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In This Issue . . .

DEDICATION..... 4

SHORT STORIES

THE WHISPER OF RAIN.....Robert J. Kuhn . . . 5
THE DARKNESS OF EVENING.....Nicholas P. Cafardi . . . 9
FOR I HAVE SINNED.....Michael J. Murphy . . . 21
THE PROTECTOR.....George A. Kline . . . 26
A CASTLE AND A VIEW.....Roger E. Craska . . . 32

ORATIONS..... 13

THE MASTERPIECE.....Kenneth L. Garver . . . 14
THE SOLUTION.....Nicholas M. Russo . . . 16
THE ULTIMATE "I".....Stanley J. Janiak . . . 18

ESSAYS

EUCHARISTIAGilbert Z. Puznakoski . . . 7
MY PHILOSOPHY.....William M. Ogradowski . . . 24
SIR FREEDOM.....Robert F. Debski . . . 28
WHEN THE CAROUSEL STOPPEDNicholas P. Cafardi . . . 35

POEMS

GOD IS SILENT.....George A. Kline . . . 8
SPRINGNicholas M. Russo . . . 12
JOY FROM SORROW.....Nicholas M. Russo . . . 20
BEYOND THE SKIES.....Robert J. Kuhn . . . 20
FLIGHTStanley J. Janiak . . . 23
SUMMERTIME BREEZE.....Joseph A. Vater . . . 23
DELTA NINE.....John A. Yurko . . . 25
MORNING LIFE.....Roger E. Craska . . . 27
ALONEGeorge A. Kline . . . 29
ODE FOR JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S FEAST.....Gilbert Z. Puznakoski . . . 30
SPRING SERENITYDavid H. Carey . . . 31
WHISPERSRobert J. Kuhn . . . 31
SEA SQUALL.....David H. Carey . . . 34

Dedication

"The work of the ministry is an exalted work and leads to the kingdom of heaven."

St. Basil: *On the Renunciation of the world.*



This edition of *The Miter* is respectfully dedicated to Reverend Michael F. Maher, S.J., teacher of Religion and Latin at the Bishop's Latin School, who passed away on February 19, 1966.



The Whisper of Rain

by ROBERT J. KUHN

The rain-spattered streets are slicked down with fluorescent reds and greens. The shops and stores are locked and empty. A concrete streetcar is adrift in a sparkling sea. A weary stranger stands there in the chilling rain, huddled close to himself.

I walk along the opposite sidewalk. A wet raincoat flaps against my shivering frame. The bottoms of my trousers are soaked. The shoes squeak as I step into the asphalt sea and, then, stumble up onto the island.

Leaning back against the black pipe railing, I pull the damp collar tight around my neck and hide my face from the icy shower. A young voice at my side calls me out of my dripping shell.

" . . . downtown to eat. I heard there's a pretty cheap place. You know what I mean?"

"Well, there's the Steakhouse . . .," I begin as I turn to the young collegian.

"Yeah, that's it."

" . . . it's down on Fifth Avenue," I continue, trying to sound optimistic, though the bite of the weather makes it difficult to conceive, if not impossible to believe. "It's a dollar twenty-nine, I think."

"Well, you see, I've got two bucks," he follows, slowly, "and the streetcar, in and back, is sixty . . ."

"The dollar twenty-nine doesn't include the drink, so . . ."

"Oh, I'll drink water," his even voice explains. "Is there tax on the dollar twenty-nine?"

"Yeah, but I couldn't tell you how much."

For a few moments he stands there, silent in his indecision. I bury my cold hands in my coat pockets, fingering the streetcar pass, the quarter, the nickel and the pair of dimes. The pass and one of the dimes will see me safely to the other side of town, to a warm home, a hot meal.

"I was hoping for a hot meal," he begins again. "But maybe I better not try it. With the tax. I guess I don't have enough bread. Damn it! I'd hate to ride in for nothing."

He turns again to silence. As I wonder what to say, I notice a floating body of yellow light sliding along the silver rails. It eyes the peopled island and rumbles to a stop. The doors swoosh open.

"What the hell," the collegian mutters as he follows me onto the streetcar.

Stuffing the transfer into my coat pocket, I walk back through the warm belly, pawing at the stainless steel ribs to keep my balance. I swing quickly into an empty seat and squash my cold body against the trolley's warm flank. If only that kid would sit beside me. If only we could talk.

The young man walks back under the dim lights, his dark hair spread neatly over his round head. He settles in a seat far to the back.

Leaning against the warm metal, I stare through the clouded window. The hum and creak of the trolley rock me to a half-dream that dims my vision, tunes down my hearing, dulls my senses.

Before my mind can wander past the pounding surf along the eighteenth fairway at Pebble Beach, I find my rain-smearred window full of Pittsburgh. The streets are dark and near empty; the bright neon flashes stretch out across the puddled avenues; a tight network of silver teeth locks the jaws of every store, except for a few drug stores, and, possibly, a musty cigar store or two.

The streetcar rattles along Liberty Avenue and grinds to a noisy stop as its center doors slam open. Easing myself down into the sparkling asphalt, I hurry through the dripping rain and find shelter in the dark doorway of a five-and-dime.

A moaning bus sweeps around a distant corner and creeps up the lonely street. It pulls to the curb and, with a deep sigh, opens its narrow doors. No one gets off; I alone get on.

I mosey back through the pale green interior and plop down on the cramped bench that is pasted against the rear window, spanning the width of the vehicle. The hum of the motor sputters and dies. Except for the whisper of rain on the roof, we sit in silence, waiting for the long trip home to begin.

In low, early morning tones, the driver talks weather to a regular customer in the head of the bus. A rustic old man, lost in the folds of his army surplus coat, snores ever so lightly. A middle-aged woman frowns down into her tattered paperback, her sagging eyes blinking desperately. And, across from myself a young girl sits quietly.

She has curled into a little ball of loneliness, hiding her sobs under her crossed arms. The dark fall of her hair plunges to her shoulders and bubbles over the coat collar she draws close around her neck. She leans into the cold back of the seat in front, her bent figure wrapped loosely in her charcoal coat, her delicate legs painted with black stockings and wedged against the seat back. Her figure is motionless, so small, so fragile, so alone.

The silence is once again filled with the low groans of the motor. The long silver bus lunges into the night. We are all going home.

EUCHARISTIA

by GILBERT Z. PUZNAKOSKI

Of all the accomplishments of the Latin School, the most important ones have been made in the Divine Liturgy. The major reason for this could be the renewed use of the vernacular in its celebration. In general, we have three major improvements.

The first of these is the High Mass. At this blessed meal, the holy readings, the prayers, the preface, and the invitations are all in English; further, most are sung—occasionally with harmony. The altar facing the people has helped to draw the students to the Lord with increased participation. This participation is the hope of Mother Church for all her children. We cannot be saved by faith alone, but only by faith and action. We cannot be changed by the Spirit unless we LET him change us and welcome him into our whole soul. Nor is this Spirit satisfied with our private participation alone. We must work to change the whole community with ourselves. We must come to work as members of one body, one in Love, one in faith, one in Christ.

Our second change has been the rebirth in our hymns. The students now have at their disposal the Antiphonal Psalms, Fr. River's Mass Program, the "Brown-books", and a number of folk hymns. All of these have brought about some avid participation on the part of the student body. Increased variety has certainly helped to eliminate boredom for many, while constant repetition has driven some to invent harmony. We are far from Mother Church's ideal, but, at least, we have taken the first steps towards perfection. I think Holy Church's ultimate goal is the perfect imitation of those mystical hosts of cherubim whom we represent at the Divine Liturgy which is, in reality, heaven on earth. Perfect imitation is a hard goal; approached by Blessed Ambrose and the other holy fathers, it still remains for us to attain that lofty height before the return of the Lord.

Third, in the past, we have witnessed those most ancient symbols of unity and Apostolic Tradition, the concelebrations. Though all the faculty priests have not directly taken part in these Sacred Liturgies, those who did have helped to bind our community and faculty into one body of prayer and love. The Spirit proceeding from these liturgical functions has undoubtedly guided our school along the way to charity. Perhaps this is the improvement with the farthest reaching effects, for it is in ourselves. No longer a group of disinterested individuals, we are ever being drawn together in the Spirit of Love. We are coming to recognize and accept our role in the Body of Christ. The results of this realization are plain: the Ozanam food drive, the annual stamp collection, the Paschal offerings to Bishop Picachi. Had English not been implemented, it is probable that concelebrations would have remained buried in the

ashes of antiquity, while the school activities would have floundered with a hollow core. The Liturgy has filled that core.

We are also formed into better Christians on first Fridays. With the liturgy as the focal point, these devotions have come to enjoy the solemn honour of a Scripture Service. The Eternal Father has come to be glorified in his word as well as in his Son.

Our liturgical advancements are fine for theologians, but have they reached the people? I believe that our acceptance of our role—now—will build for us a strong foundation of faith with the Lord Christ as the cornerstone. Today we are participating as laymen. Tomorrow, however, some of us may be participating as Christ's ministers. We will be capable of being effective channels of the Spirit only if we are willing to accept those challenges posed by the living liturgy. Whether we all become priests or not, most certainly, we shall all share in the mystical priesthood of the Lord until he comes. Future actions remain the sole judge of the success or the failure of the Divine Liturgy in the Latin School. Will we work for success?

God is Silent

by GEORGE A. KLINE

across the seas of ages
o'er the peaks of time
god is silent
like a thunderless storm
a waveless ocean o'er
which our shaky ship
skims, searching
for him

God is somewhere
in the stony silence
of a thousands year
night, hidden from
we doubting sailors
the pondering, wondering,
wandering, straining
for Him



the darkness of evening

by NICHOLAS P. CAFARDI

As I trudged outside to our mailbox, the wind's invisible hand was covering the earth with drifts of snow. Like a master decorator, it smoothed the white icing over the landscape. The whole world was a frosted cupcake floating and falling through space.

When I opened the mailbox, a warm blast flew out and embraced me, for inside was a cache of Christmas cards, each one holding a special promise of holiday cheer. I hoarded the envelopes in my gloved hands and pressed them close to my chest as a gust of wind carried me back to the house.

Once inside, I brushed the dancing white snowflakes from my clothes and tossed my gloves onto the table; my coat could wait until I had looked at the cards.

One envelope demanded that it be opened first, for among the many joyous white paper rectangles, it alone seemed out of place. Its white-faded-yellow complexion looked sad in some odd way. I ran a fingernail along the v-shaped seal and removed the card from its covering. On the front was the Madonna fondling her new-born Child. The look of love that poured from her eyes reflected from the Infant's face to mine. The message inside read:

*May the richest blessings
Of the Christmas season
Be with you now and
During the coming year!*

uncle Louie

Uncle Louie, Uncle Louie. How long had it been since I had seen him? Where was he living now? I flipped the envelope over and searched the corner for a return address. There was none. The smeared ink letters

crowded inside the circular postmark said "Shadyside." That was not far away, but, for all my family cared for Uncle Louie, the postmark could have named a place half the world around.

The early years of my childhood sparkled with memories of Uncle Louie, my father's youngest brother. He lived in our house, and I shared a room with him. I spent most of my day pursuing Uncle Louie throughout the house, waiting for the times he would need my help with his paralyzed right hand and arm. This perpetual chase was happiest when Uncle Louie invented stories and games as I traipsed after him.

Towering from the midst of these memories stands one terrible day. I can still vividly recall the sound of my father and uncle screaming at each other. Even now, my skin crawls with shock as I picture Uncle Louie clenching his right hand into a fist and shaking it before my father's angry and astonished face. Finally, my father ended their argument by seizing his brother and throwing him out of the house. Then, still in a frenzied rage, he raced upstairs to the room I shared with Uncle Louie. He threw up the window sash with such violence that the house thundered. In a chaos of crash after crash, all of my uncle's possessions went out of the window and onto the street.

At the supper table that night, I decided to ask about Uncle Louie. "Daddy," I began, "is Uncle Louie—"

"That's enough," my father roared. "Your Uncle Louis is dead. Today I buried him. His name will no longer be mentioned in this house."

The only sounds during the rest of our meal were my father's muffled sobs mixed with the noise of the clinking dinnerware.

That evening, when my mother stopped in my room to say good-night, she spoke to me in a reluctant, almost inaudible voice. "Nicky," she started, "you love God very much, don't you?"

"Yes," I murmured.

"And you know that God has a special love for you, too, because he made you a Catholic?" she continued.

"Yes."

"Then you know what a terrible sin it is to reject the Catholic faith?"

"Yes."

"Well, your Uncle Louie has decided to change his religion. He will no longer go to Mass and pray like we do—"

"—But why, Mommy, why?"

"I don't know, Nicky. He says he's been going to Protestant services and praying for his crippled arm. He says his prayers were answered. He says he can move his arm now."

"He can. I saw him. He shook his hand at Daddy."

"No, Nicky, you didn't see that. You don't understand what you saw. Now go to sleep. Forget what happened today."

The next few days were empty and sad without Uncle Louie, but, on the carousel of childhood, emptiness is soon filled and sadness, turned to joy. Before long, Uncle Louie was merely a memory, the strange man who tried so often to visit us, but who was never allowed past the front door.

I can remember an evening years later, just before my eleventh birthday. My father and mother were out, and I was alone in the house. I built a fortress of solitude around myself to protect against imagined intruders and fairy tale dragons. Suddenly, my battlements were shattered by the ringing of our doorbell. It was Uncle Louie. I opened the door and asked him in. He remained motionless on the threshold. The flickering porchlamp surrounded him with lines of yellow light.

The silhouette in the doorway began speaking. "Do you remember me, Nicky?"

"Yes, I remember you. You're Uncle Louie."

"Good, that's good. How are you?"

"Fine, Uncle Louie. How are you?"

"I'm well. I'm well. Are your mother and father here, Nicky?"

"No, Uncle Louie. They went out."

"Then I should not stay, but I have this present I have been wanting to give you. You did not think that I could forget your birthday, did you?" He took a children's Bible from his coat pocket. "Here," he said with a twinkle in his eye, "this is for you, Nicky."

Excitedly, I paged through the gift. It was filled with pictures of Christ and the saints. As my eyes played with the book, they caught the phrase "King James Version" at the bottom of the title page. I reacted immediately. I knew that those three words were sinful. I handed the book back to my uncle.

"I don't want this book, Uncle Louie. It's no good. It's a fake."

The light was suddenly gone from his eyes. His face was charged with sadness and disappointment as he mumbled an apology. "I'm sorry, Nicky. I didn't know."

I began to wish that I had accepted his gift, but it was too late now. Without a sound, the silhouette left our doorway and merged with the darkness of evening. Uncle Louie never tried to visit us again.

Now I sat holding Uncle Louie's Christmas card in my hands. As I glanced back over the Madonna and Child and re-read the verse inside, I realized that this was one holiday message that said more than "Merry Christmas."

Spring

by NICHOLAS M. RUSSO

When March winds blow through cloudless skies,
At last it's time for nature to rise.
From three months spent her winter sleep,
As babes crawl forth so does she creep.

In shoots and stems of grass so green,
Gives softened soil to the earth serene.
In spurts and spats they start to crawl,
To where they were before the fall.

Small flower buds can now be seen,
Amid the early springtime green.
Soon flowers cover hills and lanes,
Fed and formed on April's rains.

Soon blossoms come as one might see,
To boughs of cherry and apple trees.
As pink as rosy fingered dawns,
As white as gentle graceful swans.

When all these florets fill the ground.
The earth in a soft sweet smell abounds.
Throughout this air so fresh and light,
Soar singing birds in upward flight.

Amid the chant and crow of birds
A splishing splashing sound is heard
Of water gushing rushing down
Over rocks and to the ground.

So this is spring, I could write more
Till both my eyes and hands were sore,
But now it's best with watchful eye
To sit and look as spring goes by.

Orations . . .

In this section of THE MITER, we offer a break from the ordinary. This consists of a group of speeches which were written by the students and delivered before a panel of judges. Since these orations were written to be presented to an audience, the reader misses some of the excitement, the tension, the thrills which spring from a fiery voice, a moving gesture, or a piercing glance. Your imagination must supply that.

Yet, if a speech is well-written, as we believe these are, we cannot help but be affected by a superb choice of words, a clearly developed theme and a swift, powerful conclusion. Therefore, in the hope that you may profit from these speeches almost as much as those who have heard them, we present "The Masterpiece," "The Solution" and "The Ultimate I."

The Masterpiece

by KENNETH L. GARVER

Have you ever seen the inside of an Art Gallery? Hung upon the walls are hundreds of beautiful paintings: a Picasso, a Mondrian, a Rembrandt. Each one reflects the craftsmanship of its artist. Yet among all these great works of art, there is often one which stands out above all the others as a masterpiece.

Now take a look at the largest Art Gallery—Earth. A blue-green river flows gently to the sea. Trees with leaves of scarlet red, bright orange, and dull brown dot the sides of many mountains, towering green mountains which seem to turn white as they reach for the sky, a powder blue sky which is majestic in its domain. Yet even among these greatest works of art, there is one which stands out above all the others—one which is God's greatest work of art—one which not only reflects God's craftsmanship, but His image also—one which can think—one which can love—The Masterpiece!—Free Man!

But, just as rivers overflow, just as mountains crumble, and just as lightning strikes, so too, can free man's passions overflow, so, too, can his morals crumble, and so, too, can his anger strike. Free man is as unpredictable and just as complex as the awesome powers of nature. For, Free Man can be seen as four different individuals, God's Masterpiece of four parts:

First of all, there is the free man who loves and appreciates his freedom and his country which defends it. He is the ideal free man.

He can be seen in every corner of the earth as a worker in the Peace Corps. With his zealous eyes, he sees that there is a job to be done in helping under-developed peoples. With his ears, he listens to their problems. From his mouth come words of hope, consolation, and guidance. Into his hands he takes advanced tools and shows advancing people how to use them.

The ideal free man can be seen as a soldier in Viet Nam. Look at him sweat it out in some God-forsaken, man-forsaken jungle! Look at him fight, bleed, and die for freedom.

Take another look at the ideal free man. He can also be seen within our very borders as a citizen loyal to his God and his country. While the morals of many crumble, the ideal free man takes a stand for morality.

And as he stands, look at him! This part of God's Masterpiece has been preserved in its full beauty. And we Art Critics gaze happily—in appreciation and admiration.

Unfortunately, free man does not always have these ideal characteristics.

The second type of free man is handed hate instead of love. His dream of freedom is constantly shattered. He is the oppressed free man.

The oppressed free man in our country today is the Negro. Long before our country even began, his ancestors were packed into filthy

ships, shuttled across a vast ocean, and put to work as slaves on strange plantations. They were constantly under the lash of whips. Whips not only sliced their skin into ribbons and bit into their bones, but also hacked away at their human dignity and smashed their sense of freedom into the dull, dry gravel of despair. Then in 1863, they were given hope. For at that time they were "set free"—on paper! That was over a hundred years ago, and for the most part, the Negro is still the oppressed free man, struggling for his freedom.

Take a good look at this second type of free man. So often his face reflects nothing. His eyes too often see the snarling faces of barking sheriffs and the mirthless grin of deadly police dogs. He so often hears his individuality denied; he is one of "them" and, of course, the next words come with a sage wag of a non-thinking head: "I knew them—they're all the same!"

This second type of free man is also part of God's Masterpiece—but marred—horribly marred—not by circumstances or slave ships or huge whips, but by a fellow man—yes, by the third type of free man.

This third type of free man abuses his very gift of freedom by depriving others of it. The cornerstone of his philosophy is hate. When he lifts his hand, it's not to help or to lead, it is to shatter. He is free man, the oppressor.

He can be seen in the white, but hardly spotless, robes of the Ku Klux Klan. With his very hands, he beats, and slices, and burns. If our civilization was shocked to see the Nazi's delight in roasting the Jews to death in the ovens of Buchenwald and Dachau, how much more should we be shocked to see our own countrymen drench Southern soil with free blood?

Amid the atrocities of free man, the oppressor, there stands a fourth type of free man—but that's all he does—stands—stands with his back turned on freedom and his fellowman. He is the indifferent free man. He just "can't afford to get involved"! His eyes reflect cold indifference to the scrawny poor of our country. The poor man may hunger and thirst, but this fourth type of free man couldn't care less.

The only freedom the indifferent free man is concerned about is the freedom from responsibility.

Take another look within this Art Gallery—Earth. Take another look at its masterpiece, free man. Notice the four divisions of this masterpiece.

The first part is absolutely beautiful! Someone has smeared the second part. The third part is rotting away, threatening to ruin this entire work of Art. The fourth part is painted in only one color, dull grey.

As it stands now, God's greatest work of Art, free man, is unsymmetrical and indeed, desecrated. And, really, there is no room for mud, decay, and dull hues on a masterpiece.

What our glorious world needs and wants, what the Infinite Creator of that world needs and wants, what we need and want—are men; men who are willing to work and give of themselves to refinish and preserve undefiled, the now-challenged beauty of that Masterpiece!

The Solution

by NICHOLAS M. RUSSO

As I was choosing a topic for a speech, I found that I could pick from an unlimited number of present-day subjects. I could select from a vast storehouse of topics which would be pertinent not only to my life, but to yours, as well.

As I pondered, I realized that I could speak on a problem which has been harassing man since the dawn of civilization. I could speak on the ever-present, foul plague of war. I could tell the story of strewn bodies lying in filthy, muddy foxholes. I could disclose the feelings of families at home as they look upon the empty chairs at the head of the dinner table. I could tell of the tear-streaked faces saying their last good-byes at railroad stations, never realizing that these are truly final farewells. I could describe the bold backbone of any combat, the hard, rugged foot soldier. I could depict him trudging along under the weight of his pack, wading through muddy slush, as cold rain beats against his hardened face. I could point out, though, that it is not the heavy pack which weighs him down. It is the burden of fear, fear which sends chills to his cheeks, sweat to his pores, and a light beat to his heavy heart. It is the terror that, at any second, a sniper's gun may fire with a sharp "ping," and be followed only by the quiet thump of his body as it relaxes in death. I could relate that it is not the muddy slush which stymies his worn-out legs. It is loneliness which engulfs his spirit, the knowledge that he is thousands of miles from his loved ones in a land where practically everyone else is the hated enemy. I could reveal that the cold rain does not bring tears to his blood-shot eyes, but a realization brings them on, a realization that, at home, thousands of men do not know he's there and couldn't care less.

This seemed to be an excellent topic for a speech, but as I thought over the entire concept, I perceived a solution to war and its brutal killing. The answer, of course, was the age-old virtue of love. I realized, however, that love was hardly for me to preach about. Therefore, I had to immediately change the subject.

Again I set my brain to work and came up with a better idea. I could speak on a subject which is as much a difficulty now in the 1960's as it was one hundred years ago in the 1860's. I could speak on the race question. I could tell the terrible tales of Selma, Little Rock, and all those other unnamed cities. Like an artist, I could paint the drama of distorted human man, utilizing the color contrasts of black against white; yet, having one dominating hue, blood-rich red. Like a poet I could write a verse about Harlem and other flourishing ghettos, using a new type of meter, a meter as harsh to the senses as hatred is to the soul. I could include in this poem the new three R's, the social R's, rats creeping in the kitchens, rotted wood cracking on the roofs,

and rusted pipes corroding in one-bathroom tenements. Like an archaeologist, I could explore the dark caverns which conceal the causes why, in many newspapers, good human interest stories of Maurie Wills or Sandy Koufax are replaced by hatred columns about Malcolm X or Robert Shelton. I could discuss the sorrowful story of Watts and describe hard-faced national guardsmen lining the streets in battle array. I could depict people watching on as arsonists send buildings ablaze in huge flames of yellow fire. I could reveal the thoughts of other nations as they listened to this black truth broadcast over the radio. I seriously thought that I had a suitable theme for a fine oration, but further investigation proved fatal. I discovered that, if I would choose this topic, I would find myself in the same awkward predicament. I would, I felt, have to offer a solution to this ever-pressing problem, and the only one which came to mind was the heroic quality of love. However, I realized perfectly well that I am a mere struggling orator, not a world-renowned lecturer, and therefore, I couldn't possibly lecture to you about an heroic quality.

I was about to throw up my hands in utter despair when one last promising idea came to me. I realized that I could speak on juvenile delinquency. Surely, I could not possibly err with such a topic, in fact, I could do a great deal with it. It would be easy to tell the story of flashing neon lights against black leather jackets and shiny, sharp switch blades. It would be no trouble at all to describe the sun shining down with its cold winter chill upon loveless passion and, yet, with its summer warmth on the illegitimate child. It would be simple to tell of the glaring light bulbs in dark cellars, as they cast their glow upon old, dirty, stolen money—money given for new, fresh, eternally costly dope. I must say I found it a tremendous temptation to answer the why of the jackets, the how of the thefts and the dope, and the wherefore of the passionate lusts.

But a second thought restrained me. As I pondered over this topic, I saw that the hatred in neighborhoods, in families, and even to one's own person, was the same as that which pits nation against nation and race against race. Of course, I realized that there was only one possible solution to this problem. Call it an age old virtue; call it an heroic quality; it is still the same answer, love. But I am not able to preach to you about this virtue, nor am I suited to lecture to you about this heroic quality; surely, I am not a learned professor and, therefore, I could not begin to teach you about love. If you want to learn about love, you must go to theologians, lecturers, professors. If you want to learn about this age old, heroic quality of love, you must listen to the voices in the resounding recesses of your own heart.

The Ultimate "I"

by STANLEY J. JANIAK

I would like to take this opportunity to warn you of something that has been bothering me for some time now. I am going to tell you of a disease so contagious that it is sweeping the country from coast to coast in epidemic proportions. It is so crippling that it brings on narrowness of vision and dulling of the senses, making them cold to everything around them.

One of the things that really frightens me about this malady is that it has no known cure. Medical researchers do not even consider it as a disease. Since I have taken it upon myself to expose this plague, I should name it. I decided to call it "I"-goism, now you might be murmuring, somewhat relieved; "I thought that he was going to talk of a serious subject after that big buildup. But, it is obvious even from the sound of the word that he will talk about egoism. Everyone knows about that, and besides, it is not half as bad as he would have us believe." However, I think if you take a close look at the situation, you will find that "I"-goism is at the root of every major problem facing us in the world today. But, I do not want to rush into that part of the problem now. First, I will explain my theory of "I"-goism. The best method to accomplish this is by a comparison of the letter "i" and a man.

Consider the letter "i" for a moment. It is a tiny letter. In a word, it needs a letter before it and a letter after it for support. As a matter of fact, it is the one of the few members of the English alphabet that must have a point above it for security. This letter gets along well in a word, and that is the way that it was meant to be, but then something happens. This tiny, insecure letter begins to raise its head, and soon it absorbs the point above it. Then, with its new-found power, it begins to spread and grow as it feeds upon all the adjoining letters. Soon it has enough strength to break all ties with the word. It is no longer the tiny insecure letter it was. It has transformed itself into the straight, stiff, narrow letter "I". It has become a word in itself. It clammers its way to the beginning of every sentence demanding that everything depend upon "I".

How like the letter "i" we are! We start out in life very helpless, very dependent. We have many ties, however, to make us secure. There are our friends on either side lending their support as did the letters in the word for "i". We have the family above us also. We are a part of the family just as the "i" is of the point. We prosper in this relationship, but here also it happens. "I"-goism sets in "I"-goism, that drive which forces all us little "i's" to strive to become the ultimate "I". We set out in search of this goal, this supremacy. How can I make it to the top if the family ties are holding me down? I must use the family. I will become the center of all their efforts. "I" becomes all important,

and the family is only a tool. Then we need more "tools". Everyone we know, everything we do, is now geared for our own advancement. Soon our friends are reduced to rungs on the ladder to the top. They are lifeless, imperceptive things, which we can do with as we please. Always consuming, never giving, thus the "I" goes through life. Is not this narrowness of vision when the only one "I" can see is itself? Are not the senses dulled when "I" is numb to the needs of everyone around? With these symptoms, you can see why I consider "I"-goism a terrible disease.

That is my theory of "I"-goism. You might ask me why I made the statement that "I"-goism was at the root of every major problem in the world. This conclusion requires neither deep thought nor extensive research. Open any daily newspaper and you will find all the examples of "I"-goism you can stand. The Bobby Baker case was back in the news again a few days ago. This is an example of "I"-goism in the highest levels of government. Is not "I"-goism really the main reason for the Ku Klux Klan? What about the rapidly rising divorce rate? Here too, "I"-goism is at the root of all the misfortune and misunderstanding. For you see, an I and an I can not go together to form a we. There is a me and a you, and the family becomes merely a them.

Since I have pointed out the disease, "I"-goism, and its effects, the next step would be to present a cure. This is really the roughest part because there is no panacea, but there are some antidotes. Each one of us must seek out our own treatment. One sure help is kindness. Yes, just plain, simple kindness—doing something for someone without expecting something in return. There are other similar examples which I could present, but I will leave them to your own imagination and good judgment. I do suggest, however, that you prescribe an antidote which will prevent you from being stricken with "I"-goism; if you do not, you run the risk of becoming a straight, stiff, narrow-sighted, imperceptive, ultimate "I".



Joy from Gorrow

by NICHOLAS M. RUSSO

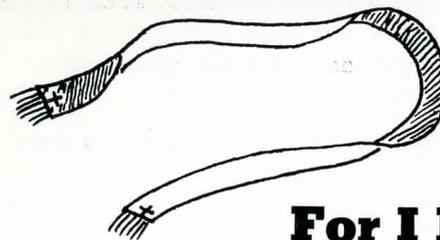
The skies engulfed with April's misty clouds,
Pour out their drenching soaking sheets of gloom
To branches caught in dewy shaded shrouds,
But sun-filled May needs April's darkened doom.
Grey waters seep into the softened earth
And saturate the soil deep within.
Torrential teeming floods are given birth,
But peaceful May requires April's din.
Warm arid shelter nature's sons enfolds.
As damp and chilly atmosphere contains
The elements inducing coughing colds.
But pleasant May needs April's biting pains.
We undergo life's darkness, din, and sting
For sunny, pleasant, placid, May-time Spring.



Beyond the Skies

by ROBERT J. KUHN

Beyond the skies that mortal men can see,
Above the soil smell that here resides,
Below the words that make a ruffled sea,
A somber marble meaning ever hides.
The bright-eyed man who knows a blade of grass
For all the things its slender life can say,
Will never fear the needled mountain pass
That threatens certain ambush on the way.
For there is something more than life and death,
For there is so much more than nuisance now,
Forever calls a rumbling whisper breath
That even walks beyond the tombstone aisle.
I wish that I could see in every sprout
The golden good the world is all about.



For I Have Sinned

by MICHAEL J. MURPHY

Henry Sinclair stared pensively out his East Side apartment window. It sounded odd. "Henry Sinclair, Henry Sinclair," he repeated it over and over in his mind. It seemed it always had been Father Sinclair, or Reverend Henry Sinclair. But, that was all over now. Henry Sinclair it would be for the rest of his life, except in the unlikely case that he could reconcile himself with the Church.

Oh, it wasn't that he was ungrateful. The Church had given him a fine education and allowed him to use the intellectual abilities he had in such abundance. But the Church expected too much of a man, of human nature in general. Could any man be asked to stand and watch his brother be killed when he thought he could prevent it?

Sinclair strained his now overwrought mind to recapture the events leading up to his excommunication. It had been a cheerful Saturday afternoon in May. A man paced slowly down the aisle, stopped, and contemplated for several seconds, then stepped hesitantly into the confessional.

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. . . ."

How that voice rang in his ears! Rough, grating, the breathing was short and fast.

"I just killed a man."

It wasn't so urgent at the time. Of course, he asked the man to turn himself in, told him he couldn't get away with it. He tried to be particularly persuasive in this case because he recognized the man's voice. George Keaney was a close friend of his brother, Jim; they worked together in a brokerage firm downtown.

Father Sinclair was not surprised a day later when the news-story broke. So Keaney had killed his own boss! He wouldn't have thought this little man had the nerve. Jimmy had often told him what a domineering character this boss was, but it was hard to believe he was that bad.

The case held mild interest for Sinclair; interest, that is, until the police released their list of suspects. There was not even a mention of Keaney; it was James Sinclair who was the first of the three suspects. Within a week, that list was narrowed to one.

Sinclair remembered what a fool he had made of himself at the Police Station.

"But that's impossible! Jimmy didn't do it, I know he didn't."

"How, Father?"

"I . . . I can't tell you that, Lieutenant, but believe me, Jimmy didn't do it. I know who did it!"

"Who, Father?"

"I can't tell who ! But . . ."

"Could you tell a jury?"

"No! If you were doing your job, you'd know who did it!"

"We think we already know, Father. Now please, we have a lot of work to do. If you'd tell us what you know, we could do something, but right now we're going on what we have."

What could he do? What could any man do?

Sinclair remembered the first visit to his brother's cell.

"Henry, I didn't do it; at least you believe me, don't you?"

"Sure, Jimmy. I know you didn't."

"You have to help me, Henry. My lawyer doesn't seem too optimistic."

"I wish I could, but just hang on, we'll see."

The problem seized and twisted him until he could hardly bear it. He couldn't eat, sleep, work. His conscience seemed to be betraying him. He had an obligation to save a man's life, his brother's life; yet, he had vowed never to break the seal of confession.

His parishioners were becoming suspicious. He had been snapping at them at the slightest provocation, ignoring important engagements, and in general acting strangely for several weeks. He would take long walks to clear his thoughts, but he was always haunted by the grating and now sinister whisper.

"Bless me, Father . . ."

His imagination would seize upon certain objects and twist and mold them into the face of the murderer.

The sight of the confessional became repulsive now. He found or made up excuses for avoiding the place. Surely, if he dare enter, this whispering demon would seize him and drive him neatly and quickly out of his mind.

Sinclair visited his brother almost daily now. He saw lines begin to form around his eyes. His complexion became pale. Each day he looked more disheveled. Was this the face of a murderer? He stared point-blank into his brother's face. Sinclair had to be sure.

It was silly even to ask himself such a question. True, Jimmy had something of a motive. He was more than outspoken about the faults of

his boss. And, certainly there was opportunity—they worked in the same office together. But these were co-incidences, and nothing more.

Just when the intolerable mental torture began to take its toll physically on Henry Sinclair, he chose a path out of his dilemma. As the day of the trial approached, he became more and more resolute. He realized that his testimony would probably have little effect on the outcome, but it was the only way he could live with himself. He also knew that the result of such an action would be excommunication. But a priest drained of all his self respect is useless anyway.

So, Father Henry Sinclair told all he knew, and, although he made the name of George Keaney the talk of the town, he accomplished, legally, little or nothing. Then he left the courtroom to the blue flash of newsmen's cameras and was swiftly devoured by the bustling city.

To his great sadness, Sinclair's brother was convicted and executed. But he had overcome his grief, and now was moderately satisfied with his lot. He often longed to again don the priestly robes, but that had to be sacrificed in the interest of his sanity and, ultimately, of truth.

The radio droned in the background as Sinclair continued to reflect on his brother's death. Just then, a news story caught his attention. A hit and run case which had gone unsolved for three months had been cracked.

"George Keaney was arrested at his home. . . ."



Summertime Breeze

by JOSEPH A. VATER

The gentle breeze of summertime surrounds
The open fields with fragrances so sweet,
That angels dare descend their pearly bounds,
To drift amid the sea of golden wheat.



Flight

by STANLEY J. JANIAC

The eagle soars on wings of graceful might
Ascending through the clouds in endless skies,
And since I watch him glide in lofty flight,
On eagle wings to heaven I can rise.

My Philosophy

by WILLIAM M. OGRODOWSKI

Contrary to the experiences of many, my philosophy of life can be traced to a very simple, hardly exceptional source. It took no earth-shaking event like a world war or divine intervention (as in the case of Saul of Tarsus) but, rather, many long, often companionless, rides on Pittsburgh's mass transit system.

My philosophical triad is hardly what might be called "involved." It encompasses three easily understandable points: first, common courtesy is a must; second, always look for the beautiful and good existing in people; and third, formulate a goal and try to keep it ever in mind.

First, common courtesy, in spite of its name, seems to be seldom practiced. People are now more generous in donations of money and other material aid to their neighbors as a group, and this is highly commendable in itself. But, yet, when some unfortunate motorist stalls his car, they honk their horns and sound-off instead of trying to help matters in some way. In a New York incident that has been widely publicized, Kitty Genovese was twice attacked and, finally, murdered despite the presence of some fifty people. We became aroused and angered at this shameful display of apathy, but how can you expect the people of a large city to risk their lives on a dark corner when they rush and push blindly to board a bus and would trample you just to get a seat for a twenty or thirty-minute trip? Simply smiling or allowing another to sit down on a crowded bus is hardly spectacular. But it goes a long way in influencing others to do the same. And if everyone would learn to practice a little love of neighbor, it would, indeed, amount to something spectacular.

Secondly, although it might not still possess the magnificence of Eden, the world's beauty depends, to a great degree, on the attitudes and insights which men have in relation to it. So it is with people. They change little. It is the circumstance of life that might present one man with the presidency of a bank and another with the lot of sharecropper or migratory worker. Moreover, it is comforting to think that all people are pretty much the same. Their natures are not depraved, as many wish to think, but only deprived of doing some of the good they might otherwise have accomplished.

Lastly, as important as the oxygen we breathe is the goal or purpose of our life which gives it meaning and simply makes it worth living. Whether one's aim is fame or fortune, virtue, or preparation for an existence after death, he should strive to the best of his ability towards attaining it. For, even if its fulfillment is never realized, it will be a source of joy, a sustaining force in a life that can often be painfully disappointing.

Sitting on a bus is, perhaps, not the best vantage point from which to view people and life. Nevertheless, it affords an opportunity that is first hand. Tons of sociological and psychological books have been written over the ages, and they are excellent for the scholar who is working for his degree, but for someone who has to live and work with people, there is only one sure way to get to know them. A bus ride is much more than just going from one place to another.



DELTA NINE

by JOHN A. YURKO

The small green globe
Streaks across the sky,
The large red spear
Strikes the last great soul.
The shrill soundless cry
Grasps for understanding of the whole
Matter.

The artificial eye drifts
In search of life to purge.
I stagger over the crest
Of the plutonium hill,
Running from the nameless scourge
That has deigned to kill
All.

He crosses the waterless lake
With his weapon at the ready,
Hunting with the photo-electric cell
Of his omnipotent machine.
He seeks, he finds, he aims it steady,
And fires: the bright plaid sheen
Strikes.



The Protector

by GEORGE A. KLINE

Day comes with a hush over the sleepy town of Turner's Corner. Light seems to break the glass of windows and the leaves of trees into shimmering atoms. The milk wagon has finished its long run of four blocks and crawls back to the dairy shack. The horse and driver are the sole owners of the activity in these early hours of Saturday's morn.

The soft warmth of the reflecting sunbeams encourages the doze of the citizens who on a day like everyday have no important task to perform. The hours move on quicker than the grandfather's clock can show. The trees rustle in the Indian-summer's breeze, and down by the landing, the river glides on with nary a ripple of a wave. The orange of the sun rolls higher along the arch of the sky's expanse, but Turner's Corner stays at rest.

High noon brings the start of today's work. Breakfasts, ham and eggs as usual, crackle and spit as the wives of the town's businessmen prepare to send their men off to work. The merchants reached their establishments and relax as their rather quiet businesses run on. But by far the quietest is Anthony Dryor, the undertaker.

Anthony opens his parlor at 12:30, eager for a dayful of activity. "The people live long here; I have the slowest business in town. But they say that they need me. Why do they need me? I seem to do nothing

for them." Anthony felt a pang of despair as he looked over the articles of his profession. His woods are the best, and there was fine velvet for the insides of the handcrafted coffins. "All this, yet, what need do they have for me? Why?"

After the long day's contemplation, Anthony begins his walk home to food and rest. The town was still at this hour of seven. Each citizen has his or her own quiet, private amusement for Saturday night. Anthony was sombre. "Why do they need me?" he repeated to himself as his footsteps returned to him from the night.

As he reaches his door, he realizes for the first time that the trees are bending under the burden of an angry wind. He shuddered, knowing that a dust storm was coming. But Turner's Corner had weathered them before; there was no danger.

Two hours later Anthony was roused by a violent thumping. The loose articles on the town streets were ramming the side of his house. He heard a monstrous yawn, then saw his windows ripped away and the furniture jostled. Anthony starts; the wind sears like live coals. "My God! The town is burning."

Anthony arranged for the town's funeral with all he could collect. For two days he dug graves and paid his respects to his clients. On the third he began his long walk to the next town. Why did they need him?, he thought to himself. He was only their protector; he covered their lifeless life with wonderful coffins and memorials. But he could not help them this last time. He began to weep as he passed the town boundary.



Morning Life

by ROGER E. CRASKA

When morning sun sends down its golden light
To melt the frosted midnight's lifelessness,
The yellow daffodil doth raise its height
To gather to its tender cheek life's kiss.

Sir Freedom

by ROBERT F. DEBSKI

The weary hand clutched at the shining steel visor and gently lifted it so that the sun-tanned face of a gallant knight shone forth. He was Sir Freedom, Prince of America and, as proclaimed by his admirers, Defender of Liberty. Twenty years past he had redeemed the free kingdoms of the world in the great war against the Arians. But just now he did not feel like Sir Freedom, Bravest of Men, Persecutor of Evil. He was tired, disgusted.

Sir Freedom slid from the saddle of his handsome, but now exhausted, steed. Stumbling into the shade of the giant Ally tree, he was refreshed with new support. Reclining, he drifted into a vivid dream. He began to recall the events which had placed him in this loathed situation. It was now twelve months . . .

Sir Freedom and the other knights of the court were assembled at the huge banquet table in Prince Nato's palace. Suddenly, the boisterous, jovial air was transformed into tension and terror. The brave knights stirred in their chairs. A cloud of smoke appeared in which a tiny elf was giggling. He was the troublesome wizard and prankster, Communism. The mischievous freak approached the conclave with a devilish gleam in his eye and proposed an annual riddle. But this riddle was the exact one of the previous year, that which Sir France had undertaken to solve and which had caused him to suffer disgraceful wounds. Who would risk his life to rescue the young damsel imprisoned in a tall tower in Asia and guarded by the fairy-like Viet-Cong? Sir Britain was about to volunteer when Communism mentioned the second and most feared obstacle, the monstrous dragon, China. Nato turned pale at the thought of assigning one of his knights to the task. Then, Sir Freedom stood, crossed the marble floor, and in a symbol of acceptance, rifled his dagger at Communism's feet. Oh! That proud Moment! What a fool! And now . .

His bones ached. In twelve months of searching for the fair damsel, he had been thwarted. He was now thoroughly discouraged. One side of his conscience repeated to him to surrender and to admit defeat; the other, to cease his mediocrity and to go all out. The war inside him raged until he decided to ride against all opposition. No matter what the result, he would move on. Determined, he rose with new strength, climbed upon his horse, and resumed the quest.

Three more years of hunting finally produced the climax. He had crossed the turbulent river, Unity, and there before him in a level plain was the tower. As he was about to enter, he became terrified as a terrible dragon materialized, blocking his way. Claws sharpened and flames shooting forth, China sprang at Sir Freedom. He met the attack with his sturdy

lance, but the impetus was overwhelming. The lance snapped. His horse, Democracy, stumbled. He was down. As China moved in for the kill, he desperately grabbed his loyal sword, Hope, and thrust. The steel caught the dragon in its vulnerable "Tyranny" bone. The dragon tumbled, conquered. Sir Freedom rose, severely wounded. He plodded into the tower.

The Viet-Cong were easily suppressed without the protection of China. In a magnificent ceremony before the U. N., the damsel was adopted by the family of free world nations.



Alone

by GEORGE A. KLINE

In my vale of loss
there is no tomorrow,
just endless today
counting the gain of yesterday.

Groping through mist
of sorrow's pangs,
my soul seared
with emptiness.

My love glows
on barren cold;
memories prick at
my dying heart.

Lonely with myself
amidst togetherness,
on and on I plod
my road of despair.

Ode for John Chrysostom's Feast

by GILBERT PUZNAKOWSKI

Though rose th'ethereal powers on high
And their winged songs did sigh;
In willow's pate, twin'd in purling arches,
Warbl'd the night'gale crystal pearls,
Thus spake the great Creator—

While mighty trumpet cast shrill dread
Before whom abyss and shadow fled:

“Lead my people up!”

Cried then they all to man

Who harkened to the words of God

And worshipped.

Those holy men might bring our weary race

To see an image of his face,

But blessed John bore the marvel higher

When spoke he from his altar:

“To senses now, and vigilant be;

Reflect whose servants true are we;

Love alone His sovereignty!”

There fluttered down from incensed perches

The blissful choirs with ravish'd
ears,

Thronged before the gold-tongued patriarch.

The phoenix comes; the trumpet shouts,

And all prevails but to destruction;

The spicy copes 'neath raging flames beturning

As groaning Nature stoops discerning

The end;

Yet bright and firm, as whisp'ring clouds of fleece,

Shall soar aloft the gilded words of John —

All else upon their knees.

The dead shall rise, and we shall die,

But risen cite his praise on high!

Spring Serenity

by DAVID H. CAREY

It's April night in the suburbs
along a tree-lined drive.

And the bluish glow of a street-light
makes raindrops seem alive.

Alive with fragile color,
as to newborn leaves they cling.

They seem like tears as they glisten,
but the tears that gladness brings.

And the tires sleesh on wet asphalt
as the headlights are hazy spheres.

Now my heart sings softly within me
as this tranquil beauty appears.



Whisprings

by ROBERT J. KUHN

When mother world is clothed in springtime green,

And dancing in her breeze enlivened gown,

She smiles and whirls the glitter of the scene,

That lightly over winter settles down;

Then all the precious finery around

Is lapped and bunched and stitched in proper place;

And then about the season's work is wound

The liquid sash of atmospheric lace.

With all the silver pins at last secure,

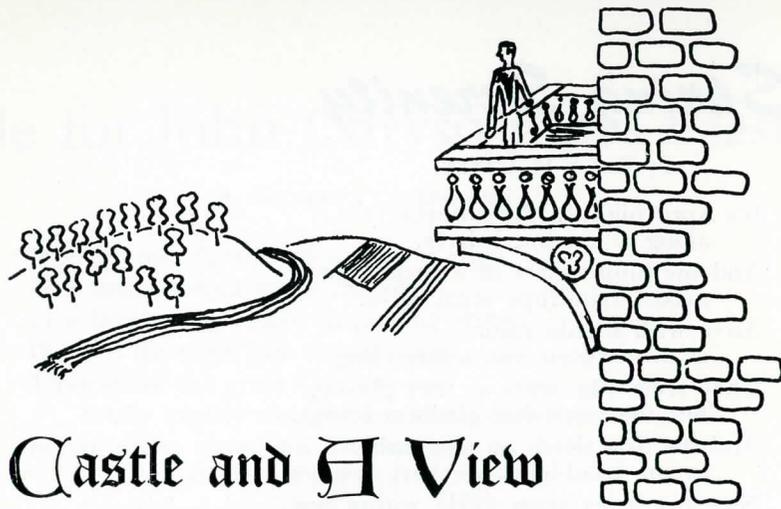
A gleaming swish is mother's greenish dress,

That whispers of the simple love much more,

And talks about the ugliness much less.

In spring the weary eye of man can find

A mother's way to soothe a heavy mind.



A Castle and A View

by ROGER E. CRASKA

I stood before the entrance of the castle. It was quite late, and the night was very dark. Even the pale light of the moon and stars was shut off by the overcast. The castle itself loomed overhead, black and brooding. Its upper features were barely distinguishable, for they receded into the blackness of the sky. I looked up at the castle, trying to detect some sign that my host was inside. It appeared in the form of a dim light shining far back among a maze of towers. With this assurance of an inhabitant, I pounded the heavy door with the clapper and waited.

It was at least ten minutes before the sound of leather heels clapping on cold stone reached my ears. Within seconds, the bolt snapped back, and the door swung open. In the doorway stood a large man whose broad shoulders seemed to be pinched by the doorposts.

"I'm here to see Marc Friday. Is he at home?"

My words brought a wide grin to the man's face.

"He certainly is, and you, Jason Courts, don't even recognize him. How are you, Jason?"

With this he shook my hand and hooked his left arm around my shoulders as he led me into the castle.

Marc Friday—he looked every inch the international traveler and soldier of fortune whom we had always heard about at home. I knew him well, or at least I thought I did, from his letters to my father. It seemed strange that the man who wrote those letters should be living in an out-of-the-way place like this.

Marc led me to the dining room. It was large and bare. Its only furnishings were two chairs and a table laden with a feast of modest proportions.

"Perhaps you might like a bite to eat after your long trip. Besides, I want to hear all about you and what's happening in the States. This will give us a chance to talk."

We sat down and began our midnight supper.

"Tell me, Jason, how is your father?"

"Oh, he is quite well."

As this type of small talk continued, I became more and more uneasy. It was hard for me to carry on a conversation with a man whom I had not seen since I was four. I thought of asking him about his travels, but I knew that talk of travel would come soon enough. When it did come, I suspected it might not be too genial.

"Well, Jason, what has brought you to France? Vacationing?"

"The truth is that my father asked me to come, but then, I guess he wrote you."

"As a matter of fact, he did, but he only said that you would be dropping in. I supposed that you would be vacationing."

"No, that's not exactly it. You see, two months ago when I finished college, I decided that I would travel for a few years before I went to work. You should know how I feel. That nine-to-five daily routine makes me sick. I want to be free and travel! My father was against the idea, but he promised his consent if I came here first."

Marc was startled by my words. He did not say anything for a few minutes. Then he spoke, half-smiling.

"So, your father expects me, the world traveler and adventurer, to open your eyes and show you the evils of a vagabond life. Well, Jason, I won't. It would just be a waste of breath. I know from experience."

That was all he said, and he continued to eat. I had come to the castle prepared for a fight, but Marc would not even skirmish with me. I looked across the table at him. Once again it occurred to me how strange it was to find a man like him here. How could a man, who had experienced what he had, possibly be happy here? In an effort to get an explanation, I made a rather biting remark.

"How can a man who has had so much through the years be content with so little now?"

Marc's passive acceptance of my rude remark made me ashamed. I really did not want to offend Marc; I only wished to understand him.

"I imagine you will be leaving tomorrow, so you had better get some rest."

The next morning, Marc awakened me around eleven o'clock. As I was about to go downstairs, he came back to my room. Apparently, he had forgotten my rudeness of the previous night, for he was very cordial.

"Jason, I would like to show you something before you go."

Marc led me down a hall and onto a balcony. Below us spread the entire valley over which Marc's castle had at one time ruled. It was magnificent. The valley was green and lush. Trees dotted its floor and cast long shadows over the ground. Golden fields of wheat checked the land in the distance. The tops of rounded mountains were capped with thousands of trees. To the east, the slender thread of a road wound its way to the foothills.

"Jason, the view that you see, as well as this castle, are mine. They may not be much, but they are mine.

So now, two years and many thousand of miles later, I stand before the castle again. This time, though, the sun illuminates the entire scene, and I can see distinctly all the towers. The boarded windows and doors confirm what I had heard in a nearby village. Marc is dead. I had come back to tell him that I understood. I had come back to tell him that I was going back to the castle and the view which belong to me.

SEA SQUALL

by DAVID H. CAREY

Gray gulls swoop gracefully o'er the sleeping sea.
Upon the vague horizon far, are filmy swirls
Of grayish mists, descending like
A hungry locust swarm. And now the harsh
North wind drives hordes of soot-black bulls across
The dismal sky. Awakened from its slumber by
An ever-quickening rain, the ocean shakes
A frothy fist at Borealis whose
Stampeding cattle put to flight the screeching gulls,
Those harbingers of doom. Now in a fit
Of frenzy wild, the north wind pounces on
Its supine prey, who lashes out its foamy arms
And grapples for the other's throat.
The hours pass and these two still contend
in mortal combat fierce. They struggle on
And on till, wearied by each other's equal might,
They back off, panting, and the wind departs
To herd his hefty cattle to the far
Horizon while the sea resumes
Its peaceful slumber and the gulls return
To wing about an azure sky.

When the Carousel Stopped

by NICHOLAS P. CAFARDI

Childhood is like a carousel. It is a whirling ride where we are sent spinning into a rapture of dizziness. It is one huge entertainment performed to the melody of calliope music and to the garish light of colored bulbs. There are times of unhappiness, though in childhood, times, it might be said, when the carousel stops. It is during these times, I think, that children often deepen their experience of life.

I can remember one such time, the day I killed my toy soldier. This handsome member of the Grenadier Guards, carved of wood and painted with excitement, had once been my most prized possession. After a few turns of the carousel, however, my interest in him waned. I was hardly aware of his existence until the day I decided, for a reason long since forgotten, to have a magnificent cremation ceremony. Without much thought for my victim, I dragged the toy soldier from the bottom of my toy chest and placed him on a pile of paper and cardboard.

Soon, all was ablaze. The fire licked away the soldier's gay colors and left him a lifeless black. In their rhythm of death, the flames danced over the soldier's body. As his shiny boots deteriorated to a dismal, shapeless heap, I remembered the miles of terrain he and I had marched together. When the flames cracked his arms from his body, I recalled the thousands of enemies he and I had fought together. All this had been forgotten when I set him afire, and now that I remembered, it was too late to save him. Ashes alone remained. The soldier was dead.

The sadness that crept over me at his passing overwhelmed any exhilaration or excitement that I had expected from the cremation. I mourned the soldier's death because part of me was gone. And that part of myself, that part of my past, would never again join me on the carousel.

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