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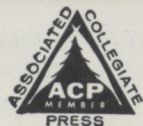


# STAFF

## PAGE

### STAFF

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# EDITORIAL

The practice of social promotion in public schools wrings cries of anguish and scorn from many educators. But in a public school, where law enforces mandatory attendance to the age of sixteen, many pupils required by law to go to school simply are not intelligent enough to do the work past a certain grade. In such cases, of what value is it to keep a child in one grade and overload that grade when he can "not learn" just as well in a higher one? Thus, it is at least possible to discern a reason for social promotion on the grammar and secondary school levels of education; and while we justly abhor the need for it, the practice itself is not to be so bitterly excoriated.

But can we find an excuse for what might be called "social promotion" in our colleges? If college admission standards are not a farce, we can assume that college students *are* intelligent enough to do the work. Why then do we have in our colleges a practice apparently equivalent to social promotion on lower levels? What excuse can the college offer for promoting large numbers of students who lack the ability to write coherent prose—who lack this ability not merely as freshmen and sophomores, but as juniors and seniors as well? The law does not enforce mandatory attendance for these students, and if they fail there are equally qualified students anxious to replace them.

As editor of a college publication, we are in a good position to see at least a sampling of the writing on this campus. We have ac-

cess to much student and faculty material and, in fact, the last quarter has been most gratifying in terms of publishable material received by THE REBEL.

But we read much material that is not publishable, and somewhere there is inequity when we see, with alarming frequency, juniors and seniors submitting (not only to THE REBEL, but to instructors) written work so full of rudimental errors in organization and grammar as to be completely unsatisfactory. And the students who submit this material have passed English courses in grammar and composition to reach the junior-senior level. When they are allowed to pass these courses without learning to organize and write coherently, without learning that bulky words, shoddy sentences and overall confusion do not communicate, then the moral is clear. Such a student is left with a basic inability to communicate beyond a certain plateau, and society finds foisted upon it, in the guise of an academic degree, a parody of a truly educated man.

As a literary magazine THE REBEL is concerned with expression, not solely literary and poetic expression, but expression for effective communication. To raise a standard and maintain its elevation is a task which THE REBEL attempts; it is its "social responsibility" to do so. Social responsibility and "social promotion" appear incompatible.



Edward R. Murrow, Director of the United States Information Agency, visited Greenville in December, 1961, on a tour of the sites of the Voice of America radio transmitters scheduled for construction in Pitt County. During his visit Mr. Murrow granted a brief interview to the Rebel.

In his long career in radio and television, Mr. Murrow has received numerous awards for his news reporting and commentary, and has gained a reputation for accuracy and objectivity. During World War II he became one of America's most influential commentators through his program, "This is London," and most television viewers are familiar with his "Person to Person" programs. He has been termed a liberal progressive, and his political views have often been attacked by conservative leaders.

When he was appointed by President Kennedy to head the USIA Mr. Murrow made an addition to the 1953 directive that established the Service. The directive had stated that the mission of the USIA was: "... to submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communication techniques that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace." To this statement of purpose Mr. Murrow has added: "We shall operate on the basis of truth . . ."



## *Interviews With*

# EDWARD R. MURROW

**Interviewer:** Does the greatest benefit of the USIA lie in person-to-person contacts or mass media? How can 1250 field officers personally contact many people?

**Mr. Murrow:** I think it is very difficult to analyze the relative importance of contacts. Certainly, I think many of us who work in the field of electronic reporting are inclined to forget that the best method of communicating is always face-to-face. You are quite right, of course, in assuming that the 1200 United States officers abroad cannot contact personally very many people. Our total effort abroad is only a small segment of the total United States communication with foreign countries. We have, for example, 30,000 missionaries abroad. We have with their dependents one million military personnel abroad. What we attempt to do in the agency is to utilize all means

of communication. We operate the Voice of America in thirty-six languages and dub our shows in more than forty languages. We do cartoon strips that have no text at all so that they may be understood by people who are illiterate. So we attempt to use all means, but in sophisticated societies particularly, where no language barrier exists, (by that I mean where we do not have to deal with the exotic languages), the face-to-face communication which can be transmitted through radio, television, or print with the local populace is certainly the most effective means of communication.

**Interviewer:** Exactly how do these facilities abroad operate?

**Mr. Murrow:** They place television shows on local stations where such stations exist. They



also place local radio programs. They spend a great deal of time attempting to explain United States foreign policy to editors, to columnists, to broadcasters; in short, to make United States policy intelligible wherever they can and palatable wherever possible.

**Interviewer:** What means does the USIA have of reaching what might be called the "little man"?

**Mr. Murrow:** I would suggest the primary method is through radio. The secondary method would be by the use of mobile transmitters to show films, to play recordings, to distribute pamphlets. These, in many cases, do not reach what you referred to as the "little man," because in vast areas of the world, the "little man" is illiterate. In this area, we must put more emphasis than we have in the past on language training, particularly in the training of people to command the exotic languages. Some can be done with very simple wall newspapers. We publish a great many books, for example, that employ a vocabulary of not more than 1000 words so that the people who have an inadequate command of English may read and understand. This is a very slow process because we have to recognize that in many areas of the world—particularly in Africa—there is no national consciousness, the allegiance is purely tribal, and the literacy rate is very low. The essence of the problem, I am persuaded, involves getting the right men, more of them, in the right places, and with greater linguistic accomplishments.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned books and magazines. What type of material is published in USIA publications?

**Mr. Murrow:** We publish a vast number of them. For example, last year we published in translation about nine million books. This sounds like a sizeable number. However, it is to be remarked that the Soviet Union in that same time moved from the publication of thirty million books in non-Communist bloc languages to forty million books in non-Communist bloc languages. We publish a magazine in Russian in the Soviet Union that is limited by inter-governmental agreement to a print run of 52,000. We could, of course, sell a hundred times that number if we were permitted to do so. We publish a similar magazine in Poland. One is published in Southeast Asia, called "Free World," that has a print run of 350,000, another called "Ohiyett" in Arabic with a run of about 30,000. In addition to that,

we print large numbers of pamphlets and cartoons. To answer your question specifically, much of the book translation has to do with what would be called "Americana" which is an effort to publish books that reflect American political, economic, social, and literary life.

**Interviewer:** What part of the American legend or creed have you found most difficult to represent to other countries?

**Mr. Murrow:** It is difficult to represent, particularly to the emerging countries, the whole economic and governmental structure of this country because we are operating a very complex system of government. It requires a high degree of literacy and a degree of political sophistication. I think our major problem has been in conveying to people abroad that we do have a diverse pluralistic society, one that is not always intelligible in its constitutional construction even to more literate persons in western Europe. But I think we have our basic success by doing what every nation has done in time of crisis: by going back to its root-holes, by making it clear that we are a revolutionary people, that we are not allergic to change, that we have no desire to sanctify the *status quo*, that we are a nation of change, that we recognize imperfections and constantly strive to improve them, and that we want to improve the conditions under which we live.

**Interviewer:** What part do you find the least difficult?

**Mr. Murrow:** The least difficult, obviously, is to convey the strength, both economic and military, of this country—its relatively high standard of living and the generosity of the American people. This sort of thing in most societies is not very difficult to convey.

**Interviewer:** How damaging has our integration problem been to American prestige and how is the integration problem presented by foreign propaganda?

**Mr. Murrow:** There is no doubt that it is damaging to our prestige. When many of us in this country see a picture of a burning bus, we are likely to think that it is merely an example of journalistic enterprise. We in the agency know, of course, that this will be front page news all the way from Manila around the world. However, in terms of accurate presentation, we do not attempt to suppress the fact that racial tensions exist in this country. We do make it clear that incidents of violence are isolated. We emphasize



what the Federal government does to correct the situation, and we make it clear that this is a matter that is one of constant discussion, debate, and progress in the United States.

*Interviewer:* To what extent is our internal policy affected by the desire to create the "right impression" in other countries?

*Mr. Murrow:* I'm not quite sure I comprehend the question, but if you are asking if our domestic policy is determined by or influenced by the desire to influence foreign opinion, then I think the answer is no.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that there has been a resurgence of McCarthyism in the United States? Do societies like the John Birch Society and the Minute Men hinder the work of the USIA?

*Mr. Murrow:* I think it is dangerous to deal in political short-hand, by saying a revival of McCarthyism. I think the sense of frustration of what the President called right-wing extremism makes our task more difficult, but movements of this kind have not yet reached the point where they present us with a major problem in telling the American story abroad.

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*Hodding Carter began his newspaper career in the early 1930's and continued it to become the overseas wartime editor of The Yank and The Stars and Stripes. He is now the publisher of the Delta Democrat-Times in Greenville, Mississippi.*

*A Bowdoin College graduate, Mr. Carter is winner of the Pulitzer Prize and is one of the outstanding Southern liberals. His ideas have been of great importance, especially in politics and social movement. He has published several books: The Angry Scar, John Law Wasn't So Wrong, Lower Mississippi, The Marquis de Lafayette, Southern Legacy, The Winds of Fear, and Where Main Street Meets the River (autobiographical).*



... And

## HODDING CARTER

*Interviewer:* How responsible for present conditions in the South is the Reconstruction period?

*Mr. Carter:* It is not so much the Reconstruction period itself but its use by four generations

of Southern politicians that link the two tragic periods. In a preface to my fairly recent book, *The Angry Scar*, I pointed out that the North remembered too little of the period and the South too much. Perhaps this may give you an indica-



tion of my feeling without your having to read the book.

**Interviewer:** Has the development of integration in the South since the Supreme Court decision been about what you expected?

**Mr. Carter:** I expected integration to proceed much more slowly and far more violently after the Supreme Court decision in 1954.

**Interviewer:** Has the "core of resistance" in the South been broken?

**Mr. Carter:** In terms of widespread urban acceptance of token integration only, it might be said that the Southern "core of resistance" has been dented, if not broken; but in the small town and rural areas of the deep South there has been little softening of the white will to resist by almost any means.

**Interviewer:** Do you feel that the more widespread distribution of the Negro throughout the country has increased sympathy for the South in non-Southern areas?

**Mr. Carter:** I emphatically feel that the impact of the economically and socially sub-marginal Negroes throughout the industrial areas of the non-South has made at least emotional allies of many Northern whites in respect to traditional Southern viewpoints.

**Interviewer:** Has traditional hostility towards Southern conservatism tended to isolate the South and put it on the defensive?

**Mr. Carter:** The South has been pretty much on the defensive, politically and economically, since before the Civil War. Antagonism from outside stemmed from many causes: race attitudes, the old political-economic clash between Northern industrialism and Southern agriculture and in latter days the conservative attitudes of Southern spokesmen, being high among the reasons.

**Interviewer:** Have contemporary Southern writers—for example Faulkner, Caldwell, and O'Connor—rendered the South in depraved cliché, and to that extent done it a disservice?

**Mr. Carter:** I doubt that the Southern writers whom you listed have misrepresented the South—incidentally, there is no such thing as the Southern Writer or The South in literature and life. They have simply concentrated upon certain aspects.

**Interviewer:** Do literary critics tend to receive well any anti-Southern writer?

**Mr. Carter:** I do not believe that the honest literary critic receives anti-Southern writers with open arms simply because they are anti-Southern. Much criticism of Southern attitudes is well and honestly done. I like to think that the good critics differentiate.

**Interviewer:** What do you think of W. J. Cash's *Mind of the South*?

**Mr. Carter:** I think Cash's *Mind of the South* is still the classic in its field and as responsible and objective as any treatment of our region could be.

**Interviewer:** What do you have to say about "freedom rider" episodes in Mississippi?

**Mr. Carter:** As to the Freedom Rider episodes, all I would want to say at this time is "a plague on both your houses." State and even Federal executives let this thing get away from them. As for Mississippi, the majority of the white citizens seem determined to buck the Federal government on integrated bus stations as long as they can. How long that will be depends on the Federal government.

**Interviewer:** What part have newspapers played in recent crises?

**Mr. Carter:** I am not sure I understand this question. Some notable Southern newspapers have counseled moderation. Others, less notable and more strident, have tried to make matters worse, it seems to me, by their advocacy of extreme measures and extreme leaders.

**Interviewer:** What does the future hold for the South? Is the pattern yet discernible?

**Mr. Carter:** I am not worried about the South's future—if there is going to be any future for anyone of us at all. The pattern is clear: increased industrialism, large scale mechanized agriculture with more and more diversification, a desertion of the countryside and growth of the larger towns and cities, and a continuing radical shift of the center of Negro population from South to somewhere in the Mid-west. I think most, if not all of these trends, will be helpful.

**Interviewer:** Has the integration problem here hurt our prestige overseas?

**Mr. Carter:** I am certain our prestige has been greatly damaged by the various unhappy episodes arising out of the integration issues. However, our enemies would have invented something else to hurt us even had this problem not existed.



# P O E T S

## *Low Tide*

Some cruel and calloused hand  
Has pushed the river back today,  
Leaving exposed a mass of distorted roots  
Resembling broken bones.  
These, and the hulls of barnacled boats  
And jagged broken bottles  
Lie bare, as witnesses  
Of the river's last folly . . .  
And tiny waves come lapping in  
Trying to stretch and cover  
This naked ugliness of passion spent,  
That has been, until now, harbored and hidden  
Below the glassy surface of the river.

—SARAH HANSEN

## *A Southern Lullaby*

Hush, my honey, hush yo' cryin',  
Mammy am here do' her  
heart's a-sighin',  
Yo' daddy at de crap-game—  
losin' all de money,  
Dat I tek in washin' fo de  
white-folks, honey,  
Hush yo cryin' an' sleep.

Lie still, baby, rest while yo can,  
A yaller woman has got  
my man,  
He buy her corn liquor and dey  
dance an' sin,  
An' de Lawd calls in vain his  
soul to win—  
Sleep honey, sleep and rest.

Sleep, my baby, de do's on de  
latch,  
Mammy gotta go to de cotton  
patch  
When wuk is over and night  
is fall—  
I go to de church when  
my Jesus call—  
Sleep, honey, sleep and rest.

I gonna kneel at de mourners  
bench—  
And pray God to take him from  
dat yeller wench—  
And pray dat the lynchers  
won't never come take him  
But sin or no sin, Lawd  
I'll never forsake  
him—  
Sleep, honey child, sleep and rest!

—DR. ELIZABETH UTTERBACK



# Papa's Journey

—G. CARROLL NORWOOD



Now he has gone, the rugged old cuss,  
'Cross the river and into the trees:  
Not gently tapping but raising a fuss  
As he bellowed for those Eternal Keys.  
His roaring aroused the keeper,  
Who fumbled at the gate;  
Old Papa wasn't excited,  
But, God, he hated the wait . . .  
The glowing gilded gates swung slowly open wide,  
And as the bulbous old man peered inside,  
With knapsack and shells, paper and pen,  
He snuffed through his beard and walked right in.  
The brilliant light from the Sinless Skies  
Made Papa squint his tired, veined eyes—  
And as the truth and goodness found his face,  
He wondered if he would like this place.

He looked like a weathered old tent, like a shaggy  
hemp rope,  
As he stood heavily there,  
And his anger rose  
As he raised his nose  
To smell the too pure air.  
"Ain't there no maskeeters and stuff like that,  
To give the air some spunk?  
Then what's to swarm on the bottle  
When all the beer's been drunk?"

With skin tanned to parchment, Papa peered  
out from under those great shaggy white hedges  
which grew in one line across his forehead, and  
warily viewed this new place he had decided to  
come to. "No damn maskeeters," he thought.  
What was to bother him when he went fishing—  
what was he to shoo away as he tried to read in  
his tent—what was to wail around his lantern and  
get burned and fall dead on his desk—?



He was a curious sight as he stood there. The land and the sea and the air all had left their autographs on Papa's great hulking frame, and they combined into one to give his bulk that same battered, used look which he himself had seen on the hull on many an old boat, on the handle of many a native knife, on the face of many a flinty woodland path.

His ponderous chest took a massive heave  
As he stooped and set his grips down,  
For he had decided, before pitching camp,  
To take a look at this new town.  
He ambled down the Avenue of Trust,  
Turned right on The Promised Land,  
And noticed that there was no dust,  
No weeds, no mud, no sand.  
All was clean, all was hard;  
No variance met his eyes.  
No cold wind, no hot wind.  
No rain clouds in the skies.  
Then, a glistening mailbox on his left  
Fair brought him quick to bay:  
The letters, fashion'd majestically there,  
Read, "E. Hemingway."  
His eyes 'most rolled down to his feet,  
And bounced on the gold of the perfect street!  
For there he saw, to his dismay,  
The *mansion* where he was to stay.

I thought I was going to enjoy myself up here, the way those gravelly preachers talked about it on earth! Are all the streets so hard with this bloody gold that I can find no place to pitch a camp? A mansion. Hell. What good is a place like this? You can't put no tent in there, them floors is probably harder'n these streets! I sure couldn't flick my ashes on the floor and set up no cook stove and build me a pine fire and spit where I want to in *this* place! Whoever built it done a fine job, but why give it to *me*? I don't want to live "eternally"—as them preachers say—in something which ought to of been donated to the DAR or the UDC clubs. And look at the *l* where they built the monster. No *trees*. Just clean and perfect everywhere. No *grass* which is supposed to be mowed but you just let the winter come and *kill* it all . . . *huh* probably no winter here, either. Look how flat the land is. So people won't tire theirselves walkin' up and down hills. Shoot. I been in places hillier'n a mule's hind leg. I bet they don't even have mules and stuff like that up here on account of the smell and having





to feed 'em the grass they don't have and  
having to shelter them from a winter which never  
comes.

"These folks don't know what they're missing up  
here,"

He mumbled as he clacked along,

"I've about got a mind

To go hunt and find

The owner, and tell him he's wrong!"

So Papa went back, and

Picked up his pack, and

Marched toward where the Light was brightest;

His one free hand

Swung like a steel band—

(He felt he was at his tightest!)

That night the saintly inhabitants saw

Great wonders in the sky;

Great shafts of light, sparks red and bright,

And they wondered why . . .

Well, Papa made his tattered presence known,

And if you ever get there, you'll see:

For he, singlehanded and alone,

Chucked out all that 'finery.

He hauled in dirt and tents,

With determination so grim,

And in the course of days, or years,

Made things liveable to him.

There's no gate now, but a table there,

Where you sign as you go in.

There's gas lamps, creeks, mossy banks,

And still a lack of sin.

The maskeeters hit you thick and hard

If you stay long in your grassy yard,

But if you to relief feel bent,

Jus' duck inside your 'skeeterproof tent!



A stubborn, hard-headed, bushy mountain:  
Papa—rebel with a cause. Folks say those who  
enjoy themselves won't last long, but he is and  
will do it—"eternally," as them preachers say.  
He was a powerful, big wave of a tempest ocean  
who rolled back his sleeves and brought his long  
white foamy hairy arms roaring in—head and  
shoulders above the other seas—casting all the  
vessels of this mind and emotion naked upon the  
beach. And these vessels remain, dried—froth  
on the sand.

Farewell, then, to those massive arms,  
Which cut into hearts for life—

Yet we're content, though lacking their charms,  
For Papa left us his knife.





# ALLEGORY and BILLY BUDD

By

JUNIUS D. GRIMES III

**B***illy Budd* is the story of a young sailor who is impressed from a merchant vessel for duty in the British Royal Navy and almost immediately, however innocently, antagonizes Claggart, the master-at-arms of the warship. Claggart falsely accuses Billy before the captain of the warship, and in consternation Billy kills him with a single blow. Captain Vere unwillingly condemns Billy to the gallows.

How should we interpret the story? Is it symbolism or is it allegory, or is it either? Much critical opinion favors the allegorical interpretation; but before we can analyze *Billy Budd* as allegory, it is necessary to formulate some working definition of allegory itself. A difficulty arises immediately from the lack of clear distinction between allegory and symbolism. We discover this distinction in the author's handling of the relationship of object and meaning.

The symbolist ordinarily begins with the objects and proceeds to explore meaning. The objects exist because they are a part of the narrative. Further, they do not derive their meaning outside the narrative; and although the object may have several levels of meaning, these levels would exist for this same object in an infinite variety of contexts. Thus, meaning must be implicit in the object, and the symbolist is concerned

with presenting at least the illusion of experience.

The allegorist deals with experience less directly than does the symbolist. Objects in the narrative are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative, and the objects become convenient emblems manipulated to suit the purpose of the allegory. The allegorist employs these objects in a logical pattern dictated by the requirements of the allegorical idea; and surface objects ultimately express an abstract idea in concrete terms. Thus strict allegory is essentially rationalistic. It is opposed to random, purely empirical experience and usually fastens upon some codification of experience to define itself. Each object in the allegory must have its logical, symbolic explanation and contribute to and progress towards the final allegorical significance.

In the opening pages of *Billy Budd*, Melville draws a possible symbolic parallel. Compare to the disciples and Christ this quotation concerning the "Handsome Sailor."

In certain instances they would flank, or like a bodyguard, quite surround some superior figure of their own class, moving along with them like Aldebaran among the lesser lights of his constellation . . . With no perceptible trace of the vainglorious about him, ra-



ther the off-hand unaffectedness of natural regality, he seemed to accept the spontaneous homage of his shipmates.

But Melville keeps this almost supernatural parallel within the framework of reality. He gives an example. Such a figure was a large black whom he had observed once, with an aggregation around him that would have "well fitted them to be marched up by Anarchis Cloots before the bar of the first French Assembly as representatives of the Human Race." In two paragraphs, Melville implies a possible parallel between the "Handsome Sailor" and Christ but maintains reality by the illustration of a large black man and his brood.

The possibility of progressive-symbolic (allegorical) interpretation arises upon the impressment of Billy from the merchant vessel. The captain says,

... Billy came; and it was like a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy. Not that he preached to them or said or did anything in particular; but the virtue went out of him, sugaring the sour ones.

Christ radiated similar virtue.

Later, when asked, Billy is ignorant of his background. He doesn't know who his father is; thus we have a possible parallel to Christ if we accept Christ as the bastard son of God. But the significance of this may be, and more probably is, symbolism of Adam. Adam actually had no parents, and his virtue was the virtue inherent in the primitive state of innocence. And the Adam interpretation is strengthened later when Melville observes that Billy

... possessed that kind and degree of intelligence which goes along with the unconventional rectitude of a sound human creature—one to whom not as yet has been proffered the questionable apple of knowledge.

And Melville fortifies the probability of this symbolism when he says that in many respects Billy was little more than an "... upright barbarian, much such perhaps as Adam presumably might have been ere the urbane Serpent wriggled himself into his company." He adds, apparently corroborating the doctrine of man's fall, that when a person is seen to have pristine virtues, these seem to derive from a time prior to civilization and not from the custom or convention of civilization. Any such virtue would certainly be more akin to Adam than to Christ, because the doubts and frustrations of a civilized man encumbered Christ.

He did not possess the primal innocence of Adam.

Additional confusion of a precise interpretation of Billy as Christ appears when Billy kills Claggart. It is difficult to imagine such violence from Christ, the man who said, "The meek shall inherit the earth." The only violence Christ exhibited was when he drove the money-changers from the temple, and this was a case of righteous indignation. Never did Christ become indignant or frustrated to the point of violence when accused personally.

On the other hand, Billy commits an error of judgment in a moment of irrationality just as Adam did when he accepted the apple from Eve. Adam knows he will be punished by God if he takes the apple, but he acts irrationally and commits himself to damnation. Billy, despite his innocence, is certainly aware that he will be punished for killing Claggart, but he acts irrationally and commits himself to his fate.

A parallel does exist between Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and Billy during his imprisonment on the gundeck following his condemnation. At the end of each experience both tranquilly await their fate.

... as nipped in the vice of fate, Billy's agony, mainly proceeding from a generous and young heart's virgin experience of the diabolical incarnate and effective in some men—the tension of that agony was over now.

But Billy, unlike Christ, had not gone through any period of true agony. Christ was fully cognizant of what was happening to him and Billy was not. "Not that like children Billy was incapable of conceiving what death really is. No, but he was wholly without irrational fear of it"—a fear prevailing more in highly civilized societies than in those which stand nearer to unadulterate nature.

Billy may parallel Christ in that he dies in innocence, but there is neither moral nor legal obligation nor moral right to condemn Christ, and as Captain Vere discusses natural and legal justice:

Now can we adjudge to summary and shameful death a fellow-creature innocent before God, and whom we feel to be so?—Does that state it aright? You sigh sad assent. Well, I, too, feel that, the full force of that. It is Nature. But do these buttons that we wear attest that our allegiance is to nature?

The court is legally obligated to convict. The most striking parallel here is the inadequacy of man's justice in both cases. However, it is possible to



examine Billy here as Adam. Both transgress the law and both are condemned—Adam by God, Billy by man. In both of these cases the justice is at least lawful.

Additional parallels between Billy's death and the death of Christ are obvious. Billy's last words before being hanged, "God bless Captain Vere!" were—

Syllables so unanticipated coming from one with the ignominious hemp about his neck—a conventional felon's benediction directed aft towards the quarters of honour; syllables, too, delivered in the clear melody of a singing-bird on the point of launching from the twig . . .

What could be more like this statement among the last words of Christ? "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do." Yet Billy is more artless than Christ. Certainly Melville's comparison of Billy to the songbird has appearances of the immemorial songbird-soul comparison. The innocent soul of Billy is about to be launched from the twig of life and wing its way to God.

And at the precise moment of Billy's death. It chanced that the vapoury fleece hanging low in the East, was shot through with soft glory as the fleece of the lamb of God seen in mystical vision; and simultaneously therewith, watched by the wedged mass of upturned faces, Billy ascended; and ascending, took the full rose of the dawn.

Compare this scene to the glorious rise of Christ to heaven following his return to the Apostles. Again there is a parallel to Christ. The spar from which Billy hung was eventually as a chip of the cross to the crew.

Despite the strong and obvious parallels between Billy's death and Christ's death, complete justification for calling Billy an allegorical Christ is difficult to see. There are entirely too many implications and statements which compare him to Adam prior to the fall for us arbitrarily to decide Billy is Christ. It is better that we should study Billy as the symbol of primordial, unregenerative innocence, containing elements of both Christ and Adam.

It has been said that Melville creates Claggart in vindication of the innocence in Billy. Certainly from the very first the contrast favors Billy; the evil in Claggart manifests itself in his description. He has no chin; he is like some fraud of the past; his skin has a strange pallor and is foiled by the

blackness of his hair; his whole appearance seemed . . . "to hint of something defective or abnormal in the constitution of the blood." Here is definite implication of something physically evil about Claggart. Melville further links Claggart with evil figures from the past and then discourses at length about his possible origin. Melville never pinpoints the evil in Claggart, but he says early that the men, with their rude conceptions, felt rather than understood this evil. Thus, with his discussion of origins and evil, he places Claggart, at least insofar as his evil nature is concerned, outside the realm of human comprehension.

Attempting to explain this evil nature, Melville further removes him from the realm of ordinary evil as comprehended by man. He uses Plato's definition: "Natural Depravity: a depravity according to nature." This natural depravity is not often found in civilization and is "without vices or small sins." And such was the nature of Claggart: ". . . in whom was the mania of an evil nature, not engendered by vicious training or corrupting books or licentious living, but born with him and innate"; in short, "depravity according to nature."

Melville proceeds to exemplify the elemental and Satanic evil in Claggart. He indirectly compares Claggart to the insidious evil of the devil in the Garden of Eden and in the wilderness with Christ. The Dansker says to Billy: ". . . a sweet voice has Jimmy Legs [Claggart]." There is a portent of his evil nature when, after the soup-spilling episode in which Billy accidentally sloshed soup near him, Claggart

must have momentarily worn some expression less guarded than that of the bitter smile and, usurping the face from the heart, some distorting expression perhaps—for a drummer boy, chancing to come into light collision with his person was strangely disconcerted by his aspect.

More illusions to the evil and mysterious nature of Claggart when:

What more can partake of the mysterious than an antipathy spontaneous and profound such as is evoked in certain exceptional mortals by the mere aspect of some other mortal, however harmless he may be?—If not called forth by that very harmlessness itself.

In attempting to explain this evocation of evil Melville digresses under the heading of "pale ire, envy and despair." He discourses on envy and antipathy as passions irreconcilable in reason, yet



which may be found in the same person. He says the envy of Claggart did not partake of the nature of Saul's for David. It is something more (or less) than human. It is perhaps the same envy that Satan felt for Adam in the Garden.

And Claggart, with one possible exception,

... was perhaps the only man in the ship intellectually capable of adequately appreciating the moral phenomenon present in Billy Budd, and the insight but intensified his passion ... which at times assumed the form of cynic disdain.

In other words, Melville implies that Claggart would have shared the innocence of Billy, but he despaired of it. And despairing he felt antipathy.

With no power to annul the elemental evil in himself though readily enough to hide it; apprehending the good, but powerless to be it; a nature like Claggart's surcharged with energy as such natures invariably are, what recourse is left but to recoil upon itself and like the scorpion for which the Creator alone is responsible, act out to the end the position allotted to it.

This is much the same passion the devil might have felt when confronted with the innocence manifested in Adam and Christ. It is certainly the passion he felt just before his fall from heaven. But Melville then attempts to explain the passions of Claggart in rational, cause-and-effect terms. A stooge of Claggart's fabricates stories concerning the actions of Billy Budd and reports them to Claggart. Here there is no evident symbolism, but the reader nonetheless feels that Melville is making a half-hearted attempt to explain something so elemental that it is outside the realm of human cognition.

The suggestions of fatality and the Satanic parallel are apparent when Melville describes the effect the sight of Billy on the upper gundeck has on Claggart. Claggart would observe Billy

... with a settled meditative expression—his eyes strangely suffused with incipient feverish tears ... Yes, and sometimes the melancholy expression would have in it a touch of soft yearning, as if Claggart could even have loved Billy except for fate and ban.

And again, when Billy is confronted by his accuser, the eyes of Claggart undergo a strange transformation, "those lights of human intelligence losing human expression, gelidly protruding like the alien eyes of certain uncatalogued creatures of the deep."

The character of Claggart evidences a more justifiable restricted allegorical parallel, at least ideally. It is perhaps proper to call Claggart an allegorical Satan in that the constituents of his character are those of Satan's. But even this parallel is justifiable in only a general sense of character, and not through specific, contextual actions. Claggart is Satan only insofar as Satan represents the most elemental evil known to man. An evil which man knows but does not understand.

But this allegory is not borne out in consistent, progressive action. Claggart is not Satan interacting with Billy-Christ in the condemnation by man, nor is he Satan interacting with Billy-Adam in the fall from grace. There are obvious elements of both.

The character of Captain Vere is less clearly delineated than the characters of Budd and Claggart. From the very beginning of the novel he is hazy and detached. He has the "unaffected modesty of manhood sometimes accompanying a resolute nature ... and ... whatever his sturdy qualities [he] was without any brilliant ones." The implied and at times expressed relationship of Billy and Vere may give a clue to the possible interpretation of Vere. We may choose to interpret the suggestions that Billy is the bastard son of Vere, in which case we may see Vere as God and Billy as Christ and Claggart as Satan. Thus Vere gives his only son to death to save mankind from complete chaos. Or we may choose to interpret Vere as God, Billy as Adam, and Claggart as Satan; then we have God punishing Adam the transgressor according to law, for man by his nature must be governed in law. This interpretation is more feasible than the first, but it is not supported so precisely throughout the novel.

A more justifiable interpretation of Vere is as mankind, who is detached from the basic controversy between Billy and Claggart, but who eventually comes to love good (innocence) even when it is defeated by evil. He represents mankind who must ultimately choose between the two without really being able. This is more justifiable because—

He was old enough to have been Bill's father. The austere devotee of military duty, letting himself melt back into what remains primeval in our formalized humanity, may in the end have caught Billy to heart, even as Abraham must have caught young Isaac on the brink of resolutely offering him up in obedience to the final behest.



Vere is a man; Abraham was a man. They both have a responsibility to a higher power.

And Vere neither evades nor transcends the responsibility placed upon him as the captain of the ship in her majesty's navy (perhaps representative of the entire world.) He forces his will to be more than the lip-servant of law, and administers law so that it will benefit the world that exists—not the ideal one projected in the form of Billy. He knows that if he makes any decision other than guilty, he condemns the ship (the world) to chaos. "So Captain Vere knew that Billy Budd must hang even though the last Asizes of man's perfection hungering heart would acquit."

**B**illy Budd is thus the dramatization of the events which befall the ideally pure Budd in the world of human realities, and the novel itself is the reconciliation of the implicit ambiguities in the demands of nature and society upon man. Captain Vere (mankind, if you will) is struck with the necessity of the choice of adherence to natural law or adherence to the laws of society. Natural law almost demands that he set Billy free. His "natural innocence" is never questioned; but the laws of man are not tractable. They are explicit, and especially in regard to naval impropriety. Billy Budd has struck down an officer, an action for which there is no justification and for which there can be only one punishment—death.

Melville apparently subordinates the supernatural idealization to the historical reality. Despite implied and at times overt comparisons between his characters and supernatural ideals, he invests the narrative framework with an abundance of detail which certainly gives the illusion of reality. In fact there is some contention that Melville took his story from an actual case, whose similarity of events is more than striking. But even so, realism does not preclude allegory if the object-meaning equation validates the allegory.

If we accept the plot of the novel as determinedly realistic, we must then decide if the objects would retain their meanings in a variety of contexts. Here we must distinguish between character and object, because only through this distinction can we answer the question. The character, Billy Budd, has distinctive ramifications not common to "Billy" the object, and these are manifest only with the particular involve-

ments of the plot. Billy Budd would not necessarily represent innocence in any variety of contexts.

These contextual restrictions evidence themselves for Claggart, but they become salient in the case of Vere. The incidents of the plot and the foils of the other characters are vital to Vere's ultimate identity; and the character Vere is himself vital, because in one sense it is as much Vere's story as it is Billy's. It is Vere, confronted with the inevitability of making a decision, who makes the decision and achieves an essential identity and nobility. Certainly he would not retain these achievements in a variety of contexts. Consequently we cannot interpret *Billy Budd* as unalloyed symbolism and indeed it is difficult to consider symbolism, since the objects of the narrative fail to satisfy the most important and definitive element of symbolism.

But can we, by definition, interpret *Billy Budd* as unalloyed allegory. Hardly. We must allow Melville some haziness of conception, for it is improbable that he viewed allegory as rigidly as theory dictates. *Billy Budd* does not batten upon doctrine to define itself—unless we choose to infer Calvinistic overtones in Billy's "fate." But then the definition is too general, because *Billy Budd* concerns itself with the fate of innocence and not random predestination.

However, the objects of the narrative are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative; (This, perhaps, is a criterion for distinguishing Billy Budd the character from "Billy" the object.) the surface objects are employed in a logical pattern which accentuates and is ultimately vital to the abstract meaning.

Thus Billy is the allegorically employed symbol of primal innocence engaged in the ineluctable combat with Claggart, the symbol of natural evil; and Vere is mankind, who represents sympathy and law—and must choose. Though Billy lives on in the hearts of man and is evidence that evil is finally defeat and that "natural goodness is invincible in the affections of man," the novel itself provides the peaceful conclusion that innocence cannot exist ideally in the world created by man. It is the reconciliation of innocence and experience and is the final admission that men must fashion moral law within the framework of human limitation and reality rather than within a projected framework of supernatural and transcendent ideals.



# HAIKU

Soft snow swirling cool  
caresses gently on the  
bosom of the boughs.

—JOYCE EVANS

Horizon's colors  
'Tis a stormy night at sea:  
The paintbrush slipped.

—BETSY ORR







## A Short One from Tijuana

By JIM ROCKEY

Tijuana at night is every bit as exciting as magazines brag or deplore, depending on the kind of magazine. But some people—if tourists can qualify as people—never realize it. They hit the main street of the city, buy a few cheap leather things, flip a coin or two to the beggars, and then head back to advertise their recent tour of Mexico.

I needed no guide or tourist pamphlets in Tijuana. Once off the main street, I moved quickly through the shadows toward a tiny neon sign that blinked blue in the distance. I saw the sign, but I didn't need to read it. I knew it would be there and I knew the words on it. It was always there. Two steps for every blink; a shorter man would need three.

As I reached the door under the sign, I felt a small hand on my arm. It was ringless and dirty; looked like it had been rummaging through a garbage can or something. There was a piece of corn silk, maybe, draped across the wrist.

"Hey, mister," a voice whispered. "You like me, huh? I be real good for two dollar." The dirty hand had started up the sleeve of my shirt toward the shoulder, squeezing as it went.

I grabbed above the hand and jerked whoever or whatever it was into the neon light. I might have guessed it would be a young one, but I couldn't help laughing when I saw the figure standing in front of me. The bare feet looked pure and untouched—by soap and water at least

—and the toes were doubled back under each foot. Thin legs turned into bony knees that peeked out from the too-short cotton dress. It was dirty, too, of course. The dress was shapeless from top to bottom and sleeveless. Just a feather of a dress on a figure that seemed too frail to hold even that much weight.

"So you could be real good for two dollars, is that right?" I stooped over and put my hands on knees to look at her. The face was so serious that I stopped laughing.

"Si, mister. My sister she teach me everything. She very good, and I be real good, too, for two dollar." She looked up at me with a half-smile that she intended to be sexy and inviting. I laughed again.

"How old are you, kid? Ten, eleven?"

"Sixteen next week."



"Sixteen, eh?" I chuckled. I wouldn't have been surprised to learn that she still had her baby teeth. The stringy, uncombed hair didn't help her look any older. "I'll give you a quarter if you'll get out of here and go home," I said as I reached into my pocket.

She looked startled. "Oh, so, mister! You think I beg, eh? Me no take nothing for nothing. Me no beg!"

I thought about explaining the quarter to her, but decided it wouldn't do any good, anyway. With a push and a soft boot in the rear, I started her off down the street.

She shouted back at me as I opened the door to the bar, "You want me for one and half dollar, maybe?"

I moved off the street and into the musty odor



of rum and cheap tobacco. My pupils did whatever it is they do for dark vision, and I searched for familiar faces. All were strange, except the one behind the bar—Carlos. He was a permanent ornament—smiling, but dirty like everything around him. I had hoped Rosa would be there; I wanted her especially to be there.

"Hey, mahn," shouted Carlos. He wiped a glass with a dirty towel and smiled big. "Ho! You got the hongry look in your eyes tonight, but Rosa she not here no more. She got sick with baby." His laughter was loud, as usual.

"Yeah," I mumbled, wondering if "Rosa" was written across my face or something. She was good, though. Crossing I said, "After the *chica* that hit me up just outside the door, I could use a full-blown night with Rosa."

The third rum from Carlos made me feel a



little better . . . for perhaps half a minute. Damn, no Rosa tonight! Another rum and I had spent almost an hour with no prospect of a substitute for Rosa. Rather than chance picking up something I didn't want from a quickie on the streets, I decided to go back to the gate and California.

Leaving the tiny blue sign blinking behind me, I turned the corner in the direction of the border crossing. In the shadow directly ahead of me I could make out a small figure, like maybe it was that little girl again. It was.

"I watch you from kitchen, mister. You still want gorhl, maybe you want I be real good for one dollar." Her voice pleaded, but without a beggar's professional tone . . . like any little kid asking for a piece of candy or an ice cream cone.

"Nah, kid, get out of here, willya!"

"Maybe six bits, eh? I be good for six bits, mister."

"Tell you what, kid. How about taking this four-bit piece . . . just as a present from me. For your birthday or something."

"No take nothing for nothing! But I be good for four bits if you want. O. K.?"

What's a guy going to do when he can't get it through somebody's head that some things aren't charity, but some kind of friendship giving? Here this little girl figured it was begging unless she did something in return for the money. What's a guy going to do, anyway? I decided to make it a dollar for her.

"Look, kid. In the States we've got a saint, see, that makes us give a dollar to some *chica* or *chico* every week. If we don't, we don't get to heaven. See what I mean?" In the dim light I could see her eyes reflect reverence and respect at the mention of a saint.

"See, if you don't let me give you this dollar, you'll get me in trouble with the saint. O. K., kid?" I slipped the bill into her dirty fingers and watched her for a moment.

A tear nudged its way down her cheek as she whispered, "Gracias . . . senior. Say your saint that I love her." She crossed herself, and I hurried toward main street and the border gate.

Near the gate I passed several small leather-goods shops. From inside one came a shrill voice in loud, rushed American accent. "Oh, George! Just look at this be-a-utiful purse—and only four dollars. Won't Elsie simply die when I get back and tell her what I paid for it!"

I handed the guard the two-cent fee and slipped through the gate, back into the States and away from the pleading of dirty little fingers.





## *a short story*

By RICHARD TAYLOR

**J**ust as we were about to enter the railroad station my sister Marie stopped in the doorway and looked back at me.

"Jimmy, how much money do you have left?" she asked.

I reached into my pocket and took out the remainder of the money my father had given me when Marie and I left Somerset. "Three dollars. Dad only had eight left out of his pension check, you know. It's pretty near the end of the month."

"Well, may I have it, please? I saw something in a store back there that I need for the kids. You don't have to go back; you can wait here in the station. We've got lots of time before the train leaves."

Marie took the money that I held out to her and walked off down Broadway. I stood in the doorway a moment wanting to buy a newspaper from the rack under the marquee until I remembered that the half dollar I had been saving in my watch pocket would be needed for cab fare when Marie and I got home to Somerset that night. I went on through the door.

The waiting room was stuffy, but it was warmer than the streets where we had window-shopped all afternoon. There were lots of servicemen on their way back to camp from Christmas leave. Some of them couldn't have been more than a couple of years older than I was. I saw a college student sitting on a bench with a shiny suitcase plastered with stickers in front of him. He had his feet propped on the suitcase, and he was reading what looked like a textbook from which he looked up abruptly every little while to glance at a group of soldiers who laughed and talked and tapped their feet and ground out half-smoked cigarettes under the heels of their polished boots.

A young couple with two children sat on the bench opposite me. The husband, his elbows on the arm rests and his hands clasped slackly

across his stomach, gazed openly at the passers-by, following their progress through the station until his attention would be attracted to someone nearer. His shoulders were bent forward and downward, and his hands were grey-white on the backs, shading off to stark white knuckles and ending in black rimmed fingernails. I thought he was probably a coal miner.

His wife held a baby on her lap while it drank milk from a bottle. A little boy was on the floor in front of them. He crawled back and forth across their shoes for a while until his mother reached down suddenly to pull him up from the dirty floor. As she bent forward, the baby lost his grasp on the bottle, and it crashed to the floor, splashing the milk across the man's shoes. The baby began to cry, and the man, his wandering attention brought abruptly to his family, drew the little boy roughly from the floor into his lap. The boy began to cry.

There had been nothing kind about that day Marie and I had spent in Louisville. The weather had been depressingly solemn, and the city had worn that air of finality—of things being over and done with—that always mark those few days between Christmas and New Year's. I wished that Marie would come back and I wished that it were time to leave. I wondered again, as I had off and on all day, what she would do now that she had come home again to Somerset. I wished that I had bought the paper so that I could read and not think about her.

Three days before, after her husband had put her on the bus in Louisville, Marie had come home with her two children and a suitcase full of soiled clothing. That night at the bus depot was the last time she saw Phil; he had simply disappeared, and she had no idea where he had gone.

Things had looked pretty good for Phil and Marie just after they were married. Phil



still had some money left from his army pay, and they hadn't had the children then. About a month after they married, Phil quit his job in Somerset and took Marie to Harlan with him where he went to work in the mines. That was the first time they moved; the time they came here to Louisville was the last one. In between, there had been a whole series of moves from one small Kentucky town to another. Phil had tried a lot of jobs, but he had either quit or been fired from all of them. He had never been able to get enough money ahead to get out of debt after the children came, and some of his creditors had written to my father about the bills. There wasn't anything my folks could do, though; I was still in high school, and my father had no income except his pension. A couple of times, when Phil had been out of work for a long while, he brought the family to stay with us while he looked for a job.

My mother blamed Phil for not keeping a job and for not taking care of his family as she thought he should. She had cried about the way Marie had to live and the places she had to live in. About two months back, after they had lived with us for the second time, Phil announced that he had found a good job in Louisville, and my folks loaned him the money to move again. My mother told him not to come back until he could support his family decently. She said that he was a liar and couldn't do anything except invent schemes to fool Marie. She blamed Marie for believing him.

Now that Phil had sent the family home and hadn't shown up himself, my mother believed he had abandoned them, and she had made me come to Louisville with Marie to help her bring her things home. I hadn't wanted to come because Marie was pretty miserable and I was afraid she would feel worse when we left Somerset. But I didn't have much choice since my father was sick and somebody had to go.

I was almost glad, when I saw the room Phil and Marie had rented, that my father hadn't come. The place was a lot worse than either of the places where they had lived in Barbourville or Manchester. The room was dim and cold, and we didn't stay there any longer than it took to make a bundle of the bed clothes and fill a box with Marie's hotplate and some odds and ends of dishes. There wasn't any furniture to bother with because it had been lost in a flood when they lived in Pineville.

We got the canary too. Phil and Marie had bought it the day they came to Louisville. It was a pitiful sight to me, but it was alive, huddled in

a shoebox Phil had fixed for it to live in. The box had air holes punched through the top, and it had some shredded newspaper inside. After three days in the box, the canary had made a mess of the paper. It was wet where the water cup had been spilled, and it was matted with manure and crumbs. The canary reminded me of a puppy Phil had bought when the children were still pretty small. They had fondled and mauled it so much that it had finally sickened and died.

I was glad to get away from that room although I was embarrassed having to walk back to the station with those boxes and the bundle of bedding. We left the canary box and the other things in a locker at the station since we still had several hours to wait, but if I had thought it could live in the city, I would have turned the bird loose.

Not all of Marie's belongings had been in the room; there were still some packages to be picked up at the bus depot which was about six blocks from the train station. Phil had left the things at the bus depot when he sent Marie home because she hadn't been able to manage them along with her suitcase and the children. He had promised to bring them down with him the next day after he met his payday at International Harvester where he worked. It was when he didn't show up with them that Marie had become worried. She called the people who lived in the room next to hers, but they hadn't seen Phil for several days. She and Phil had had a phone of their own when they first came to Louisville, and Marie had called home every week, but the telephone company disconnected it later because Phil couldn't pay the bill. After she talked to her neighbor, Marie called the personnel manager at the factory where Phil worked, and that was when she learned that he had never been employed there at all.

It was noon when we reached the bus depot, and it was even more crowded than the railroad station had been. Marie and I went to the locker where Phil had left the things, and I opened it with the key Marie had found in her room that morning. There was nothing inside except a slip of paper with a date and some numbers on it. I guessed that after the twenty-four hour checking period had expired the things had been picked up by the maintenance men.

With the crowd of travelers in the depot the employees were pretty busy, but I finally located a man who unlocked the lost-and-found room and gave me the packages. I had not known what they were until then, and when I saw them, two gaily printed cartons with a toy train and a little girl's tea set inside, I felt pretty bad.



"My God! It's the kids' Christmas presents!" I cried.

The man stood holding the doorknob waiting for me to move so he could close the room. He had to get back to his regular work in the baggage room. "Yeah, I thought about them Christmas presents when I found 'em," he said. "I figured somebody'd hidden 'em here and forgot to pick 'em up."

I took the toys back to the waiting room where Marie had stayed, and I wished that they had been wrapped or had been in a sack so that she wouldn't be reminded of the children. I didn't enjoy looking at them myself, and when I reached Marie I immediately suggested that we go to lunch, hoping that would keep her from thinking about the presents. She hardly mentioned them though, and I was relieved.

We went to Walgreen's for lunch. There was a restaurant next to the drug store, and Marie wanted to eat there because she and Phil had eaten there not long after they were married. They had come to Louisville then to celebrate a large bonus Phil had gotten through the Veterans Administration. He had been a prisoner of war in North Africa and Europe for almost the whole duration, and that was what the bonus was for. He had told me lots of interesting stories about the war, but I had never been able to get him to tell me about those months he had spent under the Germans.

Anyway, after I explained to Marie that we couldn't afford to eat at the restaurant, she was willing to settle for the lunch counter. I could tell that she was disappointed, but I couldn't help it.

We finished lunch and walked up Fourth Street to the river, looking in store windows and occasionally going into a store to look at the left over Christmas merchandise and decorations. At the river, we crossed the street and spent an hour walking down that side. When we came back to Broadway, we decided to go back to the train station and wait. On the way, Marie stopped in a couple of stores, and she saw a lot of things that I know she wanted to buy, but she didn't say anything.

I guess it was because I felt sorry for her when we were in those stores that I didn't protest when she asked me for the last of the money. I did feel sorry for her, and sitting there in the Union Station thinking about her situation and the day we had spent in town made everything worse, especially when I couldn't think of anything to do about it all. I would be glad when we were on the train going home.

Thinking about the train reminded me to check the time, and when I turned around to look at the clock, I saw Marie coming toward me across the waiting room.

"I didn't mean to be away so long," she said, "but I had a hard time finding exactly what I wanted. I was going to buy a flashlight that Phil had been wanting for a long time, but it cost four dollars, so I didn't get it. And then, at that last store where we stopped, I found this."

She handed me a book, and I read its title: *A Pictorial History of Old Louisville*. "It looks like a pretty interesting book," I said, and I leafed through the pages. I tried not to imagine what my folks would say when they saw it.

"I thought Phil would like it. You know how he is about books."

"It's a nice book," I replied, because I didn't know what else to say. I looked through it a moment longer and handed it back. "I guess I'd better get the things out of the locker. They'll announce the train any minute now, so why don't you take the toys and walk down to the gate. Maybe we won't have to stand in line very long."

I waited until she had gathered up the toys and her book and had started toward the gate. The lockers were not far from my bench, and I opened ours and took out Marie's things. I set the bundle and the box of dishes on the floor and held the canary box in my hand. Its bottom was limp and soggy against my palm. When I reached inside to see if the canary was still alive, I felt him brush my hand as he tried to get away from it. He struggled, and he smeared manure on my hand with his feet, but I caught him and took him out into the light. I held him in my hand, his back against my palm, and he blinked in the station lights. I watched him for a moment, and I looked at his box in my other hand, feeling its dampness and smelling the faint acrid ammonia of the bird droppings. Then, without really thinking about it, I closed my thumb and forefinger on his neck. I held them tightly pinched together until he stopped struggling and his eyes were closed.

I put the dead bird back into his box and pushed the bundle and the other box away from the locker with my foot. When I moved them the locker door swung shut with a soft bump, and the row of lockers was flat and smooth again.

On the way to the gate I dropped the shoebox into a trash can and went on to where Marie was waiting. I told her that the bird must have suffocated in the locker. I couldn't tell her that I had killed it because I couldn't think of any reason why I had.



# FIGURE DRAWING



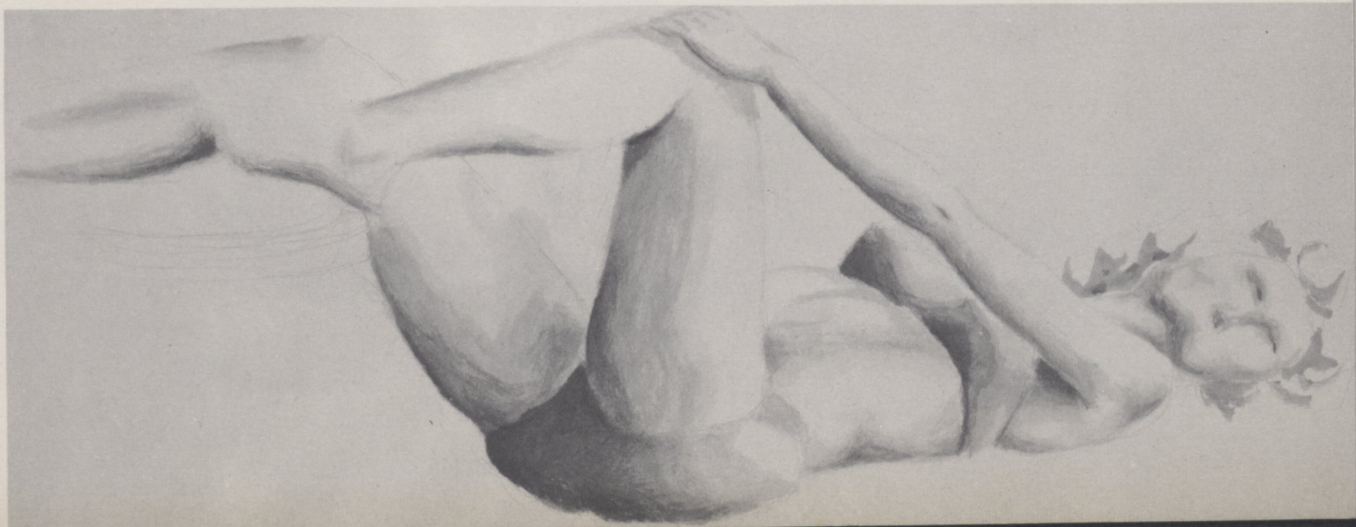




india ink and brush  
by Ann Marshburn

charcoal drawing  
by Betsy Ross

india ink by Bob Schmitz

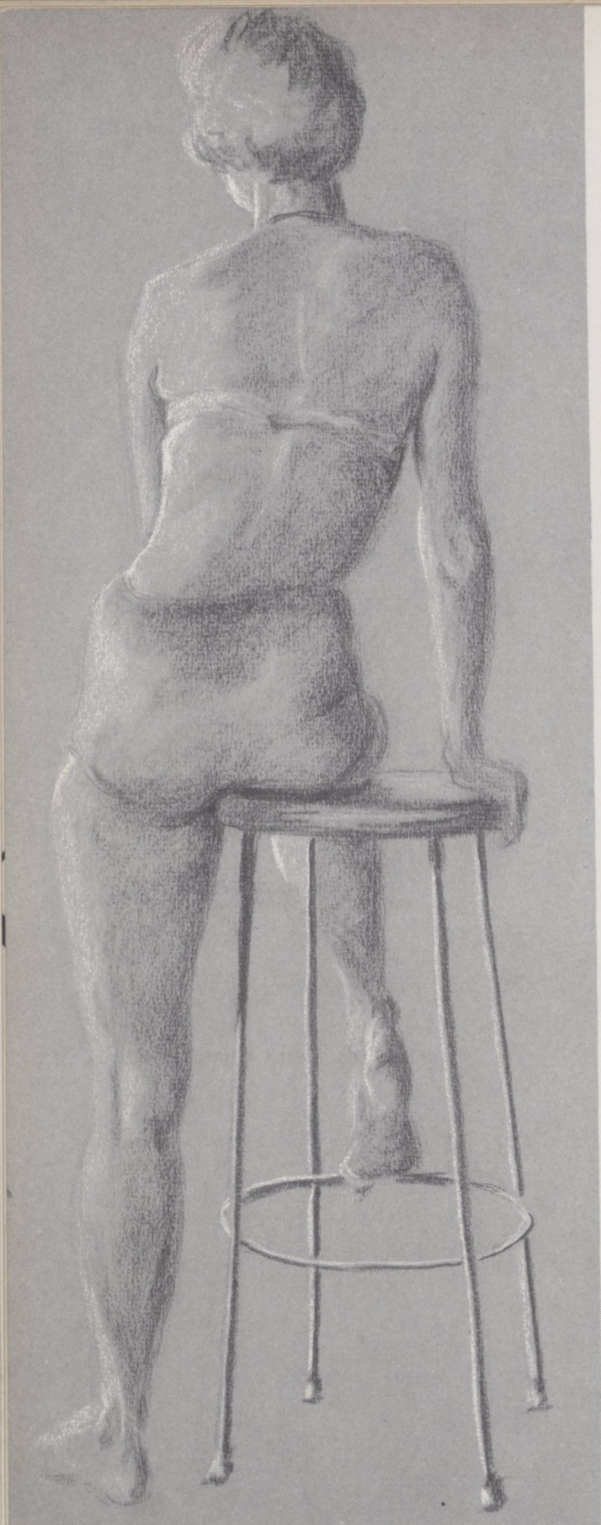






Betsy Ross  
Jan 10 '62





black and white conte  
crayon on gray ground  
by Betsy Ross

charcoal drawing  
by Ann Marshburn





pen and ink drawing  
by Pat Waff

Patricia Waff  
January 15, 1962





LARRY  
THE AND  
BIRTHDAY  
PRESENT

by  
DR.  
ELIZABETH  
UTTERBACK

I stood on the sidewalk in front of West Broadway School. It loomed big, dark, and forbidding before me. I clutched my worn red-plaid school bag that held a *McGuffey's Fourth Reader* and a scarred and battered pencil box that had once boasted a bright picture of Mary-and-her-little-lamb on the cover.

It was my first day in Marshall.

Pop had found work with the Emporia Coal Company, and Aunt Maggie had brought Buster and me and come to keep house for him. She had hennaed her hair again and was already hopefully looking over the male population of Gennet's Lane. I was desolate and homesick for Chesterton, West Virginia. It wasn't much of a place, but it had been home, and I had lived there most of my ten years. Here, I was just an outsider.

It was October. Children ran up and down the street, laughing and calling and talking in little groups. They watched the flag, for when it was removed from the telephone-pole in front of the



school, that meant that school had "took up," and they were late.

A big red car—a Stanley Steamer—chugged to a stop before the school, and a little girl jumped out and ran up the walk. She had yellow plaits and round blue eyes, but the thing you noticed first about her was her cleanness—her skin, her teeth, her white pique Peter Pan collar, her flashing white petticoat.

"Marcia, remember your music lesson at three."

"Yes, Mama."

From that moment, I admired Marcia Westlake. I admired her beauty and her elegant manners, but most of all, I admired all she stood for. The big car—one of two in town—with its chauffeur, the great brick house with its white columns, the servants, the clothes she wore, her parents and friends. Her money! Fascinated, I followed her in to the school. I tried to pull my short, faded, pink chambray down over the hole in my black stocking. I was conscious of my run-over, scuffed shoes and the faded, soiled ribbon in my not-too-clean hair.

Miss Breckenridge sat at the teacher's desk in the 4-A room. She was a big, masculine woman with nose-glasses that perched precariously over watery, red-rimmed eyes, and a perpetual dark stain of perspiration with a sour odor ringing her serge dress in great wide circles under her arms. She had a kind of a pink, rabbit nose that twitched with nervousness.

"Well, little girl, what's your name?"

I gulped; I was conscious of forty pairs of eyes staring at me.

"Well, speak up, can't you!"

I mumbled, "Gwendolyn St. John Maginnis." I was ashamed of my name. Mama had gotten it out of a novel called *Her Fatal Mistake*.

Miss Breckenridge wrote it down disdainfully.

"Well, go ahead; where do you live? What does your father do? Where do you come from?"

I mumbled something about Chesterton, West Virginia; I said I lived in Gennet's Lane and my father was a miner; my mother was dead. Aunt Maggie kept house for us, and I had a letter from the principal at Chesterton in my school bag.

Miss Breckenridge took it gingerly. I heard tittering in the room. I squirmed and reddened.

"Now where am I going to put you?" asked Miss Breckenridge irritably. "Goodness knows, I'm overrun now! I do wish you'd come at the first of school! There's not a single desk!"

I hoped she couldn't find one. I looked longingly at the door. Just to get away—anywhere!

Then I felt a light hand on my arm. I looked

up and found Marcia Westlake standing beside me.

"She can sit with me," she said smiling, and she slipped her hand in mine.

"Oh, dear no, Marcia," cried Miss Breckenridge, shocked. "Doretta Grey has that seat! Anyhow, I'm sure your mother—"

"Doretta Grey has gone to Florida for maybe all term," said Marcia decisively. "Come, Gwen."

Suddenly everything was all right. I had a friend! I found myself in the desk with Marcia, near enough to see her lovely smile and to sniff the nice Pear's Soap smell. And she had called me *Gwen*—a beautiful name! I could only look at her with dumb devotion as Miss Breckenridge began irritably to call the roll.

At recess I marched out with Marcia. Five other little girls flocked around and looked at me. They looked at my faded dress and the hole in my stocking and my limp hair ribbon. They whispered about me to one another.

"Where did you say you lived?" asked a pretty, curly-haired little girl.

"In—in Gennet's Lane," I answered blushing. They looked at one another meaningfully.

"And is your father really a coal miner? All black and smutty with a little lamp on his cap?"

"Let's play tag," said Marcia suddenly, and all at once I found myself in a game. I could run faster than any of them and get more "tags." When the bell rang I marched in proudly.

After school I walked home with Marcia. She lived on Main Street in a big white house that sat far back in a shady lawn plot in front of the steps, and a lovely iron deer kept watch over the flower beds. It was like a fairy palace!

"Come in and play."

I shook my head. I had loitered too long, and I knew Aunt Maggie would have work for me to do at home.

The house in Gennet's Lane looked even shabbier in the bright October sunlight—its tin roof sagging, its gate off the hinges, the front screen door with a big hole that let in flies. Aunt Maggie, in a red kimona, without her corset, lolled in a rocker on the porch and wielded a palm-leaf fan.

"Well, you were sure late in coming," she said irritably. "Buster has been fretting all day and nearly run me ragged; take him out somewhere in his wagon. I declare, if I didn't have nothin' to do all day but jest set up in a nice, cool school room, I wouldn't mind at all. How do you like your school?"

I went in and picked Buster up from his crib and brought him back to the porch. His yellow



hair was matted in damp curls and his little face was flushed and dirty.

"It's all right," I said, "I sit with a wonderful girl—Marcia Westlake. We're friends."

"Westlake?" mused Aunt Maggie. "Her old man must own the mines. Well, don't get too big for your britches, Sister. She won't take to the likes of you."

I put Buster in his little wagon and pulled him out in the hot dusty lane. He was elated. He gurgled and pat-a-caked.

"Buster go bye-bye," he chirped.

Almost without thinking I found myself going across the tracks and down Island Ford Street to where Main Street ran, shady and wide. I sat down on the curb across the street and feasted my eyes on the house where Marcia lived.

"Some day we are going to live on Main Street," I said dreamily. "In a big white brick house with trees and flowers and an iron deer."

"When?" asked Buster practically.

"When I'm grown," I told him; "when I'm a famous writer and sit all day in a big, cool room and write wonderful stories like Louisa Mae Alcott and sell them and make lots of money! We'll have an automobile, and a Negro cook, and you will have a tricycle, and Aunt Maggie will have a hat with a willow plume, and we'll have ice cream every day for dinner!"

"I want ice cream *now*!" wailed Buster.

I caught a flash of Marcia's yellow braids and white dress on the porch.

"She's my friend!" I told myself proudly. "She's lovely and kind and clean. I'd do anything in the world for her—anything!"

When Buster and I got home supper was ready—sardines and crackers and soda pop. Aunt Maggie didn't like to cook, and besides Mr. Crabtree was coming to call on her. He was her new gentleman friend who ran the lunch room on the corner—Mike's Place. She had pushed herself into her American Girl corset and put on her polka-dot silk dress, made sailor style with a big red bow tie, and had done her bright yellow hair into a big pompadour. I had to button her high white shoes, for the corset was laced too tight for her to lean over.

Pop was on the night shift, and while Aunt Maggie and Mr. Crabtree swung in the porch swing, I washed Buster, and when he was asleep I heated water in the big kettle and filled the wash tub and took a bath. Then I washed my hair and sewed up the hole in my stocking, and rubbed my shoes with grease. I got out my three dresses and looked at them. They were too short and

faded. I sighed and heated the irons and pressed them. They would have to do.

Next morning before the bell rang for taking up books, Marcia whispered to me as we were coming in from the cloak room.

"Gwen, come and look on Miss Breckenridge's desk. Isn't that the loveliest thing you ever saw?"

I looked. It was a paper-weight—a big glass ball. Inside it there was a tiny lady in a pink coat and hat and a little white fur muff. She was holding up a tiny pink umbrella.

"Look! Pick it up—it does something! Here—like this!"

She seized the ball, turned it upside down, and then vigorously righted it. Immediately the little pink lady was in the midst of a fairy snow storm! The tiny flakes drifted down and settled lightly all around her.

"Isn't it beautiful! It's the dream of my life to have one of my very own—just like it! Here, you try it!"

She passed the ball to me, and timidly I inverted it. We stood entranced as the snow flakes fell.

"Gwendolyn Maginnis! Put that down immediately!" Miss Breckenridge loomed large before me. "And keep your hands off everything on that desk!"

She snatched the ball from my trembling hands.

"But, Miss Breckenridge, it was my—" began Marcia.

"And don't you go teaching Marcia your bad manners and impertinence! Get to your seat!"

Marcia squeezed my hand, and the world lighted up again.

"Don't you mind her," she whispered. "I won't let her hurt you!"

I looked at her in wonder.

"What can you do?" I asked trembling.

"My father owns Emporia," said Marcia blandly, "and Emporia is the biggest thing in Marshall. Bigger even than the school! She's afraid of my father," and she giggled happily.

The bell rang then and school took up.

And so October passed and November. And Marcia never flagged in her friendship. I adored her. I wanted to do something for her—something big. I longed to give her the world. But what had I to give?

My days at school were happy ones—the happiest I had ever known. I studied and made good grades—in Reading and Spelling and Speaking Pieces I was the best one in the room. I could write too; compositions were easy for me. My head was bursting with stories! I was too happy to live when Marcia would come to me for help.



"It's wonderful the way you can think up stories, Gwen," Marcia would marvel, her round, blue eyes alight. "I can't. I'm just a ninny."

"I'll write it for you," I would say, magnanimously. "I have lots of them in mind. After I feed Buster and put him to bed, I'll come and help you."

Mrs. Westlake was very grand. She was always playing flinch or calling or giving big teas. Aunt Harriett, an old Negro woman, looked after Marcia. Aunt Harriet was snobbish; she hated "po white trash." She didn't like me. But Marcia made her tolerate me. She told her that if she wasn't nice to me she'd tell her mother about Aunt Harriett's stealing all that sugar and flour and taking Mrs. Westlake's ruffled petticoat and saying it was stolen off the line.

"And I'll call in the ha'nts, too!" declared Marcia.

That did the trick. I was a welcome guest.

Marcia's birthday was just before Christmas. I got the invitation to the party one day when I went home from school. It stood on the kitchen mantel propped up before the clock.

"A nigger come and brought it—had the nerve to come right up to the front door, but I soon learned him better," said Aunt Maggie, excitedly wiping her hands on the front of her kimona and pushing back her blonde hair. "Hurry up and open it! What does it say?"

I broke the seal. "Marcia Westlake invites you to her birthday party at two o'clock on Saturday, the fifteenth of December. Please come."

"Now what do you know!" Aunt Maggie was impressed. "Pop'll have to shell for some material, and I'll make it up into a real stylish dress for you! We don't want them snooty Westlakes to think we're trash! Why I'd like for them to know that your uncle is a butcher in Dee-troit!"

Next day all the fourth grade buzzed with Marcia's party. At recess the girls huddled in little groups and whispered about presents. I had been thinking about a present all night! Nothing in the world was too good for Marcia. If I could I would have given her a gold watch that pinned on and a heart-shaped locket and chain and a ruby ring!

In the afternoon when I was pulling Buster in his wagon along Main Street and looking disconsolately in the shop windows, suddenly I saw it! In Mrs. Abbott's Novelty Shop window I saw it! I caught my breath and pressed my face up against the window. There it was! A paper-weight exactly like Miss Breckinridge's—the little pink lady with a white fur muff holding up the pink



umbrella while the snow lay softly on the trees around her!

I left Buster outside and went in.

The lady obligingly took it out of the window and looked at the price.

"One dollar," she said. "It was a dollar and a half, but it's marked down because it's the last one we have."

One dollar! It could not have been farther from my reach if it had cost a hundred. I had never had a dollar. I had fifteen cents that I had saved, a nickel at a time, money Pop had given me when I went to the Ladies' Entrance of O'Reilly's Saloon after supper and brought him home a tin bucket of beer.

But I had to have that paper-weight! Marcia had said that she wanted one more than anything else in the world.

I had learned about prayer at Sunday School, and that night I prayed long and fervently for a dollar. I even bargained with the Lord. I would go to preaching as well as Sunday School if he would give it to me. I would hurry home from school every afternoon and sweep and dust for Aunt Maggie. But nothing happened. It seemed a very slow way, and I was sure God would need to take a much longer time than I had—just a week—to answer my prayer and arrange for anything that cost a whole dollar!

Another thing worried me. There was always the possibility that the paper-weight might be sold for Christmas, and I haunted the window, morning and afternoon—almost afraid to look. But there it was—pink and lovely as ever!

And then one morning something marvelous happened! A miracle really! As I turned away from the shop window, I saw a glint of something between the bricks of the steps, and when I picked it up it was a fifty-cent piece! I clutched it in my



hand and hurried into the shop.

I wanted, oh, so badly to keep it! It seemed like the answer to my prayer—but it wasn't mine.

"Did you lose this?" I asked the lady, holding up the shiny silver coin.

"No, no," she said, shaking her gray head. "Where did you find it, child?"

I told her.

"Anyone could have lost it," she said finally. "Leave it here today, and if no one asks for it—it's yours."

I stumbled out. All day I kept making little prayers while I should have been studying. "Please, God, please, please, please!"

After school I hurried to the shop. No one had come to claim it! I untied my fifteen cents from the corner of my handkerchief and told my story.

"And you need—let's see—thirty-five cents more to buy the paper-weight?"

I nodded.

"Can you sweep out the shop and dust?"

I nodded. I couldn't speak.

"Can you deliver parcels?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Very well; you are honest; you've already proved that. Come before school, make a fire in the stove, sweep and dust, and then after school come in and deliver any parcels I may have. And on Friday I'll give you the paper-weight."

And to seal the bargain she took the little pink lady from the window, removed the tag, and put it in a box, tied it up with white tissue paper and pink ribbon, and put it on the shelf marked *Sold!*

Intoxicated with happiness, I stumbled home, not forgetting to say a little prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for making it all come true. Aunt Maggie was sewing up a storm in the kitchen. While Buster contentedly played with the scraps on the floor and the cabbage boiled over on the stove, she had taken her prized pink satin evening dress, and in a burst of generosity had cut out of it a party dress for me! She had an old *Ladies Home Journal* propped open to a picture of a plump, fairy-like little creature with long golden curls demurely dropping rose petals from a basket in the path of a blushing bride. The dress was to be very short with a full skirt, and the waist, low-necked and short-sleeved, and Aunt Maggie was adding heavy cream lace and satin rosebuds and what had been once shining sequins.

"There!" said Aunt Maggie proudly, taking the pins from her mouth and holding aloft the pinned-together creation. "We can't let you hob-nob with the elite in an old dress! Your Pop didn't have no money for a new one, and I didn't wear

this much anyhow. I bet this will make Miz Westlake's eyes bulge out of their sockets!"

The next four days passed in a whirl of getting up at six, gulping my breakfast, hurrying to the store, making the fire, sweeping and dusting, and rushing to school. After school I delivered parcels until six o'clock. Once Mrs. Abbott sent to the Westlake's house with a big package. When Aunt Harriet came to the back door to take it, I smelled the fresh, warm smell of cake baking and caught a glimpse of pink crepe paper streamers and pink candles in the dining room.

Friday night at six o'clock Mrs. Abbott gave me my box.

"You've done real well, and I'd be glad to keep you longer, but I got word today that my sister has been taken awful bad. She lives in Arkansas. So I'm going to close up in the morning and go out there to stay with her a spell. After Christmas there's not much doing in a shop of this kind anyhow."

I thanked her and clutched the precious package to my heart.

Aunt Maggie finished up the dress by noon on Saturday, and we all stood around the bed where it was laid out. Even Buster was awed. Aunt Maggie in a burst of enthusiasm had added a sash, and a rhinestone pin at the neck.

I took my bath in the tin tub pulled up to the kitchen stove, and then Aunt Maggie curled my short, straight, black hair on her irons. I rolled up the sleeves of my long union suit, and turned in the neck. The dress was a little short and tight and my legs and arms looked longer and thinner than they usually did.

"Now, remember to keep your underwear rolled up out of sight," Aunt Maggie cautioned. I do wish you had some pink satin slippers and pink silk stockings like the ones in the picture! But maybe if you sit down you can tuck your shoes back out of sight. Rub them off good, and I'll put a little dab of ink over that hole in the toe."

At last I was ready, my glory hid under my old winter coat. Aunt Maggie and Buster went with me to the door. "Remember to act like a lady," called Aunt Maggie. "Don't jump or run or the sequins will fall off."

I walked on air to Marcia Westlake's carrying the present.

Marcia opened the door. She looked beautiful in a dark red wool dress and a white linen pinafore. Around her hovered the other girls, all shiny and clean in soft woolen dresses.

I gave Marcia the box. "Happy Birthday," I said.



We all watched as she unwrapped it. There was a chorus of "ohs" and "ahs." Marcia held it up, her eyes glowing.

"A little snowlady!" she cried. "What I wanted most! It's *exactly* like Miss Breckinridge's! Oh, Gwen, Gwen darling—thank you *so much*!" She pressed her soft, red mouth against my cheek. She turned the present up and back and the snow fell softly. She laughed happily!

I was satisfied. While the little girls hovered around Marcia and the present, I followed Mrs. Westlake upstairs and took off my coat. She looked at me oddly. I felt that my dress was somehow wrong. The pink finery looked garish and shoddy.

There was a titter among the girls when I came down, and I saw them looking at my woolen sleeves that kept slipping down. I sat in a corner and tried to remember to hide my shoes. There was tag and blind-man's bluff, but I couldn't play because of the sequins.

"Who is that odd child in the pink furbelows?" I heard one of the grown-ups say to Mrs. Westlake.

"Sh—poor little thing! She's one of the miner's children from across the tracks. Marcia wanted her—children are so democratic, you know! But it is atrocious, isn't it?"

We had refreshments—lovely pink ice cream and a birthday cake with candles and roses, and little baskets of jelly beans. I sat by Marcia, and afterward when we went back to the parlor she said, "Gwen, you must be chilly. Put this coat of mine around you."

I did feel better. The soft brown coat hid my dress, and the sleeves could come down now.

Marcia was saying, "Come, everyone, let's listen to my new music box. It came all the way from Switzerland! And Gwen will make up a story about it to tell us."

I was on familiar ground now. I sat in the middle of a circle of interested faces. It was the story of an old music-box maker and his pretty blind daughter that I made up.

My story was interrupted by the arrival of Miss Breckinridge. She arrived simpering, to bring Marcia a book of Bible stories. She no sooner was in than she said in a burst of indignation, "I'm sorry I'm late, but what do you *think* happened? I stopped in at the school a moment and discovered that one of my most prized possessions—my beautiful snow-scene paper-weight, is missing from my desk. *Someone has taken it!*"

There was a sudden hush! One little girl snickered and looked at me. And at the same moment

Miss Breckinridge caught sight of my gift on the table with Marcia's presents.

"There it is—my paperweight! Why, what is it doing here?"

There was a terrible silence. I felt everyone's eyes on me, boring through Marcia's brown coat, seeing my gaudy finery, my gray underwear, my tarnished sequins. My hands went clammy; I felt suddenly sick at my stomach. I saw Marcia's eyes—hurt was in them.

"Gwendolyn brought it to Marcia," piped up little Penny Tolliver.

"So!" cried Miss Breckinridge. "That's what happened to my paperweight! I should have known. *She stole it!*" And she glared menacingly at me.

I couldn't stand it. I couldn't be called a thief. I burst into tears and covered my face with my trembling hands.

"She did it for me! She knew I wanted one!" cried Marcia. "There, Gwen, don't cry! It's going to be all right." And she threw her arms around me.

"I didn't steal it! I bought it! I can prove it!" I cried tearfully. "Mrs. Abbott will tell you. It was in her window! Oh, you must have seen it. Didn't any of you see it?"

I looked helplessly from one to the other.

"A likely story! Why this came from Germany, and I've never seen another!" Miss Breckinridge sniffed.

"Of course, you must take it. I'm sure the child meant no harm—" Mrs. Westlake took the paperweight and wrapped it again in the discarded paper and ribbon and pressed it upon Miss Breckinridge.

I waited to see no more. Sobbing I ran for my coat, not heeding Marcia's flying footsteps and cries after me. I had a glimpse of Miss Breckinridge and her cruel smile, of all the awe-struck faces of the little girls, of Mrs. Westlake's look of dismay. I was two blocks away when I remembered that I had not told Marcia and her mother that I had enjoyed the party!

I ran crying down Main Street to Mrs. Abbott's shop and beat on the door. It was locked and the shop was dark. Suddenly I remembered that Mrs. Abbott had left that morning for Arkansas!

But perhaps she hadn't gone! I ran blindly through the streets, and when I reached her little house, I flung myself against the door madly and beat upon it. But all was still. The blinds were down and the mat taken in. She had gone!

There was nothing to do but go home. It was



dark now. Pop sat in the kitchen, reading the *Police Gazette* and soaking his feet in a pan of hot water. Buster was in bed, and Aunt Maggie had gone out somewhere with her gentleman friend.

I crept into bed, and cried myself to sleep.

I can't remember much about the next few days. Sunday was a blur of terror. I couldn't tell Aunt Maggie of my disgrace, when she had made my dress for me. I had to talk about the refreshments and answer questions. I pled a sick stomach and stayed home from Sunday School. All day I kept praying, hoping that Marcia would come and say Miss Breckinridge had found her paperweight—but the day passed and no one came.

Monday it was cold and raining and not even the Christmas decorations in the houses lighted up the streets. On the way to school I saw little girls in bunches, whispering. Timidly I entered 4-A. There was an instant hush.

Then Miss Breckinridge spoke coldly.

"Gwendolyn McGinnis, take your books and go to the office. Professor Alcock wants to see you."

Numbly I gathered my things. Marcia's blue eyes were full of tears, and she put her hand on mine.

"We're still friends," she whispered. "You did it for me!"

So she believed it, too! I stumbled blindly from the room clutching my school bag. The last thing I saw was my paperweight—the little lady I had worked so hard for—standing on Miss Breckinridge's desk.

Professor Alcock's office was as grim and forbidding as Professor Alcock himself. He came to the point immediately.

"Now, Gwendolyn, we can't have thieves at West Broadway. I know you're poor and want things, but stealing is no way to get them. We have tried to help you here; the Westlakes have tried, but to no avail. We have decided to suspend you from school until I can talk to your father and look into your home conditions. That is all."

He turned back to his work. The episode was finished.

I stumbled blindly out into the bleak December day. What could I tell Pop and Aunt Maggie now? What could I do?

But when I got home to Gennett's Lane I was spared the agony of telling them. Pop had lost his job at Emporia and Aunt Maggie was busy packing to move on. This time Pop had heard of a mine in Western Kentucky where they were

taking on men. He sat with his feet in the oven, calmly drinking his beer, while Aunt Maggie scolded and Buster got in her way.

"We'll do fine in Manitou," said Pop winking at me. "I guess that's all you'll want—a man or two, eh, Maggie?" And he laughed loudly at his own joke.

We left Marshall the next morning. It had been snowing, and the slush around the station made everything look more drab and desolate than ever. I climbed on board the sooty little day coach carrying an ecstatic Buster, while Aunt Maggie and Pop staggered under the worn valises.

I sat down in a shabby plush seat, and while Buster pressed his eager face to the window, I looked out, too, at the town where I had been so happy. It looked dull and desolate and drab.

Suddenly I saw Marcia. She was flying over the platform, her eyes darting here and there as she searched the windows of the train. Suddenly she spied me and held up something—the paperweight.

She motioned me to put up the window.

"Look, Gwen, look!" She was out of breath. "Joe Peters stole Miss Breckinridge's paperweight! Joe showed it to Sam Withers, and Sam told on him. This is mine—like you said! Oh Gwen, Gwen, come back!"

I shook my head. It was too late. The conductor was calling "All a-boo-ard!"

"Oh Gwen, please write and tell me where you are! Please do! There's so much I want to say! I always believed you, Gwen!"

The train was beginning to move. Marcia ran along beside it, trying to talk over its roar.

"We can still be friends, Gwen! Remember . . ."

We were gone. The last I saw of Marshall was Marcia's little figure clutching the pink lady, her lovely blue eyes full of tears.

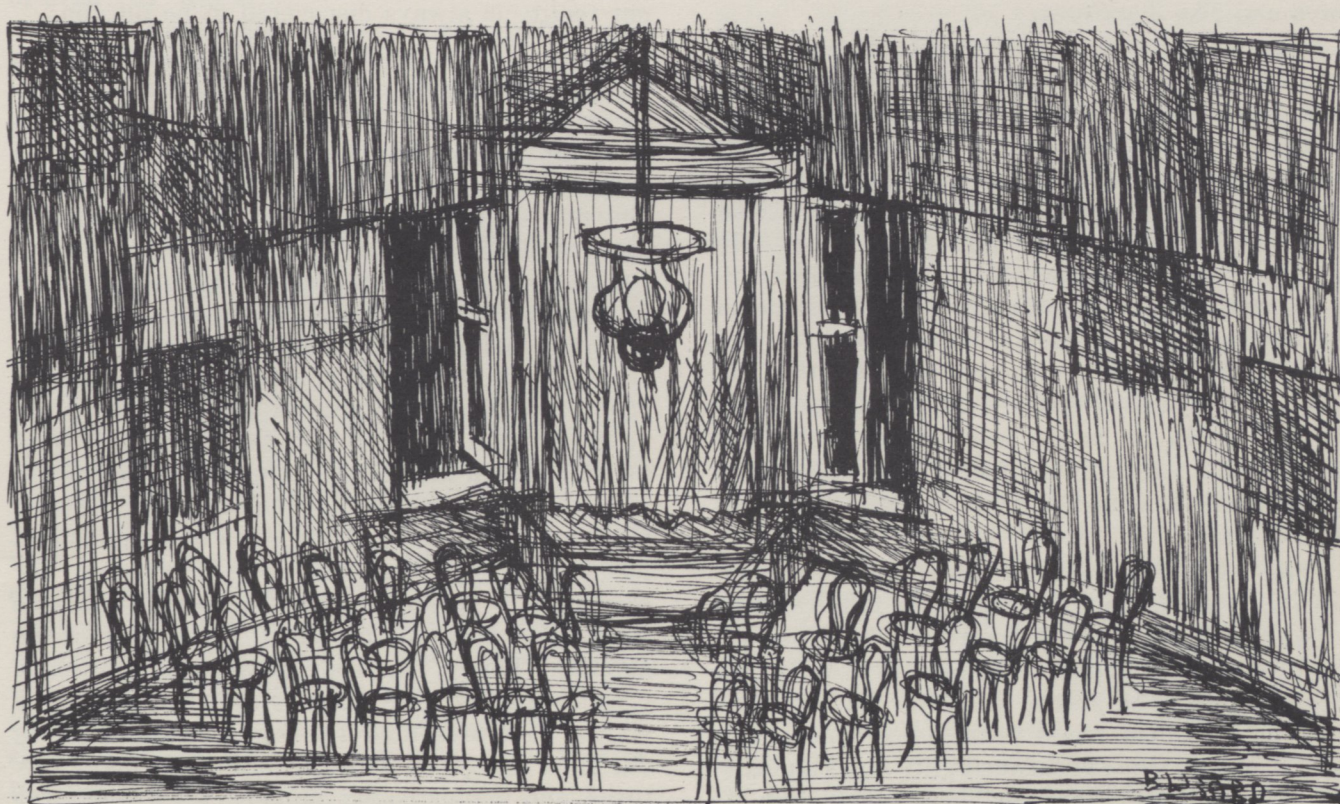
"F'r heaven sake, put down that window! Are you trying to freeze us?" shouted Pop from across the aisle. Aunt Maggie was already making eyes at the conductor.

"Goodbye, Marcia," I said softly. "Goodbye." Someday, I tried to tell myself, I'd be a famous writer, and then I would come back to Marshall in a lovely fur coat and a hat with red roses and drive down Main Street in a Stanley Steamer.

But it didn't work. Marshall was just an episode in our wandering existence of run-down houses across the track, faded dresses, worn-out shoes. . . . I turned my face to the window and closed my eyes to hide the tears.



# THE REBEL REVIEW



Setting of London Production of Ionesco's *THE CHAIRS*

## The Theatre Of The Absurd

*The Theatre of the Absurd* by Martin Esslin. Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company. 1961. 363 pp. \$1.45.

Martin Esslin's stated purpose is "to define the convention that has come to be called The Theatre of the Absurd; to present the work of some of its major exponents and provide an analysis and elucidation of the meaning and intention of some of their most important plays; to introduce a number of lesser known writers working in the same or similar conventions; to show that this trend sometimes decried as a search for novelty at all costs, combines a number of very ancient and highly respectable traditional modes of literature and theatre; and, finally, to explain its significance

as an expression—and one of the most representative ones—of the present situation of Western man." Mr. Esslin is admittedly partisan, believing that playwrights are writing some of the finest dramatic works of our time within the convention of the Absurd.

Eugene Ionesco, whose play *The Rhinoceros* recently enjoyed a limited Broadway success defines "absurd" as that which is devoid of purpose and believes that such is the present state of man. The playwright of the Absurd sees man adrift, without moral certitude or political conviction, and so without a basis for independent action.

The major playwrights discussed by Esslin are



Samuel Beckett (*Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*), Arthur Adamov (*Ping-Pong*), Eugene Ionesco (*The Chairs*, *The Lesson*, *The Bald Soprano*), and Jean Genet (*The Maids*, *The Balcony*, *The Blacks*). He also includes Harold Pinter, the English playwright whose work *The Caretaker* had a fine critical reception in New York last month, and Edward Albee, the American writer of *Krapp's Last Tape* and *The Zoo Story*.

The author claims that Beckett has successfully bypassed conceptual language in much the same way that abstract painting bypasses recognizable natural objects and that he has with like success substituted the static situation, where characters merely endure anguish, for the dramatic action where they bring anguish upon themselves. He regards Beckett's method as one that has a therapeutic effect upon an audience, much the same as that achieved in psychoanalysis. He does not mention T. S. Eliot's dramas—*The Family Reunion*, *The Cocktail Party*, and *The Confidential Clerk*—though he might well be describing the work of this Absurd old timer. Eliot's language has certainly become more tenuous with each successive play.

Some of the Absurdists have described their work as a search for the sacred, the infinite, with a tragic outlook that the doctrine of original sin has provided in the past. Adamov writes: "From whatever point he starts, whatever path he follows, modern man comes to the same conclusion: behind its invisible appearances, life hides a meaning that is eternally inaccessible to penetration by the spirit that seeks for its discovery, caught in the dilemma of being aware that it is impossible to find it, and yet also impossible to renounce the hopeless quest." No wonder many of our theologians have expressed an interest in this body of drama!

Esslin points out that it is Ionesco who has best succeeded in devaluating language. Convinced that words are meaningless, and that no communication between human beings is possible, he tries to translate the feelings of his characters into visual symbols by letting the scenery and properties reflect their anxieties; e.g., *The Chairs*. Like Adamov he denies that he is a pessimist. He believes that the only way to an authentic existence is by putting man face to face with the absurdity of his condition. In this way, Ionesco says, comes catharsis, or liberation from anxiety. Esslin cites Oedipus and Lear as characters similarly confronted with a desperate situation. I wonder, however, if we are to think of the Furies as properties.

All of these playwrights are writing plays of social protest, but in Jean Genet's works the protest is most vehement. Genet protests the helplessness of man confronted with the complexity of modern life, protests by revealing the dream world of the outcasts of society as one completely alienated from reality. Esslin compares Genet with Pirandello, noting that in their plays apparent reality is always discovered to be illusion.

There is much to admire in *The Theatre of the Absurd*, and Esslin offers some convincing arguments in support of its significance. Most important, these plays are theatrical pieces, needing a stage, the trappings of the theatre, and actor-audience contact. The authors have not written them with one eye on a movie adaptation. Therefore, they are "of" the theatre, meaningful only in that medium. Next in importance is the revitalized dialogue, expressed in language so different from the cliché cuteness of the drawing room comedy of the solemn slobberings of the "common man" dramas that the audience is compelled to listen attentively. One enjoys somewhat the same effect in reading Cummings or Stein; the language scrapes at the roots of feelings and ideas in a way that has little conceptual (or sequential?) meaning, but that creates images which have a cumulative effect on the mind of the listener. Lastly, this body of work is impressive because the writers have struck an authentic stance, have presented a personal vision of life in our time that jibes with the outlook of many civilized and sophisticated humans throughout the world.

The limitations of the Absurdists are about equal in number. The devaluation of language, if carried far, limits the audience to a coterie who can translate the special symbols of the playwright. The greatest playwrights have always reached a large audience. But if Beckett and company succeed in sifting the gold of words from the dross that often conceals their meaning—who knows?—the Absurdists may prepare the way for a modern Shakespeare. Another limitation that Esslin does not note is the fact that the most successful plays of these writers are of one act. The play with a static situation does not lend itself to development of plot, character or idea. The best that can be done is to reveal the situation as it exists, the character as he is, and the one theme of the absurdity of his condition. John Gassner, in reviewing Beckett's latest, *Happy Days*, calls it an over-extended metaphor. Lastly, this reviewer cannot stomach a good many of the characters in these plays. As Aristotle would have



said, they are not representative. True, they are symbols for certain attitudes and ways of behavior in our society; but are they representative symbols? Beckett's hapless tramps, Ionesco's middle class morons, and Genet's conscienceless caricatures all exist to a degree, but some of us might prefer reactions to the absurdity of our condition from such as Albert Schweitzer, Charles de Gaulle, or even Yuri Gagarin.

Martin Esslin has written a provocative and exhaustive study of *The Theatre of the Absurd*, one in which writers and theatre buffs should wallow contentedly.

—J. A. WITHEY

## The Crooked Corridor

*The Crooked Corridor: a Study of Henry James.* By Elizabeth Stevenson. New York: The Macmillan Company. c. 1961. 172 pp. \$1.35.

The Macmillan Company has recently published a paperback edition of Miss Stevenson's 1949 study of the work of Henry James. In spite of the vast amount of James scholarship in the intervening years, it remains a valid and useful work. Having said "useful," however, one must quickly point out that since Miss Stevenson's method is inductive, supporting her assertions with so many citations from both James' novels and short stories that even she seems to be embarrassed by the sheer accumulation, the book should properly be read only after an extensive reading of James himself.

Miss Stevenson does not fall into the biographical pitfall: James sought to unite life and art, not *his* life and art. As she says, "An item from life . . . cannot be allowed as of any weight or the author can be accused rightly of cheating." Hence the section devoted to biography is only thirteen pages long. Other sections deal with James' scope (severely limited but self-sufficient), his central theme (the collision of the individual and society), the variations he played on this theme (about which James may well have been more aware than Miss Stevenson suggests), and his means (that famous, fascinating, maddening, and increasingly convoluted Jamesian style, which he called his "crooked corridor").

So long as the reader does not mistake this for an introduction to Henry James, but turns to it only after a large experience of the works of James (and it doesn't take long to find out that reading James is precisely an experience), he will find it a rewarding book.

—FRANCIS ADAMS

## Tell Me A Riddle

*Tell Me A Riddle.* A Collection by Tillie Olsen. New York: J. B. Lippincott and Company. 1961. 156 pp. \$3.50.

Four short stories, a variety of styles, and refreshing views on four subjects make Tillie Olsen's first book, *Tell Me A Riddle*, a delight to read.

The first of these stories, "Hey Sailor, What Ship?" introduces the reader to a medley of descriptions, thought processes and spoken phrases which, when diffused into a pattern of moods and impressions, leaves the reader awed. Not only does Mrs. Olsen use words well, she is evidently careful in choosing them. Her punctuation could easily confuse the reader, but after a page or two the train of thought overcomes the lack of quotation marks, and the story moves more smoothly.

Mrs. Olsen uses one character—an old sailor—in one situation—a homecoming with his daughter and grandchildren—to describe the relationship between the young and the old and their effort to understand each other.

"O Yes" relates the white child's impressions of a Negro baptismal service. The story is based on the friendship between a white child and a Negro child. The relationship is set between the two mothers. The problem is a social one which Mrs. Olsen views with sympathy and understanding. She moves beyond the surface into the core of human relationships—friendship and religion.

The whole problem is one of "differences." The white mother wants her daughter to remain in the child-like society where there is no "difference." The white child sees this social difference between her Negro friend and herself clearly at the Negro church. The Negro mother understands that the two children cannot be close friends forever, but she wants the white child to understand the reasons.

Through these characters and a Negro church service, the reader sees a child's first experience with the grown-up world. This experience is well expressed when Mrs. Olsen writes, ". . . it is a long baptism into the seas of humankind, my daughter. Better immersion and its pain than to live untouched. Yet how will you sustain?"

The shortest of the stories, "I Stand Here Ironing," is a mother's recollections of her daughter's childhood. It is a sad, pathetic story that leaves the reader apprehensive and helpless at having viewed the girl's indifference toward the actual "livingness" of life. Mrs. Olsen retained the detached quality of her other stories; yet she presents a sensitive, touching picture of a mother's anxiety at having sensed failure in the rearing of



her oldest child.

The last story, "Tell Me a Riddle," is a highly dramatic and poetic love story at which Mrs. Olsen reaches her peak with word-pictures. The author's characters are at first vague and colorless, but as the story progresses, the color comes through in shades of violet and pink—colors for the old, shadowed by weariness and the ever-present threat of death.

The couple has been married forty-seven years, and their children are married and have children of their own. The man wants his wife to enjoy old age with him, and the wife is resentful that her children were not for her a joy, but a drudgery. "The children's needings; that grocer's face or this merchant's wife she had had to beg credit from when credit was a disgrace, the scenery of the long blocks walked around when she could not pay; school coming, and the desperate going over the old to see what could be remade; the soups of meat bones begged "for-the-dog" one winter . . ." The basic idea is fear—not so much fear of death as fear of separation and loneliness.

Here is a collection of four stories presenting to the reader four different ideas, four varieties in writing style, and one new writer, Tillie Olsen. If her first book, *Tell Me a Riddle*, is an example of Mrs. Olsen's work to come, we look forward with anticipation to her next publication.

—SUE ELLEN HUNSUCKER

### The Lattimer Legend

*The Lattimer Legend*. By Ann Hebson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1961. 325 pp. \$3.95.

Ann Hebson, the author of *The Lattimer Legend*, is a newcomer to American writing. She has spent most of her life in the South and has set both of her novels in that region. Her first book, *A Fine and Private Place*, was published in 1958. The present novel, *The Lattimer Legend*, was published in 1961 and won for Mrs. Hebson the third annual Macmillan Fiction Award.

*The Lattimer Legend* revolves around the reactions of Tom Lattimer to diaries written during the Civil War by his ancestor, Kate. Tom is a member of the country club set. He is a materialist and participates in all the Saturday night club frolics. A mere figurehead in his business, which he has inherited from his father, Tom allows his partner to assume all of the responsibility. Even at home, he evades responsibility by allowing his wife to make most of the decisions. He resents the children who, he feels, "clutter up their lives."

His wife, Cora, represents the strength on which Tom is dependent, but he does not recog-

nize her true significance. Although Cora knows about the love affair Tom had just before World War II, she does not "retreat back to her own high mountain valley and become a gaunt and bitter woman." Instead, she accepts him as he is. Through Kate's diaries, Tom discovers that Cora possesses the same qualities he admired in Kate, "the same stubbornness and gritty humor and earthiness, the same ability to fight with dignity and nobility, the same nimbus of sexuality." After Tom has developed this new conception of his wife, he appreciates her as an individual.

Kate's diaries also affect Tom's relationship with his grandfather, a Civil War veteran. Early in the book, Tom neglects his grandfather, thus driving Joel Lattimer to escape into the past from the unpleasant realities of his old age. In Kate's diaries, however, Tom discovers the secrets of the past, the most profound of which was his grandfather's passion for his own stepmother, Kate. He finally confesses to Tom that, "I wanted her ag'n worse and worse. It wore me down, that awful wanting. When I thought I couldn't stand it, I went to her room. I laid there till dawn under them sheets that smelled of her so's I could hardly breathe." Through his discovery of his grandfather's affair with Kate, Tom realizes that human sin is eternal. Thus, his guilt over his own affair relaxes. Tom no longer regards his grandfather as a ridiculous old man but eventually respects and even loves him.

*The Lattimer Legend* is concerned with both the past and the present. The author, who presents a well-developed and rapidly moving plot, uses Tom as the cohesive force between two generations. While *The Lattimer Legend* could be considered in part an historical novel, it is a story concerned primarily with individuals whose lives demonstrate the basic similarity of emotions, regardless of time or place.

—JANE TEAL

### Initial A

*Initial A*. By David Schubert. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1961. 70 pp. \$1.50.

David Schubert was not a well known poet. He has not been examined greatly by the critics, nor has he been widely read and anthologized. His is not a bombastic, passion-filled voice, but a gentle soothing one; a voice that calls to mind the green years directly after the turn of the century.

Schubert was born in New York in the year 1913. After an impoverished childhood he somehow found his way to Amherst College and the College of the City of New York, later



attending the Columbia Graduate School. During this time of his life, his work enjoyed relative popularity. However, he succumbed to "the rigors of the age—and of his own life—illness and a complete breakdown led to his death in April 1946." Today, he attracts little attention.

Perhaps Schubert's greatest gift was his simplicity of style and tone. He concocted no startling images through complicated wordage and juxtaposition. There is in his simple and direct verse nothing which calls attention to the fact that this is a poem, a complicated mechanism. There is instead a subtlety of imagery and idea, a moving panorama of innuendos with great meaning attached. However, there is a detriment to this. While Schubert's work escapes the bombastic certitude of much of the modernistic school, while it is not didactic in the least, it loses the reader's interest. It enfolds itself in vagueness and tends to skim the surface of the ideas. In a sense, David Schubert's poetry lacks depth. Without this depth, it lacks interest.

However, for the persevering reader who is willing to drift through the world of shadows and subtleties twice, interest and aesthetic value can be gained from David Schubert's simple and clear phraseology and symbolism.

—MILTON G. CROCKER

### High on a Hill

*High on a Hill.* By Lucy Daniels. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. 1961. 320 pp. \$4.95.

Lucy Daniels was born in North Carolina, and, after attending the George School, she became a reporter for the *Raleigh Times*. She is the author of the highly successful *Caleb, my Son*, a novel involving a Negro family in the South shortly after the desegregation of schools was ordered.

In her new book, *High on a Hill*, Miss Daniels has taken the unusual setting of a mental hospital at Holly Springs, New York, and its collection of people with their various mental disorders. The book moves from the highly insane, almost hopeless, to the slightly disturbed who have an abandoned air.

While interesting as a group of individual cases, the book lacks the cohesion necessary to tie the cases together on some common ground other than Holly Springs. The reader can see the author's attempt to use Dr. David Holliday, the director of Holly Springs, as the cohesive element. It is doubtful, however, that this attempt has been successful. Nevertheless, Miss Daniels dispels many of the misconceptions concerning what actually goes on in a mental hospital.

—BOB AVERETTE

## Contributor's Notes

Jim Rockey comes to East Carolina from Omak, Washington. He is a senior and has been enrolled in different schools from the West to the East coast. This is his first appearance.

Sarah Hansen has her poetry published for the third time in **THE REBEL** (Not the same poetry). She is a primary-education major from New Bern.

Richard Taylor arrived here via the USAF, Piedmont College, and Kamuela, Hawaii. He holds the position of graduate assistant in the Social Studies Department and has a mustache.

G. Carroll Norwood is a Senior from Black Mountain, North Carolina.

Betsy Orr is a Senior from Robbinsville, North Carolina. She and Mr. Norwood appear for the first time in this issue.

Dr. Elizabeth Utterback is a member of the English faculty here at East Carolina. She has had a good deal of material published in the past, but not by **THE REBEL**.

Dr. Francis Adams is a member of the English faculty.

Dr. J. A. Withey is a member of the English faculty and returns to East Carolina this year after a year's teaching in Burma.

Bob Averette, Joyce Evans and Jane Teal are freshmen (non-Freudian) and are members of the staff.

Ann Mashburn, a sophomore from Washington, N. C. and Betsy Ross and Pat Waff, sophomores from Edenton, N. C. are newcomers to the art section.



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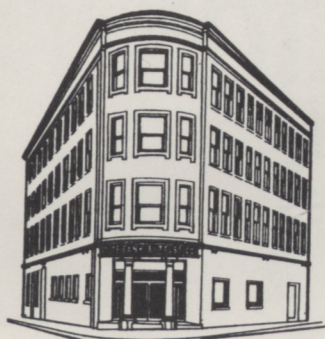
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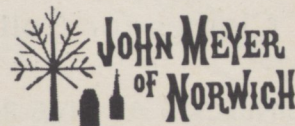
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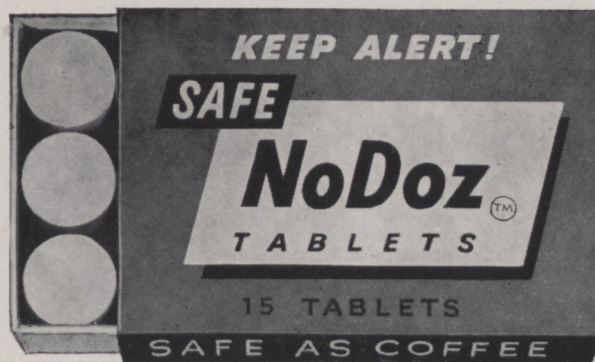
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