiled. "Did you know I had a brother?"

I shook my head.

"We used to hunt back there in them woods. Dad taught us how to test the wind with a wetted finger and sneak up on squirrels from downwind; and how to wait motionless for hours until a fat ole deer picked its way down the trail, then slowly aim just behind its shoulder and squeeze the trigger. Of course, we couldn't hunt often. The chores and the fieldwork had to be done afore we could leave. Jeff and I had to feed and water the cattle and hogs in the morning; then we had to take care of the sheep and horses at night. It was hard work, but we were happy then.

"We were a close family. The farm bonded us together. I guess Mom was never really happy, though. She had three other children that died before they reached their first birthday, and this haunted her. She worked too hard and was always worn out, until finally she caught the fever and died."

The old man poked at the fire for a while, then went on.

"Yah, then it wasn't long before Jeff went to town and got in the hardware business. I stayed here at home and helped Dad farm till he passed on. Then I took over. Well, sir, there was a lot of work for just one man, and it got pretty lonesome with Dad gone; so it wasn't long before I went to town and got me a wife. She was about the sweetest, most courageous woman I ever met. We were married two years before Jim came along. He was a big baby, and the doc was out on call when she went into labor. I didn't know anything about deliverin' babies, and...well, she bled to death before the doc came.

"I never remarried. The neighbor ladies were only too happy to help me raise Jim, so it didn't seem necessary."

"What was Jim like?" I asked.

"He was a good boy; never gave me a moment's worry. I taught him everything I knew about this farm. How to hunt the woods, how to farm each field, how to fish the stream. He learned quick, but he had other things on his mind—wanted to be an engineer. I remember when he built a bridge right in

the middle of the living room.”

The old man chuckled.

“And the time he wouldn’t let me in his room for a month, because he was afraid I’d step on one of his buildings.”

The old man heaved a sigh. “I’m glad he left. He’s happier now than he’d ever have been here on the farm, and that’s what matters. It’s just too bad an outsider has to get this land after all these years.”

It was just starting to get light in the east. I stood up, stretched, and rubbed the stiffness from my muscles. There was nothing left of the house except a bed of soft glowing coals, but I decided to check around it one last time. When I got back, I knew the spell had been broken. I asked the old man to play “Green Sleeves” for me one last time.

He lovingly drew the harmonica from his pocket and played for me. Then he smiled.

“You know, now that the farm’s gone, this mouth organ is all I’ve got left. My Grandad got it for me and taught me to play it a long time ago.”

Then he studied me a minute and ventured, “You sure do seem to admire it.”

“It’s beautiful,” I answered quickly.

“Then you can have it when I’m gone,” he said matter of factly.

“Thanks,” I said.

He nodded.

It was sort of strange. His eyes had glowed so defiantly in the firelight, but now that the fire had burned down, I could hardly even see them. In the early morning light, he just looked like a tired old man.

When the sun started climbing over the horizon, I told him I should start home so I’d be there in time for chores. He thanked me kindly and told me to take care.

Then just before I left he said, “I’ll be leavin’ this afternoon so I doubt if I see you again.”

And as I walked away, the music gradually faded out.

It wasn’t a month later, I was out weeding in the corn field when a young man came walking out to see me. Since visitors aren’t very common, I just sort of rested my chin on the hoe handle and studied him as he came. First he stopped his carriage at the edge of the field, stepped out and tied his horse to the fence. Then he climbed over the fence (being careful not to catch his suit on the barbed wire), and strode briskly towards me. As he came closer, the first thing I noticed was his nose. The rest of his features were pretty plain, but his nose stuck out like a wedge.

“Howdy, mister,” I called. When he got closer, “Can I help you?”

“I believe so,” he said offering to shake hands. “I’m Jim Davis. Dad owned that farm about a mile down the road—you remember?”

“Sure, I helped him burn that old house down when he left,” I answered. “How does he like it at the nursing home?”

I saw his jaw muscles clench, then relax.

“This is for you,” he said, handing me the old man’s harmonica.

He turned away before I had a chance to thank him. As he walked back to his carriage, I remembered that night, and how the old man’s eyes had shone in the firelight.

My Last Confession

BOB MICHAELIS, JR.

Young Catholics attending parochial schools have many opportunities to receive the sacraments. At my own school, St. John the Baptist, we attended mass each day before classes began. If this wasn't enough encouragement, on the first Friday of each month those who had received communion that morning were allowed to purchase a special breakfast of doughnuts and hot chocolate that was served in the school gymnasium. Not many of us could resist such a delicious reward. When we had purged ourselves in confession, we received communion; and then we went to breakfast. It was on one of those Fridays that I made my last confession.

On a bright spring day toward the end of my eighth grade year, I faced a big problem. I had committed a terrible sin—such a terrible sin that I didn't have the courage to confess it. But that was only half my dilemma: I couldn't receive communion unless I confessed this sin. Ordinarily that wouldn't have been such a problem, but today was a First Friday. No one missed communion on a First Friday unless something was horribly wrong. I was caught between my classmates and God. Finally, I decided that God was likely to be more kind. I stepped boldly into the line forming in front of Father Herbert's confessional.

In St. John's Church each confessional is divided into three compartments, the top half of which is open. Heavy wine-colored curtains hang around the interior of each booth to provide privacy. A white light over the center compartment signals that the priest is ready to hear confessions. The penitent's compartments are marked by red lights, and they are separated from the priest's by a dark screen.

There are some rules to be observed when making a confession that can't be found in any catechism. They concern style. It was important to strike the proper balance between piety and irreverence. The accepted method of filling this requirement was to casually lean against the wall with carelessly folded hands before entering the confessional. One left very erect and proper, with the eyes looking humbly toward the floor. It was also unseemly to spend too much time confessing, as though you had committed many, many sins. Most penitents tried to select a kindly priest, or one who was hard of hearing. I had selected Father Herbert because he was old, and sometimes he fell asleep.

When my turn came, I stepped into the confessional, knelt down, and began my confession: "Bless me Father, for I have sinned. I wish to confess in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

A deep, rich baritone replied, "Amen." That wasn't the voice of Father Herbert! As often as not, he answered with a snore. I wasn't sure that I could confess the most serious sin of my life to a stranger. After a silence of a few moments, the voice prompted me, "Proceed with your confession, my son."

I began to recite some minor offenses while I tried to evaluate the situation. I was trapped. If I left without confessing my sin, I couldn't receive

communion; and my classmates would surely know me for a black sinner. Yet there was no way of predicting how this strange priest would react. He might even refuse me absolution. My difficulties were mushrooming, although they had begun innocently enough.

Last night I had walked to the Dairy Bar with Martha, who lived on my street. On our way home, we took a short-cut through a dark alley. A heavy, wrought iron gate hanging between two garages beckoned to us, and we decided to explore. The gate opened into a courtyard of the type that is sometimes found in older neighborhoods. As we crept around, Martha pulled closer to me, for protection. There was a small pond in one corner of the yard, and by it was a stone bench. When we reached the bench, we sat down to rest, huddling together against the cool night air like two conspirators planning their next burglary. In a whisper I pointed out the Big Dipper and the Constellation Orion. When Martha didn't answer, I turned toward her to see if anything was wrong. She sat very still, looking up at me as though she were waiting for something. I kissed her, and her arms went around my neck. The sweet, sticky fragrance of her laquered hair sealed out the courtyard around us. As we continued kissing, my hand reached through her thin blouse to her breast. After a while, Martha said that we'd better go. I didn't want to move, but Martha insisted that it was getting late. I stood up and stretched while she straightened her hair. The cool evening breeze stung my face like the aftershave that I'd recently started using. I felt mature and took Martha's hand and led her out of the courtyard. We didn't have much to say as we closed the heavy, iron gate behind us—we had our whole lives to talk.

It wasn't until the next morning that I began to have second thoughts. As I walked to school I began a routine examination of my conscience in preparation for the First Friday observance. I began to remember how stringently Father Herbert had spoken against necking. The exciting adventure of the night before suddenly threatened to destroy my soul. My deliberations were interrupted when the priest prompted me, "Is that all, my son?"

"No, Father."

"What other sins do you wish to confess, my son?"

"Father, I..."

"Come, my son, no sin is too evil to confess to God, the Almighty Father."

I decided to risk it and blurted out the story of the night before, omitting only those details that would identify my companion. When I had finished, the priest asked several questions.

"What was the girl's name, my son?"

"I can't tell you that, Father."

"I respect your wish to protect her, my son. It's a natural instinct, but we must help her as well. Is she a Catholic girl?"

"No, Father."

"Well, perhaps you'll tell me later. You must understand that this is a very grave sin that you have committed, but have no fear. The Lord Almighty God can forgive any man's sins, no matter how terrible. You must take steps, my son, steps to insure that you will never again be faced with such temptation. You must never see this shameless girl again."

"But Father, how can I do that? I see her everyday. We live on the same street. I walk past her house on my way to school."

"Do not answer when she speaks to you. Avert your eyes when she looks at you. If necessary, you must take a different route to school. You must avoid this horrible girl at all costs!"

"She's not horrible..."

"Yes she is! A horrible and shameless girl! You must avoid her if you wish to reach paradise!"

"What will she think, Father, if I suddenly stop seeing her and speaking to her?"

"Her thoughts are of no consequence compared to the welfare of your immortal soul. Heed my words, and you will receive your reward in Heaven!"

My heart was beating so rapidly that I couldn't answer. When I didn't answer, the priest spoke again.

"Are you receiving communion today, my son?"

I mumbled that I was.

"Good! Then take the Lord into your soul and see the wisdom of my words through the power of the Holy Spirit. For your penance say five "Our Father's" and three "Hail Mary's." I absolve your sins in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

"Amen."

"God bless you, my son. Go in peace."

I walked slowly back to my pew where I did my penance. I received communion with the other students. After communion I buried my face in my hands, as I had been taught, to experience God's presence in my soul. Until that day I had never had any trouble picturing the size or location of my soul. I had always thought of it as being about the same diameter as my body. One part of my body, just below the rib cage, sometimes felt a little larger and warmer. It was there that I thought my soul stayed, but on that day I couldn't locate the exact place. All that I could find was the ache in my heart.

A few weeks later I graduated from St. John's Grade School. I have never gone back.

This Way

When I think of you,
I am pierced by the divine needle.
I feel the thread drawn through me,
The thread that runs forever,
The thread of accident/events
That made us what we are,
A stitch in the warp of time.

The unconscious random mutation of time
Forever unraveling, forever reweaving
Has brought us to this.
To meet in a random restaurant, in this best of all possible worlds.

Poem

How far away from another's meaning.
 Locked into my own universe of understanding:

alone here

decoding signals.

Words there

craving recognition with their scattered curves
 and leaning angles

until I
 with memory quick to recall,
 order and take into my cosmos.

There out there you are.
 Mouth moving hands cutting through the air.
 Words leaving to be caught by skin-tightened drums
 which feel the structure of your thinking.
 Then give it new meaning.

And I wonder what I've looked like to the thousands
 who have seen me,

having seen only edges and shadows,
 hollows of my flesh
 cut by roaming lights.

And
 where went all my soundings?
 Do they travel still through time and space
 to meet with spongy waiting?

I

will speak to unknown listeners?

abcdefg and yet there is ineffable.
 Two and two are four

four and four are eight but the mystery the mystery
surrounds all the same.

We look to it
in it
under it
through it.

I

am in its moving stream, merging now,
then a tributary—and merging once again.
Fingers reach out to others reaching.
others floating by.
And though we barely touch,
there is sometimes a Smile:
A Smile of understanding
that there is no understanding.

Beautiful Magic Mysteries floating by:
what are your worlds?
How do you feel the moving light,
the roaring and the delicate sound,
pushing;
closing flesh breathing?

Are there monsters, phantoms
hovering on the periphery
of the visions in your minds?

When the curtains move
in a summer's night
with secret whispering
behind the blooming hedge,
are you caught in deep remembering?

Does the green of mother earth
startle you from your metaphysical wandering
to bring you home again?

What do we mean?
Mean mean?

We wait here on the Fringe
either in war
or joyful toleration,
inquisitive ignorance,
hopeful laughter
in the

either/or before the neither/nor.

A Dream of Infinity

Musclescaped, gouged shadow gorges,
 rocked veins smoothing,
 gray still arching
 from dulled metal dunes' ended shifting.

See that stone sun snarling?

That dropped heavy intent,

low between the shadow land and a world too light for eye?

It never stops beneath that sky

broken into pieces.

Nothing crawls.

Only gray at the teeth of the cave.

Cold, glittering, fat forever beyond.

—JODY GOLLAN

On Reading About the Art of Wine Tasting

Oh, to be a Master Taster,
 working nose and palate,
 sampling spirits from the barrel
 hooped with metal
 where no nails are allowed.

This is art?

Forget the bread, Omar, the bough.

Just art, a little verse and thou.

—JANE TILFORD

The Dream Structure In Hawthorne's Tales

VICKI MARTIN

Hawthorne, in his short stories, frequently attempts to explore what he calls the truth of the human heart. The reality of this truth, for Hawthorne, is often obscured by fact, or appearance. He attempts to resolve this conflict between reality and appearance, and artistically to create a perception of a universal human truth, by a variety of literary devices. My intention is to suggest that one of Hawthorne's most brilliantly realized and successful techniques is the use of the dream as a framework within which he explores the structure and conflicts of the human unconscious.

In many stories, "The Birthmark" and "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" for example, Hawthorne alludes to dreams when he wishes to draw the reader to an awareness of a truth that is obscured by external reality. In four stories, however, Hawthorne goes beyond mere incidental use of the dream. In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Young Goodman Brown," "The Wives of the Dead," and "The Celestial Railroad," Hawthorne develops the entire structure of the story within the framework of a dream. I suggest that in three of these stories Hawthorne's use of the dream structure provides him with a means to represent psychological realities in a concrete material way; so that the incidents within the story symbolize hidden or unacknowledged truths in the unconscious mind of the protagonist. I further suggest that though the fourth story, "The Celestial Railroad," is fundamentally different from the first three stories in both style and intent, an analysis of this difference can help to explain the complete dependence of the first three stories on the dream structure.

Obviously, one of the implications of my thesis is my belief that Hawthorne had an intuitive understanding of the human unconscious and of the existence of archetypal thought patterns, the validity of which would be proven by later 19th and 20th century psychologists. Hawthorne, himself, is aware of the psychological value of the dream. In "The Birthmark" Alymer muses that "Truth often finds its way to the mind close muffled in robes of sleep, and then speaks with uncompromising directness of matters in regard to which we practice an unconscious self-deception during our waking moments." In "The Haunted Mind" Hawthorne observes that "in the depths of every heart there is a tomb and a dungeon, though the lights, the music, and revelry above may cause us to forget their existence, and the buried ones or prisoners whom they hide." He further observes that it is in sleep, "when the mind has a passive sensibility, but no active strength; when the imagination is a mirror, imparting vividness to all ideas, without the power of controlling or selecting them," that the reality of human truth is often revealed. As we move into a discussion of the four stories, several critical interpretations will be mentioned and briefly discussed, in an attempt to show that many modern critics feel these stories can be interpreted only within the framework of modern psychology. The implication is that though Hawthorne is aware of the value of the dream, his intuitive knowledge of psychology is deeper and more comprehensive than he himself is aware of.

A brief discussion of the literal story line of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" will be necessary before attempting to show how its dream structure affects any attempts at interpretation. Robin, a young farm boy, arrives in the city, and searches for his kinsman, Major Molineux. He assumes that Major Molineux is wealthy and respected, and he hopes to share in this reflected status. During his search he has several bewildering encounters. In each encounter he is either rebuffed or humiliated, and a dreamlike atmosphere of strangeness and distortion is progressively built. He then meets the first person who treats him kindly, a man who waits with him for his kinsman to pass. A mob approaches and he sees his kinsman, tarred and feathered. Within the mob he recognizes everyone who has ridiculed him throughout the day. He joins emotionally into the spirit of the mob and laughs the loudest, then withdraws and says that he feels he is ready to leave. His companion advises him to wait and possibly find his permanent place in the city, now that his rise will be without the help of his kinsman.

On a strictly literal level the town and the incidents are, to say the least, bizarre. But most critics, in their interpretations, have acknowledged that the story can only be analyzed within its dream structure. Within this structure it is a significant comment on human existence.

Q.D. Leavis has interpreted the story as "something between a pageant and ritual drama, disguised in the emotional logic of a dream."¹ She sees the psychological conflicts of America reflected in the dream town, and Robin's inner conflict reflected in his participation in the dream town's incidents. Her entire thesis, that the story represents "that most primitive of all dramatic representations, the conquest of the old king by the new," is based on the acceptance of Hawthorne's dream structure as a means to symbolize subconscious truths.²

Mary Rohrberger develops the interpretation that Robin represents both the colonial American, vital, yet lacking self control, and any young man working toward the attainment of maturity. This attempt at achieving maturity involves the inner conflicts arising from subconscious hostility to the father, concurrent with subconscious dependency.³ "Thus," she concludes, "character, plot and scene relate levels of meaning, and the structure of symbolism mirrors the inner truths."⁴

Neal Frank has observed that the story has been persuasively interpreted by many as an archetypal initiation ceremony through which Robin achieves moral maturity.⁵

The analyses of these critics seem to imply one thing. Whether "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is interpreted as an initiation rite of a young man, a search for the father, the Freudian rejection of the old king for the new, or the political coming of age of America, it can only be interpreted within what Mary Rohrberger calls the "typical dream pattern of isolation and rejection."⁶ Within this structure each action symbolizes some psychologically motivated pattern of behavior or psychic conflict.

In "Young Goodman Brown" Hawthorne again develops a story of unconscious conflict within the structure of the dream. Young Goodman Brown, or Everyman, has recently married Faith, who is both literally his wife, and symbolically his faith. He leaves her for an appointment he has promised to keep in the forest. Then begins Brown's experience as he meets, or recognizes, on his way to the witch's Sabbath, most of the people he has known or respected from childhood. He finally meets his Faith, who has also come to the Sabbath. Just as he and Faith are ready to be baptized into sin, Brown cries, "Faith, Faith," and is released. He never, however, escapes the effects of that night. He has had a vision of what he perceives to be the truth

of human existence; and this intolerable vision warps the remainder of his life. Hawthorne raises the question of whether or not the night has been a dream. But he goes on to imply that the question of the objective reality of the evening's experience is not the significant point. What is significant is that the dream has shaped Brown's life. And it is from the viewpoint of this dream, and what it reflects of Brown's unconscious conflicts, that most critics approach the story.

William Stein offers the thesis that "Young Goodman Brown" is a tragedy of doubt that is ingeniously resolved on the mythic level of reality. He feels that the main characters are neither Faith, nor Brown, but are rather symbolic creatures of Brown's psyche.⁷ He develops the argument that the entire journey is a psychic projection of Brown's distrust and suspicion. Brown projects his own negative conflicts and, as a result, diseases his entire life by his own psychological attitude. Stein concludes "that his faith in evil was stronger than his faith in good. He was unable to accept the existence of evil in the world; hence he was not equipped morally to come to grips with life."⁸

H.J. Lang has pointed out that Brown's dream is, for him, reality. It is, however, only his reality. Brown, Lang argues, projects his own unconscious knowledge of evil on the conscious world of objective reality and then he holds that world responsible. The story becomes, in Lang's view, not a story of oneself being evil, but of believing one's neighbor to be evil; and thereby psychologically alienating oneself from the rest of humanity.⁹

Mary Rohrberger suggests that "Young Goodman Brown" is set within a dream framework that reflects an inner reality. She observes that Brown's journey from the village to the forest and back into the village is a frequently encountered psychic pattern of death and rebirth.¹⁰ On the level of psychological reality the story becomes, for Rohrberger, an archetypal search for psychic reconciliation, which Brown never achieves. "Unable to resolve this conflict," she observes, "Brown lives apart from the main stream of life, renouncing, as he does, one of its most vital forces."¹¹

Once again, as in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," modern interpretations imply that Hawthorne's use of the dream structure is an intuitive way of presenting and analyzing thought patterns of the unconscious mind; both their source and their resolution.

There has been less consistency of critical opinion about the manner of interpreting "The Wives of the Dead." Most of the critics prefer to interpret the story on a literal level. At least two, however, H. J. Lang and Harry Levin, analyze the story within the structure of a dream. Within this framework the story is entirely consistent with the type of psychological analysis Hawthorne develops in the two previously discussed tales.

Briefly, on a literal level, two sisters, Margaret and Mary, learn almost simultaneously, of the deaths of their husbands. Both wives go to bed. Margaret hears a knock and is informed that her husband is still alive. She goes to tell her sister but hesitates, afraid that her own joy will only increase the sorrow of her sister. As she leaves, Mary wakes and is told by an old friend that her husband, too, is still alive. She, too, goes to inform her sister, but also hesitates. As Hawthorne concludes the story "her hand trembled against Margaret's neck, a tear also fell upon her cheek, and she suddenly awoke." Read on a literal level the story forces the reader to accept a chain of events that is quite difficult to accept. Harry Levin observes that "Hawthorne's affirmations are double negatives, the author's repudiation of his characters' denials....and that the wives of the dead dream vainly of their husbands' return."¹² In my opinion H. J. Lang has convincingly argued that only within the dream structure does "The Wives of the Dead" exemplify the psycholog-

ical insight one expects from Hawthorne.¹³

Within the dream structure, the story is an analysis of unconscious rejection of reality. Lang points out that one should not overlook the sexual and psychological implications of the lamp burning in Margaret's room. He presents a persuasive argument that this light is both symbolically and literally the light of hope. And it is by the light of this lamp that the sisters receive the news of their husbands' supposed survival.¹⁴

Again, then, in "The Wives of the Dead," Hawthorn uses the dream to frame a revelation of unconscious conflict. The deaths of the husbands may be the reality, but the rejection of this knowledge is, as Hawthorne shows, the psychic reality.

"The Celestial Railroad" is also set within a dream framework. It differs fundamentally, however, from the three stories previously discussed. A brief discussion of these differences will serve to emphasize the similarity of structural development in the first three.

"The Celestial Railroad" is both a satire and an allegory. The reader sees Christian's journey in *Pilgrim's Progress*, but now facilitated by all the illusory, but comforting, benefits of progress. In this story we see Hawthorne as a critic of society. He is socially aware, and his intention is didactic.

I do not mean to criticize or detract from the story. To the contrary, I find "The Celestial Railroad" one of the masterpieces of American satire. I do feel, however, that Terence Martin's observations that Hawthorne's focus, in this story, is on the collective, rather than on the individual, and that Hawthorne frames this story with firm, allegorical discipline, are especially pertinent to this discussion.¹⁵

"The Celestial Railroad" can stand alone without the dream framework. It definitely adds, however, to the tight construction of the story, and it is here an effective literary device. As Harry Levin observes, the consolation of finding that the journey was only a dream serves to emphasize the normal lesson of the story.¹⁶ But even without the dream structure, "The Celestial Railroad" remains a brilliant satire and allegory. The discipline of the allegorical structure and the didactic purpose of satire supply the framework within which the themes grow and develop.

The human unconscious, however, is both personal and undisciplined. It has been my intention to suggest that only within the framework of the dream could Hawthorne attempt to objectify the unconscious conflicts and archetypal patterns which he intuitively perceived in the human mind. "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," "Young Goodman Brown," and "The Wives of the Dead," suggest that only within a dream structure could Hawthorne have so ably succeeded in this attempt.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Q.D. Leavis, "Hawthorne as Poet," in *Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 39.
- 2 Leavis, p. 42.
- 3 Mary Rohrberger, *Hawthorne and the Modern Short Story: A Study in Genre* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966), p. 39.
- 4 Rohrberger, p. 39.
- 5 Neal Frank, *Hawthorne's Early Tales, A Critical Study* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1972), p. 235.
- 6 Rohrberger, p. 34.
- 7 William B. Stein, *Hawthorne's Faust: A Study of the Devil Archetype* (Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 1953), p. 61.

- 8 Stein, p. 63.
 9 H.J. Lang, "How Ambiguous Is Hawthorne," in **Hawthorne: A Collection of Critical Essays** (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 92.
 10 Rohrberger, p. 40.
 11 Rohrberger, pp. 46-47.
 12 Harry Levin, **The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne Poe Melville** (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 58.
 13 Lang, p. 88.
 14 Lang, p. 89.
 15 Terence Martin, **Nathaniel Hawthorne** (New York: Twayne Pub. Inc., 1965), pp. 30, 62, 188.
 16 Levin, p. 236.

Steam

Steam

of the cooking food
 collecting on clear

cold windows
 hiding the world
 behind its mist

Droplets

forming
 unable to hold
 falling
 to the next
 growing
 racing down the glass
 etching lines

into
 the day outside

as we sit eating.

—CHIP PURCELL

Tea

Piping hot,
 late-night brewed tea.

Tea

brewed more to dark than light,
 more to the darkness of the night.

Tea

to steam and clean out
 to bring order,
 and to think about.

Good,

rich,

one-lump late-night hot tea.

—CHIP PURCELL

