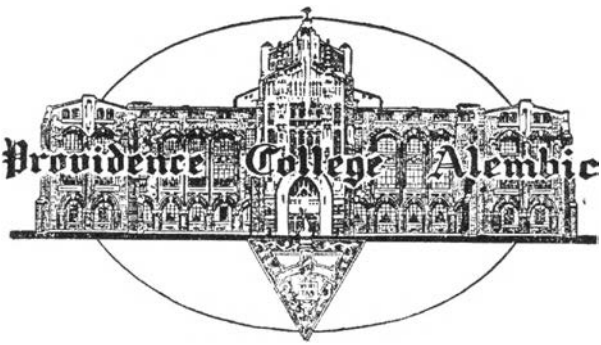
ALEMBIC

FALL ISSUE
1963

THE ALEMBIC



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FALL, '63

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contents

Dear Reader,

In this issue we have planted, as fillers, extracts from Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*. The location, however, cannot take away from these precious aphorisms; they are the gold dust of the ore.

It is our intention that these aphorisms lure you to the bonanza itself, *The Imitation,* where you will scoop up the nuggets of truth. *The Imitation* stands out as unique in an age of voluble writing, because its style is concise. In few words it epitomizes many theological and moral truths. Also, it serves as a respite for minds tired of argumentation (not to undermine argumentation), because it states truths simply.

You owe it to yourself to try *The Imitation of Christ*.

The Editors

Window on a City

James P. Farrelly, '64

atop
a distant hill
there sits a
lonely tower,
a pimple on a
face of green,
a scar upon
the earth.

within this
twisted tower
there sits an
artful mirror,
reflecting all the
bitter times,
displaying all
the wrath.

and on the
plastered walls
there hangs a
picture narrow
of every hopeless
striving the world
has ever known.

this tower
is a city,
within the freedom
lands
that so many years
ago
were founded for
all men.

Sand Fence

PAUL BELANGER, '64

Rusty stretched sand fence
Put up to stop the drifts
You've detained much sand
On its way to the sea.
How could the wide spaces
Between your strands
Hold back so many beach travellers.
All it takes is for a few to stop
For others to gather.
The sea beyond is waiting
For the sons to return
But time has not yet withered
The fence that holds them on.
Yet the sea air and water
Is weakening the fence
And already it twists with age.
Soon the sands will be rolling
And again to the sea will they go.

Verily, sublime words do not make a man holy and just; it is a virtuous life that makes him dear to God.

That Last Summer

By James M. Deschene

Across the pond and beyond the trees the sun was setting. Jeff crouched by the small campfire, piling twigs and sticks on the coals.

When Mike returned from the village with the supplies, the fire would be ready. Then they would eat their last camp meal. Tonight was the last night of camping for the summer. Tomorrow they would head back to the city. It had been a good summer. All the summers when they camped had been good. Winter though was no good because there was school then and you could not swim or hunt. He could smell the pond now. That was a funny smell. He remembered a visit long ago to his uncle's farm. The smell of rotting hay had tickled his nose. The pond smelled like that now, a little. It was a funny smell.

Shadows of trees shot dark and long across the still surface of the pond. Jeff unwrapped a Baby Ruth and threw the wrapper into the fire. It crinkled, caught, and then a small breeze picked up the remaining sheath of ash and blew it away. He munched on the candy bar.

Why did good times always have to end? Summer was simply too short to do all the things he had wanted to do. Still he had done some hunting. Swimming too. He had done a good deal of swimming. Maybe tonight he would take a swim before supper. It would be the last time this summer. Winter was an awfully long time too. The air was cool but the water would be warm. A swim might be just the thing.

He threw more sticks onto the fire and began to un-

dress. Then Mike emerged from the shadows, carrying a large bag.

"I got the stuff," Mike said, setting the bag down by the fire.

"Did you get the liquor?"

"That's what I meant."

"Scotch?" He had asked Mike to get scotch because that was what grown-ups usually drank.

"No. They didn't have scotch." Mike held up the bottle. "Rum!"

Well, maybe rum was good. Scotch would have been better.

"Is it good?" he asked Mike.

"Yes," Mike said, "rum is good."

Jeff began to unfasten his belt. "Did John say anything when you asked him to get it for us?" Maybe rum didn't cost as much as scotch. John would try to save us money.

"John wasn't there. When I got to his place they told me his kid brother—you remember Beansy?—drowned this morning. They couldn't say when John would be back. Ronnie got the rum."

"Beansy—", Jeff said, "Dead?" He wondered why his voice came from so far away. Maybe he hadn't spoken. The voice was so small.

"Yep," Mike said, unpacking the groceries.

But Beansy was only thirteen and they had spoken together only yesterday. They had wrestled too. He recalled Beansy's panting as they fought playfully. Only thirteen. You do not die at thirteen.

"He was only thirteen, Mike," he said. That voice, so far away. Was it really his?

"Yes. It's tough like that. So young, I mean."

Beansy. Beansy. That was not his real name though everyone always called him that. But he could not remember Beansy's real name. It wasn't a common name. Maybe Mike would know.

"What was his real name, Mike? I don't remember it." There! His voice was nearer now. It had become part of him again.

"I don't know. It was a funny name. Newton or something. But nobody ever called him by his real name. He was just Beansy. Poor kid." Mike greased the skillet.

"It must be hard to drown." His voice was far away again.

"No," Mike said. "Lots of people do."

But not people you knew. Not thirteen year old kids. He watched Mike set the skillet on the fire laying strips of bacon in it. The grease sputtered and sizzled. Mike did not seem very upset but then he was older, almost eighteen.

"Take your swim now," Mike said not looking up. "This will be ready in five minutes."

He had forgotten about his swim. He finished undressing, noticing the deep tan that ended abruptly at his waist, only to begin again on his legs.

"Was it Martin?" Mike said.

Was what Martin? Oh, the name. Beansy.

"No," he said: "I don't think it was Martin." It was a name like that, like Martin. But it was not Martin.

"You'd better hurry," Mike said. "This'll be ready soon."

"Yeah," he said, picking up the bottle of rum. He had never drunk liquor before. Not even his father's scotch. He would have to show Mike he could take it.

"What will it be like to get drunk?"

"You'll feel good. You'll see."

He would see. Maybe he would feel good like Mike said. He wondered how that would happen, how drinking something could make you feel good. Well, he would see. Now for his swim!

"Call me when it's ready," he said turning toward the pond.

At the edge of the pond he felt the soft black mud, cold now, sucking at his feet and oozing coolly between his toes. He walked out into the still black water. The air was turning cold and there was no warmth from the setting September sun. Against the dark water he saw his body very white. Even the tanned part was white but that was because the water was so dark now.

He dove in, swimming about a hundred yards before he turned over and floated on his back, staring up into the high blue of the sky, still warm with the pink of the setting sun.

It got dark earlier now. That was how you knew that summer was almost over—there was less day and more night. He watched the sky. There were a few crows flying high over the pond, their cries harsh and insistent. Crows too—they were a sign of summer's ending. All summer you heard the robins and the jays and the finches and it was a happy sound. But then the crows would come and their voices were like hoarse trumpets announcing the end of summer and the coming of fall. He saw the stars begin to appear in the sky. The warm pink of the sun was fading. The shades of blue and dark deepened. It would be a cold night. He watched the stars brighten against the darkening expanse of sky. It was a strange thing—how the stars were there all the time but you could not see them until it was

night. Though if you went down into a well you could see them even in the day. He had learned that in school. You could do it too by looking up a chimney. You learned interesting things like that at school. You learned a lot of things too that were not so interesting. He did not like to think about school.

A breeze blew lightly now across the pond, sending small soft ripples against his chin. Any day now he hoped to start shaving. He fingered the soft fuzz that covered his chin like soft pollen dust. Maybe he would have to borrow Mike's razor tomorrow morning before they went back to civilization. After all, he had to start sometime. A damp leaf blew across the water plastering itself to his cheek. Even the leaves were beginning to fall, though not many of them. It was early yet, but they were beginning to change. The summer lustre was gone and a certain dullness in color hinted at autumn's approach. In a few more weeks you would see the change. By then he would be back in school, back in the old prison.

With his tongue he dislodged a bit of peanut from his teeth. He had eaten the last of the candy bars. It really would not matter though since it was the last night of camping. Besides, tonight they would not want candy. Tonight they were going to get drunk! On rum, not scotch. Mike said the rum would be good. Anyhow, they were lucky to get anything. With John gone it was not so easy to get liquor. He thought about Beansy then. Drowning? How could he drown when he could swim like a fish? If you knew the water you did not have to fear it.

The breeze was cool on his face but the rest of him was warm under the surface of the pond. On the breeze came

a smell, faint, but unmistakably of something dead. A dead bird maybe. When he was younger he had come across a dead bird and had put it in a coffee can and buried it. Three days later, out of curiosity, he opened the can. It had made him sick. The smell on the breeze now reminded him of the bird.

Looking up into the sky, he saw that the crows had disappeared and the sky was inky black. The sing-song chirping of crickets filled the woods with a sound you did not notice until you stopped whatever you were doing and listened. Suddenly against the black of the sky he saw a small flicker of light. A falling star! He started to call Mike's name—"Look Mike . . ."—but remember that there was no one near enough to hear him. He went too far out. Across the pond he saw the red glow of the campfire. It was strangely quiet on the pond. In the darkness the pond seemed to him to take on oceanic dimensions, water stretching out on all sides of him into the darkness. Only the glow of the campfire, tiny in the distance, indicated land.

He turned over to swim in and the movement brought a sudden chill to his stomach. He went under the surface, a sharp icy pain knifing into his groin, and, doubling up, he began to sink.

Go up, up. Swim! But the pain immobilized him. He must find the surface, air. Beansy . . . blackness everywhere. The pain eased as his hands plunged into the slime at the bottom of the pond. He began to claw madly at the mud, wildly believing that he was heading for the surface. Where was up or down in blackness? He could not tell, hearing the roaring in his ears and feeling his lungs about to burst. In his mouth the water tasted sour, earthy, vegetable. Push-

ing against the bottom with his legs he headed for the surface as his flaming lungs expelled their exhausted air. Briefly he saw the stars and knew he had come up. He gulped a lungful of cool air before going under again. But this time the pain was gone and he easily and quickly returned to the surface.

It was all right now. Just a sudden cramp. Perhaps the candy bar.

As quickly as he dared he headed for the red glow of the campfire. When he came out of the water he was shivering very badly. The wind had picked up and was blowing steady and cool now across the pond.

Mike looked up from the fire. "Better get dry." He turned back to the fire. "Supper's ready."

In the tent he fumbled himself into dry clothes, not thinking, or perhaps thinking so much that he was unaware of thought. He joined Mike by the fire where they ate in silence.

When they had finished eating Mike brought out the rum.

"This is powerful stuff," he said.

"I hope so." He wanted to feel good.

"Maybe we ought to mix it with something."

"There is nothing."

"Then here goes." Mike took a long swallow. Jeff watched him.

Mike said it was good rum. Jeff took the bottle, wiping it on his sleeve.

"You aren't supposed to wipe it," Mike said.

"Why?"

"I don't know, but you aren't."

Jeff took a long swig. He liked the taste. "It stings a bit."

"Yes, but that's good." Mike reached for the bottle.

After a while when there was only a little rum left and Mike was feeling good Jeff began to feel cold.

"I don't think we are drunk," he said. He did not feel good.

"No," Mike said.

"Is there much left?" He hoped not because drinking was not what he had expected it to be.

Mike held the bottle up to the firelight. "No," he said. "I may as well drain it . . . unless you want it." Jeff said nothing but was staring into the fire, so Mike emptied the bottle.

"Gee, I feel funny," Mike said after a while.

"Yeah," Jeff said.

"Hey, let's go swimming!" Without waiting for Jeff's answer Mike jumped up and, swaying a bit, began to undress, removing his shirt. He had to sit though, to remove his jeans.

"Coming?" he called to Jeff as he moved toward the pond. "The water's fine." He dove in then and began swimming out across the pond. Jeff watched the white figure fade into the dark. He remained by the fire waiting for the rum to work, to make him forget something, something fleeting and elusive, a hint of impermanence, an intimation of mortality, made all the more frightening by its refusal to be clearly understood. Mortality—was that it? He did not know as he sat by the fire.

After a while Mike returned, sobered up a bit by the cold wind blowing on his wet naked body. "Hey Jeff! The water's fine."

Jeff looked up from the fire then and his teeth were chattering uncontrollably. His face, even in the glow of the fire, was pale, the color of ashes. Mike knelt by him putting his arm about Jeff's shoulders. He felt the trembling in Jeff's huddled body.

With difficulty Jeff spoke, his glassy eyes looking up at Mike.

"His name—was—Mortimer. Beansy . . . ."

Mike helped Jeff over to the tent and onto the cot.

"Rum doesn't work, Mike," he mumbled as Mike piled blankets on him.

"You'll get used to it. I did. It was your first time, that's all." Mike pulled on his jeans and a jacket. "Everybody gets used to it." Mike went out of the tent and put out the fire. He's got chills, he thought. You got chills easily at this time of year if you weren't careful. It was the change of season that did it. But you got used to it after a while. Then you seldom caught chills.

Lying on the cot Jeff saw the red glow fade from the wall of the tent. He knew the fire was out. He thought of the dark pond, his swim, that cramp—that had frightened him. Maybe he would tell Mike. Yes, Mike would want to know. In case anything should happen now. Yes. Mike must be told.

Mike came in then and lit the lantern.

"You all right, Jeff?" he said. "You've got a wicked case of chills but if you keep warm you'll be all right. Many people get them these days." He shivered as if to demon-

strate. "It's nothing you've got to worry about. Just keep warm."

"Mike?" Now he would tell him.

"Yeah?" called Mike not looking up from the sleeping bag he was unrolling.

"I—almost drowned tonight. Out on the pond." Mike looked up then and he went on hurriedly. "It was a cramp I guess." He grinned sheepishly and a little dazedly. "I ate a couple of candy bars before I went in and I guess that's why it happened."

"What are you talking about?" Mike said, genuinely puzzled.

"I went under. The water took me under and everything—was black for a while."

Mike snorted. "Well, I guess so. It's usually pretty black at night. You came out all right? Well, didn't you?"

Jeff was silent. Mike did not understand how it had been. It was no use trying to tell him. He did not understand at all.

Mike climbed into the sleeping bag and turned off the lantern.

Jeff lay very still on the cot, staring up into the heavy darkness. There was the blackness again, everywhere, pressing down, swallowing him, smothering him in its dark evil warmth. Then for a wild horrible instant he was back on the pond sinking into its black evil depths. Like a first blow it struck him—it was as if he had never surfaced after sinking for the first time. He had never come up! His hands had plunged into the mud and had remained there. And everywhere was the heavy black water, pressing down on him, squeezing him like some huge python crushing its prey

before devouring it. He must surface, escape this blackness, this darkness. Call for help! Must call. But the darkness filled his mouth with its sour blackness and no sound emerged. Struggling, sinking only deeper into the black mouth that was devouring him . . . falling . . . weightless . . . falling, sinking . . . LIGHT! Brilliant light flashed and there was an arm about his shoulders. It was Mike

"Easy, kid, easy. Calm down. Take it easy." Mike's voice was gentle yet firm. Sweat was pouring from Jeff's forehead and the pillow and blankets were damp with it. "That must have been some nightmare," Mike said.

He looked at Mike. The yellow lamplight lent a lurid glow to everything. It had been a dream? A dream. A bad dream.

"There's nothing to be afraid of," Mike said. "Nothing." Mike sat by him for a moment. "All right now?" Jeff nodded weakly. Mike turned off the lamp and lay down. "Nothing to be afraid of, Jeff," he said and then quickly began to snore.

But Jeff, for the rest of the night, lay very still on the cot, not daring to sleep, waiting for the darkness once again to begin to devour him. Awake in the darkness, easily frightened by the night's small sounds, half-fearing half-believing that there was nothing to fear, he knew that something deep within him had changed. He would never be quite the same again. He had been initiated into the mysteries of darkness, into the night's realms of terror, into the land where dreams and reality are One. And he knew too, that Sleep, who was the sister of Death, would never come quite so easily as she had in all his previous summers. It was his last summer, he knew. But there was no time for regrets, for autumn and a long cold winter lay near at hand . . . .

Just Coffee, Please

David McIntyre, '65

O, 'twould be colossus
To taste of a snack
Without any sauces;
To munch on a lunch
With ketchup uncaught,
With mustard unclustered,
With relish unbellished.
But fly away, you silly thoughts,
That contradict my reason—
You know darn well there's ne'er been made
A sandwich without season.

Anabasis

Kenneth Daly, '65

Heaving, gasping, slapped by the tide, she
Labors through the foam, faint from her fight
With the spastic channel rushing to the sea.
Erect in the race she laughs at its might,
Tosses her head, sends her red hair spilling
Down her back twitching as venal drafts graze
Her blue flanks, assays her figure, thrilling
In its want scorns the dun of clothed days.
She bolts across the flats and charges black
Boiling tides draining through the straits. She
Yields to the rush but rises from her back
Lunges at the flow, fighting to be free.
    Near aborted Cythera kicks up sand,
    Marks her path to Mars panting for her spanned.

The Last Angry Troll

MICHAEL J. ENRIGHT, '65

(With Apologies to Gerald Greene)

Trolls live inside knolls.
For, beside the rhyme,
They avoid suntime.
It turns them to lime—

Stone. Too, trolls, you know
Are built quite low
And when they eat
Grovel as they go.

When out for a stroll
A troll spies a vole,
He gobbles him up
Without even, "Hello!"

Although this seems rude,
It's worse for the trolls.
The number of voles
Is quite low in the knolls.

Trolls thus remain hungry.
They haven't the ken
To go to the fen
Where voles have their dens.

He that knows himself well, becomes vile in his own eyes, and takes no delight in the praises of men.

"British War Graves, Ranville Cemetery"

By John Eagleson, '64

It was about 3:30 on a hot August afternoon when I drove my motorbike down the main street of the French town of Ranville. It is a sleepy village about eight miles from Caen on the Deauville Road. At the crossroads there was a small green-and-white sign in English saying, "British War Graves, Ranville Cemetery." Following the arrow to the right, I left the village and rode about half a mile through the woods until I came to another sign marking the entrance. Next to a gravel parking lot big enough for four or five cars there was an iron gate. The cemetery was not visible from the road, but I could see that the clearing was set back about fifty yards in the direction of a wide grass path that led back through the trees.

I put my motorbike inside the entrance, locked it to the iron gate, and started down the path. Most of the sun was shut out by a canopy of tall oaks. High rhododendron bushes grew on each side of the path. The woods were still and quiet except for a few birds flitting about and the occasional distant whine of a car as it passed through the village on the Caen-Deauville Road. The path ended and I entered a large clearing.

Shining in the sun were row after row of identical white tombstones arranged on the green lawn in perfect file, like cadets in a parade. The columns were divided into two parts by an arbor running across the cemetery. At the head of the rows was a granite pavilion, and between the pavilion and the graves was a stone monument in the form of an altar. I walked across a lawn as well cared for as a

putting green to read the inscription: "Their Name Liveth Forevermore."

Then I began to wander among the graves. Well-trimmed red rosebushes planted between the tombs added to the dignity of the site. The inscriptions told the serial number, rank, name, regiment, age and date of death of the one buried. Beneath that was written a small verse that had been suggested by the soldier's family. As I walked and read, a small part of that drama called World War II began to unfold before me.

6093519 Sergeant
E. G. Baker
The Queen's Royal Regiment
26th July 1944 Age 26
"But God knew best
And took Daddy to rest
Before he saw me
His only son."

I closed my eyes and I thought of a young English couple, perhaps married at the beginning of the war. The wife in my little family, Christine was her name, had begged God that her husband Eddie wouldn't have to go to France. She cried all night, June 6, 1944; that was D-Day, the day of the invasion of Normandy. She cried because Eddie was somewhere on that dark beach. Then came the reading of the newspaper reports every morning, following the Allied advance, not sleeping much at night—and those bad dreams. But always praying, always hoping for a letter or for some word. But nothing. And then that night in July when she and her parents were just sitting down to dinner, there was a knock at the door, and the telegram, and the messenger boy who could only say, "I'm sorry ma'am." Their only

son—his name is Eddie too—never knew the grief of that July. He only listens to the stories his mother tells about the father he never knew.

14420679 Private
S. G. Cox
Parachute Regiment
Army Air Corps
6th July 1944 Age 19
"In loving memory
Of our dear boy
One of the many."

Age nineteen. He had probably been out of school for only a few months when he had enlisted. But his parents were proud that their son was a paratrooper, and he did look smart in that uniform. Everyone knew that the parachute regiments would be the first to see action. It was only a question of when. He was in the first wave of Operation Overlord on June 6th. Assignment: "Drop behind enemy lines. Capture the bridge over the river Orne north of Caen. Hold until relieved." His mother didn't sleep that night. The next day when the phone rang, she knew what had happened before she picked up the receiver. "Yes, this is Mrs. Cox," she answered. "Yes, Sammy is my boy . . . At the bridge between Ouistreham and Caen . . No, Captain, I'll be all right . . . Thank you, Captain. Good bye."

One corner of the cemetery—just as well cared for as the rest—was reserved for German casualties. Here there were more unidentified. I came to one tomb marked simply by

Ein Deutscher Soldat

Perhaps he was a young German soldier stationed in Nor-

mandy during the German occupation. His parents were happy he could be close to their home in Trier. Besides, the occupational forces saw less action than those at the front. By 1944 they wanted only the end of the war. Then they got the news of the invasion, but nothing from their son. The days went by, and the violent worry gave way to an ache that gnawed at their hearts. The Allied forces moved east, and the family knew that there was little hope. And then the letter came. ". . . We are grieved to have to inform you that your son, Klaus Bickel, has been declared missing in action . . ." They never even knew where he was buried.

A drop of rain suddenly brought me back to 1963. The Normandy sky had clouded up, and the sprinkle of a summer shower had begun. I walked down to the stone pavilion at the end of the cemetery to wait till the rain stopped. The inscription on the wall of the shelter read in French and English,

1939-1945

> The land on which this cemetery stands is the gift of the French people for the perpetual resting place of the sailors, soldiers, and airmen who are honored here.

In a bronze compartment in the wall are kept the visitors' register and a catalog of the dead. The comments of the visitors, mostly French, tell another story, the story of the gratitude of those for whom so many died. The comment of a Caennais: *"Souvenirs émouvants, regrets."* And a man from Bayeux: *"Hommage à nos liberateurs."* An Englishman from Cheltenham in Gloucestershire wrote,

"Thanking you for taking such good care of my brother's grave." And from an American from Omaha: "A tribute they deserve."

I put the register back in the compartment and then began to page through the catalog of the dead. There was a short account of the Normandy invasion, and then the statistics.

British and Commonwealth fatalities in this cemetery	1967
(Unidentified: 54)	
German fatalities in this cemetery	219
(Unidentified: 61)	
Total fatalities in this cemetery	2186

Two thousand, one hundred eighty-six dead. I could begin to appreciate the anguish one mother must feel on losing her nineteen-year-old son in a war. But 2,186 dead were here in one small cemetery. Each was remembered by a grief-stricken mother; many were cried for by a wife and children whose daddy would never come home. Here was grief beyond my comprehension. And there are dozens of these cemeteries throughout Normandy. Some of the American ones count twelve thousand dead. I began to realize the horror and enormity of war.

The rain had stopped and it was getting late in the afternoon. I walked back along the path under the oaks and past the high rhododendron bushes to the road. I unlocked my motor bike and started the trip back to Caen. It was cool and still, and the sun shining through the clouds threw long shadows from the wheat shocks lying in long straight rows on the green and gold and brown fields of Normandy.

Unfurl the Wind

Tom W. Jodziewicz, '66

Prologue

Unfurl the wind!
That headstrong, righteous Son of Thunder;
Fresh, yet warm;
Swift, yet tenable;
Silently He stirs the brown grasses
Sunk by their opulence
To a slow, indolent stagnation.

Closer, closer still
Glides the Wind into their lair,
Brushing aside the swelled, sluggish stalks;
Gently casting aside their apparent repulsiveness;
The Gaze intent—
Completing the denouement.

I.

How sweetly they rustle:
The soft, summer sky above
A dark, cloudless blue;
The Wind gently playing upon the softly, gold'ning stalks;
Gently, languidly, the Wind sends out upon the brown sea,
Billow upon widening billow,
Broken only by an intermittent calm.

II

The change startles—
Swiftly, dark ominous clouds roll over the terrestrial sea;
A slight pause, a sickening crash, a smoldering rumble.
The terrible roar of the Wind
Awesomely straining to be heard,
Yet succeeding in only amplifying the tumult.

III

The incessant clamor,
The vociferous clangor,
Join to drown out the Gale,
Which succeeds in only amplifying the tumult—
Unseen, yet present.

The grasses collapse
Brown, broken, battered;
Released by the alien forces,
Crushed, haggard, worn.

IV

The cooling snows come,
(Burying the inert stalks)
Rising higher, ever higher.
And all around is a whiteness,
Yet a real Whiteness,
Not artificial, not untrue.

It is so beautiful,
This Whiteness;
Even the dark, brown patches appearing
(Seemingly from nowhere)
Are beautiful;

This is real, natural—
Not counterfeit, not foreign to Reality,
But, rather, resting upon the Undulating Truth.

V

There are motions and stirrings—
The Wind rises—
The clouds pass by—
The grasses are green,
(The fields clothed with Hope.)

Gone the storms;
Gone the tumult;
Gone the purifying snow;
(Absorbed by the Wind,
Given to the grasses.)
All gone—
Only the green grasses,
Stirred by the Wind.

Your letters bring your auburn beauty.
They are your small hands.
They are your brown brown eyes.

When I receive them
I save them unopened . . . awhile.
For they are such a short time of you.

MICHAEL J. ENRIGHT, '65

Retreat

JAMES P. FARRELLY, '64

beat
the maudlin melody
that tears the memory
to finished things,
resounding thoughts that
plague
the mellow mind.

rising
the song of
secret storage
while the heart
bleeds tender gore—
tears, red stream
of bitter anguish
borne,
run on—
undam
the flow of reverie
and let
these dreams
resound.

Many are the items of knowledge which are of little or no good for the soul.

To Shoot a Leaping Horse While You're Laughing

By Maurice Bosse, '64

Jim Stork was walking briskly down Sword Street with his ten-year-old cousin, Bobby Vigue. He thought he was going to Bobby's boy scout meeting to teach the scouts a few tricks in the art of survival, a few tricks which he himself had been practicing for the last six months on the Korean front. Jim had joined the Army Rangers early in the war and had come away from it with a Purple Heart and a Congressional Medal of Honor.

"Come on Jim," Bobby coaxed, "put on your Congressional Medal."

"Wait until we get to the meeting," said Jim.

"You won it, Jim; you should wear it."

"I didn't WIN it, Bobby."

"Your dad says you killed thirteen Reds to get it." retorted Bobby.

"I didn't kill to get any medals," Jim flared up.

Bobby cowered at the big man's anger. "Sorry."

Jim didn't reply, but looked repentant. And Bobby, noticing this, took advantage of the situation. "But is it true you killed thirteen Reds?" he asked meekly.

Jim didn't reply.

"Gee, it must be great being on the front," Bobby went on. "I can just see myself sitting on top of a hill; thousands of yellow faces are bobbing towards me; and I let 'em have it with my machine gun."

Jim remained silent. He walked with a slight stillness, now.

"They don't use tactics; they just come at you in masses," Bobby added.

"And your guns are frozen, and you struggle frantically to put them in order," thought Jim.

"You keep shooting them down, but they keep coming, straight on . . ."

"And from the sides and the rear, because your flanks have retreated," Jim added to himself.

"I can see it now; I'm with my comrades . . ." said Bobby.

"A dirty Turk eating half frozen meat by your side, with the same bayonet he mutilated a Chinese corpse with, five minutes before," Jim thought.

"I'd volunteer to keep the watch most of the nights, so my comrades could sleep," Bobby continued.

"And you'd accidentally kill one of them, when he stirs in his sleep."

"I'd feed the Korean orphans . . ."

"And you'd turn one away, because you'd know he was booby-trapped; and then you'd watch him explode in the distance.

Bobby looked askance at Jim, wondering if he was moderately disposed for the next question he had in mind. "Did you really kill thirteen Reds, Jim?" he asked.

"I don't know how many men I killed," Jim abruptly answered. Trying to change the subject he inquired, "Aren't we going to be late for the meeting; doesn't it begin at eight P. M.?"

"Whenever we get there is when it begins," Bobby answered proudly. "Some of the boys say you have to kill fifteen to get the Congressional Medal of Honor." Bobby paused for an answer, but to no avail. "I told them it wasn't so, because you had killed only thirteen, or did you kill more?" Still no answer. This line of questioning had driven Jim into a trance of unhappy recollection. His memory had been primed, and he could no longer hold back the thoughts he had been trying so hard to forget.

"Yes, I killed over thirteen," he thought. "I killed over twenty, in fact. And all those killings weren't as clean as the comic books make killings out to be . . . We're on a commando raid behind enemy lines. Fifteen of us are creeping through the woods, our rifles ready for action. We're quiet, as we've been trained to be. All of a sudden I stumble and fall over an object. It's a Red squatting. Both surprised, we stare at each other for a few seconds. Then, instinctively, I grab for my bayonet, but it's stuck in the sheath. The Red starts running and whimpering, his pants about his knees. I snatch up my rifle and run after him. He looks back and whimpers louder. I catch up to him, and he falls to his knees. A pang of pity shoots through me. He whimpers louder, and I tell him to shut up, but he doesn't understand. I can't shoot him,

because we're too close to the camp. He starts screeching. I try to knock him out with my free hand. But with each blow he screeches louder. Now, I feel brutal; I hate him, because he won't shut up. I grip the barrel of my rifle like an ax handle and give him a chopping blow on the head. Still he kneels. He's no longer screeching, but bawling like a wounded rabbit; this tears my heart out. 'Why won't he die?' I ask myself. I'm powerless to do anything more. I just stand there watching him bawl. I feel like kissing him. Another Ranger sneaks up to us. He quietly and deftly grabs the Red's throat and shoves a bayonet into his back. The Red remains kneeling but no longer bawls. I would kneel and say a prayer, but the sergeant tells me to get moving."

"Hey Jim, hey Jim," Bobby was saying.

"Ya?" Jim answered quickly, having been snapped out of his dream.

"Do you have any souvenirs I can have?"

"Like what?" Jim asked.

"Like medals, swords, and helmets . . . you know what I mean," chided Bobby.

"No, I don't have any medals, swords, and helmets," Jim retorted sarcastically.

"Why don't you?" Bobby persisted.

"In the first place, the Red Chinese don't have many of those things . . ."

"Of course they do," Bobby broke in, "every soldier has them . . ."

Jim continued, "And in the second place, I wouldn't take them, if they did."

"Why not?" said Bobby.

"Why should I?" Jim retorted; he was tired of questions.

"To prove how many Reds you killed."

"But I don't want to even remember how many Reds I killed," Jim shot back.

At this statement Bobby became silent; he couldn't understand why a soldier wouldn't want to flaunt his killings. And Jim's memory hammered for attention once again.

"The Reds on the hill have held us at the foot for an hour, now. We can't budge from our position, because their machine gun has a clean sweep from the bottom to the top of the hill. Either side of us is swamp area, so we can't get to them from the back. One Ranger jumps out of his foxhole, grenade in hand, and charges toward the nest. The bullets are making dust all around him. His head gives a quick jerk backwards. He falls to the ground and lies flat on his face. All is quiet for a few minutes. The wounded soldier rolls over on his back. He lifts his head and hollers a quivering, "Help." His face and neck are streaming with blood; his helmet is still on his head, the strap holding it fast. The bullet has torn off the top of his helmet and head. 'For the love of Christ, somebody help me,' he begs. Nobody moves. And the Reds leave him wounded, because he's good bait. Now he starts to cry. It is the crying of an angry child, but then it changes to the weeping of an abused child. We have to let him die."

Jim was startled back to the present by, "Hey Jim, hey Jim."

"Ya, Bobby," he answered. ,

"Have you . . . have you ever fought hand to hand combat?" Bobby asked hesitantly.

"Yes," Jim answered stiffly.

"Were you scared?"

Jim didn't answer. And Bobby, getting the hint, didn't inquire any further. There followed another lapse of silence.

"Dig, dig, dig! The shells are falling all over the place. I've got to make a foxhole fast. What's that over there? It's a shell hole. There's a droning overhead; here comes a big one. I've got to get to that hole before it lands. Run, run, run for your life. God! I made it. Who's that groping in the dark? Ah! . . . Where am I? The last I remember is darkness, but it's light, now. Oh ya, there was a sharp pain on the back of my head. I want to get out of here. Oh! There's that pain again. I got to get out of here. 'Medic! Medic! . . .' Thank God, here comes one. Everything is getting fuzzy. I can't make him out anymore . . . What place is this? It's an infirmary. Thank God, I'm safe. Now, I can go home and forget this bloody war."

"Hey Jim, hey Jim . . ."

"Ya?"

"Do you promise you won't get mad?" asked Bobby.

"Mad about what?" Jim replied, beginning to lose his patience.

"If I ask you the next question," said Bobby.

"What next question?" said Jim, now showing his irritation.

"Gee, you're getting mad already," Bobby whined.

"Look boy, if you have a question, out with it," Jim commanded.

Bobby was silent once again. And once again Jim was beset by those hated memories.

"This farmer boy from Minnesota is helping me look for Corporal Damon, who is missing from yesterday's action. The farmer boy is a good soldier, except he carries a pet rabbit in his shirt. He loves animals, more than humans . . . I can see only a few feet ahead; the bushes are so thick. Every move I make with caution, for fear of snipers. Quietly, I plow through the bushes, with my rifle. Suddenly in front of me is Corporal Damon, or what's left of him. His eyes, ears, nose, hands, and feet have been cut off. (Rangers get special treatment from the Reds.) I signal the farmer boy to go back. There's no need for him to see the corporal; besides the kid's as green as his corn back home . . . It's easy to find the corporal's I.D. bracelet; it's still on his dismembered wrist which juts from his mouth."

"Well, here we are, Jim," Bobby broke in. "Now, don't be mad, if things aren't exactly as you expected.

Bobby led Jim through the back doorway of the town auditorium. "Put your Congressional Medal on now Jim." Jim hesitantly obeyed. They proceeded to a stage, the curtain closed and everything was in darkness.

"What's going on?" Jim demanded.

"Sh!" answered Bobby.

Slowly the curtain was drawn, and Jim blinking from the light, could make out no boy scouts. Rather, the audience was packed with grownups.

The mayor skipped up onto the stage and handed Jim a large golden key. "Welcome back hero," he said. The audience burst into applause. When the applause subsided, someone in the crowd yelled out, "Tell us a war story, Jim."

"Ya, tell us a funny one," someone else added, and everybody laughed. The mayor and Bobby coaxed Jim on.

At this point Jim was completely exasperated; he had had too much of this war business. "All right, they'll have their funny, war story," he thought angrily: "Just before I left, a funny thing happened on the front," Jim started.

The townspeople, taking his sarcasm for humor, started to laugh. Jim raised his hands and forced a smile . . . The loud laughter subsided into a dull roar which faded down to an intense stillness. The people were intrigued with this war hero's confession. Very aware of this, Jim felt anger churning within him, which anger became manifest in Jim's ears—they grew from red to crimson. "After this, they'll leave me alone," he thought. Beginning to speak in a choppy manner, he continued throughout:

"A horse got caught between the lines, and his stomach was split open by a shell. And it was the funniest thing to see him try to run with his intestines entangled around his feet. And what was even funnier was to see my farmer boy friend react. Why he screamed and hollered, almost louder than the horse. We finally shot the horse dead, but only after a time, because it's hard to shoot a leaping horse while you're laughing."

Having blurted out his anger, Jim immediately felt ashamed. "These people didn't deserve that," Jim thought, "but why would'nt they leave me alone?" The townspeople were mute; the mayor hung his head. Jim could speak no more; there was only one thing he could do. Shrugged shoulders, he slowly retreated from the stage. Bewildered, Bobby tagged along after him.

Autumn

for Peg

Stephen Herald, '64

each tree's first-fall leaf disturbed you
who wanted to mother the floating shells
so ruthlessly discharged—you would have made
their grief your own and have known *why*

and like all mothers, felt pain of grieving
over each son's fresh unleaving
—every image left you distracted,
pointed to both problem and mystery

there is a book that says that from
Adam's fork fathered-forth all
fall of goldengrove and graveyard,
wane of woodland, grief of green

this gentile seeks another comfort
—are there two forces or just one?
—and is spring's earth spontaneous
in birth . . . or in death?

If you should see another openly do wrong, or commit some grievous sins, you ought not to think yourself better; for you know not how long you can persevere in well-doing.

Love Not Lost

GERALD ANTHONY DELUCA, '64

The 1955 Rambler flew over the flat highway. Norman, the driver, swerved to avoid running over a stray skunk. Jim, who sat beside him with a drowsy deadpanned look on his face, removed a crumpled handkerchief from his shirt pocket to wipe his damp forehead.

"Just missed it," Norman said without concern.

"Thought you were going to hit it for sure," Jim said.

"Didn't see it," Norman said.

"Can't see all this speeding," Jim said. "We've got all the time in the world. The guys from Maine won't be there until tomorrow afternoon."

"I told you we're stopping in Montreal," Norman said.

"But how long are we going to stay there?"

"Until I find her," Norman said.

"This is asinine—chasing some dumb girl, and at eighty miles an hour."

"I'm anxious," Norman said. "A year is a long time. I want to see her before we go up to the trail."

"Sure you'll want me along?" Jim said. "I mean, if you're going to start getting sentimental with her and all that, I want to be far away. Hell, I couldn't take it."

"It's O.K., I said!" Norman switched on the car radio, changed stations three times, and shut it off abruptly. In two hours they reached Montreal. They checked into a cheap hotel on St. Catherine's Street. An old French matron with shrivelled cheeks led them to a dingy cubicle on the third floor.

"Place gives me the creeps," Jim said. "Why can't we stay at the Canadienne or someplace? This is real cruddy."

"It doesn't matter. We won't be here long, I hope," Norman said.

"I think this is completely pointless, bunking up in a city just to find some dumb girl—why don't we drive up to the trail now. The guys from Maine will be there tomorrow. We can start right in—two, three days earlier. What do you say?"

"No! I'm not going to pass this off, not now that I'm here."

"Suit yourself," Jim said. "I'd rather get in two extra days on the trail."

Norman removed a slip of paper from his pocket. "I have the address," he said. "Let's go now. It won't take long."

They left the hotel and went to the car. Norman drove again. "I can't see how she could have meant awfully much to you, if you want to know," Jim said.

"Lay off, will you. As a matter of fact, you didn't even have to come," Norman said.

"You said you didn't mind."

"I wouldn't—if you'd stop telling me I'm wasting my time. Don't you know what it's like to have known a girl, and loved her, and then, after a short time of happiness, to be separated from her?"

"I've had my fill of girls," Jim said.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm fed up—it's all over—through—done with."

"You're joking, or you're insane," Norman said.

"Neither. I'm damn serious."

"I wouldn't put it past you, you dumb jerk," Norman said.

"How long did you know this angel, Romeo?"

"You mean Annette?"

"Annette? Was that her name?"

"Yes, Annette Benoit. Her family is French," Norman said. "I met Annette last year when I visited some relatives here with my family. Annette lived next door to them."

"You were engaged?"

"No," Norman said. "But I was fond of her, all the same."

"And I suppose you wrote her long sugary love letters after you left Montreal with your parents," Jim said. "Dear Sweetheart, do not fret, for someday your happy and handsome Prince Charming will come on his faithful steed to take you away, and we will live happily ever after."

"You're not very funny," Norman said. "Get my cigarettes from the glove compartment."

"I hope the returning prince isn't getting nervous. After all, Sleeping Beauty is waiting for your kiss. Pucker up."

"I said you're not so damn funny."

"I know it's not funny," Jim said. "It's *pathetic*. Here you are chasing after a girl who may or may not still be here, who won't remember you from Adam if she is, and who is probably married and raising a brood of slimy babies."

"You haven't got the brains of a cat," Norman said. "It's only a year."

"All it takes, you know . . . . Anyhow, even if she isn't married, she won't remember you."

"She'll remember," Norman said.

"But you said she never wrote you. If she never cared enough to write one stinking letter, I don't think she has sweating palms of anxiety to see you!"

"If she didn't write, there must have been a good reason for it. Anyway, her parents may have forbidden it. They were in a feud with my relatives."

"Come on! There's nothing very difficult about writing a secret letter. She could have written if she *really* wanted to," Jim said.

"But the letters I wrote—maybe her parents got a hold of them first—and maybe Annette thought *I* was being thoughtless by not writing."

"Don't kid yourself," Jim said. "When you're out of a girl's sight, you're out of her mind. This is a complete waste of time. We ought to head up north right now and start in on the camping. Who ever heard of looking for a broad in Montreal in the middle of August?"

"She's not a 'broad.' She was a fine person I liked and respected very much. But I don't imagine how you could possibly appreciate that. You are so damn shallow that the word 'affection' has no meaning for you whatsoever. You don't know what it's like to lose someone, because all you have ever had or cared about is yourself. You're just an introverted, egotistical jerk. People are nothing to you but walking things!"

"Hey, lay off, Norm. I was only kidding, for cryin'-out-loud. You don't have to get sore."

"It's your whole attitude that bothers me," Norman said. "You're indifferent."

"So I'm indifferent," Jim said. "There are people that are committed, and there are people that are indifferent.

I'm indifferent. What does that prove? I still say we ought to forget this whole thing and head up north, right now, and meet the guys from Maine."

Norman didn't answer. "There is no way to make him understand," he thought. He wondered why he had ever come up with Jim in the first place. He was going to explain to him how he had saved Annette's life a year ago, the day they met and went swimming at Trois Rivieres. He was going to tell him about the picnics, the times they used to ride the carriages together to the top of Mount Royal and walk to the great steel cross on top and sit together on the grass for hours, silently watching the city and trying to identify landmarks from a distance. But what could Jim understand? Jim had never loved a girl. To him, girls were things you danced with.

"This is the street," Norman said. He drove slowly and looked at the numbers on the houses. "It's around here, on your side. I remember it now."

"What's the number?" Jim asked.

"1026."

"You sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure. 1022, 1024 . . . 1026."

Norman parked the car and got out. Jim followed. They walked to the door Norman rang the bell. A minute later an elderly man answered. Norman did not know him.

"Does Miss Annette Benoit live here?" he asked the man; the words stuck in his throat.

"Benoit?" the man said. "There isn't anyone here by that name now. But there used to be some Benoits here awhile back."

"Used to be?" Norman said. "Don't they live here any more?"

"Oh no. Seems to me they moved away awhile back."

"Moved away?" Norman said. "When?"

The man scratched his head. "Seems to me its about . . . oooohhh, eight, nine months or so. In the fall sometime."

"Do you know where they moved to?" Norman said. A chill passed quickly through his spine. He felt as though his heart were no longer in him.

"No, I couldn't tell you that, son," the man said. "We don't ask those kind of questions. People say its none of our business."

"I see."

"I can let you see a telephone book if you step in."

"Would you please?" Norman said.

In the car, Jim lighted a cigarette and waited for Norman to return. "Is she there?" he asked, after Norman was seated behind the wheel for some time.

"No! She's not even in the telephone directory," Norman answered, looking downcast.

"I might have expected it," Jim said. "I told you it's a waste of time to go around chasing girls. That's why I'm fed up with them. It's silly. What do you say we stop somewhere for a drink? That ought to cheer you up. Besides, it's hot." Norman nodded and drove away, crestfallen. They stopped at a small bar and ordered beer.

"Something funny happens to you inside," Norman said after a few beers.

"You mean the beer?" Jim said.

"No, I mean something funny happens to you on the inside, when you can't find something."

"You mean Annette."

"Yes."

"Look, I told you, you've been taking it all too seriously. The best thing to do is forget about her. You can get along damn well without girls, so stop eating your heart out."

"Yes, I suppose if I keep telling myself," Norman said.

"Keep telling yourself! You act as if it's some kind of sacrifice, as if you were some kind of martyr because you can't find this Annette-of-your-memories."

"I should know better than to try to convince you. No one can explain to anyone else exactly how he really feels."

"You may be right about that. Because I, for one, don't understand," Jim said.

"I know I'm right."

Jim wasn't paying attention. "It's real funny, just the same," he said.

"Funny? How?" Norman asked.

"I was just thinking about something."

"About what?" Norman said.

"About a story," Jim said.

"A story?" Norman pursued.

"Yes, a story. A movie, actually. I remember seeing it awhile ago. It was an Italian movie about these people who go to this island, off the coast of Italy somewhere. Then this storm starts coming up, and they have to leave the island, you know. Come to find out, one of the girls in the party is missing. They spend days looking for her, but nobody can find her anywhere. After a while, anyway, they give up looking for her. They figure she was kidnapped or committed suicide somewhere. Sounds like Annette?"

Norman, engrossed in the story, gulped his beer. "Well, what happened? Did they eventually find her?"

"No, it's never answered in the movie."

"Well, what was the whole point of it?" Norman said.

"I'm coming to that. After awhile, anyway, the missing girl's fiancé and the missing girl's girl friend continue the search themselves."

"But they don't find the girl?"

"No, after a while they forget all about her and fall in love with each other. At first the missing girl—her name is Anna—haunts their minds. She's not really dead, and she's not really alive. But it doesn't bother them any more, because they think this is the way it has to be. They've been thrown together by chance, and they have to love each other whether they like it or not. At least that's what the picture says. In the end the man spends the night with a prostitute. The girl sees him, then forgives him after he comes crying like a little boy into her arms."

"But no one thinks about Anna any more?" Norman said.

"Why should they? She's part of the past."

"But some of our best moments are in the past. Memories mean so much. They are always there to disturb us whether we like it or not. Do you think I can turn a knob and forget that I ever knew or loved Annette? 'There, Annette, you're gone.' It's not so simple."

"What are you going to do, live in the past?"

"How can you compare Annette with some stupid girl and some stupid characters in a movie? You never knew Annette."

"Maybe not. Maybe Annette was different. Maybe the movie was stupid. The name of it was 'L'Avventura' or something."

"She was wonderful, the kind of girl you'd want to have as the mother of your children," Norman said.

"Touching, I'm sure," Jim said, finishing the last of his beer. "All I know is that I'm not going to waste *my* time chasing girls. I plan to be a professional bachelor. You get more fun out of life that way. You're not tied down. You're free."

"And lonely," Norman added.

"Depends what you mean by lonely."

Norman was not paying attention to Jim's words any more. He was thinking of Annette, of those unspeakably happy and peaceful moments they had shared last summer, how they had promised never to forget each other, how they would write to each other and think of each other during those quiet moments before falling asleep at night. "Where is Annette now?" he wondered. "Is she eating? Is she walking hand in hand with someone? How things change," he thought. "How the past melts into the future. But how love remains."

"You're not listening," Jim said.

"I'm sorry. I was daydreaming," Norman said.

"Still thinking about Annette?"

"Yes."

"You're a damn fool!"

Jim said something else, but Norman didn't pay attention . . . They went back to the car. Norman decided to head up north right now, rather than search for Annette any longer.

"It's no use looking for her"; he thought, "I'll never find her again. She's gone but will remain in my soul forever."

Manly Miles

ROBERT VILLAREALE, '65

Water, a tumbled roar, rolls
And falls bubbling with foamy sweat.

The tearful victim is current drawn
And whirlpool locked in a stormy pit,
As crashing thrusts ring echo
Like a throated gurgle in a hideous choir.

Bobbing he comes, though driven, he resists
With paddled hands and sightless eyes,
Until torn and broken, he sinks beneath
To be lost in silence, sealed and deep.

Phase 4

DAVID GRACE, '64

Never suspecting that it is being watched,
The infant spreads its rolling form over the blanket beneath it.
It silently fingers a colored thread and lets it pass with wonder.
The smooth grain of wooden bars startles it,
While adults talk in mysteries of language.
Pictures on facing walls make no impressions.
Doors open and close with loud thuds and slams,
Yet the infant remains quiet amid the adults' talk.

For all their future, dying, tomorrows,
The infant takes their vacating places,
And stares with an uncomprehending eye at the scene around him.
He sits, passively, now, neither caring nor uncaring.
And occupied, silently, fingering the smooth wooden bars,
He spies the foregone colored thread and lets it pass:
The soundlessness of infancy dispels their fear of talk.

Alembic

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All manuscripts must be typewritten.

The deadline for copy to be considered in this contest will be April 10.

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