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Content

Short Story

Michael Onwuemene, '65	The Albino	5
Grand Prize Winner; Division Winner		
Barb Koontz, '67	Jan	16
Sylvia Babcoke, '67	The Prophet	18

Poetry

Bob Phillips, '64	The Night Sea	9
Division Winner		
John Murch, '65	Haggard Hands	10
	Bisection	15
Kathleen MacLennan, '66	Subway	10
Larry Van Sickle, '67	Limerick	10
Jerry Larson, '67	Limerick	12
James Pearce, '64	Cycle	17
Ann English, '66	Devotion	17
	The Calling of an Isaiah	24
Kay Jones, '67	The Little Fellow Comes to Church	19
Roberta Larson, '67	Upon Reading "Ars Poetica"	20
Lan Green, '66	Sparkler	23

Essay

Marcia Eaton, '65	Life with a Physical Education Major	11
Division Winner		
Dean Coe, '65	Dialogue Between Two Vermonters	13
Elizabeth McDonald, '65	Lost Children	14
John Murch, '65	The Other Side of the Tombstone	21
	Solitude	22
Janet Delorey, '65	In Praise of Camping	23

Grand Prize Winner

Winner Short Story Division

THE ALBINO

I had waited for over an hour but yet Silvanus was not back. I was beginning to be worried because the post office was not very far from our house, and it would take less than thirty minutes to go to and fro. At this moment, however, my mother came in with Maggie. They were in the middle of a conversation, and it was my mother that was speaking.

"Do they ever get married?"

"Who knows?" replied Maggie, "but I guess that no one would marry them. It makes me shudder to think how cold their bodies must be."

"Whom are you talking about?" I asked, but my question was ignored and Maggie continued.

"It is his eyes and his skin that disgusted me most. Poor Enoch! he must be having a terrible time putting up with creatures like that. I wonder . . ."

At that I knew they were talking about albinos, because Enoch's daughter-in-law had consistently given birth to albinos. With this discovery, I switched my mind from their conversation back to Silvanus. He was in the middle of an interesting story about his girl friend when the wall clock chimed 11:45 and he hurried off so as to have his letter posted before noon. Since then I had waited anxiously to hear the rest of the story. In my restlessness I had walked outside several times and back again. Now I went out again. Five minutes later (I was about to go into the house) I saw him coming in the distance. I waited for him to come nearer, but before he could get down from the bicycle, I was already asking questions.

"What were you doing for so long in the post office?"

"I wasn't in the post office. I was hiding somewhere."

"Hiding? How come?"

"I almost ran into an albino that attends our grammar school. He was in the Armel's bus so that when the bus stopped at the post office he came down with the rest of the passengers. I was not

Michael Onwuemene is a junior English major from Issele-Uku in western Nigeria. He is a member of Lambda Iota Tau and Sigma Alpha Honors Society. He will be a senior at O.U. in the fall of 1964.

Mr. Onwuemene's name will be engraved on the trophy donated by Madtson's as the Grand Prize Winner of 1964.

Bob Phillips is a senior English major from New London, Connecticut. He is a member of Lambda Iota Tau and Sigma Alpha. Next fall he plans to attend Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

Marcia Eaton, a junior from Methuen, Massachusetts, is also an English major. She is a member of Lambda Iota Tau and SNEA, and served as treasurer of the Gamma Gamma Gamma social club during the past year.

far away and I think he would have seen me had the sun not been shining very brightly."

"Maybe he is the one Maggie and my mother were talking about."

"Probably. There were many people there."

"What would you have done had he seen you?"

"I just don't know. It would have been terrible."

"Why?"

"You know at school we all move together as friends and he would have expected me to treat him as a friend here. As a matter of fact, he told me that he would be going to Lagos during the holidays, and that if it is possible he would drop in at our house to see me. But that would be terrible. His cat-like eyes and his miserable skin are sufficiently disgusting to me but I am even worried more by what people may say and do."

"Is he gone now?"

"I hope so; the bus has left."

"But don't you know that if he really wants to see you he could break his journey for the meantime and continue it by the six o'clock?"

"That's true. It means then I should not go home until after six o'clock."

"Yes, that would be the safest thing to do, but where will you stay all afternoon? There is a meeting of the local leaders of the Nigerian Youth's Congress to be held in our house this afternoon, and besides, people are likely to direct him to our house if you are not in."

"Well, let's see — suppose the two of us go to our house and then keep my little brother on the lookout to warn us if he sees any white thing approaching?"

"I think that'll do."

"We will be in my room but if he comes, I'll hide under my bed and you'll come out to the parlour and begin to iron some of the shirts I left by the ironing board. You will then tell him that I am not in."

Our plan was thus set, although it was not specified exactly what I should say. When we got to their house, only Joseph, his younger brother was in. His parents had gone out. He instructed Joseph where to stay and what to do, and then we started to enjoy ourselves. First of all, we drank some palm wine. Then he completed the story he was telling me before he left for the post office. Then he recounted how he treated the teacher that he met at Ngozi's the previous night. He had heaped lots of insults on him by indirect methods and was surprised that the teacher did not lie in wait for him on his way home. Then our conversation turned to Monica because I had just seen one of her pictures in his photo album.

"Why does Monica give you so many of her photographs?" I asked.

"She says I am her husband."

"And you like that! Don't you fear her muscles; she could

strangle you if she means to do so."

"Never mind that. I know how to deal with her."

"Here's Victoria also. What's her picture doing here?"

"Don't mind her. She's the most foolish girl I've seen. She calls everybody brother and I wonder if she does not call her father that too. I . . ."

"Listen! a whistle."

We listened and it sounded again. That was the sign that Joseph was to give us. Immediately Silvanus rolled under his bed and let down his bed sheets to touch the floor. I went to the parlour and started ironing some shirts. Presently, two people appeared before the door — the albino and his guide. It was the guide that spoke.

"Is Silvanus in?"

"No, do you have any message for him?"

"This is his classmate. He is travelling from Onitsha to Lagos and would like to see him."

"How long can he wait?"

"My bus leaves at six o'clock," the albino answered.

"That's rather unfortunate," I said. "He has gone to Asaba and will not be back until eight or nine o'clock. That's why I am here to help him iron his things. He will be leaving for Enugh before noon tomorrow."

At this point, the guide asked me if they could come in and rest for a little while because the sun was very hot.

"By all means," I answered.

Then they came in. The albino was looking very miserable. He reminded me of a local saying which says that when the sun shines brightly albinos begin to find a place to hide. I sympathized with him, however, because it was his devotion to his friend that prevented him from hiding. When they were seated, he opened his bag and brought out some letters.

"These are for Silvanus," he said. "They came after he had left for holidays and I brought them out for him."

"Put them on that table."

"Here's a bow tie also. I bought it two days ago when I bought mine. We had looked for them before the holidays but they were then out of stock, so I thought it might please him if I bought it for him."

"How about the price?"

"I'll settle that with him when we get back to school."

"O.K.," I replied as I took some ironed shirts into Silvanus' room.

"Is that Silvanus' room? Please see if you can get his needle for me. I wish to attach a button to my shirt before we leave."

"Are you talking to me?"

"Yes, see if you can get his needle for me."

"I doubt if he has a needle. At any rate I don't know where to look."

"Look in his mathematical set; he usually keeps it there."

As he said this, Silvanus lifted the sheet that was covering

him and shook his head. By this I understood that I should not give him the needle. So I went outside and told him that Silvanus had packed all his things into a locker in preparation for his travel and that the key was not with me. Then I suggested that if he had sufficient time he could buy a needle and thread from a small store near the bus station.

A few minutes later they left, and I waited until they were out of hearing range before calling Silvanus to come out. Then he bustled out from under the bed with the exclamation, "I am now back from Asaba!"

I was not inclined to make fun of the albino, so I did not respond to his exclamation in the way he was expecting. Rather, I told him that he had not dealt fairly with the albino.

"Was that why you would have kept him there attaching a button?" he asked.

"What's wrong with that?"

"You know that I did not want him in our house but as he came, he should be kept as short as possible. He shouldn't stay too long."

"Well, see the things he brought for you. They're on the table."

"Yes, I'll take care of them, but I'm not in a hurry."

Then he sat down on the floor while I pushed aside the ironing board. There was an unfinished shirt on it, but I was done with ironing. I sat on a chair and gazed blankly on the quadrangle of sunlight which had come upon the floor through the open door. As I thus gazed, I grew rigid and all moisture dried from the roof of my mouth because suddenly a shadow appeared in the quadrangle. I did not look up but somehow, something told me that it was the albino. There was silence for a moment longer but it was a highly charged silence. It was full of expectations, but I did not know for certain what I expected. Then it was broken by a voice.

"Silva . . ." but as he pronounced the first part of the name, the last part stuck in his throat. Then in quite a different voice, a voice that embodied betrayed friendship, the albino spoke again.

"I'm sorry, but I forgot my bus ticket on the table. Please can I come in and take it."

No one spoke. Then after a moment of silence, he walked to the table and with a trembling hand took the bus ticket as well as the bow tie. As he approached the door, his still trembling fingers slowly released the bow tie which then fell on the floor. I could not bear to look him in the eyes, but I knew somehow that tears were coming out of them. Then he was gone but the bow tie remained on the floor. Neither Silvanus nor I spoke for about ten minutes. Then I broke the silence and told him that I was going. He looked up and sighed but said nothing.

— Mike Onwuemene

Winner Poetry Division

THE NIGHT SEA

The sand stretched grey,
The water struck the shore,
The night was dark, yet live with the breath of gods,
Aeolean breaths that stirred the sea.
Endless was the view before me,
Endless in its darkness.
Yet from its surging waters shone the sea
Whitening with its froth, product of inner struggles;
Then dark again — eternal, endless water.
The darkness of the night joined the darkness of the waters
Becoming one — eternal, endless, void.

Strong was the surging of the sea
Breaking against the dusky sand,
Expendng itself in white splendor,
Then receding into obscure darkness.

The rushing waves returned
And broke against the shore,
Crashed! — sundered the silence of my mind.
Overwhelming my senses the sound continued,
Filling the silence with its pounding,
As a giant heartbeat of the earth
Assuring me of the life of God's creation.
But then as I noted the dark shroud of the night
It seemed the somber cadence of a drum
Reminding me that death is part of life.
The beat of life and the beat of death together
Crowding out my foolish thoughts of self
Brought me into the realm of the eternal —
for eternity is now.

The power of the night joined the power of the sea
Transcending life — eternal, endless, full.

And still the sand stretched grey,
And water struck the shore,
The waves struggled, then ceased and flowed away,
But returned ceaselessly — immortal.

— Robert A. Phillips, Jr.

HAGGARD HANDS

Tired and bleeding hands
paw then scrape
at bleak facades
 for the builder's counsel
 somewhere cut into the stone.
Exhausted,
they turn again to claw
black-nailed at a hardened earth
 for shallow roots
 to clutch and guard.

They finally probe in dark,
now-vacant corners
 for better hands;
and finding none
 at last they fold
 in barren slumber.

— John Murch

SUBWAY

Veining the city, swift coffins
claim caretakers whose glass eyes
watch blotched lights fingering braille walls,
gouged with discontent.

Unnumbered turnstyles mark dimensions as life leaks through.
Here, death and passage roll together.

Inside — advertisements, colored and torn
like passengers. Sharing grips, perfumed women avoid eyes.
The roar of silence recalls forgetfulness.

And above, pigeons people the sky.

— Kathleen MacLennan

You've heard of Ambassador Lodge —
And the "draft" he tried **not** to dodge;
 A campaigner he's not,
 'Cause Viet Nam he has got,
But his silence has **strengthened** his odds!

— Larry Van Sickle

Winner Essay Division

LIFE WITH A PHYSICAL EDUCATION MAJOR

Until this fall, I was never considered particularly athletic. I was the type who barely managed to get "C's" in her gym courses. It took me six months of straining effort to complete my first sit up and two years to get my first volleyball serve over the net. However, since this fall, I have been displaying athletic prowess beyond expectation. I have gone on long bike rides, participated in forced marches, learned the techniques of several sports, and finally mastered the human squash. This sudden metamorphosis is not the result of the rising national interest in physical fitness. Rather, my increased physical activity is the direct consequence of rooming with a physical education major.

About two weeks after I moved in with Linda, I began to realize what my new life would be like. Returning early from class, I unsuspectingly opened the door and found myself face to face with a red balloon. Linda, whose face was rapidly becoming the same color as the balloon, explained that she was practicing her kicking technique for soccer. I was just in time, she said. She was having trouble figuring out the correct foot position for the drop kick, and she asked me if I would go through the motions while she read the directions from the rule book. From then on I was hooked; I learned every skill and technique that the Physical Education Department taught, right along with Linda. By the way, I became an expert at placing the drop kick; I can now get the balloon between the two lamps on our desk almost every time.

From soccer, we advanced to field hockey. Again, the red balloon came in handy (it's much better than a ball because it's too light to break windows, glass fixtures or mirrors), but we had no hockey sticks. One evening, I found Linda unsuccessfully trying a right hand lunge with a twelve inch ruler. We soon decided that playing in a doubled over position did not exactly help our hitting style. Furthermore, as we did not own two rulers, it was impossible to execute any group maneuvers such as the block. Therefore, we switched from ruler to broomsticks. Perhaps the wide straw end gave us a definite advantage in hitting the balloon, but we felt this was balanced by the awkward shoulder-high broom handle. I don't know how much field hockey we mastered, but we had the cleanest floor in the dorm.

Thank heavens the field hockey season was soon over and volleyball began. Our balloon was a little deflated by this time, but it still functioned quite well. We had a slight problem setting up a net, however; the school authorities frown on students at-

taching anything to the walls. We finally settled on a bed for the net; it must have been the lowest, widest volleyball net in history. Using the bed had a specific advantage — whenever we became tired from too much play, we could always lie down on our net to regain our strength.

With the change of semesters, we shifted from volleyball to basketball. Turning the room into a basketball court was easy. Like the founder of the game, we improvised the goals; he used peach baskets, we used wastepaper baskets. Of course, we also used our faithful balloon, but it soon collapsed from overwork. At the moment, we are saving popsicle coupons for a beach ball replacement.

Of all the physical activities we have attempted, marching was my favorite. Linda and I spent evening after evening mastering right flanks, left obliques, about faces, and sideways steps. Marching presented a special problem for Linda; she could never decide which direction was left and which was right. In class, this confusion often resulted in heading down the gym floor one way, while the rest of the class proceeded in the opposite direction. To overcome this difficulty, Linda and I spent several hours pointing to things first with our right hands, then with our left.

Many evenings we adjourned to the attic. There amid sheets, towels, and various unmentionables, Linda would parade me up and down while she learned to call directions correctly. These evenings were quite dangerous for me. So Linda could learn when to stop and when to turn me, I followed her every command exactly. Therefore, until she became oriented, I would often end up bumping into a post or being smothered by a wet sheet. Nevertheless, I was very disappointed when we finished marching.

Now, Linda is taking tumbling. Every night, we go through a series of various contortions commonly called exercises. Slowly and painfully, I am mastering the egg roll, tripod, and duck walk. My aching muscles won't last for long, however, as this section ends at nine weeks. Right now, I'm trying to decide how to arrange our room with the two beds together in the middle. They'll make a perfect trampoline. . .

— Marcia Eaton

A wife who was making clam chowder,
Mixed in accidentally gun powder;
If her husband had tried
With his mouth open wide,
He couldn't have eaten it louder.

— Jerry Larson

DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO VERMONTERS

"Windy."

"Yep."

"Think it'll stoam?"

"Oh . . ."

"Snow?"

"P'haps."

"Ducks left?"

"Most 'um."

"Almnac says s'gonna be rough winta."

"Ain' guessin' — last yea s'pos'd be, bu' twasn't."

"Much berries on th' ash?"

"A-ya."

"Almnac could be right then."

"A-ya."

"Still gotta put hay 'round my place."

"Got bales?"

"Yep — Jud gi'me some fer mowin' his place."

"S'wife's ben ill, ain' she?"

"Pa'ently so — said she an'ha ma gone in St. Albins ta see a doc."

"Won' do ha no good. Hot butta an' white sy'up do as good an' don' cost like them fancy pills an' all doc gives ya."

"Jud's boy go'na be a doc — goin' ta school someplace down in Boston. Neva comes home any — don' know why — think he would, what bein' boen hea an all."

"Schoolin' makes folks diff'en't."

"Jud says he couldn't even pile hay right any moa — shows what good an edacation done him — says his boy's takin' all that schoolin' cuz he likes it — that bein' an ansa. Says he's aimin' on comin' back hea to Shafsb'ry ta be a doc when he's done learnin' 'bout it — think he will?"

"Don' come home now — nothin' sayin' he will — thinks he's a somebody, maybe is — that'sa trouble with him an' city folk — think theya somebodies. Wo'd do'need somebodies — needs people — people 'ats not made fools of by books an' too much learnin'."

"Fa'm folks is people — city folks is somebodies."

"Fields an' woods what makes people — makes a fella glad he's livin' — makes men woak tagetha, fields does — wo'd needs people."

"Folks is like seasons — some's fer woak an' some's fer thinkin' — an' it's comin' time fer thinkin' 'gain — fella needs a winta."

"Well, she's 'bout hea."

"Almnac could be right — this yea."

— Dean Coe

The word "lost" still fills me with terror and an indescribable sense of loss.

Three summers ago my family and I spent a week near Evergreen, Colorado. We were fortunate to have friends who allowed us to use their small lodge, The Treetops. As the name indicates,

LOST CHILDREN

it was located on the topmost point of the mountain, which was densely forested. Although it was the center of a resort area with a highway at the foot of the mountain and a town in the distance, it seemed quite isolated.

We had planned a sight-seeing trip for the day after we arrived. This entailed a general "clean-up and look decent process." In order not to overcrowd the one bath, everyone was taking his turn. Our older boy, fourteen, and only girl, nine, were outside exploring. We could hear them talking. When they were called and told it was their turn, they answered. Doing the many things that had to be done before we left, we did not notice that the children had not come in. When we did, we called again but did not get an answer. Slightly angry now, since we had to travel quite a distance and time was flying, we called again, louder. There was no response, just the lonely sound the wind made in the tops of the tall pines. The anger was gone; we were becoming uneasy and frightened. It did not seem possible that two children could be out of sight and sound so fast; they could not get lost that easily. But they were out of sight and sound, and they were lost. What do you do when you lose children in the forest? On the plains of Kansas we do not contemplate such things.

We became panicky, frantic, terrified! My husband and I searched madly for some distance around the lodge — up old logging roads, around huge rocks, and to the edges of cliffs, calling all the while. Breathless with the exertion, we paused to catch our breath. We realized we needed help. We recalled a sign by the highway pointing out a Forest Rangers' Station in this vicinity. We had read in the newspaper recently about the rangers rescuing a child lost in the forest. Surely it could not be that we, of all people, could be in a like situation. We had caught our breath and had made our decision. My husband would get to the nearest phone and report our lost children. I would stay near the lodge and keep calling, hoping the children in their wandering might come within range of my voice.

During my frantic searching, I had not had time to think. The reality of the situation had not struck me. It did now! There was the possibility I would never see my children again. I could not face that. Perhaps one of those huge rocks had become dislodged and they had been hurt. I could hear the rush of water, maybe they had stumbled into that swift current. I could not stand this inactivity. I started searching and calling again. Soon

I heard the car return. My husband had reported the lost children and had been carefully questioned by the ranger about their age, size, clothing they were wearing, how long it had been since we had discovered their absence, and numerous other details. According to his judgment, the children could walk out of the forest in two hours if they went in one direction, if in another direction, there was no end of forest. A good many times children will walk in circles and can be found easily. He would wait another hour and if we had not found them he would organize a posse and start the search. The hour passed and still no children. Again my husband drove down the trail and came back. The ranger would start organizing the search.

Suddenly, we heard a motor laboring up the steep incline. It was a jeep and beside the driver were two children. A tall lanky boy and a little girl almost fell out of the jeep in their hurry to get to us. Our world was whole again; our prayers had been answered! After a period of everyone talking at once, the ranger remarked that he had received a phone call from a hotel manager saying he thought he had two lost children, and was he looking for a tall boy and a little girl? The ranger told him he was, and to keep them right there until he could pick them up. The children had walked in the right direction; they had walked out of the forest.

— Elizabeth McDonald

BISECTION

Rudely bisecting circles
deep trod by tethered lives
and sneering at contempt
filed smooth by invitation,
a determined hiker defines
his own erratic path.

He has shunned the stale steps
of the crepe-soled retinue —
Haughty he stands, hobnailed
on a distant dune;
his mask glare conceals a cry
he smothers with a laugh.

He stands alone.

— John Murch

JAN

"Come on Jim, supper's waiting and I'm hungry." Ron, my kid brother, met me at the corner. "You're slow as a snail anymore, dreamer boy."

"That's enough out of you," I retorted and took out after him. Ron was three years younger than I and had been teasing me unmercifully ever since I'd met Jan.

"Sounds like a herd of elephants," Dad said as we burst in the kitchen door. We slowed down and walked very sedately to the bathroom to wash up.

"All right you clowns," Mom was laughing.

All during supper Ron kept giving me wise looks and raising his eyebrows. He knew I had a date and he was making the most of it.

Jan and I went bowling that night. It was her first time bowling but she learned quickly.

"A strike! I can't believe it." She was almost laughing. "That's beginners luck for sure."

No matter what we did we always had lots of fun. Jan was easy to talk to and she was — well, she was just different than other girls.

After three games we were tired and hungry again. "Say," I remembered, "Mom was making fudge when I left. Let's go see if that brother of mine left any."

"OK. You know, it must be fun to have a brother."

"Are you kidding? He's a pest! Come on, let's go."

Surprisingly enough there *was* some fudge left. "The Cokes are in the refrigerator if you'd like them," Mom called from the living room.

"Leave some for me," a familiar voice called from upstairs.

"Ah pipe down," I yelled back. Jan giggled. Ron came bounding down the stairs. "You know," Jan remarked, "both of you guys look just like your dad."

"Yea," I laughed, "everybody says that." I always get a big kick out of it since Ron and I were adopted.

Before long we were all sitting around the television munching popcorn and candy.

A few days later when I came home from football practice I knew something was wrong. Dad was quiet and thoughtful till supper was over. "Son, I'd like to talk to you."

"Yeah? What about?"

"Do you remember when we told you that you were adopted?"

"Sure, Dad. But that never bothered me. You're the best parents a guy could ask for. Just ask Ron. He thinks so too."

"Son, that's not the point." Dad hesitated. I wondered if maybe my real mother was trying to cause some trouble again. She had tried to get us back once a long time ago.

"Is it something about my relatives?"

"Well — yes."

"Not again!"

"No, no, it's not that situation this time. It's someone else."

What could Dad be talking about. Mom was the only relative that had ever caused any trouble.

"Who, Dad?"

"Jim, do you remember that you had a little sister who was adopted by another family?"

"Yeah." I was afraid to guess any farther.

"Her name was Jan."

"Not . . . but we've had so much fun together."

"I know you have, Son."

That was all he said.

— Barb Koontz

CYCLE

Knowing, yet dumb, dropping purified
Out of the looming cloud my web is cast
With the thread of a river life ebbs and flows
Through many faces waters pass to the sea
Serpent coiled, hero ready, the question call

To every droplet: Will you shimmer
Before the sun
Rises?

— James Richard Pearce

DEVOTION

Such ecstasy in the self-inflicted pain
of loving an "other," who seeks
to lift the cup only to his lips
to sense the color, the aroma, and
Be content.

To have only the mental pleasure of hope
that somehow you can endure the pain
and dream that your wine may some day
be worthy of a sip, or perhaps,
A meal.

— Ann English

THE PROFIT

From the cold darkness outside, I stepped into the world of gleaming bottles, fluorescent lighting, and the smell peculiar to drugstores. Only a few scattered shoppers hurried for last-minute items before closing time. I moved to the aspirin counter and was reaching for a box when a motion attracted my attention. Through a space over the aspirin bottles I could see a woman's hand close on an object behind the display.

Curiosity stirred me to move around the end of the aisle to stand about twenty-five feet from the woman. Pausing in front of the soap counter pretending to look down, I observed her more closely. She looked quite average in some ways — pleasant-faced, moderately attractive, about thirty-five years of age — but she did not seem average in other ways. I noticed her expensive clothing enviously and then eyed her curiously. As I watched, the woman picked up a squeeze bottle of nasal spray, palmed it, and casually slipped it into the open alligator handbag on her arm.

Fascinated, I moved closer as she stepped across the aisle. Again I watched her deftly slide a packet of bobby pins into the bag. The woman walked quickly to the aisle where I had originally been and stopped at the same aspirin display. She picked up a bottle but did not drop it into her purse. Instead, she walked to the check-out counter, paid for her aspirin, and started out the door.

My first impulse was to expose her — to have this woman who evidently was so much richer than I arrested for a petty crime. Then I became curious again. I caught up with her just outside and spoke, "Excuse me. Could I talk to you a moment?"

She paused, then smiled. "Of course."

"Why do you shoplift?" A fleeting startled expression flickered in her eyes but she made no other sign of surprise.

"Are you really interested? Would you like to know the reason?"

Nodding assent, I listened amazed. "Have you noticed my cashmere coat and my diamond? I am able to buy them through shoplifting. My husband and I together save over \$200 a year just picking up small items like these."

"Aren't you afraid of discovery?" I wondered, thinking how I had almost reported her.

"At first, I was. Now I am not. Those who discover my theft do not tell. They profit from it instead."

We parted with no further words. When I looked again, she had disappeared into the darkness.

As I was standing in front of the cold remedies counter reaching for the nasal spray, I noticed a young woman watching me over the aspirin bottles. When she looked down I dropped the spray into my purse.

— Sylvia Babcoke

THE LITTLE FELLOW COMES TO CHURCH

The Little Fellow
Has stepped out today
In his best suit.
He has come
To the House of God
To worship
And give thanks
And praise the name of the Lord
And squirm
And wiggle.

Now, the Invocation.
Though others stand,
He would sit,
But for the coercing hand
Grasped firmly about his arm,
To aid him
As he jerkily maneuvers
Himself to his feet.

The hymns, prayers, and offering,
They all pass by.
And ever so slowly
To the Little Fellow.
But they are fleet
To the everlasting sermon.

He turns around
And those worshipping behind him smile,
As they see eight stubby fingers
Curl over the top of the pew,
And a funny, round, crew-shaven head,
Then two wide brown eyes
Peeping back at them.

But the sound of Father's snapping fingers
Turns him quickly around,
And he sits,
Facing front,
In quiet, pensive meditation.

The pews are wooden.
Very, very wooden.
And the Little Fellow
Feels much discomfort
To his posterior.
And all his squirming, fidgeting,
Scooting and wiggling
Bring naught but more discomfort.
Plus thumps on the head,

Whacks on the leg,
And threatening whispers to the ear.

The Benediction is pronounced.
And who can say
What reprimanding measures
Await him
After the worship service has ended,
And he is in his own house again,
Instead of God's?

It makes one think
Of the Saviour's words:
"Suffer the little children to come unto me . . ."
And oh,
How the little children suffer.

— Kay Jones

UPON READING "ARS POETICA"

A poem should not mean
But be —
Exciting, sad,
Exhilarating or gay.
If it takes you to the highest
Hill above the bay
Or leaves you in
A deep, dark canyon
Filled with gray;
A poem should not mean
But be.

A poem should be equal to
Not true.
Teasing, deceiving
Lying or laughing.
If it makes you think of
Everything
That you have
Missed or remember,
Something gay or tender
A poem should be equal to:
Not true.

— Roberta Larson

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TOMBSTONE

Anyone might assume that in a city of relatively large size one could surely buy a tombstone. Not so. There are none to be found. I am sure there hasn't been a tombstone sold in the past twenty years (or whenever it was that people stopped dying and began passing away). Nevertheless, being involved with the funeral arrangements for a deceased relative (notice that he, too, avoided dying) it was important that I find some sort of a substitute. I finally settled on what the bereavochologists gently term a memorial marker. This was the beginning of an experience that was destined in the end to change many faulty conceptions.

Let me explain by stating that in my bubble gum and cowboy stage, I was occasionally forced to attend funerals. "Such trouble," I thought, "when someone dies." Services, cars lined up, crepe paper, handkerchiefs, flowers, sermons, and by the time I got back to the ballpark the guys had already gone home. In short, my youthful experiences made me irreverent and skeptical. I was not yet aware of the deep significance of each traditional phase. I was, as I have said, to be awakened from an objective boredom to a subjective amusement and derision.

The first illustration of what was to be found on the other side of the tombstone involved a tour of a reliquary show room, the solemn occasion being the selection of a casket (pardon the rough term) for the demised. I was first shown a modest, attractive coffin (there, that's better) of upholstered pine. Upon commenting on the reasonableness of price, I was reminded that this particular model was usually used for county cases. We proceeded then to the more elegant models. One especially took my eye, and eventually my life savings; a solid copper, satin lined, hand crafted, custom cushioned model with adjustable double inner-spring mattresses, an overstuffed pastel foot rest, and a bronze memorial cylinder for indestructable identification. Oh yes, I am compelled to mention the battery operated, twenty-five watt, Everready light — guaranteed to burn steadily for two hundred forty-eight hours. I mentioned my concern at this point that the lining did not come in my Grandfather's favorite color; but I was reassured that the shade was compatible with the decor of both the chapel and the slumber room, where it was to be on open display for a total of four and one-half hours. We would, of course, have to buy him a tie to match the cushioning; but considering the fact that we never went out of our way to see that he was well dressed during his lifetime, the least we could do was to show some concern in that hour.

Having finally selected a suitable, comfortable coffin, I was relieved that my task was finished. But I had under-estimated the family sexton (known in the trade, I mean the profession, as a grief therapist). I had yet to see the most important facility of the burial procedure — the twelve gauge steel vaults which most

families purchase to insure restful repose for their loved ones. It seems that the coffins, though sturdy, are unlikely to prevent leakage for any length of time; and if you have ever slept under the stars on the damp grass, you know that there are few things less comfortable than a wet bed. These vaults, and the more expensive decorator-color fiberglass models (for twin burials), also assure the family that their four thousand dollar casket won't become scratched or (heaven forbid) crushed.

You might guess that in the dazzle of funeral preparations the family has little time for mourning; but then, why should they — after all, Granddad's never had it so good.

— John Murch

SOLITUDE

Two swim in the same water under identical external conditions, yet their experiences are quite different. To the one the water is still and warm and the exercise invigorating. He relishes the opportunity to get away from the bank with its entangling vines and roots. For him it is a taste of his own uniqueness and freedom. Motionless, he allows himself to sink below the surface; or swimming slowly and systematically, he looks up and deep into the clouded countenance of space and his tomorrow. He swims easily and tries various strokes to find one most natural; he feels no fear or anxiety. He will, of course, tire and again desire the solidness and security of the bank, but it will then avail itself and he has no doubt of his ability to reach it. When he returns, as he must, he will be renewed and less aware of the roughness and sameness of the earth. In such experiences he finds himself.

To the other the water is threatening and deep, and the exercise taxing. Here a man could drown! He grasps and flounders and finds nothing solid, nothing on which he can rest the weight of his own body. His feet seem heavier and the bank farther away — he is sure he will not last to clutch the vines for which he so frantically swims. The waters fight against him, seem to swirl around him, trapping him in his own suspension. He cannot enjoy his swim; neither can he profit by it.

It seems apparent that the nature of the swim depends on the assurance of the ability to return to shore — the nearness of the shore — real or imagined.

— John Murch

SPARKLER

A dim glimmer,
The darkness pauses, and
Watches.
It feels the warmth
Then slowly the flicker
Bursts into a
Brilliant, tintillating
Shimmer and glory of a
Sparkler,
And then the darkness turns
And runs.
Fiery figure eights, loops, glides
Forms reach out
As if to catch the night, but then
Again, the glimmer dies
And slowly darkness
Surges back to fill the hole
Left by the sparkler's
Death.

— Lan Green

IN PRAISE OF CAMPING

Going to camp should be a part of every child's education. It gives something that school and home cannot give. The bookish school must remain bookish in attitude; and the home is set to that school. They must turn out one-sided children. Facts are sawdust to all children; and sawdust they will remain till they are enhanced by experience.

Among the most important of experiences is the art of living with other people; learning how to be a leader, and how to be a follower. This cannot be taught out of books. It must be experienced, and camp is the place where children meet situations that offer the essential experiences of life.

Living in camp for a season is a far different thing from living at home in the bosom of an affectionate family. Family traits are not smoothed over; no loving voice comforts the lamb. Instead somebody calls out coldly, "Be your age," and attention is promptly switched elsewhere. Edges are rubbed down; tongues disciplined; unlovely traits toned down; manners toned up generally. Here is a daily evidence of an old and proven educational truth: Children can do more for each other and for themselves than any grown person can ever hope to do.

Camp life makes possible certain quickenings of the spirit

that nature alone can inspire. This cannot be taught; it is felt. And once felt, it changes the whole being and all his attitudes. Did you ever climb a mountain and find its top carpeted with powder-blue berries, canopied by an infinite blue sky that stretched out to meet the horizon and lose itself in the blue lake? Have you ever swung along a road to the tune of a marching song, heart to heart with some loved friends, dimly sensing a feeling of kinship with something very lovely? Something of this is in the life of the camper, freed for the time from his bookish routine.

— Janet Delorey

THE CALLING OF AN ISAIAH

In the year
 that the church worship service died for me,
I saw the Lord
 standing in a crowded streetcar
 clutching a ceiling strap.
in the press before him
 was a middle-aged man
 of low social repute
And behind,
 a drunken woman
 grasping a small purse.
And he smiled at her.
 When the bus stopped
He helped her off
 and followed her into a bar
 which was filled with smoke.
 Then said I,
 Woe is me,
 For I am unconcerned.
I am a double talker
 dwelling in the midst of double talkers,
 Who have failed to see the King.
Then I encountered one
 with a searing problem
 and he laid it upon my heart
 and shared openly with me.
And I heard the voice of the Lord say,
 Who shall be opened to worship me
 and who will serve for us,
 Then said I,
 Here am I,
 Open me.

— Ann English