El Palenque

A PUBLICATION OF SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE

AUTUMN
1937.......10c.
Hamlet's query anent the essential verb of existence is at last not applicable to El Palenque. Mr. Alvin Morrison's frigid black book is fat as a little pig and student enthusiasm mirrors itself in the great abundance of submitted manuscripts. El Palenque is stepping ahead.

Difficult as was the selection of material for this issue, the editors feel that the content is worthy through its apparent quality of artistic expression, the variety of subject, and the nod given to formerly unpublished writers. Especial thanks is given Mr. Payne and Mr. McClintock for their illustrations, to the many contributors, to Neyenesch Printers, and to you, whose interest makes this San Diego State College publication possible.

—The Editor.

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Palenque, the Athens of the ancient Mayans, encompassed the culture of a great race within its four walls. EL PALENQUE, the magazine, endeavors to assemble within its two covers a representation of the literary and artistic attainment of San Diego State College.
OR a day and a night, the hunted man had held half a hundred Mexican soldiers at bay from the adobe shack. His guns jammed. His ammunition ran out.

Now, at sunrise, he walked out to surrender to the commandante of the garrison.

"Your personal safety, senor, it is guaranteed as I promised," the commandante said loudly. The soldiers half raised rifles about them.

"Thanks," the squat man replied. He drew down the corners of his mouth as he looked at the trim, tailored figure of the Mexican officer. "Out of the arms of Uncle Sam into the arms of Mexico, eh?"

"Your guns, please." The commandante gestured with his Luger.

"Oh, yes," the prisoner looked at a .45 caliber automatic. "This one jammed on me after I'd shot it twice. I still have a hundred shells for it."

The automatic thudded in the dawn-lit dust at the officer's feet. He started nervously. "Perhaps you will be so kind as just to let the rest of your guns fall." The commandante reflectively twirled to a finer point the black needles of his moustache. He said, "Are you the Sammy Walker?"

"Right." Walker lit a bent cigarette, flicked the smoking match and watched it fall.

"The Americans said you would not be taken alive. You kidnapped a very rich man in the United States. You broke out of so many prisons they say no prison can hold you. You killed several police. No?"

"Read it on page one of any newspaper."

"You are a very famous bad man. You are very brave to fight fifty soldiers. I would like to shake hands with you."

"Sure." Walker held out his hand.

With the column marching behind them, the commandante and his prisoner stepped quickly toward the white walls of the garrison.

"Nice looking jail, but I've gotten out of better ones," Walker said. "I'll have ham and eggs for breakfast. You are my host, but what is your name?"

"Captain Juan Sebastian y Dominguez, new commandante of this garrison."

"New commandante?"

"Yes. You shot and killed the former commandante early last night. He was the only one to die."

"You ought to decorate me."

"I thank you for my promotion, senor."
"Is there an American consul here?"
"This is a small place, 100 miles below the border and far from roads and railroads. We are not honored by a consul."
"When will I stand trial?" Walker nervously fingered a fresh-lit cigarette.
"Oh, you know Mexican law?"
"Yes, at least, I've heard shooting a man doesn't mean more than a few years at hard labor down here below the line."
"Twenty years. It will be very difficult to arrange for you to stand trial. The courts are very far away and it would cost a great deal to transport the witnesses all that way. So much trouble, you understand?"
"I understand I'm an American citizen. I want a fair trial."
"You shall have a trial by Mexican law. Or you wish to be returned to your country?"
"I'd burn there."
"Do not worry. You will never return."
"Anything's okay as long as I have my mouthpiece and my day in court like they say."
"You have been in court before?"
"Plenty of times. I've never seen a jam yet a good mouthpiece couldn't square if he had plenty of dough. But I haven't much money left."
"That is too bad."
"So you're on the make for a little graft, too. Mexico is just like any country."
"In some respects." The commandante crisply ordered a soldier to open a cell door. It clanged behind Walker. Wetting his lips nervously, the prisoner looked through the bars. His eyelids drooped, shuttered a mind that weaved a scheme. "How much—"
"—have you got?" Captain Sebastian finished.
"A grand?"
"What is that?"
"Thousand dollars American money. That's plenty at the current rate of exchange."
"You have no more?"
"That's every red."
"Where is it?"
"It's a deal, then?"
"Never doubt the Captain's word, senor. You shall have your escape."
"Look under a loose brick in that adobe shack's chimney."
"Thank you, senor." The commandante turned, walked briskly down the corridor, his heels smacking the adobe dully.

At noon when tortillas and beans were brought to Walker, the soldier carrying the tray bent and whispered, "Esta noche."
Walker nodded.

He smoked his last cigarette at sundown and watched the stars speckle the night blue. Later taps sounded. Quiet spread like a blanket over the town and garrison.
"Senor?"
"Yes?" Walker tiptoed to the bars. At his touch, the bars opened. He was free.

Down the corridor, a lighter patch of darkness marked the door. He walked toward it. One hundred miles to the border lay ahead of him. He'd get back to the States and his friends where a guy could get a mouthpiece.

Walker's feet whispered in the sand. The night was a cloak about him. "Halt! Halt! Halt!"

Walker started running.

A rifle cracked twice. Walker slid on his face in the sand.

The commandante stood over the body. He nudged it with his boot toe. Walker lay still. He was dead.

Fingering his moustache, the commandante addressed Walker, "You were tried, senor. La ley fuga.* Your thousand dollars will pay for a grand funeral for my brother, late commandante of this garrison."

*(The Law of Escape.)

PHAETON

Riva T. Bresler

Tossed, as the storm-tossed billows in that ride,
Racked like a slave at every dip and pull,
He thought, as lightnings strike, "My mother lied,
The Sun-God's not my father. Else the Bull
Would lower his thick neck; the Ram, the Bear
Fawn at my feet; the Archer call my name.
The proud Queen would give up her golden chair
To see me hold in check these steeds of flame."

Before the bolt of killing thunder, hurled
From Jove's hand struck, he leaped, his flaming flight
Marking a passage to a burning world—
A gleaming arrow in a space of light.
And hearing in shrill mockery the yell
Of the Horse-tamer, laughing as he fell.
SUPPOSEUM

If there never was such a thing as a twin,
If Columbus hadn't sailed,
If people didn't know what it was to sin,
If all inventions had failed,

If there hadn't been Juliet,
If God hadn't put Pharaoh's army to rout,
If Cleo and Caesar never had met,
If Casey hadn't struck out,

If the World War hadn't been fought,
And that goes for other wars too,
If Jesse James hadn't been caught,
If Napoleon had won Waterloo,

If all that I wrote made sense,
If Carrie Nation hadn't her axes,
If landlords didn't want rents,
And nations didn't want taxes,

If governments never held sessions,
If Alexander hadn't been great,
If there were no such things as depressions,
If no one felt passion or hate,

If love were a thing unknown,
If leopards changed their spots,
If no one was mentally undergrown,
What the hell would our writers use for plots?

—Elya I. Bresler.
By James Malcolm Kligman

The enemy barrage had quieted down a bit, and a patrol was being organized to go out in the night and determine the enemy’s new position. Perhaps he was feeling a little bit cocky. Anyway, he found himself volunteering.

He felt well pleased with himself as he got things ready—very few had volunteered. Then suddenly he realized with a start what he had put himself in for. His confidence faded. He felt sick—his stomach felt as if it were resting in his throat and his head throbbed.

Hesitantly he began digging a foothold in the side of the trench with his foot. A sergeant had to approach before he found himself climbing over the top. He snaked his way forward slowly. A bullet whistled by, and another bullet. He stopped—longer than necessary—swallowed hard and again forced himself ahead. He stumbled over something that he thought was a rock. He glanced down and saw a mangled body that set
him running. A bullet banged noisily on a piece of steel on the ground as he went by, and after he had flopped down another one hit a stone near his hand and threw dust in his eyes.

Tiny fears began to percolate through his head like ghosts, and gradually his apprehensions intensified into despair. He began to think of death and lying on the field keeping company with the corpses he had tripped over.

He looked back. He couldn't see the trench whence he had come. He could see nothing—nothing but the endless war torn field, the shell holes, and here and there the stub of a tree. Ahead, too close ahead, he felt that ever watchful line of death. Cold sweat made him tighten his slippery grip on his rifle. Then he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was lying in a muddy, smelly hole, had been for as long as he could remember. He was shivering now, as much from desolation as from the cold.

All the while, the night was being illuminated every few seconds by brilliant flares. During their torturing fall he had to catch and hold himself in whatever position the glare found him, and remain still as one of the corpses until long after he thought his cramped muscles could stand no more. He felt himself discovered by many eyes each time—eyes of men who were searching him out to blow his head off, and he was obsessed with the idea that his slightest motion would bring death. He was afraid to breathe, and he had a great fear that the enemy might hear his quaking body, that his pounding heart was attracting the attention of the whole line, that the uncontrollable nervous vibration of his body was shaking the earth. Through it all he felt the clammy cold.

Then all at once, hell broke loose, worse than it had ever been. A deluge of metal poured forth from the heavens, and the shaking earth seemed eagerly to open its arms to grasp its victims. Jagged, death-dealing particles of steel and rock flew everywhere. The terrific din deafeningly pounded through his head; he was afraid—terribly afraid; he wanted to die. But, try as he could to escape, he still was very conscious as he lay there clutching the quavering ground. He was conscious, in spite of his eyes pressed shut, of the blinding flashes all around him. He was conscious of the repelling force of the explosions, the pungent, acrid smell of bursting shells, the high-pitched hum of large projectiles far in the air, and the deadly whine of the smaller, closer missiles. The thunderous discord into which everything blended was enlarged within his own mind into an unendurable torture which could not keep on.

His fears continued to multiply. He now entirely lost his ability to see things in any true relationship. With each nearing explosion he called harder and harder to God to send him anything to save him—to KILL him. He was crying now. Crying and screaming and yelling. He forgot who he was, what he was doing out there, everything but his terror. Chaos and ruin reigned as completely in his mind as on the field that surrounded him. The gods, in mercy, should have sent him death.

And then, finally, as if in answer, a piece of shrapnel inconspicuously
lodged in his head.

But he didn't die; at least not then. Later, much later, he was to awaken. But even before he opened his eyes now he again heard the reverberations in the air. He stirred. The booming was louder than ever. His head hurt . . . This terrific noise . . . He was sick of it all. He opened his eyes slightly—just enough to see the bright flashes in the direction towards which he was facing. He felt strangely weak. So the war was still going on . . . He wished he were dead. The thundering . . . He had enough of war. He became delirious again. He had been conscious for scarcely a minute. He tossed about, moaned something, died at last.

He never noticed that now his head was bandaged, that this time he was in a hospital—facing the open window, that he was back in the United States. He never realized that.

Nor did he hear the nurse in the corridor outside remark, "Doctor, I don't think they ought to have these celebrations on the Fourth. They disturb the patients so much."

THERE ARE DOGS IN THE WAVES TONIGHT

By Dorothy Fuqua

There are dogs
In the waves tonight.
Scaly-backed of diamonds.

Wildly, playfully,
They lick the rocks
With frothy tongues.
OG—clammy, dripping, smothering fog. An infinity of gray, invaded by an occasional auto-horn or barely discernible street light. Scowling, The Mac drew his coat collar close and let it fall back with a curse as he felt its icy wetness against his neck.

"Ahhhhh! A hell-uv-a-night!" He sat up and rubbed his hands, letting the newspaper fall to the grass. The bench was cold, even where he’d been lying. No use trying to sleep. He might as well walk and get warm. He stooped and picked up the soggy newspaper, folding it carefully and putting it under the bench. Then he set out, shoulders hunched, hands in his pockets.

His fingers played with the hole in the left one—Oh. Must remember not to make it any larger. Mustn’t press too hard on the right one, or that’d go, too. His right hand curled caressingly around a piece of metal. One lone nickel. Not even a penny to jingle with it. The nickel was warm and slid slowly through his fingers, tickling a little. The left hand began picking at the hole again. He might transfer the nickel for a while. But then, he might lose it. It had happened before. He shuffled by the Brazen Bowl. The sign was just a rosy blob in the night. At the street lamp, he stepped off the curb and peered about its edges for a possible coin—nothing. He went cautiously across the street. Geez! It was still...

"Wahhhhhn! Wahhhhn!"

He leapt for the curb. Those new cars were just too damn quiet! Two, three blocks away he could see the headlights rushing along, twin will-o’-the-wisps.

"Hope he gets his!" Muttering, he paused to stare into a shop window. Women’s clothes—coats, dresses, hats—Fantastic pieces of felt crowning stupid heads impaled on little poles—$35, $20, $50... He went on. Ten feet from the window, the fog closed in like a clammy shower curtain. His hands were still cold. He played with the nickel.

Another curb. He examined it with the same care. Nothing. Then he waited, listening carefully before he crossed to search the opposite one. Nothing. He lifted the lid from a trash can standing near the lamp post. Empty. This place was too damn efficient. Full of small town civic pride. Can’t even let a trash can get decently full before emptying it. Annoyed, he continued down the street, hugging the buildings, looking for anything that might have dropped from a more prosperous pocket.

"Lord! that fog’s cold!" He took momentary shelter in a shop entrance. It was very dark. He couldn’t make out the other side of the...
Something made an abrupt clink on the tile. A sharp whisper smothered The Mac's investigating instinct 'ere it was aroused.
"Clumsy! Fine help y'are! No batt'ry in the flash, no matches and now y'start droppin' things! Y'want the watch down on us!"
"Well—get some decent gloves! Try 'n hold six tools in a greasy mitt and not drop none!"
"Shhhh! Where d'y'think y'are? Echo Bridge? Pipe down!"
"Uh-oh!" thought The Mac. A little business venture. Touchy going by the sound, too. No place for The Mac. He slid around the corner, but the scrape of a coat button against the stone made him stop, hold his breath, listening. The whispering continued and The Mac departed down the block, his pace slightly accelerated.

He played with the coin in his pocket and stood, uncertain, on the corner. For all his walking, he wasn't much warmer. A prowler car passed slowly, making a slight eddy in the fog that swirled and broke for a moment to show across the street a midget diner—"Jake and Jerry's." The Mac, first scanning the curb's edge, crossed the street and made for its welcoming light. He shut the fog outside and the warmth of the room received him.

He sat down close to the coffee urn. His hands and feet tingled and his toes wiggled gratefully inside the damp shoes. The waiter looked him over and waited for The Mac to show his nickel before he filled the order. The coffee was steaming, fragrant, and The Mac gulped it eagerly, too eagerly. The first swallow made him blink and straighten as it burned its way down. He poured some into his saucer. Lord, it was good! The warmth inside and the warmth outside spread over his body. In a haze of contentment, he surveyed his companions.

Down at the far end of the counter, near the door, was a girl in a
green dress, velvet, with little sparkling buttons. A black cape lay about her shoulders and there were two ragged gardenias in her hair. She was talking to a rather wilted White Tie beside her.

"Come on, Larry. Drink it up!"
"No. Don' wan' 'ny coffec."
"Drink it just the same. It'll be good for you."
"Don' wan' it. Won' drink it. Here! You drink it, honey." He pushed the cup toward her suddenly and the contents leapt gaily over the side and into the lap of the green dress.
"Ohhh! Now look what you've done!"
"Don't you 'honey' me!"
"Awww h'Nancy, don' scol' me. Lemme help! He reached for a napkin, knocking over salt, sugar, and a glass of water.
"No, Larry! Sit still!"
"Doncha love me 'ny more?" Nancy made no answer, busying herself with napkin and handkerchief in an effort to remove the spot. Unheeded, the drunk subsided into mutterings and sniffles.

The old man seated beside the White-Tie was oblivious to everyone else. He was reading, dunking a doughnut the while and conveying it mechanically to his mouth, careless of adding a few more spots to an already generously spattered coat. He made curious sucking noises and swallowed in great gulps. The Mac shrugged; another dope without teeth.

To the left of Toothless, was a Four-Eyes. Between bites of a ham sandwich he was poring over a racing-form, and figuring industriously on the scratch-pad beside him. Occasionally, he paused to rub the brown hair left exposed by the gray felt that clung precariously to the back of his head. As The Mac watched, matters seemed to grow complicated; he bent over the form. The ham sandwich, forgotten for the moment where it balanced on the edge of the coffee cup, sank into the coffee, and lay there, half-immersed, soaking luxuriously. The man scribbled furiously, then sat back and reached for his sandwich. Still absorbed in his figures, he didn't notice its liquid condition till it was in his mouth. He withdrew it slowly and looked at it, sighed and put it on his plate.

"Hey! Jerry! Bring me another ham san and s'more coffee!"

The Mac eyed the discarded sandwich. Half of it was still good. He ventured a remark:
"How're they running?" The man turned and stared.
"Oh, I break about even." Just then the waiter returned.
"How've y'doped it?"

They bent over the racing form and Four-Eyes showed Jerry his figures. While their backs were turned, The Mac annexed the discarded sandwich and stuffed it in his pocket for future consumption.

Over in the corner, Larry had pushed aside the coffee cup and was sobbing gently, his head on the table. Nancy eyed him helplessly and took out her compact. She removed the melancholy gardenias and
smoothed her hair, twisting and fluffing her curls. Then she called to Jerry:
"Where may I telephone?"
He indicated a little table just behind The Mac. The girl came over, dialed a number quickly and waited, frowning at her shoes.
"Hello? Weeks? This is Miss White. Mr. Laurence is more than usually non compos mentis. Ummm? He's drunk! Please take a taxi down here and drive him home. His car's parked half-way up the sidewalk before 'Murphy's.' You'll find him on the counter at 'Jake and Jerry's.' Yes. And oh, Weeks—when Mr. Laurence recovers his faculties, you may tell him I feel I can't afford him any longer. Yes. That's all. Good-night, Weeks."

In his corner, the drunk had wept himself to sleep. His hat, once perched jauntily on one ear, had fallen to the floor beside him. Miss White sighed and dialed for a taxi.

At the counter, old Toothless reached for another doughnut and The Mac's stomach contracted. What he could do to that doughnut! He looked at his cup—about three gulps left—he sipped slowly. With care it should last half an hour. What was that Four-Eyes was saying?
"Yeah. 'Bluenose' in the Fourth. Oh, he's sure. Besides, I got a tip from a nigger woman that hangs around down there. 'Huh?"' Huh nothing! Say, she knows more about horses than Al Vanderbilt. Saturd'y, I stood around and watched her pick 'em and darned if she wasn't right every time."
"'Yeah? That was just once!"
"'S good enough for me. I'm willing to chance five on it."
"Ahhh, yer crazy!"
"Say—"
"'Bluenose.' In the Fourth. And The Mac without a penny, to say nothing of five bucks. Hock? Nope, nothing he had was good for five bucks. He took a sip of coffee. Le'see now, there must be some way. He put his head down on the counter, the better to think, to think—to— The Mac was asleep.

The girl surveyed them. The drunk; Toothless; the waiter and Four-Eyes conversing in earnest mutters, The disreputable Mac—. She sighed and closed her eyes for a minute or two...

"Somebody here call a cab?"
A cab? The words echoed dimly in her consciousness. A cab?
"Oh. I did." She sat up and reassured the inquiring carrot-top poked around the door, paid the check and left.

The jangle of the cash register woke The Mac in time to see her disappear outside into the fog and the boy after her. He blinked around. The noise had evidently disturbed the drunk, too. He sat up, muttered, waved his arms and fell back on the counter. The Mac watched him idly. What a mess! Collar rumpled, hair straggling, his coat half-way up his ba—. The Mac blinked and looked again. Was there something sticking out of that hip pocket? The tip of a piece of paper? Green and white paper? Did they see it, too? He glanced at Jerry quickly. He and Four-Eyes were still talking, heads together. The Mac stole another glance
at the drunk. There WAS something. He reached for his hat and the coffee cup caught his eye; there was still some left. He tasted it and put it down unfinished. Stone cold!

Four-Eyes and Jerry were studying the dope sheet. Toothless read on. The man slid off the stool and sidled toward the door. The hat on the floor caught his eye. Stooing for it, his hand brushed the drunk. Straightening, he glanced at the hat-size—Same as his. Nice silk, too... hmmm... He looked around to meet Jerry's eyes. The hat returned to its former perch on the White-Tie's ear. The Mac moved toward the door which opened before him to admit a dapper little man in black.

"Ahem. Oh, there you are, Mr. Laurence! I say, Mr. Laurence——"

Clammy, dripping, the fog closed around The Mac. He turned up his collar. It was dry and warm about his ears. His right hand, endeavoring to enter its pocket, encountered the sandwich. Munching, he wended his way toward Broadway. His left hand, warm in its pocket, caressed a worn piece of paper, engraved in green and white.

"Bluenose." In the Fourth.

A REFLECTION

By Mary Emily Smith

Fool! A thousand scathing epithets I hurl at you.
You said you were invulnerable, strong
Against the wiles of men, but you were wrong—
O worthless male has pierced your armor through.
O image in the mirror, to think that I am you!
DEATH OF THE BUGLER'S BROTHER

By Everett S. Coffin, Jr.

When Jim Monroe was killed, shot through the head,
The war was nearly new, and the mounds
Over the sudden dead were unhealed wounds
In the earth's frozen breast. A somber form,
Shivering, symbolic, cold, murmured a phrase
Of current pagan rite over the simple box
Which was the final resting place
Of one more bit of disinherited clay.

The figures passed in the swift burial march,
For Jim Monroe, a number only, one of many
To answer when his country called for men
For her defense, Jim Monroe would receive
A separate honor, Taps, played by his brother.
Over the hill John Monroe waited the word
To bury his brother with the bugle note.
All was still except the distant rumble
Of hungry, restless guns, and the wind
Which laughs unseen among bare limbs
Of stark, shell-shattered trees. All wait,
Except the already dead who do not care,
For those cold notes which whisper, "Peace at last."

"Day is done—"

The listeners chill
At the first screaming note ripped from the horn.
Into that cry, harsh and overdrawn,
Went all resentment, fury, hate, and bitterness
Which can be born into a brother's heart
By legal murder and an unjust death,
Through state stupidity and human greed.

"Gone the sun—"

More quietly through the dusk
The slow notes move, a tender slow caress,
Love from a bleeding heart which had been mute
So long, for brothers do not show their depths
Of feeling; and John, who loved all beauty,
And was so full of poetry and song,
Was stilled by fear of ridicule and laughter.
"From the lake,
From the hill,
From the sky—"
Each tone sounds slowly out, a bitter gall
Drained to the last sharp drop of human anguish
By a soul torn in the throes of crucifixion.
Each tone a cry for a mother's sheltering arms
By a small child, lost, alone, afraid.
Each tone a cry to an unhearing heaven,
"My God, my God, why am I here forsaken?"

"All is—"
Silence grips the field in sudden calm;
All nature chokes in one sharp quiet sob.
Slowly over the hill comes John Monroe
Walking as in a dream. Into the trench
He drops his horn, and not lifting his head,
Passes over the hill and out of sight.
The priest coughs once, then hurriedly moves on.

Jim and John Monroe were as unlike
As day and night, though of so near an age.
Jim loved life and laughter and his friends,
And sang of his contentment with his lot.
John was little known and little liked
Except by those who took the time to pierce
His sultry armor. He was sullen, silent,
Except to those who saw that underneath
There burned a flame of love for truth and right,
Of hate for cruelty and avarice and lust
And ugliness. He dreamed a poet's dream
Of human betterment and universal love.
Unskilled, except in words which he would use
For man's enlightenment, he knew he was ground down
To resentful silence by the power of greed
Which he dreamed was his destiny to overthrow.

Jim it was who hurried to join up
When cries of "For defense" were in the air.
John had gone along because it was
A way to prove that he was not a coward.
Better to join and be called brave
Than fight almost alone against the unholy lust
And murder sanctified by holy fools
Who swore there was a God in heaven above,
To love the state and worthy citizen
Who took a gun and marched in savage hate
Against His children who in another land
Had been fed lies by the same devilish knaves,
Until they also took the sword and gun
Against their fellow men. Better to join
And die and lie forgotten, than live
To hear the jeers and taunts of the poor fools
To whom he had tried to show the wickedness
And lack of Christian love and brotherhood
In the state for which they blindly gave their lives.

So John had joined. He was not one of those
Who stood, like ancient heroes in the books
He'd read so long ago but had forgot,
Who stood alone in darkness through the night
Surrounded by his foes, and there steadfast
Remained to fight the evils and the wrongs
Which he with clearer vision saw and taught
Against until he died, unhonored but unashamed.
I guess you knew I loved you, though I couldn't show it.

John, walking blindly from the new-filled grave,
Bowed by his grief, his eyes so full of tears
That he did not know where or care how far
He stumbled, cursed man and blasphemed God.
Rage surged through his brain and gripped his heart
In such a clasp as nearly stopped its beating.
Blindly his footsteps beat the earth as though
He would, with whirlwind power, destroy the world
So full of bitterness and hate. What good
Are words, poetic lines, against the flood
Of lies and flatteries which drown the people,
But which the people love? Half mad, he thought,
And clenched his fists until the pain had stopped
His bitter musing. He held his opened hands,
Amazed, before him; he stared and saw the palms
Torn with bleeding wounds, the hands of Christ
When He was carried down from Calvary.

He sank down where he was upon the ground
And cried, sobbed with choking breath. He clutched
The earth with fragile poet hands until he slept,
In a small wood sheltered from the wind.
And while he slept he dreamed. He was a boy
Again and Jim was there, in Spring. It was the year
They had spent on the farm. How Jim had loved
To drive the team, to milk the cows which stood
At night awaiting patiently the ministration
Of human hands. How proud Jim was when he
had fixed the motor of the pump down by the spring
which drew the water into the reservoir.
How they had fought for a chance to work the churn.
Then it was high school where Jim had made
the football team, was president of his class,
while John wrote poetry and worried over Virgil.
Jim had been called "most likely to succeed."
Now he was dead. John, startled, woke. He knew
he had heard Jim's voice which called, "Hey, John,
Sleepy, wake up or you'll be late for class."
"Jim," he cried, "Jim, come here. You know—
I guess you knew I loved you, though I couldn't show it.
Men don't speak of sentimental things.
Jim, Jim, do you hear?" Only the moan
of wind through barren trees. "Jim, Jim," he sobbed,
"Answer, tell me you are not dead. You can't
have died so soon and left me here alone.
I am afraid to be alone." He tried to rise,
Stumbled and fell. "My Jim, My Jim," he cried.
But soon he slept, dreaming of friends and home.
He dreamed until the God Whom he had loved
gathered him up and mended his broken heart.
HARLES HOLDEN rang the bell of his nieces' apartment and waited for the footsteps on the other side of the door to approach and pause, and for their owner to open it.

It was Jean. "Uncle Charles!" she said affectionately, and took his hand. He kissed her on the cheek. "It's good to see you again," he said, and thought privately that she looked a little peaked.

"Claire is in the living room," she told him, taking his arm and walking toward the door. She said very softly, near to his ear, "I'm terribly worried about her, Uncle Charles. Terribly."

Even so, he was not prepared for Claire. She was sitting by the window in a wicker chair, her shoulders hunched up, her body still and listening. She half-turned as they came into the room, and he saw her face was white, with the skin drawn taut over the cheek bones and jaw, and that her long dark eyes seemed hot and liquid.

He said casually, "Hello, Claire, my dear," but he did not kiss her. She relaxed a little. "Well, Uncle Charles, it's been quite a while."

He seated himself on the edge of the wicker chaise longue—the room was not large enough to hold more than four pieces of furniture—before he answered. "Almost a year." He turned toward Jean, who had curled up on the little footstool. "But what have I been hearing about you? A wedding—? And when's it to be?"

Jean said, flushing a bit, "Why, we've postponed it. John's gone to San Francisco, and now we're being married in the fall."

"Ah—a pity you couldn't have been married before he went."

"Oh—Jean began, but Claire interrupted almost harshly. "That was their plan, and then, because of me, Jean . . . ."

Jean protested. "But it was better this way. You see, I didn't have my trousseau, or—"

Charles said, "Have you been ill, Claire?"

She turned her face away and stared out the window. Jean said hesitantly, "Claire has had a very . . . strange . . . and very upsetting experience." She looked up at her older sister. "Claire dear, may I tell him about it?" Claire's head gave an almost imperceptible nod.

"It was almost a week ago—last Thursday morning—early. We sleep in there, you know, in twin beds. The phone's in here." She nodded toward the little wicker table that held the telephone. "It was about one in the morning when we heard it ringing. It rather frightened me. I thought it might be from home—that someone was sick or something. I sat up and
was fumbling with the covers when I realized that Claire had already

gotten up. I could hear her in the next room. She took off the receiver

and the ringing stopped. She said, 'Hello,' and after a minute, sharply,

'Who is this?' Then she said, 'Oh, no ... no ...' It seemed to me she

almost screamed that, and then I heard the receiver drop. I was out of

bed by that time, and I ran into the next room and turned on the light.

Claire was lying on the floor. She had fainted . . ."

Charles had leaned forward and was looking into Jean's face. "But

what had happened?" he asked.

Claire looked up suddenly. Her eyes were burning. "Let me tell him,"
she said in a husky voice. She drew a deep breath and then began. "When

I picked up the receiver I said, 'Hello,' and a voice answered, 'Hello.'

It was ..." she stopped speaking for an instant, and her face was tense

with horror as she seemed to be reliving the scene, hearing again that

voice, "... it was ... my own voice."

She closed her eyes. The room was still. Then she went on. "'I said,

'Who is this?' The voice answered, 'This is Claire Holden.' I said, 'Oh,

no ... no,' and the voice—my voice—repeated firmly, 'This is Claire—.'

I think I fainted then."

She was silent again, and for a moment, Charles shared her horror,

until his mind began to struggle for a rational explanation.

"But how did you know it was your own voice?" he asked. "You've

never heard it. None of us would recognize his voice over the wire. But

you were scarcely awake, and when the voice said, 'This is Claire,' you

immediately took it for granted it was your own voice. Psychologically

you were ready to believe it was your voice."

Claire shook her head. "I don't know how I knew it, but I did. With

the first word—'Hello'—I knew. And I was not half asleep. The ringing

didn't wake me. I had been lying in the dark, wide awake, for at least an

hour. I wasn't the least bit sleepy. I seemed to be waiting for something

—something to happen. "When the phone rang, I wasn't even surprised.

I seemed to have been waiting for it. My mind was clear—clear and

reasonable when I picked up that receiver." She looked straight at her

uncle, and he could see she was frightened. "Sometimes I'm afraid I'm

going mad—and sometimes I hope I am, and that it's not something

... worse."

Again Charles felt that almost pleasurable thrill of horror, but he said,

"Nonsense, my dear. I'm afraid someone's been playing a joke on you.

Jean said, "But who would play such a cruel joke! And for what

reason!"

"There could be a number of reasons. Perhaps they didn't realize what

the effect of such a joke would be. Or perhaps it was done with deliberate

cruelty—petty racketeers, extortionists. In that case we must be very

careful. If you receive another phone call——"

At this Claire's body seemed to tighten. Jean said hurriedly, "Oh,

I'm sure there won't be another. I think it was a mistake, or a coincidence

of some kind. Probably some day we shall find the explanation, and it

will be a very simple one. Don't you think so, Uncle Charles?"

Charles nodded. "And we'll all feel a little silly for having worried
so about it."

But Claire refused to be reassured. "I can't forget it. I can never forget that voice ... that ..." She shook her head wordlessly.

However, Charles felt that the subject was closed. He said determinedly, "But you've heard nothing of my trip!"

Jean looked up with an effort to be cheerful that he found touching. "Tell us—tell us everything you did. How was England—and the Coronation?"

"Ah, the Coronation—" he began.

When he said he must go, Jean walked with him to the door. As she handed him his hat, he asked in a low voice, "Then the wedding is really off for now?"

She nodded. "We were to have been married Sunday noon and left that night for San Francisco. But—you can see—I couldn't leave Claire."

Charles said, "About Claire. I don't think there is anything really to worry about. She looks run down and tired is all. I'll send my doctor around to check up on her."

Jean kissed him and said in a louder voice, for Claire's benefit, "Goodbye, Uncle Charles. You're a dear. But don't forget about us. Come to dinner some evening next week."

At first after he had left their apartment he felt oppressed with that same sense of something unreasonable and strange and not entirely unpleasant that he had known while Claire was telling her story. But a brisk walk across town to his own place, with the afternoon sun warm on his back and a light June breeze giving a spring to his walk, and he began to see the thing in a better perspective.

After all, there must be an explanation. Unless Claire actually was losing her mind—! and remembering her taut face and hot eyes this was not difficult to believe. Yet the whole thing had not been within Claire's imagination. Jean had heard the telephone ring too—and she had heard Claire answer it.

As for his other explanations—that someone was playing a joke on them, or trying to extort money—they were hardly reasonable. How could whoever have called been sure Claire would answer and not Jean? And as for money; well—they had none.

What was Claire's own explanation? She had said, "Sometimes I'm afraid I'm going mad—and sometimes I hope I am, and that it's not something worse." What—worse? What did she fear, or pretend to fear?

Pretend, yes. That was it. There was the explanation—simple and damnable, and entirely typical of both girls. And the further he walked, the more reasons he found to believe in it.

Claire was a strange girl. He had always admitted quite frankly to himself that he did not like her. She was too much like her mother—moody, brooding, selfish—or if not selfish, egocentric. But he had always tolerated her because she loved Jean so intensely. He loved Jean himself—she seemed almost like his own daughter—though his love was more selfless. But it might be her very love for her sister that had caused the trouble. For if she loved Jean, conversely she would not like Jean's fiancee, who proposed to take her away. And so, he imagined, she would
have done almost anything to stop—or postpone—her sister's marriage. She could do that by making Jean afraid to leave—afraid of something unknown and indefinite.

And so, perhaps she had not planned it. Perhaps the 'phone had rung early that Thursday morning and she had answered it. And perhaps it had been a wrong number, or the other party had already hung up. She had known Jean was listening, and suddenly this plan came to her. Perhaps she hadn't decided until later what she would hear over the wire: but she knew it must be something indefinite and terrifying. She knew too that if she postponed the wedding one day it would be postponed for months. And so she had simply said, "Oh, no . . . no," screamed, and fainted.

Her appearance today? That was only consistent with her whole performance. If she were capable of such a hoax, she was capable of convincing herself it had actually happened, and reacting accordingly.

"But I won't forget," he told himself. "I'll watch—for Jean's sake.

I suspect that gradually they'll both forget about the 'mystery' . . . until next fall," he went on, after a moment's thought. "I wouldn't be surprised if then we had a recurrence of the strange telephone voice."

As he had promised, Charles sent his doctor to examine Claire. His report had been that her general resistance was low and that she was emotionally unstable. He suspected a slight hyper-activity of the thyroid gland. He told Charles, "The girl needs rest, a routine program of eating and sleeping, of course, and perhaps change. But more fundamentally, she needs to be relieved of some worry—or fear—that's bothering her.
Finances, perhaps, or an unfortunate love affair."
Charles said, "There's nothing special. She seems to worry about nothing—or something that doesn't bother anyone else."

"Precisely!" the doctor exclaimed. "It's a vicious circle. She worries because she is emotionally unstable, and her instability is increased by worry. Rest and change will help."
Charles, feeling—with some little irritation and a great deal of complacency—that he was almost a family man, arranged for his nieces to spend their two weeks vacation at his hunting lodge. When they returned to town, Claire had lost her attitude of tense listening. She made no allusion to her experience, and though she still started every time she heard the 'phone ring, Charles privately thought she was a little self-conscious about it. Jean was much happier; she was already making plans for a fall wedding. Life was progressing smoothly and normally again.

And yet, a week after their return, something happened which indicated that not one of them had really forgotten—that the effect of everydayness was only synthetic. It was the last of July, and the city was sticky with heat. John was coming east in a month. It had been six weeks since Claire had heard the telephone voice. On Friday evening Charles was at the apartment to take his two nieces to dinner. Jean met him at the door. She wore a dinner gown of soft turquoise blue, and Charles thought he had never seen her so lovely.

"'Claire's still dressing," she said. "She had to stay a little late at the office. But she'll be ready soon."
They went into the living room and sat down. There was a ring of the door bell. Jean went through the little hall to answer it. In a moment she was back, a florist's box in her hand. She opened it, and pushed aside the tissue paper. She lifted out three white camillias. "How lovely they are," she said. She looked up at her uncle and smiled. "From you, Uncle Charles?"

He shook his head regretfully, and she went on: "Oh, here's a card." She opened the envelope. "Why . . . it's from Claire." She did not look up again, and Charles felt that her eyes were filled with tears. "Poor Claire—" she said briefly. She fastened the flowers at her throat, and when her sister came out of her room Jean went up to her and kissed her on the cheek.

"Thank you, dear," she said.
Claire drew back, surprised. "For what?" Charles turned quickly and looked at her.
Jean pointed to her flowers. "For these—"
"But I—I didn't send them. They must be from Uncle Charles."
He thought, "What is her trick this time—?" He said pleasantly, "We found your card."
He saw her stiffen. "My card . . . ?" she said. "Let me see it."
Jean picked up the envelope from the little telephone table and handed it to her sister. "Here it is."
Claire glanced at the card, as though she already knew what she should see there. "I didn't write this," she said in a dead voice. Charles thought how well she did it—how restrained was her tone, yet pregnant
"But it's your name—and your handwriting."

"It's my handwriting, but I didn't write it."

Charles said mildly, "Then who did?"

She did not answer, but stood staring down at the piece of white cardboard in her hand. The three were silent, and his simple words seemed to reverberate in the room.

Then Claire said sharply, "Yes, who . . . Who possesses my name—my voice—my handwriting—what horror . . . ?" She looked at them almost defiantly. Then she said, "I've heard it called—something—doppelanger." Charles felt the same thrill he would have at the end-of-the-second-act performance of a fine actress. And yet, what nonsense. Doppelanger! She'd been reading Poe.

But now, suddenly—pathetically—her defiance was deflated and she slumped against the door frame, and covering her face with her hands, began to cry bitterly, but without sound.

On his way home that night Charles thought again what a dammably clever and simple plan it was. Claire answers the 'phone and reports she heard her own voice. She buys her sister flowers, writes a card to accompany them, then denies having done either. And then she babbles German mysticism, trying to make them think she's being haunted by a ghostly doppelanger.

How simple!—how simple and how effective! If he could only do something—but what could he prove? He could only wait and watch, and hope that one day Claire would over-reach herself.

The next afternoon he received a telephone call from Jean.

"Uncle Charles?" she said. "I want to talk to you alone—you know, without . . . ? yes. Could I meet you for lunch? . . . I have a half hour . . . At twelve-thirty . . ."

As soon as they were seated at a corner table and had given their order she began, hesitantly, to speak. "Uncle Charles . . . I'm afraid . . . oh, how can I say it? . . . but Claire . . . she's losing her mind."

Her uncle said gravely, "If you think that's true, what can we do?"

"Take her away from here! She was so much better those two weeks we were in the mountains . . . you wouldn't know . . ."

He said, still gravely, "And where would we take her? To an institution?"

He heard Jean's shocked intake of breath. "No, no . . . I want to help her. I'll take care of her—if only you can find us some quiet place to stay. We have a little money, if you can lend us some . . . a year will be enough . . . ."

Charles was almost frightened to see how smoothly Calire's plan must be working. Then for an odd suspended moment, he felt detached from the whole affair, and he wondered, "What would happen if he didn't step in now . . . ?" But suddenly he became conscious of Jean's unhappiness, and her need for help, and he said:

"You know what that would mean—putting off your marriage for a year."

"It would mean more than that. I couldn't ask John to wait again.
It would be . . . the end."

"You would do that for Claire."

She looked him full in the face then, and said in a low voice, "If Claire goes mad . . . it's my fault . . . mine and John's."

He asked sharply, "Did Claire say that?"

She said, "Do you think we ever talk about it?"

"I didn't mean that, of course. But don't you think you're martyring yourself and John . . .?"

She interrupted him almost eagerly. "Claire hasn't wanted me to marry John. She always disliked him. She never said anything, and yet she was so strange when he was with me. And if he kissed me in front of her, she looked . . . almost sick . . ."

He spoke calmly. "Claire may be only tired. Certainly you are tired. I think it would be better if we did nothing decisive yet. I'll loan you the money, but stay in town for a week or two. Get plenty of sleep and rest—both of you. Before long you'll feel different."

Jean said in an emotionless voice, "All right, Uncle Charles. We'll stay for a while." Then she added intensely, "But we must go before John comes back—!"

They did as he had suggested. He visited them each evening, and within a few days he thought Jean was better already. But Claire was listless and without vitality. He supposed she would show no improvement until she got away entirely and took Jean with her. But he sent his doctor around for another examination.

"The girl is exhausted," he told Charles. "Physically and emotionally exhausted. As I told you before, she needs change—complete change, both of environment and companions."

"I've thought of sending her away. Her sister could go with her, or I could send someone else—"

The doctor said, "It would be better if you sent someone else. An acquaintance, but no more than that. She must forget about her old life and find something new."

The next day Charles made arrangements for the youngest McCarthy girl to go with Claire to California. She was a placid, cheerful girl, and he thought she would be good for Claire. He bought two railroad tickets and a drawing room for them, and wired to Santa Barbara for a cottage by the ocean. That afternoon he went to his nieces' apartment.

Claire was lying on the wicker chaise longue, dressed, but covered with a light afghan. Her face was pale, with purple half-circles smudged under her eyes. She spoke little, and after greeting her, Charles sat down beside her rather uncomfortably. Now that he had made all his arrangements, he hardly knew how to propose the trip. Finally he decided he would wait until he could see Jean alone.

Jean came in and sat down and the three of them talked of unimportant things as the afternoon disappeared and dusk fell in the room. Their voices grew gentler, and suddenly Jean said with surprise, "Why, she's asleep!" She bent over her sister. "It's almost the first she's slept in a week."

She turned to Charles. "Perhaps she's really better. Perhaps the
quiet and the rest have done her good after all." She went on in a low voice. "I'm going out in the kitchen and make some coffee and some sandwiches. Stay here with her and be beside her when she wakes up."

After she had left the room he sat there in the dark for what seemed a long while. He almost dropped off to sleep. Then Claire spoke, in a low clear voice that told him she had not been asleep for some time.

"Is Jean here?"

Charles said, "She's in the kitchen."

Claire said nothing more for a moment, and he wondered if he should speak. Then she said, "You've tried to help Jean, I know, Uncle Charles. But she's going to need your help more than ever soon. She'll have no one else."

Charles thought, "Does she mean she's going mad?" He said, "She'll still have you."

She said with a short laugh, "Oh, yes—she'll have . . . me." She went on almost wildly. "Me . . . or I . . . what am I . . . What will I become?"

He reached over and snapped on the light. She stopped speaking abruptly. Then she smiled. "Frightened, Uncle Charles?"

He leaned over and patted her arm, and almost snatched his hand away at the heat of her flesh. "The doctor must see her," he thought, and said, "I'm afraid you're not well, my dear." He started to rise, but she began speaking again.

"You think you can dispel all evils—all fears—with the light . . . don't you Uncle Charles. No matter what is in the shadows, here . . . here in the light you're safe. You're smug, Uncle Charles. You only believe what your common sense tells you to believe. But there are some shadows your common sense can't pierce. God help you—you and Jean—when the shadows engulf you."

He forced himself to smile, and felt easier. How well she did it. He could almost see why Jean was ready to throw away her life for her sister.

Claire said somberly, "If it were only dying . . . dying would be the simple way out. If death were the end . . . the end of me, of all the things about me I hate . . . but now death—my death—means distorting them, magnifying them . . . until they're monstrous."

She was looking beyond her, staring fixedly. She brought her eyes to his face. "Call Jean," she said. "I can't be alone. I can't stand it. I want her with me."

"Poor Jean," he thought. "She's the one who can't stand it—not much more of it, anyway."

He said, "I'll call her. But you must be quiet."

"Oh, I'll be quiet . . . I won't disturb you again, Uncle Charles."

He went to the kitchen. He felt relief at leaving Claire. Jean was just picking up a tray of sandwiches and coffee. He took it from her.

"I'll take this in. Does the next apartment have a 'phone?"

"Yes—why? Is—is anything wrong with Claire?"

"She has a slight fever," he said. "I'd like for Dr. Barnes to look at
her. But I'd rather she didn't hear you call him. It might excite her too much."

Jean nodded. "I'll only be a minute."

He started to carry the tray into the other room, then put it down. Claire was hardly in a condition for food. He went back to her. She was still lying very quietly on the chaise longue.

When she saw him she spoke sharply. "Where's Jean? I must see her. I must!"

"She'll be in in a moment," he said. "She'll be here."

"I've got to see her . . . talk to her . . . help her . . ." She looked at him for the first time with a desire for sympathy in her eyes. "I've tried, Uncle Charles. I've tried so hard—"

He thought to himself, "Yes, my girl, you have tried. And very nearly succeeded, too."

"I've said I won't die. I won't! Because as long as I'm alive . . ."

He only half heard her. "She's really ill, now," he thought,—this is delirium. She seems oddly horrified at the thought of death. But is it odd? We're all horrified at the thought . . . and yet—there's something almost unnatural . . ." As he was thinking he was listening for the sound of the kitchen door. Finally he heard it. Jean was back, and the doctor would be here soon.

Claire was listening too. "Do you hear them?" she said. "Footsteps. Footsteps."

He said soothingly, "It's only Jean."

"No . . . no. . . they're mine . . . outside. They're coming . . . I tried to tell you . . ." Suddenly she screamed.

Now Charles did hear footsteps—a woman's step—in the corridor outside the apartment. As Claire's scream died away, he heard the bell ring. Jean had heard her sister, had run toward the room. She stopped at the sound of the bell. "I—I'll get it," she said uncertainly, and turned toward the door. Suddenly she stopped. "Who is it?" she asked.

The person on the other side of the door spoke, in Claire's voice. "It's Claire, Jean."

Jean said, just as Claire had done, "Oh, no . . . no."

Charles thought, "What trick—what monstrous trick—is this . . ."

Was Claire trying to drive them both mad? How . . . ? What . . . ? He turned back toward Claire, as he heard her voice again, "Jean, Jean—it's Claire."

She was still on the chaise lounge. Her head rolled back and her face was in the shadow, but he could see her eyes were open—he caught their glint. "You devil!" he cried. "You devil! What have you done!"

He grabbed her shoulder and shook her furiously. Her body was limp. She made no sound. He knelt down then and put his head to her heart.

He stood up. Everything she had said now came tumbling into his head. He remembered that night she had said, "Doppelänger." She had tried to tell them. God! What was beyond that door?

Claire was dead.
NOR IRON BARS

By Muriel Fenerty

The rain-cloud enfolds us,
Its inverted bowl shutting out the world.
Rain falls silently, interminably,
Its thin-etched lines barely visible
Against the straggling ranks of tile
Toiling wearily up over the wet red roofs.
Sound is muffled,
And nothing moves save the protesting trees.
Then, as if o'er-turned by some giant hand,
The cloud lifts,
A mountain shoulders into view,
Life re-asserts itself in sound.

So melancholy wraps us round,
Self-pity paralyzing thought,
Till under the stress of living,
Tho world invades our gloom
And, willy-nilly,
We continue in our roles.
T was a good seat, right in the middle of the center section, the same place he always tried to get his pair. There were lots of people at the concert, and a good many were still milling in. He glanced sympathetically at the bedeviled ushers at whom ticket stubs were being thrust by a dozen hands. But the crowd made no difference to him now. In the old days he had always liked watching the thronging concert-goers. But now—What was the use of remembering how it USED to be? And yet, divorce! what a hideous word!—if it hadn't been for those abominable lawyers he would still have Peg, somehow, in spite of her dislike and lack of respect for him.

It used to be that Margaret would send him to their seats while she smoked a cigarette in the foyer. That had always made him nervous, for he knew that there were "No smoking" signs out there. But, Peg, of course, ignored them coolly; and the ushers were too busy to notice. But it always bothered him, because what if they HAD noticed her, and raised a row. One night he had dreamed that the ushers caught Peg smoking in the foyer and threw her down the iron fire escape. He would always remember her face. It was white and fear distorted. "Anton, help! Anton!" she was crying, as she crashed down the stairway. He had stood at the top landing and breathed joyously of the damp night air. She had wanted him. She had cried for help, his help. He had felt strong and invigorated. He was up-lifted, ennobled, and made a man—for the duration of that dream. Yes, he would always remember Peg's white, dream face, grotesquely vanishing the length of a cruel, black stairway.

Margaret often came in just before the second number on the program. It was like her to stand outside and smoke while everyone else was hurrying to get to their seats. She would march calmly down to their seats, and wade through from the aisle as if no one were in the way. That was how she looked at things. It never occurred to her that she might be in anyone's way; it was always a matter of her ignoring someone's annoyance to herself. Then Peg would stand for a moment in front of her seat, glance at the stage, and at last sit down.

Her breath always smelled acrid with Egyptian cigarette smoke, and he always noticed it when she leaned over to ask him what had been the first number. This had happened so often that invariably he associated the peculiar odor of those cigarettes with certain compositions—numerous Preludes, Bach Toccatas, Vivaldi Sonatas, some of Brahms. No matter where he heard any of these, or under what circumstances, that peculiar odor always manifested itself. He had come to take it for a matter of course that Bach and Brahms and certain Preludes should evoke the acrid smell of the Egyptian weed.
Tonight the violinist was beginning with Sarasate. Peg would never have come in to hear that! "Violinistic stuff," she would have scorned. But he thought it was wonderful. He liked Sarasate and Vivaldi and Viotti, too. He liked listening to their compositions. His ambition was to hear all of the Viotti Concertos, not because he considered them all great music, but just because he wanted to hear them. But some were out of print, and he could not quite afford to gratify the whim of a collector. That was where he and Peg differed. She thought such desires extravagant, even when you could afford it. He thought it was silly to smoke Egyptian cigarettes, or at least to prefer them to first numbers. Yet somehow he had never convinced Peg of that. And there was the whole thing. He couldn’t help feeling she would be with him, if he could have convinced her that opening numbers were better than those abominable Nile weeds. He had never been able to convince her of anything. But... there was no use thinking about it. And besides, the violinist was coming on stage, and the house lights were going down.

There went his bow! He always got a thrill when the fiddler laid his bow to the strings. Perhaps it was the highest moment of anticipation. At heart he had always wanted to be a dilettante, that is, if a dilettante was one who got more pleasure out of anticipating than experiencing. Sometimes he thought dilettantism bordered upon hedonism, which he hated very much. But as for the dilettante, he had tried it, and found it could not be done with Bach. A good performance of Bach drew him to greater heights than the anticipation of it. Every time he listened to the Toccata and Fugue in D minor, or the English Suite, especially the Silver arrangement of the Toccata, he felt strong enough to convince Peg of anything. And for a while he did seem to assert himself more. But the invigorating harmonies grew dim within the ear, and the themes in the winding fugue got mixed, and he forgot how the last chords resolved. He knew it was some harmonic route only Bach could have unraveled and written down, but he himself could not recapture it. And when he heard again it all came back. Always that soaring and yet torn feeling rushed over him, strangely beloved and yet strangely dreaded. Of course, that didn’t make sense, but he understood, and he needn’t be clear when he talked to himself under his breath. Yet he would like to be a dilettante all right. There were all kinds of music he would rather think and talk about than listen to. There was Mussorgsky, and Debussy, and Stravinsky, and Faure and Ernest Bloch, and Svendson, and others—mostly considered somewhat peculiar. He found it hard to realize that in the early nineteenth century, and later too, Beethoven was a Faure and a Bloch. Or was the analogy wrong?

But there was the end of the Sarasate! He hadn’t listened at all well. How could he when Peg was still in the foyer smoking those—but how stupid he was. She wasn’t there any more. That was not now, but past—a little peculiar how hard it was to keep them separate. But then she wouldn’t be in. . . . There were lots of people fanning themselves with their programs and leaning to each side to talk. Some were hurrying back to their seats, while others were being admitted late. But he had no one to wait for, and here was the artist, so it didn’t make much difference...
HEN I first brought the Little Guy into the clubhouse office, the Hon. J. B. Williams, owner and boss of the "Billowing Boilers," looked at me and in a kind of a tired voice croaked out:

"Joe" (that's me, Joseph P. Padalowa), he sez, "you may be the ace talent scout in football but this time I am afraid you erred. In other, and simpler, words, you have picked a lemon."

And lookin' the Little Guy over I guess it did seem as if I had wasted my time in travelin' all the way to Pineville, Mont., just to get a little one hundred thirty-nine pound football player for pro ball. But bein' the expert I am (I had heard this little guy could kick a football pretty fair) I pass up no bets and I grab a sleeper to the Pineville, Mont., to take a gander at him.

Well, I ask some of the natives of Pineville, Mont., if they know the Little Guy, whose name was Arthur Archibald Barton. They sez that they know no individual of their fair community by that appellation. Also they say that the only Barton in town is "Kick" Barton and that if I wanted to find him I could by looking behind the big red barn. Well, I started lookin' for a red barn but to no avail. At last a local citizen informs me of the locality of the red barn and after walking some two miles I arrive just in time to see a football clear a crude model of some football goalposts. I look around to see who boots the ball over like this and I see the Little Guy about 50 yards from the posts. He picks up another ball and drop-kicks as beautiful a goal from the place where he stood as I ever hope to see.

After seeing this private exhibition of really hot kicking, I do not hesitate to ask him if he is interested in pro ball. He says he is and what is more he has a nice plan for winning the league championship for us. Which is funny, as we are in the cellar three years. Yet here is the boss, not even willing to hear it.

"But J. B.," I sez, "listen to his proposition."

"No, no, NO!" squawks J. B. and from the look on his facial area I do not relish the idea of further argument.

"You are wrong," said a voice from the doorway. We turned to see who spoke.

"You are 100 percent wrong," said another voice from behind the boss' back. He spun around on his chair. Nobody was there.

"Am I going screwy, or did I hear someone say something behind me?" asks J. B.
"You're screwy," said a muffled voice coming from the closet. The boss rushed over to the closet and practically ripped the handle off the door as he pulled it open. It was empty.

"Mr. Williams," put in the Little Guy, "those voices you heard was me. I'm a ventriloquist.

The boss gets sore. "Listen, I am paying you to find talent for football—not for an amachoor hour." And then he crams his hat on his head and starts to leave.

"Mr. Williams, I don't want you to pay me a cent for playing football for your team unless we win the championship," sez the Little Guy.

"Huh? What's that?" asks the boss, too surprised to believe that someone would dare mention the word championship when speaking of our team.

"I mean it, Mr. Williams. If we do not win the title you pay me no dough."

"Justa minute—just supposing we should win. How much do I gotta pay you?"

"$10,000," was the reply.

"$10,000!" sez the boss, his eyes poppin', and his mouth hung open.

"You get $25,000 if you win the title," reminds the Little Guy.

"Yeah," adds the boss. "And how I'd like to grab the flag. I'd get even for them dirty tricks. There is the time the Redlegs tried to derail our train and the Blasters sent us some doped coffee and the time the Maroon club got us socko the night before we played them and—" His eyes gleam.

The Little Guy is signed.

You know the story of our first games. We win them all with plenty to spare before the sports writers know we are in the league. Heck not braggin' or anything I'll just show you a clipping out of a local paper here at Chi, Ill.

'This writer was very much surprised at the showing J. B. Williams' Billowing Boilers made last night under the arcs. Let me tell you, my friends, in this "Kick" Barton Mr. Williams has the greatest kicker in the game. The sensational thing about Barton is that he weighs but 139 pounds! His three dropkicks scoring nine points beat the Blasters last night.

"Aiding in the Boiler victory were three penalties. Strange, but they were all for the same reason—substitutes talking before the first play after their arrival in the game. All penalties came when the Blasters were in scoring territory, once on the 15, once on the 7, and again on the 8-yard line. After each 15-yard penalty the Blasters' attack bogged and the Boilers took command. What this writer cannot understand is why the subs vigorously denied having spoken."

Yep, you're smarter than the fans. The Little Guy not only kicked field goals but he let his ventriloquism go wild. Mister, it was a knockout seeing them 250-pound linemen sputter after hearing themselves talk before plays. Our boys were in on the gag by now and we almost goes raving mad with delight on one play when the Blasters tried a razzle-dazzle. They have the quarter running around barking signals and the fullback all of a sudden starts yelling signals and those dumb linemen just turns around and gawk!
Our whole line almost fell over they was laughin' so hard and poor Bull Mojkovski had to be carried off the field when his cracked rib comes loose again. Baby, the Little Guy had 'em fooled first, place, and show.

And win the league championship we did! Undefeated! But all the papers wrote about was our "Kick" Barton and how his expert kicking won us the championship. It was most of a certainty the truth. Barton got his $10,000 and everybody is happy until the playoff games between the two leagues. The count is one up, and 80,000 customers troop in the stadium to see the classic.

The Little Guy kicks a goal and we're ahead 3-0 for three quarters. Boy, those Titans are tough, and 3 points look good to us. With just a coupla seconds left to go, and the game and world championship in the bag, we are feeling plenty good. The Titans are backed down to their 7-yard marker. We're a happy, hilarious gang of ball players, mister, when from the sidelines a substitute comes in for the Titans.

As the sub reports to the ref, and hands him the customary card, the Little Guy waves at me kinda laughin' like and I know he is going to pull the old "substitute talking" trick. Ha, ha, we sez, up to his old tricks. Top it all off with some tricky ventriloquism! Ha, ha. We're all half hysterical, even the boss, and he's got his arms around some of the bench warmers he's so happy.

I am waiting for the ref to move the ball because the Titans talk and I expects the old pigskin to rest on the one-yard marker. But my face freezes. The ref walks the other way.

Yep, you guessed it. The Titans catch on at last. Their boss is bringing out a lot of signed papers. After some palavering with the refs, the ball is placed in the middle of the field and the Titans run right through us for a score and the world championship. The Little Guy's dummy is straight goods. He is certified deaf and dumb.
SEPTEMBER SCENE

By Mu Li

The languid trees stir gently
With the breathing of the drowsing earth.
Somnolent in the heat that conjures Mexico,
The Aztec broods,
Stares south beyond the hills
To Papantla,
To Tenochtitlan.
Stares and dreams,
Alien in an alien clime,
Of home and the warm bright skies.

Students gaze, uncomprehending,
On their chosen totem,
Call him "Father of the Campus,"
"Warrior," "Mascot,"
Deck him with their trophies,
Rejoice in his approval . . .
Stolid, unheeding,
The Heron's son—
Twice captive—
Looks south to Mexico.
N the edge of the platform with his legs dangling above the shining steel track sat Albion Cartwright dressed in faded overalls. Close beside him lay his dog. As Mr. Wallace, the agent of the Beauville depot, tilted back his visor to look at the clock, he pushed his spider wheeled baggage truck across the platform; then he scowled at Albion and wondered why his step-mother didn't dress him better. People said that he was a victim of epileptic attacks. Mr. Futty said he once had a fit in his Variety Store. Albion no longer went to school because the parents objected to having their children in the same room with him. People said Mrs. Cartwright could really afford a special teacher for him. For two weeks Albion had made a nuisance of himself by meeting every train. "Stand away from the track," the agent spoke roughly. The boy got to his feet and moved over against the station, his dog following close behind him.

Several of the patriarchs of the village were already sitting on the iron bench waiting for the train. When Albion heard the sound of rubber tires crunching on the gravel, he turned to see a car that stopped with a lurch. It flashed the prosperity of Mrs. Bachelder who stepped out and tapped up the ramp on high heels. When two lively little boys sighted the train in the distance, they danced about like birds on the tracks, laughing loudly at the agent who tried to make them climb on the platform. Albion stood looking dully toward the approaching train; his heart was pounding with excitement; the muscles of his face twitched, he mussed his hands through his hair. When the boys' sharp eyes saw Albion's action, they jeered at him. Mrs. Bachelder turned away to ignore their jeering. But everyone forgot Albion as the breathing engine glided past the depot. The boys ran along with the steaming front of the locomotive until it rolled past the edge of the platform. The brakes took hold and stopped the train with a slight jolt.

Albion paid little attention to Mrs. Leonard with her little Gracie who got off the train to be greeted loudly and enthusiastically by Mrs. Bachelder. The little boys ran back to this group but stood to one side to exchange timid "Hullos" with the little girl who pulled at the ruffles of her dress. "Look, mother," Gracie piped, "Albion's here to see us come home, too," but she was jerked away by the arm to the shining car.

Albion watched the agent at the baggage car. Several cardboard boxes were thrown on the baggage truck. Then came the bulging mail bag. A young freckled-faced man with red hair shouldered the bag, scrawled his name on a pad held for him by the agent, and clumped down
the ramp whistling noisily.

Albion and his dog followed the mail bag as it was carried along the main street. When it was taken into the diminutive post-office, he followed it with his eyes. He strained his ears to catch the feeble voice of the postmaster inside as he called out the daily mail. A tired looking woman with a simpering child hanging to her skirt pushed her way through the glass doors reading a newsless letter. Behind her strode a farmer with a package from a mail order house. When the postmaster's voice stopped Albion ventured in, leaving his dog outside.

The people and the bank of individual mail boxes and the cluttered bulletin board made the little room overcrowded. Through the lattice Albion saw the meek little postmaster sorting mail into pigeon holes. After ignoring the newcomer at the window for a moment, the man said, "Nothing for you, Albion."

"Nothing at all?" the boy asked anxiously. The postmaster crossed to the wicket and held out a bunch of letters spread like a fan. The boy scanned the names slowly. His name was not among them. "I'll be in for the afternoon mail," he said.

In disappointment he left the postoffice. His dog wagged her tail a couple of times in greeting to him. They wandered up the street together, protected from the midday heat by the cool green shade trees.

Sharp faced Mrs. Manville from her parlor window saw his take out a worn envelope from his shirt pocket. "He's expecting something in the mail all right," she said to herself. "Meets every mail bag."

He unfolded it to look at the heading of a big hospital in a nearby city. The body of the letter had been blurred and fuzzed by his frequently tracing out the words. He didn't read the letter as he had studied it out before. The surgeon of the hospital, whose unreadable signature appeared below, said in the letter that Albion's case was being considered and a hearing would be held. Nothing more. Albion had hoped that his last letter, which his friend the herb woman had written for him, would move the board to action; yet two weeks had brought no answer. He wanted to be like other people who could think without their heads throbbing with pain, who could have the excitement of fun without nervous exhaustion. There had been times when his head was clear; it was then that he knew how others felt. He was determined to try to win that glorious freedom for himself. "If the doctors could only wipe away the fog," he thought.

Albion passed from the shaded sidewalk through an iron gate and along a path leading to a columned house overlooking a wide lawn. It was the most pretentious house in the town and was pointed out to visitors. In the garden beyond the arbor Albion saw his stepmother and her friends of the local woman's club gossiping over their monthly luncheon. At such times Mrs. Albright didn't want him around, so he went around on the other side of the house to his room in an old shed where his stepmother had moved him after his father's death. His dog trotted ahead of him into the shack to a blanket near the door where a litter of hungry puppies greeted her with little joyful barks. Albion heard the kitchen door slam. It was the cook who put a dish of food on his wash bench and threw a
pebble against the shack to attract his attention. Albion crossed to the bench eagerly and carried the dish back to the sunny doorway where he ate with a good appetite. Out of his dish he fed bits of meat to the mother dog who lay with her pups sucking at her side. A hen from a neighboring yard walked boldly to where Albion sat eating. She clucked her thanks loudly when acrust of bread was thrown to her. He could still hear the chattering of his mother’s guests. Sometimes his stepmother came to his room and asked if he wanted anything; but she frightened him and he stammered that he needed nothing.

After lunch Albion hung a gunny sack around his back and left the yard through a hole in the board fence. His dog stayed behind with her brood sleeping contentedly by her side. He made his way across the fields that were full of warm earthy smells, and the splashy color of flowers, stopping occasionally to dig up certain roots to put in his sack.

About mid afternoon he came upon a stagnant pool where he set on the bank to watch the cattails as they waved gently above the green unbroken surface of the slime. He took out the letter and stared moodily at the pond. The shadow of a person slid smoothly up behind him. It was an old woman who touched his shoulder, rousing him from his reverie. He looked up and smiled at the woman’s simple understanding face. After he had put the letter inside his shirt, they squatted together around his bag and sorted out the different kinds of roots into several bags that she carried. They talked over the values of the roots in quiet voices.

Back in the empty yard the chicken was scratching before the shed. Over the fence by the street a ball fell, nearly hitting the hen which quacked loudly and escaped in terror through the hole in the fence. The latch of the gate was raised gingerly and a mischievous looking little boy looked into the yard cautiously. Quickly he retrieved the ball; but seeing one of the puppies sleeping alone in the sunlight he threw a rock at it, laughing when it woke with a yelp. He picked up a stick and stuck the little dog which howled in pain, rolling on to its back with helpless legs in the air.

The mother dog, who was outside the yard, heard the howling of her pup and ran growling through the open gate and clamped her teeth on the little boy’s leg. He screamed with fright and pain. Bursting from the kitchen, the cook grabbed the broom at the door and beat off the growling dog, which slunk into a corner of the hut where her puppies were huddled.

"What’s the matter?" cried the stepmother as she hurried from the house.

"Albion’s dog bit him," the cook shrialled excitedly.

The step-mother’s face hardened. "I’ll get rid of that cur now. I’ll be held responsible for this." The boy was filling the air with his loud wailing.

"Look how the poor boy’s leg is bleeding." The boy pulled away from the cook to run limping from the yard toward his home crying in panic.

As he passed the butcher shop, the sheriff stopped him, "Why, my boy. What’s hapened to you?"

"Albion’s-dog-bit-me," sobbed the boy brokenly.

The sheriff bent his long body over to look at the blood running from the wound. "Go home and get your mother to call the doctor." The boy yelled louder. "I’ll settle with the dog." He patted the bulge on his hip.
"Come on," he said to a couple of loafers standing in front of the butcher's shop, "I've got to get rid of a mad dog. I might need help." He stalked determinedly down the street followed by Jim Towney and Jake Ransdall.

Albion was coming from the opposite direction and saw the three men go into his yard. With curiosity he hurried after them. As he pushed through the gate, he heard his stepmother say, "I don't care how it's done, only kill that dog. She's dangerous." She went in the house with the cook who closed the door behind them.

The sheriff advanced toward the shed with pistol drawn. "Watch out for her," he said, "She's mad and might bite."

Albion blocked the doorway realizing the man's intent, "You can't come in here. This is my room."

"Stand aside," ordered the sheriff. "I've got to shoot that dog."

"No, No. She's never done anyone harm."

"She just bit a boy. She's gone mad." The sheriff pulled Albion aside to the other men who held him by the arms. He struggled through the door to see the sheriff standing over the mother dog, whose pups were wriggling on her belly. She looked up at the man with pleading eyes. Albion begged for her life; tears were running down his cheeks. The pistol was leveled. The sharp report stabbed suddenly in the closeness of the room. Albion fell to the floor and sobbed with big gasping breaths. The three men left without a word.

Hours later he was worn with weeping. His head pounded with pain. He lay on the floor too weak to rise. When a pup nuzzled at his hand and whined, Albion rose unsteadily, taking the little dog in his arms. At the door he pulled on his shapeless hat and left the yard through the back fence to stagger with exhaustion across the back field. The whistle of the afternoon train wailed across the meadow echoing his hopeless despair.

In the late afternoon the cook came from the kitchen with Albion's supper, pausing to throw a pebble at the half-closed door. The long rays of the sun fell through the opening onto the dead dog's leg. Unheedingly the cook went back into the kitchen. A cat wandered boldly into the yard; she jumped on the bench to eat undisturbed from the dish.

Out in the field the old herb woman made her way quickly toward the cattails of the pond. She came upon the bank where Albion always sat. His battered felt hat lay there with the puupy peacefully sleeping in it. The slime on the surface of the pool was broken and reflected the blood of the sunset. In the woman's hand was a letter; its seal was unbroken. Sadly she looked at the unmoving reflection of the stiff unbending reeds in the space of open water.

After she stooped and rolled a rock away, she put the letter tenderly under it. The old woman took the pup in her arms. It whimpered at the coming evening chill as she started across the field into the dying red of the sunset.