

Winter 1964

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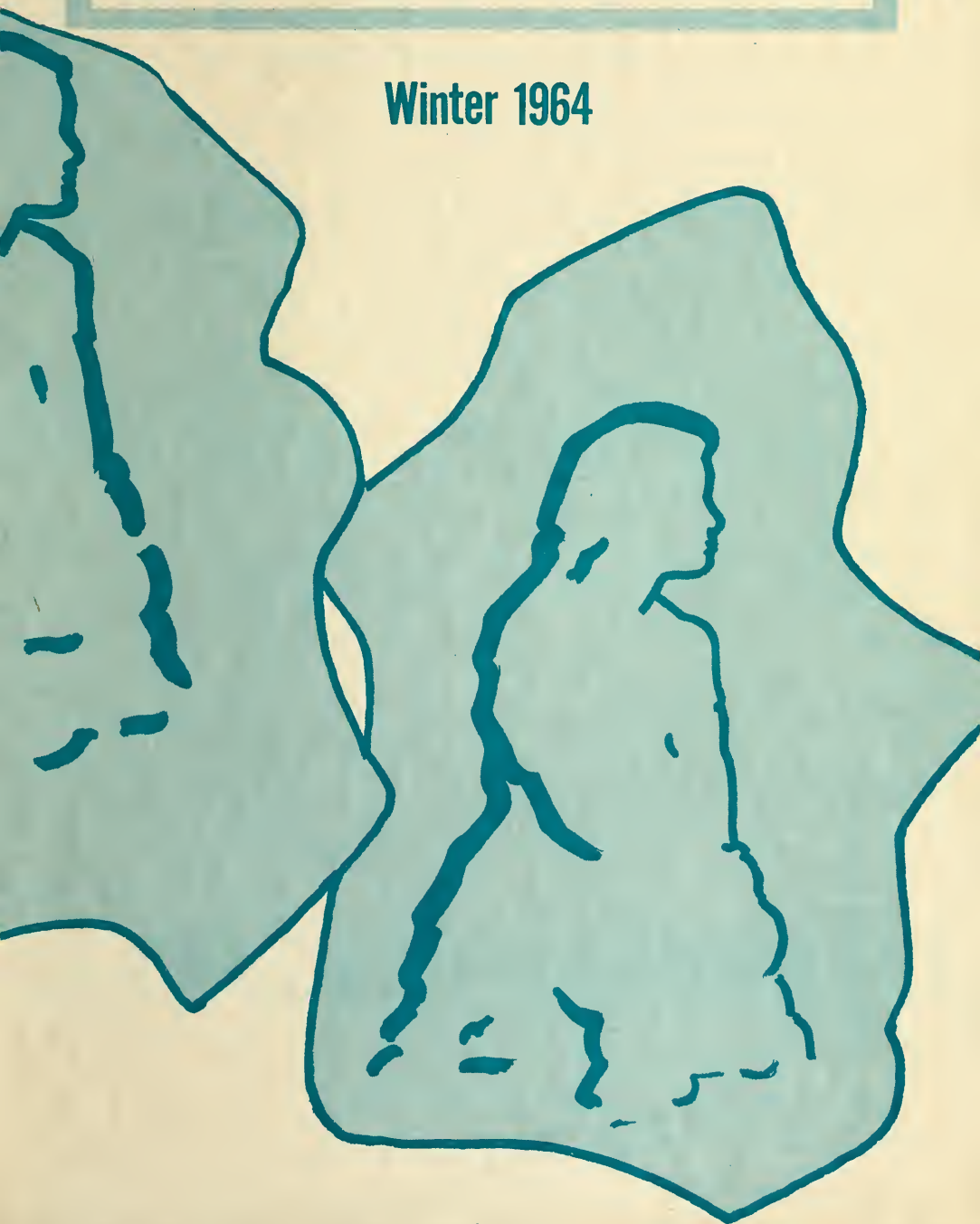
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Colonnade

Winter 1964





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Colonnade

LONGWOOD COLLEGE
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA
WINTER • 1964

Volume XXVI

Number 2



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A County's Final Plight

Gawking calm rage gropes,
Silent mist molds clear,
Too late, too late,
They hear the universe cry.

Black line in settling autumn
Carrying them light to learn,
In suffering they emerge
With a consuming denial
And a go hell with it all,
Issuing a thousand swift strikes
In returning for a hundred years of abuse,
Defeated purpose more than mean?

I shudder—
Ideals grasp the aesthetic pedestal
Where ultimate truth lies with
 a child's reality in hope,
When the pendulum clangs
And abuse ends, to unreal despair,
Are you worthy?

It cannot be—
Crime at heart,
They live, they fight, they compromise
With half-grace, a smile and the
 stroke of compassion,
Returning which wasn't given,
Molding suffering into determination
With something beyond fear—a lasting
 monument,
No more, no more—
Perpetuating truth,
Man must exist,
It is his one right.

—Gayle Ray



THE SEPARATION

by Virginia Gilmore

The dust-covered Greyhound bus pulled up to the filling station, jolting the wandering minds of the passengers sharply back to the present. A few sat up straighter in their reclining seats, took in their parched, dusty surroundings, and settled back again, finding little interest in the cluttered station and the few false-fronted buildings that surrounded it. The driver stood up and stretched. After announcing a ten-minute stop, he swung himself off of the bus and disappeared into the building.

Except for a grease-covered attendant who lazed in a chair by the side of the station door, only two other persons were in sight. A woman, tall, and much too thin for her heavy bone structure, rested her hand on the shoulder of an equally thin, slightly stooped boy. They stood gazing uncertainly at the bus for a moment before picking up their luggage—one cardboard suitcase and a large pasteboard box tied with heavy cord. They moved hesitantly toward the bus and stood at the open door, waiting for the driver to reappear.

The woman set the suitcase down and opened her purse to search for the tickets. Once they were found, she examined them carefully, turning them over and over in her large, rawboned hands. The boy

THE SEPARATION

looked down at the ground, pushing his heavy-laced boot through the dust. The woman, taking sudden notice of this, put her hand back on the boy's shoulder and jerked him in a silent reprimand. The boy submitted sullenly, knocking one boot against the other to rid it of the dust that had collected on it.

The driver returned, and after punching and tearing their tickets properly, picked up the suitcase and box and followed them onto the bus. The woman stood in the aisle, trying to decide which seat to take, while the driver and another passenger arranged her possessions on the racks overhead. Suddenly aware of their help, which had escaped her attention in her preoccupation, she faced each in turn with a quick, self-conscious nod. She slid into a vacant seat, her face still showing the embarrassment of her awkwardness, while the boy settled down beside her. She leaned her face close to the window, covered with grease and patterned with the marks left by someone's hair. As they left the few buildings behind, she leaned back limply and closed her eyes for a moment, shutting out the glare of the sun which left the land around them white with suffocating dust. The boy continued gazing at the toes of his boots which he had propped up on the bar attached to the seat in front of them.

Their preparations for the journey ahead had been half-heartedly observed by the passenger in the seat across the aisle from theirs. He had slept a good part of the morning but had been rudely awakened by the jerked stop of the bus at the filling station. He had lain lengthwise on the seat—his well-worn sport coat wadded up under his head to give it some protection from the arm of the seat on which it rested. He stretched his numb legs out before him as he sat up, rubbing his scalp and stubble of a beard which tingled due to the poor circulation of his cramped position. The sleep had refreshed him, uneasy as it was, and he felt light of heart with the sun beating in at the window giving him a healthy invigorating sensation. He felt the oppressiveness of having been silent for too long and turned to the newcomers with mild interest. He smiled at the boy, who had not yet looked up from his close observation of his boots, and tried to catch his eye.

"Hey, boy. Where'd you come from?" he asked jauntily. The boy ignored the question, pretending not to hear, but giving the hoax away by jumping at the sound of the man's voice. "Hey, boy!"

The woman pulled her eyes reluctantly from the window and looked crossly at the boy. "Speak up when someone's talking to you!" She turned to the boy's interrogator, talking in an unnaturally condescending tone. "S' name's Jedediah—that was his Gramma's idea. She's

(continued on next page)

THE SEPARATION (continued from page 7)

a real case and a nut on everyone's having to have a 'Bible' name. He can't even say it hisself, so's we just call'im Jed."

"How-do," the boy said quickly after his mother had stopped long enough to catch a breath.

"Les' see, you must be—'bout nine?" the man went on, addressing only the boy again.

"No'suh," the boy whispered. "'Most thirteen."

"So ya' are! Guess I don't know much 'bout kids." He laughed at his blunder, throwing back his shaggy head. The boy watched the man's Adam's apple jump up and down in his thick, powerful neck—keeping rhythm to the sound of his laughter.

"You his ma?"

"Yeh, he's my kid."

"Hey, ain't you s'posed to be in school, boy?" He leaned down, trying to look the boy in the face as he spoke, but was afforded only a fleeting glimpse of the boy's colorless eyes before they were completely hidden by the long, dull-blond hair as the boy dropped his head even further.

The boy's color deepened around his ears and the back of his neck. He cleared his throat testily as he looked to his mother for explanations. She looked down at him, expelling her breath in exasperation. "He'll get back in school soon's we get settled in New York. Got better schools out there then they'll ever have where we come from, anyhow.

"New York! Say, you're in for quite a trip, you two." The man's voice registered awe and sympathy at the same time.

"All the further as this bus'll take us."

"Goin' settle there?"

The woman leaned forward to get a better view of the questioner, but the boy's head obstructed her vision. "Got a sister living up there. Goin' see's we can get a place 'round where she's staying."

"Ever been up that way?"

"No. Got the address, though. Reckon we'll find it, all right."

Both were silent for a moment—the man with his head lowered and his forearms resting on his thighs; the woman leaning back against the prickly nap of the upholstery.

"Got a chance for a job up there you know of?" The man asked his question quickly, as if fearful of the silence that momentarily closed in on them.

She shook her head quickly, with a muffled sound deep in her throat. "My sister don't even know I'm comin' yet."

The man made no reply.

(continued on next page)

THE SEPARATION

"Lissen." The woman leaned toward him eagerly, throwing one arm back on the headrest of her seat and straining to see him. "You ever been to New York?"

"I been there a coupl'a times."

She opened her purse again and came up with a post card folded into a little wad. She unfolded it and handed it to him. "That's all we ever got from my sister since she left three years back. Know where it is?"

He looked at the card which bore only an address. On the reverse side was the New York address. It had been written hastily in pencil and was unsigned. He read the address out loud, and gazing at the ceiling, narrowed his eyes in an effort of concentration.

"No, can't say for sure. 'Course I don't know much about New York 'cept for parts of it. Any cabby ought'a know, though."

The woman leaned back again, her eyes wandering dreamily across the ceiling of the bus. "What's it like . . .? New York, I mean."

The man shrugged and pondered for a moment. "Same as any city, I guess—'cept maybe only bigger and busier. Then a city's not much different than a town 'cept for size."

"Ain't no town like that one we just pulled out of." The woman's voice hissed with contempt. "I lived there all my life, and that's more than three sane people ought to have to put up with. Guess anywhere else would'a been just as good as New York. But, New York—there's things goin' on there, boy!" She took a deep, expansive breath and a shiver of expectation shook her gaunt frame.

The man nodded in agreement, but looked down at the floor rather than face her eyes. There was a silence, and the man watched as the woman turned to the boy. She hissed something close to his ear and the boy straightened up quickly. He looked at her momentarily, but knew by the set look on her face that any argument would be futile. "Go on, she said, louder this time with a touch of unexpected gentleness. "It's too hot to sit so close like this. Nobody's goin' mind."

The boy stood up and awkwardly made his way down the aisle to the back of the bus, holding on to the backs of the seats for support. The woman moved toward the center of the seat she now occupied alone and ran her hands down her thighs to smooth the wrinkles out of her limp skirt.

"The boy's a mess. Just like his Dad. No good in him at all."

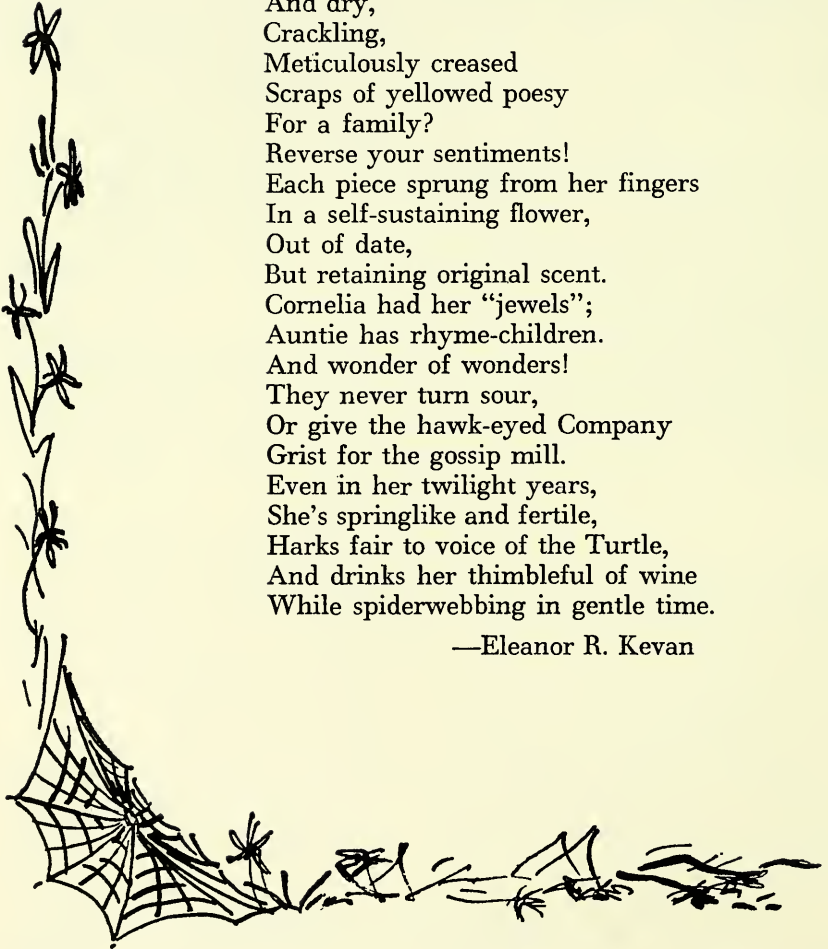
The man was silent for a moment. He looked back at the boy and watched him find a seat and crowd in close to the window. Then he turned back to the woman.

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The Lyrist

So you pity the old dame,
Miss Maiden-Aunt-Ramrod-Brittle,
With no adoring mate
Curled up at her feet,
But only a cold and laryngitic Dicky Bird,
And dry,
Crackling,
Meticulously creased
Scraps of yellowed poesy
For a family?
Reverse your sentiments!
Each piece sprung from her fingers
In a self-sustaining flower,
Out of date,
But retaining original scent.
Cornelia had her "jewels";
Auntie has rhyme-children.
And wonder of wonders!
They never turn sour,
Or give the hawk-eyed Company
Grist for the gossip mill.
Even in her twilight years,
She's springlike and fertile,
Harks fair to voice of the Turtle,
And drinks her thimbleful of wine
While spiderwebbing in gentle time.

—Eleanor R. Kevan



Confidence

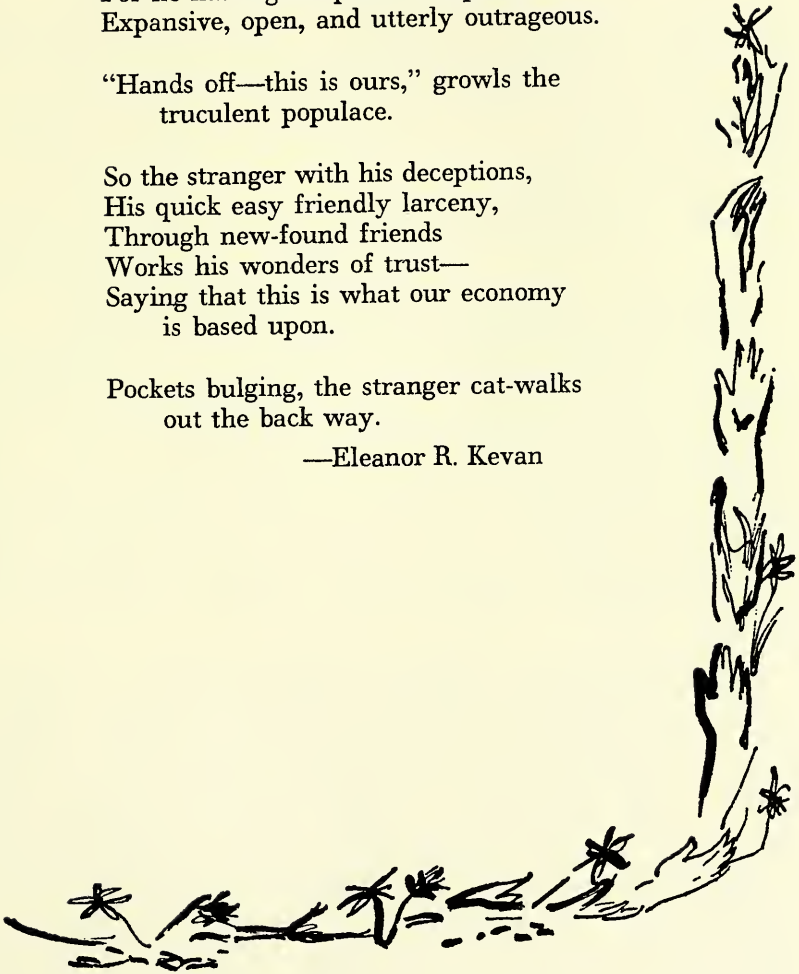
The stranger moves on the town
With all the stealth of a boxer pup
Rampaging through a forbidden pansy
bed,
For he has high hopes of conquest—
Expansive, open, and utterly outrageous.

“Hands off—this is ours,” growls the
truculent populace.

So the stranger with his deceptions,
His quick easy friendly larceny,
Through new-found friends
Works his wonders of trust—
Saying that this is what our economy
is based upon.

Pockets bulging, the stranger cat-walks
out the back way.

—Eleanor R. Kevan



Symbolism in *Lord of the Flies*

by Pauline F. DePew

The intricate symbolism in *Lord of the Flies* fits into the central theme of the book like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. The entire book is representative of the possibility of man's degeneration into a savage state in spite of the influences of rationality and intelligence.

First, the names of the characters could be symbolic. The name, Ralph, suggests Raphael, an archangel. This angelic symbol is supported by Ralph's description in the first chapter. He is described as having a "golden body" and a "mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil." In his playful attack on Piggy, he approached "with wings swept back"; and a "golden light danced" about his face as he swam in the water.

When Jack approached in response to the sound of the conch, he asked, "Where's the man with the trumpet?" Although Ralph finally succumbed to the hysteria, panic, and acts of self-preservation, he was, predominantly, an influence for morality, hope, and rescue.

In striking contrast, Jack is symbolic of evil. Jack and his choir boys, in their first appearance, have Mephistophelian long, black cloaks decorated, ironically, by a silver cross. The name, Jack, and his savage predatory actions in the story remind one of a jackal.

The jackal is described as a dog-like, bad-smelling animal that hunts in packs. In this book, Jack insisted that his choir boys should be hunters; and his relentless pursuit and desire to kill the pigs strongly support this comparison. He is described as he tracked the pigs as "down like a sprinter" and on all fours—"doglike"! Even the bad smell of the jackal symbol is suggested by Jack's insistence that the pigs can't smell him.

The use of the name, Piggy, for the character who is symbolic of civilization, intelligence, rationality, and reason seems to be deeply ironical. His physical appearance invited ridicule, and his actions did nothing to command respect from the group. Then, too, it is strange to note that the animals on the island are always referred to as pigs, never by the more common term, hogs. Since so much of the action of the story is involved in killing and destroying the pigs, this could be symbolic of the final destruction of Piggy and the end of reason.

Simon's name, too, is symbolic of his character and role in the book. Webster defines the word "simon-pure" as genuine and authentic. Simon helped to find food for the "littluns", helped to build the huts, and intuitively ascertained that the beast is "only us". This truth

(continued on next page)

LORD OF THE FLIES

Simon faced in his symbolic counsel with the *Lord of the Flies* and in his subsequent discovery of the "beast of the mountain." The name, Roger, is defined as "famous with the spear." This name is certainly in keeping with his sadistic nature in the story. Roger's cruelty increased in intensity from tearing down the sand castles of the "littluns" to killing the sow with a sharpened stick. As Jack's lieutenant, he served as the ready guard of the fortress.

One of the chief symbolic objects in this book is the conch shell. Used repeatedly as a symbol for authority, the conch is also a symbol of maternal influence. Feminine words are used to describe the shell. It was delicate, fragile, and pink; and the words "pink lips of the mouth" give it a human quality. To strengthen this idea, conch shells have a lining known as "mother-of-pearl." Continuing this maternal and authoritative symbolism of the conch, one notes that even in the closing chapter many of the boys still responded to its call. Piggy made the piteous observation that when someone used to blow a conch "his mum would come."

The "pink" island is pictured in feminine terms thus becoming another maternal symbol. Such phrases as "lip of a circular hollow," "skirts of the forest," "backbone of the island," "slow, split milk" of the surf, and the "pink tail" of the island substantiate this idea. The island has yet another symbolic meaning. It could be compared to a "garden of Eden" with fruit to be eaten and with fruit that was "forbidden." This idyllic existence is invaded by symbols of evil such as the "snakes" which the littluns visualize in the burning trees, the beasts from the water and from the air, the "Lord of the Flies," and the evil within the boys themselves.

The sow, another maternal symbol, could also be symbolic of innocence. These animals did not attack wildly and ferociously. Instead, they seemed to be calm, peaceful, and serene. The mother sow was attacked as she suckled her young piglets, thus adding to the horror of the useless slaughter. All the acts of brutal killing of the pigs seem to be indicative of the moral decadence of the boys. Since they had an apparently sufficient supply of fruit, they were in no danger of starving; hence the killing of the sow just satisfied a primitive urge.

Piggy's spectacles are a symbol of intelligence and rationality. Again and again, Piggy removed his "specs" and cleaned them as if to gain a clearer outlook; and after he replaced them, he presented a logical thought or suggestion. When Jack attacked Piggy and broke one of the lens of the glasses, it marked the beginning of their violence toward each other. It is symbolic that the spectacles or intelligence must be used to light the fire, their one hope of rescue. Finally, it is

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LORD OF THE FLIES (continued from page 13)

ironic that the savage Jack, who has rejected reason and rationality, resorted to violence and theft to seize the very thing he had spurned.

The fire is symbolic of several things. Ralph said, "The fire is the most important thing on the island." It is, primarily, their hope of rescue and, paradoxically, the agent which almost destroys them. Another function of the fire "was to be a hearth now and a comfort until they slept." This was a symbol of the warmth and security of home, and the use of the fire to cook their food was an attempt to cling to a civilized world. Emotions, too, are symbolized by the fire. Like emotions, the fire under careful control was sensibility, security, stability, and safety; but unchecked, it was dangerous, destructive, disastrous, and deadly.

Symbols of civilization are evident throughout the book. Strangely, Jack was the first one to suggest that they have rules; but later, his rebellion against them caused Ralph to lament that "the rules are the only thing we've got!" The custom of voting was also retained in group decisions at first.

Another custom of the civilized world to which they cling is that of designating a place for a lavatory. Ralph insisted that they must keep the place clean. Also, these English boys often referred to the afternoon as "tea-time." One of the most pathetic gestures toward civilization is found in their almost absurd insistence on continued use of their clothes. Utterly without modesty, these young boys strip naked to go swimming; but afterward, they again don their ragged, dirty, uncomfortable clothing "not for decorum or comfort but out of custom." Ralph placed great value on retaining a civilized appearance. This is shown by his remarks when he planned to go to Jack and ask him to return Piggy's spectacles. He said:

'I'm trying to think. Supposing we go, looking like we used to, washed and hair brushed—after all we aren't savages really and being rescued isn't a game.'

Perhaps even the language of the boys in this book is symbolic. It seems that these boys are not representative of the lower class society of which one would expect the use of such words as "ain't." Instead, their language seems more representative of the middle classes; thus it is relatively free of vulgarity and "guttersnipe" terminology. This makes Golding's theme even more frightening if we interpret it to mean that, under proper conditions, this could happen to us!

Symbolism is evident in the actions and mannerisms of the boys. In contrast to Ralph, Jack sought to change his appearance. Like a savage, he painted his face; and "the mask was a thing on its own,

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LORD OF THE FLIES

behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness." The others "understood only too well the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought."

Other symbols of savagery are the "war" dances and "tribal" chants which inflamed emotions to such a point of mass hysteria that even the rational Ralph and the intelligent Piggy were emeshed in the mob murder of Simon. The methods and implements of death, the sacrificial offering to the beast, and Jack's insatiable desire to kill can only be symbolic of complete savagery.

It is important to note the change in Ralph's mannerisms. At first, when he realized that they were free of adult supervision and restrictions on this isolated island, Ralph was so exuberant that he stood on his head. On his first exploration of the island with Jack and Simon, their camaraderie overwhelmed him; and again, he must stand on his head. The last time he indulged in this innocent, carefree action was just before the fire which claimed the life of one of the small boys. Hereafter, Ralph, beset with fear and anxiety, unconsciously began to bite his fingernails; and he was surprised to see the "blood that gathered where the quick was gnawed away." One of the most heart-rending scenes in the book comes at the very end when, for the very first time, "Ralph wept for the end of innocence and the darkness of man's heart."

The symbolism of the title, *Lord of the Flies* is the most difficult to interpret. The juxtaposition of the two words "Lord" and "Flies" is the first noticeable thing. The word "Lord" has an immediate divine connotation; and when it is used with the word "Flies", the incongruity of the combination strikes with an impact. After the recipient of this title has been revealed in its Calvary-like setting, the reader is seized with a nauseated, yet fascinated feeling.

Epstein, in his introduction to Golding's novel, says that the word "Beelzebub" or "lord of the flies" has been interpreted as the Devil. Using this meaning, the "Lord of the Flies" must symbolize the inherent, thinly disguised evil within each of us which is inevitable and inescapable. The grotesqueness of Golding's description of this scene of a severed head, dribbling blood, and flies buzzing over a pile of guts is exceeded only by Dante's description of Lucifer.

When one tries to unravel the implications of Simon's council with the "Lord of the Flies," one is faced with more questions than answers. "I'm part of you?" queries the head; "I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?" These are not definite statements; they are questions.

Although the theme of Golding's book asserts that civilized man

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Lovely Women Are Not To Be Trusted

by Michael Forbes

I was somewhat surprised to find my friend telling me all this; even though it seemed of little consequence, it was not the sort of thing he would normally relate willingly; he was sensitive. We had turned to talk of the college years—I'm an old University man myself—and he suddenly began to enlarge upon the facts of his three years spent as a student at, of all institutions, a women's college. "Of course," he explained quickly, "one couldn't board there if he were male—though a fair percentage of the inmates wouldn't have minded—but he could only attend classes and other . . . *compulsory* functions." He looked at the ceiling and continued, "As a result, a male student never was an integral *part* of the school. Couldn't be expected to be, really."

"What was it like?" I asked.

"What . . . was it like?" he repeated. "Well, you being an old poker player like me, though not as good a one, sad to relate, as you know as well as I—you would appreciate the odds from a theoretical point of view. Odds that were something like twelve-hundred, twelve-hundred fifty, to . . . say, eight or ten on the average."

"Sounds pretty good."

"Well, I always went around making the joke that the intramural football games—girls against boys—were really something. Of course, nothing of the sort went on; obvious point, I guess." I agreed with a grimace. He smiled and went on. "But, like I said, these odds were good only from a theoretical point of view. Hell, not even from that. After so much, it gets . . ."

"Overwhelming?" I suggested.

"In a way, yes. I guess the law of diminishing returns might apply here in an abstract sort of way. I'll get the women to bring me my dictionary from the other room here sometime. I'll check and see. "*But*"—he expelled air with the word—"the fact remains, that there's such a thing as too good a set of odds. And that was the case here."

"Sad state of affairs," I observed.

"Yes, it was, for me. At the time, I was completely broke. The family and a few matured bonds sent me to school. Commuted. Up-keep for that car cost me more than tuition did. Second-hand foreign car, to boot."

"Times *were* tough," I said. I was purposely saying as little as possible, only enough to keep things going. He hadn't talked this freely in months.

(continued on next page)



"Times, and things, change. From a Virginia farm to this." He did not indicate what "this" was, since he thought I knew. I didn't, but I suspected that he was not comparing past and present financial conditions.

"Anyway, I don't recommend that sort of an education to any red-blooded American male. Not that I was red-blooded, but I was male, no matter what anyone concludes."

"So how did it affect you in particular?"

He gave me a puzzled grin. "Well, after all, I'm the product of my environment, among the elements of which my education is not among the least." He added, "If you can follow that sentence, I'll be convinced that *your* schooling left you with some talents."

I waved the comment off and said that I hadn't known him *that* long and he had probably reached his point ultimate of development before I met him. He lay back a minute, finally speaking. "Well, you know you're putting me in a spot. I'll have to sit here and figure just how all this *did* affect me. Well, to start with, I was born at a very early age, and . . ."

"Quit stalling, quit stalling," I ordered in what I hoped were good-natured tones. He didn't look up, but closed his eyes, composing his next sentence.

Finally he slapped his thighs with his big hands and sighed, "How do you evaluate something like that? Three years of your life, and you

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LOVELY WOMEN ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED

don't really know what it all meant, what it did to you. For one thing, I didn't get any of the benefits of dormitory life, whatever *they* are."

"I wonder what sort of benefits you would have derived from dormitory life *there*."

He pursed his lips. "I wonder. Though I imagine, with any luck whatsoever, it would have been a short but happy life."

I pursued the thread of thought to see what he would do. "And I wonder how much studying you would have gotten done?"

He made a neutral noise, seeming to be embarrassed somewhat, and steered back to the original topic. "But I can think of ways all this affected me. At least, I guess all these are results. For one thing, I never married. Obviously. Didn't have the guts, after what I saw at times. Don't misunderstand me; I won't go so far as to rescind my statement and say that I really love them all, but I'll say that it was certain *ones* that made the impressions on me. It's like a man who knows somebody who owned a Ford that went bad—y'know, just one of those things that happens once in a thousand-odd times—and that man will build up an impenetrable sales resistance to Fords, just because of that, ah, one Ford his friend had. Same way here. I didn't see it coming, so I couldn't prevent it. "*But . . .*" (the same expulsion of air) "the fact remains, that I might have ended up with one of those particular types of women." He reconsidered. "But, for that matter, they would have ended up with *me*, to look at it the other way, and *that* wouldn't be much of a bargain."

"Oh, come on now." He was always running himself down this way.

"I'm serious. It's deeper than you're thinking. That impenetrable sales resistance I was talking about! . . . it works in strange and mysterious ways, to quote something or other. I ended up really unsuitable for anything like marriage. It just wouldn't have worked, so there was no use trying."

"What, do you lose some basic, like love?"

"The ability to love? No, you don't lose the *ability*, just the *capacity* in certain fields. Now I enjoy—*love*, if you will—a good car, good music, and an able mind. As it goes, all these are fairly precise and mechanical things. So there you are. The car works for me. The able minds are those of my friends and at times my own—permit me some immodesty. The—what is it? The music. The music is at my fingertips. I turn on the player, there it is."

"And women?"

"They're not so convenient."

"So you let that part of it slide."

(continued on next page)

LOVELY WOMEN ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED

"Yes, that's it. After college, I spoke to them in passing, I associated with them at parties, and I tolerated them in business. And I somehow manage to put up with this one in the house, though I think I could take care of myself without her help. But . . ." He shrugged. "She's fairly considerate in her own way."

He was getting away from the subject, and I had a point I wanted to bring out. All this had to be pursued quite carefully. "Weren't there quite a few male graduates from the school though?" He nodded. "So did all this affect them the same way?"

"I don't know. I didn't keep tabs on them. But no two persons are alike, and therefore no two persons are affected the same way by the same thing. And as far as it goes, their education could have been very much different from mine. And we *were* talking about how all this affected *me*."

He seemed annoyed. I hastened to agree. "Yes. So basically what this did to you was to make you a woman-hater?"

He sniffed and said, "That's a poor way to put it. It turned me into a sensible-thinking individual. I just know where I stand. How many people can say that? Not many, I would think."

"Simple as that."

"No. It just doesn't happen, it's—it was—forced on me."

"By what?" He had come to the crux of it.

"Nothing in particular, I don't think. In fact, not *what*, but *who*. No one in particular, but I can still think of incidents. Yes, call it apparently insignificant incidents, if you want to." He seemed to want to drop the subject altogether, but I couldn't let him.

"Incidents?"

"Well, one morning a professor walked up behind me and said, 'How's the luckiest man in the world this morning?' Surprised me, and I asked him what he meant. Of course I realized what before I finished asking. He said it would be a very long time before I would be in such a situation again, surrounded by women. I thought about it, and I found that I felt like it couldn't be long *enough* before that happened again." He mused. "'Luckiest man in the world.' How wrong can somebody be?"

I saw some sense in it, but I had to hear more. There had to be something deeper. There always is. Amateur psychology has taught me a lot of things while I've pursued the sport. And this was a strange case for me, even though he was a friend of some years. I wouldn't be talking to him many more times, and I wanted to know what made him like this. And I was very close now. Very close. "But are you sure there was no incident involving a certain woman?" I said

(continued on next page)

LOVELY WOMEN ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED

“woman,” since “girl” wouldn’t have sounded right somehow.

“Always the curious one,” he chided. “Yes, there was one.”

“That being?” It was coming; he couldn’t stop now; it wouldn’t be fair to me.

“That being one day when I was, well, call it goofing off, looking out the window at the campus, probably worrying about the car. Thing ate up oil like it was going into the business for itself. Anyway, a girl called my name and asked what I was dreaming about. I’m sure it was something about the car, since it always was. So I explained in some detail. In the course of the conversation, she asked which car was mine. Well, in those days I was partial to rather striking color schemes, and my car didn’t escape that predilection. Call it exuberance of youth. So I let down my defenses and pointed it out with some pride and she said something like, ‘Oh, I wondered what kind of a nut would drive something like that.’ I let it pass, muttering something about kicks and abuses, that was all I got. Then she said, ‘Well, that’s what you’ve got to expect when you go to school with the *girls!*’ I had been deceived. It maddened me. It still does.”

“What was she like?”

He didn’t note the eagerness in my voice. “It’s been a while. All I can remember is an angry face and eyes. Tried to make a drawing of her once. Didn’t quite come out. Not that I was much of an artist, but there’re just some things you can’t quite put in a picture, can’t capture on a scrap of paper. But she proved it; lovely women are not to be trusted.”

I had my answer, and could imagine the rest. The nurse came in, signaling that I should call it quits for the afternoon. I asked a last question, got my answer, left the house, and walked out into a late fall evening.

He died that night, without the convulsions of months before, simply letting go, giving up. It was inevitable, of course, but it seemed strange to have him gone.

The funeral went off well, and exactly a week after that, I finally married the girl I’ve been going with for a few years. But as I was driving alone to the church, I started thinking about my old friend again. Something he had said wasn’t right. It didn’t figure. As I was leaving him that last time, I decided to say what had been on my mind since he had brought up the subject of the girl. I asked, “Come on now, tell me the truth, you really loved this girl, didn’t you?”

And he twisted around in his bed to face me, surprised. “No,” he said. “I hated her.”

Why?

“I gave my love a baby that’s no crying.”

—“The Riddle Song”

Pinewood shack,
Pa is back,
Grim and pale
From the trail
Bogged by mire.
No warm fire—
Ma don’t care,
Gaunt-cheeked stare,
Stiff with cold.
God grows old,
Can’t reach here—
Hearts are sear.

“Did you git the buryin’ done?”

“World’s a grave,
No more cryin’,
Him that’s gone
Done our dyin’.”
Never said there wasn’t no room,
Never spoke a hardheart “No”;
We made room,
Us and your brothers,
Loved you our best—
Different from others.

“Take the cradle out.”

Little boy sleepin’,
How’d you ever know
There was badnesses,
And The Bad was so?
It was peaceful here,
You never heard strife—
Why’d you sorrow
And turn away your life?
There was no cryin’,
We didn’t even know;
Little boy laid away,
Why’d you have to go?

—Eleanor R. Kevan

The Obscured View

Great men think and ponder;
Eternity rolls on—
A machine, created, wails,
And knowing their all, Fate smiles.

Oh cursed men!
That do not comprehend
The marvels perused by a speck of sand,
But pretending all righteous wisdom, damn
A fellow-miracle in brother man.

—Donna Lee Weatherly



THE COURTYARD

by Judy Woodyard

The backs of four graystone apartment houses came together touching corners to form a rectangle of space between them. It was cold flagstone space, sunlit and shaded during the course of the day in geometric patterns from the enclosing roofs and the progressing sun. At noon there were no shadows and on Saturday and Sunday when she was off from work, Amy liked to look down into the courtyard during her midday meal.

She sat at the window, elbows propped on the table with a cup of coffee in both hands, as if she were drinking from a bowl. Heat from the coffee steamed her glasses lenses so she invariably took them off, though the scene outside became instantly fuzzy. The sun glistened in the open window, picking up one of two bright highlights in her usually dull-brown hair as she hunched her angular shoulders and straightened up in the chair. The unexpected warmth of the autumn sun made her skin feel alive and tingling. Everything seemed different today: the white dishes on the table glowed ivory instead of their cool blue white, the window sill warm in the sun felt almost alive and she, herself, kept feeling that the heat was making her expand. It was a curious sensation of feeling able to fling her arms wide and envelope everything. She stretched her arms out before her, throwing her head back and feeling the muscles tight in her neck and shoulders. She was so acutely aware of the sensation that she felt she must never have used these muscles before. Relaxing, she shook her hair back and returned her gaze out the window.

The tree in the courtyard was affected, it seemed, in the same way. From three stories up it usually looked small and drab, and on a sunless day it almost blended with its surroundings into nothing. But today, in the yellow light, the remaining leaves were gay and vibrant. Amy could almost count each individual one: yellow and red and brown with bright orange standing out above its more subdued counterparts.

In the stone courtyard, the lone tree in a small square plot of earth between the stones made a strange picture. It was a small oak about fifteen feet tall, and Amy's fingers didn't quite touch around it. In the three years that she had been living in the apartment she had wondered many times where it had come from, but she had never asked anyone about it. She doubted that anyone would know; and in a way, she didn't really want to know. She liked to think of it as detached from everything, significant in the fact of merely being. Talking about it

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with anyone would somehow make it a part of them and these surroundings. Its glory was its uniqueness in its environment.

She continued staring out at the deceptively shining world. The wooden bench beside the tree looked inviting, warm and used, but there were no couples strolling nearby, no children, no squirrels, and in actuality, the few times Amy had ventured down to sit under the infant tree she had felt very uncomfortable. For what reason she had not been exactly sure. There were also brick flower boxes placed strategically in the rectangle that yielded promise of spring flowers, but Amy's springs here had seen no flowers.

At one time she had half-heartedly thought about planting some bulbs in the court, but somehow she had never gotten around to it. At first she had put it off because she just didn't have the money to spend, but since she had become established in her job and had gotten her apartment furnished, there was no excuse anymore. Once she had stood at the bathroom mirror in the morning and said: "Amy, this is the day you're going to buy some flowers and shrubs for the boxes in the court." She had even gone down to count the boxes and to estimate the number of plants each would hold. Then she had looked up. On all four sides row after row of windows looked down on the enclosure like hundreds of square eyes. At that instant she had felt as if she were standing in the courtyard naked. Since that time she had not gone there again.

Now as she sat and mused out the window all her thoughts seemed to well up from the space in the courtyard. She never had time to daydream anymore, except when she was here at the window on weekends. It was good this way; during the week she could leave all her frivolous thoughts here and when her work was done she came and they were sort of waiting for her. Now she only thought about the flowers and she had a mental picture of herself, planting them, watering them, cutting a few for a vase on the coffee table. Always she was the same: slim and graceful with her hair put up golden and silky like a fashion model, she would move about from plant to plant not at all unlike a butterfly. She guessed that she had read about a girl in a novel somewhere that had looked like that.

A cool breeze drifted in through the window, stirred her from thoughts of her idealized self. "Lord," she thought, "wouldn't the tenants get a laugh out of me clumping around in my size ten's and hornrims, watering a bunch of flowers." She got up from the table leaving her lunch dishes until later and started her usual Saturday cleaning with unusual verve.

The sounds of a busy street below jangled in the living room win-

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THE COURTYARD

dow, but Amy was hardly aware of them anymore. At first, when she had moved in, the sounds of cars and trucks and busy city life had invigorated her. The excitement of coming and going to work like the thousands of other people around her had filled her with an enthusiasm she had never known before. She had felt a part of the metropolis and the sense of aloneness and separateness that had filled her before she had come here was gone.

She rarely thought of home with any nostalgia any more. It was too small; so small, in fact, that each person in it was practically unique. There was "the" grocer, "the" minister, and "the" town flirt. Amy was "the" homely daughter destined to follow in the wake of "the" town spinster. Coming to this city she felt that life was all behind her and walking down the streets to work every morning she noticed all the unbecoming features of the other homely girls she passed: this one's teeth were buck, that one's eyes too close. She even began to feel that in comparison to some she had seen she must be fairly attractive.

The feeling had not lasted long. If she were reasonably nice looking, no one had noticed. Her work became a bore. She hated to leave the apartment in the mornings, then she hated to leave her safe cubby-hole at the office to venture out into the world again at night. The traffic irritated her, and she had a habit of slamming her windows to shut out the sound of the street below. This, too, had passed and then she had settled down to being "the" homely girl at the office and "the" homely girl in the apartment building.

For weeks she had gone about the business of existing, not really touching anyone or anything around her. At the office she did her job mechanically but well; her typing and filing speed increasing from lack of interruption. She made no close friends except for a rather unlikely association between her and Jonathan Andrews, a seven-year-old who lived in the building, too. His mother was ill frequently and the boy stayed with Amy often. Her conversations to everyone else were limited to quick "Hellos" and noncommittal shrugs. There was nothing she had to offer these people, and they had ceased offering her anything. She felt that even their polite greetings in passing were more habit than awareness of her as a person.

Now, standing in the middle of the living room, she swiped at a splotch of dust on the coffee table and casually flipped the dust rag over the arm of the chair. Today was different. She became more and more aware of the feeling as the minutes passed. She looked in the mirror over the sofa, scrutinizing herself: her hands weren't bad and her complexion was relatively flawless. The new way she was fixing her hair

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THE COURTYARD (continued from page 27)

and the brighter colored clothes she was wearing livened her appearance and she felt that she walked straighter. Height wasn't such a disadvantage as she had always felt it was. Paul was over six feet tall and he had even said that he didn't mind glasses on a girl. She took them off and leaned close to the mirror; she put them on again laughing a little inwardly, thinking she looked better out of focus.

There was a familiar rattle at the door, and Jonathan came into the room in his usual habit of not knocking or announcing himself.

"Hi." He had a brown paper bag in his hand.

"Hi, John," said Amy turning from the mirror. "What's in the bag?"

"I've been to the drugstore for Mama. What were you looking at?"

"Nothing. What did you buy at the drugstore? Anything good?"

Jonathan shook the bag in demonstration. "It's pills," he said. "Mama doesn't feel good again. Can I watch TV down here?"

Amy nodded and began getting the sweeper out of the closet.

"You can turn on the TV just as soon as I finish cleaning, and we'll have ice cream or something until about five. O.K.?"

"O.K. Do I have to go at five? Why?"

"Be—cause." Amy drew the word out, took a breath, and plunged on. "I have a date with a man tonight."

"Oh. Can I come back after he leaves?"

"It might be late, John. He's coming to supper and we might go out afterwards. Maybe we'll go to the movies or something." She went on putting the attachments on the cleaner, not looking at the boy.

"I could stay up late, Amy, and you could call up when he goes."

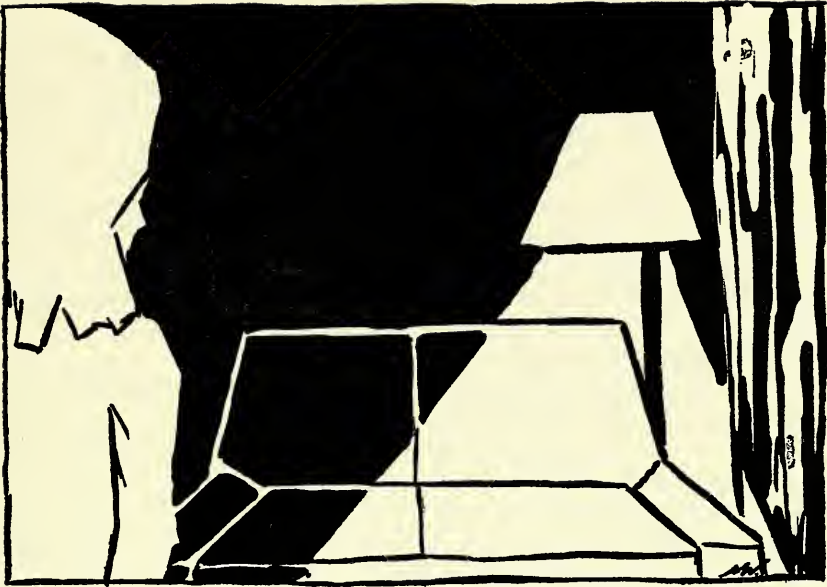
"No honestly, we'd better not plan on it, John. Tomorrow night we'll watch TV or play checkers or something."

Looking into her closet, trying to decide what to wear, Amy was suddenly aware that she had become more and more nervous as the afternoon had passed. Now her palms were wet and she kept smoothing them down over her hips. The blue dress? The gray skirt and white blouse? What did she have on when Paul spoke to her that day in the office? The orange dress. Yes, he liked bright colors.

She slipped the dress over her head and turned before the mirror buttoning it up. It was new and Tuesday before last when Paul, also new, had spoken to her, she had been painfully aware of the bright color and how conspicuous it must have made her. But then, she thought, if she had not had it on, Paul might not have noticed her as he passed her desk. He had leaned over and said in a bantering tone: "Like that green dress."

"But it's not . . ." she had begun. Then, too late realizing the joke, she had blushed.

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"You're Amy, aren't you?" he had continued, ignoring her confusion. "I asked one of the girls. The 'quiet one' she called you. Are you that quiet?"

She had tried to assert that she wasn't so quiet, but she couldn't get what she had to say out quickly enough. The light voice waved across her and he had ended the conversation with: "Don't worry, I like quiet girls. In fact," he winked, "the quieter the better."

In a week and a half she had waited all day every day for the moments when the plaid sport coat would pass her desk and Paul would rap lightly on the corner in conspiratorial greeting. Sometimes he would hum a little of "Once in Love with Amy" and grin knowingly at her. All of which disconcerted her but she always tried to cover her confusion. He seemed to expect no reply or answering gesture, so she did not have to face the embarrassment of thinking up something witty to say.

What conversations they did have had been brief and meaningless, but Amy felt the impact of Paul as a person. She began to feel herself in relation to him as a person. For the first time she was a girl. A girl almost like the one she had imagined herself being many times. She knew Paul flirted with all the other girls in the office, but she overlooked it. She was content just to be included. Then when he had asked yesterday if he could come over, she had felt special. She had also felt as if she would fly apart in a hundred different directions. She

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couldn't even remember her answer but she knew he had said, "O.K. see you for supper. You can cook, can't you. A girl with an old-fashioned name like Amy should know how to cook." He had gone off whistling with his slightly swaggering walk.

The bell rang. Amy again experienced the feeling of flying in a hundred directions at once. She hurried from the bedroom smoothing her dress and casting an anxious look into the kitchen as if expecting to see that the carefully prepared table had vanished. Paul was just letting himself in the door, and Amy stopped in confusion, realizing he must note her haste and nervous gestures.

The bantering voice spoke. "Hi, Cinderella."

"Come in, Paul." She realized her invitation was a little belated, but she could think of nothing else to say.

"I am in. Hope you don't mind." He crossed the room and sat down on the couch. "This is a nice place you have."

She smiled. "Thank you. It's not too big, but it suits my needs."

"Yeah, a girl living alone doesn't need a great big place. How come you don't have a roommate or something?"

"Oh, I'm not . . . well, when I came here I didn't know anybody and . . ."

He interrupted. "Hey, why don't you sit down, standing there like you're about to fly away"

She knew she looked awkward standing in the middle of the floor, but she wasn't sure whether to sit on the couch or in a chair across from him. She chose the chair. There was a silence and she realized he was looking at her intently. She didn't know what to do with her hands.

"You look nice in that dress," he said. "You ought to wear bright colors more often."

She felt her face and neck getting warm. "Thank you; would you like to have supper now? It's all ready." She rose to start for the kitchen.

"It's early yet. It won't get cold, will it?"

"No, but I . . ." He reached out and took her wrist lightly with his hand. "Here, sit down and relax. I'm not the first guy you've ever had up, am I?"

Sitting awkwardly on the edge of the couch she lied, "No, I thought you might be hungry, that's all."

"Not that hungry. After all, I came to see you, not to get a free meal. His eyes beneath his straight dark brows glistened from the glare of the lamp beside him. He flicked the palm of her hand with his finger. "Tell me about yourself." He leaned back on the cushions at her half-smiling, half-demanding.

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THE COURTYARD

She laughed self-consciously, "You wouldn't be interested in that."
"Sure I would." He sat up and leaned toward her. "I'm real interested in you." He put his hands on her shoulders at the base of her neck pulling her head forward. "I know how lonesome things must be for you."

She jerked back. His voice was placating and modulated, like someone talking to a frightened animal. His tone fell on her like thick syrup, and she felt trapped. She was moving away from him, trying to escape him and the revulsion that had closed in on her.

"Hey, Amy, who'll know? Who'll know? There's just you and me." The heavy voice poured over her and she was turning in circles. The floor beneath her feet had no substance; it gave with each step. She felt like she was trying to run through water. Her feet were heavy. She was about to fall and struck out with her hands.

The sound of the flat of her hand on his face shocked the room back into focus. Paul's eyes were hard as he rubbed the side of his cheek.

"You'll regret that. Girls like you can't afford to be so picky."

She turned from him and saw herself in the mirror over the couch. She closed her eyes.

"Go away. Don't ever come here again. Don't touch me."

Her sentences were short whispered commands and she never really knew whether he heard her or not. He had begun to speak once more when she ran from the apartment trying to escape it.

She was home again, running across the field barefoot, arms flung wide. She would run until her lungs were bursting, her strength pushed out of her in one great explosion. Then lying in the soft grass, dizzy for breath she would watch the crazy reeling world come slowly into focus.

She nearly fell down the steps, but she reached the bench and slumped onto it, her head against the small tree trunk. The hundred eyes, yellow with light, looked down into the courtyard in the dusk. Amy didn't care. She gazed steadily at the liquid spots for a long time until they became dry-edged rectangles again, full of venetian blinds, nylon curtains, and people moving back and forth in their evening rituals.

She almost felt as if she could reach out and touch them as they passed thru the light. A woman carrying a baby; a man lighting a cigarette—all of them she felt a kinship to. The luminous light of the many openings filled the courtyard with a diffused glow and Amy knew that anyone looking out could see her. She looked up thru the almost bare branches of the tree and for the first time really wanted

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THE COURTYARD (continued from page 31)

to know where it came from. There was a touch on her arm and a light voice spoke.

"I saw you come out here. Did the man go?"

She looked at the half shadow of Jonathan in the twilight and was shocked to hear the sound of her own voice when she spoke.

"Yes, he's gone."

"Can we go watch TV now?"

"Not now, John; let's sit here a while."

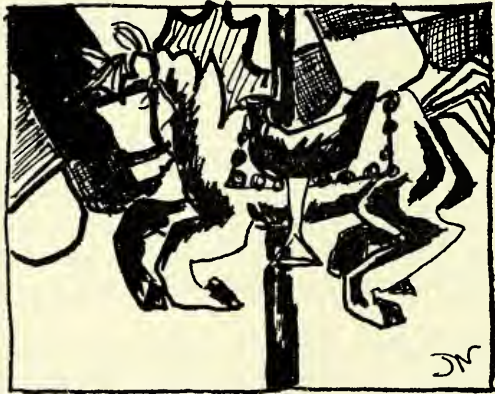
The bench rattled against the tree and Amy knew the boy was not going to sit still long.

"John, do you know where this tree came from?"

"Sure." His answer was a surprise. Then he was moving about on the stones around the tree and under the bench. A hand thrust up from below her pressed a small object in her fingers. She held it up to the light. An acorn. She began to laugh softly. "Oh, Jonathan, how obvious it was."

"I don't know who planted it, though," he said. "Can we go in now?"

"Yes, I guess we can," said Amy.



Wouldn't You Rather Be In Florida?

by Shirley Fleming

Taxi gone. Bags checked. The place smells like humans. Colored and white—All sitting around. Poor—you could tell. A little girl with cotton in her ears—straight brown hair tied back with a dirty ribbon. A woman, wearing a dirty print dress, shaking her head in rage, laments to the elderly overall-clad man sitting next to her. The woman, probably the little girl's mother, continues her conversation as the little girl picks her teeth with a bobby pin. Taking a puff from the limp cigarette hanging loosely from the corner of her mouth, the woman wipes her mouth rather hard—hard enough to reveal the empty spaces in her mouth where teeth are missing. Someone went to Delaware and left the place in a mess. Her cold voice. The man appearing disinterested in her gossip, rises from the bench to leave, but she continues talking louder as he walks away. Finding that the man has gone, she gets up from the bench, picks up her brown paper bag with handles on it and walks over to the other side of the terminal toward the bench against the wall where five or six elderly men are waiting. Recognizes someone. She begins laughing loudly—talking boisterously. The man moves over for her to sit down. Someone moves out—four women died up at the hospital yesterday.

As she talked, two young boys passed by. About thirteen or fourteen—hair slicked back—red cotton shirts hanging out over black pants.

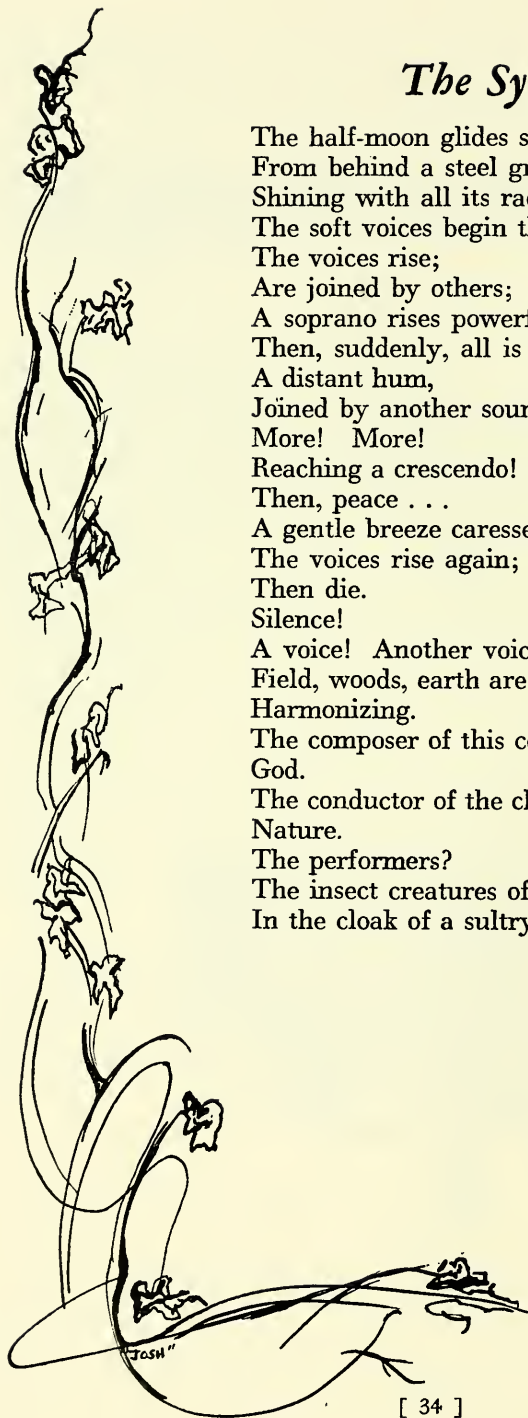
Another hour and a half to wait. A woman's voice over the loud-speaker. May I have your attention, please? The woman and the men get up to leave—as she starts for the door, she turns around and orders the little girl to rush for the door of the bus.

Well. A sign—red letters—yellow letters. Wouldn't you rather be in Florida? Go Trailways.

The Symphony

The half-moon glides silently
From behind a steel gray cloud,
Shining with all its radiance.
The soft voices begin their melodious chant.
The voices rise;
Are joined by others;
A soprano rises powerfully.
Then, suddenly, all is quiet!
A distant hum,
Joined by another sound;
More! More!
Reaching a crescendo!
Then, peace . . .
A gentle breeze caresses the cheeks of the listener.
The voices rise again;
Then die.
Silence!
A voice! Another voice!
Field, woods, earth are . . .
Harmonizing.
The composer of this concerto?
God.
The conductor of the chorus?
Nature.
The performers?
The insect creatures of field and woods
In the cloak of a sultry July night.

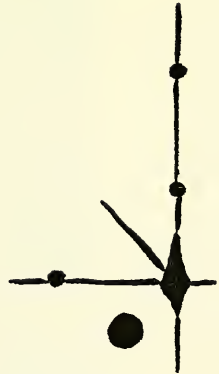
—Edwina Miles



Snow-night

The one balloon light
on a single steel pole,
with the snow jiggling around it
and ceasing to be on contact,
stands illuminously out
in the feathery snow-night,
forcing a return to the aqueous state
and defeating the beauty of the crystal;
The resting death-blanket lies around,
the product of the changing currents;
the closeness of the snowy pad
commands quiet discipline;
The wavering specks
continue their presence with the night
to build a wrap of delusion,
concealed by a misty smile controlled
by wisdom in past sins.
It evades visions of
 the Hadean thaw
and makes footprints in the heart of man.

—Gayle Ray



THE MAN WHO WAS IMMORTAL

by Michael Forbes

Once there was a man who believed himself to be immortal. And his one great fear was that the world would never know, that no one in generation after generation into infinity would recognize that he had existed at *any* time, much less for all time. There had been a time, of course, when he had fears that he was not immortal, but he soon dispersed these with cold surety; with billions of people on the earth, it was inevitable that at least one should be immortal. As far as he could determine, he fitted the bill perfectly. So he scattered his petty fears and left himself with the great fear of anonymity.

None of his friends knew. He could not bring himself to tell them. An especially close companion once told him the fable of the sultan who commanded his ministers to find a statement that was absolute truth. One after another failed and was put to death for his inability. But, as befits such an apocryphal tale, the last minister had the absolute truth. It was, "And this, too, shall pass away." The immortal man listened politely, evincing none of his philosophical disdain. He was the exception to the rule.

The immortal man attended a plethora of funerals, and never failed to slip into the somber line that went by the coffin; he would gaze at the still face and think, "*He* was not immortal."

Then one day a Doubt minced into the presence of the immortal man, asking what *proof* did he have that he was immortal? and the immortal man, knowing that the Doubt would not be swayed by personal logic, said grandly, "You shall *have* proof," and walked out the same door through which the hairy-legged, thousand-beady-eyed Doubt had entered.

It was a bright, warm, windy day, on which, he declared to himself, it was great to be alive—and immortal. He walked for miles until he came to railroad tracks. He walked up to the tracks and stepped in between the rails. Here he sat on one of the worn but still firm ties. A spider, very much resembling the Doubt of an hour before, avoided demise by scuttling under one rusty rail. The man reflected, "*It* was not immortal."

The sunlight was comfortable, the wind, brushing his eyelashes, conducive to thought. He thought of an earlier life, an existence which promised an end to being. Now he had transcended that ephemerality. But what good would it serve if he were the only one to know? He had to convince the Doubt.

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THE MAN WHO WAS IMMORTAL

This was the test of immortality. He would sit and wait, tempting the hand of fate. In his mind, he had a clear picture of a mortal struck by a train. A recognizable arm and leg, a smashed skull, a torn maw that was the belly. Clothes shredded and pulped and a pocket watch thrown clear, still ticking. He would be that watch, untouched by the juggernaut.

The train did not come. He looked at the trees flashing whitish patches of wind-aroused undersides of leaves, and said aloud, "The leaves, the trees, *these* are not immortal."

The afternoon came; the train did not. Shade crept around where the immortal man sat thinking. He was wondering whether or not the Doubt was immortal.

The train did not come. When the pall of twilight began to wisp around, he arose and walked away from the twenty-foot stretch of vine-covered tracks, abandoning them as had others years before. He was immortal for another day.



THE SEPARATION (continued from page 9)

"You're leavin' his pa, ain't you?" He spoke low, trying not to be overheard.

The woman stiffened slightly and made no reply. She opened her purse again, fumbling with the catch and hastily drawing out a crumpled pink tissue. With a fluttering motion of her hand, she swabbed at her temples and neck.

Suddenly she let out a nervous little laugh, cut short by the shock of its volume on her own eardrums. "Crazy, isn't it? I mean this whole thing." She had lowered her voice again, and the whisper had a surprising gaiety to it.

The man shrugged. The woman let out a shudder, and the tautness of her muscles made dark shadowed areas on her neck. "Well, I ain't leavin' much, and there ain't anyone 'round here who can't say I ain't got reason enough." Her words shot out, clipped short by the tightness of her entire body.

The man cleared his throat, feeling that now he was obligated to say something to this woman who watched him expectantly.

"Do you know," she continued with a flat, matter-of-fact tone, "I didn't even tell anyone I was leavin'. Nobody! 'Cept the boy, 'course, an' I didn't even tell him 'til this mornin'!" She sighed, her expelled breath wheezing mournfully. "Now I kind'a wish I hadn't even told him."

(continued on next page)

THE SEPARATION (continued from page 37)

The man nodded in agreement. "It's hard for a woman alone to make do with a kid to care for." His answer came out slowly, as if he were not quite sure of what he was saying, but thankful for a chance to say something.

The woman expelled her breath with contempt, ignoring the man's sympathetic agreement. "It's not just having the kid, it's just that he ain't worth nothin'. He's just like his pa, 'cept his pa claims he's no kin to him. He won't do a lick on his own, and what he does do has to be done all over again."

The man turned and looked back at the boy, crouched forlornly against the window and gazing out at nothing. The man felt the need to defend him, as if the boy's dejection had enveloped even himself.

"Ah, the kid's still young yet. He'll catch on all right."

The woman slapped at an imaginary insect on her forearm. "Oh, no. You don't know *that* boy! He ain't never goin' be any good. Whinin' and whimperin's all he can do." She shoved a matted piece of hair back from her forehead with a restless hand. "That's his father's doin', the way he's always knocking him 'round. Wouldn't doubt that the boy's brain's been knocked loose the way his pa knocks him 'round."

The man shook his head in the boy's defense again. "Ah, ain't nothin' really wrong with the kid. Just a bit shy is all. Growin' pains, maybe.

"Nothin' wrong, 'cept he don't hear half what's said to him. Just what he want's to, I guess. Got to say things to him three times to make him understand." She shook her head bitterly. "Maybe I'm not a good mother to him, but I don't even like to be around him. Makes me nervous with his spooky ways."

The man remained silent with an uncomfortable feeling that his defense of the boy had failed.

"I should'a left him back there with them others. They're his kind all right . . . just like his father and the rest of his kin. No good in him at all."

The man studied the floorboards for a moment. He shrugged his shoulders and ran his hand through his dark, greasy hair. "Why'n ya leave him behind, then?"

"That would'a been just fine, wouldn't it?" The woman's words were stung with hate. "Grow up worse than they are! Too many of'm runnin' 'round loose as it is to suit me."

She leaned back again, closing her eyes. She put her hands up and pressed her closed lids with her fingertips. "No; I'll keep him for what he's worth." She was silent again and looked firmly ahead with sullen determination, her jaw thrust slightly forward.

"No. It's for me to keep him."

LORD OF THE FLIES (continued from page 15)

will degenerate into a savage state, one's personal reaction must be rebellion against this idea. In a final analysis, one wonders if the questions quoted above represent the author's deliberate attempt to provoke each reader into a closer examination and evaluation of his own values and inclinations.

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