



A Whetston is No Kerning Instrument,
And Yet it Maketh Sharpe Kerning-Tolis

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Staff

Editor	Henry Oliver
Assistant Editor	Rodney Baine
Typists	{ Lewis Duffee Russel Cross

The other experience was in regard to the death of an aunt. She lived off in Alabama somewhere, but her body was being brought back to be buried in the family graveyard.

For days, for years, everything was quiet around the house. Strange people came and went. Conversation was carried on in lowered tones. The house was darkened. There was talk on the telephone of flowers and there were flowers which were different from any I'd ever seen. Nobody paid much attention to me. I felt small and was small, and for the life of me couldn't understand the strange undercurrent which was passing through the house.

Then one morning mother forbade me to go into the parlor. I of course accepted the challenge; howsoever age may contain itself, the curiosity of youth will not be downed. At an opportune moment I applied myself to the keyhole of the door to the banned room. My eye caught something grey, something out of the ordinary, over at the end of the room. This still further aroused the want-to-know itch in me. Fortunately the door was unlocked. So having cast a furtive glance to the rear I entered. The shutters being drawn, the room was quite dark and was cool with a sort of coolness that went right into you. Across the room, resting on a table, was a long, grey, oblong box. The distance between the box and me dwindled to nothing in a twinkling of the eye. Standing on tiptoe, I was just able to peer over the top. There, with the divine serenity that I have since learned some people's faces assume at death, lay the most beautiful woman that I had ever seen. That was my first impression then and it remains with me to this day. I was stilled all inside. The melancholy dignity of death had its grip on me. Again I felt that impending separation from the past, from things that could never return, that I had experienced when looking at old Tige. I had never seen this woman before, had never heard her voice, and yet my life seemed impregnated with her being. Losing her meant losing something very dear to me, part of life itself. I might perhaps have sensed the passing of childhood in that moment.

Since that day of long ago, many have died around me, so many that I have finally come to understand the ease with which life replaces dead things. Death, like 'most everything else, has palled with numbers into insignificance. It means very little to us at twenty. At five it meant everything. And yet childhood is supposed to be one succession of joys. Joys, yes, but feelings even more.

R.R.



Infinity

White clouds blown by a summer wind,
Faery wool from a master's loom . . .
Green trees gracefully nod and bend
As I plumb the depths of Infinity.

The clouds speed onward in ceaseless train—
There comes no answer.

The Man Who Walked

JOHN GRAVES

I saw him innumerable times walking—always walking. He was a quaint old bit of humanity. So short and scrawny was he, that one thought of nothing so much as a moulted pullet, or some ungainly bird that the first puff of wind might crumple up and blow away. Only the eyes of this strange little old man bore a commanding touch. They were deep blue and strangely bright. His forehead was high, and his face narrow and sallow. A straw hued moustache seemed to be struggling to live on his thin upper lip and slowly dying from lack of nourishment.

The clothes which he wore were outmoded in style, so faded in color, and of a fit so contrary to convention, that they immediately struck one as being in perfect harmony with the outlandish person himself. Still, he never seemed to me ridiculous. I felt no desire to laugh at his stangeness. To the contrary, he impressed me with an indefinable sense of dignity.

I saw him most frequently walking in the park. A charming bit of **rus in urbe**—this park. It lies at the edge of town, too far to be a loafing place for the indolent, but within distance of a good walk. It has not been altered too much to suit the passing whim of man, but remains a great deal as nature made it—except for a number of well ordered paths that wind in confusing patterns between the tall avenues of trees. On all sides are stately oaks, silver poplars, and drooping willows, in whose tops the birds scream and sing, and among the branches squirrels leap and chatter. There is a small lake in the center of the park, where one may sit on the bank and see the clouds and the tree tops mirrored in the smooth surface of the water.

Here, thru the paths and by the lake he walked with quick, jerky steps, craning his bird-like neck from side to side, as though fearing to miss something of his surroundings. He did not have the appearance of a man who is thinking or puzzling over some profound matter; yet, he looked at passers-by without apparently having seen them. He seemed, rather, to be drinking in, absorbing some unknown essence given off by the trees and the moist earth and the sunlight.

Having occasion to pass through the park daily, to and from my work, I saw him so frequently that few of his eccentricities were unobserved by me. He was not at all daunted by bad weather. Often I saw him walking in the rain, with no extra wrap, and apparently without discomfort. I amused myself with forming various suppositions to explain his queerness. Perhaps he was trying to forget some great sorrow in his life—or mourning some lost happiness. Maybe he was paranoiac dissipating his energy in aimless walking. Still, none of these theories seemed to fit him exactly. He did not act entirely like a man who was seeking to forget, nor one who was mourning, nor, yet, one who walked without purpose. He appeared to be finding something that he needed.

One evening when the haze of autumn was in the air, and the leaves were falling in bright flurries from the trees in the park, I met the old gentleman hurrying along a path. A sudden inspiration gave me courage to speak to him. "Hello," said I. He looked at me as though start-

led. "The leaves are pretty this time of year, aren't they?" I continued before he had time to pass on. He was calm as he answered me in his high, though pleasant, voice.

"Why, yes, I guess they are; but they are always pretty to me."

"I have often seen you walking here. I feel that I have known you for a long time. Tell me, why do you walk so much?"

He smiled ever so faintly. "Why I walk so much? I guess you might say that I'm soaking up life." His smile broadened. "You look puzzled. I see you don't understand me. Let me explain." Suddenly his smile vanished and his face became solemn. He looked at me strangely. "But perhaps you wouldn't care to hear. I never talk to others about it."

"But, yes, I do want to hear," I assured him.

He spoke softly. "The spirit of the Infinite is not in after-life, but is in life itself, my friend. I see it in the trees, and in the shadows on the lake; I feel it in the wind and in the rain; I hear it in the birds' songs; I smell it in the earth. I have not long to live, but I mean to absorb all of life I can before I die. What else do we become after death but food for the living?—the eternal living. Why, the earth from this old body of mine may some day nourish a tree—a strong, handsome tree." Again he smiled faintly and went hurrying off down the path. I stood for several moments recalling what he had said and puzzling over the meaning.

A few weeks later, I missed my little old friend in the park. There was a whole week that I caught not a single glimpse of him and wondered at his strange absence. His disappearance was so sudden and unexpected that if I had been more superstitious, I might have amused myself by thinking that the old gentleman had been metamorphosed into a tree, or into one of the squirrels that were always running through the branches. I might have gradually come to believe this, anyway, if it had not been for my happening on to a small heading in a newspaper dated a week back. It stated that an "eccentric inmate of the Old Soldiers' Home had been suddenly stricken with a heart attack—had walked almost continuously in the park near the Home—" There was no doubt that this was my old friend.

Even yet, when I am walking through the park, and am suddenly aroused from some day dream by a sudden step, or a twig snapping, I look up half expecting to see the grotesque little old man walking briskly toward me. And sometimes on my way home in winter afternoons, when the tall, barren trees cast shadows across the deserted paths, and I am thinking about what the old man said to me, I almost imagine I see him for an instant; only to have the illusion dissolve itself in the dancing shadows.



On Guard

He has not lived who has not heard
The dismal call of a lone night bird,
The tramp of the sentry on his beat,
Wearily lifting his leaden feet.

On guard!

A Real Santa Claus

JULIA MARIE SCHWINN

It was just three weeks until Christmas. The streets were crowded with holiday shoppers, and the stores were bright with Yuletide decorations. It was destined to be a most happy Christmas for thousands, as it was just two years since the close of the World War, and many families were to be reunited.

Early one morning, a tall, pale-faced, earnest-looking man entered the waiting-room of the manager's office of Farish and Company, one of Louisville's largest department stores.

He was immediately admitted to the manager's office, and, by way of introduction, said, "I am George Bradford from Cincinnati and have just returned from overseas."

Mr. Harrington, the manager, offered him a chair.

"In a few days you will hire a man to impersonate Santa Claus," continued Bradford. "I have come to apply for that job."

Mr. Harrington attempted to interrupt, but Bradford stopped him, "Oh, I know you're going to say that I do not look as though I needed a job, but I'm asking you to give me just ten minutes to tell you why I want to be Santa Claus."

Mr. Harrington told him to continue.

"Before the war," Bradford went on, "I was a bookkeeper for a large wholesale house, happy with my wife and baby girl. For the first several months after I went over, my wife and I exchanged letters regularly, and everything seemed to be all right, for I was sending her my monthly pay.

"Then one day in the stress of battle—I needn't go into detail—I was wounded, captured, and sent to a German hospital. When I regained consciousness, I knew nothing about myself—name, home, family; I remembered a few weeks after that, and I was transferred to a French hospital. I stayed there until three months ago, still a shell-shocked victim.

"Then I was told that I was to be sent back to the States and was finally put on a New York bound steamer.

"It was not until I saw the Statue of Liberty that reason returned to me. I screamed, 'America!—Delia!' (my wife's name). Of course, I made my way to my home in Cincinnati but found a FOR RENT sign on the door. An old Irish woman, a neighbor of ours, told me that Delia and our baby Patsy had lived there until she couldn't pay the rent, for she lost her temporary job. Mrs. O'Sullivan had shown her the paper where my name had appeared as missing in action. So she believed that I was dead, since she received no word from me. Mrs. O'Sullivan said she had come here to Louisville to find work. I have been frantically searching for her here but can't find any trace of her. Things seem almost hopeless.

"But there may be one chance. If I impersonate Santa Claus, Delia might bring our little girl to me, and I would recognize my wife or find Patsy."

Needless to say, he was given the job, and Mr. Harrington shook his hand, wishing him luck, as he handed him the costume.

That afternoon and night he paraded the streets. The snow was falling, and it was almost night, but mothers found it never too dark or too cold to let their little ones stop and speak to Santa. He saw one little girl who looked as he had imagined his Patsy. He asked her her name.

"Letitia," she replied.

For three weeks he kept vigil day and night, stopping the timid ones, never missing an opportunity. But he was always disappointed. He became almost desperate as Christmas drew closer.

Two days before, he decided to visit the tenement districts and take candy to the children who would meet him. His first day's searches were fruitless.

It was late afternoon of Christmas Eve that he made his final stop. He alighted from his automobile and found an old barrel to sit on. The children crowded around him, scrambling for the goodies he and his aide were distributing.

One little girl stood aloof, seemingly afraid.

"Little one," he called to her, "won't you come and talk to Santa?"

Hesitatingly she came and, with a little persuasion, let him put her on his knee.

"Now," he said kindly, "what do you want Santa to bring you?"

"Please, Santa, I want my daddy," was the reply.

"Where is your daddy?" He was almost afraid to hope.

"He got lost-ed in the war. Everybody looked for him, but nobody found him."

"Child, what's your name?"

"Patsy."

No wonder the child screamed in pain, "Santa, don't squeeze me so hard. Why, Santa, you're shaking. Are you cold?"

"No, darling." It was hard to control his voice. "Where your mother? Tell me, is she living?"

"Yes, but she's sick in bed. Santa, if you're so cold, I'll take you home to get warm. We haven't any fire, but Mrs. Hogan across the hall has."

Taking her in his arms, he ran, rather than walked, to the tenement house and up three flights of stairs.

"Patsy," he said, putting her down, "you go in there and get warm, and I'll go see Mother."

The child ran off to Mrs. Hogan's rooms, and he opened the other door cautiously.

The wan little figure on the bed tried to raise itself.

"Delia—"

"George—darling!" she cried as he threw off his cap and came toward her.

It was that night that Patsy received gifts from Santa, for he moved her mother to a hospital, engaged a nurse for her, and found her daddy.

Perhaps no other room held such a happy picture, father, mother and baby mingling tears of joy.

The nurse slipped out and softly closed the door, just as the Christmas chimes were ringing, proclaiming the anniversary of the birth of Him who came "to seek and to save that which was lost."

Horror

RUSSEL COLE HENRY

Blazing heat! That was the torturing thought of the half demented creature lying there on the sand. Dust Devils danced their macabre rhythms before his eyes—blinding him and then scurrying away like live things, seeming to mock him with his helplessness. The charring sun blistered the gasping desert as if these same devils had brought a breath of their own Hell with them.

Again, for the hundredth time, he lived over those eternal seconds of falling. Riding serenely along, then a nerve wrenching crack as his horse stumbled into a half concealed hole. A dizzy parabola—a million blinding lights as he struck the hard-packed sand—then blackness. How long he had lain there he had no means of knowing. He had awakened, tortured by thirst and almost maddened by the bites of fiery-beaked insects. Dizzily, he tried to brush away a particularly vicious fly. Tried again. And again. What made his arm so heavy? Why, he could hardly move it—could not move it. Like a blow the realization swept over him. He was paralyzed—could not move even a muscle. For a time his mind was numbed by the shock. Then he began to think clearly.

He remembered that this region of Death Valley was the hunting grounds of a particularly poisonous and homicidal family of "side-winders", His sick fear increased to wild, unreasoning panic. He made a mad effort to move, but the only result was to leave him trembling with mental exhaustion at the terrible effort of will. In spite of the searing heat, cold sweat was flowing from every pore.

A jarring impact roused him from his mental torpor. By a super-human jerk he turned his head a tiny fraction. He smothered a crazy desire to laugh as he saw that this cataclysm was caused by his horse, trying to rid himself of the winged pests which were annoying him. This laughter was silenced by the feel of something rough and scaly crawling up his arm. A maniacal scream died in his throat, producing only a sound like the last rattle of a dying man. Then something brushed past his face on gossamer wings and he laughed insanely as he realized that his reptile had been only an insect.

God! A few more hours of this and he would go stark, raving mad. Why, he could feel himself slipping now. Down, down, into crazy mutterings and mouthings without sense of connection. Weren't these the common symptoms of insanity? Didn't one see and hear things that were not there when one was mad? That was it. He was crazy now. This was all some unreal hallucination. But it was all too real. The blistering sun, which seemed to have evaporated all the moisture from his tortured body, leaving it a mass of charred, dry flesh, told him of the hellish reality of it. If he could only get to his horse. But maybe the animal would stray toward home. Then some one would come for him.

Then he heard it. A dry, horrid rattling, like the scraping of the bones of Skeleton Death. Any "desert rat" would know that sound instantly. It was the warning rattle of a snake. Fresh horror gripped him. He could hear it slither toward him. He let out a strangled yell.

Myra fingered the envelope. At first she thought perhaps Hal's employer, Mr. Holton, had suddenly decided to lend the money and that Hal had him send the money to the house to surprise her. The "personal" puzzled her. Then she thought maybe Hal was teasing her, and trying to put her in spirits. Even if it wasn't a trick of his, it was sure to concern her, and she had a right to know what was in it. They had never had any secrets. Should she open it? She saw every reason why she should; the silly bit of convention that forbids one to open other's letters, she and Hal had dispensed with by agreement, years ago.

She pried curiously at the flap of the envelope, and the one point where it was glued gave, leaving it opened. She removed the letter, still folded, and held it up to the light. The letterhead of Holton & Sons, Jewelers, could be seen through the paper. Had he sent the money? She unfolded it and read. Her cheeks paled as she hurriedly ran her eyes over it. It was short and to the point. "As you are doubtless aware, the pearl necklace with diamond clasps which you delivered yesterday morning to Mr. Grant on Parkway is worthless, a substitute for the article which you received at our office for delivery. Because of your long and faithful service, and to avoid unnecessary loss to the company, we shall allow you until close of business this afternoon to return the necklace or \$425 in cash, a low estimate of its worth—"

Hal returned home about one o'clock. The baby was by itself in the front room. Hal called to Myra. No answer. Thinking to find her employed in the kitchen, he hastened thru the house. On the dining room table were two notes. Hal siezed the first one, from Bolton's. All the blood faded from his face. He took the next. It was in Myra's hand—"I know you did it for me, darling, but you can return it now. The river looks so deep and calm, so friendly—nothing but trouble since we were married—that I still love you and forgive you, but I couldn't bear the disgrace, and you can return it and everything will be all right. God forgive me! Look after the baby." The phone jingled as Hal ran thru the house.

"This is Mr. Bolton's secretary speaking, Mr. Williams," came the voice. "I have good news. Yes, the necklace was reported awhile ago from a pawnshop, and traced to one of our clerks. We are sorry we accused you. Hope it hasn't caused you very much worry."

The phone fell from Hal's numb hands to the floor. He stared dumbly at the crowing baby on the couch, then at the crumpled paper in his hand.

J. G.



Standing on a bridge
Watching the water swirl by
Makes you think of life
And wonder if
Perhaps you're not
Just drifting along.

Clark Porteous

The Peacemaker

JOHN FISCHBACH

"And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them;—for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

A merry sunbeam, darting into the dusk solemnity of the cathedral from a chink in a clerestory window, played about the gray head of the black robed minister. He paused from his reading and looked down into the faces of the gray-clad figures before him. Tomorrow they were to entrain for the front. Today it was his job to put the sanction of the church on their going forth, to convince them of the righteousness of their cause and to stir up within them a war-like spirit. He noted the youthfulness of many of the faces, and, for a moment, a wave of nausea passed over him. Immediately he regained control of himself. Hate must be preached and he must preach it. The service went on. At length came the benediction. As the militant organ notes rose above the subdued buzz of conversation and sound of moving feet, he retired to the quiet of his study.

A slender youth in uniform detached himself from the departing throng and slipped down a side aisle. As though quite familiar with his surroundings, he made his way to the pastor's study, which was just across a courtyard from the cathedral. Without the formality of knocking, he opened the door and stepped inside. At the noise the pastor started up from the easy chair where he had been sitting with bowed head. The youth spoke first.

"Herr Pastor, I want to talk to you."

The older man replied:

"Surely, Otto. Sit down." Again a wave of nausea swept the old man as he saw the thin, colorless face of the youth and the circles under his large, dark eyes. The boy sat down and asked in a mingled tone of pain and incredulity:

"Pastor, why did you preach that sermon? Surely you have not changed so much in the months that I have been away?"

The pastor hesitated a moment, cleared his throat and then said:

"Otto, we must face facts now. It was well enough for us to talk of peace months ago, but now war has come. Our country is fighting for its very life. We must break the encircling line of our enemies or our great civilization will be strangled. They hate us and we must hate them, hate and crush them for Deutchland and the welfare of the world!"

The look of incredulity on Otto's face grew more pronounced. With a strained voice he said:

"Pastor, you don't believe what you are saying. You have studied in France and England; you know that they, too, are being made to believe that we are monsters. You know, but you're afraid; you're a coward!"

"Otto!" the old man almost shouted. With a rising note of excitement the youth went on.

"Yes, you are a coward, a coward, just as I am. We used to talk of peace and of God's kingdom on earth, but now that war has come we say nothing against it. No! We are working for it. And why! Because we are cowards, miserable cowards!"

With forced calmness the pastor said:

"Pull yourself together, Otto. You have been a good Christian boy. Tomorrow you are to go to the front and fight for your country like a Christian man. Remember how proud your father has been since you enlisted. You must not disgrace yourself and him."

Laughing harshly, Otto replied:

"All my life they mocked me because I would not fight; because I tried to follow the peaceful Christ that you used to talk to me about in this very room. At the university I was scorned and called a molly-coddle because I would not duel. And you encouraged me. Now you say that I must fight like a Christian, must take care not to disgrace myself. As if I could further disgrace myself." He appeared to be on the verge of tears. The tense face of the pastor softened.

"Oh, come now, don't take it so hard. Remember, ideals don't work very well in this world of ours. We must be practical. We need this war. It's an economic necessity for us."

In mingled disgust and despair, Otto cried:

"You are the one who taught me to love peace when we studied together before my confirmation. Now you talk like a war propagandist because you know that if you don't the government will throw you out of your benefice, and probably into a nice, clean jail in the bargain if you dare to oppose this Christian war!"

Angrily the old man cried:

"What's the reason you are wearing a government uniform? You had no family to support. You would have lost no prestige by refusing to enter the army. No! You were afraid to go to jail. You with all your talk of following the Prince of Peace! Pah!"

The younger man grew paler at these words, but replied in a calmer voice:

"Pastor, you are right. I am a great coward. I turned my back on what I held most dear because I was afraid. Now, I know that I will be more miserable in the army than in any jail because my self respect will be gone. I won't go on; I'll turn in my uniform today and go to jail!"

The pastor, again in control of himself, exclaimed impatiently:

"Don't be a fool, Otto. The people are at white heat about the war and the authorities will stand for no pacifistic sentiment. You are a soldier in the army now. If you refuse to obey orders, you will be shot for insubordination."

Otto leaped up from his chair in a state of intense excitement and shouted:

"I don't care! Let them kill me!"

"Sit down, Otto. Sit down," pleaded the pastor. Unheeding, Otto ran to the door, jerked it open, and rushed outside. A sick feeling crept into the pastor's heart as he watched him go.

* * *

Two days later the postman paused at the door of the pastor's study and called inside:

"Well, they shot young Otto this morning. There won't be any more

peace talk around here for a while." The pastor looked up with eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep.

"They did?" he inquired dully.

"Yes," went on the postman. "And, you know, he was actually cheerful at the last. Said that he felt better about being executed than he would have about going to war. The poor fool! He took his Christianity too seriously." To himself the pastor muttered:

"I wonder?"



Saddest of men is he who dreams
Her mind is a mirror wherein he gleams,
And wakes to find that the image there
Is an ass's head on a bag of air.



Winter Scene

Somber earth around—and a yet more somber sky—
And a moaning wind bewailing a world about to die—
A lonely landscape lighted by a faint star's fading eye.

He said; "I have lived long ages;
I have seen the hidden past;
I have sat and talked with sages;
I have marched with armies vast.

Long ago were joy and splendor;
Long ago were pomp and might—
Brave men who scorned surrender
And laughed as they pressed the fight.

I have lived and watched and waited,
Till the earth is like that sky,
Where a lonesome star is fated,
Ere the night is gone, to die.

Weariness, silence, and sadness hovered there, kindred ghosts,
And far off sounds of marching of a phantom army's hosts
Echoed there in the darkness a thousand futile boasts.

Yet the star gleamed on till morning,
When the sun came out to laugh,
With kindness, not with scorning,
At a bent old man with a staff.

H. O.

William Faulkner—Our Neighbor of Mississippi

MAURICE CARLSON

Even before the horrible story of Temple Drake and Popeye shocked the reading public, William Faulkner, literary genius of Oxford, Mississippi, had definitely established himself as one of the most outstanding writers in the contemporary field.

Producing a feeling of horror comparable to that produced by Eugene O'Neill, a feeling of weirdness equal to that of Poe, combined with the bitter irony of an Ambrose Bierce, Faulkner torments his readers with strange stories of suicides, idiots, lynchings, rapings, unhappy families, and murders.

His characters, warped and twisted shapes reflecting the chaotic wreckage of a mad world, are all unusual, yet human enough to provoke sympathy. Who could help sympathizing with Temple Drake, or even Popeye in "Sanctuary", or the idiot Benjy in "The Sound and The Fury" as he recalls the woeful story of his family, or the young, shell-shocked lieutenant in "Soldier's Pay"?

It was Sherwood Anderson who introduced to the world the creator of these peculiar characters. Anderson succeeded in getting Liveright and Company to publish Faulkner's first novel, "Soldier's Pay", and it was he who time and again helped the struggling young Mississippian financially. The interest of Anderson in Faulkner is clearly shown in a recent article in "The American Mercury", in which he states the opinion that William Faulkner is the most promising writer of this generation. This statement by Sherwood Anderson is reflective of the opinion of the great number of critics who believe that in Faulkner the early twentieth century is producing a writer whose works will endure.

The life story of Faulkner is interesting in itself. He was born thirty-six years ago in the town of Ripley, Mississippi. He quit school in the fifth grade, and for many years has been in turn a house-painter, carpenter, English war aviator, student, post-master at University, Miss., dish-washer, poet, and novelist. In his youth, Faulkner wandered through the woods on his father's Mississippi farm, mingled with the people around him, read numerous books, and in every way possible gave himself a store from which to draw later on when he should begin the work which he knew was meant for him—writing.

When the war broke out, Faulkner enlisted in the Canadian Air Corps. Although he crashed two planes, he never saw service in France. Faulkner in recalling his experiences as an aviator says: "Cracked one plane and that cost the British government 2000 pounds. Cracked another and that cost the British government 2000 pounds. Quit the army and that cost the British \$83.47. British rejoiced." If you notice the quotation, the fact that the personal pronoun I is omitted is quite striking. Faulkner makes little use of this pronoun in his conversation.

For a while Faulkner attended the University of Mississippi as a special student in English. There he was looked upon by the students of the University as some inexplicable mishap. They called him all kinds of peculiar names, and ridiculed him for not entering into associations with them. These students, who are men and women now, are overcome with awe by the overwhelming fame which has come to the

young man whom they passed off so lightly. While at the University there was only one person with whom Faulkner could freely talk and associate. That person was Phil Stone, his life-long friend.

Through the influence of a friend, Faulkner secured the position of post-master at University, Mississippi, and worked there for two years before he lost his position. He was fired because he kept the students waiting for their mail while he wrote poetry. It was while he was employed in this capacity that he submitted his first literary efforts to the publishers. The work consisted of a group of poems entitled "The Marble Faun". This is the only group of poems which he has ever had published. He is essentially a novelist, not a poet.

After he lost his job, Faulkner journeyed to New Orleans where he met with an old friend with whom he used to work in a book-store, Mrs. Sherwood Anderson, who invited him to meet her famous husband. From the first, Anderson was interested in this young man so unlike himself, and sponsored young Faulkner on his rise to fame.

Faulkner is also indebted to his friend Stark Young, whom he visited in New York during the period when his funds were low. Young had only one bed in his two-room apartment, and Faulkner was obliged to sleep on an antique settee. "Since then," writes Faulkner humorously, "I have learned that Stark Young was in mortal fear that I would break his darned settee."

Returning to Mississippi, Faulkner secured a position as furnace stoker in the power company of Oxford. It was during this time that he wrote "As I Lay Dying", which he insists is the best of his novels. Faulkner wrote the book in six weeks at odd moments during the nights. He never re-wrote the story, but sent the original manuscript to the publishers. The constant hum of the dynamos around him are said to account partially for the weirdness of this story of a family which is accompanying the body of their dead mother across a desert to its burying place. The body is carried in a wagon, and Faulkner gives the thoughts of each of the members of the family as they go long. All of the family are neurotic.

In 1931 "Sanctuary" was published. Although this book was written before "As I Lay Dying", it was not published until afterwards, this being due to the fact that no publisher would accept it because of its frankness. With "Sanctuary" Faulkner clinched for himself his place as a leading figure in the present day literary world. His late novel, "Light In August", tends to make his place secure.

Faulkner writes in a style closely akin to the ultra-modern "stream of consciousness" school, although at times he is less restrained, and at other times more conservative in his manner of expression.

When asked what ideas he wants to put forth in his novels, he replied, "Not any. I write them because they are in me. If a story is in you, it has got to come out. If you have something to say—you've got to write it."

Faulkner is now living again at Oxford, writing every day in the corner room of his tumbled down home which is strewn with papers, guns, and hunting-boots. He holds himself aloof from his fellow human-beings, studies their actions, looks into their souls, and writes of their unhappiness and their bitterness.

Occasionally, he makes a trip to New York to see his publishers. There he shuns the company of other authors who, he says, are always

talking about what they are going to write and never write anything. When asked why he pictures only the unhappy side of life, he replied, "Where is there a law requiring that we should be happy? We are here to work. It is either sweat or die."

Such is the philosophy of William Faulkner, who writes his strange tales of horror. Whether Faulkner will change the tenor of his writings in the future is a subject for much speculation; but regardless of the vein of his future works, his past ones will mark him as one of the greatest writers of his time.



Riddle

Why is it that the lips can never tell
The thoughts that race like madmen through the mind,
And that fond wishes never can dispel
The inarticulateness which they find?

Why is it that we suffer untold woes
When but a phrase would free us from our pains?
And stranger still, why is it no one knows
The reason why that phrase unsaid remains?

H. O.



I have climbed far and lofty pinnacles
And in the clouds seen gilded palaces
Till hope has bound my heart with tentacles
Of strongest steel to shining fallacies,
Where lords and ladies midst magnificence
Sip sparkling wine from golden chalices.

Then in the west I've seen the sun go down,
And one last glow of splendor flood the sky;
And from the distant palace came the sound,
Of a lone sentry shouting forth his cry,
As from the east he saw the shadows rush
To overwhelm the palace with a sigh.

H. O.

The Mansion

On a little-traveled country road, not far from Jackson, there are the ruins of an old Southern mansion; the building, though partially destroyed by fire, is still imposing looking and retains much of its former magnificence. The wide steps, the tall, broad windows, and the old-fashioned roof show vividly the contrast between modern architecture and the architecture of the old plantation days. Everything about the mansion is a relic of the South that is dead.

About this mansion, deserted and almost unknown to the present generation, there has sprung up a legend. No one knows how much of it is true, and how much of it is due to the imagination of the countless people who have added to it time and time again. There the mansion stands, lonely and deserted, and at night the shadows that flicker noiselessly around its portals seem to hide in their darkness the ghosts of men who lived there long ago. In the moonlight the blackened scars made by the flames disappear; only the sight of a telephone wire which now follows the road in front of the house destroys the illusion of the Old South, for the fields, the woods, and even the winding road remain the same. It is a scene of peace, now, of peace and quiet, and no one would guess the ironic drama which was enacted within its walls.

Ever since West Tennessee had been open for settlement this property had been in the possession of the Rands. Old William Rand, a Virginia farmer, had been one of the first to settle in Nashville, but the death of Sevier, whose friend he had been, and the rise to power of Andrew Jackson caused the old farmer to push on farther west. So in 1819 he bought three hundred acres of land on the Forked Deer, and his slaves built him a modest country home. By the time of Douglas and the slavery agitation the Rands had already become rich and powerful. Stephen Rand, grandson of old William, tore down the modest farm house and erected in its stead a palatial three story mansion.

Then came the war. No battles were fought there; no skirmishes took place in the neighborhood; but most of the slaves fled to the Union Army, and in the absence of its master, the mansion was uncared for. Its finely kept lawn began to grow in weeds; its garden was trampled by drunken negroes; the building itself was once broken into and looted. Stephen Rand, minus one arm and a considerable amount of his optimism, returned to find himself a poor man. He still had his farm and his home, but he had no slaves, no money, and, in a region where all were poor, seemingly no way of obtaining any. He visited his friends, cursed the Yankees, and became a drunkard.

Young Stephen, his son, who had followed him off to war, and who was of hero worshiping nature, followed the commendable example of his father. And so, when a few months later old Stephen died of heart failure, his son was somewhat mystified at how to proceed; he ended by hiring a manager and mortgaging his home for as much as possible. So the days passed by, and Schwartz, the new manager, by dint of perseverance, hard work, and some skill kept the Rand estate out of bankruptcy.

Schwartz was a German refugee, a revolutionist of '48, who had wandered from one place to another, and had come to Jackson just in

time to be drafted. He accepted his fate with resignation; fought faithfully, if not spiritedly, for a cause in which he did not believe; and was immensely glad when the war was over and he could return to his business. He had remained a private. Rand found him without a job; the war had closed up the Jackson banks.

He was a curious fellow, this Schwartz. One wondered how he could ever have been a revolutionist; he seemed too phlegmatic, too business-like and unemotional. Insult, honor, praise meant nothing to him; with equanimity he would let his drunken employer curse him, pat him on the back intimately, or act toward him as toward a negro slave. The only time that he ever spoke to Rand about other than business was late in the evening when he returned to the house and met his employer on the porch. Then he would say, "This is a beautiful home you have, Mr. Rand," and would listen attentively if the Southerner started telling the history of the place.

Schwartz continued to take infinite pains in running the farm, and to bank the salary which he paid himself out of the farm's earnings; Rand trusted him explicitly; the German never took more than the money due him. At the end of two years he presented his employer a detailed account of what he had accomplished, and demanded a raise in salary. Rand cursed and stormed, but ended by granting the raise. The same thing occurred at the end of the next year. And the next. By now Schwartz was receiving more than the owner. But Rand, who knew his manager's business ability, and who had seen an almost bankrupt farm become a prosperous one, was grumblingly content; he had his liquors, his wines, and his horses. Also, the mansion, which for a time had shown neglect, was now as handsome as in the fine days before the war, thanks to Schwartz's careful eye.

So for a number of years things continued in much the same manner. Schwartz continued to raise his salary, but supplied his employer with the same amount of money as before. But the German continued to live simply; he spent no more now than he had when he was a bank clerk in Jackson. When Rand would joke with him, sometimes quite rudely, about this miserliness, the German would merely smile and say, "It is good to save."

One day in midsummer Schwartz walked into the house and said that he wished to see Rand about business.

"This is unusual," thought Rand. "He usually asks for a raise on New Year."

But Schwartz was not concerned about a raise. "Mr. Rand," he said. "The mortgage is due next month."

Rand was irritated. "Well, get it renewed. The holder knows it's a good investment." He wondered why Schwartz was bothering him with this; the man usually waited until a notary was there, and he could sign the renewal.

"The owner wants his money this time, Mr. Rand."

"Well, give it to him."

"You know where the money goes that the farm makes, Mr. Rand."

"Well, borrow some from somebody else."

"You don't understand, Mr. Rand. I'm the mortgage holder."

"Huh?"

"I bought it some months ago."

Well, get some bank to take it off your hands."

"I don't want the money, Mr. Rand."

At last the truth dawned upon the Southerner. He was too taken aback even to be angry. "You mean—you've actually intended all along to get this land?"

"Yes, Mr. Rand."

Stephen Rand exploded. Well, by God, you won't get it. My great-grandfather bought this land, and I'm not going to give it up."

"Yes, but how, Mr. Rand?"

And then the Southerner sensed the futility of it. He could not borrow any money; his word was worth nothing. Without Schwartz, he could do nothing. "All right," he said resignedly. "Take the land. But don't come around here any more until you come to take it over. You're fired." He sank back in his chair and nervously poured out a glass of whisky.

Schwartz said nothing, but as he slowly walked away, he looked back at the mansion and drank in almost worshipfully its beauty. Until a sudden thought came to him; one month with the drunken Rand in control. Anything might happen.

The day arrived, and Schwartz came over to take possession. The legal formalities were observed and then, after the notaries had departed, Rand turned to the German and said: "I hope you don't mind my spending this night in your house. I am not quite ready to leave."

"Not at all," replied Schwartz jovially. "I hope you don't mind if I spend it here with you."

"Not at all, replied the Southerner, almost insulting with his politeness. "It's your home."

He went down to take a drink, while Schwartz roamed out toward the fields, to see what damage had been done.

Late that night, while Schwartz was attempting to sleep, he was aroused by a crash down in the cellar. Thinking that something might be wrong, he quickly ran to the cellar stairs. There he saw Rand, evidently drunk, laboring under a load of seven or eight wine bottles, which he was attempting to carry up the stairs.

Schwartz looked at him with amusement. "What are you trying to do, Mr. Rand?"

Rand looked at him angrily. "My grandfather put up this wine. Don't want no damn German to drink it." He waved his hands with a flourish, and dropped all the bottles but one.

The German viewed the wreckage with disgust. "Come on to bed, man, You're drunk."

"Drunk, am I? Drunk? Don't insult a gentleman"—The Southerner suddenly let fly the wine bottle. It narrowly missed Schwartz's head.

The German ran back up the steps, not desirous of continuing the conversation.

Rand picked up the lantern and stumbled back to get another bottle of wine.

Sometime toward morning Schwartz awoke to find smoke slowly drifting into his room. He rushed out into the hallway; there was smoke everywhere. For a while he was unable to move. His beautiful home, his after so many years of waiting, was slowly burning up, burning before he could enjoy it, revel in its stately pillars, in its grace, and know that it was all his. With an effort he stirred himself and ran to get help.

But it was too late; despite the efforts of the negroes on the place, and of a few neighbors, the flames continued, little by little, to spread throughout the great house.

A neighbor looked up at the sky and remarked, "Looks like we'll have a rain in about an hour. It's a pity it couldn't come sooner. It's a beautiful house, Rand's is."

Schwartz looked at him quietly. "Yes," he said. "I know."

At daylight the rain came, effectually putting out the last glowing embers, and causing huge clouds of black smoke to rise to the sky. The mansion was not completely destroyed, but it was damaged beyond repair.

No one in Jackson knows what became of Schwartz. He sold the plantation and moved North, telling no one where he would go.

Rand lingered on for a while, but without Schwartz to support him he could not last long. Friends of his father secured permission to bury him in the old family graveyard.

The mansion still stands. The rush of modern civilization has passed it by and has been content to leave alone a vestige of the Old South. A Northerner spoke of buying the place and rebuilding, but the panic of '93 destroyed his fortune. Since then, untroubled and unconcerned, the mansion has serenely gazed at the surrounding countryside, a relic seeming to boast of its past.

J. O. H.



Just One Lucky Break

MAGARET TALLICHET

"I don't see why they have to act so snooty, like they owned this school. Just because they belong to a high school sorority, and we don't, they seem to think they have a monopoly on every boy in the place", said Jean, gazing bitterly at the retreating backs of two stylishly dressed girls. The two departing damsels were none other than Misses Mary Reid and Nell Blakeley, members of the Theta Omicron Sigma Sorority and prominent heart-breakers at the high school. "Why, just this morning, I was standing in the hall talking to Tom Lanham, when up comes Nell and butts in just as if I weren't there."

"I know it", returned Eleanor. "They do everybody the same way, except their own, dear sorority sisters. Just because we don't have dates every Saturday night and go to the Country Club to dance with their little old S.Pi and T.O.S. crowd, they don't even take the trouble to speak to us. I think it's a darn shame the way this school has gotten. You know we're just as cute as they are, but just because we don't belong to a sorority, our whole crowd might as well be a bunch of lepers, or something. We never have any dates, hardly. I don't think it's fair. Why can't we be popular, too?"

"One thing I'm glad of—and that is that we don't hang around that Theta crowd like some of those girls do. Nobody can say we run after them. You know, Elly, I think I'd think I'd be perfectly happy if I could go to just one dance, and get a good rush, especially from Frank Shannon. I'll bet that would make Mary Reid sit up and take notice. She's been trying to hook him ever since school began, though I can't see that she's made much headway. But gosh, he doesn't even know that I

exist, doesn't even speak to me in the halls.

"Why not try it tonight, Jean?" asked Eleanor. "You've got a date with Mickey, so make him take you to the Club."

"I guss I could, at that. Poor old Mickey! If it wasn't for him I don't suppose I ever would go anywhere. He's been mighty nice to me; but, some way, I can't get much of a thrill out of a date with him. Those glasses and floppy ears sort of take the romance out of things. You know, though, I really ought to get a good break sometime. Maybe, if I wore the new green taffeta trimmed in rose, I'd have some luck."

"Try it", advised Eleanor. "Just strut in like you owned the place and keep up a good line of talk. Somebody is bound to break on you; and, then, Mickey can introduce you to some more. I'll be pulling for you, kid, so do your stuff. Hey! Hurry Jean. There goes the bell for English."

The two girls got up off the running board of the car on which they had been sitting, and walked slowly toward the high school. A crowd of little freshmen in khaki R.O.T.C. uniforms surged up behind them and disappeared inside the door.

Jean and Eleanor were the unfortunate members of a small crowd of very nice girls. Nice, in that they were from good families, well-dressed and attractive looking. The high school which they attended was so dominated by cliques that a non-sorority girl was practically taboo, as far as dates with the fraternities were concerned. The T.O.S. members ran the social life, and never let any of the other girls forget this fact, in so far as they were able to rub it in with slights, rebuffs, and complete indifference.

That night there was much commotion in the home of Miss Jean Morris, junior at the Oak Park high school. When she had finally succeeded in slipping into the green taffeta, had at last finished pinning down her freshly waved brown hair, rouging her cheeks and applying lipstick to her mouth, she looked into the mirror with a few flutterings of hope. A pair of laughing eyes sparkled back at her, and the roguish smile deepened. "If I don't get a rush tonight," thought Jean, "I might as well retire from competition, 'cause I probably never will."

If only Mickey would come before all her assurance oozed away. Already, her mouth felt a little dry with excitement. She shut her eyes, dug her nails into the palms of her hands, and prayed: "Please, God, won't you let me have a real good time just this once, and let Frank Shannon dance with me?"

A peal of the door bell heralded the arrival of Mickey. With a hurried good-bye kiss to her parents, Jean ran down to the door, opened it, and joined the boy on the front porch. Mickey was a rather inconspicuous, good-natured youth, afflicted with light brown hair, brown eyes that gazed mildly out behind horn-rimmed glasses, and a pair of ears that stuck out "like the handles of a loving cup." He had been going with Jean casually for several months. As Jean expressed it, she considered him as a means unto an end.

Riding toward the Country Club, the two exchanged the latest class room gossip and spoke of the on-coming dance. Jean voiced her growing nervousness only once, when she said calmly, in her most sophisticated voice, "You know, Mickey, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if I got stuck tonight. You'd better introduce some people to me."

To which remark Mickey replied with the gallant commonplace, that he wouldn't mind dancing with her all evening.

The weekly Saturday night dance was the stamping ground of all the gilded youth of the suburb of Oak Park. The events which happened there were the topics of conversation for the ensuing week at school, to be whispered, laughed over and enlarged upon until another Saturday night furnished a new set. Here, members of the T.O.S. went about their business of entrapping the masculine hearts of the members of S.Pi and Z.D.E. Here a girl's reputation as a belle could be made, if only the right people gave the requisite rush.

With all these considerations weighing upon her mind, it was no wonder that Jean's heart beat double time as she stepped inside and made her way to the girls' dressing room. Here, she was engulfed in a crowd of girls about her own age, all gowned in bright evening dresses, and all chattering at full speed. An over-powering sense of inferiority swept over her. None of them were her intimate friends; none of them took the trouble to acknowledge her presence in any way, save by a cool nod or a curt "Hello, Jean;" and all of them continued their gay conversations about people and events entirely strange to her.

All the self-confidence she had had earlier in the evening fell away from her, and she felt lonely and exposed amid the carefree group. With deep disgust at herself, for not being able to join glibly in the talk, she elbowed her way to the mirror, only to stare discontentedly at her own reflection, pictured there beside some twenty others. If only she were tall! But to be just medium, with nondescript brown hair and hazel eyes—it was impossible.

A few dabs of powder on her nose and she returned to where the faithful Mickey awaited her. "Too-oo Late", moaned the orchestra, as the two stepped out on the dance floor and began to glide around. Feverishly, Jean looked around the room to measure her chances. She saw many familiar faces, but none on whom she could depend for a break. In the middle of the stag line, stood Frank Shannon, his brunette head a little above the others. Her heart jumped. (Truth to tell, Jean had secretly yearned after the handsome Frank ever since first catching sight of him in the school lunch room. He, however, captain of both football and basket ball, had a habit of making feminine hearts flutter, and designed to be attentive only to a favored few.)

If only he would dance with her, surely some of the others would follow suit. Boys were such devils. You might work their geometry problems for them every day of the year, and still they would pass you up with a blank smile, and never pretend to dance with you. And as for asking you for a date, humph, nothing doing there.

Now she had danced with Mickey for half a dance and still no help in sight. If only some one would rescue her. "I don't care who they are, what they look like, or whether I know them or not," thought Jean. Her face, which she had forced into a smile, was stiffening, and she felt that her lips had drawn back from her teeth like those of a horse.

The music stopped and another dance started—"Let's Try Again." She felt numb and stiff, unable to answer Mickey's polite remarks, unable to do anything except gaze imploringly into the faces of the stags who were moving around her, begging them with her eyes. For a second hope would glow within her as she saw someone walking toward her. She would wait expectantly for the bliss of a touch on the arm, then sink back into the depths of despair, as the girl next to her was broken on.

Two dances. Her whole body burned with shame, and she felt that every one on the floor was staring at her, whispering about her, and pointing her out as a social failure and outcast. Three dances. A sudden misery overcame her. She felt limp and drained of every emotion except a dull hatred of everything and everybody, fierce resentment against the one-sided Fate which gave her nothing and others so much.

Suddenly the longed-for came to pass. She felt a tap on the arm and turned to see the somewhat childish face of the boy who sat across from her in Latin. Welcoming him with a seraphic smile, she hissed into the ear of the departing Mickey, "Introduce me to Frank Shannon, please. Hurry!"

"How do you like the dance? Isn't it simply swell, though? Are you having a good time?" she babbled to her new partner, meanwhile watching Mickey cross the room, speak to Frank Shannon, then the two of them start back in her direction.

Another touch on the arm. Jean held her breath, turned, and gazed into Frank Shannon's boyishly handsome face. "Miss Morris—Mr. Shannon," murmured Mickey.

Jean felt dizzy from happiness, hardly able to keep from screaming her joy. "Dear God, make him like me. Give me just one lucky break", she breathed.

Aloud she said, "Don't you think it's horribly hot in here? Let's go out on the porch a minute and cool off." Triumphant she marched across the floor, leading him by the hand, and noticing the surprised glances which Mary Reid and Nell Blakeley bestowed on her in passing.

Once they had gained the cool darkness of the verandah, Jean tried to start the required peppy chatter, but her tongue was paralyzed.

Finally she burst out with a line which she had watched Nell use with great effect.

"You don't know what a thrill this meeting you is. I've heard so many nice things about you," she murmured coyly, with a smile and her most provocative upward flutter of the eye-lids.

"Oh yeah!" muttered the boy awkwardly. Obviously, he was not responding correctly. "—Say, uh, how do you like the dance?"

"I'm crazy about it."

Silence settled over them. Frantically, Jean tried to call up some witty remark, something piquant that would plunge the two of them into the sparkling conversation of magazine stories; but her mind was blank and her mouth dry.

With sudden inspiration she tried another track. "You surely did play a good game last Saturday."

He brightened visibly.

"Oh, thanks. S' nice little game.—Uh, who d'you think's gonna win, Notre Dame or U. S. C.?"

"I—I don't know. I haven't read anything about it."

"Well,—uh—did you see Lew Ayres in that football picture, "The Haunted Halfback." He was really swell."

No. I missed that one.

Seconds ticked by and the silence weighed down almost tangibly. Jean bit her lips with disappointment. Here she had him all to herself and couldn't even make a dent in him. She saw his eyes jealously following Mary Reid's triumphal progress around the floor.

In desperation she tried the animated line once again. With a supreme effort she managed to giggle, "Hot-cha. I'm having such a good time tonight. Isn't it a swell dance?"

But her effort collapsed, and the words seemed to hang in the air, grinning at her mockingly.

Frank roused himself from his apparent lethargy long enough to murmur, "It's a good enough dance. Rotten orchestra, though."

Again a long silence. Jean saw him move his feet restlessly, gaze longingly at the circling couples on the dance floor. Tears stood in her eyes at the realization of her failure. It was all plain enough. She was a hopeless flop. Life stretched out before her, empty of all romance save for the uninteresting figures of occasional Mickeys.

"Let's dance," she sighed resignedly.

The boy jumped eagerly to his feet and steered her straight for the stag line. They danced in stony silence.

After what seemed an eternity, the faithful Mickey came to the rescue. Jean watched Frank dance with Mary Reid, talk, laugh, look down soulfully into her face, and squeeze her to him. It was the last straw.

"I—I've got to get home, Mickey. It's after twelve and my feet hurt."

* * * * *

Next Monday at school, Eleanor pounced on Jean. "How was the dance? Did you have a good time? Did you meet Shannon?"

With carefull nonchalance Jean replied, "It was a lovely dance. Rotten orchestra, though. Oh, I had a good time, all right. Yes. I met Frank Shannon. Listen, I don't think he's so hot after you get to know him. He gives me a pain."

At about the same time, Frank Shannon bore down on Mickey. "Listen guy, "he said with bitter emphasis, "why on earth did you introduce me to that wash-out. She dragged me out on the porch, and when I finally did get in I was stuck with her for two dances. She's the dumbest gal I ever saw."



Night, and distant stars,
And a silvery moon that bathes the trees in its mystic light.
Snow-like softness appears on Gothic stone,
Gleaming in darkness,
And all is quiet.

Rest comes, and Peace,
And then we know that God is with us,
And we shall rise again.

R. B.

Four Poems

He thought of spring,
The first breezes of spring,
Their gentle smell
So intoxicatingly sweet and indefinable—
And then remembered
Half the joy's in the memory,
Half in contemplation of the new season,
Just out of grasp,
Always out of reach.
In reality spring is nothing,
A study in bright, warm colors,
A period for contemplating the Fall,
A season for gathering in joyful remembrances,
Sad, clinging melancholy memories—
Nothing more.
He thought too much.

The heavens were black with night
And he was alone.
The dying leaves in nearby trees
Rustled as the cool wind played,
Echoing their lost joy in temporal things.

He sighed,
And in that sigh
Was burning, persistent aspiration
After the unattainable, the unknowable.
The sudden, hurrying footstep of some eager mortal
Broke the stillness of his reverie
And dying away into the nightfall
Intensified his feeling of isolation
And of nearness to the spirit overhanging all.

Spring, joyful spring,
We hail thee!
We who have grown old
Become young again.

Spring, immortal spring,
Ever living, breathing symbol of youth,
We love thee.
Vigorous new blood surges through our veins
When we look upon the fresh green things
That herald your coming.
And then superabundant growth,
Overabundant life spreads everywhere,
Diffusing, diluting as it envelopes all,
Until gradually satiated, dulled,
We find ourselves disillusioned, saddened,
And we know not why.

Ah, noble thought!
Why do you evade me so?
A moment ago
A flashing gleam,
I was sure I had you—
But no, gone!
Dissolved into bitter nothing
Even as I tasted the sharp delight
Of your immortality

Gone, oh thought! Gone
In the very mightiness of my triumph,
Departed like the penetrating light of beacons
Which for a brief second
Send a ray of hope into some poor soul and are gone.
The wavering beam of a passing automobile
Darts cheerfully through the blackness
And is gone.
Life's big moments are always gone.
The maddening dullness
Unrelenting persists for ever on.

With all my might
I cup my hands,
But still the water runs.
To contain some elusive thought
Were harder still.

R. R.