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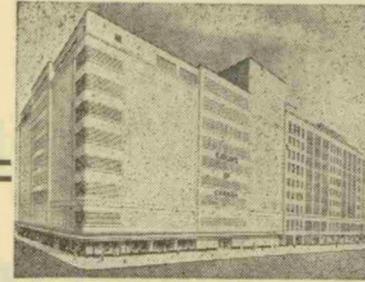
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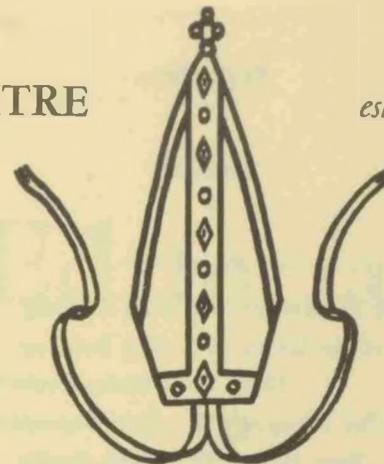
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*Dedication
to Rupert Brooke*

*"We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever."*

THE MITRE

established 1893



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Editorial

To children, the world is a relatively simple place. But as they grow toward adulthood, they realize that it is exceedingly complex. They stand, bewildered by this increased awareness. They must live in this world, however, and they do. Only now and then their youth cries out in protest, disbelief, or early, derisive cynicism. And sometimes it shows quiet acceptance or determination to amend.

The *Mitre* reflects the reactions of its youthful contributors to their society. Each of them is trying to find his answer to Rupert Brooke's question:

Say, is there Beauty yet to find?
 And Certainty? And Quiet kind?
 Deep meadows yet, for to forget
 The lies, and truths, and pain?

The Fulfillment

Morpheus has me drowsy in his clutches
 it's morning.
 My eyes are shut,
 for if they'd open, I'd remember
 you,
 and live a waking dream that you
 are near
 You are my very life
 And are so far from where I wobble
 in uncertainty—

WHISH!

a mental gust-wind takes its toll
 and leaves me where my soul is:
 on the ground —

And I'll stay there!

ii.

Answer-threads of maddening reason's web of sanity
 elude me
 as I stand in the rain
 uncertain.

A creeping dullness fogs my senses
 as though he were near
 But he's not

He's gone:
 my love; he's gone.

And I'm alone.
 My hair flies in a screaming wind
 And I bend, with the rest.

iii.

But now
 The numbness slowly fades from out
 a sleepy spirit.
 The fresh spring air supports me,
 returns this soggy, sodden mass
 to life —

You're back!
 The monotone of droning dreams
 will now cease,
 become a part of ancient past;

swing
 me diz—
 zy
 in your arms:
 REMAIN!

— KAY DELANEY

Sleep of the Living

A springtime park of birds and trees
 Gives forth with mute and vain complaint
 Of automation,
 Vegetation of the mind.
 The world is too concerned
 With gadgetry and
 predigested popcorn.
 Novelty is not ambition
 but a weary god
 templed in the patent office— SEE
 ALL MEN COMPLY. None dare abstain.
 Then is our Age.

The May-wind wakens
 And combs its fingers
 Ever lightly
 Through the grass.

The funeral is set for tomorrow
 in the A.M., early.
 We shall bury originality and
 Common sense, my people.
 Are you not afraid?
 Let us proceed our hurried, patterned way

Ignoring hyperbolic ramblings,
 rooted in senility,
 of peace-born scribes weaned at the breast of
 physical work
 and mental labour,
 defining happiness.

Please HURRY. I SHALL BE LATE.

Z-z-z-z-z

There's no point.

— KAY DELANEY

1984

A worm smoothed its belly on a floating spar
 It saw the sky darkened by the soot and sorrow of the world;
 the hordes of unshod, squalid children crouch like rats in hiding.
 In cellars blown open to the skies
 they lurk and lick their wounds.

On every limb and batlike fang
 There's Einstein's fame denounced
 by the fury of atoms crushed.
 For years no word of Darwin
 Or how a human tooth resembled some prehistoric fang.
 It was better, they said, to look beyond these queer beginnings
 to an end which was the future or the fate of all mankind.

And now if they could they would say
 that it would be better not to have been born at all.
 And that would be true.
 But life will go on without man: a worm will keep crawling.

— CHARLES COCKERLINE

The Decapod

In his indigo Executive Mansion
 Sits the Decapod just.
 Each appendage at some task labours,
 Far too busy for my small request.
 Ten pair of eyes scan the horizon,
 Completely missing the embryonic black dab
 That is me,
 Even though I shout and wave my arms,
 Silhouetted against the sky.
 I fear your tympanum is not working, O mighty Decapod,
 Or has your chitinous exoskeleton grown too thick
 To feel the insults I am always screaming at you,
 Often unintentionally?
 Please come and visit me some day
 When I am especially receptive.
 Perhaps then
 I will be better able to understand you.

— ANNE THOMPSON

Dear Heart

Ah, when, dear heart, will we again
 Hurt one the other still the same?
 Your mouth will have a different guilt
 Your shyness voiced a certain lilt.
 And once, or twice, three times — yet more,
 I'll find you still by a different door,
 Until our loves, our wills, our woes
 Shall find themselves in age's throes.
 Your thighs will ply me differently,
 A different smile etched on your knee;
 A different hand, a different face,
 And yet, dear heart, our same disgrace.

— BLAKE BRODIE

Of Tears and Blood Roses

I'll send her a wrapping of tears and blood roses
 But the scene will lie buried
 As hearts can hush noses,
 Our mouths will lie fixed as they have since that day
 That we lost all our words
 We'd so carefully lay'd.
 But those water blue eyes see only too well
 They dream of lost lots
 In subconscious blue hell.

— BLAKE BRODIE

The Cocktail Fête

This is the myth of the Cocktail Fête,
That brittle people soften here,
Much less exude compassion
From hidden-zippered Diors
Or wilted-rose Chanel.

And have these pores felt pity?
Below the powder, shame?
In blurring drinks, an ounce of doubt,
To touch the lips that punctuate
This bald pink-lady game?

For forward conversation
We've progressive education.
And so we greet our enemies
With witless, wry, wrung smiles,
And bury aching truth with marachino'd wiles.

— BLAKE BRODIE

Ours Is The Living

Ours is the living;
Ours is the damned;
Our face is the face
In which life will be slammed.

The good will die young,
And the bad will die when
A God full of nonsense
Has counted to ten.

— BLAKE BRODIE

Unforgotten

Hush, beloved: I'll tell you a tale.
Of a land I know
Where sunbeams glow
In the grass, as you pass
To the purple-dark sea
Where the stars float free,
And the moon flashes past with a silver sail.

There are great white horses with golden wings
Forged in a fire
Which blazes them higher
Than a dream, till the gleam
Of their pinions keen
May no more be seen,
But their hoofbeats' hammer on the heavens' roof rings.

Where a moon-beam glides through the glimmering air
Or the black waves fold
In a road red-gold,
Or the sky arches high
In rainbow rings
Like a dragonfly's wings —
Follow fleet and you'll find. I know: I've been there.

— ELMA BEALL

A Response

Says the psychologist—
We're just stimuli and responses;
He's an apologist
For the Almighty Subconscious.

But to him this I say,
While trying to be civil—
What stimulus, pray,
Brings on all your drivel?

— J. L. WISENTHAL

The Pen

You dribble and scratch uneven lines
And are slowly emptied of all fire and power
Without choice, and carve inanities
Or wisdom on virgin-white paper
And care not which.

—DOROTHY GILLMEISTER

The Leaves of Loneliness

Solemn, grey, the ghostly clouds
have gathered,
Ringed about with fast, fading
light;
Soon the gentle rain will trickle
down from Heaven—
And only our two loves will
light the night.

How can I say what feelings, are
damp
With dew drops here, and rest upon
the bowed flower's head;
I only know that with the hourèd
time—
The blessed boughs of memory are
shed.

And so, my Sweet; as deep within
the dew drop
The world reflects, so I,
when fed
With your sweet presence—
live,
And the leaves of loneliness are
shed, and die.

— R. H. HUNT

Van Gogh Exhibition

the other day I went to see my friend Van Gogh, (that Dutch Chap
perhaps you'd know him if you saw him)

I found him a little apart from the crowd, standing dusty
in his cover-alls, with his rather dirty hat pulled low to hide
his insufficiency of ears.

he was looking quite surprised to see the mobs
warming themselves at his canvases
he seemed not altogether displeased.

although he always needed some-one, still I weep to see
them squat to suck at his vitality,
the pseudo-artistes are here en masse and crowding past
them come the aggressive high-class tarts
who call themselves modern women.
their mothers discuss him like their bridge games
or their infernal golf.

can't they see that he is standing right there?

is nothing quiet any more?
they have their television and their religion, do they
have to have everything?

poor Vincent smiled insanely at them
as they carefully examined his luminous,
lunatic visions
and I
left
without speaking

— EVE NORTON

the seductress

stand there in your own world

finger the mountains with your eyes and when you screw up your
courage
fling yourself against its contours;
sprawl upon its rasping grandeur, panting.

you desire this mountain:

this cacophony in stone,
this apparatus in light and shade,
this monster in ceramic,
this lump. Press.
It remains brittle and deliberate beneath you

* * * * *

Perhaps not even any of the goddesses could have succeeded.
Perhaps no one of them except Minerva
could have.

Minerva, who was too militant, too flinty, for the Greeks
might well have mated with this
adamantine rock pile.

Perhaps Minerva and the mountain
would have produced regiments of
craggy bastards.

* * * * *

Stand there in your own world. I think
perhaps this country after all, will not end up
a matriarchy.

— EVE NORTON

Passiontide

The first is of the body.
An emotion more than shoddy,
The union of the animal, that blinding flash of light.
The world around in splinters, each a shaft of pain so bright
As to eclipse the others,
Fellow-creatures in this life.
In its ecstasy it smothers
'Til survival calls for strife.

The next is of the mind.
Once again completely blind
To the world revolving by, occupied with only one
Now 'tis hate supplies the power for the blaze that's like the sun.
Almost eyeless in its rage
Revenge becomes its goal
'Til the marching feet of age
Also claim their awful toll.

The last is of the soul.
As the embers of a coal
It burns as bright as either, but gives neither light nor heat
Only anguish of the mind following the heart's defeat.
Knowledge's illumination
Also sad experience
Decree suffering a salvation
In the world of now and hence.

— GAIL ANGELL

The Letter

I tread the path
With weary footsteps
The same straight path
Each grey-green morn.
I drag my feet, and, moving slowly,
I rue the day that I was born.

I count the stairs
With increased loathing,
Then delve into
A tunnelling hall.
My heart beats faster. I start to fear
The sight—that nothing's there at all.

This is the object
Of my daily journey,
This mysterious rectangle,
Wooden and plain.
It holds the secrets of my moods,
Rationing pleasure with the pain.

I peer and lo!
I see a glowing
Messenger on
Wings of paper.
I gaze and so it seems to be
Eclipsing in brightness the largest taper.

At last I clutch it
Hoping, praying,
To read the recipe
For my release.
It's there—a cheque—and now
I smile, my mind can rest in peace.

— GAIL ANGELL

As Time Moves On

My breath forms suddenly before me.
 Banish thoughts of Summer!
 For colder nights, more sober days reveal that
 Autumn, key to Winter, has come on.
 The city swallows up its fold,
 Children scurry back to school
 And life moves on.
 The great river, too, has learned the news
 And vents its feelings
 With frost-capped waves and morning mists
 To fight the freezing air.
 The uniform of shedding groves
 Is not just green but many hues that
 Weave one pattern—that of beauty.
 The birds, aroused by the wind, their aerial consort,
 Grow restless and long
 For winter homes in summer places.
 Then they fly away.
 The meadows remain no longer carpets,
 But ruts of earth trod by a lonely walker.
 Is he a beggar seeking shelter for the night,
 Or lover by sins of summer haunted,
 Just a lonely artist
 Stumbling over transcendental matters?
 The moon is climbing
 Set against the running clouds
 Pushed by some all-seeing breath.
 The sun sneaks up,
 People wake and shake their sleepy heads—
 As time moves on.

— GRANT JOHNSTON

Lost in the woods is but a condition of mind
 For it is in the unlost woods I dwell
 Boundaried alone by the moss green limbs
 Of fallen fences. Past strife is unbound
 And the tortured mind unwound by the gurgling brook
 Of spring which like my pebble self suspends
 The air and tosses richness to the speckled head
 Of sadness for from the greatest sorrow comes
 The greatest soul.
 A weary peasant treads on himself
 For he and the soil toil together
 Though the elements furied make them
 Seem as foils.
 Don't walk but let the trees walk by you
 And scent the blossoming, upward sloping night
 For the heart must be tethered to the ground
 Which salts the blood, perspires the unswallowed.

— GRANT JOHNSTON

The trees are bare, the winter long,
 Until that day
 When someone sees those buds,
 Sweet signs of spring,
 That bring with them the innocence of Love.
 They, like that Love,
 Mature throughout the summer
 And gaze with a kind, knowing glance upon
 Two seedlings swaying
 In the giddy fumbblings of first passion.
 To leaves passion is droplets of rain
 Cleansing and berating their green forms
 And the hot breath of the wind
 In its flighty jaunt through the woody vale.
 Summer is fast-closing now;
 Forms of green are forsaken for light patches,
 Then entities of gold,

of red,
 of purple,

Upon the natural canvas.
 Is gold most final vows,
 Red the blush upon a-nun-white cheek,
 Purple of lost Love, now so bitter, before so sweet?
 Then they fall.
 Yes, dead but still courted by the wind,
 Not cold, not hot,
 And leave to come again another day.
 They die so silently, so pure, to come alive
 As innocent as next year's love to share its story.
 'Tis not farewell,
 But does Love remain when innocence goes away?

— GRANT JOHNSON

Images of Youth

clownings of moon-beamed fear
 hidden leapings, boundings through the wood
 those fair-black moon-drawn witching hours
 whom we beg off but always wish to stay
 the bare-footed exuberances
 jumpings for the rain-fed pot of gold
 bottoming Joseph's cloak
 gasping, then drinking from Big Dippers
 dew-droppings nestle our grass-given somersaults
 eating four-leaf clovers
 screaming from snake-bred rustles
 believing god-said sky-wise minister's eyes
 sinking into tag-tired sleeps
 watching old age watching rivers, wondering
 climbing toe-high trees to hold the world
 palming stars of pebbles
 laughing at slippered spankings, smothering cries
 splashing after river-curtained minnows
 burying dead crickets
 dissecting grasshoppers, molassing our hands
 braving gravel scrapes, running home
 whistling with the kettle
 wooing flowers, scorning maidens
 little-knowing of light-infested night.

— GRANT JOHNSON

A Handy Matter

An Englishman will shake your hand
Upon an introduce;
Germans clasping paws with you
May shake your shoulder loose;
And Frenchmen hold extended hands
With pleasure you can't miss;
Italians, when they get the chance,
May charm it with a kiss;
But we, whom northern air has chilled,
Give greetings stiff and dry.
We shuffle, mumble, blush or grin
And meekly murmur "Hi."

— ANN MEREDITH

To A Young Woman

Here is a girl that sighed
Because her childhood stayed so long
She will not mourn a girl that died
Buried in the woman she has become.

— PAUL JONES

The Meditations of an Intellectual Student on the First Day of Winter

I like snow
It is cosy
It brings sniffles
To my nosy
I just breathe
Cold is bitey
I feel good
'Cause all is whitey
Snow is sleepy
I will resty
And forget that
Mid-term testy
But I guess
If I should faily
I would feel
A little paley
I see snowflakes
Falling, falling
And my unread
Books are calling
But I think
I'll say "to hecky"
And breathe snow-
Air for a seccy
'Cause it's cozy
And I'm happy
Back to bed
I need a nappy

— SUSAN ANGLIN

Awe

The structure stood
Cold and perfect
Piercing the autumn sky.
And the people
Dwarfed by the woven steel
Gazed in wonder.

They scanned its soaring lines
its planned effect
its intricate design
And they loved this work by the hand of man.

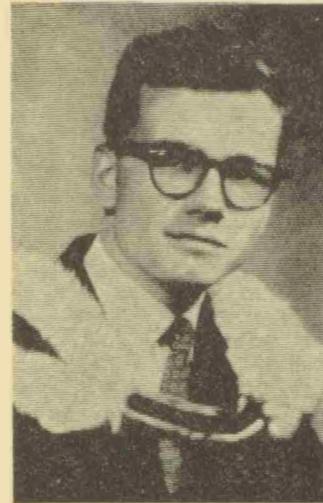
And they walked away lost in awe.

And nature grew
Warm and unique
Dipping the world in gold.
And the people walked on
Oblivious to the matchless glory
Losing their souls.

They scanned the blazing hills
the bursting earth
the magnificent perfection
And they undervalued this work by the hand of God.

And they walked away lost.

— MARILYN PAGE



THOMAS BAKER:

Tom graduated with a B.A. from Bishop's in 1958, returning the following year to secure his Class I teaching certificate. While at Bishop's, he was a regular contributor to the Mitre. He now lives on the South Bank (of the St. Lawrence) with his Muse.

POEM I

My candle flares at sunset
In the grove where shadows grow,
And my small flame pales
Grand sun shadows in its tiny
Inch space of illumination,
In the setting of the sun,
In the evening.

From the last rays over miles
Of sea, and vast to far horizons,
In still lands here, I sitting
Stretch toward the sun and
Living, die in infinite diurnal
Glories of the evening,
In the setting of the sun.

Long from my wasting flame
And long ungluttering, the
Shaft of time, untiring of
These spark incursions,
Wheels the circle hours of sun
Toward the night and through
These shadows of the evening.

— T. E. BAKER

POEM II

It was unfortunate that
We could not stay for the execution,
But the countess was waiting,
And you know how impatient she is.

Even in our position it is quite
Difficult to obtain passes, but
We talked to an official and
It was quickly arranged for us.

Such a waste, but of course
There will be another soon.
At this stage one actually has
Difficulty keeping up with them.

By the way, you should have come along;
The countess serves excellent cocktails.

— T. E. BAKER

POEM III

Down the martyred sky
The torrents quench the earth thirst,
And pterodactyls cry
From our cracked havens.

This is the lobster month,
Crustaceous crawlings of
The baleful moment
Or salamander eggs
Of days and days.

Wail flowers stretch
A tendril helplessly,
And half-life elements
Tick geometric paths
Toward the infinite.

— T. E. BAKER

TIME TO GO

At last I have my way. You are sitting opposite me. I listen to what you are saying and all the time I watch. How perfect you are; I have conjured up your face a thousand times. How rightly I remembered the smoothness of your skin and the way the golden hair sweeps on your forehead. Your eyes are dark, watchful; as I remembered them.

I listen to you and feel numbly the warning behind your bright and intimate chatter. I can follow the quick shifts to "safe" topics when anything I say could lead to a more personal feeling.

You look at your watch and I catch the movement, slight though it is. I feel a desire to scintillate, to speak so well and entertainingly that you will forget time and be ready to sit here with me; giving yourself. Giving something more than this sham intimacy. I feel a sickness within me as you tell me things; little indiscretions "just between you and me." I am to be your priest, hidden behind the grille you have erected. You unsex me; but not quite. You can guide our talk to safe channels, but you cannot hide from what my eyes tell you. You are not so happily self-assured as you seem. You are a little nervous, and you will escape as soon as you can.

Now at exactly the right moment, you announce it is time to go. You have not lost a second. I go through all the politenesses, I essay a compliment. I have been refused, and I know it. I wish we could have come out in the open, but this bright manner is your armour. I suddenly know I cannot get beyond it. Under my facade I feel a desire to strike you and clip some less studied reaction from your mind.

I will survive, I always survive. Maybe I will bury my memory of you under a silt of more successful enterprises. All this I know, but I know too that whenever and wherever I see you I will live this damnable moment again and again.

— PAUL JONES

TWO SOLDIERS

The muddy, worn-out soldiers of the American forces were passing through a small town, freshly ravaged by the ruins of war. They were retreating after their bridgehead had been taken, and were strung out in a straggly line all down the road.

The dog, which looked faintly like a collie, except for his stringy ears which resembled a terrier's, sat in the middle of the road, chewing on an old boot he had found in the ditch. When the trucks thundered by, he looked up quizzically and then returned to chewing on the boot. Most of the soldiers passed by without even noticing him.

One of the soldiers, Jack, was short, and quite young. He walked over to the dog, knelt down, and tried to pat him, but was met with a growl. He took off his helmet, and laid it down beside him.

"Hey, look mutt, that ain't no way to talk to an old friend . . ." He put forth his hand, but the dog growled, and snapped at him.

"Aw, now come on, let's be friends. Why y're just gettin' to be about as bad as them Krauts. Damn Krauts. Damn near killed us. You hear 'bout that, mutt?"

The dog barked . . .

"We was sitting down, just about to have dinner. Why, we was just serving up the soup when this airplane came over (he pointed) just up there. The field artillery broke out, and then the damn Kraut. He comes in, both guns blazing. Those bullets cut right through the center of our mess . . . Jake got it, right in the eyes . . . Wasn't soon before their field artillery opened up, and then . . . But say mutt, we ain't heard enough about you yet . . ."

The dog sat there, chewing on the boot. He had already chewed halfway through the lace, and was tugging on it trying to break it.

"Say, y're a cheeky looking cuss, ain't ya. Won't talk to me, eh? No one ever talks to me, and you my friend . . . I thought you'd talk to me. Where you from? Town, looks like. Who owns ya? Come on, mutt. Ah, what a mutt."

He rubbed the dog's head with his glove, and the dog licked his arm through his tattered sleeve.

"You know, I used to have a dog like you, back in the States. Marg, that's my girl, she and I used to take him for a walk every Sunday, down by Johnson's farm. That was fun, 'specially in the winter when I'd throw sticks for him . . . We worked hard, and we was working hard when draft called me up. We had fun though, 'specially . . . Say mutt, want to throw sticks? Here's a stick. Here I'll throw it for you. That's a boy, bring it here . . ."

A jeep sped up and screeched to a halt. A man inside wearing a

Prose

clean pressed uniform stood up and shouted . . .

"Hey soldier . . . 'tenshun!"

"Yessir . . ."

"What are you doing here? Hurry up and get back to your platoon. What the hell do you think we're playing here, tin soldiers? Hurry up and get back before I report you."

"Yessir . . ."

The jeep sped off. The soldier knelt down and patted the dog on the head. He started leaving.

"'Bye mutt, nice knowing ya . . ."

It had been almost an hour since the Americans had left, when the second battalion of Von Markheim's forces occupied the town. They had just been on a forced march for nearly ten hours. Their officers were giving them a rest, while they conferred in the old bombed-out church up the road. Some of them lay right down in the middle of the road. The rest took their packs off, and flopped down at the edge.

Klaus was a tall blond lad, barely eighteen. He had just been recruited after being trained three years in the Hitler youth. He was a junior officer, untrained. He leaned back, and mopped the sweat off his brow with his sleeve. The dog nudged up beside him, and licked his hand.

"Aw, b- off . . ."

The dog ducked the heavy arm, and started to whine.

"Aw, it's only a mutt. Here mutt . . ."

He reached into his pocket and took out a biscuit.

"Here, you want it? O.K., O.K., here we'll split it. There we go. Happy? Friends? . . ."

The dog wagged his tail and begged for more.

"Ah, mutt. Sorry, no more. Father Adolf only gives us so much. Here boy, come on. Sit on my lap. What's your name, eh? No name? Fritz, we'll call you Fritz. Everyone's got to have a name even in this war. Hah, you like my beard. No? It's decent, haven't shaved in ten days. No razor. The German government does not see fit to supply us with razor blades at this moment. Too expensive, while they hold beer parties at Berchtesgaden. This damn war is all too expensive . . ."

"They promised us all the glory. We were to conquer the world. And what do we get? Just this miserable hell hole. This damn war. Dragged me out of bed at five o'clock to throw me into the bloody recruiting station.

"They don't even know the reason for mercy . . . Here, want some candy? Don't like candy? That's too bad. All good soldiers eat candy . . ."

"In the last town they lined up all the men, and shot them, and only

for one reason. Just because one of the young Lieutenants had to pay for one of his crimes, courtesy of the angry villagers. Hah!

"What's that matter to you, mutt, anyway. You don't care. Too damn stupid perhaps. Ah, mutt. Here, wanna play? Here, wrestle with my feet, you ferocious little tiger. Wanna growl, eh? Here take that . . ."

Into the midst of the soldiers strutted an excellent specimen of the might of the German Army. The soldiers snapped to the alert.

"We are to proceed immediately to the second sector, where we expect to meet the enemy. There we will battle, and fight to prove the strength of the German Army, and to add more glory to the name of our General. Is that clear? Proceed as instructed. Heil Hitler!"

The forces advanced slowly toward each other. The machine gun fire grew more intense. Men were fighting fiercely hand to hand. There was no mercy. Torn, dead bodies floated up onto the shore of the creek. Then Klaus and Jack met. Jack was the first to fire, and the bullet hit Klaus in the shoulder. They fought each other viciously now for their lives. Klaus dug his knife deep into Jack's back

A small group of soldiers had fought their way well, and were now nearly up to the river. They heard noise up in the bushes ahead.

"Achtung! Who's there? Fire!"

Four machine guns burst, sending bullets slicing through the leaves. They investigated and came across Klaus and Jack, slumped over one another. Jack had no face left, and Klaus' back was riddled. They kicked the bodies down behind a rock, and moved on . . .

— The dog sat in the middle of the street. He was still chewing the boot. He had chewed through the lace. He picked up the broken end, leaving the lone shoe sitting in the middle of the road. He walked off to chew on the small bit of lace. It was quiet

— RICHARD WARRINGTON

BEYOND THE LIMITS

The girl rose from her desk and hurriedly stamped out her cigarette. She looked quickly at the image in the mirror before her and shuddered at the reflection. A pale, thin face stared back at her, the wide eyes devoid of expression.

She crossed over to the other side of the room and automatically switched on her phonograph. Kostelanetz's Concerto shattered the silence, but she didn't seem to notice. Too many thoughts bore down on her and crushed her. Perplexing questions had never bothered before. She had been depressed, saddened, and worried to distraction, but the duration had been short and the consequences easily endured. She had emerged unscathed—only hardened by experience.

At present she couldn't even define what her problems were; they were elusive, they evaded her when she grasped for them. She only knew something hung over her like a shroud letting in no light or even air. She choked and suffocated; there was still no escape.

She lit another cigarette and watched the smoke as it wreathed lazily over the record player and across the room. The music still beat out its mournful rhythm. She was so much like these phenomena. Existing, beating out her dull, depressing cadence but yet floating through an endless, bottomless chasm with no ties to hold her or make her secure.

Then a pinpoint of illumination struck her—her mind clutched it without thinking. Here was something concrete and very real—the only thought that had made a true impact since? it was aeons ago now—she couldn't remember what it was to belong, or even to be human. That had been far behind long ago. But the thought—she mustn't let that escape—her whole being depended on it.

She laughed nervously to herself—yes, she would do it. She answered to no one any longer. Of course it was sin—but this too did not ring true. It fitted nowhere in her very organized scheme.

The idea grew till it surrounded her and finally—overpowered her.

* * *

The butt had burned through the lush carpet and gone out. The needle scratched ceaselessly on the finished record.

—Alanne Hooker

SO, THE LITTLE GIRL KNOWS!

The party had already begun. Boats were clustered around the dock three deep, jostling each other like bugs about a light bulb. Hugh Thorpe could just distinguish the evening's first premature laughter as Al steered the Mayer family launch up against a great white plexiglass demon. This was a customary event in the Al Mayer summer weekend, as Hugh understood it, the party that floated from one summer house to another without any definable beginning or end, buoyed up with an unspoken agreement to "eat, drink, and enjoy each other, for tomorrow the weekend dies." And with the weekend went its people, back to the city, a few back to jobs, but most back to the do-nothing lethargy of twiddling their toes, a sport supported by a fond wealth.

Al switched off the engine and lashed his boat to its next door neighbour, while Hugh did a hop-skip-and-jump through the backseats of the gathered luxury to the dock. Landing on the well painted planking, he suddenly felt more comfortable with his hands in his pockets. Hugh Thorpe had passed the awkward stage. It wasn't that. But, even at twenty he had the feeling of being a stranger encroaching upon some long established rite. He watched Al finish mooring the boat as another launch, brimming with strange faces, pulled up.

"All hail Caesar", demanded a voice from amongst the new arrivals. The contents of the boat, wrapped in bed sheets spilled onto the dock. "Hey, fella: Where's your toga? Toga party, you know."

"No, I didn't know. Bedlam in bed sheets, eh?" Hugh countered.

"How do you mean?" perked up a baby-fat-hefty male crew member.

"Later you shove on head masks and reorganize the Ku Klux Klan."

"Sure, fella, he replied, letting the joke fall to its knees. "You get yourself a toga, fella. You being a stranger without even a toga, I can't see our female friends having much to do with you. Where're you from during the week?"

"The working class." Hugh felt a strange consolation at being able to say this, even jokingly.

"Oh, to hell with it. I wish I had the time to try and follow you, fella. Hi, Al! You got the Scotch, Ernie?" The baby-fat fellow and an even heftier accomplice swung on up a set of stairs that seemed to Hugh to wind to and fro the way the more stoned guests might on their way down. The road to Oz, he thought, catching a green light emanating from the window of the summer house at the top.

Al had started up the path and Hugh now followed, he realized, in a somewhat ridiculous little brother fashion. The two had been classmates at one of the more expensive private schools and very close friends, with the only real dividing line between them one of money. Al had nuzzled and been a part of wealth all his life. Hugh had been on the outside looking in most of his. He seemed to bump into wealth, rather than make friends with it the way Al did. Eventually, he had met and

made love to a decidedly middle class girl until her father had found out about it, and after examining the Thorpe financial situation put a stop to the relationship. The Thorpes weren't nearly as well off as the proverbial everyday Joneses, and yet they had fought for a private school education for their son and all but gone into bankruptcy over it.

Now at college age Hugh suddenly realized the colour of the purgatory he had stepped into. It struck him as ironic, this expensively well educated specimen, Hugh Thorpe wasn't part or parcel of any one group or class. He floated somewhere in between the upper and the middle strata. His allusions to his private school friends had confused and finally scared the pants off his girl friend, and at the same time the wealth Al Mayer came from frightened Hugh. There were the hundreds of small debts and courtesies he could never return and the friendship that could be interpreted only too easily as leach-like. What a bloody mess! he often thought. He had somehow turned up beside a society that wanted no part of him, a group that was basically, despite all its money, gorgeously dull, untalented, and creatively sterile, and yet he, already the world's most unpublished twenty year old writer, breathed hotly in pursuit. Of what? he wondered. Possibly he expected to bump into a fellow enigma. More probably, he would play the poor visitor to this impotent wonderland for another twenty years of his life. He yawned rather loudly as they reached the porch of the summer house.

"Don't anticipate," replied Al, the exception to the rule in a room full of dull money. The screen door wacked shut behind them, an annoyed and unheeded butler. "These are the greatest people in the world." Al stepped forward and the room seemed to swallow him up like a piece of furniture that was an essential part of the atmosphere. He had the ability of being everybody's friend all at once, and yet no one person's particular pal. The art of objectivity, he called it.

Hugh stood back by the door, eyeing Al's Pied Piper tactics with a self confessed envy. But, after the ritualistic placing of sandwiches and beer in the newcomers' hands, Hugh stepped into the group. A severe case of detached introductions began, which the gathering all tried to talk above, and which eventually petred out.

"For God's sake, why didn't you tell me it was a toga party, Al? Now we're both going to stick out like the sorest bloody thumbs . . ."

"Hugh, fella, I didn't know. Look, get one of these bedsheeted females out in the woods, an ugly-wugly, you know, and when she surrenders oh so willingly, you unravel her. And, presto-chango you're one of the gang." The girls smiled a little uneasily. The males in the group fell all over themselves laughing.

Hugh could smell the customary kiss of the hops on their breath. Caps had been popping off bottles for most of them that night long before the party's inception. And, now, with half a dozen warm breaths patronizing him, he suddenly wanted to dive for the door. With something between diplomacy and panic he eased himself out as far as the porch.

But, here there was something else. A set of eyes seemed to be work-

ing their way through him. Not blankly staring cat eyes, but subtle, apparently indifferent, yet still, 'I'm conscious of your presence' eyes. He turned to meet them with a magazine, man of the world smile. Instead he saw only the distant outline of a girl huddled by herself in the far corner of a badly lighted porch, intent on bringing an equally badly lit cigarette to life. Her eyelids were lowered in concentration.

As Hugh walked toward her, skirting cliquy sets of tables and chairs, his first thoughts were all poisonously facetious or just inconsequential. He had forgotten to think any other way. His experience, such as it was, had hardened him toward most females. By the time he was within ten feet of her, she took the problem of the first words out of his hands.

"I'm hiding what you might call my 'nudity.' But, since you're in virtually the same boat, I suppose we can drop the sarcasm."

She was wearing an old shirt tied at the midriff, shorts, and no shoes. Most importantly she had no toga, a point that had unconsciously put Hugh at ease. Nothing bothered him as much as several dozen neophyte clowns, swathed in bed sheets, going full tilt at twelve o'clock at night.

"So, tell me then, does your 'nudity' bother you?" He suddenly had the feeling he was pushing forward rather rapidly.

"It would bother me if there was more than one male present to make it a topic of conversation instead of an experience. Although I can't say I've ever been in that position before . . . in fact, either one."

She had positive and striking good looks with a deep voiced earnestness that reminded Hugh of a Dietrich or a Lauren Bacall, a result of his lengthy relationship with the movies. When he least wanted it, those damned movies seemed to make everything seem so bloody unoriginal. The word 'sultry' came into his mind for a moment, but he refused to choke on it.

"How old are you?" he asked, a little undiplomatically.

She smiled. "Sixteen. With the sort of puzzling maturity that seems to throw genteel middle-aged ladies for a bit of a loop. I'm, apparently, always coming out with something that's 'over my head' . . . so the ladies say . . . and they don't mean 'angelic'."

"The tea drinkers!" He beamed at his own image of middle age.

"The rabid bridge players," she corrected him delightedly. "I surprise them."

"I wouldn't be surprised, not once I'd heard your voice. It's quite a few years ahead of you."

"I sometimes get the impression that everything about me is a few years ahead . . . of 'me.' I only hope I don't sound egocentric."

"You sound like an only-child."

"From what basis have you reached that conclusion?"

"'Only-children' talk more about themselves than anything else. That's two years of university psychology and the fact that I'm one myself speaking."

"Well, tough little bananas! I have a brother!"

The latter phrase ripped into Hugh. It seemed out of character. The

girl assumed a sudden, possessive pride, a silly, selfish little-girl stinginess.

"I'm sorry. I'm afraid I've gone a bit too deeply." He could feel her silence letting the sting of the wound set in. "I have a habit of entering people's lives . . . feet first," he added.

"I'm just feeling ratty," she finally pronounced. "I've spent so much of the past few weeks alone. Normally the family comes up here for a month. I'm up for three weeks as of yesterday. I can't say I'm very keen on the people in this neck of the woods. So, I thought I'd stay in town and try to get back to my painting. The trouble is, I couldn't get used to the loneliness of our place. It's just big enough to be well haunted. You know, I never even got as far as dipping a brush in the old oils."

"What did you do with yourself?"

"Usually ended up at the movies. That's everyone's 'easy out,' I guess. It's funny, I used to paint all the time. Then about two years ago I did a picture for my brother's birthday. It never appeared in his room, at least not on any one of its four walls. Six months later I found it in his closet, hanging with his pajamas. I never said anything, but for some reason or other I've never painted since. Could you call that spite?" She looked up a bit pathetically.

Hugh quenched the beginnings of a smile by digging his thumb into the upper part of his leg. "Spite? Yes, I suppose so. But, why not just laugh the thing off? Brothers can be a heartless . . ."

"At fourteen laugh it off?" The cool, deep-voiced monotone had momentarily vanished. "I would have kicked him normally, sisterly devotion gone awry. The only problem is I was adopted, so things aren't all that apple-pie normal. I've been close to my brother in a way. But, I've always known how things stood. Whenever I see parent or guardian on an application form, I've always wanted to strike out the 'parent' and . . . Excuse my late modesty, but what's your name?"

Hugh floundered from his preoccupation with her. "Hugh Thorpe. And you're . . ."

"Joy Bellingham."

"One of the Bellinghams of Bellingham Steel and Cable?"

"A friend of the family. I suppose that seems like one God awful thing to say about the only parents I've got. But, that's the way I've always felt, like a good friend of the family." She shrugged, then relaxed, eyeing him quietly.

"You never show your tears, do you?" he said finally.

"I try not to. I used to. They never did anything for me but embarrass."

Hugh watched her eyes drop to her lap. "We both seem to have the same problem. Neither of us understand the blessings of wealth."

She bit her lower lip, smiling wanly. "But, I'm on the inside so I'll have to make an effort to. "You're a one weekend intruder I take it."

"Exactly. Imported from the middle class. Can I get you something to drink? Beer?" He had an overwhelming urge to keep her separated from the inside crowd. He wanted to talk. He had to find her, to break

through the crust of composure, to mean something to her. Let the people move where they would. Let the whole damn party fold into happy double beds. Just to have the silence to reveal and understand, like the blank space in a newspaper ad, to hold her thoughts and feelings.

"A glass of water would do. Is that too original?" she asked earnestly.

"Like sin at this party." He felt slick, too slick. It was the last way he wanted to seem to her then.

"A couple of glasses of beer destroy me when I'm tired. Just a water on the rocks." To his dismay she stood up and began to move after him, toward the screen door and the bustling inner room.

Hurt, he turned on her with a somewhat foolish expression. "Whither goest thou?"

"I don't feel like dancing, but I should mingle," she said firmly.

"Limbo! Limbo! Limbo like me!" The chant, and the hand clapping had swelled to a fever pitch, and the beer had made athletes out of most of the assembled males and a couple of the females. Stomachs were bared in an attempt to escape the wrath of a lowering pole that threatened to peel off the paunchier entries passing under it. Then one of the girls lost her balance, and sitting down suddenly, collapsed into hopeless, tearful spasms of laughter. The males looked on in disgust. Somebody helped her to her feet.

Hugh watched Joy's expression return to a little girl's world of birthday-party glee as she absorbed the activity. He approached with the glass of water and a beer for himself. Her laugh was simple and colourful, but somehow powerfully physical and completely out of character with the world of urbanity she had wrapped herself in a few minutes before. It looked like a craving for something, a thirst of some sort. He handed her the glass of water.

"She's the type that'll always be falling into other peoples' swimming pools when she's married. At large cocktail parties, and for a price from the males," Joy spouted.

"Is that bad? You seemed to be enjoying her antics."

"Nervous laughter," she pronounced, covering up rather badly, it seemed to Hugh. "The party's going to move now. Whenever somebody starts to laugh like that, it's a pretty good indication the party's moving. They're really all the same."

"So we're moving. Where to, further into the woods?" he asked a little disdainfully. Joy was silent. Suddenly, he was aware of the double entendre, the second meaning she had caught immediately. He had meant to be sarcastic, but somehow the phrase had turned out gloatingly bawdy. "I didn't mean it that way." Then he saw her smile the smile of acute politeness. At least she was on an even keel. He drained his glass, and excusing himself went to find Al. He had to keep her interest in him pulsating. If he couldn't soften her with a couple of beers, the artificial froth of a speedboat playing tag with a complacent moon might help. He had come so close to seeing her with her guard down, that now he couldn't just let her evaporate. Couples and a few strays had already

started to move on down toward the dock when he finally collared Al losing at bridge to a drunk female acquaintance.

"It's time to move, Al. The golden geese are flying south. Our chariot is getting impatient and may end up in the midst of the lake without us, if we don't get a move on."

"Say, how many have you had, Hugh?"

"Why?"

"Because, when you start to get prosaic, you're well on your way to getting loaded. You've got a lousy capacity, but you act like a Chinaman with a hollow leg."

"I'm only on my third glass. But, it shows does it? Good God! It can't, Al. I can't afford to let it. Instinct tells me I've got to be a pillar of strength and temperance. All the more reason to get going, get out in the air. I have met the most wonderful girl, Al, but she has a problem, a sadness as big as the lump in my throat." Hugh felt tears fringing his eyes. But, these were nine-tenths alcohol, he told himself, and he felt ashamed of them.

Al, unable to win even peering at his drunken friend's cards, threw down his hand. "Thanks Shaughn." The girl nodded vaguely. "Okay, let's go, fella. You'd better grab your problem child, if she's coming."

Hugh found Joy out on the porch embracing a glass of beer.

"I thought you were a water-on-the-rocks girl."

"I've decided about this time of night one or two beers gives me confidence in myself." The expression on her face suggested she had given away information most people wouldn't have caught. Hugh had.

"Your confidence isn't built-in then?"

"My friend, I have to live with these people the rest of my life. The impression I make on them tonight rebounds off . . . my parents. Shall we just say, the artist is trying to work up a not so artistic party spirit."

"Are they that tough to take sober?"

"No, but we have to meet on neutral ground. And, if I've got a little something in me, I lose that great big pain known as 'artistic drive'."

"Which makes you presentable."

"Which makes me presentable. Artists bother them. And, don't ever think that writers don't bother them just as much. If you do anything more creative than sailing, swimming, or making love, the kinder ones will say, 'You must be very artistic,' and avoid you like the plague. Here's to the dying spirit!" She lifted her glass and drank without feeling the need to acknowledge his expression.

"They're not the important people," he said flatly.

"Oh?"

"What did you paint?"

"People and things."

"No landscapes?"

"I tried, but I'd always fall asleep. I liked 'human' pictures, probably because I've never really figured people out. Has anybody!

"Were you any good?" Hugh felt himself teeter slightly.

"I thought so. A wallpaper firm almost bought a couple of my designs, but they went bankrupt before the final decision. Very

flattering. And, there was a time when I'd have worked in my own blood just to keep painting. Very melodramatic! Now I'm just a common garden variety ploop." The glint that is a part of every artist passed across her eyes and then sank back within her.

"You must have been quite the prodigy."

"My parents didn't think so. They aren't very artistic. They have horses in their blood-stream, so I rode during the school art classes," she said flatly.

"Just what was the big idea?" Hugh felt himself getting belligerent about the whole matter. The beer was beginning to catch up with him. "Yes, tell me, what was the big idea!"

They were busy making a little lady out of me."

"Isn't that sweet!" murmured Hugh, letting his subconscious float to the surface. "And, you're worried about not being one of them. You're different. Of course you're different! You're too damned intelligent for this crowd, and the sooner you escape them the better!"

How?"

"It's not a question of how. If you don't feel something tearing at you inside, pushing you, goading the hell out of you, then something in there has died, wouldn't you say? Has it?"

"It has not," she replied fiercely.

So paint!" He was wonderful. He could almost hear his words echoing wildly inside her, carrying her along like the crest of a wave, feeling her out, and, finally, quietly taking her hand. "Get back to the city! To hell with the party crowd!" Suddenly, the bottle he held slipped free of Hugh's grasp. The beer splashed out over the floor, gushing forth like his life blood, drowning his words, seeming to nullify all he had said and a momentarily god-like stature with one unforgiving strain. He paused like a man dazed and mortally wounded, but not quite conscious of the fact. After several seconds he retrieved the bottle rather awkwardly, covering his face with a foolishly sprawling hand.

I'm sorry. It didn't splash up on you?"

"No." The expression and spirit had completely drained from her face. It had only the puzzled look of disillusion. He was drunk. That was all.

"You were right. The party is moving. Shall we vamoose with Mr. Mayer in his waterproofed pumpkin?" He laughed nervously. Trying to blurr the disillusion was only sending the hurt underground.

"Fine," Joy agreed with a slight, disconcerting smile.

As the boat cut through the trackless stretch of midnight water, Hugh was conscious of only two things, that his legs were trembling with the cold, and that with Joy squeezed in against him the way she was, his poor insulation was no secret. The beer confronted with a sobering head wind had just enough effect to reduce his spirit to a sludge, and not enough to keep him warm.

"Where are we headed?" Joy asked.

"Scoop Welland's," Al contributed in the tone of a well worn tourist guide.

"You're such a fine feathered bird! And yet, nobody touches you do they?" Hugh said, staring blankly at her, not looking for an answer, realizing what the beer incident had done to her. His sincerity, his advice, his belief in her all seemed to be peeling away like a bad job of chrome plating. But just the alcohol talking? No, it was not! It had helped him spit out the words; it had goaded him on to pull her out of the do-nothing class, to try to force her to use the little nugget of creativity none of the others had lodged in them. And, the words were his. Unexpectedly, the alcohol had bolstered him, and just as unexpectedly it had turned traitor. What had that momentary step forward, her belief in him, cost her, he wondered, two steps backward? Maybe more. The good, old, bungling Samaritan! More dangerous than a sniper. His thoughts were pretty damned eloquent, it occurred to him. He smiled, but he felt dizzy. His stomach felt queasy. He must be tired. Those three pints were really punishing the hell out of him. He couldn't be sick here, though. He wouldn't be! The boat roared on with the same droning discontent.

"Are you going back to town Monday?" Hugh ventured.

"I don't know." Joy Bellingham was balancing on some unseen fulcrum. "I don't really see there's much reason to."

"You didn't bring art materials up with you?"

"No, I didn't! Just who do you think you are?" Spray shot across her face, and she wiped it away. Al said nothing.

"I was a stand-in conscience for Miss Joy Bellingham. Make a good magazine article, wouldn't it?" Hugh replied. His hand slapped sharply on his knee. One of the most fruitless persuaders was sarcasm. Hugh knew it. But, his feelings hadn't accepted it.

Joy was at the bursting point, reaching for a whipping boy among her thoughts as the boat pulled into a narrowing channel. It slumped in the water as Al decreased the speed.

"Good God, I know where we are! I know this channel," Joy insisted. She looked up at Al. "It's a brute to maneuver, my friend. Here, give me the wheel. I'm an expert on it."

"I guess I'll have to take your word for it, kiddo," Al conceded.

Joy's right hand curled around the wheel. Her left pulled the accelerator back to the "Full Speed" mark, and the boat shot forward, spray cascading out into a homeless night, twisting, turning, and ducking the marking buoys like a skier with a vengeance. She was wrenching everything she could from the aging craft. Life and limb be damned!

Hugh watched Joy's face tighten up . . . with the wind and the confidence, he thought. No shoal and no sand bar would be touched. Independence was on the loose, was asserting itself. Halleluya! So, the little girl knew what she was about, knew where she was going. A lost tongue of water splashed across his forehead. Joy's expression reminded him of the figurine on the front end of a Cadillac. But, who or what was in the driver's seat, he wondered, as the boat fled on into a deepening night.

Scoop Welland's seemed to be the party's second wind. The liquor was pushed into the background and now the female came into her own.

New faces entered the fiasco superbo, Hugh noticed, and the toned down voices seemed to be whispering of a candy-coated illegitimate sex. The woods and the natural-openness of it made everything alright. It wasn't as if it was in a motel or its scrubbiest city counterpart, except that it ended in the same thing. Hugh watched, as one or two couples drifted out to the blind euphoria of the woods behind the place. Male and female were all they had to be to each other. A different weekend, a different body. And, it was hard luck if somebody got pregnant.

Joy sat moodily in a wicker chair with a group of other girls spread out across the floor on either side. A dancing fire seemed to be the only common ground for this little cluster of moths, Hugh concluded. He watched Joy cross and uncross her legs at least a dozen times in something less than five minutes, until he couldn't take it any longer. He went over to her, dodging small knots of the gathering.

"You probably have a right to brood, but I'd like to talk to you."

"Go ahead."

"Out on the porch," he insisted.

"Fine." She got up and followed him out.

"I've given you a bumper crop of ups and downs for one evening. The beer business I want to apologize for," he said. "It could have been coffee or tea, couldn't it?"

"Of course." Her voice sounded thoroughly unconvinced.

His mind was clear, completely sober after the boat ride, but now Joy's eyes seemed to be blurring. She had the look of a small girl brimming with condescending words, but able to wreak havoc, it seemed, without even the tools of provocation. At least, he hadn't given them to her. Her society had, if anybody. She stood, now a little impatient as if she had asked to be excused.

"You have a terrific thirst for something. What is it? Love?" he asked.

"My God, you're a panic!" She flushed self-consciously.

"No, blunt and a bungler maybe. But, if it's love you need . . ."

"Look, chum, apathy is getting the better of me."

"What do you want?"

"To uncomplicate the works . . . life. Forget things."

"Your art and whatever it is makes you tick?"

"I suppose."

"That nonchalantly? And in the process bed down in the woods with some mutt you don't even know, like the rest of them? Grovel for their friendship?"

"Why not?" She stared blankly for a moment as if trying to waylay the idea of tears.

"But, you couldn't sleep with me?"

"No. You are everything that has made me a freak and a reject in this crowd. And, they're the only people I know. I shouldn't have even spoken to you tonight."

"You don't laugh because you feel you **have** to, or do you? You won't make the grade and be happy here because you feel you **have** to.

"I'm sorry. I promised Scoop's sister I'd help her with the food."

She opened the screen door, held it a second, and finally disappeared inside.

"Don't get lost in there," Hugh mumbled, almost to himself. Her only reply was the springy swallow of the screen door closing.

He sat thinking of what had passed for ten or fifteen minutes. This time he had been sober. They had been his words, and the compulsion to get them out had been his. But, his side had lost. He had watched her immaturity begin to show like a loose slip. For his part, it was hard to seem sincere when you'd made an ass of yourself only an hour or so before.

Hugh somehow found his feet and shunted himself inside. The room was heavy with cigarette smoke and chatter now as Al brushed by him carrying a tray of bits and pieces that rather closely resembled sacrificial innards, his own insides being passed around, Hugh decided.

"It's marvellous what damage one misplaced beer can do," he piped up.

Al stopped in his canvassing of the room. "Well, what the hell happened to you? One beer certainly didn't lay you out."

"In one respect, I'm afraid it did."

"I wondered where you'd disappeared to when I saw your little girl friend with some guy in a ski jacket."

"Where?"

"Over behind the couch. The foursome."

Hugh's eye travelled across to a small gamey looking huddle. A dark type with a black ski jacket had his arm around Joy's waist. Hugh could just distinguish their conversation.

"You have the sweetest little set of measurements I've seen on anything," the friend insisted. "I'd just like to wrap you up and take you home."

"What would you use for wrapping paper?" Joy quizzed.

"My own sweet skin." He pressed his thighs to hers for a brief moment. "What about a walk, a nice short walk?"

"Alright," she blushed uncertainly.

Hugh watched intently as the two meandered out the door and into the outer evening. "What do you think, Al?"

"Bitch! First class little bitch! He's one of the biggest skin men here. She's just classified herself. All sadness, simper, and sex."

"I don't think so," Hugh said.

"When she pulls a stunt like that right under your nose! It's just the old story of the almighty 'broad' well disguised. Forget her."

"I've got to see her face when she comes back."

"I've never seen anyone that liked to punish themselves as much as you do," muttered Al.

Hugh watched him revert back to his job of distributing his tidbits. Maybe Al was right. Maybe he was putting too much faith in humanity, and when he was disappointed in them, when he found one by one that they were a bunch of thorough-going bastards, he was punishing himself for their shortcomings. Some martyr! Never again.

He would have to drift now for maybe an hour or more, but he would

see her face when she came back. And, he wondered what her eyes would admit. Possibly a trite and non-committal 'I'm no longer your business.' She would then become a part of that great milling backdrop whose only foreground was one of empty glasses and settling cigarette smoke. He wandered past two females, name dropping their way to self-importance by establishing the vital family and social ties. Within themselves, he realized, they were vacant beings with an ornate shell of names, a crust built up of connections. And he passed on to another group.

There was the record breaker, the girl who had to be an integral part of the lives of at least three men in one evening. Only a spoiled society could breed her. She didn't expect to be saved from herself. She knew what she was, and she was making the most of it. That was all there was to it. It was, in a way, her one redeeming quality, and Hugh understood it.

And the men, what were they? The 'would-be's,' the would-be producer, the would-be band leader, and the would-be stock broker. Somehow they didn't smell of success or even originality, only of solid bank support for their early failures which would come before they joined their fathers' companies. Hugh talked with them, forced a laugh for their jokes, and felt incurably empty.

Half an hour had passed. Only one person was in the back of his mind, but there was no sign of her. The queasiness had left him, but he felt a bit dehydrated, and he went into the kitchen for a glass of water.

When he returned to the central gathering, he had that inexplicable feeling that something in the room had changed. Somebody had left or somebody had returned. He glanced hurriedly across the faces. His eyes bolted themselves to one in particular. Joy was sitting quietly between two strange males. The ski jacket was nowhere in sight. Have you or have you not? he thought to himself. Lift up your eyes, damn you. Catch mine. Catch mine! But, her face was passive and disinterested. It told him nothing. He started toward her, but Al intercepted him.

"Three o'clock, Hugh. If it's all the same to you, I'd like to move along back to my place. I'm beat."

Well, it's not all the same to me, Hugh wanted to yell at him, but he said nothing as he elbowed through two small groups to where Joy was sitting. With a slightly comic twist he wedged himself in between Joy and the male on her left. She looked over at him annoyed. Then, in realization, her expression dropped. It fell miles, it seemed to Hugh. Like Alice, falling, falling, falling. It had disillusion. It had hurt. What else? What else? He felt her hand touch his sport jacket. Then, for no apparent reason, she turned her face toward a conversation on the other side of her.

"So she said, 'I'm sorry I two timed you.' 'But, you didn't,' I said, 'you triple timed me.' 'Well,' she said, 'if you're going to be nasty, let's get the figure straight. I quadruple timed you.' Herb tells that one. Lays me out every time."

A wave of laughter passed, and a fellow at the far end of the couch revelled in his minor triumph. Hugh noticed Al signalling from the door. So, it was time for the guest to depart! He had watched Joy's face

striving for control, complete passivity, as if she were afraid she might betray herself to him. While she laughed she appeared to be biting her lip. But she kept her silence. What could he say in return? What had happened inside her? He leaned toward her, kissing her on the cheek.

"Goodnight, my poor little twerp!" He stood up, walking toward the door with no reason for looking back. Her thoughts and feelings belonged only to her now. It had always been that way really. Al preceded him out the door and they wound on down the path single file. Hugh's expression was frozen. An alien in the horn of plenty. Everyone else there was out to gorge themselves. Many happy returns of the day!

The boat plowed quietly away from the dock, gradually lifting its nose as it found itself in open water. The cool morning air brushed across the deck and into the cockpit. Hugh pulled up the lapels of his coat and dug his hands into his pockets. His right hand wrapped around something. Matches! What in God's name were matches doing in his pocket? He didn't smoke and never had. He examined the small folder. It was well worn, past the disreputable stage, not at all the sort of thing a business friend would hand out. "Bellingham Steel Foundries," it announced in straight black type. "E. T. Bellingham, president." He flipped open the cover. Inside was a lone match, a bit frayed and quite badly twisted.

Al leaned over, fingering the match cover from curiosity.

"Well, symbolism it gives! Arty, at that! I should have mentioned it. It's fairly common knowledge among the crowd. She is one of the few females that, apparently, can treat you like a bastard and still expect a call when she gets back to town. Get it through your skull, she's a bitch!"

"Um," replied Hugh quietly, half-listening, "maybe." He ran his finger slowly over the face of the match-book. Then feeling strangely sure of himself, he leaned back, tucking it into his breast pocket.

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