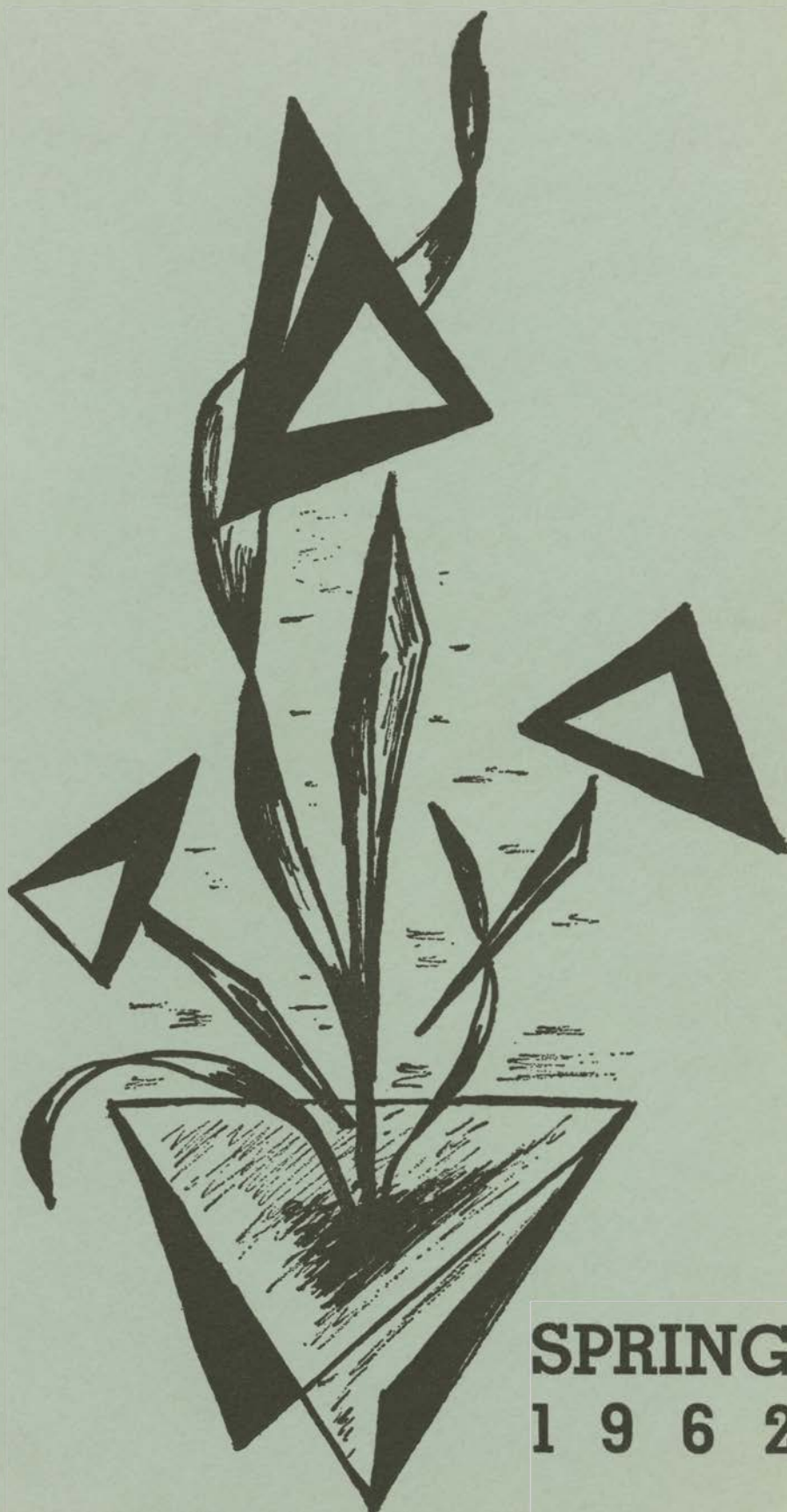
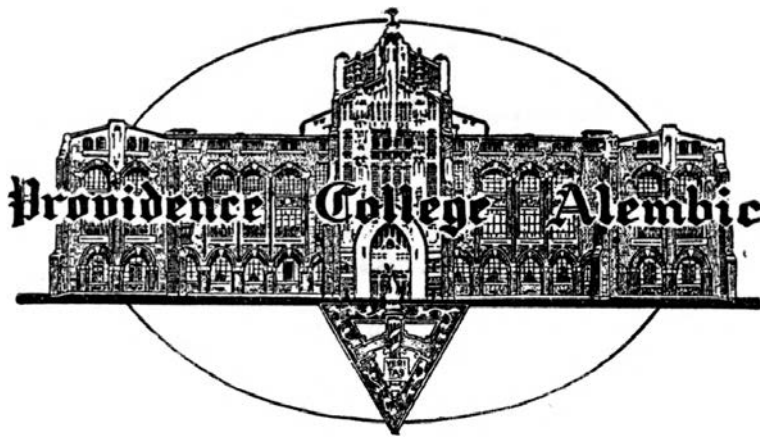


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# THE ALEMBIC



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BY THE  
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## *Prize Short Story*

### The Narrow House

ROBERT J. VELLECA, '62

POKER chips clicked hollowly in the huge game room of the Prescott mansion as nearly soundless air-conditioners sucked in shafts of bluish smoke. Four men sat around a large, compartmented poker table surfaced with black and red inlaid wooden squares. Above the table, a large cutglass ball revolved slowly around a light, casting multi-colored flashes upon the distant walls. The huge room, the huge fireplace occupying one wall, the huge bar covering another—all tended to dwarf the central scene. A beautiful woman in tight black leotards, a gold lamé blouse, bare feet, and a fur anklet, turned from a tall mahogany gun-rack and padded through the deep black rug to gaze distractedly at the alabaster nymphs galloping all over the mantle.

"More drinks, Kitty," said Seth Prescott. "That's what I invited you for."

"My martinis are world famous," replied Kitty Durell, her gaze settling on the diamond stickpin in Prescott's silk ascot. Seated next to Prescott, her husband wore a casual sweater which made a contrast to their host's clothing that Kitty found distasteful.

Prescott smoothed back his white hair and made a growling noise deep in his throat. From beneath his bushy black eyebrows he followed Kitty's undulatory gait. "A little dryer this time," he called, as an excuse for staring.

Duncan Durell looked up from his cards and glared a little drunkenly at his host. "You open, Seth?" His glazed eyes revealed that he was cognizant of Prescott's interest in his wife, but his face wore the bored mask of the play-boy. Younger and handsomer than the aging Prescott, Durell still had reason for concern. Prescott was wealthy; Durell had wasted his entire inheritance with uncommon speed.

"I pass," replied Prescott, looking to Hermann Beers.

Beers, retired undertaker and owner of two of the most successful parlors in the state, pulled at his eyebrow thoughtfully. "I'll open."

"Good," said Durell. "I can't open, but I've got a good hand."

"You talk a good game," said Prescott.

"How many, Stiles?" asked Beers, the dealer.

Stiles Crittenden threw three cards into the center of the table. "Three aces, please. Give a guy a break."

"Fat chance," said Prescott. "I've already got four of them."

Crittenden, smiling girlishly, reached for his cards with a slender hand. He wore three rings.

"I'll take one," said Durell.

"Phony," said Prescott. "I'll take three to keep you honest."

Beers passed the requested number of cards to each man, himself included, and announced, "Dealer takes two."

"Keeping a kicker, Beers?" asked Durell.

## *The Narrow House*

"You'll have to pay to find out," replied Beers.

Meanwhile, Kitty Durell sauntered up bearing a tray of drinks. She placed one drink in the cylindrical glassholder next to each man and placed the tray on the billiard table to the left. Sitting on the arm of her husband's chair, she asked, "How much are you losing, Honey?"

"Be quiet, will you, Kit?" replied her husband.

"Six-hundred dollars," interjected Prescott, gazing lecherously at the small, star-shaped beauty-spot which Kitty had moved from her chin to her cheek-bone since their last meeting.

"Maybe you'd better quit, Honey," said Kitty, curling her bare toes in the nap of the rug. "Six-hundred dollars. Gee, I could buy a nice new gown with that. I saw a beautiful black one down at . . ."

"Please, Kitty. Not now!" snapped her husband.

Crittenden relieved the tension by throwing in his hand. Turning to Beers, he asked, "How's business, Hermann?"

Beers, used to jokes about his profession, only smiled.

Crittenden continued, "How did you ever get into that business, Beers? You don't look like a ghoul to me."

Beers grinned and threw in his opening hand, obviously unimproved. He leaned back and replied, "My father was a mortician. You know the old story."

"It must be creepy work, nonetheless," said Crittenden. "I wonder if you've ever buried anyone alive."

"That's not possible with the present embalming procedure."

"Aagh, what a thought," continued Crittenden. "I would never have the nerve to do what you do."

"There isn't much you do have the nerve to do, brother mine," said Kitty cruelly as she drained her glass. "Everybody says you're a pansy."

"That's one thing you can say for my wife," said Durell disgustedly, slamming down his cards, "she's sweet and tactful."

"That's two things, Honey," said Kitty.

"And brilliant."

An uncomfortable silence followed. Prescott, having won, pulled the chips into the trough in front of him with joined hands. He mused thoughtfully, "Houdini is known to have performed many tricks which could have resulted in burial alive. I suppose it all boils down to suffocation in the long run."

"Oh no," said Crittenden, obviously having forgotten his sister's previous remark, "It's different in a coffin. Even the Indian fakers were buried in cloth. I think the very idea of a coffin is what's most horrible."

"Bah," said Durell. "I've heard of people who sleep in coffins. What's a coffin? Nothing but a social ashtray. God knows where the smoke goes."

At this, Prescott turned and gazed with interest at Durell. "So the worldly one has a little of the philosopher in him. You must admit, however, that the coffin does symbolize that which we fear most."

"That's right. I'd rather be buried alive in a beehive than a coffin," said Crittenden, his flesh creeping almost visibly.

"I agree with Durell," added Beers. "But, of course,

## *The Narrow House*

I've become inured to the sight of coffins and all that goes with them."

"Honey," said Kitty, having sulked for a sufficient length of time. "Why do you always back the side of an argument that seems bravest? I've seen you run from fights at the club." Her revenge was sweet.

"Could you sleep in a coffin, Durell?" asked Prescott, availing himself of the opportunity to make manifest a little scheme he had been considering.

"Of course!" snapped Durell, unable to discern just where the conversation was leading.

"Well, then, I have an idea for a little wager," said Prescott. "You know how I am about wagers."

"Here we go again," said Beers. "Someone's about to make another pact with the devil."

"What's your wager, Prescott?" said Durell with thinly disguised hopefulness. "Maybe I can clear up the six-hundred I owe you."

"Six-hundred? Ha! I'll bet you . . . Well, Ill bet you one-hundred thousand dollars that you won't allow yourself to be buried alive for . . . let's say . . . three days." Prescott, fascinated by his own scheme now, leaned forward eagerly.

"You know I don't have that kind of money. What are you trying to do?"

"You don't have the money, but you do have a valuable trinket." With this, Prescott looked up into the o-shaped mouth of Durell's astounded wife. "Kitty here."

Kitty's face immediately burst into a blinding smile. She had always felt that she was beautiful, but to have her beauty assayed out at one-thousand dollars a pound . . .

fantastic. Of course she probably felt that the figure was a little low, but still . . . What Kitty didn't realize was that one-hundred thousand dollars represented to Seth Prescott what one dollar and thirty-nine cents represented to anyone else.

"You must be kidding," said Durell. "I could do it standing on my head."

"That won't be necessary, Durell. All I ask is that you do it. Of course I intend to bury you. And in a cemetery."

"How will I breathe?" asked Durell suspiciously.

"That will be taken care of," replied Prescott. "As will everything else including the suspension of your bodily functions. That can be handled, can't it, Beers?"

"Yes. Yes. It can be done simply," replied Beers, stunned by the recent turn of events.

"Then I suggest that we put the rules of this little wager into writing," said Prescott, reaching into a drawer beneath the card table.

"Now slow down a minute," said Durell. Doubt was beginning to manifest itself in his manner and appearance. "Let me collect my thoughts."

"I assure you," said Prescott smoothly, "that everything will be above board. Are you backing down?"

"No. No. It's just that . . . Well, what the hell. Let me hear the conditions."

"No conditions, Durell. I just want to put down what we've already discussed. All right now. I'll set up the whole thing, and you tell me when you disagree."

Durell rose and walked slowly to the bar, speaking over his shoulder. "Wait till I get myself a drink." The



## *The Narrow House*

remaining four looked about, excited by the forthcoming adventure yet reluctant to show it. Durell poured himself a drink and consumed half of it at the bar as though preparing for the walk back. Suddenly, he said, "Go ahead, Prescott, I'll listen over here."

Prescott smiled up at Kitty and, writing, began, "We'll meet tomorrow at my family plot at Sunnycrest at 5:45. Everything will have been prepared. There will be an air-tube from the side of the coffin to the surface. I'll also rig up a bell-rope which connects into . . ."

"Leave out the bell-rope, Prescott," interjected Durell with a voice that fairly swaggered with nonchalant bravado.

Prescott repeated Durell's words with a smirk. "Leave out the bell-rope." He continued, "The wager will begin at 6:00 P.M. tomorrow and will expire at 6:00 P.M. Monday evening. Stiles, Hermann, and myself will fill in the grave. That shouldn't be too much trouble, should . . ."

"Be damn sure you leave the breathing tube clear," interrupted Durell. "And another thing. Make sure that the coffin is above the water table in that area."

"Don't worry. My plot is on the crest of a hill. Now, since you don't want the bell-rope, I'm going . . . wait a minute. You must have the bell-rope. Otherwise you won't possibly be able to lose the bet. Unless, of course, your insanity disqualifies you from winning."

"What do you mean?" asked Durell, finding the word distasteful.

"It's quite simple. If you allow the bell-rope to be installed, you win at the end of three days provided you

don't use it. If you refuse the installation of the bell-rope, your insanity or death makes me the winner. You see that, don't you? Otherwise I won't be able to win."

"All right. All right. Install the bell-rope."

Prescott gazed at Durell for a short while, then said, sardonically, "Why Duncan, I do believe you were trying to trap me."

Durell smiled around the brim of his glass as he finished the remainder of his drink. His face, all but the hollows of his eyes, was beginning to flush. Durell generally drank offhandedly, relishing only the effects of the alcohol, but tonight, for some reason, he was moved to appreciate the tang of each swallow, chill, yet fiery. The effects, however, were still there. His words were beginning to come apart; the last letters of some words becoming the first letters of the next. "Let's finish up, Prescott."

"All right. We know the bet then. If the caretaker doesn't hear the bell for three days, I give you one hundred thousand dollars when you come up. If you do ring the bell, Kitty is mine." Kitty giggled at this as Prescott patted her thigh. "Now let's get some sleep."

As the four filed slowly from the room, leaving Durell at the bar, Beers said to Crittenden distractedly, "Well I'll be damned."

Durell's heart was nearly paralyzed with fear as he felt the coffin being lowered into the grave. Strange, he thought, how one's imagination, when imagining something horrible, tends to underestimate the situation. How crushingly tight it is in here! Why, my nose is nearly touching the lid. And how dark . . . No. How black. Prescott hasn't missed a trick, either. How devilishly clever the

## *The Narrow House*

morbid touches to heighten my awareness; the uniquely funeral odor of well-chosen flowers, the rosary beads, the incantation made so slowly and so tonelessly. The very marrow in my bones seems to be turning to ice.

Impressed indelibly upon Durell's mind was the picture of the last scene: one side of the beautifully full willow tree stained blood-red by the nearly dead sun; white and grey, oddly-shaped stones marching off in all directions; the thick, squat mausoleum sitting mute and silent between the new grave and the tree. But this picture was slowly being pushed aside by a more unreal, more horrible one. The coffin had touched bottom, and Durell was imagining, quite easily in the utter dark, and quite against his will, what it was that lay only feet away on all sides of him. He began to realize that he was at the level of a whole city of similar coffins containing quite unsimilar bodies in various stages of total or near decay. Women, men, children, whole families, all dressed in their Sunday best and busily rotting, busily passing, through stages saponaceous, gelatinous, and leathery, from human to humus. At the first shovelful of earth upon the lid of the coffin, Durell reached for the bell-rope.

As shovelful after shovelful of earth rattled harshly, then more softly by layer, Durell fought to refrain from tugging at the rope. His body was trembling violently, jerking spasmodically, as his mind shrieked for deliverance. The sound of his feet rasping against the silken cushions chilled him the more. He began to fight frantically for control. He spoke aloud. "Easy. Easy now. You've got to get your mind on something else. You'll never make it this way." His voice chased itself about the narrow confines of the coffin, then lost itself in the thick cushions. "You've got

to think of something else. Don't give in. One hundred thousand dollars. One hundred thousand dollars. One hundred thousand dollars." All was quiet now save for the drone of Durell's voice as the coffin became a cushioned cave in the solid earth. Durell was alone.

It was evident to Durell now that his only hope of retaining his sanity or winning the wager lay in his ability to keep his mind occupied. Whenever he failed to do this, the horror of his situation expanded from a pin-point of awareness to a flaming ball of raw panic. It was, then, to this end that Durell devoted all of his energies. He thought furiously, doggedly, about anything and everything. Anything and everything save one thing. I must channel my thinking, he thought. I must make it orderly. Man thinks much faster than he acts, so I must think about some detailed action which lasts about ten days. I must leave nothing out. I must think every step, every move.

Durell began his thought marathon; daydreaming, imagining, conjuring. His thoughts began to fall into line; to follow one upon the other naturally. He thought . . . he thought . . . he thought . . .

Large flakes of snow float softly to the ground, thickening and reshaping everything upon which they settle. The dark firs, blending into a sprawling white-capped cathedral, form a stand which creates a semi-circular backdrop of unparalleled beauty. And in the foreground, the cottage. A strange sense of exquisite serenity rises through me as I stand at the gate to the low picket fence and look again, with quiet pride, at the soft angles and low sloping roof of my home. I don't know which is more pleasant to contemplate the sheltered warmth within, or the crisp, clean cool-

## *The Narrow House*

ness without. Suddenly, from the midst of the pine stand, a dappled doe steps into view on incredibly slender legs. She raises her head to read the wind, then steps gingerly to the window, facing the unseen valley on the left. The door opens, and my son Ronnie, wildly gleeful, rushes to greet me with a whispered entreaty.

"Don't say anything, Dad. Bliss is back, and you might scare her."

"No fear, Son. She's hungry enough to knock at the door. Let's go in and see what your mother has for us."

"We'll feed Bliss too, Dad?"

"The four of us, Son." Treading through the soft snow and into the small front hall, I am conscious of the same feeling of anticipation which always precedes my seeing Emma, my wife. She is at the window watching Bliss, and I can tell somehow by the curve of her throat, the loose disarrangement of her incredibly soft hair, the tiny shell-like perfection of her ear, that she loves me. That's part of my happiness, the certainty. But there are many other parts. My love for Emma; our son, perfectly normal; my freedom from cares, material or social; the beauty, solitude, and serenity of my home; even Bliss, the doe; all interact through the catalytic excellence of my wife to radiate a halo of tranquillity which can be dispersed by no trivial misunderstanding or accident.

"Hello Emma. Bliss is back I see."

"Hello darling. Yes, she's back. I think she's dropped a fawn somewhere nearby. We must look tomorrow."

"Uh-huh. Meanwhile, we should feed her. Food's scarce with the snow this deep."

"Who shall I feed first? Are you hungry?"

## *The Alembic*

"I can wait, honey." As I sit before the fire, relishing the color of the flame, the smell of the burning wood, and the feel of the warmth, I begin to consider what my wife has said. Yes. A fawn. It would be the ideal thing to keep Ronnie company. At least until the next child. A year, possibly. Yes, a wonderful idea. We could keep the fawn until it was strong enough to fend safely for itself. Then it too could visit us every so often, as Bliss does. Ronnie and I must look in the valley in the morning.

For the first few days my son and I search the valley and the near slope with little luck. We cover both sides of the stream, the lake region, and every inch of the main slope. The snow has obscured Bliss's tracks, so we decide to wait for her to make a move which would lead us to her bower. Finally, Bliss returns. The next morning we set out again with tracks to aid us.

"They head towards the far slope, Dad."

"I know, Son. I should have thought of the big birch brake myself." Climbing to the top of a small rise, the doe's tracks are visible to us for nearly a mile through the granite ledge at the valley's end, across the far swamp bottom, and up the distant slope into the brush. We climb slowly, happy to be alone, happy to be alive. Soon we are through the brushy area and are climbing into a large birch brake shaped like a lop-sided crescent moon. An impressive bit of reconnaissance on the part of Bliss, it must be admitted. No large carnivores in this area; plenty of water; plenty of tender birch shoots; a stone ledge to the rear that only a deer could navigate; two miles of visibility to the front. Beautifully chosen. The only thing lacking is plentiful food. Two more weeks of thaw and that won't be a



## *The Narrow House*

problem either. Soon we are standing atop a fallen birch gazing into the huge eyes of a fawn, a buck, nestled against the upturned stump.

"Gee, Dad, he must be a month old."

"He's all of that, Son. He'll be eating shoots in a few days and won't be dependent on his mother's milk."

"You mean we can't take him now?"

"I don't think that would be wise. In a few days when Bliss starts prowling closer to home we'll know he's ready. He'll stay here a while after she leaves him. Then we'll take him."

As the boy and I are speaking, the fawn rises shakily and trots, squealing, into the thicket. His coat is not yet dappled, his feet not dangerous, but he kicks instinctively while seeking the greater safety of his mother's proximity. Bliss steps from behind a rise and nudges her fawn into a shady patch, nipping and grunting.

"Let's go before we convince Bliss that she should find a new hideaway."

Turning slowly, the boy and I walk, my arm over his shoulders, down from the beautifully black and white brake, into the brush, out of the valley-bottom on a lengthening bridge of fluff-edged footprints. The walk back will be longer and easier.

Back at the cottage, Emma and I speak softly while enjoying our nightly tea ritual. Ronnie is in bed, and the crackling of the fire adds music to the fiery dance superimposed upon the walls by the whirling flames.

"I think the fawn is a good idea."

"I agree, Emma. You should have seen Ronnie's face when we came upon that wobbly little rascal in the



woods today." Suddenly I am conscious of a dull pain in my head and a grating sound in my ears.

"What's wrong, darling?" asks my wife apprehensively.

"Nothing, Emma. A little headache and a strange noise in my ears."

"Has it happened before?"

"A few times. Nothing to worry about." Then, returning to the original conversation, "The fawn is all well and good, but Ronnie still needs brothers and sisters. And I need sons and daughters like Ronnie . . . like you."

"Certainly, darling. The fawn will be for the interim. To teach him patience and kindness."

"Yes. I pray God he . . . "

LIGHT!!!

"Duncan, honey! You've done it! It's Monday and we're rich! One hundred thousand dollars!!"

Slowly as like sand trickling through a tiny hole, it all returned: Kitty, Prescott, the wager, the money . . . .

As he squinted up at the faces, his body frozen into immobility through disuse, they moved mechanically. They chattered and grinned, bodyless, blurred, changing shape like opaque jellyfish. An unknown horror clawed at the portals of his mind. Realization was a fist striking a crushing blow.

Slowly then, muscles stiff, tongue thick, his voice ragged, "Oh, my God! Ronnie. Emma. Emma . . . ."

# *Prize-Winning Play*

## The Perfect Communist

ROBERT BREITENBACH '64

### CHARACTERS

IVAN: A low-ranking member of the Party.

OLGA: Ivan's wife.

MOKAV: Ivan's Party boss.

**S**ETTING: The action takes place in a typical communist city. The community is celebrating the final victory of communism. The time is the fuzzy future.

(With the sound of a roaring mob coming from the right, Ivan and Olga are walking swiftly across the stage from the right in front of the closed curtain. This apron represents a side street.)

O: Where are we going?

I: (pulling his wife by the arm) Follow me.

O: But that wild mob . . .

I: Joyous, not wild.

O: I think they're mad.

I: How could they be mad? This is the greatest day in history. The last of the capitalists have been killed.

O: So what?

I: (shouting) So what! Don't you remember anything from school? Don't you remember the teachers saying that as soon as capitalism is defeated everybody will be free to do as they please? Well, that day has arrived!

O: You don't have to yell.

I: (shouting louder) I'm not yelling.

O: Where are we going?

I: To Comrade Mokav's apartment.

*The Alembic*

O: That slob?

(At the left end of the stage a gap has been left in the curtain. The curtain is then raised as Ivan and Olga turn left into the opening. As the curtain rises, the couple is seen in a hallway outside of the door to Mokav's apartment. On the other side of the door, which is part of a wall perpendicular to the front of the stage, is the living room of the apartment.)

I: Shut up, Olga. Comrade Mokav is a perfect communist. He has worked very hard for the Party.

O: He worked harder for himself.

I: Olga, if you weren't my wife, I'd have you arrested.

O: (resisting Ivan's pulling) Why are we going to his apartment? I can think of much better places to celebrate the victory of the World Revolution.

I: Mokav has a very beautiful apartment with rugs and shades and even vodka.

O: I never did think that it was fair for him to have all that.

I: He worked hard for the Party. He deserved his rewards.

O: But why did Party officials always get more rewards than the working man?

I: (pulling his wife) Olga, I can't stand your babbling.

O: But why are we going to his apartment?

I: Because I want to be with him on this glorious day. For years he has been giving us speeches about how happy this day would be.

O: That's about all that he ever gave you. Why

## *The Perfect Communist*

didn't you get more money along with all of those speeches?

I: The answer is simple. Up to this time we have been at war and sacrifices were to be expected. After all, during the transition from capitalism to communism, suppression is still necessary; but it is the suppression of a minority of exploiters by the majority of exploited.

O: Where in the world did you hear that?

I: Engels said it.

O: How do you know?

I: Comrade Mokav had us memorize it.

O: That's about all you're good for, memorizing. Why do you fall for evrything Mokav says?

I: Comrade Mokav is a good communist. He gave us hope. And now we have what he promised.

O: Speaking of hope, I often wonder what I must have been hoping for when I married you. Since you were a Party member, I thought that you would advance in the ranks. How wrong can a person be?

I: You married me because I was handsome and you were getting old.

O: Oh, brother . . .

I: Besides, what good would it have been if I had advanced in the Party? Today everybody is equal.

O: That sounds too good to be true.

I: (Ivan knocks on the door and Mokav answers.) Comrade Mokav, ain't it wonderful?

M: What?

I: Our victory, of course!

M: Our victory? Oh, yes, of course. It's just wonderful.

*The Alembic*

I: How does it feel to be free and equal? Just think, you won't have any more problems than I have. And as I was saying to my wife . . .

O: (wide-eyed) This apartment is out of this world! Why didn't we ever have anything like this, Ivan?

I: Shut up, Olga.

O: And look at those beautiful chairs and tables.

M: I admire your wife's artistic taste, Comrade Ivan. (Mokav stares at Olga.) Hmm, and that is not all that I admire.

I: Yeah, and as I was saying . . .

O: I never saw such thick rugs. (Olga starts to walk around the room.) What is this box with glass in the front?

M: That's a television.

O: A what?

M: A television.

I: What does it do?

M: Oh nothing, it's just an ornament that I found one day.

I: (scratching his head) Television? Oh yeah, I read about those in the newspaper. Those are the things that the capitalists used to sit and look at all day. No wonder they were defeated. A person would go mad from just watching a box with a glass front all day long. Isn't that right, Comrade?

M: Oh, sure, Ivan

O: But why do you have one, Comrade?

M: As I said, I just found it one day.

O: You didn't buy it then?

M: Of course not, I would never buy anything made by the capitalists.

*The Perfect Communist*

O: (picking up a Polaroid camera) What's this?

M: A camera.

O: You mean one of those things that takes pictures?

M: Yes.

O: How did you ever get it?

M: A friend gave it to me.

I: (picking up camera) This is really nice. Comrade, what does (spells out loud) M-A-D-E I-N U-S-A mean?

M: Oh, those are just some code letters for different parts of the camera.

I: You mean like the numbers on the machines at the factory?

M: Yes.

O: (looking into another room) What's that shining room in there?

M: That's a bathroom.

I: Inside your own apartment?

M: Yes, Ivan.

O: This place is unbelievable!

M: Do you like my apartment, madam?

O: I love it; it's nothing like Ivan's shack.

M: I'm glad that you like it. Maybe you could come back to visit me sometime, Olga, but I'm busy now, (trying to push the intruders out the door) so if you don't mind.

O: (sweetly) Ivan.

I: What do you want?

O: Didn't you say that we are all free and equal

I: Yeah.

*The Alembic*

O: Well, then we have just as much right to this apartment as Comrade Mokav has, don't we?

M: WHAT???

I: Don't be silly, wife.

O: What's silly about it? We're equal, aren't we?

I: Olga, sometimes you act as if you ain't got a brain to call . . . (Ivan stops to give the apartment a closer appraisal) . Hey, this place is more beautiful than I thought. Maybe you're right, Olga. We are all equal, aren't we, comrade?

M: (loosens his tie) Well, ah, I never thought . . . Why don't you try to find yourselves a better apartment with more luxuries than I have?

O: But I like your place.

I: We'll stay. Ain't you pleased, comrade?

M: There is a much prettier apartment across the street, Ivan. It has new plumbing and decorations and . . .

I: But comrade, we like you. You always was my hero. It was dedicated men like you who really beat the capitalists. It would be a real honor to live with you.

M: (almost frantic) Please leave my apartment!

O: You mean *our apartment*.

M: But I've struggled so hard to rent this. I worked and saved and dreamed for over twenty years to get it.

O: That's strange. I thought that your only interest in life was the Party.

I: Silence, Olga. I won't stand for any more disrespect toward Comrade Mokav. He has always had his whole heart in Party activities. Even now he is trying to help us find a better apartment.

M: (screaming) What made you think that you could burst into here like this?



## *The Perfect Communist*

I: I'm surprised that you ask such a question, comrade. You told us yourself that the harder we worked at the factory the sooner capitalism would be defeated. Then anybody could do anything because all of the evil people would be gone. As a matter of fact, you said that Marx said the same thing.

M: Yes, but don't forget that the transition must be a gradual process.

I: But when? The capitalists are defeated. That makes us free, doesn't it?

M: I don't think that you know what freedom means, comrade.

I: Marx said that in a communist society, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, just as I have a mind. That's freedom!

M: No, Ivan, that is the gradual effect of freedom.

I: But you told . . .

M: Freedom does not consist in a free or undetermined will, Ivan.

I: Who said that?

M: Engels.

I: You never told us that at the factory.

M: I didn't have time to tell you everything, Ivan.

I: But you said that we could do anything that . . .

M: Engels also said that we shouldn't expect a Utopia.

I: I'm confused.

O: Ivan, you're so damn dumb that it's almost funny. Mokav thinks he is too good for us and is trying to make us leave by confusing us with a bunch of nonsense.

M: I am not trying to do that. I'm just pointing

*The Alembic*

out that this transition must be a gradual process and that we must not expect changes overnight . . .

O: Gradual, gradual. I think you're just trying to stall.

M: Of course not, and to prove that I'm your friend, I will get you a better apartment across the street.

I: Enough, comrade, we appreciate your trying to find us a better place, but we like your apartment so much. (Ivan moves toward a picture window as Mokav moves toward Olga.)

I: (looking out the window) You really have some nice scenery around here, comrade.

M: (looking at Olga) I most certainly do. (whispering to Olga) After working so hard to get this apartment, I couldn't bear to share it with an idiot like Ivan. But I'm lonely here . . . maybe we could find another apartment for Ivan to live in. How would you like that?

O: (teasingly taking a step backwards) I don't like the way you have the furniture arranged around here.

H: Maybe we could send Ivan out for something while we rearrange it.

O: Oh, I wouldn't need your help.

M: But I have some ideas that you might be interested in.

I: (watching a wild mob rush by the window) The people sure are happy today.

M: (starting to caress Olga) Let's get rid of Ivan.

O: He is kind of stupid.

I: (turning slowly from the window) It is good to see that everybody is free to do . . . Wife! WHAT IN THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

## *The Perfect Communist*

M: What does it look like? I've decided that since you are going to share my apartment, I might as well share your wife. How would you like that, Olga?

O: Share me???

I: Comrade Mokav . . .

M: (ignoring Ivan) I assure you, Olga, it won't be as bad as it sounds.

O: Not as bad as it sounds, eh? What do you think I am? A Tibetan woman with five husbands?

I: No, of course not. What I mean is . . .

O: What you mean is that you're putting me on the same level as your apartment.

I: (angrier) But Comrade Mokav . . .

M: (once again ignoring Ivan) Calm down, Olga. What I'm trying to say is that . . .

I: COMRADE MOKAV!!

M: What do you want, Ivan?

I: What are you trying to do? Olga is MY wife.

M: What do you mean, your wife? You said yourself that we are all free and equal, so what gives you any more right to Olga than I have?

I: Well, I never thought . . .

M: You must agree that we are all equal. You just said so.

I: Well, I guess that's right, but . . .

M: (winking at Olga) Ivan, I have a special mission for you.

I: For me?

M: (authoritatively) Yes, I left some very important papers in my office. Could you please get them?

*The Alembic*

O: But that's twenty miles from here! Do you really need them?

M: Top secret Party papers. I'm afraid that they might fall into the wrong hands.

I: If they're that important to the Party, I'll go. We better get started right away, Olga.

M: Why don't you leave Olga here, comrade? You will be able to travel faster.

I: You're right, comrade.

O: (as soon as Ivan leaves) Well! I've never been so embarrassed in my life. You don't really think that I would live with two men?

M: Calm down, my dear. You don't think that I'd let Ivan stay around here, do you?

O: But you just said that you and Ivan would share me.

M: I just said that for Ivan's sake, my dear. I assure you that Ivan will very shortly depart from our lives.

O: What do you mean?

M: To put it in simple terms, we'll get rid of him. (Walking sullenly down the hallway, Ivan suddenly discovers that he doesn't have the key to Mokav's office, so he heads back toward the apartment.)

O: But how can we get rid of Ivan? He's determined to stay here. (Ivan has just arrived outside the door and is about to enter when he hears . . .)

M: Oh, I'll arrange a Siberian job or maybe some type of fatal accident for Ivan.

O: I'm not sure that he would fall for something like that.

*The Perfect Communist*

M: Sure he will. It's just like you said, he's so damn dumb . . . (Ivan suddenly realizes that he is being duped. He pushes the door open and rushes into the apartment.)

M&O: IVAN!!

I: (moving toward Mokav) Yes, Ivan.

M: I thought that I sent you to my office. What are you doing here?

I: I'm sorry if I caught you by surprise.

M: What do you mean, caught me?

I: A fatal accident, eh?

M: Fatal accident? Ivan you've been under too much pressure. Maybe you need a vacation.

I: In Siberia, comrade? Would that make you happy?

M: Were you listening outside the door, comrade?

I: You're damn right I was.

M: Shame on you, Ivan, you know what Marx said about . . .

I: I don't want to hear any more of your quotations, you double-crossing . . .

M: Take it easy, Ivan. I can explain.

I: You probably can, but I don't have the time to listen. (Ivan slugs Mokav.)

I: (to Olga) I guess you'll want to stay with this fake.

O: Oh, no, Ivan, I'll go with you. I'm so glad that you rescued me from that horrible . . .

I: Shut up and come with me before I really lose my temper. (Ivan drags Olga out of the apartment as the curtain falls.)

## *Prize-Winning Essay*

“You’re All A Bunch of Actors.”

Uncle . . . . .

ROBERT J. VELLECA '62

I HAVE a remarkably perceptive uncle. Prematurely bald and inordinately uninformed, he thinks ping-pong is a Chinese disease. I don't mean to imply, however, that my uncle isn't intelligent. Far from it. He's one of those individuals who strikes everyone as being extremely dense, yet has the ability to stand quietly on the sidelines and, with frightening clarity, see things in people best left unseen. With his eagle sharp eyes peeping out of his slack, expressionless face, he strips away layer after layer of that flesh-textured stucco which surrounds the pulpy ego that cowers within us all. Every time I find myself in his presence, whether it be at the dogtrack, a wedding, a shower, or a small conversational clot at some club clam-bake, I sidle up to him and listen intently to his oracular mutterings. Shivers ripple up my spine and my scalp crawls as he quietly and nervelessly pins each specimen, like a particular butterfly, into a particular category on the board of Truth. Perhaps a few examples of my uncle's uncanny perceptiveness would serve to convince the skeptics, though his candid pointedness may prove embarrassing. Remember, meanwhile, that my uncle is no slim, clear-eyed, horn-rimmed, psychiatrist type. Oh no. The paradoxical juxtaposition of a svelte mind and a brutish body serves to heighten the effect of his utterances. Well, the examples. Last year, at an anual fire-station clam-bake, my uncle and I sat contentedly, drinks in hand, under a sour apple tree.

*"You're All a Bunch of Actors."*

Before us was the bake area and the temporarily erected bar. My uncle, in an exceptionally caustic frame of mind, was emitting a constant flow of biting comments. I, mental notebook open, sat raptly attentive.

"Bob," he said, "did you ever notice how well liked Tony is?"

"Yes, he is pretty popular."

"He got that way by sayin' nice things about people," observed my uncle.

"Umm," I replied.

"Well, if you pay real close attention, you'll notice he only says nice things about Dagoes. If there wasn't no Dagoes in the world, he'd be speechless."

"No kidding."

"That's right. He's really pretty one-way."

Reeling from the impact of this observation, I realized that my uncle had it within his power to turn people's feelings for this man from affection to disdain. Thinking back, I concluded that what my uncle had said was true, but I was shocked that he had been able to reach this conclusion after watching the man for a matter of mere minutes.

Later, cardboard plates in hand, my uncle and I slowly dunked our clams in butter and stretched our sun-baked bare toes. While pondering lazily upon the fact that my uncle's little toes were nearly non-existent, I was suddenly shocked back unto reality by the sonorous drone of his voice saying, "You know, God couldn't come up with a worse punishment for sinners than to have their whole lives, every minute, pass before the world, over and over again."

"Yeah, it would be unbelievably embarrassing."



"Well, that fat guy over there would hate that more'n anybody."

"Why do you say that?" I asked.

My uncle sucked a clam into his rubbery mouth, butter running onto his polo shirt, and replied, "He looks like he's very sensitive about his build. I betcha he wears a girdle."

I shuddered inwardly at the horrible brutality of this statement. Blunt and concise, it had an immediate effect on me. I lost my taste for clams.

The rest of the day was pleasant but uneventful. My uncle conducted himself well, chatting, eating, and joining in the inevitable poker game. When darkness began to fall, the affair broke up. On the way home, I asked, "How'd you make out playing poker, Unc?"

"Pretty good, but I'll never play with them guys again."

"How come?"

"I don't trust people who back-raise after they check."

These examples should make it relatively clear that my uncle is a remarkable character. It's small wonder that his tiny variety store is a gathering place for all of the most philosophical minds in Bristol County. Of all the things which he has said, however, one statement will remain with me forever. This pet phrase, which he repeated quite often, was "You're all a bunch of actors." Seeming to fit a wide variety of situations, this statement was summoned up by him quite often, but as many times as I had heard it, it never impressed me as being overly important, or for that matter, astute. Under the right set of circumstances, how-

*"You're All a Bunch of Actors."*

ever, I began to see why my uncle relied so heavily upon it. Contained therein was a world of thought and meaning.

On the night prior to my brother's wedding, my wife, my brother's fiancée, my brother, my uncle, and I were gathered at my uncle's house for the purpose of calling my parents, who live in Arizona. My uncle had graciously offered to pay for the call. Sitting quietly in the corner, pipe in hand, he rocked lazily as the four of us talked, listened, or reported what we heard. After three-quarters of an hour, we said our goodbyes and sat down to a cup of my uncle's favorite drink, ginger brandy and tea. Talking excitedly we all but forgot that my uncle was present. Suddenly, during a lull in the conversation, he spoke. Removing his pipe from his mouth, he yawned and said, "You're all a bunch of actors." He then smiled, and promptly fell asleep. There they were. Those six words which I had heard so often were now to influence me as no other words ever would. Everyone else present merely smiled indulgently, but I felt a chill. He had known. He had known that we on this end of the telephone conversation and they on the other had told everything but the real truth. We had played out our separate roles to the hilt. No one in Arizona must know how things really are here. They might worry. No one here must know that my father's health hadn't improved. We might worry. Ah, Uncle. Life isn't the same since you stepped in.

"You're all a bunch of actors." How often have I thought about this sentence since first I heard it. It has been my slide-rule, my micrometer, my bible. Every word that I hear, every action that I view, every nuance of emotion that I encounter is whittled into a farcical, pre-con-

ceived deception by this adage. I no longer participate in life, I'm a spectator. I will admit that some human actions are spontaneous and unplanned, but not nearly enough.

The retrospection that my uncle's statement elicited began to bear fruit immediately. My first related recollection can be placed definitely at November 2, 1945. A nine year-old boy, I first began to "act" when another uncle of mine, and a cousin, God grant them eternal peace, passed away. The victims of trichinosis, they were the source of a deep and lasting sorrow to my family. I, however, felt nothing. This may seem to be a horrible confession, but I find relief in blaming that lack of emotion on my tender years. At any rate, one picture remains indelibly imprinted on my mind. Standing on a street corner with a friend, also nine, I can remember distinctly feigning sorrow! There I was, a young boy who had just lost two blood relatives pretending to be touched deeply. What a morbid introduction into the world of pretense. Strangely enough, now that I think of it, my young friend was probably pretending also as he sympathetically comforted me. If that's true, the resultant picture is shocking. Two small puppeteers putting their flesh-colored dolls through appropriate paces as they themselves stand disinterestedly behind a curtain of deceit. It's not very pretty. Of course, as time passed and I grew older, I became more and more adept.

The next strong recollection that I have places me on a basketball court in a local Y.M.C.A. The balconies surrounding the court are filled with male and female schoolmates of mine. On the floor there is pathos. We have just lost the Gold Medal Tournament Championship by two points. The role I played in the game was far from instru-

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mental, yet I felt obliged to conform with the other members of the team who were in tears. They moaned and cried, stamped and wailed, in a particularly Italianate fashion. I am unable to determine, in retrospect, whether they were displaying real emotion or not, but I wasn't. I felt no need to cry and stamp, yet cry and stamp I did. I actually summoned up real tears. Every spectator sympathised (our defeat followed upon a particularly picayune call by the referee), or so it seemed. Surely our maudlin machinations deceived them, but were we deceived as well by their response? Where in the name of Heaven does reality begin?

At any rate, with age and experience I improved apace. I learned to cock one eyebrow at will, and did so whenever I felt the need to look quizzical. I developed a particularly effective sneer which could bring into play either side or all of my upper lip, depending upon the gravity of the situation. I developed a beautifully realistic display of anger which served as a good bluff when fisticuffs threatened, as a trump card in an argument, or a device which worked well with females. And righteous indignation . . . Ah, that was my forte. No matter how vague, tenuous, or indirect it may have been, any seemingly unflattering remark concerning mother, country, girl friend, religion, nationality, or what have you, would instantly call up my most effective response, righteous indignation.

Have you ever seen the hero, cowboy or otherwise, who says, "Nobody calls me a liar!" Ha! I don't mind in the least being called a liar, but I'll mouth those self-same words, at the risk of shedding teeth, merely because it's the thing to do. The same holds true with this business of cheating at cards. It seems that hundreds of people have

been killed merely because they were caught cheating. I once played an entire card-game with the full knowledge that the man on my left was cheating every time he dealt. Through fear or embarrassment, two things which I can't feign, I never said a word. Yet when someone else mentioned it and called the man down, I suddenly felt the need to be shocked. Why? Because anything as heinous as cheating at cards can't be overlooked, of course. Yet I had overlooked it easily for the previous two hours.

How often have people laughed at jokes that don't amuse them? Or worse still, how often have people laughed, thinking that a joke was finished, only to find that it wasn't? A famous comedian who was telling a joke once, stopped suddenly realizing that he had forgotten the punch-line. Before he could explain, the audience, thinking that he was finished, burst into wild laughter. Result. Three hundred people caught being "actors" simultaneously. How about the individual who, while being introduced at a cocktail party, kept repeating, "I hate your grandmother, I hate your grandmother," to everyone he met. Of the dozen or so people to whom he was introduced only one person had paid enough attention to be shocked. Everyone else had just smiled or said "Thank you." Lately I've tried to catch people in the act of "acting." It's really not very difficult. Once, while sitting with three pseudo-intellectuals (like myself) whom I had just met in a bar, I began a discussion on Latin, about which I know slightly less than nothing. Later, I began to tell them a story. I told them that a college friend of mine, checking to see if our professor really corrected our papers, had inserted a smutty Latin phrase into one of his answers. My three

*"You're All a Bunch of Actors."*

companions immediately asked me what the phrase was. I replied, "*Effeminandos animos est sequibus et loquandi*," which is of course, pure gibberish. Two of them looked at me quizzically, but the third said, "No! He had the nerve to say that?" Now there's a real actor for you. Another incident worthy of mention is the one that occurred in a gas-station near my home. Doing summer work in this station, I was confronted by a woman whose car was passing steam through the exhaust pipe. This indicated that the head-gasket was blown, but I told her that her non-existent canafelling pin was sheared. Do you know what she replied? An actress of the first water, she answered "It can't be! My husband just replaced it last week."

Not all of the acting in the world, however, is that harmless. Most women who misbehave themselves will still leap at the chance to cast aspersions at the poor unfortunate creature who gets caught at it. Some call this hypocrisy, but I call it acting. Many men pretending to have high incomes have snubbed other men who appear to have lower incomes, when in reality, the men that they are snubbing earn more than they. All this may sound confusing, but that's only because it's difficult to keep track of actors. There's a little insincere elf in all of us which says "look shocked," when we ought to look shocked, and "look amazed" when amazement is becoming, but no one will own up to his existence. I have, and he's making my life miserable. You just won't have friends without him though. Can you picture someone saying "Look honey, you've got a rotten complexion, but I'll marry you anyway, because I'm



getting too old for pride.” Or, “Mac, you’ve got the mentality of a club sandwich, but I’ve got to sell this vacuum cleaner before I can knock off.” It can’t be done. We can, however, be as honest as possible. Other people see through us most of the time anyway, so why play the role?

Well, that’s the story of what my uncle has done to me. I steer clear of him now, though I suspect that it may be too late. In any case, I have to play it safe. Who knows what he may have in store for me? Anyway, the next time somebody pulls out his wallet to show me a snapshot of his son, I’m going to say “You’re kid is uglier than a bag of pretzels.” Then maybe I can look down my nose and say, “You’re all a bunch of actors.” If I’ve still got a nose.



## *Prize-Winning Poem*

### The Waste-A Parody

R. A. LEIDIG, '62

America est patria mea  
America est patria tua  
America est patria nostra  
Quicumque, paranoia

#### I. THE DRIVE TO THE WEST

March is a ghoulish month  
Breeding desires of an urban nature  
Mixing memories of tournament  
With present hopes  
Providence bored us;  
Manhattan undid us.  
Spring surprised us,  
Coming over the Chrysler Building  
Landing in Central Park  
With a soft inland murmur.  
We sat in the Garden  
Drinking                      Wenching  
*Dolce far niente, eh, Leporello?*  
That year we stayed at Grossinger's  
And learned to water ski.  
Molly! Molly! Hold tight  
As we skimmed across the lake  
Ja, das ist die Liechtensteiner Polka, mein schatz

#### II. THE WELL-WROUGHT INCINERATOR

By the shores of Gitchee Gumee  
I sat down and wept.  
Past Grand Central  
Flows the excess

After the depression  
Came the New Deal  
Je comprends jouer au tennis  
Down river comes the pageantry  
Of sewage and Milky Way wrappers,  
Of Washington and Henry Hudson, Half-Mooned.  
Du, du lebst mir in hertzen  
I can get it for you wholesale  
"Why, then, I'll fit you," cries Seventh Avenue.  
Under the spreading chestnut  
Stands the Mayor, making book.  
Now is the month of Maying,  
    Of May-ing  
Of May-ing; now is the month of May-ing  
In Greenpoint or Canarsie.  
The polypoids are burning in the wood  
Sh-boom                      Sh-boom  
Ya Dadda Dadda  
    Da.

### III. WHAT THEY SAID AT THE SPEAKEASY

Quèlqu'un frappe à la porte;  
Guy Fawkes is dead.  
In the room the Sapphics go  
Discussing the Venus de Milo  
There's a sane young woman from Bologna  
Her name's—how do you call her?—Lucia  
di Lammermoor, that was betrothed to  
Bernard Goldfine.  
By the light of the silvery moon  
The Goodhumor truck tolls the knell  
And Orion without two bits.

*The Waste—A Parody*

I am a slug I am a slug  
Dare I seize the Waring Blendor by the plug  
To make a cocktail?  
I will send for the Drambuie and make  
A Rusty Nail.

Ooh eee Walla walla bing bang  
At the bar the men grow old  
Standing with their trousers rolled.

LET'S GET OUT: IT'S A RAID  
We will take a ride on  
The Fifth Avenue Coach to the Library  
And read between the lions

LET'S GET OUT: IT'S A RAID  
I have seen Robert Frost stop by a bar  
On a dry evening  
This is the way we drink our Scotch  
Drink our Scotch drink our Scotch  
This is the way we drink our Scotch  
At three o'clock in the morning

LET'S GET OUT: IT'S A RAID  
Goodnight, suckers  
Goodnight, suckers  
Goodnight

Adios

IV. THE GAME OF HI-LO JACK

On the road with Kerouac  
It's proletarian, so incredibly ovarian  
Where shall we go now, where shall we go  
We will bum a ride out  
To Tijuana, Mexico.  
Hail to thee, blithe spirit

## *The Alembic*

We spend the summers at Venice, near Monterray;  
The winters in the Village.  
Is a motorcycle de rigueur this season?  
And leather jackets?—give the reason  
Antigone, Antigone  
What's the use of the Pleiad?  
That's my last mistress  
Looking like she needs a fix.  
And after the espresso, the frenetic Twist  
There is the music of Schoenberg, not Franz Liszt.  
Behind the sign board lies the cycle cop  
All is still behind the boathouse, where the rats  
live,  
While the Buick rocks on rusty springs  
From harmony, from heavenly harmony.  
Naturally you won't see me on the Côte d'Azur.  
Last night I met the Scarlet Woman  
Coming out of Woolworth's with a pattern for embroidery  
Is it for this Prometheus was rock-chained?

### V. SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET

Over St. Patrick's cathedral  
Where the Cardinal trills the hour  
Swoops the predatory bird with wings dihedral.  
Shall we wax and wane?  
Shall we wax and wane?  
Shall we become as burnt flies upon the window  
pane  
We will take a freedom bus to Atlanta and pull  
taffy.  
The Grand Inquisitor had the answer:

*The Waste—A Parody*

“Hurrah for Karamazov.”  
They came into the medieval redolence  
Cowled in isolation—“Comment allez-vous?”  
J’ai un mal du mer.  
And after the elevation  
After the bread and wine  
Amen stuck in my throat.  
Oh, ach du lieber Aaronstein Aaronstein Aaron-  
stein  
Ach du lieber Aaronstein—du schwein  
Once I stayed with my Uncle Charlus  
Behind the gasworks  
He had much to atone for  
With his chains and naked bedsprings  
At the laundromat Van Cliburn overturned the  
Round Table  
We must forego the promenade at Balbec  
The lift boys are too old this year  
The countess is merely a facade  
A daiquiri for Sebastian  
Repentance                      Repentance  
I will wear a hairshirt up to my neck  
And eat turtle soup.  
In the middle distance Frazer hangs from a golden  
bough  
Eating apples thrown by Atalanta from the super-  
market.  
’St! there’s Vespers  
The lights are going out  
Fais ce que voudrais, Robespierre!  
Sanka                      Sonata                      Soma

## A P. C. Gringo

JOHN EAGLESON, 64

AS the giant Panagra Airlines jet settled onto the runway at the Cali Airport and began taxiing toward the passenger gate, I peered out over the huge silver wing and got my first glimpse of Colombia, South America. Participating in an exchange program, I was to live with a Colombian family in the Andean city of Cali. My purpose was to absorb as much of the Spanish language, Colombian culture, and the South American way of life as possible in two months. Like many a well-intentioned gringo I came to Colombia with a good will and a broad mind. I was ready to wake up to, "*Buenos dias, Juan,*" every morning, to live on a diet of hot tamales, to encounter some anti-Yankee sentiment or insurrectionists, to see wretchedly poor peons, and possibly to have to travel by burro.

But I was to be surprised. The family "burro" was a '56 Ford, my hosts were in favor of both peace and North Americans, and the Colombians don't eat hot tamales. My real problems were unanticipated. Living in our native environment, we have become dependent on hundreds of everyday cues for our social behavior. A slight smile that tells us a conversationalist is being sarcastic, a look from the hostess that indicates dinner will begin, and proper procedure at a formal introduction—all enable us to function comfortably in our society. The sudden collapse of these social props—a phenomenon described as "culture shock"—was the biggest problem I faced in Colombia. This ignorance of the fine points of associating with people, the

## *A P. C. Gringo*

“what-do-I-do-now?” predicament, can cause as much embarrassment, hard feelings, and misunderstandings as inability to speak the language and more discomfort than burros or insurrectionists.

For example, in Colombia the favorite alcoholic beverage is *aguardiente* (literally translated as “fiery water”)—a syrupy liqueur that has a taste lying somewhere between licorice and paregoric. At all social occasions—from weddings to washing the dishes—the bottle of *aguardiente* is brought out and served in small, shot-glass-size goblets. Familiar with the North American custom of sipping liqueurs, I had no quams about proceeding in this manner when first served *aguardiente* at a Colombian birthday party. As I sipped away, one of the neighbors, trying to look inconspicuous, whispered, “Only women drink *aguardiente* like that. If you’re a man you drink it all at once.” Slightly mortified and eager to regain my masculinity, I took a deep breath and swallowed the half-gobletful that remained. Tears filled my eyes and my throat burned as the fiery liquid trickled into my stomach. “*Caramba*,” I thought. “And Socrates thought he had troubles.” But from then on I gulped my *aguardiente* and even got used to it just as you can get used to racks and claws and ripe olives. I was determined to conform to the unexpected standard of Colombian masculinity.

One of the first things I noticed in Colombia was that Latins love to shake hands. If you pass your next door neighbor on the street you shake hands; if you see Aunt Elvira at church you shake hands; when you say good night to your date you shake hands. This custom presented no problem to me as far as men were concerned, since they



were constantly grabbing my hand and I had no choice but to conform. However, with the females I soon became suspicious of my procedure: the *señoras* and *señoritas* never shook my hand. I expected them to take the initiative, for my mother had often told me that it is the woman's prerogative to offer her hand. More than once as Aunt Elvira was leaving she shook everyone's hand but mine. After rejecting ideas that she might be anti-Yankee or anti-Irish, I asked one of the younger members of the family what the proper hand-shaking etiquette is. To my dismay I learned that in Colombia, the man *always* offers his hand first. By using my North American manners in South America, I must have earned quite a reputation for anti-sociability.

Colombians love bananas. Often as the maid brings in the mid-day meal, she lays a ripe banana next to each plate (they also eat cooked bananas). At my first meal I was shocked to find them cutting up their bananas and nonchalantly depositing them in their vegetable soup. I was very eager not to appear disquieted by any Colombian native customs, but this was more than I had anticipated. With a gulp I asked the banana-in-soup-eaters, "*Se comen los bananos en la sopa?*" I needed oral verification of what I had seen. "*Claro que sí,*" they said. "Of course. Why, don't they in the United States?" "Well," I replied, trying to be as diplomatic as possible, "not usually." And so, determined to be a Colombian for two months, I cut up my banana and deposited it nonchalantly in my vegetable soup. To my complete surprise the extraordinary combination was quite palatable.

Later an avocado was put next to the soup. I glanced at the others and, just as I had suspected, into the

*A P. C. Gringo*

soup went the avocado. On another day there was a mango at my place, but this time I was ready. It was a messy operation, but I diligently cut up the juicy, yellow-red fruit and put it into my rice soup. At this point the little six-year-old at my side began to giggle. Her brother opposite me grinned. "What's the matter?" I asked. "Silly," they said. "You don't put mangos in your soup."

Of course the most apparent problem on arriving in Colombia was language. Each time I went to the local five-and-ten, I said a prayer that the cashier wouldn't ask me any questions. If she did ask me something complicated—like "Shall I put your toothpaste in a paper bag?"—I was completely helpless. Thank heaven these language deficiencies were understood by the sympathetic gentry. I found my friends very cooperative in helping me overcome my problem. My six-year-old "sister" spent long hours explaining and defining vocabulary words at the very reasonable tuition rate of ten Colombian centavos an hour (US\$0.02½). For example, "John," she would say in the simple, well-articulated language of a youngster, "when a thing is good, we Colombians call it 'a good thing.'" Although more entertaining than enlightening, my *profesora* taught me much.

Although these basic language problems can be embarrassing, very seldom do they cause any hard feelings or misunderstandings. Rather, your patient listeners regard you as an object of compassion. The problems began after I became somewhat proficient in the tongue. Since I *usually* meant what I said, people developed the false conclusion that I *always* meant what I said. When the wrong things said were no longer looked upon as mistakes in linguistics, the misunderstandings began. For example, once

when I cut myself shaving, the fourteen-year-old *señorita* of the family thought my misfortune quite hysterical. Thinking her humor rather sadistical, I tried out one of my new words and called her a sadist: "*Eres sádica*," I said proudly. Her laugh abruptly changed to an angry frown of indignation. "What was that you said?" she asked. "*Eres sádica*," I repeated. She seethed. I thought maybe she misunderstood me so I asked her if she knew what "*sádica*" meant. "*Sí*," she said, still fuming. My conception of a sadist was someone who delights in the pain of another, but I suspected "*sádica*" perhaps meant something else. Trying to reconcile myself with my young friend, I suggested that we look up the word in the dictionary. We did. "*Que muestra sadismo*," it said. "One who shows sadism." "Yes, that's exactly what I mean," I told her. She took a deep breath, clenched her fists, gritted her teeth, and began counting, "*Uno, dos, tres . . .*" Maybe I better look up "*sadismo*," I thought. "*Crueldad acompañada de lubricidad*." "Cruelty accompanied by "*lubricidad*." What could "*lubricidad*" mean? Her dark brown eyes gleamed." . . . *Diez, once, doce . . .*" I flipped to the "L's." "*Lubricidad*: a propensity toward pleasures of the flesh; sensuality; license; depravity." . . .

Then began a long explanation of how I didn't mean "*sádica*" at all, but that in English the same word popularly has a different, not so harsh, meaning. But for my dictionary I might have started a hemispheric war.

These were some of my problems in Colombia: all part of the "culture shock." In stepping into and working out of these discomforting situations—sometimes with only limited success—I learned of a foreign culture. Seeing occasional Andean Indians or poor women washing clothes

## *Pseudo-Haiku*

in the Magdalena River was of course educational. But these can be seen in a *National Geographic*. It was only after my limited—but very real—experience in Colombia that I began to suspect that the true value of foreign contact is to learn that everybody doesn't shake hands or eat his bananas as North Americans do.

## **Pseudo-Haiku**

J. W. Ross, '65

Pseudo-Haiku is a poetic form perfected by ZONZO LAMA, a Nepalese opium fiend who lived in the nineteenth century. Pseudo-Haiku verse contains at least three lines of more than one syllable followed by a one word conclusion. The poem must not express an idea, but only narrate a pointless story. To capture the thought trend of ZONZO LAMA, I swallowed fourteen Phenol-Barbitol tablets before attempting to compose.

Sitting in Aquinas Hall,  
I gaze at the cockroaches on the wall,  
There are four of them and two of me,  
Help!

Through the gloom  
The light from the flashlight pierces the gloom  
At an inopportune moment.  
Undesirable!

No live pets herein are allowed,  
But in my room wrapped in a shroud,  
My dead pet clam lives  
Law-abidingly.

## Impression

THOMAS ECK, '64

the rocks, mute and still,  
worship in mournful silence.  
prostrate in their fervor,  
they heed not the elements  
to sing praises to their God  
in a speechless  
and silent song.  
immobile with dignity.  
the rocks mute and still.

## Barrabas

EDWIN KIMBALL, '62

"Barrabas!" Did they hide their heads  
When they called "Barrabas!"?  
No. They were proud —  
Proud when they called "Barrabas!".  
"Barrabas!" Did you see His face  
When the crowd called for "Barrabas!"?  
Did the look of Him Who is  
Haunt and taunt "Barrabas"?  
And if He came again today  
Would the world still call "Barrabas!"?

## “The Great Deceiver”

DAVE MCINTYRE, '64

Oh, mirror, mirror, on the wall,  
Who's the fairest of them all?  
Just answer me that question.

Why do you remain so mute,  
Making no reply?  
Oh, mirror, mirror, on the wall,  
Answer me that question.

As I gaze into your mighty realm,  
The reflection of someone I see;  
This someone I know can certainly not be me.

For, where are the gleaming eyes,  
The bulging muscles, shining hair—  
None of these are there.

You block, you stone, you worse than senseless thing,  
Know you not you err?  
For why I wonder don't you show  
The things you know are there.

Never when I have looked at you,  
Ever did I see  
The thing that I do often call “my” me.

# Escape

JOSEPH FARRELL, '62

CHARACTERS: Max

Greenberg

Cantsky

Captain Stanzler

Leopold

TIME: 1943—in the midst of the Aryan madness.

SETTING: A wooded area about a half mile from the Koslau Concentration Camp. The sounds of patrol movements can be heard near the forest. A light but steady drizzle has been falling all through the day. The murkiness of the night combined with the drizzle provided at least one favorable element for the group of ragged skeletons who are huddled in the center of the wood. As our eyes become accustomed to the darkness, we can distinguish three men in this cringing group. The men are talking in hushed tones as one man who appears to be the leader is trying to quiet the others. The men have just escaped from the camp and are waiting for the fourth to come back from a scouting mission.

(THE SOUND OF EXCITED VOICES IS HEARD EVEN CLOSER THAN BEFORE.)

CANTSKY—(SHAKING)—What was that? Did you hear that noise?

LEOPOLD—IN A FRENZIED TONE)—It's the Gestapo! I knew it. I knew it was useless to try and escape. Oh, how I would like to see my family again, but the punishment if we are captured! I knew we shouldn't have listened to you, Greenberg. You and your fine-sounding ideals have really fixed us this time.



*Escape*

(THE SOUND OF BARKING DOGS AND LOUD VOICES IS HEARD MOVING NEARER.)

GREENBERG—Shut up you fool or you never will see your family again. You consented to follow my plan and my orders, so do as you're told. I've been planning this escape for four long years and I won't have the looseness of your tongue ruining my chances now. I would rather die than return to the fiendish cruelties of that hell-hole and its master-butchers. Our people just don't stand a chance in their hands.

CANTSKY—I agree with you, Greenberg. I hope that I've seen the last of that place. What of Max? Greenberg, do you think he will get back safely?

GREENBERG—I hope so but I'm afraid that his violence is going to cause his downfall. He was a strange one. I could never seem to get close to him at the camp. Only when I mentioned the escape plan did he seem to confide in me. He appeared to despise us as much as the Germans and he practically told me as much last week. He said that he didn't care much for the three of us, that his purpose in life was killing Germans, and so far as we helped him toward that end, he would aid us in our plan. I don't think that he cares whether he gets away or not, as long as he is able to kill Germans in his attempt.

CANTSKY—I agree with you. I don't care much for him; he seems almost inhuman in his drive for vengeance. There must be a reason for his hatred. Do you know anything of this, Greenberg?

GREENBERG—Yes, I heard rumors around the camp that the Germans tortured and killed his parents. Also he lost two sons who were fighting for the underground in Warsaw, and his daughter was taken by the Ges-

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tapo for the amusement of the troops. God knows, he has reason for his enmity.

CANTSKY—The rotten butchers. I was in Warsaw too, and consider myself fortunate to be here. I understand Max a little better now but his ideas of revenge are still dangerous and harmful to our chances of escape. Although, I guess we have to trust him with our lives since we don't know the terrain and he does.

GREENBERG—I wish he would return. The soldiers are getting closer and our routes of escape are slowly being cut off. They will find us before long, if we don't get out of here.

LEOPOLD—(SHOUTING) —We're going to die! We're going to die! The Gestapo! The mad Gestapo are coming!

(GREENBERG GRABS LEOPOLD BY THE COLLAR AND SHAKES HIM VIOLENTLY.)

GREENBERG—Shut up you fool before I tear out that babbling tongue of yours.

(A RUSTLING IS HEARD IN THE BUSHES TO THEIR REAR AND THE THREE TURN THEIR HEADS AND PREPARE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. A TALL NAZI OFFICER EMERGES SULLENLY FROM THE TREES AND IT CAN BE SEEN THAT HE IS BEING GUIDED AT GUNPOINT BY A SHORT SWARTHY MAN, DRESSED SIMILARLY TO THE OTHERS. HE HAS A HAPPY LOOK ON HIS TIRED OLD FACE AS HE PRODS THE OFFICER TOWARD THE GROUP.)

GREENBERG—Well, Well! Max, what have you brought us? It appears to be that smiling brute of a Prussian, Stanzler. How do you do, Herr Captain?

*Escape*

STANZLER — (SPITS ON GREENBERG) —  
Swine!

(MAX HITS STANZLER ON THE SIDE OF  
THE HEAD WITH THE GUN BUTT AND OPENS A  
SMALL CUT.)

MAX—(MOCKINGLY) —Ah, you see Greenberg,  
the superman is human after all. He bleeds like the pig  
he represents. He is a prize possession, is he not, Green-  
berg? All we must do now is devise a fitting means for  
his despatch. There is no time to skin him alive or pour  
acid on his body as he did to so many poor fools in the  
camp. But give me time, I will think of something. (HE  
LAUGHS ALMOST DEMONIACALLY.) He will pay  
for the murders of my parents and children.

GREENBERG—No, no, Max, your brain is not  
functioning properly. We will use him to make good our  
escape. He will know the position of all the patrols and  
they won't shoot us while we hold him prisoner.

STANZLER—You swine! You will never live to  
enjoy your freedom or debase the pure Aryan stock of the  
homeland. Before the Leader is finished, you and all of  
your kind will be exterminated as is befitting creatures of  
your type. I curse you, spawn of the devil.

CANTSKY—Shut your foul mouth. You and your  
supermen have become like animals in your drive to con-  
quer the world. But you will never succeed and when  
your atrocities are revealed to the peoples of the world, we  
will see what happens to the Third Reich.

STANZLER—The Prussian army is superior to that  
of any other nation. We will never be defeated. Germany  
will rule the world. (CANTSKY PUSHES HIM TO ONE

SIDE AND BINDS HIM TO A TREE WHILE PUTTING A GAG IN HIS MOUTH.)

CANTSKY — There, that will hold you and your lying tongue until we are ready for you.

GREENBERG—But tell us, Max. How did you capture him? He is so much stronger and younger than you.

MAX—Ha, if he is an example of the master-race, then we have nothing to fear. As I was trying to find a means of escape, I came upon his patrol. He remained behind while his men went into the woods looking for us. I came up behind the fool and used my pipe for a gun. (HE TAKES HIS PIPE FROM HIS POCKET AND WALKS OVER TO STANZLER AND JABS IT INTO HIS BACK.) I disarmed him and decided to bring him back here. Now we must decide how to kill him. Perhaps a piece of cord around his neck and then a quick twist. (HE MOVES HIS HANDS AS IF HE WERE STRANGLING A MAN.)

GREENBERG—No, Max. If we kill him, we will never escape. He has information which we need in order to get away. As a prisoner he will be able to help us but as a corpse, he will do us no good. We must use him to gain our freedom. And we have to hurry because his soldiers will be looking for him.

MAX—Escape! Who wants to escape? I have no home or people to go to. His friends saw to that. They killed my relatives and destroyed my home when they took me prisoner. God! How I wish that they had killed me instead of taking me alive. Four years in that camp to think and brood over what happened to my family. All those years I watched the other prisoners suffer. Oh, how

## *Escape*

I wished and prayed that they would take me in place of the others. But they didn't and now you have made it possible for me to be free and gain my revenge. At this moment I don't wish to escape. I just want to see this German's blood flow freely on the ground.

LEOPOLD — (HYSTERICALLY) — He's mad! He's mad! We're all doomed. We'll never see our families again. They'll catch us and God knows what will happen to us.

CANTSKY—Shut up you fool, before you bring them down on us. (HE BRINGS LEOPOLD OVER NEXT TO THE GERMAN AND THEY SQUAT DOWN NEAR HIM.)

GREENBERG—Max, won't you listen to reason. I've been inside that dirty hole for four years and I don't want to go back. I sympathize with your losses but we must think of the future and a chance to gain freedom. There are three other men here who want to get away. There will be plenty of time to fight the Germans afterwards. Through the underground, the four of us will be able to work for the release of our people from these death camps. But we can't help anyone if we are captured.

MAX—I don't give a damn for the rest of you. I'm not interested in the future. I just want to finish Stanzler now and get as many of his comrades as I can before they get me. If you want to leave, I'm not stopping you. But as for me, I'm going to make my stand right here.

GREENBERG—That's a clever statement, Max. You are well aware that we aren't familiar with the country so we can't get very far without your help. I also know that I'm not going to let you kill the Captain when he represents our only chance to reach freedom. I don't know how the

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others feel but I want to get out of this alive. Let's ask them for their opinion.

MAX—All right, but it won't make any difference.

(THEY GO OVER TO THE OTHER TWO WHO ARE GUARDING THE PRISONER.) MAX—(SHIVERING)—I wish this blasted rain would let up a little. Even the elements are adding to my misery.

GREENBERG—I can stand it. It will provide cover for our departure, if I can bring you to your senses. (HE NOW DIRECTS HIMSELF TO CANTSKY AND LEOPOLD.) How do you two feel about the German?

CANTSKY—If the circumstances were different, I would not hesitate to run a knife through his miserable body. But we must think of our freedom and as much as he can help us toward this, I say that we should keep him alive. At the moment his death will mean nothing but disaster for us.

GREENBERG—Exactly! That is what I have been trying to tell Max.

MAX—Bah! I still say kill him now and worry about other problems afterwards. (TO LEOPOLD) What about you coward? How do you feel?

LEOPOLD—Perhaps you are right. Maybe I am a coward. But I know that I would like to see my wife and children again. That means more to me than the death of the Nazi. You're right, I am afraid. I don't want to go back to the camp. I haven't seen my family in three years and I miss them terribly. I don't want to kill Germans. I just want to return home. (HE SOBS LOUDLY)

MAX—Stop your sniveling, you spineless wretch. This is what I have to put up with. Idealists! Freedom-



## *Escape*

lovers! Sentimentalists!—Bah! Tell me Greenberg, how do we even know the German will aid us?

GREENBERG—I think that he will with a little persuasion. These Germans, no matter how much they pretend to be iron-men, value their skins more than anything. Yes, the Captain is quite aware of his precarious situation and I would guess that he will be most willing to help us. But we will find out right now. Well, what do you say Stanzler? (HE REMOVES THE GAG FROM STANZLER'S MOUTH.)

STANZLER—Why should I help you and the other Jew devils to escape? My men will find us while you are arguing among yourselves and then we shall see what will happen. When I get you back to the camp, you will regret ever trying to escape. Ha, I will never help you.

LEOPOLD—You see, you see, we're going to be punished for this attempt. Heaven help me, I knew that I shouldn't have agreed to go with you.

MAX—If you don't be quiet, I'm going to bind and gag you and leave you for the Germans. As for you Stanzler, you have just proven by your statement that you will not be cooperative. I don't see any use in discussing it any longer. I'm going to shoot you right now. (HE POINTS THE GUN AT STANZLER'S FOREHEAD.)

GREENBERG—No Max, don't do it. The noise will bring all of the soldiers down on us. Please give me the gun and listen to reason. (HE MOVES TOWARD MAX IN AN ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE GUN AWAY FROM HIM.)

MAX—Stay where you are, Greenberg. I warn you. I'd just as soon shoot you as the murderer here.

Now stand back while I finish a part of the job



which I have planned for four years. (HE COCKS THE GUN.)

STANZLER—No! Stop him! He's mad! He's completely out of his mind. Stop him Greenberg and I'll agree to do anything you say. Please, in the name of God, stop him!

MAX—Ah, so the non-believer calls on One whom he has denied in the past. I thought that the super-race did not need God. We were told that it was an old-fashioned custom to believe in the Almighty. Herr Stanzler, how can you call on someone who does not exist? (HE LAUGHS) Now we shall see how many bullets it takes to kill a superman.

STANZLER—Greenberg, please stop him! I can help you. You need me! You need me!

GREENBERG—You quivering hypocrite! I wish I could let him finish you, but I can't. Max! He has agreed to help us and so I have proven that he is valuable to us alive. Now come over here and listen to me before you do something which you'll regret.

MAX—Ha! Regret killing a German? That's a good one but I am in no hurry. I'll listen to more of your silly chatter. (MAX AND GREENBERG MOVE AWAY FROM THE OTHERS.)

GREENBERG—Max, before I begin, will you please give me the gun? It makes me quite nervous to look at it while I am talking.

MAX—Do you take me for a fool? If you have the gun, I become the prisoner. No friend Greenberg, I have no intention of giving you the gun but if it will make you feel better, I'll put it away. Now, what do you have to say to me that can possibly change my mind?

## *Escape*

GREENBERG—Will you just think of the rest of us for a moment. You're the only one who wants to kill Stanzler. The rest of us want to use him as a hostage. Are you so incensed with hatred that you want to condemn the three of us to death? That's just what will happen if you kill Stanzler. In your grief perhaps you can realize the importance of family connections. Will you deny this to Leopold and Cantsky?

MAX—So they have families. What is that to me? I have none. Tell me this, Greenberg. Have you ever stood by helplessly while your parents were taken from their house, placed against a wall and shot down while they pleaded for mercy. They were sixty years old, Greenberg. Sixty years old, and the Germans shot them down without blinking an eye because they were Jews. I wanted to die too but they wouldn't take me because I was strong and could work in their labor camps. Now Greenberg, can you see why I feel as I do?

GREENBERG—Yes, but do you wish others to feel this same pain because of your stubbornness? Cantsky wife and Leopold's children! Do you wish to be responsible for their sorrow? Because the guilt for their deaths will lie with you if you go through with your plan to kill the German.

MAX—The death of one German won't be enough to pay for what they did to me. A few years after the death of my parents I had escaped from the labor camp and was working with the underground. My wife had died and all I had left were my two sons and a daughter. One day when I came to headquarters I found the bodies of my two boys riddled with bullets. Their faces were splattered with blood and their mouths open in torment. During my five

years in Koslau, the sight of their twisted bodies kept appearing in my dreams. Both only boys, and the Gestapo slaughtered them. Now do you see? Do you know why I hate them so? And it doesn't end there—

GREENBERG—I know, I know. But when they joined the underground, they knew the risk which they were taking. They were brave boys who fought to free their people. You should be proud of them instead of feeling the way you do. The cause was valiant and the sacrifice supreme.

MAX—Yes, you idealists all talk the same. But if you had suffered the loss, your tone would be different. You wouldn't think so much of your wonderful cause then. But to continue—

GREENBERG—I'm sick of your grumbling so listen to me for a minute. You're not the only one who—

MAX—(WAVING THE GUN)—Don't interrupt me. You don't think I should hate the Germans. Well after the death of my boys, all that I had left in the world was my little daughter, Anna. She was fifteen years old, just a baby, when they took her. You've heard the stories of how the Germans amuse themselves with these girls. Well it's true! The rotten animals! I'll never forget the wild look on her face when they took her. She was screaming and calling my name. All I could do was to stand by helpless. After that day I never heard of her again. But my God, I hope that she didn't last long. My little baby! My poor girl! (GRABBING GREENBERG) Do I have reason? Do I have reason, Greenberg? Tell me! Tell me!

GREENBERG—Yes, but don't you know that many other Jews have suffered just as much as you.

MAX—How is that possible? Have you ever experienced a small particle of the grief which I have known?

GREENBERG—You're really pitiful. I was in the thick of the fighting for Warsaw. One of my sons was hanged on the main square for his part in the defense. Don't you think that I felt sorrowful at the sight of this?

MAX—I'm sorry. I didn't know. I didn't—

GREENBERG—Let me finish. My poor wife was used by the butchers for some of their insane medical experiments. We almost lost her and she has never been the same since. Her brain was damaged by the fever and she's like a little child needing constant care. Her body is covered with monstrous scars put there by the so-called doctors of the Third Reich. Now tell me my selfish friend, do I have reason to seek revenge also? Have I felt grief and pain? Do I have a right to feel self-pity?

MAX—(QUIETLY)—Yes. But why didn't you express this before? Why didn't you agree to help me kill the German? Come, join me, and we will take our revenge together.

GREENBERG—No, you blind fool. Don't you see why I told you this story? You admit that I have reason to kill Stanzler but like the others all I wish to do is gain freedom through the use of the German. After, I am sure we will all work for the underground. Now you must decide. If you will help us, good. If you insist on killing the Captain, I must for the sake of myself and the others, attempt to stop you. (HE WALKS TO THE EDGE OF THE WOODS.)

MAX—(TO HIMSELF)—Can it be that I am wrong? Greenberg certainly has reason enough to hate but instead he thinks of the welfare of the group. I'm quite con-

*The Alembic*

fused I want to kill Stanzler but am I being selfish? Is the freedom of the group more important than the revenge which I can taste? (HE HAS A PUZZLED LOOK ON HIS FACE AS CANTSKY LEAVES LEOPOLD AND COMES TOWARD MAX.)

CANTSKY—Have you decided to help us escape or do you still have the same insane desire to kill?

MAX—(POINTING THE GUN AT HIM) — Don't get too close or I'll have to shoot. I can't understand Greenberg. I thought that my ideas were correct but he has jumbled them. I still know one thing, the German must die.

(THE SOUND OF SOLDIERS IS HEARD VERY CLOSE)

CANTSKY—Did you hear that? Get on to yourself before it's too late.

MAX—Let them come. I'm ready for them. (HE PATS THE GUN.)

CANTSKY—(ANGRILY) —Maybe you want to get killed but I don't. I've got a wife that I want to see again. She's terrified of the Germans and has been in hiding since I was captured. I'm young and I don't care to make her a widow.

MAX—You're fortunate to have someone who cares for you. I've got no one thanks to his friends. (HE POINTS TO STANZLER.)

CANTSKY—Yes, I heard you telling Greenberg. I'm sorry, but surely you must have someone to go to.

MAX—No my last relative, my little daughter, was taken by the Gestapo and I'm sure that she is not alive.

## *Escape*

CANTSKY—Are you positive that she is dead?

MAX—No, but I heard that these girls do not last long once they are given over to the troops. (EMOTIONALLY) There isn't much chance of escape!

CANTSKY—That's true but it's not an impossibility.

MAX—What do you mean?

CANTSKY—I know of one girl who escaped.

MAX—What's that?

CANTSKY—I said, I know of one who escaped. My wife was taken by the Gestapo in Warsaw and held at their headquarters for a year. They thought that she had important information about the underground and continued to threaten her by saying that they would turn her over to the soldiers. I happened to meet her when they were holding me for questioning.

MAX—How did you get away?

CANTSKY—My friends in the underground staged disturbance outside, and I managed to get out by bribing the guard. I felt sorry for the girl and was attracted to her, so I took her with me when I escaped.

MAX—You escaped from the Warsaw headquarters! That's quite an accomplishment. I know the difficulty because I was imprisoned there. It was also the last place that I saw my daughter alive.

CANTSKY—You're right, it wasn't easy to get away but we did. Then I thought that the girl was going to die. The Germans really gave her a working over.

MAX—But you said they didn't torture her.

CANTSKY—No, but their promises and threats terrified her. Her mental state was quite poor. Besides the

brainwashing, she was alone in the world. Her father had been taken by the police, and she feared that he was dead.

MAX—The poor girl!

CANTSKY—She didn't want to go on but I talked her out of this foolishness. In the meantime we had fallen in love and were married two years later.

MAX—Ah, she was fortunate to have a man like you. If only my little one could have escaped.

CANTSKY—Yes, it's too bad. I'm sorry. (PAUSE) But soon after our marriage, I was sent to Koslau. She was only seventeen then, and I have feared for her safety. For the three years that I was imprisoned, all I thought of was getting back to her. Now I have the chance, but you talk only of killing.

MAX—Your wife is lucky. Have you heard from her in the past three years?

CANTSKY—Only once. There was a letter smuggled in from her. Here I'll show it to you. (HE TAKES A RAGGED PIECE OF PAPER FROM HIS POCKET AND HANDS IT TO MAX.)

MAX—(UNFOLDING THE PAPER)—Ah, she loves you very much. But wait. (EXCITEDLY) Your wife's name is Anna?

CANTSKY—Yes, why?

MAX—(WITH INTENSE EMOTION)—That was my daughter's name! And the writing—it, it does seem familiar. Yes! Yes! And the age—How old is your wife?

CANTSKY—(PUZZLED)—She is twenty.

MAX—(HAPPILY)—The same! The same! What what does your wife look like?



*Escape*

CANTSKY—She's about five foot six and—Wait a minute—I think that I have a picture of her. (HE REACHES IN HIS SHIRT) YES, HERE IT IS. (HE GIVES A SMALL PHOTOGRAPH TO MAX.)

MAX—(SOBBING)—My baby! My little Anna!

CANTSKY—Max, what's the matter?

MAX—This is my daughter. You rescued my daughter. Oh, how can I ever repay you?

CANTSKY—Anna is your daughter. Well, I need no payment. The look on your face is payment enough.

MAX—Thank God! Thank God! Now we must hurry if we are to get back to her. My Anna is alive! I must see her. I must.

CANTSKY—Good, then you will agree to let Stan-  
zler live?

MAX—Of course, we must get to Anna. She will never be lonely again.

CANTSKY—That's right and neither will you. You'll always have a home with us.

MAX—Thank you, my son. (PAUSE) Here give the gun to Greenberg. As the leader, he should have it.

CANTSKY—Greenberg, Greenberg, he has agreed to go. Hurry, let's get started. (GREENBERG COMES BACK OVER.)

GREENBERG—Fine Max, I'm glad that you decided and you won't regret this choice. Now let's get going.

(THEY UNTIE THE GERMAN AND MOVE OFF THROUGH THE WOODS.)

# I Am The Cross

JOSEPH HATTLEY, '65

I AM the cross of Christ. I was the implement of destruction and the throne of wrong that held the lifeless Body of a deathless King. I was shaped from two sturdy beams of wood. I was a useless piece of wood which nobody wanted in life, so I was used for death. No beauty surrounded me. No laurel wreath was ever placed upon my frame. Yet, was there ever a man-made thing as privileged as I? Alone and unsupported, I held the only Son of God.

I thought I would be forgotten when they took Him from the little hill where I stood. But men came and looked upon me. Some stood and gazed on in silence. The hours soon became years. They respected me because I held, in such an ignominious way, the Saviour of the world.

Soon the rain and winds of time began to beat upon my side. The dust of centuries gradually covered my honored frame. I was strong the day they raised me on the hill, but now I am only a poor and humble symbol. For centuries, this symbol was buried from the eyes of men. Yes, I too, am material. One day however, a saintly woman by the name of Helena found me. In finding me, the true symbol of Christ was once again before the eyes of man.

Yet I live on. Men could not forget me. I became a symbol of God's love when men were loveless;

## *I Am The Cross*

I recalled to them, the compassion of Christ. When they were afraid, I reminded them that even in death, He knew no fear. He passed into eternity with the assurance of a man lying down in restful sleep. I could not die. Man needed too much the things for which I stood and the things for which He died.

All men did not look upon me with kindly eyes. My life began in a time when the world had little knowledge of me. The Roman civilization was pagan at its core. Its people were licentious in their ways. They held no regard for me. But I lived on through those precarious days. My sign appeared upon the walls of the catacombs. Men died for me in the arenas for the amusement of the mighty. Though their bodies were forfeited, each died believing that no one could harm their souls. In my struggle to survive, the blood of martyrs was spilled until the one called Constantine became emperor. He was the first to have kind feeling toward those who were my followers. I forged my mind upon his mind and heart. By my sign, he went forth to conquer the western world for me.

Such is the life that has been set for me. Men will be slow to grasp the things for which I stand. My way will not always be their way. Yet for good or evil purposes, men must take me into account. I am a fact in history. I am a part of the plan and purpose of God. I stand my purpose, they will never let go of me.

For I, the Cross of Christ, am not the symbol of defeat but of victory. When the greatest Man Who ever lived laid His body on my bark, evil appeared trium-

phant. But that is not God's way. Countless millions have won victories over themselves because of me. When I felt His hands and flesh warm against my side, as He looked up into the face of God and called "Father," I knew it was enough. I can commend you to no more capable hands than His. Everything is what He said it would be.

Down over the hills of rolling centuries, marches a slender column of those whose influence has been beyond measure. It is of small account if a man saves himself. He must find something he is willing to die for. I know, I speak for Christ.

I am the cross on which He died.

## Too Young

RAYMOND F. WELCH, JR., '62

“**R**ATA-TAT-TAT, rata-tat-tat.”

Machine gun bullets skim over my head again. That gun has had us pinned down all morning. Only three hundred yards of plowed, muddy earth separates us from that stone farmhouse, but that damn gun makes it three hundred yards of hell. If we had an officer, this might not have happened, but we get stuck with a fink. Our dumb lieutenant doesn't know what to do, so we sit here like ducks in a shooting gallery.

“Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat.”

Don't hit me! Please don't hit me. “Phew!” Another mouthful of mud. That's what I get for ducking with my mouth open. How that gunner can come so close without hitting me is amazing. Either he needs glasses or he's trying to bury me alive.

“Rata-tat-tat.”

God! Don't let him hit me! I don't want to die. I'm too young to die. I never thought I'd see the day I'd be clawing out a foxhole with my fingers, but here I am doing it. War! It . . . it stinks.

“Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat.”

Doesn't that gun ever stop? It seems like that thing has been shooting at me since I was born. I wish I could dig this hole real deep, and then pull it in on top of me. I'd be able to forget all about those bastards and their gun. Forget about this whole stinking war, and when it's all over, I'd be safe and sound. I'm too young to die. I still have a long, wonderful life ahead of me.

## *The Alembic*

Twenty-five guys all around me, yet I'm all alone. I'm lucky though. The entire third platoon with the exception of Tommy and me got it right in the LST.

Thomas Ewell Stuart was quite a guy. He claimed that he came from a family of army officers. He was always bragging about being related to J. E. B. Stuart, but Tommy seemed more like a Tennessee moonshiner than an army man. Why couldn't he be here now? I'd have someone to talk to so I wouldn't be so scared. He was Lady Luck to me. I can still remember the day we met back in boot. I was kneeling next to him during a crap game. After crapping out he handed me the dice.

"Look kid, I ain't got no dough left, but if ya let ol' Tom blow on those ice cubes, he'll make 'em hot for ya," he drawled.

For a minute I thought he was joking, but after looking into his tired, blue eyes, I knew he was serious.

"I know what you're thinkin', boy," he said. "You're thinking' it's bad 'nough that you're losin' as it is, but then when an ol' rebel who lost all his bread in the same crap game comes over and tells ya he can bring ya luck; well, ya think he's crazy."

"No, but . . ."

"But boy, I can never win when I play with my own scratch. I'm like a rabbit's foot. It didn't help the rabbit a-tall, but it brings luck to other people."

"Well, all right. I can use a good rabbit's foot," I laughingly replied.

When the game finally folded, I walked off with my pockets loaded.

"Tommy, you turned those pills into blazing streaks. We made a hundred forty-seven dollars."

## *Too Young*

"Ol' Tom tole ya he was lucky, didn't he?"

"You sure are. Let's go down to the post. We'll have a few beers out of our winnings."

"Lead the way, boy. I'm with ya."

Tommy has pulled the father act with me ever since. But, he got his that day we hit the beach. It seems so long ago, yet, it was only the day before yesterday. The LST we were in ran aground a hundred yards out on the coral, and we had to wade the rest of the way in. Tommy splashed over the side of the craft with me right behind. We ran like a couple of foxes with the hounds at our heels. He stumbled into a shell-hole on the beach and I dove in after him.

We just sat there watching the show without saying a word. Artillery shells were whistling over our heads. One disintegrated an LST. It was the LST our platoon was in. The one we should have been in. I was horror stricken, and as we watched our buddies—pieces of them anyway—float in on the crests of waves, I vomited.

I have Tommy to thank for not being in that boat. We were on deck at our debarkation station when Tommy decided to go AWOL for a few minutes.

"Oh, no!" the old rebel screamed. "We gotta beat it down below. I forgot our cards and dice down there."

"To hell with them. It's too late to make it down and back. We'll miss the boat. We won't be able to use them anyway."

"Hell we won't!" he retorted. "We ain't goin' to be shootin' all the time. An' anyhow, I ain't leavin' our money-makin' kit to some flitty sailor boy."

"All right, Tommy, you win, but let's hurry."

We were back topside in a matter of minutes. We



had just left the companionway when an officer grabbed us and ordered us over the side into an LST.

Tommy had always been lucky for me. I have only him to thank for being alive. Yet, ironically, he has only me to blame for being dead.

We had been on the beach about a half hour when we were ordered to move out.

"You heard the man, kid. Let's go," Tommy drawled as he climbed out of the shell-hole.

I didn't move. I wasn't going to become cannon fodder. The loveable fool was standing up waiting for me when some bastard opened up with a tommy gun. He was dead before he hit the ground. The slugs had ripped through his body and left behind a heap of mangled, human flesh. Blood was gushing out of what had been his middle. More was seeping around his bulging eyeballs and oozing out of his hideously twisted mouth and nose. A small red rill was wending its way down the beach to the rose-tinted sea. I've lost the only good thing I ever found in the Army—my rabbit's foot. "—————" There I go again. Every time I think about it I puke.

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

Why doesn't somebody do something to stop that gun? The damn thing's driving me nuts. You'd think that dumb lieutenant would do something. The s. o. b. hasn't said a word since he jumped into that hole. He's alive though. Three hours ago he told us to dig in, and he has been throwing sand out of his foxhole ever since. Maybe he's trying to tunnel back to Terre Haute. He got his commission in O.C.S.—a ninety-day wonder. Boy, is he a wonder! We must really need second lieutenants bad if a yo-yo like him can get a commission.

## *Too Young*

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

"Sullivan, crawl around toward the left and try to get that gun with a grenade!" the lieutenant bellows.

It's about time he did something. I thought he was just going to sit there till they killed us off one by one. They've gotten almost half the platoon now. But why did he send Sully? Sully is only a kid; even younger than I am. Oh, well, better him than me. I don't want to die.

"Crawley, you crawl around to the right and try to get it from that side," the lieutenant croaks. "One of you should be able to make it."

That's me! He's talking to me. No! I don't want to go. I . . . I won't!

"Crawley, do you hear me? Get the lead out and move!"

"Yes, sir. I heard you, sir. I'm going, sir."

Why do I have to squirm like a worm through this sea of mud? I don't want to fight and kill. Worse than that, I don't want anyone to kill me. All I wanted to do was stay in Miami. I was making good money teaching water-skiing. By now, I might have even married Fran. But, I couldn't be lucky enough to be 4-F. I had to receive the President's congratulations for being selected by my friends and neighbors to die for them. Fine friends I have! To hell with everybody, if I can make it to the cover of that shot-up tree stump, I won't go any further. It's about half-way to the farmhouse, and that is as close as I want to get.

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

"Phew!" I must be on a mud diet. I was crazy to leave that hole. They're going to kill me out here. I'll never make it to that stump—to salvation. I must really

be off my nut. They've been shooting at me for hours, so I start moving closer to give them a bigger target.

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

The blind s.o.b. That pass sailed 'way over my head. Thank you, God, for making that gunner so blind.

Why me? Why did that dirty slob have to send me? Why didn't he go? He's the lieutenant, not me. He could have sent someone with more experience, someone that's older. Why do I have to be sacrificed so that a louse like him can live. I want to live, too!

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

Stop it! Stop it! Oh, God—someone—please stop that gun. Maybe this is just a bad dream and soon I might wake up next to Fran. Lovely, vivacious Frances. Come morning, I'll have to kiss her good-bye and race across the Seventy-Ninth Street causeway to where I teach water-skiing on Biscayne Bay.

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

Doesn't that damn thing ever stop? "Stop it! Stop it!"

What the hell am I doing? In the open, seventy-five yards from my foxhole, and I yell. I've popped my cork! They're swinging the muzzle around toward me. It's spitting red flame. It's all over! Twenty-two years of living for what—to get killed in a muddy field thousands of miles from home?

"Ping."

The shell hit the edge of my helmet, but other than that, I still feel alive. That blind bastard missed me. He's firing elsewhere now.

Move boy. Keep moving. I've got to make it to that stump. I've eaten so much mud today that it's begin-

## *Too Young*

ning to taste almost as good as Fran's cooking. It might even be better than some of the stuff they serve at the Americana Hotel over on the Beach. The last night Fran and I were together, before I went to boot, we went to the Americana to see Frank Sinatra.

We were dancing when she asked me. "Bill, let's find a judge and get married tonight before you go. Or, if you'd rather, we could do it early in the morning."

She floored me because I wanted so much to be married to her. "Fran, are you serious?"

"You know I am," she replied reproachfully.

"I . . . I can't. I want to. There's nothing I'd rather do, but I can't. I will as soon as I come back if you'll wait, but if we got married now and I got killed, well, you're too young and beautiful to be a widow."

"But don't you see?" she pleaded. That's the reason why I want to get married before you go. If you didn't come back, I could still tell everybody I was Bill Crawley's wife. And, besides, it would make an honest woman of me."

"We can't. You would be sorry you did it if I didn't come back."

We let it go at that and pretended it had never happened. It was a sham, but we both tried to make the rest of the evening gay.

Sully is only about a hundred yards away from his side of the house now. I'll rest behind this stump for a few minutes before I go on.

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

Beelzebub is spitting at me again, but I don't care. He can't hit me as long as I stay behind this stump. It's the most beautiful, shot-up stump in the world. It's saving

my life. I've made it half-way, and a little further and they won't be able to cover me with that damn machinegun. It's funny. They keep shooting away at me, but they haven't even seen Sully.

I really was tempted that night. I wanted to marry her. I had been wanting to ask her, but I never had the nerve. It seems so long ago. Well, it's better this way. We can get married properly as soon as I get back.

Good boy, Sully. I hope he knows enough to wait there till I start playing beautiful music on my submachine gun before he tosses his egg. Now, Sully! I've drawn their fire, but don't wait till they kill me. Right in the window. I'll sign him for the Yankees right now.

"Boom."

I don't have to crawl in this stinking mud anymore. Beelzebub has finally been stopped. Well, Crawley, are you going to get up or just sit here? Sully hasn't moved so you had better make sure that thing doesn't start again. Run! Run like hell! Come on legs, we have to make it to the side of the farmhouse before they can get us. That's it. Now, in the door real slow. Stop! Have to get used to the light. No sense taking unnecessary chances. That's the room. The one where the door is closed. Right behind the door is Beelzebub and his friends. Spray the door! I've made it, but no use taking chances.

"Rata-tat-tat, rata-tat-tat."

That sound is sweet now because it's coming from my submachine gun. Take it easy, Crawley. Don't go in yet. Let loose with another clip because you can't be too sure. Reload and open the door slowly. The bastard humped over the gun and his friend on the floor aren't moving, but they could be alive. It's best to make sure.

## *Too Young*

Two short bursts should do it. I don't have to worry about the third one. The grenade plastered him all over the ceiling. All right, it's safe to walk across the room and turn them over to make sure they're dead. Can't take chances.

They have enough lead in them to sink a ship. I can rest and have a cigarette now. I can relax. I'm not going to die. I'm going to live. I'll get home to Fran.

"Thump—thump—thump."

That must be Sully. I want to thank him. I'm alive because of him.

"Pow—pow—pow."

Too late! What hit me from behind? The bullets ripped through me and bounced me off the wall. That's what I felt. Funny, I didn't even feel the bullets. No, it can't happen this way. Why didn't I turn around sooner? I forgot to check behind the door. Why? God, why did you let me get so close, then do this to me? I wanted to go home. I wanted to live.

The s.o.b. fell to the ground. I must have shot him. My middle is burning. It can't happen this way. I have to hold my intestines so they don't pop out, and the blood, my blood, is squirting through the spaces between my fingers. I can't do anything except sit here and watch my life squirt through my fingers. My life is flowing before me and there is nothing I can do about it. I can just watch it collect in a little red pool. The blood tastes strange boiling up in my throat and I can feel it hot and sticky as it escapes through my mouth and nose. Oh, God, why do I have to die? Twenty-two years is such a short time to live.

## Passaic

GEORGE M. WELKEY, '64

to you, river  
i sing this song  
green river ugly with  
the pollution  
the stench of a thousand hidden sewers  
i have watched you as you flow  
from the falls to the sea  
i have watched your slime-filled waters  
from a thousand vantage-points  
from a lazy rowboat  
or a dock  
or a nervous, bitchy speedboat  
i have watched you  
i see you carry your cargoes  
of sticks  
and timbers from the shipyards  
up the river and  
down the river  
and dead carp from the falls  
i see your tides  
whose seven foot span  
carries your burden  
to the bay  
i even see the dead men  
men too tired to live  
whom you kiss and  
take for a long slow ride  
and up where the nigger-kids swim



*Passaic*

i see you slosh over the skeletons  
of dead ships  
and suck at the pilings of ghastly, ghostly docks.  
i smell your stinking mud flats  
studded with broken bottles, like jewels,  
as they slope away into your channel.  
and i feel your touch as  
you spit in my bare face  
and burn my skin  
and tickle my hands  
and i hear you sigh and moan in the wind  
and your sloshy lullaby  
puts me at a strange rest,  
troubled, heaving yet peaceful.  
and as i round your final bend  
and enter the  
blue bay beyond  
i see majesty in you  
who can bear  
the loads of oil and steel and wood and flesh  
and i feel for you  
a certain love . . .

## Denny's Crying

ROBERT J. VELLECA, '62

RAIN. It obscured the view through the plate-glass window of the Black Horse Tavern as the storm squatted sullenly over the small coastal town. The floor of the tavern was puddled near the door and, in alliance with the sweating walls, exuded the musky odor of dampness. Drumming, drumming on the flat roof, the large, charged drops assaulted the building with dauntless monotony. Inside the low coffin-shaped wooden structure, the horseshoe bar and its four human apurtenances were bathed in a lurid, somehow evil, red glow. Smoke drifted like a lost soul.

With a rush of wind, the door opened and was forced shut by a small balding man in a heavy coat. Turning, he flashed a wide smile and said, congenially, "Hiya boys. Good day for ducks, isn't it?"

In reply he received nothing from the three men at the bar, a grunt from the beefy bartender, and a curse from Tombo, the permanent fixture at the table near the large window.

"Some infernal nuisance has got to wake me up every time I get comfortable."

"Don't get mad, Tombo. The rain's stopping, and you'll want to be looking out the window again." Denny laughed at his own joke, looking about for some reaction. There was none.

Removing his coat, Denny, even more shrunken at its loss, walked to the wall and placed it carefully on a hook.

"You guys ever noticed how Tombo spends the whole day looking out that window? It's just as though it

## *Denny's Crying*

was a huge TV set." Again Denny laughed at his own joke. Looking across the bar he saw that one of the men was gazing steadily at him. "Oh, that's right. You were joking about that last week, weren't you Carl? Heh, heh. It sure beats all though, doesn't it?"

Under the coat, Denny was wearing a white shirt buttoned at the cuffs, a bowtie, and a sleeveless sweater. His belt had a huge bottle.

"How about a beer Steve? You got something against making money?" A beer was placed before Denny in exchange for one of the five dimes which he had put on the bar.

"I guess I shouldn't have said that, huh you guys? We don't want Steve crying poor mouth to us again, do we?" With this, Denny winked across the bar and continued, "You remember, like last week."

Receiving no reply, Denny lifted his glass of beer to his thin, pale lips. Swallowing slowly, he left a moustache of foam beneath his sharply-hooked nose which he licked off with rapid flicks of his pointed tongue. The remaining moisture he absorbed with the back of his thin hand.

The silence in the bar gave each man a sense of dejected isolation as the drumming on the roof softend to a barely discernible patter. Tombo, peering through the nearly circular porthole which he had cleared through the steam on the large window, made the first contact with reality.

"There goes Arthur with his fish and chips. He looks pretty sober today. For a change."

Denny, hearing the chuckle that this remark had elicited from Carl, took the initiative by saying brightly, "Hey you guys, watch this. This is how Arthur looks when

he's walking home drunk." Swinging from the bar stool, Denny began a weaving, puff-cheeked caricature of a drunken walk. He staggered up and down the length of the bar a number of times, then stopped. His impromptu act finished, Denny began to laugh violently in a high, squeaky shriek, ears moving, eyes crinkled shut.

"Well, what do you boys think?" he asked, nearly choking with glee. The man next to Carl groaned, rose slowly, and walked to the wall hangers. Putting on his hat and raincoat, he spoke over his shoulder. "I think I'll stop down the German Club and have a couple."

Steve, the bartender, walked to the right of the horse-shoe bar, nearest the door, and said, "Hang in, the next one's on the house."

The man opened the door, glanced at Denny, and closed the door with a parting, "No thanks."

Denny's face had gone white by now, and he began to toy with the base of his glass, eyes down. "I don't see why that guy likes the German Club."

Suddenly, seemingly on impulse, Denny rose and, carrying his beer, sauntered with affected nonchalance to the other side of the bar. Standing behind and between Carl and his remaining companion he shifted nervously from relaxed pose to relaxed pose. "Hey you guys, how about a game of crib?"

Carl, looking up at Steve, replied without turning, "I don't feel like it, Denny."

"Aww, come on. Just one game," cajoled Denny hopefully.

## *Denny's Crying*

Carl stubbed out his cigarette and snapped with finality, "I said I don't feel like it Denny. You know what that means? That means that I don't feel like it."

Denny recoiled as though struck, his face a pathetic picture of dumb-founded pain. He began to squeak apologetically, "Sure Carl. I understand. A lot of times I don't feel like playing cribbage either. I know how you feel." Denny turned slowly and returned to his seat, still speaking. "Heck, lots of times I don't feel like playing either. I know how you feel."

It was a bent and shrunken Denny who reseated himself. He gulped the remainder of his beer with unbecoming haste and placed his glass in the trough at the far side of the bar signifying that he desired a refill. Steve reached for the glass and placed it beneath the tap, his hand on the lever. Then, decisively, he plunged the glass into the soapy water and began to wash it, saying, "I'm sorry Denny, you're shut off."

Denny jerked his head up in shock. His face looked as though it was about to fly apart. "What's that, Steve?"

There was pity in Steve's eyes now, but he continued resolutely. "You're shut off, Denny. I think you better drink somewhere else."

Denny was crushed. His words, from a mouth which barely moved, seemed to come from a far-distant, lonely place; the echo of some dread incantation. "Gee Steve, why? God knows you're all my friends."

Steve mumbled his reply, but it didn't matter. He didn't really know what to say. "You're costing me money, Denny. You only spend five dimes every Saturday, but you

drive a lot of the gang out. I don't know what it is Denny. They just don't take to you."

Denny sat perfectly still for a long time, digesting what he had heard; digesting questioning, disbelieving. Steve spoke more softly now.

"Why don't you go over to Vincent's Tap, Denny? Here's your change."

Denny rose slowly, mechanically, his whole being seemingly turned in upon itself. With a softness of motion which suggested a lack of any consciousness of action, Denny cloaked his slight frame in his heavy coat and shuffled towards the door. He opened the door slowly and, without looking back, left. The door closed with silence and finality.

Tombo, who had watched the whole episode dispassionately, peered through the window.

"Hey, look you guys. Denny's crying."





