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BEFORE
Marcus the Necrophile

By Harold Brent '65

In an article which recently appeared in the Saturday Review, the eminent psychologist Erich Fromm discussed what he believes to be the two most important polar attitudes of the world’s men and women toward life and death. There is one set of people to whom Fromm gives the title ‘biophile.’ The attitudes of the people who belong to this group are normal and healthy; they love life and expectantly look with hope to the future. Their opposites, the ‘necrophiles’, are frigid devotees of whatever is mechanical and orderly; they live in the past, and their thoughts of the future are permeated by a fascination with death.²

While such a dichotomy is too exact to be readily accepted as a correct categorization of all of the past and present inhabitants of our planet, I believe that there are many individuals who exhibit traits concomitant to a greater or less degree with general attitudes of either biophilia or necrophilia. In an enumeration of those influenced by the latter temperament, I would include such philosophers as Fridrich Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer and the second century Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

The philosophy of Marcus Aurelius is that of moderation in all things and enjoyment of nothing. The stoic emperor has been praised as a single example of calm sublimation of the will to fate in an age when men lived for the moment, despised religion, and thought not of death. Mar-

² It should be noted that Fromm uses the word “necrophile” in a sense which is entirely different from its commonly accepted meaning.

Marcus the Necrophile

cus thought a great deal about death. His philosophy emphasizes the idea that man must not seek to alter his destiny; man must be complacent and inactive; he must accept whatever calamities befall him with cheerfulness, and he should not make provisions for the avoidance of similar disasters in his future. This philosophy deserves some praise for bringing to men's attention the fact that the events which happen in the world are not entirely within their sphere of control, but basically it is a meaningless and frigid interpretation of life; Marcus Aurelius deserves our commendation little more than those who sought overindulgence in the pleasures of life at the expense of contemplating death.

It is an interesting fact that there are few members of that necrophilious category of philosophers called stoics who enjoy prominent positions in the history of Philosophy. I would even venture to speculate that were it not for the accident of Marcus Aurelius' being a Roman Emperor, few people would consider his most famous work, The Meditations, to be a very important work of philosophy. The reason is easily demonstrable. Stoicism points to a static life, a life in which one should desire neither to be great nor to do great things. It is an existence during which one only waits for and speculates upon non-existence. If one were to live the life of a stoic, he could never hope to make a great contribution to the progress of man. For by its very nature stoicism leads to an indifference toward life and an expectancy of death. One cannot hope to alter anything; one must consider with Marcus Aurelius that everything which occurs happens justly, and that "all things soon pass away and become a mere tale" which is buried by complete oblivion.
The profound respect which Marcus Aurelius had for law and order is closely connected to his uncertain but fatalistic attitude toward death. He says:

He who flies from his master is a runaway; but the law is master, and he who breaks the law is a runaway. And he also who is grieved or angry or afraid, is dissatisfied because something has been or is or shall be of the things which are appointed by him who rules all things, and he is Law, and assigns to every man what is fit. He then who fears or is grieved or is angry is a runaway.

A man must not run away from law and order because he cannot hope to flee from the one unalterable law of nature, the law of death. Marcus cannot tell us about what is to happen to us after we die. His thoughts concerning this matter are very confused; he contradicts himself many times, and at one point he gives the choice of the alternatives “either to be extinguished, or dispersed or continue to exist.” He does know, however, that the moment of death will inevitably arrive for every man, and he tells us to wait for it complacently. For him, death is the culminating experience of life; it overshadows all pleasant experiences and nullifies the value of all deeds, good and bad.

Consider—says Aurelius—when thou art much vexed or grieved, that man’s life is only a moment, and after a short time we are all laid out dead.

and

‘When a man kisses his child’ said Epictetus, ‘he should whisper to himself,’ ‘To-morrow perchance thou wilt die’—‘but those are words of bad omen—’ ‘No word is a bad omen’ said Epictetus ‘which expresses any work of nature.’

In short, the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius is one which, if strictly followed, would lead both to the unemo-
tional acceptance of the burdens of life, and a perpetual lethargy from which one would find it difficult to rise to perform any great or noble deed. Marcus would have us avert our gaze so that we would not see the gladiators, but he would have us do nothing to prevent them from murdering one another. After all—he would say—what does it matter if men die in their youth or in their old age? Death is an unalterable fact; what does it matter if men die by their own hands or by the hand of sickness? It matters a great deal, because to be preoccupied with the inevitability of death is to miss not only the pain and suffering, but also the beauty and joy of life. Instead of saying with the necrophile, Marcus Aurelius:

Such as bathing appears to thee—oil, sweat, dirt, filthy water, all things disgusting—so is every part of life and everything.

we must say with Spinoza, the biophile:

A free man thinks of death least of all things; and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life.
“A Fatal Bound”

By PAUL J. TRAINOR ’65

During one of his many frequent and virulent diatribes against Christianity, Friederich Nietzsche declared that “It was fatigue and weariness which created the Beyond; the fatigue, which, with one bound—and a fatal bound—wishes to reach the last things—a poor ignorant fatigue, which no longer even wishes to will.”¹ What a tremendous truth there is in this statement! What a tremendous falsehood! It is psychologically, though not ontologically, true that the fatigue and weariness of mind and body and spirit created the Beyond—immortality. That is, it created it in the sense that it made it highly personal; it created it for me. But if it is anything, the belief in eternal life is not a giving up of the will; rather it is a thunderous and fervent affirmation of the desire to be. The will to be endears the concept of immortality to the hearts of men. Man can be truly defined as an immortality-craving being. What animal but man knows the temporarility of the present? By know I do not mean just a passive awareness; knowledge of temporality consists in the realization of the infinitesimal shortness of that junction of time and eternity which constitutes my present existence. And who but man desires so passionately and strongly immortality? In fact, Miguel De Unamuno, the Spanish philosopher, has rightly observed that the hunger for immortality is innate to man because man is a theological being. That is, man cannot avoid seeking the answers to the mysteries of life. The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius take on a profound meaning, historically and psychologically, in light of man’s absolute inability to sati-

¹ M. C. D’Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love (New York, 1956), P. 145.
ate his thirst for immortality without the fullness of Revelation. Without Revelation the deep draughts of natural belief in and unaided reasoning about immortality but intensify the thirst. Aurelius represents one of the most noble and also most tragic, because unsuccessful, attempts by a pagan to solve the problem of life hereafter.

What makes men sensitive to their craving for immortality? One answer to this question is an awareness of the contingency and temporality of our present existence. Such an awareness produces a tragic sense of life. The tragic sense of life is a whole conception of life itself and the universe. It is a feeling of lacking; it is a doubt about our destiny; it is anguish in face of evil, physical and moral; but above all, it is that feeling of dread and loneliness which is attendant upon a realization of our distance from God. That Marcus Aurelius had this sense of life is evident to any reader of his Meditations. How often does he emphasize the shortness of life? How frequently does he remind himself of his composition?—a little flesh and breath. The fallibility of the human mind is all too well known to him, and because of his cognizance and exaggeration of the limitations of reason, Aurelius subscribes to a skepticism. His view of the nobility of man gains in stature because of his awareness of the emotionality and irrationality of man, or, to say the same thing, his awareness of man's ungodliness. Yes, Aurelius had a noble concept of man, but a concept distorted by a sublime despair. For him death is a liberation and life an agony. But a liberation to what? To a loss of identity and consciousness, and a vague sort of re-absorption into the Divine at the world-conflagration. This theme constantly recurs throughout The Meditations, and Aurelius' favorite metaphor for it is the flow of phenomena to a river.
Aurelius’ admission of a limited immorality attests to what I would call the “feeling of immortality.” This feeling is not necessarily intellectual, though it is not totally nonrational. Without Revelation, it is extremely difficult to prove the immortality of the soul. The whole history of Greek philosophy substantiates this. (The proofs offered by St. Thomas, while being logically cogent, are psychologically unacceptable unless one is already predisposed towards them. I think it would be found that those who accept the proofs are those most inclined to believe in immortality anyway, and those who raise objections to them are those who make a foolish effort to deny the existence of their craving for immortality.) Philosophically and logically, Aurelius did not and perhaps could not prove that the soul is immortal. Yet he struggled valiantly but vainly against his materialistic presuppositions. Unfortunately the myopia of his vision, uncorrected by the glasses of Revelation, aroused in him a pathos which expressed itself in a despair and fatalism.

The nobility of Aurelius’ view of man and his universe must inevitably lead to pessimism and despair because he refused to make that one last, and in spite of Nietzsche, glorious leap into the Beyond. It is supremely and sadly ironic that this man, Marcus Aurelius, should realize the limitations of reason and still adhere so closely to his reasoned principles (i.e., the cosmology of the Stoics) as to forbid the full expression of his feeling of immortality. That a man so intensely involved in the why and the wherefore, the meaning and the purpose, of human existence should only think about it and not feel it is difficult to comprehend. Marcus Aurelius certainly had a feeling for life: he had a feeling for the suffering of men, men of flesh and
bones; he was sensitive to the suffering of men who, although they did not wish to die, do die. Yet, he refused to will, to will to believe in immortality. It is the pagan Nietzsche, not the Christian, who gives up in fatigue and weariness; it is the pagan, not the Christian, who no longer even wishes to will. Ah how noble and tragic was Aurelius' view of life! How much more tragic was the man born 121 years after Christ!

A Setting for Love

By Robert A. Ras '67

*Natura* was asleep at half-
Past dusk (or so I thought).
I looked for wind, but could not feel:
The frozen sights were hardly real.
The blazing bright and burning billows thrilled my thralléd, intrepid, thriving heart.
I lost a breath as past the clouds
So still I saw the glowing, gliding, glory, moving, mounting moon.
The softened white of Sol's reflected glow danced stilly on the ponds
From afternoon's refreshing meal;
The standing, stolid, stoic, stilled arbors grotesquely gave their darkened limbs to Nature's dusking sky.
(What blind soul could watch this teeming, lacking' sights to read its meaning?)
It was an eerie looking — feel — tasting night. It was a night fecund and ripe for love — and love I did.
Island
By George Welkey '64

sleep, woman of my sorrows
sharer of my secret softness —
the darkness is rising out of the day
and the storm is on the wind.
the trees talk among themselves
of the agony that will come too soon
and what say the clouds
eddying and swirling soundlessly weary
their foaming lips speak
only an eloquent silence —
this cycle they have moaned before —
but they know not, they know not . . .
therefore sleep
and dream
woman of my blood, weary now,
fall away quickly
time slays itself on the swords of our sense
rest in the tall, soft grass
while i walk in the fire that is to come
and speak with
the ones gone before me,
to learn of what has been and what will never be
o woman, my woman
dream now,
dream the echoes of a silence
that dies
as swiftly as footsteps in the fog —

DURING
as surely as the rose sheds its last petal
before the brittle wind —
as sweetly as the sea
sleeps with the sand —
dream of the lost, fatal spirits
that have forgotten us,
failed us as if we were never
and are now not —
dream, woman, dream
for i cannot
and i am afraid

are there deeps in your soul, woman
as there are
bottomless shallows in mine
do they heave and whiten and curl
or do they lie undisturbed
does peace rest easily in you
or, as i see, no
you rest in the yielding fire
and consumed, do not die
yet die unconsumed

wake now,
the time is near
wake now, child, and walk with me
your life is just beyond the night -
mine was just beyond the day .
Primal Scene

By Jim Napier '66

Formed on the wing of a howl;
Impelled by the erratic stream;
The flake flutteringly searches
The murky veil, for fibre to glean.

Thread by thread the milky mist becomes
Sameness in unique selection;
Its perfect limbs connected
To the core in reflection.

And from the nurturing cloud,
Now the flake is quickly whisked.
It dangles in stormy screams,
As by the wind is kissed.

Its gentle sigh cannot be heard
As toward the grey mass below,
The flake swirls in debate of that
Or the tempest's powdering blow.

Thus, to earth, form directs the way
To landing with a silent crash
On the side of a cloaked hill,
Or cling to a stem or branch.
They had told me that possibly I needed a change of pace for a while. "Why don't you go home for a few days?" Father Evans had said. "You need a rest. Why don't you just go home and forget your books and your duties? Just relax and have a little holiday."

And so I had come home. My parents were surprised. I explained that it would only be for a few days. It was a holiday. No, I had not changed my mind.

Father Pierce came to dinner my second evening at home. He was an august old man with a giant bald head, and the massive folds of his chin always rested in solid billows on his stiff white collar. The conversation at dinner was quite general, with only casual questions concerning the seminary and my studies.

But, after the meal, my parents left the old priest and me alone in the parlor.

"Well, Tom, I hope that you're not finding the life out in the seminary too burdensome."

"No, Father, I'm not. I rather enjoy it."

"It's really a great life. Many a fond memory I have about that old place. Bill Burke is out there teaching now, isn't he?"

"Yes, Father Burke is my theology professor."

"Yes . . . yes . . . Bill was an odd case. He came in the same year that I did and was ordained in my class; he's about five years older than I, though. He had been in the seminary before and then dropped out and went to work for a few years. But then he came back. He never talked too
much about it, though. Never talked about himself at all really.”

The old priest sat there for quite a while talking about his life in the seminary. But my attention soon began to wander. It is agonizing when older people start telling you about when they were young, and how they wish they had it all to live over again.

Finally he got up to leave. “Well . . . enough of this rambling. I really must be going. I have to relieve the curate in a few minutes and I shall be late if I don’t hurry. I’ll go in and thank your kind parents.”

At the door he turned around and shook hands with me. “The best of luck to you, Tom. You’re a fine boy.”

“Goodnight, Father.”

The next day I sat about the house reading a novel. Once or twice I opened a school book and began to study but I soon closed it. In the mid afternoon I looked out the parlor window and watched a group of boys playing football on the pavement. They were about my own age but I didn’t know any of them. I wanted to go out and join them but I didn’t. It would have been a true holiday to go out there with them. I really wanted to.

But instead I watched from the parlor window, thinking how foolish they looked at their play.

I took the train back to the seminary the next night. It was quite late when I arrived and I found the gate locked. I knew that it would be quite useless to ring the bell, for I knew that the gatekeeper always got quite drunk on Saturday nights and would be sleeping heavily until morning.

The cab that had brought me from the railroad station was gone, and so I began the long walk back to the village to find a room for the night. As I walked, I thought of
many things—the priesthood mainly and a hundred ensuing complications.

It was strange, I thought, about Father Burke having doubts at one time about his vocation. He seemed to my mind to be the most resolute of persons. I had often admired in class his authoritative tone and masterful demeanor. It would be pleasant to sit in his class now and be able to realize that I knew a bit of his past private history.

I suddenly found myself crying over and over again, "God, make me a priest. God, please make me a priest."

That's it. That's what they had been trying to tell me all along. It wasn't for me. It just wasn't for me.

When finally I reached the village, I didn't look for a room, but instead walked to the station to wait for the train.

The Uncommitted

By Peter LaPorte '66

To soar!
Free from the
gavity of ignorance,
above the mountains,
above the opaque
mist of belief
hung round the valleys.
To search and suffer,
this is life!
To soar! — but there's
so much — too much:
I ask: Is this folly, too?
The Filters

By J. G. Prior '65

Last summer I worked as a lifeguard at the officers' club swimming pool of a navy base. Every morning at nine o'clock, dressed in my liturgical red bathing suit and an all-encompassing brown cope of suntan, I, the high priest of an order of water worshippers, climbed the white steps of the lifeguard chair, my pulpit. The congregation arrived slowly. The first to come were the innocentes, the children, seeking only the cleansing baptismal balm of the clear, cold water. Next came the cognescenti, the teenagers, initiated long ago into the mystic rites of the swimming pool cult. The pristine wonder of the first days of their conversion was wearing off. As they grew older, they learned to spend longer periods away from the watery sacrament of the swimming pool itself. They sat around the perimeter of the pool, pursuing secular activities—smoking, reading, talking, arguing. The unbelievers, the adults, arrived last. For them, the pool had lost all mystic qualities. They came to laugh at the innocent devotion of their children to the mysteries of the water. Jaded and smug, they drank beer and gossiped, oblivious to the wonders so close at hand.

Like a good pastor, I guarded my entire flock well. Ever conscious of the dangers, I frequently shot up in my chair, ready to save anyone from the perils of overenthusiastic devotion to the pool. I ministered to their needs kindly, applying sunburn ointment, iodine and band aids. Safe in my pulpit, I preached stern sermons, exhortations to virtue—"Only one on the diving board at a time. No running on the swimming pool deck."
As the glaring eye of the sun settled down behind me, and the shadow of the lifeguard chair sank slowly into the pool, my congregation began to depart. I was left for my own period of silent contemplation. But too much meditation can be dangerous. Staring into the pool, I began to become amazed at how clean it was. Despite the amount of grass, dirt, paper, cracker jacks and bandages it absorbed during the day, it was crystal clear. I knew why, of course. Thirty feet away in their little brick house, three mammoth filters pumped away, draining every drop of water through a sieve of gravel and white powder. The water they fed back into the pool was pure and antiseptic, each malevolent bacteria killed by a solution of chlorine. I was shocked to find that my faith in the swimming pool was beginning to falter. I, the priest, was about to join the unbelievers, the adults. Sitting in my lifeguard chair, I began to regard the filters in their red brick fortress as my enemies. Wistfully I thought of the ocean where the seaweed, salt and sand, blended with the water by the pounding of the waves, serve the bather a spicy and aromatic mixture. As the summer wore on, I slipped away secretly on my days off to the sea, my new found shrine. Back at the pool, I wanted to stand up like a prophet and proclaim a new reformation, a return to the ocean. But I knew it would be hopeless. Pool filtration is an ingrained part of American life.

Confident in my new found heresy, I became daring and began to generalize. I came to the realization that Americans have every aspect of their lives filtered for them. The people who control American culture believe that all harshness and conflicts must be removed before anything is ready for consumption. They think that we
are unable to accept anything which might cause shock because we are a passionless people. Everything in an American's life, the products he buys, the entertainment he enjoys, and even the social life he leads, is dulled by a process of filtration. My sympathy went out to the jaded adult members of my congregation, understandably bored by their bland life.

The filtering of an American's life is most obvious in the food he eats. Each of his meals is tasteless. It begins with a salad made from stringy green vegetables which have had almost all flavor washed and scraped away. The salad is smothered with a heavy oily dressing, covering any taste remaining in it. Next comes a limpid pool of luke-warm cream of tomato soup, a dull pink puddle with no more flavor than water. There is a large supply of spongy white bread served along side, tasting very much like paper. The main course is a slab of rare roast beef swimming in a pool of purple blood. This meat is made tasteless by sterilization and freezing. Accompanying the meat, there is a mountain of instant mashed potatoes tasting like wet plaster and a hill of pale green peas, flavored by the tin of their man-made shell. After the main course, the American is offered a slice of waxy machine-made cheese to accompany his hot cup of weak instant coffee, which has the bouquet of burnt leaves. For dessert there is a soggy apple pie with an imitation filling and a rubbery crust.

It is not only American food which is the victim of this process of filtration but also American manufactured products. The makers of these products desire the greatest possible return for their investment. For this reason, they try to make the products pleasing to the great number of
The Filters

people. But, in trying to satisfy everyone, they please no one.

The designers and producers of American clothes, hidden away in the windy caverns of thirty-fourth street in New York, analyze what they consider to be the typical American and adapt a style to him. This year, they have decided that all American men are tall and thin, desiring to be clothed in the parti-colored hues of Joseph's robe. The women, they have decided, are larger and more muscular. Therefore, they need clothes displaying this new build — tweed jackets, woolen slacks and leather boots. Americans are left with no choice but to follow these prefabricated dictates of fashion. They are obliged to wear the uniform filtering down to them from the designers in New York.

Out in Detroit the filters are working too. The trend analyzers and style setters of the automobile business have discovered the formula to satisfy every buyer. Americans are supposed to want bigger, more powerful cars, cars with the sporty look. Therefore, each company produces cars to fulfill this supposed need. Americans must follow this trend and purchase huge, shining cars, capable of being distinguished from each other only by the name plate on the hood.

Like American consumer products, American entertainment must be filtered for the mass American mind. This is most obvious in television where the filters are the advertising agencies, aided by the all-powerful analyzers of taste, the Neilsen ratings. The trend in American taste this year, they have discovered, is to hillbilly programs with a liberal sprinkling of doctor shows. Thus, an American,
when he turns on his set, must be ready to enjoy the antics of Jed Clampett or Ben Casey.

American motion pictures follow these supposed trends in taste in the same way as television does, although the filters controlling this aspect of American life are less obvious than those in television. Americans now must watch movies of epic proportion about Anthony and Cleopatra or the trials of the sailors from the *Bounty* on Pitcairn Island. These motion pictures must be in color with every hue a garish exaggeration — royal blue seas, blood red robes and milk white palaces. American producers also make so-called quality pictures specializing in a constant use of popularized Freudian imagery. The motion pictures have followed the interpretation of mass trends so closely that each motion picture seems to be a copy of another.

The field of journalism, also, has submitted to this cultivation of a mass American mind. The magazines and newspapers seem to think that Americans are interested in one thing—scandal. Their papers are dominated by lurid accounts of the influence peddling in Washington, the sex and security scandal in London, and fixed sports events in Alabama. Even the dignified *New York Times* seems willing to submit to this new trend towards yellow journalism. In the field of news, Americans have again had their tastes dictated by an interpretation of mass taste. They have no choice but to what the editors have decided interests them.

American books, once above any trends of fashion, have also been filtered for a mass taste. The publishers have decided that Americans do not wish to read anything which takes any degree of mental effort. As a result, they
publish ghost-written autobiographies of noted comedians and large illustrated histories of the Civil War, almost to the exclusion of books of literary merit. Americans buy more books now than ever before, but they buy what they are offered. Since worthwhile books are considered unprofitable by the publishers, they are unavailable to the public. Again, the mythical mass taste has removed the excitement from the American’s life.

On a more general level, even the social life of Americans goes through a process of filtration. America has often been referred to as a great melting pot in which the cultures of many nations have been blended together to form a distinctly American civilization. This description is true to an extent. America has, indeed, removed the distinguishing characteristics from the racial groups it has absorbed. But, it has not replaced these with any discernible culture of its own. The people our country has absorbed have become undistinguishable faces in a meaningless crowd. American culture has been reduced to a few senseless parades, understood or appreciated by only a small number of people. The American spoken language has lost its imagery, resorting to words like “nice” or “awful” to express the furthest extents of emotion. The American people have no ties, no roots with which they can identify. All these have been filtered out of their lives.

The government aids this filtering process in its legislative action. The politicians have interpreted the principle that all men are created equal to mean that no man is better than another. They encourage mass trends by requiring conformity to national norms for financial support of education, housing, road building, and social services. The government has also used the armed forces
as a filter, removing all individual characteristics from the soldiers and shaping them into conformity with the mythical American average.

All these processes of filtration make American life bland and insipid. Like the swimming pool I was watching, American life has had all challenge and excitement taken out of it. The adults at the pool were bored with it as they were bored with everything in their lives. I, myself, was able to sympathize with them and, perhaps, able to join them. But then I turned to the young people at the pool. Occasionally they would rise in revolt against the boredom which they were beginning to perceive at the pool. They turned the pool into an ocean by their enthusiastic running, swimming and splashing. They struck out wildly against the constant dullness of the pool.

There is in America a similar revolt against the filtering which has dulled our life. The young people know that they are being forced to follow patterns which their parents do not enjoy but are helpless to combat. For this reason they refuse to accept the tastelessness of the food, the sameness of the clothes, the stupidity of the entertainment, the dullness of the culture, and the domination of the government. They are determined to assert their own individuality, to impose their patterns on American life. Their revolt is, perhaps, overenthusiastic and exaggerated. But, this is necessary if anything of it is to remain after it has exhausted itself in the battle against the filters in American life. It is to be hoped that this revolt will bring about a change in American society so that the next generation will be free from the discontent now frustrating the major portion of Americans.
Madrigal on a Broken Jimson Weed

By Robert Walsh '64


—Jamie . . . Jamie, get up. It's time for breakfast. Your dad's already downstairs eatin'.

He rolled over, groaned, and saw his mom's green housedress by the window. Swish and snap and the figure vanished. The light hurt and he clenched his eyelids. Groaning again, he buried his head under his pillow.

—Jamie, you get up. We're waitin' for you downstairs. Hurry up now.

He sat up.

—Ah, mom. Whata I gotta get up for. No school today. I wanna sleep.

The green-clad figure clacked over to the door, clutched the knob, and paused.

—You just get up, young man. I'm not fixin two breakfasts around this house, school or no school.

The figure passed out the door. He sighed and threw back the bedclothes. He set his feet on the wooden floor. It made the sound that hurt his teeth.

He went over to the chest and started to dress. He looked over to the chair where he threw his jeans the night before, and walked out of his room to the top of the stairs.

—Mom . . .

—Mother!

—What ya want, boy?

—Ask mom where she put my bluejeans.
He heard the reply from below.
—Tell him I put them in the closet where they belong.
—They’re in the closet, boy.
—Thanks.

He went over to the closet and opened the door. As he ripped the jeans off the hanger, he looked out the window. Nice day. Real nice. Hope Barry don’t have to do errands for his folks.

He came down the stairs, jumping down the last three steps, and turned right into the kitchen. He plopped down in his usual chair. His dad was across the table reading the paper. His mom was shoveling the pancakes out of the skillet and onto his plate.

He liked to brag how many pancakes he always ate.
—Fix me at least twelve, Mom.
—Hah, that boy sure does eat cakes, Mother.

He gorged himself and swilled the milk around his mouth to wipe out the sweet taste of the syrup.
—I’m goin’ to call Barry and see if he wants to do some-thin’.

He bounded into the front room and grabbed the phone. He called Barry and told him he’d meet him by the diggings across from the little grocery store. They were building some new houses and there were dirt mounds and he and the guys had been playing there a lot lately.

He went to the front hall closet, reached behind the winter coats, and pulled out his B-B gun. He fumbled in his light jacket pocket and brought out a red cylinder pack of B-B’s and shoved them in his pant’s pocket.
—Where ya goin’, boy?
—Barry and me are goin’ to go huntin’ with our B-B guns.
Madrigal on a Broken Jimson Weed

—Alright. But mind you don’t fire the gun in the city limits.

—You be careful now, his mother added.

They had ridden past the rows of houses that used to be white and through the main street of town. They had ridden past the movie house where the cowboy show and cartoons would be that afternoon and past the fan over the bakery door that pumped the wonderful smell out into the street to attract customers. They had gone to the city park, had left their bikes in the rack, and had crossed the road into the woods beyond.

At first they had set up bottles and cans on rocks as targets. Then they had shot at the birds on the branches of the small trees and watched the small limbs quiver as the dark spots left and moved into the white sun. Once Barry had pretended that he was a desperado and had pumped pellets into the ground at Jamie’s feet to make him dance.

It was mid-May and hot. And they had run and played and he was sweating. His aunt always said that only horses sweat. People perspire.

They had eventually made their way out of the forest on the side opposite the park. Across the road was the Home. Although he was born in the town, he had not often been out by the Home. It was isolated from the town and people only came out here to go to the cemetery down the road. He remembered going past the Home on the special day that they always put flowers on his grandparents’ graves. The people behind the fence always waved at you—once when you went to the cemetery and again when you were going back to town.
—Hey, Jamie, let’s go look at the crazy people.
—Huh?
—I said let’s sneak over by the fence and look at the nuts.

They had heard some stories about the crazy people at the Home from the older boy who went there with the priest to serve Mass on Sunday. He had told them about the stupid way the people looked and the stupid things they did at Mass. And, whenever the older boy would tell his stories to them at school, someone would always kid him that one Sunday they were going to keep him at the Home because he was just as bad as the nuts. Everybody always laughed at that.

They crossed the road, climbed the small hill, and settled down in the wheat-like grass at the base of the heavy wire fence. It was tall and had barbed wire on top. Someone had once told him that you got killed like if you were in an electric chair if you touched that wire.

There were just a few people in the field between the fence and the large old brick building with the black bars over the windows. He pulled the tall grass back a little and peered at a grizzly-looking old man walking back and forth about twenty feet away. The old man walked with a cane and needed a haircut.

Suddenly he saw a pair of slanted eyes staring at him from not ten feet away. His heart jumped. But then the eyes looked down at the sandbox. They belonged to a boy with a round foreign-looking face. The face was uglier than the one that had scared him last month at the horror movie and had made him go home before the movie was over and go up to his room and lock the door and sit in the light by the window.
The boy was sitting in the sandbox, shoveling sand. It made a grinding noise as he sank his shovel into the sandbox, and it made a whispering noise as he poured the sand slowly out of the shovel and into the grass at the side of the box. Beside the boy in the sandbox was a teddy-bear with the stuffing sticking out at the neck.

A bell rang. The people in the yard started toward the red building. The ugly boy just sat there. Grind, whisper. Grind, whisper. Everyone else was almost inside.

—Boy!

Jamie buried his head in the grass and froze.

—Boy, why didn’t you go in when the bell rang?

Grind, whisper. Grind, whisper.

—You imbecile, don’t you ever mind when you’re told somethin’?

Jamie lifted his head. The ugly boy was intent on the sand in front of him. A man was standing over him.

—C’mon idiot.

The man grabbed the boy by his shirt collar. Grind. The shovel rose from the box and tossed the sand in the man’s face.

—Why, you damned little idiot!

The man grabbed the boy by the arm, lifted him out of the box, and slapped him hard across the face. The ugly boy began to whimper and the man pulled him toward the building leaving the bear alone in the sandbox.

Jamie’s throat felt dry and heavy.

Jamie got off his bike and swung his kick-stand down with the inside of his foot. Barry followed him into the
house. As he entered the door, he noticed the smell of old people's houses that used to be at his grandparents'.

— Mom, I'm home.
— I'm in the kitchen. I'll have lunch ready in five minutes.

She appeared at the kitchen door.

— Oh, Barry.
— Hello, Mrs. Burke.
— You boys wash up and I'll put on the soup and sandwiches.

He sat there hearing the mutterings of his mom and Barry and nodding whenever his mother reminded him that his soup was getting cold. Finally, he got up from the table.

— James P., you sit right down and finish your lunch.
— I'm not hungry.
— You sick?
— No.
— Then sit down and finish your lunch.

He finished eating and carried his dishes over to the sink and turned and went out the screen door into the back yard. Barry followed.

Jamie sat down in the little bit of shade next to the flower bed that ran along the side of the garage and scooped up some loose dirt. He picked out the pebbles and little dirt clods and began to throw them aimlessly across the yard. Barry lay on his back with his arm over his eyes to protect them from the sun.

— That guy at the Home sure gave that crazy kid hell, didn't he?
— Ya, he said, and grabbed another handful of dirt.
The Traitor
By P. Traynor '65

Long, long ago
When the grass was fresh and sweet
He stood on his own two feet.

An oak among saplings, he scorned nature's wrath;
For his back was sturdy, his hands were rough.
He labored, he wept, he laughed, he loved.

Long, long ago
When his skies were bright and blue
He enjoyed the life he knew.

His sons grew to manhood as he grew old,
Teaching the soil the strength of his arms,
While he knew his wealth was not stored in his barns

Long, long ago
With family and friends to love him
He thought his life could never dim.

As years rolled by, he watched them die,
Until he alone was left. Now day by day
He sits and stares, and bows his head to pray.

Long, long ago
He liked the change of season,
Before time's treason,

Long, long ago,
More than four score and ten,
He lived! and wanted to, then.
The Liturgical Year:

An Evaluation

By Michael Cessario ’66

Few Catholic students can fail to recall the catechist’s words repeated toward the last week of November each year: “This Sunday is the beginning of the Church year; make some good resolutions.” Undoubtedly the catechist’s concern was more for the good resolutions than for the new Church year. Under the impetus of Vatican II, the catechist’s words are undergoing a critical examination. What is the foundation for the concept of a “Church year” and why is Advent the beginning of this year? These are two of the many questions which liturgists are scrutinizing. Here I should like to present the thesis of one of the more noted liturgists, Dr. Pius Parsch, as discussed in his book, The Church’s Year of Grace.

Rather than a Church year, the liturgists of the new school propose the theory that the various ecclesiastical seasons compose a cycle. The idea of a Church year appears in none of the liturgical books. The Missal and other ecclesiastical books speak of either festive seasons, such as Easter, Christmas and Pentecost, or non-festive ferial periods. However, the length of the series of liturgical seasons and ferial periods is co-extensive with the civil year. The seasons are indeed independent of the civil year, that is, no new season begins on January first, but since they unfold within a civil year, they may be considered in that sense to compose a “Church year.” Concerning the cyclic theory we have the testimony of the Church Fathers, who spoke of the “year’s
cycle”. The cyclic theory holds that the seasons form a complete drama—the drama of redemption.

Having determined the nature of the cycle, the liturgists examine the order of the various seasons in the cycle. The catechist, representing a school of long tradition but little foundation, would demand the Advent Season as the beginning. This school might find support in the plan of the Missal which begins with the first Sunday of Advent or in the inconsistent medieval attempt to represent each period from creation (Advent) through redemption (Easter) to judgment (Pentecost) within the solar year; however, more substantial authority is wanting.

The medieval plan places the emphasis on the historical-symbolic nature of the liturgical seasons; a more fruitful emphasis might be placed on the sacramental, grace-giving nature of the liturgical seasons by the following chronology. The sacramentally orientated cycle begins on Septuagesima. This beginning finds traditional support in the scripture readings of the Breviary which begin the story of Genesis on that Sunday. The following three weeks of the pre-Lenten season present the three great patriarchs, Adam, Noe and Abraham, each of whom sets part of the stage for the coming of Christ. Then comes the main act of the redemptive drama, the restoration of divine life to men. The liturgy of Lent through the gospels shows the process of our redemption: the parable of the vineyard, an invitation; that of the sower, a beginning; the story of the blind man, an enlightenment; and finally Easter, a victory.

The cycle continues, stressing the coming of Christ in grace in accord with the sacramental emphasis of the cycle. During the post-Paschal season we celebrate our newly-won
victory over death and sin and as children wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. The Pentecost season's liturgy nurtures the life of faith, which we had received or renewed in the baptismal vows on Holy Saturday. The simple but powerful gospel themes of this period direct our spiritual growth. Toward the end of the Pentecost season and continuing through the Advent season, the end of this life of faith, that is, the Second Coming and the beatific vision, shines strongly in the liturgy. Advent is a period of expectation, expectation not of Christ in Bethlehem, but of Christ in majesty. The Christmas-Epiphany season is the fulfillment of this expectation. The Christmas Epistle expresses this idea when it describes us as "awaiting our blessed hope, that is, the glorious coming of the great God, our Savior Christ Jesus."

The cycle is finished. The liturgical seasons have set our thoughts to the future and not to the past. Our good resolutions no longer are limited to the last week in November, but they are encouraged every day through a sacramentally orientated liturgy.
Beneath an almost effete Chianti tree. Story and drawings by Stephen Vincent Grillo.
...an almost effete chianti tree...

And they were all nonconformists... all very radical.
Talentless T. thinly and bubbles A. dairymaid lived on the hill - in an empty Chianti bottle - they were an ideal couple. They had three children: solipsistic, narcissistic, and egotistic. They also had a cat called Alizarin...

And they all built all-concealing walls around themselves... beneath an almost effete Chianti tree, they wanted to hide from the affected world.
and he sat around on the chair they both had once drawn, and she prepared an affected salad — and she used linseed oil for the dressing — later they would gather beneath an almost effete Chianti tree.

and they all gathered beneath an almost effete Chianti tree.
And then one sad day the almost effete Chianti tree transformed into myriad bubbles—all bursting.

Amidst bursting bubbles, they set out on a pilgrimage—each of them searching for an almost effete Chianti tree. 