

EXPRESSION

Spring 1965

*Expression is published by the
students and faculty of
Casper College, Wyoming.*

Editor, Jane Logan

Faculty Sponsor, Mrs. Bertha Davidson

THE HOT ROD KID

The Hot Rod Kid bought a four twenty-six.
That was well equipped with a four-speed stick.
Out to the strip, to see what it could do.
He found its best was a hundred and two.

So back to the city to tear the motor down
He stroked and rebored it, gave the torque more pounds.
Now equipped with four barrel carbs, the Kid found
The car did one twenty on the second round.

In a cloud of smoke, as he neared the line,
A very funny feeling made him look behind.
He beheld another car coming up so fast,
He knew it had to be a cop, so stepped upon the gas.

And away he peeled, to outrun the fuzz,
But his car gave up, with a shattering "buzz."
With siren ascream, the cop closed the chase,
And so ends the story of Hot Rod Kid's first race.

—Ken Geer.

MY TOY BOX

A broken doll, held together with twine,
What have I done with this life of mine?
A little toy dog, a broken balloon,
Why did I leave my childhood so soon?

To youth's box of happiness,
I come to lose my loneliness.
But I am of the future and it is of the past,
And there is no way to regain lost happiness.

—Phyllis Anderson

QUESTION FOR YOUTH

Marionettes in Society's hand,
How will you know the Truth,
If while dancing to Conformity's Band
You waste your precious youth?

—Wayne Smith

A CURIOUS PLACE

The fateful eve finally came—the theme was due
on the morrow.
As I pondered and peered in my mind for a
thought
A little green man popped out of my ear and said
with a sneeze, “May I borrow?”
Then he hopped on the keys of my typewriter so
fast he couldn’t be caught.
With his yellow dot cap bouncing with every hop,
he typed till the keys became hot.
Then one by one the letters formed a curious sight
for my eyes
Of a land he knew between my ears where Heffa-
lumps grow in abundance.
Joy and Despair have a card game there to see
who will rule each day—
But read for yourself of that long lost vale I
have found and am sure to explore:
“I walk in a mist of bluish green hue on a lawn
of silvery lace.
Your eyes, not our feet, take us everywhere in a
coach through a rose colored place.
We have seen the world through pink glasses
till now, which is why I have come to complain.
There is more to life than your eyes have seen,
my followers and I maintain—
There is an inside, different and bright, in every
living thing.
You have just to explore the mind and soul
instead of the dress of the being
To see how deep the world really is—how noble
in bearing and gait.
Not at all the thin pink walls you looked at in
outward traits.
Let me show you in one short day what one
being really is—
Not a dress and a smile with the name of Miss,
But a lonely soul crying for help in a world all
are deaf.
Tis a common trait in beings your age, but I
think it’s really your fault

That instead of answering what you know is there,
you'd rather go get a malt.
Now, though, you won't get any rest—I'm your
hearing aid."
And then with a puff of purple smoke he waved a
cheerful goodby
And I felt strangely alive — more than ever
before—and I really think I know why!
—Janet Thompson

FUTURE

On the shore standing,
And incessantly gazing,
Man has a future,
What does it hold?

On the sea drifting,
And noisily groping,
Ignorant of future,
Man becomes bold.

—Ron Forgey

FOREVER DEATH

The mountain sang of a billion loves
Lost on an endless sea.
And the green grass died and turned to dust
That nurtured hate's brown seeds,
And the brown seeds of hate were scattered far
By the lust of Hell's hot breath.
And the soft blue sky turned red with rage
And screamed of the painful death.
And the rivers of faith ran red and thick
With the helpless blood of fear.
And the face of life moaned sadly dark,
No words of hope to hear.
And once rich trees withered black and cold
Their wasted life now gone.
And the eternal wing of nothing
Smothered the bird with his song.
And the love was gone, forever gone,
To the heart of the endless sea.

And the faith was gone, forever gone,
 To the fields of hate's brown seeds.
And the hope was gone, forever gone,
 To the rich red rivers of fear.
And the life was gone, forever gone,
 To the dark where no one hears.

—Linda Pulliam

THE CLAM

Wrap yourself in layers of yourself,
Draw the fitted armor close.
Let no smallest part protrude,
To mar perfect security.
Dwell within your self-made fortress;
Bear it always as you travel.
No stick, no stone, no pointed shaft
Can crack that pearly panoply.

—Jane Logan

NOW

Starry desks and
The decision will stand
Forever as the tears ride by
On yellow peanutbutter cars
And the time lags
Generations behind my
New time—which is now.

—Colleen Casheros

DAY OF RECKONIN'

Slick Revere

Overhead the sun was struggling to cast a ray of light through the gray, menacing-looking clouds. The clouds were gradually cutting the sun's rays off, but as Buddy gazed across the arena he could easily predict a large turnout for the Annual Little Britches Rodeo. The bleachers and grandstands were being occupied with people carrying umbrellas and raincoats since there had been a slight drizzle that morning. Some were even wearing rubber boots probably anticipating more and heavier rain, but nevertheless, rain or shine, the Annual Little Britches Rodeo would be held.

Buddy strolled over to the front of the chutes as everyone around him was bustling about attempting to prepare for the first event of the day which would be bareback riding. Buddy thought of his brother's enthusiasm for this event since he was entered in two of the riding events in the senior division, which were bareback and bull riding. Buddy was only entered in steer riding in the junior division for those under fifteen years of age. He wished he had a horse to ride to compete in the other events which consisted of barrel racing, pole-bending, and calf roping. This way he would have to compete only in one event and attempt to earn enough points to go to the National Little Britches Rodeo Finals which would be held in Loveland, Colorado, this year.

Buddy was fairly preoccupied in his thoughts when his brother Tommy walked up and startled him.

Tommy laughed and asked, "What's the matter, are you nervous?"

"No, I was just thinking," answered Buddy.

"You had better get your spurs on and let Bob help you secure them down," Tommy said as he went over to speak to one of the contestants.

Buddy then turned and headed for the side-gate to go back to the car where Bob would probably be waiting. He noticed the nervousness of some of the older contestants and wondered if he should be nervous or even anxious for his one event, but figured—why should he?—his brothers didn't get nervous before they ride.

Buddy glanced up to see his older brother Bob motioning for him to come to the car so Buddy thought he had better hurry over to see what he wanted.

As Buddy approached the car his brother exclaimed, "I wish you'd stay put! I don't have all day to put your spurs on since Tommy wants me to set his riggin' for him!"

Buddy replied, "I'm sorry, but I was out in front of the chutes looking around."

"Oh, well, forget it!" Bob said and pointed to the rear of the car. "Get your spurs."

"Okay. How about these tie-downs?" asked Buddy.

"Bring them and those tie-ups too," answered Bob.

Buddy got Bob's bull spurs and all four straps. He handed them to Bob and set his foot between Bob's legs on the car seat. He wished he had his own pair, but he reckoned he'd just have to wait until he got a little older as he had just turned thirteen in April and this was only the middle of June. Buddy put his other foot up and contemplated that Tommy who was only sixteen had his own rodeo equipment—chaps, spurs, riggin', and bull rope.

Bob interrupted his thoughts and asked, "Are they snug enough?"

"They feel all right," Buddy answered.

"Okay. Don't wander too far now," Bob said as he closed the trunk. "I have to go help Tommy; so be good. I'll see you later."

All right," replied Buddy.

Buddy watched his brother head for the side-gate to the chutes, then turned and shut the car door. He wondered if he should put the rubber pad inside his pants to cushion his tailbone or wait until later. He decided to wait.

He wandered over towards the pens containing the rodeo stock and wondered what his steer looked like and how big he would be. He hoped not too big since he wasn't too big himself.

He heard the grand entry music and decided he would head over to the chutes in case Tommy would be the first contestant to buck out.

He sauntered in the direction of the chutes attempting to imitate the older cowboys in the way they walked. He exaggerated the swaggering of the hips a little, but he knew he had the idea.

He entered the side-gate, but a judge approached, "Hey you, only contestants are permitted in the arena, Sonny."

Buddy then remembered he had forgotten to pin his number eighty-seven on his back so without argument he went back to the car to fetch his number.

He returned later with his number properly pinned on the back of his shirt and was admitted into the arena.

The grand entry was over so the first event would start soon.

Buddy walked over to the front of chute number three where his two brothers were preparing to set the riggin' on the bronc that was picked for Tommy.

Buddy examined the bronc in the chute and noted the horse was pretty stout-looking. He probably would be a money horse if Tommy stayed with him to the whistle. Buddy had faith in his brother's ability and this was Tommy's favorite event. He saw that his brother was ready to sit down and he would be the first one out.

He thought to himself, "Boy! Tommy will give the other contestants a mark to shoot at!"

Buddy saw Bob beginning to tighten the cinch and decided he'd better step to the side before he got run over. Besides the judges were motioning to the other cowboys to move to the side.

The action was all set and Buddy could see Tommy sit down on his bronc and nod to the gate man to "Open 'er up," while keeping his eyes on the bronc's neck and head. The gate swung open and for a fraction of a second Buddy could see a perfect picture of his brother leaning slightly back and sitting high with his toes pointed out, just above the shoulders of the bronc. His left hand was pointed to the sky for balance, and Buddy saw Tommy grit his teeth before the bronc turned out into the arena. He watched every jump the big, bay horse made after the first important jump. His brother had marked him good as he had raked the shoulders and brought his legs high into the air until the whistle had blown.

Buddy thought, "Just the way the big boys do it! Pretty as a picture!"

He just hoped he would do as well as Tommy since this was his first rodeo participation. He was still hoping when he heard the announcer call Tommy's marking of "sixty-nine."

"Boy! That sure's a good marking," Buddy shouted to Tommy as he was limping back to the front of the chutes while he loosened the handkerchief tied around the top of the glove on his right wrist which kept it snug against the palm of his hand.

"I sure hope it stays that way," grinned Tommy quite satisfied with the score.

Bob walked over, shook Tommy vigorously and patted him on the back saying, "Good ride, Tommy!"

Buddy was glad his brother had made a high score and hoped he would stay in the winning bracket. Buddy kept thinking and hoping he would win the steer riding event so as not to let his brothers down. Besides, he wanted to be like them and he figured if he didn't win he wouldn't be able to take in the rodeos with them. Winning was Buddy's only real concern at the moment as he left the arena.

He heard that the other rider had made a scoring of fifty-three and the next had been bucked off.

He was contemplating the riding of his steer as he strolled over to the car.

He opened the car door and got the rubber pad, and placed it in position inside his pants, sung between his crotch as he used the car door for a screen. He really didn't care if someone had seen him since that was the least of his worries.

He looked up at the sky and saw that the clouds had finally accu-

mulated and would probably pour down the rain any minute now. He didn't care, not the least, rain or not.

Suddenly, he perked to attention as though his ears had deceived him as he heard the announcing of the Boys' Junior division steer riding.

He looked up and saw Bob headed towards the car. Bob hurriedly opened the car trunk and got out the bull rope that Buddy was to use on his steer.

Bob turned and asked, "Buddy, are you all set? The judges changed their minds and decided because of possible rain they'd better have it now before the track gets too slippery."

"On the track!" Buddy exclaimed.

"Yes, they got some chutes set up in front of the grandstands on the track and you'd better hurry," he added.

Buddy followed him as he went through the side-gate across the arena, and over the fence to the three small chutes to the right of the grandstands. The chutes had been dragged onto the track and were attached onto a small gate that led to a pen containing some yearling steers.

The judges and assistants were busy arranging the chute attachments to the gate opening as the rain began to pour down by the bucketfuls. The track was slippery within five minutes, but, from the looks of things, they intended to have the steer riding before it got even worse.

Buddy approached one of the judges and inquired, "When do I ride?"

"What's your name?" asked the judge.

"Buddy Thunder."

"Well, lessee, you're coming out about thirteenth," the judge answered.

"Thanks." Buddy said and turned back and informed his brother when he would ride.

Bob was attempting to keep the bull rope dry by wrapping his raincoat around it, as Tommy handed Buddy his raincoat he had retrieved from the car.

Finally, the judges hollered out that they were ready to start the steer riding event. The announcer was informed and he related this to the audience.

The announcer, quite jovially, began his announcing. "Ladies and gentlemen, today we are fortunate to be able to watch our future cowboys in their debut to the road of hard knocks. As you all know, this is a sport that requires a tough breed of men to desire this as a means of living, and there are always some that do make the grade. So let's see what material we have here today. Out of chute number one we have a cowboy by the name of _____."

So went the announcer as Buddy watched the kid hit the mud face down when the steer departed with his rider.

Each time the chute gates opened and closed a steer was either conquered or unconquered, and Buddy's turn drew nearer.

Finally, as the chutes were being filled for the fifth time, Buddy saw that he would be first out of chute number one in this grouping.

He put his glove on while Bob set his bull rope on his steer and had Tommy tie his handkerchief snugly around his right wrist. While Tommy was tying the wrist, Buddy looked up at Bob and noticed an unusual thing. Bob was nervous.

Bob looked down and asked, "You all set, Buddy?"

"Hope so," Buddy replied as he checked the snugness of his spurs and glove and took his raincoat off and handed it to Tommy.

Buddy climbed up on the chute-gate and swung over almost astride the steer. He reached up and pulled his hat down until it pushed his ears down.

He thought, "Boy! I bet I look awful funny, but that's the way it goes!"

"Sit down on him!" ordered Bob.

Buddy sat down on the steer and slipped his right hand into the handhold that was braided in the rope.

Buddy said, "Okay, tighten 'er up, Bob."

Buddy felt the rope becoming tighter until he decided that it was snug enough and looked up at Bob and signaled that it was tight enough. He sat down high onto his hand on the steer's back and turned his toes out, digging his spurs deep into the steer's belly.

"Are you all set, Buddy?" asked Bob.

"Yep! Outside!"

Out of the corner of his eye he could see the gate swing open, but he kept his full attention on the steer's head and lowered his shoulder to the gate and pushing his chest outward while attempting to keep his left hand reaching to the sky. The steer's head turned and Buddy leaned his weight to the left as the steer came out with a leap. The steer landed hard and Buddy could feel the jolt, but he knew the pad would absorb most of the shock. He pulled upward hard on the rope and knew he must stay close to his hand or else get bucked off. He took every jump the steer gave and dug his spurs in deep with every jump as he brought them straight out and in, out and in. He could see the people in the grandstands flying past, so he figured he was moving awfully fast.

Finally, as he was wishing the whistle would blow, it did. Buddy let go as he swung his right leg over to the left to roll off, but the steer bucked upward just then, and threw him down on the side of his back. The left side of his beautiful white and red polka dot shirt was covered with mud.

He looked up to see his two brothers running towards him, hollering with glee.

Bob grabbed Buddy and threw him high into the air and caught him shouting, "You rode him, you rode him, Buddy!"

Tommy was pounding him on the back hollering, "That's our little brother, Bob, that's our boy!"

Buddy was filled to the capacity with exultation. He knew now he would be with them at every rodeo.

He forgot about the mud on his shirt and walked over to pick up the bull rope out of the mud.

He was walking on a cloud.

The afternoon passed quickly and the next thing his name was announced with his brother's to come over in front of the chutes to receive their awards. His brother Tommy had won first in bareback and third in bull riding. He had placed third.

The judge called out, "Buddy Thunder, third place in the Boys Junior division steer riding."

Buddy walked towards the judge with a swagger of the hips to shake hands and receive the award. It was a large, yellow ribbon with a horse's head outlined in the ruffled center with two, long ribbons hanging down.

He walked back, still swaggering, with a big exalted smile stretching from ear to ear. They, too, were smiling and Buddy notice that Bob wasn't nervous anymore.

Buddy curiously asked, "Bob, why were you so nervous?"

"Can't I get nervous when my little brother makes his first attempt at riding!" Bob laughed.

Buddy thought later as he admired his ribbon while they were driving home, "Boy! What a day of reckonin'!"

" . . . FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED"

Colleen Deimer

He walked again through the small valley town, shoulders stooped under a brown leather jacket stained bloody. His young face scarred long and narrow, red from the snowshine, eyes whiteblue and squinting against the glare. He smiled the same smile, looking at everything he passed, studying it, touching it with his smile.

The afternoon was quiet. He heard them speaking, the two men. One had a shovel for clearing snow, one stood with a newspaper rolled under his arm. They were familiar to him. He had seen them before. He knew them.

"Hello." He smiled at the two of them, stopping his walk, standing, watching them, waiting. He would stay, if invited.

A dog ran, golden and barking with wagging tail, leaving clover footprints in the new snow. He stood in front of the young stooping man, waiting to be spoken to. He patted the dog's wet fur. Then looked again at the two of them. The smile: green leaves and roses.

They nodded pleasantly, and stood silent until he walked on.

"Claude isn't a bad boy." Harry said, resting his chin on the shovel handle, looking seriously at the figure moving bent down the sidewalk. "So many kids are smart alecks. You know?"

Jud lit a darkwood pipe, holding the match between black gloved hands, blew the flame into nothing, tossed the charred matchstick into the snow. The dog sniffed it and laid down. "Claude sets a good example for the kids as far as that goes. He can't help it if his face's all cut up. Ever hear what happened?"

"Naw," Harry answered.

"But it's nobody's business. Hell, he can't help how he looks." Jud slapped the Daily News against his blue wool arm.

"But that damned coat. That damned old bloody coat."

"Oh, it isn't as bad as all that, Harry. Looks to me like he tried to get it cleaned up, but the stains wouldn't come out." He stopped and thought for a moment. "He's got his good points. That's for sure. He's kind."

"Well, that's true. That's true." Harry kicked his foot at the snow, drew a circle with his toe, head bent like a child being scolded.

"Really, you know that makes up for his coat and his face and all. And the kids like him."

"He's simple minded, you know, Jud. But God, I can't blame him for that."

"Heavens no. He's sad. Awful sad. Ever noticed? I think his whole trouble is he's so damn devoted to his father, an' then askin' a kid to live

clear up there in that damned monstrosity of a house. He always sends the kid down. Ever noticed that? No matter what the weather, he sends the kid. Lord, I haven't seen the old man for a million years or so. Doubt I'd even know him now. And you know, he was the first one here? That house must be as old as Methuselah."

Harry looked far away at an old white shadow planted high on a hill. "Really plush, they tell me. Real beautiful. But hell, I wish they'd clean up the road a little. We were talking the other day, about how maybe we'd go visit, if the road wasn't so damn messy."

Public road, Harry. Really isn't up to them to clean it up."

"Leads to their house, Jud. It does go to their house."

Their thoughts echoed in word clouds hanging in cold air, then vanished.

"Good God, it's colder than hell out here this morning."

"Yeah. Bring your wife and come on over when you get through shovelin'. We can watch television or do something else exciting like that." He shrugged. "Sundays are so damn long." He bounced on his toes through the snow to a porch not far away; stamped his feet, and entered the house he called home.

The town stood bluecold and silent as he walked slowly, stopping now and then to look. The bar door stood open slightly. Frosted glass cast light green shadows upon his face. He stood, watching through the door crack with blue eyes watering cold; listening. The sweet smell of home floated to the sidewalk.

Tall, shaped sharp like a lightening bolt, he stood at the bar, holding a wine glass, talking loud, drunk, ragged. A corpulous man with a flat face stood beside the dark man, the thin man. "When you die, Jake, you gonna go to heaven or to hell?"

They all laughed, the fat one's stomach bouncing against the bar front.

"Hell." He answered, swiming crooked over two pointed teeth. "Hell hell hell hell." He filled his glass from the tall narrow wine bottle and raised it in the air. "My mammy, she's a g-o-o-d woman. She go to heaven. My pappy, he a g-o-o-d man. He go to heaven. My wife a fine beautiful g-o-o-d woman. Heaven." He waved a long dark arm, spilling redblack wine down his coat front. "All my g-o-o-d kin in heaven." Voice loud, then dropped to the bottom of his stomach. He raised an eyebrow, put a finger beside his nose. "Now they's waitin' for me. They's up there." A smile came slowly to the side of his mouth. "Why should I work my bones climbin' them *golden steps* to heaven? When I get there, there's all my damned kin, and I'll get the same hell I've got a guaranteed ticket to in the first place."

They laughed from their tables as they listened to him. The fat man's belly followed the laughter. He wiped tears from his redfringed eyes. The

sharp one yelled toward the door shadow standing still. "What you starin' at, google face?"

Claude's eyes looked into the jagged man. The talking stopped. The room turned cold, air blowing in from the open door. The man shuddered and turned away. He poured another drink.

Claude turned from the door and walked on.

The occupants of each table turned to one another, glancing back at the door, ignoring the man at the bar. They began talking quietly, breaking into silence. The show was ended for a while.

"Who was that kid?" The redfaced bloated man asked, asking confidentially close to the dark one.

"Some damned loony lives on top the hill." He drank with haste, gagged, slammed the glass against the bar.

"See ya." He said loudly. "See ya later, boys."

They nodded to him, watched him leave, pulling his coat tight around him as he met with the cold air.

The tears were in his eyes. The bar smell was on his coat; the taste of winter stung his throat. His footprints followed him silently. His footprints and his shadow.

They waited for him, laughing, hiding. They knew he would come through the park. When he came, their mittened hands hurled balls of snow that hit him, squashed against his coat, his trousers, his ears and the back of head. Some were hard and they stung more than the others. Some were soft featherballs bringing a kiss, leaving a faint blotch of red against his skin. Some had tiny pieces of gravel that cut small, unseen. He did not scold them. He waited for them to come out of hiding.

"Hi Claude. Hi. Hey, Claude. Whatchaknow?" They came around him. "Boy did we get you good. Boy did we get you that time."

"You sure did." He laughed with them.

"You want to make snowballs with us?"

Claude thought for a moment. *Perhaps they would like me better.* He looked at his coat and brushed his hands over it, ashamed. "Sure." He bent, gathered snow between his hands, feeling it fall cold and white through his fingers.

"Now throw it." The little boy laughed, jumping up and down; the green hat on his head jumping with him.

"No, I might hit someone." His voice was quiet, like always.

"Throw it at the fence. Come on, Claude."

The one named Johnny put his hand on Claude's arm. Claude looked down into the round brown face, the round brown eyes. "It's okay Claude. If you throw it at the fence, it's all right." His voice grave. "It's fun to throw it sometimes."

Claude threw the snowball. But the fence wasn't there any longer.

Instead, Mrs. Witcher. On her way home from a weekly Sunday afternoon Women of God Auxiliary's tea.

She shrivelled, pulled back and lunged at the young man with the dark brown hair. He looked at her and was sorry now that he had thrown the snowball.

The others regretted it too, but they couldn't stop their faces laughing as they watched her arms flying, lips flapping, a black hat with a feather bobbing. "You should be ashamed of yourself. I expected better things of you than this, you naughty wretched little imp. You're a menace to the ladies, that's what. A menace."

"It isn't his fault, Mrs. Witcher. We told him it was all right. We told him to throw it, Mrs. Witcher. Usually nobody comes through here on Sundays. You just got in the way, that's all." They opened their mouths, speaking quickly through front teeth missing, bubblegum coated tongues. "It wasn't Claude's fault."

"You simpleton," she said, the voice high pitched and brassy; old in a loose skinned throat. "You been ramblin' on in that big house so long you've taken leave of your senses. That's what."

The five boys looked at Claude, as he stood among them, listening to her words, unflinching, crystal tears in his eyes, and they were angry and afraid and they did not understand their feelings. The one with dirty yellow hair quietly raised his thumb to his redchapped nose, and began to wave his fingers at her.

Claude pushed the hand down gently. "I didn't mean to hit you. I hope I haven't hurt you."

"Well. I should say." She gathered herself, straightened her hat; the hand yellowwhite and blueveined like a plucked chicken. She walked away down the sidewalk, a bony hen with a sore toe.

They comforted him. "Gee, Claude, it wasn't your fault. Claude, don't feel bad. Mrs. Witcher is always wonderin' around spoilin' fun and gettin' into ever'thing she shouldn't be into. Aw, come on, Claude. We'll go get a cream cone. Okay? What kind of ice cream do you like, Claude?"

The children led him by the hands into the drug store, sat him at a table, and crowded in beside him, laughing.

He spoke. "Someday, you'll all have to come to my house for ice cream." he said, smiling at each one of them.

They looked at each other in silence, hiding behind ice cream cones. "Naw, Claude." The one with red hair and frechles said. His voice a whisper, ashamed. "Our parents told us no."

"Why?" Claude asked. "Why won't they let you come?"

"Oh, it's not that they don't like you. It's not that they think you're looney or anything like that," one of them said, too hurriedly.

"It's too far. That's what they said. It's just too far, and we're too

little'." He said brashly toying with a coat button. "You know parents, Claude. You know the way parents are."

"But I would take good care of you." He said, looking at each of them. "We would have such a nice time."

"Well, maybe sometime, Claude. Maybe next year of somethin'." He stood up. "When we're older."

Outside, the little brown hand touches Claude's arm. "Don't worry. they can't come to my house either. It's all right. Don't cry or nothin'." They still like you."

They left him alone on the corner. It was time for supper. Claude walked through growing darkness, looking far away. Smoke blew slow and gray from a chimney, lay down for a moment on the air, rippled in the breeze and was gone. A train stood, black and motionless, silent, like a cold dream, far beyond the buildings. The Flag blew once, quickly, far away. A little rectangle that cried, "I am the symbol of a country, a motto, a freedom." as it struggled to free itself from the narrow rope that bound it to the flag pole.

Night shadows chase themselves. He climbs the rock path to his home. The door is heavy as he pushes on it. He enters the large room, the light falls upon him, warming him.

His father comes, stepping soft, graceful, down stairs carpented white. "Where have you been, Son?" The man is small, wrinkled, smiling. His voice deep like a river running smooth.

"Walking, Father."

"Why do you look so sad?"

His son stands, tired and old before him. "We are strangers to them, Father. They do not want us.

They are sad, Father, but they do not know how to cry, for themselves or for others. They try to be happy, but they do not know how." He sits in a polished wooden chair, his head hidden behind his hands. "It's as if they were numb, Father." There are tears in his eyes as he looks across the room at the old white man sitting in a great soft chair before the window. "The children, Father. All of the beautiful little children."

The old man watches the lights of the town below him. "Blessed are they that mourn . . ." he mutters the promise of so long ago.

He sees the feet of his son climbing the stairs, slowly, heavily. "God help them." Claude whispers at the stair top.

The old man moves from his chair, and puts on a faded green coat. He closes the heavy door behind him and descends the hill into the frozen night. The light from the many windows of his home blow snowflakes gold and silver to his shoulders, his old gray hair as he approaches the town that bears his name.

AND MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP

Eugene Taylor, Jr.

He stood diminutively against the building's dim chamber rooted just outside, stretched to his full height and pressed firmly to the wall. In the soft semi-darkness of dusk the air was pungent with the dampness and chill of this season's first frost. Lord, but I am cold, he thought, breathing deeply. My home is not here, I was born and bred for openness and to feel the soft undulating caresses of my tossing companions. What he wanted was to return to his homeplace, faintly remembered—after all these months and now as strange as any other from which he might have been brought. Only now did he pause to think of the human land which had gently pulled him from the others. Yes, a human weakness had created him of that which was rightfully his. He thought of how his absence had aroused his companions, and their rustle of movement as he left, how they cursed the impersonal hand which had passed his irrevocable judgement. Now, he was no longer a part of their life. He was simply a figurehead of human greed and uncaring. He closed himself against the latest chill and drank in the wet familiar dark, thinking, I don't belong here; here I am not complete.

His closed half was starting to adjust to the dimness. The awful work of the frost was starting to leave its tell-tale mark on his outer appendages. Across the length of the building a rising wall of tiny multi-colored lights winked and gleamed, hastening the arrival of the night, gently illuminating the chamber's height against the lower level of the concrete. The lights steadied themselves at sure levels; pin-point faces softly scintillating, regulating their vast power, guiding the night toward

He swore, bowing himself, and drew his first painful breath. He didn't want to think about his ultimate destination. It seemed so grossly unfair somehow, but then he imagined that was how it must seem to all His servants at such a time.

He moved slowly, circularly, toward the glowing panel of lights and savored the immense breathing presence of the earth and lowered himself still more towards the cushioning depth beneath him. There was an almost imperceptible vibration of movement as the cold crept along each fiber of his body.

He sighed, giving forth another painful breath. He didn't need the starlight to read the signs; they were graven on his brain, before tonight's end it would certainly all be over, there was so little time left.

Lying in his bed, he stared at the stars pricking the dark night sky beyond him. The stars were telling him he should be out there with them, that he had no business being here, alone, in the cold. They understood him.

Oh, they'd tried to make him feel at home here. He was given every

comfort; food, and the binding gift of a fence to shelter him. Yes, they had given him everything except the chance to go back. His screams of removal still rang faintly in his memory.

He felt trapped and somehow abused, transplanted by those who had looked and remarked how noble he seemed, yet, through it all he wanted to damn them, because now it was too late. The coldness licked at his senses, forcing the small bent flower even closer to the ground. Sighing wearily, he closed himself completely to the cold, shutting out even the bright beckoning stars.

As the small, slanting rays of light touched the building, tenderly reaching just into the dim chamber, the small object no longer pressed itself against the short wall. In the soft semi-darkness of dawn the air sparkled dryly in the all-enveloping coldness. Above the wilted object, the dials of sunlight grew. Its petals were noticeably chill-bitten, and its bed sparkled whitely. Its muted thoughts no longer rang out clearly, and even as the snow crystals melted in the rays of the rising sun, they too thought, even as the small flower once had . . . Lord, but this is fine.

THE VANISHING LOVER

Sam Shoultz

The waves were violent, and hungrily lapped at the glistening sand. Far off, the breakers could be heard thundering against the cliffs, like Thor with his mighty hammer. It was a lonely stretch of sand and it seemed as if there were some evil in the air. All of this was not noticed by the young man who was walking along the beach, barefooted in the sand, with a paper in his hand. The headlines of the paper jumped out: **PRETTY HEIRESS MISSING — POLICE SEEKING BOYFRIEND.**

The straw-colored hair of the young man was constantly being blown into his face by the restless wind, and each time he brushed his hair back, lines of fear and grief could be seen etched on his young face. He had not shaved for some time and his whiskers had the appearance of the stubble in a freshly cut field of wheat. His stylish, expensive clothes were not neat and pressed as they had been several days ago, but hung on him, sacklike, in wrinkles.

He raised the paper, looked at the headline again and the thought, "Why did I do it?" rushed through his mind. He knew he could not go to the police, because they would never believe what he had to tell them, but how could he blame the policemen when he could hardly believe what had happened himself? What if they thought he was crazy because of what he would tell them? Would they try to send him to an assylum saying that he was criminally insane? All the evidence pointed straight to him and they

were sure to think that he had killed her. He knew, or at least he thought he knew, that he had not harmed her in any way. After all, weren't they engaged to be married? What had happened to her was of the supernatural and unexplainable!

His mind slipped back to Friday night when he had gone to visit her at her home. He remembered just how she looked when she walked in. She was wearing a light pink dress which accented her fiery red hair and dark blue eyes. "What would you like to do tonight?" he asked her.

"Why don't we go to your apartment, and I'll fix us supper? Is that all right with you?"

"Of course it is: you know how well I like your cooking."

The dinner was delicious, for she was a good cook. Later, they cleared the table and washed the dishes, together of course, as they always did everything. Then, when they had settled themselves in the livingroom, she asked him to hypnotize her. That had not been the first time. In fact, ever since she found out that he knew how to hypnotize people, she begged him to 'put her under' every time they were alone. At first he would hypnotize her for just a few minutes and bring her out again, but this time she had said, "Darling, why don't you ask me some questions about our future, just to see if I can answer them?"

He had not wanted to, but she finally talked him into it. His first question was easy: how many people would attend their wedding? She had answered that forty would. Next he asked her where they would go for their honeymoon and she told him, "Maple Hollow, Vermont." She had answered him so easily that he decided to delve a little more in to the future.

The next thing he knew, it was two hours later and he asked her what significant events would happen in 1998. She seemed not to hear or understand him, so he presented the question again. This time, she started to tremble, and he noticed her getting very pale. Her once dark blue eyes and fiery red hair had now started to shimmer, like a pale white fluorescent lamp. He suddenly became afraid and mentally calming himself, began to snap his fingers loudly, which had always brought her out of a trance before. But this time she would not come out! He saw her lips moving and when he leaned close enough to hear, he heard her mutter that she had died in 1997 and must return to her grave. He rushed to her side and began to snap his fingers in her ear and violently shake her. But it was to no avail. He helplessly watched her while she slowly grew paler and the once distinct outline of her body began to fade into a shimmering indistinctness. He threw himself onto the floor and began to sob uncontrollably.

THE RETURN

Jane Logan

"How much farther, Dad?" the small boy queried as he leaned over the seat.

"Yeh, how long till we get there?" his younger sister chimed in.

"That is the third time you've asked that question in the last five miles, and I told you that it's five miles past Riley's Crossing.

A few minutes of silence followed this reply.

"Hey, Dad, is that it? Is that Riley's Crossing? Is it only five more miles now?"

"Yep, that's it."

"Dad, was it really like you said? Did you really live here once?"

"Yes, it was really like that," Harold Martin, the much questioned father replied. "I was born in the farmhouse there. I had some wonderful times on that place. I used to swim in the creek and fish off the footbridge. I had a dog called Topper who went every place with me. I used to go with Dad around the farm. Sometimes he'd let me ride one of the work horses. But I had chores to do too: haul wood and water, hoe the garden and help my mother. When I was about ten, my father got an itchy foot and decided to move to California. He said there was more opportunity for a man out West, so we sold the place to a couple by the name of Elberg and moved to California. That was twenty-five years ago, and I haven't been back since. Well, this looks like the old place right here."

The car turned off the highway into a dusty farmyard.

"Well, this is it, Alice," Harold said to his wife. "I'll go and ask and see if they will let us look around."

Harold Martin climbed out of the car and started toward the house. His eyes took in the house and yard. The house was shining white instead of the soft weathered gray he remembered. And the cottonwood in the side yard had grown from a slim sapling into a massive shade tree. The pump was gone from the yard. How cool and sweet the water had tasted from that pump on a hot summer day, but they would surely have indoor plumbing by now. He climbed the steps and knocked on the screen door. Suddenly a black and white Border collie, caught napping on the job, burst out of the door barking loud enough to be heard in the next county.

"Vic, be quiet," a woman said as she opened the door.

The dog slunk away with a parting "wuf."

"Mrs. Elberg?"

"No, I'm Mrs. Harrison. The Elbergs sold the place to us about two years ago and moved to Omaha. Can I help you?"

"I'm Harold Martin. I was born on this place. We sold the place to the Elbergs when I was a small boy and moved to California. My family

and I are on our way to St. Louis to visit my wife's cousins, and I decided to swing by and show my kids where I lived when I was a boy."

"Well, Mr. Martin, you're welcome to show your family around the farm. My husband is cultivating corn on the south end. Stop and say 'hello' to him if you get down that way."

"I'll do that, Mrs. Harrison, and thanks for letting us look around."

Harold returned to the car.

"Come on," he said to his family, "We'll leave the car here and take a look around."

The family started across the field toward a little stream—the two children running ahead, the husband and wife coming more slowly. The collie, who had accepted their presence, trotted ahead with the children, his white tipped tail gaily waving. Impulsively Harold reached down and caught his wife's hand.

"Alice," he said, "I wish we could raise our kids in the country. Life is much more uncomplicated out here. There's none of the pressure and hurrying of city life. The kids would have room to run. They could have a dog and other pets if they wanted them. It would be cheaper to live in the country too. We could grow our own food. When I retire, maybe we can get a little place in the country somewhere."

"Hey, Dad, how do we get across the creek?"

"Well, now, the foot bridge used to be just around the bend. Let's see if it's there yet."

The four rounded the bend in the creek, but no little wooden foot bridge greeted their gaze. Instead a shiny metal culvert covered with earth made the crossing. The family crossed the little stream and started up the hill into a patch of woods. Harold noticed that the woods were smaller now. As the need for tillable land had grown, the trees had been cut, their stumps uprooted, and the leafy forest humus had enriched another field. Now, only the steepest, rockiest part of the hill had been left to the trees.

As the family left the shade of the trees and crested the hill, they heard the steady put-put of a tractor—Mr. Harrison cultivating corn. They descended the hill and started toward the tractor.

When Mr. Harrison saw them, he stopped the tractor, climbed down, and walked over to meet them. Harold introduced himself and his family and explained their presence. As he did so, his eyes took in the big green diesel tractor hitched to the cultivator. How different things were done now. He remembered how his father had cultivated the corn with the team of big Clydesdales, the shiny cultivator blades cutting the dark earth. His father had walked behind, the reins looped over his neck, his hands steadying and guiding the cultivator. Sometimes his father would let him ride one of the big horses. Then he would grip the hames tightly, his short legs sticking out from the horse's great barrel, and pretend to be a knight or cowboy.

"Yes, Mr. Martin," Mr. Harrison was saying, "I reckon you'll find things have changed a bit since you were a boy. Farming is just like any other business. You plant a crop and hope it grows. If it does you make a profit, if it doesn't you go broke. But we don't depend on nature so much anymore, now that we have so much help from science: fertilizers, insecticides, hybrid plants, and machinery that can do the work of twenty men."

Harold snapped back to the present. "Do you grow a garden? I was telling my kids how I used to hoe in ours until my back ached and my hands were blistered, and still there were weeds."

"No, we don't put in a garden. I don't have the time, and neither does my wife Ella. She does all the book work for us. You know, there's almost as much paper work to running a farm as there is to running a store. Besides, with just the two of us, it's cheaper to buy what we need. I'll tell you what, though, you go ahead and look around. In about half an hour I'll be done here. Then I'll show you folks the rest of the place. I own the old Riker place next door too. I'll take you over there too, if you'd like. I've got some new hybrid corn that looks awful nice."

"Thanks, Mr. Harrison, but we've got to get to Grand Island tonight, yet. I think we'd better just go back to the house and be on our way."

"Aw, Dad, do we have to go?"

"Yes, we'd better. Well, it's been nice meeting you folks. Thanks for letting us look around. So long."

The four of them walked quickly and silently back across the fields to the car. Mrs. Harrison waved to them as they drove out of the yard.

As they turned onto the highway, the little girl said, "Hey, look Daddy, there's a horse."

Harold Martin looked where she was pointing. An old, broken-down work horse stood in the shade of a tree, switching flies. Harold tried not to look as they passed by.

THE "39" BULL

Richard L. Donning

The hot sun shone down steadily on the dry, dusty rodeo arena. The clown, dressed in baggy coveralls and a red and white striped shirt, bent over and tightened one of the strings on his dusty cleats. Then he looked toward the bucking chutes, anticipating the next ride.

The loud speaker blared from above the chutes, across the arena, and reached the grandstand and bleachers which were packed with a colorful Sunday afternoon crowd. The announcer was informing the spectators of the judges' scoring on the last bull ride.

Then he continued, "Now out of chute number 3 we'll have Douglas

Johnson on bull number 39. Doug is a young cowboy who comes to us all the way from Calgary, Canada. This is his first year in the professional ranks of the Rodeo Cowboy's Association, but he has already won \$2,490 this season to put him in as third in the standings."

In chute number 3, Doug was settling down on the broad back of the 39 bull. The bull was a new one on the bucking string of the rodeo company which was in charge of the rodeo, so it had no name yet and was referred to only as the "39" bull. Doug has asked around about the bull but no one had ever seen it come out of the chute save for one cowboy who could remember only that "it was a bad one for spinnin'" and that being a young bull, it was a little bit on the mean side.

Actually the 39 bull had only been out of the chutes three times before this ride and now he was putting up quite a fuss as Doug was trying to straddle him.

Doug pulled his bull rope as tight as he could and waited while a cowboy adjusted the flank strap. Then Doug forced his hand into the braided rigging and took his wraps. He eased down on the bull and clinched his legs, with the well resined chaps around the bull's enormous body. Suddenly the bull tried to rear up in the chute and he smashed Doug's leg against the side. Doug climbed up away from the bull and started talking to it until it once again quieted and stood apprehensively in the narrow chute with its head down.

The clown came over and peered between the planks on the chute gate to see what the delay was. He noticed the young cowboy was rubbing his leg but was gamely settling back down on the bull. The clown looked at the bull. It was a big bull for a bucking string. It weighed well over 1500 pounds and was especially broad with shaggy brown hair. Foam slobbered out of its mouth and the whites of its eyes were prominent. Also prominent were the eight inch stubs which had once been sharp pointed horns projecting from its head.

Doug once again settled down on the 39 bull and as soon as he felt right, he yelled, "Outside! Outside with the bull!"

The bull stood there for a second, not fully realizing that the chute gate had been quickly swung open. A man behind the chute jabbed a hot-shot into the bull's shoulder and to Doug, the bull seemed to explode. A man once said that riding a bull was like climbing on a box car and trying to ride it down the side of Pikes Peak. Doug was forced to agree, especially this time. It was the strongest bull that he had ever been on. It jumped straight out of the chute, desperately trying to rid itself of its burden. The rider dug his spurs in deeply and help on with all of his might. The 39 bull took three jumps straight out. Each jump seemed higher than the last and as rider and bull hit the ground, Doug thought he would be torn apart.

On the fourth jump the bull suddenly twisted violently to the right,

throwing Doug off balance over its left shoulder. The bull sensed the closeness of its tormentor and hooked at him with its horn. The stubby horn on the bull's wide head caught Doug fully in the chest. Doug's hand hung up momentarily in the bull rope. The bull jumped sideways away from the cowboy and the rowel on Doug's spur pulled a strip of hair from the bull's hide as his foot slipped across the broad back. He was suddenly aware of the salty taste of blood in his mouth and as he hit the ground, he could also taste the arena dirt. His chest hurt violently as he tried to gasp for breath and he was afraid to cough.

The bull whirled, and seeing the cowboy lying limply on the ground, charged toward him. Doug felt a sudden jolt of many breaking ribs. He was tossed into the air and rolled over several times. He was aware of the audience's horrified gasp and he could hear the bell on his bull rope clanging. Ironically, he also heard the eight second buzzer blow, terminating his ride.

Doug saw the clown run between himself and the bull, jabbing a broom at the bull and distracting its attention. Then, mercifully, the cowboy from Canada slipped into unconsciousness.

The clown jabbed the broom viciously into the bull's eyes, blinding it, until it turned and trotted toward the far end of the arena, trailing the bull rope behind it. The clown threw the broom at the bull in a futile gesture and swore violently as he ran to Doug's side. The clown eased Doug over on his back. Foamy blood trickled from a corner of the bull rider's mouth. A siren wailed in the distance but it seemed an eternity before the ambulance entered the arena. A crowd had quickly gathered around the bull's victim.

A young woman, also from Calgary, pushed through the crowd and fell by the still figure, sobbing uncontrollably. The ambulance arrived and as the stretcher was laid out, the clown put his weathered hands on her shaking shoulders and gently but firmly steadied her. She fell against his chest still crying, but silently now. The clown felt helpless, more helpless than he had ever felt in his life. He smoothed the hair back from her face and noticed the blood on her neck and collar. He guided her into the ambulance and as it sped away, the siren wailing in mournful contrast to the bright red flashing light, he knew he would never forget.

The arena cleared and the next bull rider was almost ready. After all, "the show must go on."

But the clown still stood in the middle of the arena, silently hating. Hating the world, hating all of its 39 bulls. hating rodeoing itself. But he stood there hating himself most of all.

LIGHT BROWN WITH BLACK STRIPES

Steve Shelsta

The final wires were connected and the timing piece set for ten o'clock. The three men, who had been meeting in the dimly lighted shack for the past week, now relaxed and one of them said, "Whew—I'm glad that job's done. Now let's go have a drink."

The largest of the three men thoughtfully rubbed his stubbled, dirty face and muttered, "I still wonder why that guy who hired us was so mysterious-like. Ya know—he didn't say his name or nothin'. He just told us what to do. An' he was kinda nervous-like, too."

"I don't care how he sounded," added the third man. "He paid us a hundred bucks for fixing up this little package and putting it in that building over on the north side, so that's what we're going to do. That's more money than I've seen in ten years; just think how drunk we can get for a hundred bucks," he adding laughingly. "Well, let's go put the package where that guy told us to and then go to Joe's."

Each of the three was capable of thinking, each possessed an imagination and perhaps even a trace of conscience, but in their situation and faced with the prospect of a hundred dollars, which of them would dare use any one of these faculties? During the preceding week, many an anxious and questioning glance had been cast, but after a quick drink of whiskey, the work had been resumed.

* * *

Amelia had been excited all week, but today she was almost too excited to sit still. Amelia was a small Negro girl, whose enthusiasm showed from her huge brown eyes to her dark skinned feet, which were never stationary for more than three seconds. Sunday, the next day, was to be her first day of Sunday School and she was looking forward to that as much as she did her birthday. Today was the day she was going downtown with her mother to get new clothes for the next day, a new hat, a dress, and the prettiest new shoes she had ever seen. They were light brown with black stripes.

That morning the Robinson family was watching television when the news broadcast came on describing racial demonstrations in a town not far from their own. "One man, a minister, died following a beating administered by several white southerners," declared the announcer, "while two companions of the dead civil-rights worker are in serious condition in a local hospital. Negro leaders have announced plans to stage an extensive march to protest this and other alleged violence shown them in recent weeks. Governor I. M. White has issued a statement blaming outside agitators for the continuation of violence in his state and warned that he

and the law enforcement agencies of the state cannot be held responsible for the safety of these and all other people involved in such activities."

For once that week, Amelia was quiet. "Why don't white people like us, Mama?" she asked in an innocent voice.

A reassuring smile tried to force its way onto Mrs. Robinson's face, but failed. "It's hard for you to understand, honey, but one day it won't be that way."

"When I go to church tomorrow, I'm going to pray for all the white people, Mama."

Mrs. Robinson's eyes moistened. "You do that, honey, that's what everyone should do."

Then Amelia remembered tomorrow, and exclaimed, "Come on, Mama, we have to go get my new dress and, oh, those pretty new shoes."

"OK, Amelia," replied her mother as she cleared her eyes, "but Daddy's gonna be home in a minute and he'll be tired after working all night. So you go on out and play and I'll call you when we're ready to go."

The small girl waved to her father as he drove up the driveway, then she ran into the neighbor's yard, greeting her friends. "Hi, honey," greeted Mrs. Robinson, "did you have a hard night?"

"Same as usual," came the weary reply, "and the floors were just as dirty."

John Robinson sat and leaned back in his chair with his tired legs propped on a stool. He was more quiet than usual this morning and his lined face showed signs of deep thought.

"Your supper will be ready in a minute, John, and then you can go to bed while Amelia and I are downtown shopping."

"Do you have to go downtown, honey? I don't like to have you go there alone."

"Why John, don't forget Amelia's big day tomorrow," Mrs. Robinson reminded him with a smile.

"Oh, that's right; it's really important to her, isn't it? There's something else important I want to talk to you about, honey. All that trouble they're havin' over in Jefferson City? That's getting awful close, and pretty soon we're gonna start havin' more trouble than we ever had. There's a lot of colored people gettin' hurt, and we've got Amelia to think of, too. How would you like to move, maybe to a place called Denver? There's work there, good work, and some of the fellas downtown say the people there are good and friendly!"

"Oh, John, it would be so much trouble and this is our home, but if it *is* better there, and for Amelia's sake . . ." Her eyes moistened again. Let's talk about it tomorrow after church," she asked as she dried her eyes. "Right now I had better get that young lady downtown to get her new clothes. She's looking forward to tomorrow so much."

The next day, the Robinson family was early to church, due to a certain amount of prodding by one small daughter. Amelia's face was glowing with anticipation and excitement as she ascended the steps, turned to the right, and entered her Sunday School class for the first time. Her parents smiled understandingly, then went on to church.

Just at ten o'clock the class began, and just at ten o'clock the earth shook with a tremendous explosion. For a moment the only sound was heaven-strewn bricks clattering to the ground; then shrieking, moaning, crying, and screaming blended together to produce the symphony of terrified pandemonium. Figures darting here and there through the smoke and rubble called for lost ones. When no answers were returned, the searchers fell into hysterical sobbing.

One member of the crowd which had gathered heard a man next to him ask what had happened, and was vaguely annoyed at this large man with a stubbled, dirty face. He heard the man mutter something, then saw him turn and walk quickly away.

A policeman going through the debris discovered and wept over a torn, lifeless body. Next to the limp bundle he saw an object and picked it up. It was a light brown shoe with black stripes.

"Why do the white people hate us, Mama? When I go to church tomorrow, I'm going to pray for all the white people."

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?

John Baker

It was spring again and the mountain was in its full verdant glory. The shrill warbling of the birds, the agile bounds of the deer, the turbulent tumult of the mountain stream where it cascaded into a small but spectacular waterfall, all accentuated the splendor of the setting.

Above, the sky was a lucid, sparkling blue with a fleecy cloud hanging here and there with reckless abandon. And in the center of the sky a gilded sun was radiating its warmth, like golden drops of good cheer. There was just the lightest hint of a breeze rustling the tree tops.

The sight of the row on row of emerald pines and jade-colored spruces made one feel relaxed and at one with nature. There was tangy smell of flowers; exquisite flowers, with their ripe, colorful glory unfolding in fields of yellows as bright as the sun, of reds as warm as ruby lips, of whites, like small earth-bound clouds.

And wandering among the whistling birds, the chattering chipmunks, and the smells and sights of the lush foliage, was a young girl. Looking like a part of the scene, she seemed to glow like the sun, with an easy, breezy walk like the breeze that gave the scene its careless air. She stopped here

and there to pick a flower, and tenderly, with a love of the beautiful and delicate and beautiful, she sniffed its fragrance, she marveled at its intricate beauty, then she carefully deposited it in a woven basket she carried.

Where have all the flowers gone?

Young girls picked them ev'ry one.

The brilliant sun caught her auburn hair and made it shine like the cascading waterfall. Her effervescent dark eyes also reflected the sun with her sparkling warmth; they seemed to be continuously smiling, and they probably were. She had full red lips, and when she smiled a perfect set of ivory-white teeth, shone like gleaming dewdrops. And on her rosy cheeks two beautiful dimples winked, with the air of sweet, mirthful innocence.

She was now descending the hill with the grace of a ballet dancer, her perfectly formed legs, with their hint of tan, moving carelessly, yet expertly from rock to rock. In one hand she carried her basket of flowers, with the fragrant odor permeating the air while her other hand delicately traced invisible designs in the air as she kept faultless balance on the rocky slope.

Once down the hill she seemed to be running toward something, or was it someone? Yes, it was. A young man was waiting at the bottom of the hill. She ran up to him and they exchanged a look which was deeper than any words can tell. Then he softly took her basket and carried it, and with his other hand he gently took her hand. And as they slowly walked down the silent trail it was easy to see how they felt about each other.

Where have all the young girls gone?

Gone to young men ev'ry one.

The youth seemed to fit into the fields and forests as perfectly as the girl, just as they themselves fitted together so perfectly. He was fairly tall with a supple, but not overly-muscular frame. His bronze skin made his brownish hair appear lighter than it was. His face had a look of knowledge beyond his years, with clear-cut features. His jade green eyes sparkled with the same warmth as the girl's and when he smiled, he had even, pearly white teeth.

As spring advanced into summer, they could often be seen, strolling hand in hand through the warm, green forests and lush many-colored fields of flowers. And at the end of summer they were married. There could not have been a happier couple, and it looked as if things could not be better.

The summer ended all too quickly, but the life of the newlyweds continued to be vibrant and their love for each other flourished. Then the young man decided to enlist in the army because there was trouble in the Far East and he felt it was his duty to do what he could. They said their fond farewells, and he promised to write as often as he could, and there were no tears shed, because he would be back in a matter of months.

Where have all the young men gone?

Gone for soldiers ev'ry one.

With the first flurried snow of winter he was transferred to a combat zone, which of course worried the girl. But, he wrote often and told her there was nothing to worry about and he still loved her; and, of course, she still loved him. Then, on the darkest days of winter, with the snow covering the mountain's trees and the wind howling about her doorstep, she received a telegram from the War Department. Her husband had died bravely and would be honored as a hero, and there was more, but she could read no further for she was blinded by the surge of tears that rushed from her eyes.

His body was returned and he was buried with quite a crowd attending, all of them saying what a shame it was that such a brave young man should die, and wondering why, though the worst must fight, the best must die. And in the midst of the throng an auburn-haired beauty stood with unsmiling eyes and lips as cold as death.

Where have all the soldiers gone?

Gone to graveyards ev'ry one.

Winter turned into spring, and the mountain bloomed again. There was the tang of pine resin and flower petals. The sun shone, and the clouds, like puffs of pure-white smoke, drifted lazily across the pale blue sky. Below, there was the sound of the cascading waterfall and the twirping birds. And in the open fields there were the flowers; the delicate violets, marigolds and lilies. A young flaxen-haired girl was there picking the flowers, while a few feet away her dark-haired Adonis waited.

Where have all the graveyards gone?

Gone to flowers ev'ry one.

When will they ever learn? *When will they ever learn?*

NO TRUMPETS, NO DRUMS

Rod Shelsta

"The world is a beautiful, wonderful place," he thought as he went along. It was one of those unbelievable mid-winter days that are famous in the southwest. Although it was towards the end of January, the sun was shining brilliantly in a sky unpolluted by clouds. The weather, while not really warm, was just crisp enough to be invigorating and inspiring. The air was clear; the country, some of the most barren imaginable, was beautiful in a strong and rugged way. "Yes, the world is truly beautiful today."

Here he was, going down the road, hell-bent for election, in his stubby, low-slung little roadster. The top was down, the wind whistling around him, and he was loving it. Because he was rather tall, and the windshield rather low, his head stuck up above it and the wind blew his hair so that it looked as if he had a patch of grass up there. So what? Who cares? Him least of

all. He was on the road, moving again. That was the important thing. He was content. He had with him almost all his worldly possessions. The passenger seat was full, skis, poles, a suitcase, a duffel bag, and his old crash helmet made it a bit cramped in the cockpit, but he was on his own, moving. He was free!

As he was moving and feeling so great he had to keep his mind off the reason he was moving, why he was going from this place he loved so much back to a place that he was decidedly lukewarm to, to a life he had thought he was through with forever. But circumstances had decreed this not to be so. He was being forced to return to it again. But not for long. This he knew for sure.

He was driving, noticing the scenery, smiling at the people who stared at him as he passed them or they passed him. He periodically checked the instruments on the dashboard of his car just to make sure that everything was working correctly. This was one thing that he was proud of—his love of machinery and the pride he took in it. His special love was this machine, the one he had spent so much time on, and put so many loving hours into. And he was trying to keep it as good as possible.

On one such check he noticed something wrong. The oil pressure gauge was reading zero which should have read sixty. The words of a mechanic friend of his flashed through his mind, "Man, when you got no oil pressure, you better shut 'er down right now. Somethin's real wrong." This was just what he was doing when he heard that "Clatter, clatter, clatter!" that driver dread. That dread sound that means that he had blown his engine. Of course, one always thinks it's not that. That it's something caught in the fan, or dragging on the ground, anything else except what it always is. The engine is blown. Naturally as soon as this started he stopped and checked everything. Sure enough, the worst was true, the engine was out of oil.

"You dirty _____!" he shouted at it in a blind rage. "After all the time and love I've put into you, how can you do this to me?" Of course after just a moment he realized this was foolishness; after all, it was only a machine, inanimate, nothing but steel and aluminum and no oil. Yet somehow it did have a soul and a spirit. At least so it seemed him and to a few other nuts like him. And it had let him down terribly. He was very disappointed. He looked around and suddenly it wasn't such a wonderful place anymore. The sun, somehow, seemed to be a little dingy. That strong, beautiful, rugged country now seemed nothing but a vast, barren waste. Things didn't look wonderful at all. That sick, sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach only served to emphasize this to him. Suddenly he was very tired.

Quickly, after sitting and feeling sorry for himself for all of nine

seconds, he decided he had better start thinking, and fast, about what he was going to do. He still had a long way to go.

As luck would have it, he was at the top of a long incline. He knew his engine was good for just a few more miles before it froze solid and was ruined completely. Off in the distance he saw something on the side of the road—a filling station. He decided to chance his engine to try to make it. He climbed in, started his engine, and took off. He ran it up to about fifty, shut it off, and coasted down the road. The young man was very nearly in tears just from having to listen to his beloved engine hammering away, hurting itself like this. But it had to be done. There was no other way. He hoped it understood.

As he coasted into the place, he noticed his surroundings. Hmmm, better than I'd hoped for," he thought to himself. "A truck stop, cafe, and a bar across the road and up a way. Could be a lot worse, I guess."

He rolled in without a sound except for the scrunch of his tires on the gravel of the drive. He pulled to a stop at the side of the station and got out. The place didn't look too bad. Luckily it wasn't one of those sterile, bright, shiny, new kind of places with clean, efficient attendants with no personality, running around clicking their heels, saying, "Yes, sir," and "No, sir," and "How much can we clip you for today, sir?" No, this place had a well-used, greasy feeling. No "Sterilized Restrooms Recommended by Duncan Hines." Real people lived here.

A young man about his own age ambled up to him. "Ya, got troubles?" Briefly he told him his predicament. "Well, come on inside. Yer welcome ta stay here 'til ya figger somethin' out."

A kid of about seventeen was hot on his heels; "Chee, mister, that sure is a nice car. Whut's the matter with it? How fast is it? How much do ya' want for it? Wouldja take fifty bucks down if my mother'll sign fer it? Huh, huh?"

Tiredly he said, "Yes; it's broke; very; five hundred dollars as is; talk to your mother about it." It took a few seconds for it to register on the kid that his barrage of questions had all been answered and he sped off to talk to his mother. The young man remembered when he had been like this kid and wondered if he still wasn't, just a little bit.

They were sitting around the stove talking that evening. The young man was very dejected. In the course of the afternoon he had thought of, and rejected, forty-eleven different plans. No, he couldn't fix it here. There were no tools that would fit it around this place, and even if there were, he couldn't get the parts he needed. Parts for this machine were none too plentiful in a large city, let alone out here in the middle of no place. Also in the course of the afternoon he had listened to several propositions, the best of them being, "Two hundred bucks and a 74 Harley that'll really be a neat bike if ya just put a battery in it and a seat." Forget it !! Racking

his brain, he thought, "What in the hell am I going to do? I still have a long way to go and I haven't got much time. You're really in good shape now, boy."

A vague plan that had been at the bottom of his mind for quite a while bobbed to the surface. He went out to the phone booth, and watched his coins disappear down the slot. "I'd like to place a long distance call." Ring.

"Super Service Station; may we help you?"

"Howdy, Rick; got some problems." And he told him the story. "You think you could take a day or two off, get a tow bar, and make a little trip down this way?"

"Exactly where are you? How do you get there? And how far is it?"

"It's 685 miles one way from there and you get here like this——."

"Well, man, I've got a lodge initiation tomorrow night, so I'll leave here about 10:00, right after it's over. Look for me about 10:00 the next morning. OK?"

"Great! I'll be looking for you. And, oh yeah, thanks."

"Forget it, man. I owe you a whole lot more than that. And, what the hell, I need a little change of scenery anyhow."

He went back to the station feeling as if a thousand pound weight had been lifted from his shoulders. It's nice to have friends like that. Someone whom you don't feel like you're imposing on, even by asking something as big and as crazy as you've just done, because you know that you'd do exactly the same for him, and be happy to, if he asked you; almost insulted if he needed it and didn't ask you. That's what friends, true friends, are for.

A day and a half to wait. God! He had seen dead places before, but . . . It was interesting in a way though. By talking with truckers that stopped in he found out that, "The prass on pataters is gone skah hah! Ah be damned if'n Ah'd pay what they's askin' for 'em! Ah'll go 'thout 'em furst?" Well, friend, it looks like a long potatoless winter for you then. Also other earth-shaking things like, "Thee road hup fron Santa Rosa ess hall cover wees snow and ees steel snoween hard like hell." Thanks friend, that's one way we won't go.

The wind had started to come up. It had turned cold. The storm from the south looked to be moving in. He was very tired by now. He went back to the unheated back room with its couple of bunks for truck drivers that might want to stay over night. They had told him he could use one of them and he was very grateful. And cold.

The next morning he arose stiff, cold, and not well rested, but it sure did beat sitting in that hard chair all night.

The minutes dragged by. Every day or so a bunch of them would form an hour. Wow! It's time for lunch already! And it hardly seems like much more than a month and a half since he'd gotten up that morning!

That afternoon things got unbearable. "Have you people got anything

to read around here?" "Sure, got a bunch of it right here." O Boy! A whole pile of three year old Readers' Digests! Well, they're better than sitting around doing nothing.

He couldn't really concentrate too much on his reading. He kept watching the weather. Somehow the snow had missed where he was. But it was continuing up north. What if his friend ran into it on his way down? He had to cross two mountain passes to get there. They were bad enough when the roads were clear . . . "You were an ass," he told himself, "a really and truly ass for even asking him to come. You've done some awfully stupid things, but this takes the cake!"

A year passed and it was time to go to bed again. Cold room, trucker bunk, one blanket. "Gawd!" "What are you complaining about? These people are doing their best for you. And a whole lot more than they have to." "Yes, that's true. They're pretty good people."

The next morning he got up, got his gear ready to go, turned down a final offer of "Two hundred and fifty bucks cash, a 74 Harley Davidson motorcycle, a .22 caliber pistol, and three boxes of ammunition for it." He was almost sorry to turn the kid down. He wanted that car so much. But he was only a kid. He wouldn't give it a good home. A meat-headed kid who wouldn't give it all the tender loving care that it needed, required. Oh well . . .

10:15. He saw a beautiful sight. — A car with those oh so familiar license plates on it turning into the place. There were two men in it. He'd brought Jim with him. Great! The Three Musketeers were together again!

After they had gotten on the road, it hit him again; where he was going, what he was going there for, how it was going to be. It had started when they had started gabbing as old friends do when they get together after not having seen each other for a long time. Talking about people once known, and half forgotten; who was sleeping with whom, who was pregnant, who had been married, who had been divorced, what they did with the children of their aborted marriage. Who had new cars and how fast they are; who's throwing the best, i.e. drunkenest, parties. All of these things from another life. A life he thought and hoped he had left forever. But not so. He didn't want to go back! But he had no choice.

They finally reached their destination. As they pulled into town, he looked around at the familiar sights. He thought to himself, "O goody! Oh boy! Oh crap! I'm home!"

