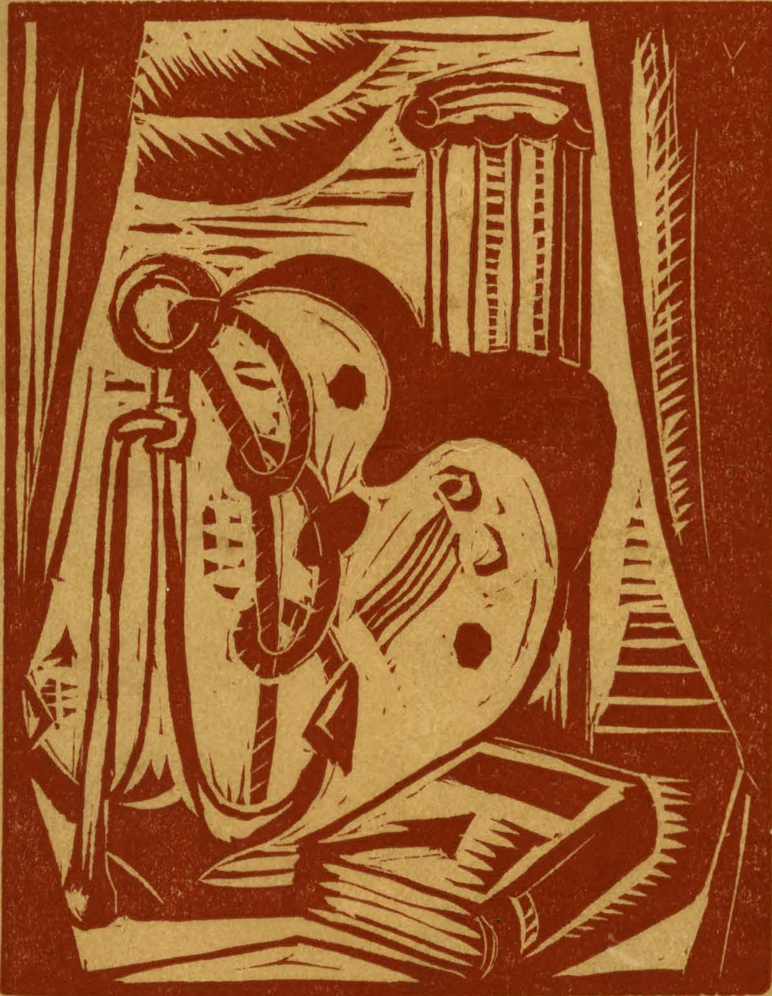
Provincetown

• • • *a magazine* • • •



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PREFACE

Good reader, we present to you this first of our promised six issues.

Our magazine is frankly a Provincetown production.

It is edited and printed in Provincetown, and in gathering material we have sought first among the writers here. This does not mean that writers living elsewhere are excluded. But where material of equal merit must be accepted or rejected for reasons of space, we will tend to render a geographical decision.

We will not solicit nor publish the work of Provincetown's established writers. We feel that this colony has too long worshipped the tradition of a departed O'Neill, of the glory that was the Old Provincetown. We respect our contemporaries and neighbors who belong to that tradition, but we feel that they have other outlets for their work, and that this magazine should devote itself to the establishment of a new tradition, and to the encouragement of writers who have too long remained silent in the shadow of great names.

PROVINCETOWN invites your literary contributions, and your comments. We hope you will like this issue, but frankly, our efforts will be toward literary excellence rather than toward greater circulation.

Provincetown

• • ● *a magazine* ● • •

Edited By

Lloyd Frankenberg
Bernard C. Schoenfeld
Saul Yalkert
Paul Smith
Erik Huneker

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Designs by S. Y.

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ON WRITERS

How do you write? I said to this one and that one and they told me but how do they write? For though they selfstudy and sit astrally watching their intelligent fingers click-gambol typing, how can they know what darkturns in the pitchlake of the skull? The eye moves in its socket, but behind is unseeable and quickly extinguished. And how can a man know the transient unseen? For he sits in his hidingplace saying I will write treatisewise, and from the movingfingers comes poetry. This, selfspeaking, is good and when a man says I write in the coldness of consciousreason he is like a stagefire and fraudhearted. For intelligence dwells first in the pitchlake, and harnessed against itself is barren. Yes and when darkintelligence dies art is dead.

Thus Cabell. Once the fire flashed or maybe twice, but chivalpride extinguished it, and out of the bannerflung south came gasnoise and hash uncooked on deadfire. Oh Jurgen, of the plentyaliases, was it Cabell tombedlivering so often or was it publisherscontracts? Oh conumdrumcolonel, did you know you gave birth to mummies, or did you namechange till nothing was left to change but the author's name? How did you write?

And I said to them why do you write and they made some answer but why do they write? Surely we are boastingfools who turn to paper. For

who among the beavermen does not hate thought recorded? These are they that set themselves up over us, mocking olympus watering feet of clay exalting themselves on paper. So they arthate as cats doghate and probably as rightly. Why then do we commit this folly in the eyes of our masters?

Is it to loudspeak? Do we then truly selfpuff in opinions? But surely this is folly and Jesus crosshanging and Galilio mocksurrendering ampletestify of the wisdom of opening one's windows. For the sharpeyed beavermen have vision only for new streams to dam and new trees to fell. Streams running lifeternal and the sound of teeth on bark and the log falls thusright for the mudplaster and the dark streamcircled studpen teeming orthodoxly. The spawn comes and eageruns for more trees and the eager head biting is caught by the straintumbling trunk and the carreramarble brains run down unnoticed for the tree has fallen thusright and the dam builds and raises and is roofed and the teeth of buildings bite the sky but the beavermen have no ears save for the crash of treetrunks. Are we fools that we secretshout to our enemies?

Is it then to speak with the dead for the unborn are also dead? Voltaire spoke and I hear him but my world treetumbles as I listen, and what are a dozen ears in the tumult? Shall my voice outshout the roar of the beavermen and where will I be when they comfort me? Only old men and fools deadspeak.

But this one outspeaks there is a newcause and a

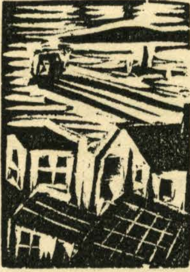
newreason. I write that the Newday may come and the Newrevolution triumph. Sophistfool! Have you not lived long enough to know that all days are alike and that seasons rotate? Are you justborn to think the world can be made for your milkfeeding? Do you then think what a million years has failed to do can be done in ten? Who are you to referee when tigers fight over the carcass? For it is true that one man is as brutal as another, only crushing-power pendulumswings. Do you think your new-day will be better than the old? Or worse? The beavermen arthate equally, and when a man talks to you of classconsciousness you are of the artistclass and an outcast. Even Hitler wheedlebegged in the pale days and before the Inquisition there were soft-whisperers. And a man selfsold for a gold piece or denimemblem is equally cheapbranded. Hate the stronglorious for the apeman flowers best in altitudes, and boastingpower is the selfexile's enemy, but do not selfseduce with the weak.

Why then do you write? Myselfspeaking, it is to curse god and die. So Job's friends advised, and did his refusal bring back his sons? But this also is foolish, for god has no microscope to seek me out, and my curse deadfalls.

And so we return to the darkpitch fermenting behind the eyesockets, for there in the unseen things move and the nimblefingers write, as cats doghate and men snarlingfight and it is futilmeaning like the sun's vigilence or a man's life or oceantide.

N. D. Seconk.

THE BALTIC LIES EAST



That cold day had no morning. Four days on the Holtenau locks happened in a daze. Sometimes a cup of coffee and a piece of black-bread from a steamer passing through. A dusty sleep on a bench in a little brick shack. Waiting for a pierhead jump. Until late afternoon the American didn't look at the sky. Then to the westward even the sun looked cold. He scanned the clouds, way around to the north and looked down to the ice in broad Kiel harbor. He could just about make out the Krupp drydocks.

The kid Paul from Rhineland was on the beach too. They had met in the Kristliches Seemannshaus. The last steamer through was a Swede for Stockholm. The kid said all harbors north and east were blocked, but she might get in with an ice-breaker. They went in the shack. The kid pulled out a piece of newspaper with some tobacco in it.

The official wiggled a finger to the American while they were rolling cigarettes. He asked him if he'd fire a small Baltic trader until they finished the bridge to the states. Sure he would, where was she? She was on the east bank of the canal south of the coal pockets somewhere. He gave the American a slip of blue paper,

"Dampfer Annchen Hecht

"Heizer, 294-A"

He hauled a half filled bag out from a pile in the corner and wished he had an overcoat. South the coalpocket might be halfway to Rensburg. He could leave Paul the bag. The gear wasn't much. A couple dirty shirts, a pair of dungarees. Not as much as the donkeyman's wife expected her old man to bring her. The bag wasn't *full* of dirty clothes and the only stiffness he had was in his fingers. A job is a job.

"Good luck," the kid said. "Listen, did you know you spilled that tobacco? I got the paper when you dropped it, but the tobacco spilled."

"Give me another making and help me find the Annchen Hecht. We'll get a hot meal. Come on."

At the gate on the east side they asked a young cop if he knew where she was. Annchen? No, wouldn't Gretchen do? No, he didn't know. There wasn't anything in sight near the locks so they started walking toward the coal pocket—"WEBER—BUNKE—LANGE" in burning red letters. They didn't see a soul until they got to the cobbled entrance of the tip. A coalheaver was going home. He said they bunkered her three days before. She must be down at the grain elevator. She probably would be until May Day. Keep on walking. Take your time. The ice will hold her for you.

"Maybe they're not signing on," he said to the kid.

We'll bum a meal, anyhow," the kid said. "Let's find out. Maybe she *is*."

"Maybe he won't sign *me* on."

"Ach, take it easy.

"Maybe she'll wait till the ice breaks to sign on."

"Ach, maybe she's an ice-breaker herself."

"Don't walk so fast. My heels are cold. It hurts when I put my feet down."

"Im cold. Your heels won't get warm walking slow."

" I know, but it hurts."

"Come on, I think I see the elevator. Here, I'll carry the bag."

"You know," he said, "The excitement is too much for me. I've got a bellyache. There's nothing in it but blackbread and wind."

"Most of us have wind," the kid said.

Thin, uninsulated electric wires sang over their heads. Dust blew in their faces. A half sheet of the "Kieler Neueste Nachrichten" blew against the American's legs. He picked it off, folded it and stuck it in his jacket pocket. The kid took short quick steps. The kid's face was very dirty. You could see he wasn't a kid that was used to this stuff. The hand holding the bag over his shoulder was small.

At a break in the highboard fence he said to the kid, "Keep walking if you're cold. I'll catch up in a minute." He stepped through the break in the fence. The canal bank was about eight yards away. Nothing to break the wind.

The coldest few minutes he ever squatted. The wind nearly bowled him over. He braced his shoulder against the fence. He pulled the "Kieler

Neueste Nachrichten" out of his pocket. The head on the lead story was "HITLER PROZESS"

"An ill wind, Adolph. Wiedersehen."

Even when he started walking his thighs were cold. The wind scraped over them like a hot file. He changed steps to see if he could stop that file.

"That wind's so cold it burns," he said when he caught up to the kid.

"I see your Annchen," the kid said. "She looks like a submarine."

A sharp bowed steamer was tied at a grain dock. Her engine was aft. Her short stack had a yellow band between two wide red bands. The street lights were lit and there was one arc burning on the dock. No light showed from the portholes. There was nobody on deck. The decks were dusty from the grain. Tarpaulins were over the hatches, but they weren't battened. There was a gangway aft and they went aboard.

"Wait, I see a light below. Be right up."

He gave the paper to the man in a tiny engine-room. The man wiped his hands on a piece of waste. He took a black spectaclecase out of the top pocket of his dungarees and put silverimmed glasses on. He held the blue paper under the electric bulb. Only one bulb was lit.

"294 A What's that, 294 A?"

"AH? Oh, foreigner, I . . . auslander."

"You know there's a lot of Germans out of work, don't you? Have you no more ships over there? Well, I'm not the chief, anyhow. He'll be aboard

in the morning. I suppose he'll have to sign you on if you have the number. You got it on the locks, I suppose. H-m-m-m. The chief will be aboard in the morning."

"Thanks."

It was so warm he hated to leave the fiddley. He looked down into the fireroom. One boiler. Two fires. The fireroom and the engineroom together. Three steps down to the fires. One fireman on a watch. He hopes he doesn't draw that old son of a bitch below there. Heat rose under his pants legs. It began to be worse than the wind. He felt raw. He noticed the valves were along the portside. The condenser in back of him was about as big as a good-sized oil barrel. He saw the man with the glasses looking up at him. He went on deck.

Paul wasn't around, so he started for'ard. Up over the open bridge. Down along the for'ard hatch, brushing graindust off the tarpaulin as he passed. The foc'sle hatch was on the starboard side. There was Paul on the starboard side of a long table, his small hands folded over a mug of steaming coffee. A small man with big eyes and a pipe was standing beside him. He had one foot on the bag. The man had a striped muffler tied around his neck.

"Where's the firemen's foc'sle?"

"Here."

Across the table from Paul was another man. His face was coalblackened and he had a sweatrag on his neck.

"Hello," the American said. "Guess I'm the last of the blackgang."

"You're one," the man said. "I'm the rest. Sit down."

On the portside were two bunks, half hidden behind lockers, and athwart the vessel. On the starboard side there were two bunks along the shipside and two more stuck away on the other side of the hatch corresponding to the two on the portside. Wooden anchorchain housing slanted down through the foc'sle aft.

"Have some lousy coffee," the fireman said. "The cook says it's coffee. My name's Willi. What's yours?"

"Ah . . . Max."

"Sit on this side of the table."

"Well, Paul," Max said. "More coffee, what?"

Willi threw a can of tobacco on the table. Paul grabbed it as the American poured himself coffee from a kettle that hung on a hook under the table. The cigarette papers were inside the tin box. The edges of the box were shiny where the paint was worn off. The American rolled himself one, too.

"The chief will sign you on in the morning. He and the old man have gone into Kiel," Willi said.

"Yes? I hope so."

"Oh, sure. You got a number at the locks, didn't you? That's all you need. They have to take you. Well, I'm going to bank my fires. You, Herrmann, rustle some grub for the other guy. I'll get enough for this guy."

"Well," the sailor said, "Well, alright . . . ."

"You don't have to, you know," Willi said, going up. "I'll get something. Don't worry," he said.

Paul and the American filled the coffee mugs again. Willi's tobacco can was still on the table. They rolled another cigarette apiece. The Amer- brought his bag over to the portside. There were blankets in the top bunk. His must be the lower. He opened the bag and pulled out a blanket. He swiped it at the Kristliches Seemannshaus. It wasn't a very good blanket. He folded it on top of the bag and felt in the lower bunk. It was filled with straw.

"How is it," Paul asked.

"Jesus, no mattress."

"No mattress?"

"It's filled with straw."

"Clean straw?"

"On top."

"I'll flop in one of the sailors' bunks if that guy Herrmann is the only one aboard," Paul said. "Maybe I can bum a blanket."

"Sure. You get a hot breakfast too."

The American jerked a pair of dungarees, (they weren't clean, but thy weren't dirty) out of his bag and threw it into the lower bunk. He threw his jacket and cap into the bunk, put the trousers over his arm and went over to a little potbellied stove on the starboard side about at the middle of the table. He took off his woolen pants.

"My God," Paul said, "where are your underdrawers?"

"Well, Paul . . . I didn't have time. See?"

"God, you must be frozen."

"No, thawing."

"No kidding, what about the drawers?"

"No time, Paul. I left in a hurry."

Pretty soon Willi and Herrmann came back, Willi first with a covered pan he set on the table. He uncovered some chunks of stewed beef. Herrman put a pot of boiled potatoes on the table and a small saucepan of whitelooking sauce beside it. Willi took a loaf of blackbread from a locker. He cut four slices and put two in front of Max. He put two on the portside of the table at the end nearest the bunks. He explained that the bread was rationed out to each man every week. Herrmann gave Paul two slices. Two thin slices. They all ate very fast.

"How do you like the grub," Willi asked Max.

"Well, . . . wait till I sign on."

"Yeah. Well, the meat is fresh."

"How do *you* like the grub," Max said to Willi.

"Well, I kick, but I've seen worse."

"Oh, sure."

"The grub is not bad," Herrmann said.

"It better *not* be," Willi said.

"I wouldn't walk this far tomorrow for it," Paul said.

Willi laughed. Herrmann looked at Paul out of the corners of his eyes and said "huh." Herrmann washed the dishes and cleaned up the foc'sle a little. Herrmann lit his pipe and climbed into his bunk. The other three sat at the table smoking Willi's tobacco.

"You can flop there," Herrmann said to Paul, pointing to a bunk.

"Fine," Paul said.

They heard someone walking over the deck. A short heavy man looked down into the foc'sle. His cheeks were red. Spit glistened on his lower jaw underneath his pipe.

"He lives midships, but his heart's in the foc'sle," Willi said. "Hello, bos'n." How goes it?"

"What won't go gets shoved," the bos'n said. "Good evening, everybody." Paul and the American looked at him and said, "Hello."

"Say, Willi, tell me," the bos'n said. "I hear we have a foreigner aboard. Is that true? Have we shipped an American or something? A Yank?"

"A foreigner? An American? Jesus!" Willi said.

"Is that right?" the bos'n said to Max and Paul.

"Look around bos'n," Willi said. "Smell around. What are we getting for foreigners kins in Lubeck this winter, Bos'n?"

"No, that's right, Willi,' the bos'n said, (looking at Max and Paul) "the cook told me."

"Did the cook see it?" Willi asked him.

"No, no joke, he told me."

"Maybe that one," Willi said, pointing to Paul, "Maybe that's one, Bos'n."

"Ha, not that one," the bos'n said.

"It couldn't be that (pointing to Max) it has no silk shirt on Bos'n."

"No kidding, Willi. . . ."

"But look at its heels, Bos'n. Maybe it has rubberheels."

"Aw, I mean, I was just asking. . . ."

"The monkeys mean."

"You're *not* an American are you?" the bos'n asked Max, turning as he went out. "Are you?"

"Jesus, no," Max said. "I'm a Zulu."

"A wha—"

"Goodnight, Bos'n," Willi said.

"His heart's in the foc'sle. . . . You can turn in when ever you want to. We turn to at seven. I get up an hour earlier to get steam up. It's overtime. Don't worry about the foc'sle or the bunk. I made them smoke it out when I came aboard. The mattresses will be here in the moring, I guess."

Willi went over to the bunks. He leaned against the lockers and slipped his clogs off before he stepped on the edge of the lower bunk to spring himself up. Herrmann sat up in his bunk and took a folded blanket out of the corner of it. He threw it to Paul.

"Put the light out, will you?"

"Sure,.' Paul said.

The American moved his hand around in the straw. He could still feel the file on his thighs. He picked up tufts of the straw in the far corner of the bunk, back of the lockers. He pushed his bag up in that corner, and climbed in after it, his head behind the lockers. He spread the blanket over himself. He held the blanket in his hands to keep them warm. He put his head on the bag for a pillow. It was cold, too cold. He put it alongside the bulkhead. Wedged

it in. He heard Herrmann knock the ashes out of the pipe. Paul coughed. He knew that cough. A cake of drift ice slammed against the shipside. It pushed the vessel easily to starboard. His head dipped. He heard the hawsers grunt. The wind whistled in the rigging. The icecake grinding, slowly grinding along her side. And she rolled gently to an even keel, bringing his head up. As the ice slid away.

Edward McSorley.

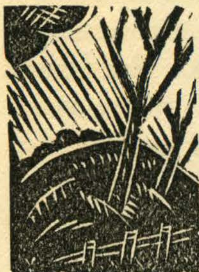
REJOINDER

Perhaps a better favor
For me was never done,
When you eclipsed my moon, dear,
With your brighter sun.

And though for but a moment,
You moved across my path,
The lustrous, thin corona
Was worth the aftermath.

Ethel Boynton.

THE BED



Since ten o'clock the old nurse had been lying in the huge double bed, but she could not sleep. The bed was tremendous and she was small. If she lay in the center of it and stretched out her arms she could not reach its sides. It was as though she were lying on a white island surrounded by pitch blackness.

She tried to lie quiet, but it was impossible. Every night it had been the same; she could not sleep because of her husband. He had been dead a month. If she closed her eyes very tightly and allowed her imagination play, she could fancy her husband beside her, his large snow-white head peeping from out the blankets, his mouth open and closing, rythmically as he snored, his narrow back close to hers, his thin arm thrown about her. But it was hard to imagine that, for the bed was so large and she could feel the white emptiness beside her where he used to lie.

She knew it was this vacancy beside her that denied her sleep. She was sixty-five and had never had a day's illness until now. She knew she was ill because she had not slept for a week. Her head felt as though it were filled with cotton, and there were sharp pains in her back and legs.

The old nurse sat up in bed and strained to hear any noise at all. She could not bear to lie awake

with the room so quiet. She shifted her position and peered across the band of moonlight at the heavy shadows in which the folding door stood. Beyond it was the new gardener's room. For hours she had listened for any noise in the next room, hoping she might hear footsteps walking across the floor, or the scratching of a pen or the opening and shutting of the window. But the young gardener had not come in yet.

She groaned and the groan tore into the quiet of the room. She felt relieved and settled back. She looked up at the ceiling and commenced to count sheep, but after a while her mind shut out the sheep and she began to think of her husband. She could not forget him long enough to count sheep. She knew that this large space beside her must keep her awake. She could sleep if only her husband were beside her.

She put out her arm and felt the cold sheet and pillow. She remembered how for forty years they had slept side by side until one night a month past he had been found dead in the garden beside his roses. At first she could not believe it; the forty years had passed so quickly and joyfully that his sudden death left her frightened by something she could not comprehend.

A mile away a train whistled past. She heard the sound and felt an emptiness clutch at her heart. She remembered the train taking his body to the graveyard. Suddenly, not knowing why, she commenced to pray. Dear God, let me sleep. Let me

sleep just a little while. Don't let me think of him lying in a grave instead of lying beside me here. I want to sleep. Please let me forget this emptiness beside me. I want to sleep. Dear God, let me go to sleep.

But it was no use. The wind entered the attic and scratched its way across the sheets. She shivered, although it was a warm night, shivered from the desolation that she felt alone in this huge white bed.

All day she had taken care of the children—telling stories to the eldest, boiling milk for the baby, dressing them, feeding them, washing them. She realized the mistress was keeping her for mere sentiment's sake. At sixty-five it was hard to play with children. They wanted to run out into the road and she had to go after them, as fast as her stiff legs could take her, and bring them back. She knew it was only a matter of months before she could no longer do this.

But she did not worry about that. She could think of but one thing, her desire to sleep. In her weary mind she saw her dead husband bending over the rose bushes, shearing away withered leaves, sprinkling powder on the flowers, clipping the long line of hedges. He had been seventy-one, but had stood straight as a poplar, his face sun-burnt and his white hair as thick as a boy's. At sundown he would come into the house and together they would have supper and after that play double solitaire until ten o'clock. Then up to the room and to bed. He

would undress, yawn and stretch, for he would be weary. He would turn out the light and talk to her in bed for a moment or so.

"Remind me to buy a new spade tomorrow."

"Yes."

"The handle broke today."

"Yes."

"The tulips are growing better than last year. And the tea roses. Have you seen the tea roses?"

"No."

"There would be silence. Then she would turn to ask him a question, but he would be asleep, snoring peacefully. She would be happy, listening to him.

In the fields a bird cried and the sound carried her mind back to reality. There was no longer any moonlight in the room; she could not even see the white folding door.

Her eyes ached terribly from lack of sleep. She twisted and turned. Her fingers picked at the fuzzy blanket. She wished it were time to get up so she could work and forget about the vacancy beside her.

There was a sound of feet on the stairs. She heard the door of the next room open. The new gardener had come in.

She listened. She heard the click of the light being turned on. She heard his shoes drop on the floor and the sound hurt her head so that she pressed her temples. She found she was listening to all he was doing, though she did not know why. She heard him place a bottle on the dresser; she thought she

could hear the ticking of his watch as he put it with the bottle. At last she heard him climb into the cot with a drunken sigh.

Now she tried to pretend once more that her husband was beside her. If she could pretend hard enough perhaps she might sleep. But she opened her eyes and could only see the smooth blanket and the pillow untouched and the emptiness about her.

The new gardener snored. It frightened her at first, so suddenly did he break the quiet. Then she listened to the snoring, fascinated by its insistency. She tried to imagine that the new gardener was her husband, but the sound came from so great a distance as to break the illusion.

She could not bear to hear the man snore, to know he was sound asleep. She was possessed by an idea which grew and expanded and caused her suddenly to become strangely tranquil and full of peace.

Nothing mattered now except sleep. She must sleep. She left her bed and turned on the light. The light was a sharp blade cutting its way up and down her eyes. She turned out the light again.

She pushed the folding doors apart, entered the next room. She stood in the doorway. In the moonlight the gardener's face was buried deep into the pillow. He was young, forty or so. She knew he had been drinking, for the room smelled of stale whiskey.

The gardener grunted. She stood in the doorway, waiting. She wondered why she was waiting. It was so simple to just awaken him and ask him the

favor. She would lie so quietly there and soon be asleep.

"Hein?"

He had awakened. His voice startled her. She could see him leaning on one elbow, rubbing his eyes in the moonlight, his head shaking.

"Well," he said, "what do you want, old girl?"

Now it would be so easy to ask him. He wouldn't laugh at her, would he? It would be so simple, and the bed was plenty wide enough for them to sleep comfortably.

"I'm tired, old girl. Go to bed."

The words came to her from the depth of the pillow where his head lay, each word wrapped in warmth and sleepiness.

"I—would you mind—", she began.

She heard his tongue clack.

"Hurry, what is it? Are you sick? What's wrong?"

She tried to express her need in words, but no words came. She stood a second more in the doorway, then turned away. With a straightening of her bony shoulders, and a shake of her head, she shuffled across the threshold and shut the folding doors.

In her room the band of moonlight had widened. Now it touched her bare feet as she sat on the edge of her bed, shivering. Tears kept rolling down her cheeks. They fell on her knees, through her cotton nightgown, wetting her flesh. She did not move as the moonlight widened, but sat on the edge of the

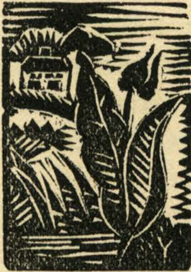
bed, listening to a train whistle harshly, far off, in the dark. She wondered why she had not dared to ask him such a tiny favor. But he might have misunderstood. He did not know what the warmth of her husband's body beside her night after night after night after night had come to mean to her. He might have laughed.

She knew that another night would pass and find her still awake when sunlight came. But there was no use of lying down on her bed. There was no use of walking the floor.

Cold clutched at her heart. She shivered. The old nurse sat on the edge of the bed, looking at the floor. She could do nothing else.

B. C. S.

CYNIC MOON



Actually, he was a gawky boy of seventeen, and she was a fat little girl of fifteen. It is too bad, but I suppose it is an essential part of our story. Because she was fat, she looked older than she was, and because he was gawky, he thought of himself as a man of dignity.

He met her first on Sea-Hawk Island, where both families were spending their summer vacations. They used to go fishing together, and go swimming. The intense sun of that sub-tropical country tanned their bodies above and below their skimpy bathing suits, and they made a nice picture trotting about together. He taught her to swim, although she had learned before. The contact of his hands on her chubby body was pleasantly exciting to them both, so they talked incessantly of other things. She told him of her collie named Bruno, and of the gossip she had heard from her mother. He talked of invented escapades in school, and made silly jokes. They quarreled over shells, and wrestled with each other on the white sandy beach.

Their families returned home at the end of July. She used to call him up at his father's law office, where he played at office boy. Always she talked of Bruno. "Bruno ate a Shredded Wheat this morning, and looked too cute with the whiskers sticking out of his mouth." "Bruno's learning to walk on

his hind legs." "Bruno barked—" So familiar did he become with Bruno's doings that he learned to put the receiver down on the desk and go on with his work, interrupting now and then with an appropriate remark. She never detected this fraud, and to himself he called her "Dumb Bertha.' For men of his age must feel superior to their women-folk.

Once or twice he took her to a movie in the evening, and kissed her goodnight afterward. He thought himself quite masterful and adult.

September came, with hot dusty days, and tense hot nights. One day Verny, who was just out of law school, said, "I'm throwing a party at my place on the river. Grab a wench and come on out."

He called Bertha and invited her. His father, who liked Verny, let him borrow the car.

There were other couples, older than they were, and a portable phonograph. There was corn whiskey and ginger ale to drink. Through the windows the river showed, like melted asphalt. Yellow stripes of moonlight were caught in silent almost motionless ripples.

The boy and girl held their glasses awkwardly, and made faces when they sipped their drinks. Someone started the phonograph.

> *"When the wind starts to blow*
> *Where am I gonna go?*
> *Follow the swallow back home!"*

it sang. Verny danced once with Bertha. After that they were left alone. She was too young for the men. On their third dance she whispered,

"Please don't drink any more," and he lied "But it peps me up. I like it." "Please—I'd be afraid of you if you drank." So they hid their glasses in the kitchen.

"Gee, I'm hot!" she said. "Let's go outside where there's some air," he answered.

Outside the air was very still, and the yard, sheltered by great oak trees, was dark. Beyond, the black river slid under moonlight. They climbed into the back seat of Verny's car. Overhead a bird moved, and a dry leaf fell, scratching at branches as it tumbled. "What's that?" cried Bertha.

"Leaf, probably," he answered, and put his arm around her protectively. So they sat for a while, until they felt afraid to break the silence. Presently he kissed her cheek. She put her arms around his neck. The odor of perspiration was in his nostrils, and he found it good. The perspiration of her body was as a lubricant under his exploring hands. They clung together in the hot darkness feeling each other's hearts beating.

Suddenly, as if her crumpled dress no longer existed, she pulled the boy to her in an instinctive embrace, and pressed herself wildly to him. Breaking the silence for the first time, she whispered "Oh Jack, I love you! I—love you so much!"

Finding himself in reality where he had often been in the impersonality of day-dreams, the boy was aware of many things at once. He was aware of the rough fabric of his trousers against her delicate flesh, aware of the strong glide of the river,

aware of the heat and the vital bodily odor. He was aware that the phonograph inside was singing again "*When the wind starts to blow.*" But stronger than everything, and permeating everything else, was a sudden panic that had seized him. And while his body enjoyed the moment, his mind struggled against it.

As they lay, he knew that his silhouette showed dimly against the window of the house. Disengaging his hand, he clenched his fist and pressed it against his forehead in what he felt was a dramatic gesture. Consciously he allowed her to feel his body tremble. "No," he muttered, loud enough for her to hear, "No. I must be strong."

For a long moment Bertha continued to cling to him. Then she sighed. "Let's walk down by the river," she said.

It was a little cooler by the river, and the water made small sounds on the bank. They stood a long time with their arms around each other's waists, watching the moonlight. A fish struck in the stream, setting up a series of yellow circles. A frog grunted suddenly, and the trees along the banks grunted an echo.

Presently they returned to the car. As they settled down into the seat, she ran her warm finger-tips down his cheek. "Thank you, Jack, she said, and laid her head in his lap. Soon she was asleep.

But the boy sat silent in the silence. Inside, the phonograph sang, "*Where am I gonna go?*" A drop of perspiration trickled down the sensitive curve of

his nose, and he brushed it away. In spite of the heat, he felt chilly. He was profoundly relieved.

J. Tree.

THE HILL OF THE SEA

Think some new thing about the sea, oh think
The sea is not horses with their manes flung back,
Snorting and thundering up to paw the brink
With foreleg white and black.

The sea is an old grey mother, with a shawl for
bonnet;
An armour, link over link, against the sun;
Think, the sea is a Shakespearean sonnet;
An El-train rattling on.

Think of the sea as a bathtub bobbing the moon,
A moon rubbed thin at the edges, seeping suds;
Or dawn, over the hill of the sea; or noon,
An eye in a field of buds.

Think oh think of some new thing for the sea,
Mistress of wind, and wantoner with boats,
Serpenting earth with scales and tail esprit,
Most brilliant of Joseph's coats.

O boundless drop, bright tear in the lash of space,
A castle of glass, a whore with a heart of ink,
A glimmer of white like a hand before the face:
Think, oh think.

FEBRUARY TWELFTH: BACK SHORE

Warm day in February like false dawn:
Prosperpine unquiet where she lies
Beside her dreamless lord whose pores are stone
Walks the white hummocks with unopened eyes:
And unaware beneath her shadowy tread
Stirs in its shroud the long immobile clay:
See, where her print has been, a berry red
Like wraith before the still unrisen day.

We woke at seven: throwing back the quilt
I stretched my arms out of their winter sleep
And thought it strange, the fire can't be built:
Thermometer's at fifty, and I leap
To see the tranced wave and the listless hill,
The longdead fly that walks the window sill.

False promises of spring: the melted pane,
The sea lost in a shimmer with the sky:
The air is fresh and cool as after rain
And on the narrow path we venture by
A rosebush clears itself, the sandpocked snow
Withers at the roots of it, and runs like tallow:
And in the hollow where the cranberries grow
Their heavy heads uncover, nipped and sallow.

And everywhere her thistle feet have fled
The sand forgets that it was rock, and grass
From beaten into sand, lifts up its head
And is a grass again: until she pass
And whisper of her passing go with her:
The pine tree's recollected sough and stir.

H. L. F.

THE GRENOWEE STORY

Well, it was about the middle of April and the Smiths had gone, and we were all feeling pretty lonesome. So we went into Nice one night—to the casino or somewhere—and when we came back we were dead tired. We missed a bus and it was about two o'clock when we got home. Then we didn't all go to bed. I don't remember just why, some reason—Oh, Phil said he wanted to read so we left him downstairs reading and we went up. I got undressed and went to bed. I'd just fallen asleep and all of a sudden this noise broke out. So she said, "What the hell is that?" and she woke up, and banged on my door and woke me up and I became conscious of this *crok-crok*—a lot of frogs. You'd have thought a lot of bass drummers had come to town. It all began this one night—just started in a chorus. Every time they'd croak I'd listen. You can't help it you know, you just have to listen. So I said, "Oh, the hell with this." I couldn't sleep. So I got up and got dressed and went downstairs.

We all sat around and we couldn't even read. The noise was terrible—*crok-crok-crok* all the time. It got on Helen's nerves. She got madder and madder. Finally she said to Phil, "If this was bothering *you* you'd do something about it." Mind you this was about three in the morning. What the hell could anybody do about it at that hour? So I finally said,

"Oh hell, I'll go for a walk and find them." So I went out and walked around looking for the noise.

I decided it came from the place next to ours, and then I spotted a big water tank there I'd never noticed before. I couldn't go there that time of night so I went back to the house. I forget what we did —I guess we sat up all night. Anyway the next morning I set out.

The tank was on sort of a little truck farm. I walked up a long, crooked driveway—no, not a driveway, just a sort of wagon way, to the farmer's house. When I got to the house out flew the dog— a female bitch of a police dog. She tore at me growling and snarling. I was kind of scared and I said, "That's all right, little doggie, that's all right." But no. The dog just snarled and came right on. She wanted a piece out of my leg. But then the farmer came out and called the dog off and asked what I wanted.

So I said to him, "jay shershay lay grenowee?"

"Unh? Comment?"

"Jay shershay lay grenowee?"

He looked at me dumbly.

"Lay grenowee!"

He shook his head.

So I shouted, "GRENOWEE—GRENOWEE!"

His face lit up. "Ah, ah—des Grenouilles?" He pronounced it exactly the same as I did. "You want to eat them?"

"No, no. Pa de monjay. I want to kill them."

"Ah—oui, oui, oui. Go ahead."

So I went on up to the tank. It was a round stone tank about as big as this room and higher than my head. And by God! sitting right on top of the wall was a bright green little frog. So I made a grab at it. But I missed it and it jumped off into the grass. I looked and looked all around but I couldn't find it, so I gave up. There was a ladder against the tank and I climbed up and looked in. The water was kind of stagnant and at first I couldn't see anything. Then I saw something moving down there and I thought it must be a frog. Then I saw a couple more swimming around down there. But I didn't know how to get them. I decided I'd go in to Antibes in the afternoon and get a butterfly net and come back, but I was worried because I didn't know how the hell I'd ask for a butterfly net in French. So I just stood there looking down at them, and then—I don't know what made me do this. I still don't know what the hell I did it for. I sat there looking at those damn things and I thought, "Christ, I can't take my clothes off and dive in there." And I put my head on one side and made a noise with my mouth. "Psee—psee—psee"—a sort of a kissing noise. Just "psee—psee—psee." And sure enough, up comes a couple of frogs. So I kept on saying, "Psee—psee" and they just swam right up to me. I grabbed one and said, "You little bastard" and I killed it.

So then I thought, "There—that's one that's not going to bother me tonight." But there was still the one down on the grass. So I climbed down and

fished around in the grass some more, and after a while I found the damn thing. So I took a stone and scrunched it. Then I climbed back up the ladder and looked down the tank again. I saw something more moving in the water so I said, "Psee—psee" again and it began to swim up. But it was a funny looking damn thing. I knew it was a frog of course, but it looked so funny—I didn't know what was the matter with it. But I kept calling and sure enough it came to the top so innocently! And honest to God! it was a mother frog with a little teeny baby sitting on her back! I didn't know they carried their young around that way. Well, I grabbed it but God! I couldn't kill a mother and child like that. So I wrapped them up in my handkerchief and stuck 'em in my pocket. I didn't see any more in the tank then, so I came back home and I said, "Well, I've got that batch."

I showed them the mother and baby and we didn't know what to do with them. Then I said, "We'll keep them till tonight, and when we walk down to Juan Les Pins we can throw them into somebody's garden. Maybe the people around here'll get conscious about the damn frogs."

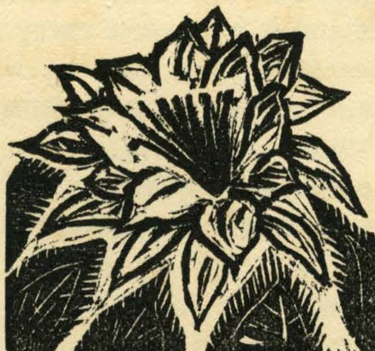
So we got an old coffee can (old dollar and ten cent Maxwell House coffee can, that's what it cost over there), and I punched holes in the top and we put the frogs in it.

After dinner that night we started out. When we got out of our neighborhood so I thought we couldn't hear the frogs I began looking for a place,

at that!" And there was a whole tank of these little bright green frogs. So I said, "For God's sake—they must have 'em to sell or something. Let's go in and ask." So we went in and asked the man what the frogs cost and he said, "They start from $2 up. People want them for aquariums."

Two dollars and *up*—those same damn little green frogs! *

* . . . . How does the fortuitious structure of the story-teller compare with that of the author? Do, say, Hemingway's characters speak as such people do in everyday life? This story is published as a possibly interesting comparison between spoken and written narration. The editors arranged that it should be taken down in shorthand without the knowledge of the narrator. It is, however published with his consent. Possibly other experiments of this nature will be included in future issues.



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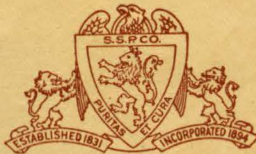

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