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CALLIOPE

Vol. I, No. 1

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The Blue Belch...

... Earl Farrington Bmoclohl

In any consideration of the contemporary short story, or in any mention of such greats as Steinbeck, Hemingway, and Faulkner, the name of Oscar Farrington Bmoclohl must not be omitted. Through his stories are relatively scarce (he wrote only two in his life) they glow with the vitality and terse symbolism of the new Naturealistiromantic school of which he is the founder and only member (with the possible inclusion of Carl Bandooni who has contributed many fine works to the illustrated monthly "True Tales Of Teenage Cowgirl Romances". Eminent for his beauty of style, subtle irony, and immediate presence of scene, Mr. Bmoclohl's greatest contribution to modern literature is his handling of point of view. The finest of all his stories is re-printed below.

Dave Holcomb

I didn't recognize him at first. He was standing at my elbow buying a pack of cigarettes, and I looked up casually and then returned to perusing my favorite volume of Freudian psychology. Suddenly, a sharp, sonorous chord sounded in my sensitive sub-conscious—and then it was all too clear, and the memories of this man fought their way tumultuously into my mind, one after another like luminous locomotives pulling coal cars; and the memories came piling, flying, bubbling into my conscious mind. I turned timidly back to the man.

I said, "Say."
"Huh?"
"Excuse me . . . "
"Yeah?"
"But, isn't your name Ed?" I asked him.
"Ed," he corrected. And his blue, too-blue eyes, like the plastic dome of the sky, burned defiantly into my own eyes—brown eyes like the brown, brown clods of wet clay at Frayway bay. I could tell he didn't recognize me. But why should he? . . .

* * * * *

It was a December; a black wet, dark, stormy, calm, miserable, sunny, cold, and snowy December, and the bums along the street spit into the gutters, and the spit went “splat” and spread into greenish
and yellowish rivers, tributaries, and streams on which I perceived
phlegm barges floating, and brownish-blue tobacco schooners. It was
then I saw Ed for the first and, until now, the only time. In a cock-
tail lounge. He, the center of attention ... like a king ... majestic
purple ... champagne-glass sceptre ... young women sat around ... 
listening, listening. They were smiling demurely like the sweet, pink,
drunk young things they really were. And laughing. Laughter like the
sound of bells. Ding Dong he he Ha Ha Boinng Dingle doing. And
I could only look on—drunk. Drunk not with the cheap bock beer
with the mauve mold islanding in it—the beer my environment forced
me to drink, but drunk with abject envy. The great, gaunt Envy Bird
buried its beak into my bosom. Peck, peck, peckpeck, peck. Spinning,
scarlet, screaming jealousy shook my frame. (It was ten o'clock.)

No, Clarence, I told myself; no! No jealousy—ah, naughty lad.
Control yourself! Is it your fault you're poor, destitute, and not
wealthy? No. It's society. The variety of impiety in society has driv-
en you here. Damn, damn, hell, oh blast it all to heck! You're as good
as the next man. But—oh Lord—those happy, flashing, too-blue eyes,
like the plastic dome of the sky, with crinkles of lightning-mirth at
the corners. It was the eyes that affected me most. They flashed con-
fidence. They showed me my littleness, my miniaturesqueness. Oh,
damn my miniaturesqueness and my obscurality. Like a universal
telegraph to all the world, Ed's eyes coruscated the overpowering
symphony of his confidence and my own un-confidence: "I'm better
than you. I'm happy, have money, am popular with the debutantes,
my wife, and the prostitutes on Fifth avenue. I stand here sipping
scintillating champagne—the proud paragon of man. Kneel down,
you bastard; my name is Ed!"

And I felt baser and bluer and duskier and moodier than ever I
had before—and my thoughts were dark, dirty, dank, dread and
cobwebbed corners and the yellow-gray bloated bellies of dead fish,
and I thought of that long sleep and of peace in the next land, and
should it be hell, why, let it be so, and I thought of the laden longings
of the man contemplating his self-styled journey to the land beyond this
present life—beyond that chintz curtain of little life he had always
lived. And, when my desire to live was at its lowest ebb, and when
the corks of bottles were popping all about and calling me "Sop," and
the head on my beer nodded in agreement, there suddenly happened
something strange. At that table of gaiety and mirth, presided over
by Ed, something happened which changed the entire course of my
life. Precisely in the middle of an inspired discourse, with three pairs
of dancing eyes focused lovingly upon him, at the height of the even-
ing's merrymaking, the light in his blue, blue eyes went dull, his huge frame quivered majestically—Profoundly, with solemn dignity, he belched. Ed belched! "Burrroomph," he belched; it was exactly ten-fifteen o'clock, a misty Decembr night. And then . . . liberation! For somehow I sensed that beneath that excellent epidermis of Ed's lay the COMMON physical desires and motives of all base mortals. Behind the eyes that burned blue, like the sky's plastic dome, lay a brain preyed on by the dictates of the human drives; and as I considered more and more that blue belch, my mind was washed wonderfully clean by a giant wave of sunshine, spray, and phosphorescent foam. Then, feeling as new and bright as a raindrop from a gilded sky, I squared my shoulders and strode out of the saloon and surged forward into the world to carve my niche in society's wall of employment. I became a psycholanalyst and have subsequently had the satisfaction of helping other morally depressed and mentally mortified fellow creatures.

* * * * *

As Ed gazed at me there in the snack bar, while waiting for his pack of cigarettes, an inferior brand, with his blue eyes burning, I felt sorry for some strange, odd, unusual, queer, unique, inexplicable reason. He seemed to sense this, for slowly and silently he turned away, and the light in his blue, blue eyes went dim, and in ineffable agony he crept away, and as he went out through the panelled door, creeping away, an all but inaudible sound wafted back on wavering wings. It was a sorrowful, plaintive belch.
He went down, down—deep into the chasm. The shadows and memories followed him, tumbling over each other, falling down, down. He put out his hands, clutching at the mists which disappeared under his fingers. Sprawled deep in the chasm, he seemed to feel the bottom rise around and over him like a huge feather tick that got bigger and bigger until he couldn’t breathe, couldn’t see, couldn’t hear. There was no light, no direction. He finally struggled and stumbled to his feet, tottering unsteadily. Think! where was he? He wasn’t home. No, he couldn’t be home. There was no feather tick like this to smother and confuse him at home. Home? He didn’t have a home—did he? Think. He had to remember. No, Ira was dead now. He didn’t have a home anymore. He couldn’t live there anymore now that Ira was dead. Dead? How did Ira die? Water. It had something to do with water.

The feather tick was now wet—wet like water. Yes, it must have had something to do with water. Why couldn’t he remember? The water was rising. It was up to his ankles, his knees, his thighs, his waist... his chin. He couldn’t move. The water was like molasses, holding him back, but always rising higher until it was over his nose, his eyes. He held his eyes open if he couldn’t see anyway. Was he blind? Maybe that was the reason that he couldn’t see, but he didn’t remember anything having happened to his eyes. He put his hands to them. They felt the same, except for the water or molasses or whatever it was. He wasn’t breathing. He had to breathe. Had to get air. The well rope! Of course, there had to be a rope. All wells had to have ropes. He had to grasp the rope and lift himself out of the well. People drown in wells. He had to get out. Air at last! He wanted to cry out, but his tongue was thick and heavy, and he couldn’t make a sound. It was a long way up. He would never get out. Was this the way Ira felt? Ira couldn’t have known because he was dead. No, Ira couldn’t have known. He was sure that Ira was dead before he ever got into the well.

It wasn’t so dark anymore. He was right. He wasn’t blind—not really blind. He could see. It was that there wasn’t anything to see in a well. Here out in the street he could see. There were people. He must know some of them, but he couldn’t make out their faces.
Why couldn't he see their faces? There was someone whom he knew. The newsboy. He was selling papers. Silly, what else would a newsboy be doing standing on the corner? He was holding something in his hand and saying something. A newspaper. Yes, a paper. He couldn't hear what he was saying. Why couldn't he hear what he was saying? He wasn't deaf—at least he didn't think that he was. He couldn't get close enough to see what the paper said. The sidewalk became soft and sticky and his feet were sinking into it. It was hard to move. One step, two steps. Only one step more. Then he could see the big black letters that he knew had to be on the top of the paper. He couldn't move anymore. Lean forward. Then he could see—read the letters, the words. The letters blurred and weaved on the paper, getting smaller and farther away from his eyes. He had to see. Ah, now he could just see the words. "DEED." Deed? No, "DEAD," "... DEAD ... WELL." Yes, that was it. He could see the words clearly for an instant: "DEAD IN WELL." But who was dead? The old man, of course. He had forgotten for a moment again.

Everyone said that Ira was a nice old man, but they really didn't know. He knew. Ira had never liked him. Ira had made him pitch hay and haul up the water from the well. And besides Ira didn't need money. What would an old man do with all that money. It was so hard walking through all the bills on the ground. Much worse than the leaves piled deep in the park in the fall. They were fluttering down all around him. He was so exhausted. The money was heavy, and each bill hit him as it fell from the nowhere. He didn't know that there was this much money. No, Ira didn't have that much. It must be someone else's money, too.

Voices again. He had heard them before. Where were they coming from? He couldn't understand what they were saying. He just heard the voices. Did they know he was here? They must not find him. He had to hide. His ears hurt from straining so hard to hear. It was almost the same as trying to read those letters. He could see and yet he couldn't. He could hear, but he couldn't understand. They were talking about him. Why would they be here where he was hiding if they didn't know? Had they been in the foam? At the well?

The voices. They were beating, pounding now. They were hitting Ira. Now he was hitting, too. He couldn't stop. He had to go on pounding and beating. He wanted to stop himself from swinging the ax handle which he held in his hands high over his head, and which he brought down heavily again and again upon the squirming mass at his feet that was screaming—drowning out the voices for a few seconds. Then the screaming stopped and he heard the voices—louder
and clearer now. Suddenly he bolted up and sat in the cheap bed with the perspiration running down his face and chest. He knew. The voices were pounding on the door. They were coming for him.

R. John Mc Keough

Spring

Comes tripping triumphant over the fallen snow
God knows what all;
Little elves with pails to spoon the golden sand,
And girls, breasts kissing the flying wind,
Astride the plunging satyr's dancing stirrups;
From the moon, lad, from the moon.
And the sun's bursting in easy fragments
Over a garden as wild as a world,
With flowers to be as anxious as unwritten poems;
And Pan's lute piping over the pregnant hills;
To a tune, lad, to a tune.
And Death catching in his scythe, the piped phrase
For a moment with capered legs, stands, sighs,
And moves on.

Ativismus

The delicate sound of falling paint
From ancient icons
Tinkles slowly through the drifting void,
Echoes sharply into the wish-world
Refracting thought, destroying Time:
Feeds Phoenix on Phoenix;
And the brain-womb gives birth
To idiot children, half-man, half-child.
Reflections About an American Apple-tree . . .

Mila Samal

It is just about the time to think of some other kind of tree—we are not far from Christmas—but don't blame me if I tell you something about the apple-tree which you can find, when you look carefully, in that sharp curve of the road which comes down from the Administration Building of Western Michigan College. Most of my American friends do not know that tree for the very simple reason that they cannot know it. You see, they all drive cars and in that curve they must watch the road and not my apple-tree. As far as I am concerned, I am a walking, European type of man and therefore have had plenty of time to find out that the mentioned tree exists and also to observe it as much as I wish.

By the way, I said “my apple-tree” but in fact it belongs very probably to the owner of the garden in which it has its roots. So, instead of this name let me call it by the French name Pommier. No doubt, it is a better name because it has an apple-formed letter just after the P. I don't think you will mind and anyhow—whatever you many think about Pommier, I like it. You know, when I came to the United States, from Paris straight to Kalamazoo, Michigan, I felt terribly lost. All was so different. I had scores of papers to fill out in order to be a student at WMC in lieu of that wonderful one-page application for the Strasbourg University last year. I was meeting scores of friendly people who kept on constantly asking me how did I do. The cat on whose tail I stepped nearly excused herself instead of squaling angrily as a European cat would do and the girls smiled differently and had another type of rouge on their lips than I had been used to. Under such circumstances I met, or rather, I saw Pommier. And I was happy about it. It was like meeting a countryman.

The first time I saw him, it was in September and he was covered with beautiful leaves among which were disposed and partly hidden the familiar reddish spheres. Then Pommier began to do the same thing as his European brethren do. He began to lose his green ornaments and now, in December, he is only a black skeleton—something like a good inverted old-fashioned broom.

At this time I feel uneasy about him. He is still loaded with
beautiful red apples. In this period of the year his likes of the old continent are also in this black inverted broom stage of their cycle but no one has to support such a burden as Pommier does. Their fruit was taken away by their proprietors or by some early teen-age youngsters who consider that a nation's air space belongs to everybody and therefore everything in that air space belongs to them if they dare to come to get it. In this rich America Pommier has to go on carrying his burden and as he grows more and more weary he loses his apples one by one . . .

Some of the apples fall down on the road in that dangerous curve where no driver can look at the scenery. When I pass by I have to overcome two contradictory drives: both of them are typically European. One, which had been molded back in the hungry war times, is to pick up an apple. The other, and I daresay the most powerful drive it to kick it off as I used to do when I played the left wing in our soccer team. You see, the apples are round, and round is the European soccer ball. The Americans have oval balls; they don't kick off the apples in the curve of the road near the Administration Building of the Western Michigan College; there should be at least a pear-tree for them.

At this place I interrupted my writing and went out to see Pommier because a terrible suspicion came to my mind. And I was right. When I picked up some of his apples lying in the mud, I noticed that all of them are of about the same size. You know that Americans like standard things, don't you? Pommier is unmistakably American. He is not a pommier but a standard American apple-tree.

Words . . .

... James Keats

I wish words lay undiscovered
And languages never spoken,
Then fallacious thoughts would lie unheard
And man's good will remain unbroken.
But if he had no words for speech,
In what language would his cerebrum teach?
Loyalty Legislation...

...Carl Ramsay

In the last three years have been sown the legislative seeds which, if nourished, might well turn the United States into something like George Orwell's nightmarish conception of the 1984 state. And it might not take thirty-some years! This growth of legal tyranny is accepted in the belief that it provides internal protection from that totalitarianism that takes the form of World Communism. And certainly it is providing such protection. But where is the logic of protecting us from totalitarianism by making us totalitarian? Is governmental tyranny any more desirable because it originates within rather than without? Is the suppression of free expression any less suppressive because it is implemented by an American rather than by a Russian? Is a dictator necessarily any less dictatorial because he was born in Georgia, U.S.A. rather than in Georgia, U.S.S.R.?

But wait! You say this talk about dictatorship and suppression is nothing like the true situation in America today. And we must certainly protect ourselves from Communism. I agree on both counts; but in protecting ourselves we are turning out a lot of legislation that can easily be converted into machinery for producing an Orwellian America.

The law most potentially destructive to democracy in America is McCarran's Internal Security Act. There are several parts of the McCarran Act which have contributed to putting America on the road to totalitarianism. The act calls for the registration of all Communist and Communist-front organizations. It also requires that these organizations label all mailed publications and all broadcasts as having a Communist origin. Members of these organizations are ineligible for non-elective Federal jobs. And, with incredible non-specificity, the Act makes it unlawful to perform or plan any action "which would substantially contribute to the establishment within the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship."

These provisions of the law apply to the Communist Party and to so-called Communist-front organizations. There can be little opposition to this law being applied against the Communist Party. But an objection of monumental proportions arises when the Law is used to suppress what the Law itself considers Communist-front organizations. The objection is that any organization from the PTA to the
GOP could be considered Communist-front. Whether or not it is, depends on the ruling of a five man board which, according to the McCarran Act, bases its findings on such dubious criteria as whether or not the organization is giving aid and support to the Communist Party. Would an organization that proclaimed itself in favor of public housing, Federal work projects and a high minimum wage; and maintained a steadfast opposition to dictatorial tendencies in government, be considered a Communist-front organization because the Communists ostensibly shared these views? Apparently so, because it would be giving aid and support to at least a part of the Communist Party's program. So, if someday when the Republicans have a firm grip on Congress and want to make their grip a bit stronger; and if the Democratic Party's views coincide with the Communist's on some innocent issues, then the government could quite easily have the Democratic Party declared a Communist-front organization and have it suppressed by the McCarran Act.

Having an organization declared Communist-front deprives its members of their Constitutional rights by refusing them Federal jobs. But more important, it could severely cripple a worthwhile organization by making it brand its views Communist. So the McCarran Act can be used as an agent to suppress political parties. The suppression of all political parties but one has fearful parallels in Nazi Germany, Russia and Fascistic Italy and Spain.

But you say the Act is not being used that way today. Nevertheless it's there and it can be used that way. It's a young law. Give it time.

The section of the Act most effective in general suppression is that which outlaws any act or plan of action "which would substantially contribute to the establishment within the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship." How's that for vague wording? Would a vote for Joe Smith (according to our files, a totalitarian, though he may deny it) contribute substantially enough? (Of course, to make sure you don't vote for Smith we'll have to do away with the secret ballot.) Might not some day, voting for any but a specified slate of candidates "contribute substantially"? Would an editorial criticizing some government project be an indirect contribution to establishment of a dictatorship (by weakening present government)? And how would you execute this law? In order to prevent America from becoming a police state we must use all methods of detection, counter-espionage and spying in all areas of society—in the name of the McCarran Act.

In other words anything could be construed as "substantially contributing" by an unsympathetic government. And the methods used to enforce the Act would reek of police-stateism. The loose-wording and
suppressive applications of the McCarran Act make it too dangerous a legal instrument to be tolerated in a country that intends to remain democratic.

Lullaby...

... Mary Louise Lemon

Sleep now, child; your mother is worn
   —Fa! my boy, my dear, naughty boy—
You've hidden your blocks and you've broken your horn
   —Fa, Fa! my dear, naughty boy—
You looked for adventure and you soon found
A frog in the pond, a worm on the ground.
And now you must sleep with what you have found
   —Fa, Fa! my dear, naughty boy.

Away to the west where the sun goes down
   —La! my boy, my sweet darling boy—
Away to the night on your bed of down
   —La, La! my sweet, darling boy—
Away I will whisk you; and we shall see
Stars that are ships on the night's dark sea,
Bobbing, and blinking the lights on their lee
   —La, La! my sweet, darling boy—

Then back to the east where the sun comes up
   —Ha! my boy, my pretty, bright boy—
Back to the morning when you'll wake up
   —Ha, Ha! my pretty, bright boy—
Back to your room, to your wee, blue crib,
To your tall highchair and your messy bib,
Back to the day and the toys that you hid.
(Fa! my dear naughty boy, my boy!)
   —Ha, Ha! my pretty bright boy!—
Dawn...

... Pauline Karling

The muted music of a hush;
And the sun sends lighted fairy feathers
In silent advance,
To caress a sleepy black of heaven.
Distant day and midnight hue merge
In sure surrender,
Greyed together in unhurried communion.
Echo-promise of a yester-morrow,
And the borning dawn
Glows.

pot...

... R. J. Murphy

We didn't worry, or we did,
about the pot without the lid
or what it held, or what's the use
of living living's sad abuse?

we didn't worry, or we did,
which suit was trump, or what was bid
which hand will prove the highest one
to play for keeps or play for fun?

did we worry, did we not,
there still remains the lidless pot:

the thing it holds, the single thing:
the "reason" why to thee we sing
TO THEE, O PLOT UPON THE EARTH
THE PLOT THAT CLAIMS US BY OUR BIRTH
but who labors, country, you or we?
and should YOU not then sing to me?

sing a song of freedom of life liberty
and the various pursuits.
or better yet tell a story: the times of the
tom tom paine, jefferson, in
modern dress . . .

without a lid what can it hold?
this pot that harbors fool's gold?
it holds the thoughts of time gone by
holds them, for the men who die

we didn't worry, or we did,
about the pot without a lid
or what it held, or what's the use
of living living's sad abuse?

but did we worry, did we not,
there still remains: the lidless pot

Frank...

... D. L. Newsome

Frank's a man
Who
Plods
Along
Body, mind opposed.
One near sleeping seems
While other
Laughs!
Not loud;
With crinkle-thinking eyes.
Twelfth avenue was wet and uninviting as the couple crossed to its west side, to pier ninety, where the Queen Mary had docked earlier that foggy April morning. The young woman, a small corsage of white carnations on her blue coat, leaned heavily on the man's arm as they stood gaping at the graceful black hull.

"What does that 'thirty-nine' down there mean, Charlie?"

"Guess it means there's that much more of the ship under the water, hon."

"Isn't it about twelve stories high? I've been counting the rows of portholes. There's no smoke coming out of the chimneys."

"Not chimney; funnel, smoke stack."

"Okay, funnel. Where'd it just come from?"

"Southampton and Cherbourg. And ships aren't its, they're shes, darling."

"Look at those funny people around the doors to the dock. I'll bet they're foreigners. They look like it."

"How can you tell?"

"They just look like it. See that man with the funny coat and that cloth suitcase. Did you ever see anybody in Springfield with an outfit like his?"

"Hon, that's not nice to say."

"Let's see if we can't get on the boat and look around, Charlie."

"Why? Aw, let's not."

"Wouldn't you just love to go someplace on a big boat like that?"

"Let's not."

"Come on, stubborn."

Charlie reluctantly followed June's lead through the doors and up the cement steps. "Didn't you see that 'no visitors' sign? Besides, there's a cop over near the gangplank. He's not going to let us on."

"Hey, there. No visitors allowed."

"Please, Mr. Policeman, I'd just love to see the big boat. We're in New York on our honeymoon. Please, Mr. Policeman."

"Visitors will be permitted aboard tomorrow from nine-thirty to eleven-thirty in the morning upon presentation of a pass, obtainable at the offices of the Cunard Steamship company, twenty-five Broad-
way.” The blue-coated guard met June’s gaze firmly. “No visitors today,” he added mechanically.

June turned on the policeman. Charlie hurried after her, down the stairs, to the street outside. “Don’t see why all the rules and regulations. Charlie, you’ll go and get a pass, won’t you? I’m going back to the hotel this afternoon. But Charlie’ll get a pass for his little bride, won’t he?”

“Sure, sure, hon.” He took his wife’s arm as they ambled toward Fiftieth Street.

When they appeared at the dock the next morning June tugged at Charlie’s arm, “Let me see the pass. Oh, look! It says we’re boarding the vessel at our own risk, et cetera. And the pass is not transferable, et cetera. It is supposed to be presented at the gangway, et cetera. Charlie, what does et cetera mean?

“June, don’t ask so many questions. You must know what it means. Isn’t that the cop who stopped us yesterday?”

“Sure, it is. Here give me the pass. Let me wave it under his nose. Look, Mr. Policeman, we’ve got a pass, today.”

“June, honey, be quiet. He’ll kick us off the pier.”

“But we’ve got a pass, Charlie. Oh, isn’t this exciting? Imagine what fun it would be to really go away on the ocean on this boat!”

They walked up the gently-inclined, rubber-cushioned, canvas-covered ramp to the ship’s foyer, a wood-paneled room containing several elevators. The couple joined a group of tourists ready to be guided about the vessel.

“Charlie, isn’t this wonderful? Whose picture is that on the wall?”

“It’s the queen’s.”

“Listen to the guide. He’s got such a funny accent.”

“He’s English.”

“Oh.”

“An officer of the ship.”

“How do you know?”

“Look at his sleeve.”

“Charlie, you’re so smart. That’s why I married you.”

The tour included some of the first and cabin class staterooms, one of the kitchens, a library and most of the large, public rooms.

“Did you hear that, June?”

“What?”

“He said that Winston Churchill occupied this suite on his last trip to the United States.”

“Oh.”

The group went on to the Veranda cafe. The guide explained,
"Here some of the young folks who like to stay up late dance."

"Charlie, wouldn’t it be wonderful to be taking a trip on this boat instead of just coming to New York for our honeymoon?"

"It costs plenty, you know that."

"I’ll bet if you got a better job we could do it, soon."

"But I’ve got a good job."

"It doesn’t pay enough to travel on a boat like this for a honeymoon. Think how much fun it’d be to dance up here. Aren’t these drapes pretty?"

"And this," said the guide, "is Piccadilly Circus. Here many of the fine London shops have sea-going branches." He pointed with pride at the paneled corridor lined with show windows.

"Look at all the samples of cloth, Charlie." She moved to another of the cases. "And the gloves and purses. Oh, they’re beautiful. I’d like that brown alligator one over there. I wonder how much it costs. I don’t know whether I’d like that one or the dark blue one best. They’re both so pretty. And the blue one would go with my coat. I think—"

"Please, you’ll have to stay with the group," the guide called back to Charlie and June.

"Look, what does that mean? ‘Cigarette Ends.’ It’s printed over those slits."

"That’s the same as ash tray."

"Well, Charlie, we’re back where we started from. But they didn’t show us the whole ship!"

"We saw enough, I think, hon. Aren’t your dogs tired?"

"Not very. I sure like those purses in that place. What did that guy call it?"

"Piccadilly Circus."

"That’s such a funny name. Gee, but I’d like to take a trip on a boat like this."

"You should have married somebody rich, June."

"Next time I will."

"June, they’re loading cars into the hold," said Charlie when they were out of the dock itself.

"There’s one with Illinois plates! A car from Illinois! Wonder if it’s anybody we know. I wonder whose car it is. Well, guess it proves that some people from home have the money to take nice trips."

"Jesus Christ! Are you still harping on that?"

"Charlie, this is the first time you’ve ever spoken that way to me and I don’t like it. What did I say to deserve it? What did I say?"

"Nothing."
"Then don't be so unreasonable with me."
"There's a car from Quebec being loaded on."
"Where's that, Charlie?"
"In Canada."
"Oh, yes. That's the place where they speak French or something, isn't it?"
"Yes. June, haven't you had enough of this?"
"For today, I have. I found out that the boat's going to leave tomorrow morning. Will you bring me back to see it go, Charlie?"
"Anything you want. I never thought I'd spend my honeymoon playing second fiddle to a god damned ocean liner."

Next day, shortly after ten, they hurried down sloping Fiftieth street to Twelfth avenue. The street itself was a snarl of brazen yellow taxis and private cars stopping and starting before the pier's entrance. Charlie and June threaded their way through traffic and joined a group of on-lookers to the right of the entrance.

"Look at the lady with all the orchids. Did you ever see a coat like that one before in your life? And see what that man's got? A case of Carnation milk and a ham!"

"Some things are still rationed in England."
"Charlie, let's have our picture taken. There's a man over there. He's grouping people around those iron things. The ship'll be in the background. That will be fun to show at home."
"Don't be silly, June. I can't think of a bigger waste of money! No, June."
"You're stingy. You don't want me to enjoy myself in New York. And you don't know how much I'd love to show the picture around when we get home. Charlie, I hate you."
"Come on, June, let's get out of here."
"No. There goes the whistle. The boat will be leaving any minute. Next time I get married I'll find somebody who's willing to do nice things for me."
"I've had enough of this. I'm going to the hotel. Are you coming?"
"No."

He turned his back on his wife and began pushing through the crowd. He walked between taxis and waited for a lull in the traffic before he crossed the street. He didn't look back, even when he heard June's voice.

"Charlie, Charlie, wait for me."
Impressions in Rose . . .

. . . Robert Chatterson

Everywhere there is that sense of emptiness. Of watchful waiting. Row upon row of blank, staring, impassive faces. Waiting to be touched by the flame. A flame that can never touch them.

Who gives a damn. Drink up.

Fear lurks behind those faces. A pervasive, nameless fear. It does not clutch at the heart, or probe deep into the soft, slimy viscera, or dehydrate the throat. It is a faint, ubiquitous shadow that falls relentlessly across the lives of us all.

Drink up, pal. Worse days are coming.

You see the faces everywhere. On the streets, in the lecture rooms, in the homes, in the factories, on the battlefields, in the churches, in the honeymoon cottages. And always they are the same. Blank. Utterly devoid of humanity. The faces of robots who wander blindly about in their own little paths until the clock of eternity ticks off their last flickering second, and they are gone leaving nothing behind. Not even a memory.

Drink up, drink up, before it gets flat.

Sometimes the blank faces smile or laugh or cry. But these are mechanical reactions. Humor, joy, sadness, love, hate . . . these things do not touch them deeply. The smile, the laugh, the tears come and go, as though operated by push-buttons. And alway the blankness returns to the faces. The watchful, staring eyes. Uncomprehending. Afraid.

Drink up, friend, I'm buying this round.

I am a free man because it says so in the Constitution of the United States of America, so don't come around here giving me that line about my responsibility to my fellow man. To hell with my fellow man. I am tired of it all. So have a drink, but don't be telling me your goddamn troubles, pal. I've got enough of my own.

The blank faces speak but they do not say anything. Their hearts thud heavily, and the pulse beats out the message of the heart . . . I am tired, I am exhausted, I am confused, I cannot laugh, I cannot cry. I simply do not give a damn.

And that's the way it is.

Expectant. Hushed. Waiting. Time Marches On . . . there is no turning back. Nothing is important except a new Cadillac and a new
modernistic home and a wife with sex appeal and a husband with money and the easy way to have children and the weekly paycheck. All else is irrelevent.

But there is also faith.

An uneasy faith in the hydrogen bomb.

Who gives a damn about life? Drink up.

The blank faces do not stir . . . not a twitch betrays the inner emotions. Nothing. A deep, endless, black void. Suspended in a vacuum tube. Brief flashes of light glimmer. But the blank faces retreat from the light and the sightless eyes close from the glare. The beam is bent, or the flashes of light are of the wrong color, or something else is wrong. There is always something wrong.

So what? What the hell difference does it make? Drink up.

Sometimes the blank faces respond dramatically and unforgottably. A sudden fire lights up the eyes, the face grimaces in sheer horror, shattering the last highball glass with which reality is desperately clung to, and the blank faces becomes the faces of madmen.

Who gives a goddamn. Drink up. The night is young, and I know a cute little doll who will. She's smart, because she doesn't give a damn for anything. What you don't know sure as hell can't hurt you. Let somebody else do the worrying.

There is nobody else.

Drink up.

Somewhere in the night a kid is starving to death.

Drink up. Drink up.

Somewhere in the night a white hot piece of shrapnel sizzled into somebody's guts.

Drink up, damn you.

Somewhere in the night three teenagers smashed a new, glittering, 130 horsepower Cadillac into a pile of twisted, blood-spattered junk.

Drink up, drink up, drink up.

The blank faces cry out in the blackness and their voices are afraid and terrified. Drowning. Strangling in their own inhumanity.

Drink up.
"Three sailors, three drinks, three inevitable more. Three sailors, their treasure, their last night ashore."

The bar-keep thought and spoke in rhymes: a whim of his. It helped business; he was individualized by his poetry. The seamen who frequented his place called him "the intellectual." Though they said it in a joking way, he began to believe them. He felt that he was above his position; he deserved more. He read poetry, spoke poetry, thought poetry; no man so cultured as himself should waste his life in a waterfront dive.

The sailors shouted for rum. The sailors drank too much run. So did he. But he could hold his rum.

"Three sailors, three drinks, three inevitable more. Two bottles were empty, then three, now four." His thoughts continued as he brought them the liquor, slowly, suddenly.

"Come, Mr. Intellectual," said one, "How shall we divide our bounty? Devise us a plan."

A proposition was forming in the poet's mind. Why should ignorant sailors have such wealth, when he, an intellectual, must be left in want? Why not devise a plan for them, a gamble that he alone could win? "Your treasure has value; it's easy to see, but not quite enough to satisfy three. Drink hardy, my lads, and before night is through, I'll have worked out a scheme that will surely suit you." Saying this, he walked away.

His mind filled with cunning, the bar-keep returned to his station. When the place was closed, when the sailors were drunk, then he would make his proposition.

"All sailors are gamblers; so they must be too. I've one sure-fire way; I know what I'll do." His logic was good, but he noticed his poetry wasn't up to par. "Confound the poetry," he thought. But he found himself drifting back to it from habit. "An adventurous gamble will tempt them I'll bet. They can all be eliminated by Russian Roulette."

Some customers came in, breaking his train of thought. He served them and returned to his stool behind the bar.

Russian Roulette: that was it. There was no other way. He would
load the gun, load it so none could win and then, the treasure would be his.

As fortune would have it, there were few patrons that night. Everything was going smoothly. He locked the door and pulled down the shade at two o'clock, just as the constable passed by. The officer waved and he returned the gesture. The sailors were still drinking and by this time were very drunk. He inserted four cartridges in his revolver. "The sailors drink to find their pleasure; I get them drunk and take their treasure." He smiled at this thought.

"What's your plan now, Mr. Intellectual?" shouted the oldest of the three.

Their eyes were blurry and one of them was slumped over the table, half asleep. The others were weaving considerably, and their speech was slurred.

"Perfect!" thought the host. Then he began to form his plans. "Gentlemen, I have formed a plan that might shake the nerve of a lesser man. Tell me yourselves; I wonder yet; would you indulge in a game of Russian Roulette?"

Two men sat straight, though their eyes were still blurred. The third remained asleep. For a moment there was silence, then the older man said, "You dare challenge our nerve, you old hoot? By all that's holy, we will." The expression of the second man remained blank. The third still slept.

"To eliminate two, I believe was my task. Two shells in the cylinder, then I must mask."

He broke the revolver so that none could see; then he extracted two shells from his pocket and slipped them in place, closed the piece and spun the cylinder. The third man still slept.

"He will go first," said one of the two, motioning to the sleeping man. "You, poet, will pull the trigger and help our incapacitated friend." The second sailor nodded his approval.

The bar-keep had not thought of this, but what must be done, must be done. "To the man with the break goes—" He could think of no rhyme and this somehow rattled him, but to blot out the error, he quickly pulled the trigger. The explosion was deafening. The hole seemed gigantic and ugly. The older man sat motionless; then bade the other to try his luck.

"Too late to back out now," thought the host as he saw the second man raise the gun. "He looks as if he were hypnotized," he said half aloud, but no one seemed to notice. But he noticed the poetry was gone. Again he said, "Confound the poetry!" But his words were covered by the explosion.

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The older man was still expressionless. He said, “I suppose I must live up to my part in the bargain, even though they are dead and the shells are used up.”

The bar-keep was suddenly taken by fright. “Enough of the whole business,” he said, “Give me the gun.”

But the third man would have none of it. “I made a bargain,” he said, “and, by God, I’ll keep it.” A third explosion and he died with this oath on his lips, but the expression on his face was peaceful.

“Death won the game on an evening so still—” he started, but again he was at a loss for the rhyme. “How can a poet live without poetry? I’ll never have peace without poetry. And they look so peaceful.”

He raised the gun and firmly pressed it to his temple.

Night City...

... Margaret Perry

Her eyes are never closed;
They look down aimless alleys
Where darkness is not always shaded,
But dark with crass desires.
Staggering bodies with leadened feet
Try running from their own existence,
And cry at life’s huge darkened mirror.

This is My city—My own,
Of glittering lights—blinking, glaring,
And of soundless sounds and
Sounding sounds. Where whorish
Screems pierce through the night
And flesh filled matter—happily—
Jockey to an unset rhythm,
Reeling, rolling—subdued, still.
I Am What I Am Or Am I?

... Jack Zakon

Deep chasm, the abyss of our minds:
Behold the pseudo, the poseur, the coward, the cheat!
Who will not — cannot — see their images;
Never knowing the soothing potion of admission.
Seeing only what they want
And: "How true! How true!"
Desperately afraid of life,
And someday they die...
Without having ever met themselves
Or known throbbing Truth.

And Love Shall Die...

... Albert De Roo Jr.

And love shall die
To rise again within another’s heart.
And birds shall fly amongst the multitudes,
And yet alone.
Hopes shall dwindle into dreams
And dreams shall vanish
Nor again be seen,
Until, once more and far away
Within another’s heart,
Shall burst into reality,
And shall be seen throughout,
Not lands, but dreams.
But love shall die.
CHARACTERS: (in order of appearance)
RUTH ANDERSON—mother of Arne, wife of attorney GERALD ANDERSON.
MR. GERALD ANDERSON—father of ARNE, husband of RUTH.
ARNE ANDERSON—the son and the conscientious objector.
REV. JOHN BARTLETT—ARNE'S religious counselor.

SETTING: The living room of the Anderson house. It is obviously the living room of a rather well-to-do family, for it is richly furnished. One wall is a fireplace, but it hasn't been used for a long time, and an expensive television console sits partly in it. Over the mantle hangs a rifle, polished and wickedly beautiful, occupying the place of honor. On the mantle are a few war souveniers. On the walls are pictures of flowers, vividly contrasting with pictures of war scenes from the last World War. On one table is a picture of Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Anderson dressed in the uniform of Colonel in the army. On another table is a picture of Arne, his high school graduation picture. In one corner sits a spinet piano. The room is in very good taste in all respects.

A door on stage left opens into Mr. Anderson's den. An arch on stage right leads to the vestibule and the front door, and also upstairs.

TIME: Early 1951, early in the evening.

As the curtain rises, RUTH ANDERSON is standing in the middle of the room. Immediately the door bell rings, and she walks to the door, coming back with the mail. She finds a letter she has been waiting for and quickly opens it. Before she starts reading she realizes something, quickly puts down the letter, sorts out a newspaper and several letters, and takes them over to the bookcase next to the door of the den. She then returns to her letter.

While she is reading, GERALD ANDERSON opens the door of his den, and strides out into the room.

GERALD: Mail in?
RUTH: (still reading) Yes, dear.
GERALD sees mail and begins to sort it. He is a very tall man of about fifty, with silver hair and a handsome face. He is the town's
most prominent lawyer, and looks the part to the utmost. He fingers
the pipe he is smoking, revealing that he is nervous about something,
but is trying to hide it.

GERALD: Here it is. The letter from that Scott case witness.
(Reads the beginning) I knew it! He was lying! I knew it, but no one
would listen. I'm a good judge of men! Well, that will settle it with-
out any question at all. (Walks around nervously) What time is it?

RUTH: (Still reading) Not quite seven.

GERALD: How can you stand there and take this so calmly?

RUTH: Honestly, dear, you act as if Arne were sort of a traitor.

ARNE: Anyone mind if I play a little?

GERALD: It's all right with me.

ARNE walks to his piano, and lovingly fondles the keys, running
up and down the keyboard. He begins playing softly the “Moonlight
Sonata.”

RUTH: (Looking up) Dear, must you play that now?

ARNE stops playing, glances at his mother, then closes the piano.

The door bell rings.

GERALD: Perhaps you'd better get that, Son. (ARNE goes to
the door) At least he's on time.

ARNE: (Offstage voices) Hi-ya John. Thanks for coming. Let me
take your coat.

JOHN: I'm glad to be here. (Lower) Do you think there's any
chance?

ARNE: Nope.

JOHN: Well, we'll hope. Where there's a will there's a way.

They walk into the room together. Since RUTH and GERALD
are standing together on the other side of the room, they form two
groups. JOHN BARTLETT is a man who creates a serene and con-
fident impression immediately. He is quiet in manner, about thirty,
and just the type of young minister everyone admires. He represents
the ideal man of God.

ARNE: John, this is my mother and father. Mom and Dad, this
is John Bartlett.

RUTH: (A little over-graciously) I'm glad to know you, Rever-
end.

GERALD: Glad to know you Bartlett. Shall we sit down.

RUTH and GERALD sit on the couch; JOHN and ARNE sit
on the chairs facing them, JOHN nearest the audience.

JOHN: Mister Anderson, I regret that I have to make this discussion briefer than I would like to, but I have—

GERALD (taking command of the situation as a good lawyer does) Now, Reverend, we are concerned with some unorthodox and crackpot ideas that Arne has gotten into his head. I don't know where he's gotten them, but I strongly suspect they come from you. And I want to say right here and now that I regard them as unpatriotic and dangerous, and possibly even a little Communist. Fortunately, such ideas don't exist in our (turns to RUTH and back) church, and had I known that they were in yours, I never would have permitted Arne to go there. I want to make it plain that I'm dead set against any type of appeasement.

JOHN: (unruffled) Mr. Anderson, there are several misconceptions that I believe you have, but the most important that I'd like to correct you on is your conception of the relations and differences of pacifism and appeasement.

GERALD: They're one and the same thing.

JOHN: (calmly) No, I don't think they are. First of all, let me agree with you that to follow appeasement principles is to follow the road of destruction. (GERALD and RUTH smile) But pacifism is a bit different from appeasement—

GERALD: I don't think so.

JOHN: —in that pacifism does not mean giving in to every demand of an aggressor; indeed, it follows your principles to the point of war, and there it stops. Perhaps if I called it Christian Pacifism, my meaning in this discussion would be clearer.

RUTH: I fail to see how you can put the two words “Christian” and “pacifism” together.

ARNE: Sure you can, Mom, because—

GERALD: Arne, I must ask you to keep silent. This is a discussion between Reverend Bartlett and your mother and me.

JOHN: But, Mr. Anderson, since it is Arne's views that are under discussion, isn't it only fair that he be allowed to speak.

GERALD: (appearing not to have heard) Very well, Reverend, for the discussion this evening, I'll accept your definitions.

RUTH: Reverend, suppose a man came to your house, forced his way in, and had every intent of attacking your wife. What would you do?

JOHN: I would forcibly restrain him and probably call the police.

GERALD: (triumphantly) But that isn't pacifism then. (This is a lawyer's speech) You're being very inconsistent in many places, Re-
verend. First of all, you said you would forcibly restrain him. Second, you said you’d call the police. Neither of these is compatible with pacifism.

ARNE: But, Dad, as John said before, pacifism follows your principles except it stops short of killing people. Wouldn’t you at least try to stop him before shooting him?

GERALD: No! I should say I wouldn’t. I’d take no chances! (Leaps, up, takes the gun from the mantle) I’d take this and make sure that he didn’t do any harm. (points the gun at JOHN, who is completely calm)

RUTH: But what about the—

GERALD: Yes, Arne, what about the police? (puts gun away)
You don’t believe in an army, but you believe in a police force. There’s no difference between the two.

ARNE: Yes, there is, Dad. A police force—

GERALD: Arne!

ARNE (cracking a little but going on) A police force is maintained for the rights and peace of men and to keep order.

GERALD: So is an army!

ARNE: An army does not single out the individuals that are doing the wrong; it moves on and even glories in mass murders. It kills indiscriminately the good along with the bad.

GERALD: Bah!

JOHN: Mr. Anderson, I see that you were in the army. (nods toward the picture) May I ask in what capacity you served?

GERALD: I was a Colonel.

JOHN: Yes, I see, but how did you serve? By that, I mean, were you in the lines, or in the air, or where did you fight? (GERALD suddenly becomes very nervous)

ARNE: (bitterly) Why don’t you tell him, Dad? (GERALD is still searching for a reply) Then I will.

GERALD: Arne!

ARNE: He was a DESK colonel. He never even saw a German or a Jap. He sat behind a desk for all of the war.

JOHN: Well, Mr. Anderson, (takes a meaningful glance at all the war souvenirs and gun) if you will permit me to say so, I don’t believe you know war as I do.

GERALD: (scornfully) And what do you know about war?

JOHN: I served as a medic in the front lines. I know the horrors of war as only a medic can know them. I saw Americans and Germans, horribly mutilated, but lying side by side, both thinking of home. I saw a man who had had his arm ripped off by a shell. I saw men
do “courageous” deeds as a result of fear—fear alone. I saw men, suppos-
ed enemies, discuss in a hospital their respective homes and loves, the things common to both of them, no matter what their nationality or the side of the trench they had fought on. What do I know about war? I know this: war is evil, war is horrible, and wars are not accord-
ing to the laws of God, and wars do not settle anything.

GERALD: Wars bring peace.
ARNE: (softly) And yet there are wars.
GERALD: (casting a baleful glance at his son) And you, (to
JOHN) you who call yourself a man of God, you have given my son these ideas that have—have—
RUTH: Turned him against his parents.
JOHN: I'd like to correct you on that, if I may. It was a com-
plete surprise, although a pleasant one, when Arne came to me to find out what steps he should take in getting his conscientious objector classification for the draft. What ideas he had before, I have not changed. Neither did I originate them.
RUTH: I don't believe you. There is nothing in his background here at his home to give him such fanciful ideas.
ARNE: Nevertheless, it is true: John is not responsible, for my thoughts.
GERALD: And where did you get them?
ARNE: (a bit sarcastically) By reading. I read about a man once. I'm sure you've heard of him, Father. His name was Jesus.
RUTH: Oh, but that was hundreds of years ago, dear; everyone knows that His ideas are not practical nowadays. (Both ARNE and JOHN are surprised for the first time. There is a long silence.)
GERALD: If the Russians came over here, you would let them?
ARNE: Yes, if the alternative is killing.
GERALD: (to JOHN) And what would you do?
JOHN: I would fight! (GERALD and RUTH start) But I would not fight with a gun; (GERALD glances at the gun) I would fight from my pulpit; I would live my own normal life. I would fight, if you please, by the Spirit. “Not my might, nor by power, but by my Spirit shall you fight.” And sooner or later, the Spirit will win.
GERALD: Bah!
ARNE: And I would follow as nearly as I could.
GERALD: (Completely losing his temper) Shut up! Shut up!
RUTH: (to JOHN) Reverend, what we want to know before you leave is what Arne is going to have to do to receive his draft classifi-
cation of conscientious objector?
JOHN: When he receives his classification questionnaire he must
sign a blank requesting the special form for conscientious objectors, and then—

GERALD: He shall not sign it! I shall see to that!
ARNE: I shall sign it!
RUTH: You are too young.
JOHN: (very quietly) He is old enough to go to war.
GERALD: Bartlett, perhaps you'd better leave.
JOHN: (Looks are ARNE, ARNE nods) Yes, perhaps I'd better.
RUTH: I'll get your coat.
ARNE: I'll get it.
GERALD: Stay here! (RUTH goes out)
ARNE walks to get JOHN'S coat. GERALD steps in front of him. ARNE tries to step around him. GERALD slaps him. JOHN rises quickly from his chair. GERALD looks sharply at him. RUTH appears at the door with JOHN's coat. There is a long, tense silence. GERALD stands glaring at JOHN. ARNE and JOHN look at each other and both relax. RUTH is standing stunned in the door with the coat.

ARNE: (to JOHN) I'll see you later.
GERALD: You will not!
ARNE and JOHN look at each other with complete understanding. They know they'll meet again. So does GERALD. JOHN walks to the still stunned RUTH, takes his coat.

JOHN: Thank you. (to GERALD) Good night, sir. (GERALD does not reply; JOHN smiles at ARNE, turns, and exits.)

RUTH: Really, GERALD, I—
GERALD (to ARNE) What does a parent do when he loses control of his son?

ARNE: (very quietly) Strange it is that of all the people I've argued my case with my parents should be the most intolerant.

RUTH: Arne!
ARNE: You've decided many things for me. But one of the things which a parent cannot decide for his children is their religious faith. Now, if you both will excuse me, I'm very tired, and I want to go to bed.

He walks to the door. GERALD stands in the way.

ARNE: Please, Dad.

Startled, GERALD steps aside. ARNE exits, GERALD turns to stop him. It is too late. Both RUTH and GERALD walk separately out into the room, each not wanting to look at the other. Both are completely deflated.

CURTAIN
The setting is unchanged, except that the civilian picture of ARNE has been replaced with a picture of him in an army uniform. The picture is in an extremely elaborate gold frame. RUTH is sitting on the couch reading a pamphlet. She is bothered about something. GERALD is sitting in a chair smoking a cigar.

RUTH: Seems sort of lonely doesn’t it?
GERALD: Dear, must you bother me when I’m reading?
RUTH: Sorry.
She goes back to her reading. Now it is GERALD who is nervous. There is a pause.
GERALD: Ruth?
RUTH: Dear, must you bother me when I’m reading?
GERALD: Alright, alright, (Pause) I don’t quite know what I want to say.
RUTH: Seems sort of lonely doesn’t it?
GERALD: Yes.
RUTH: Well, we can be proud of Arne. He seems to be making quite a name for himself, according to the reports your Sergeant Mann sends to us.
GERALD: (Strides over, picks up the picture, holds it at arm’s length) My son! An army man! Not a cheap coward, but a soldier! And thank God he’s given up those crazy thoughts of appeasement.
RUTH: (uncomfortably) Dear?
GERALD: (sharply) Yes?
RUTH: Nothing.
GERALD: Are you still worrying about what I told the draft board?
RUTH: I can’t help it. It wasn’t true, you know, all that about his constantly beating up the younger kids around him.
GERALD: Never mind what I told them. I know what’s best for Arne. I said if I could help it, he’d never get his C. O. classification, and, by God, he didn’t!
RUTH: (pensively) I still remember the look on his face when he answered the phone and was told he hadn’t made it. He had such a look of resolution, it—it frightened me.
GERALD: And he wouldn’t speak for days. (Laughs)
RUTH: Have you noticed that Reverend Bartlett seems to avoid us?
GERALD: I have. Probably because he’s ashamed to see us after failing to pervert our son.
RUTH: Odd. I got a different impression. Like he had something important to tell us, but couldn't.
GERALD: Bah! Don't let that Bible-toting preacher worry you.
RUTH: Yet, I can't help wondering . . .
GERALD: Well stop. Sergeant Mann hasn't noticed anything unusual, and as soon as the old fox does, we'll hear about it. (RUTH is still uncertain)

CURTAIN

SCENE III

The curtain rises on the same setting. In the center of the room is a big army trunk, with half of its contents strewn on the floor. GERALD and RUTH are sorting through the rest of it. RUTH has been crying.
GERALD: Here's a diary.
RUTH: (taking it) Do you think we ought to read it?
GERALD: Why not? (Still sorting)
RUTH: He never used to keep a diary.
GERALD: War does strange things to men. (Stops, realizing what he has said, then goes back to work)
RUTH: (Holding a pair of boots) Goodness, Korea must have cold winters. Look at these boots!
GERALD: Here's his Bible.
RUTH: Worn, isn't it?
GERALD: Well, the rest of the junk isn't any good. (Closes the lid. Sees RUTH still looking at the Bible, takes it, and carelessly tosses it into the trunk also.) This too. (Hauls trunk to one side) Have Clair haul it out tomorrow. (Sees RUTH crying again) Now, dear, please don't start that again.
RUTH: I can't help it. He was our only son, Gerald.
GERALD: (Puts his arm around her) But no man could want a better death, fighting for his country. I'll bet he showed the dirty Reds a thing or two before he died. (Walks over, picks up the picture) Son, I'm proud of you!
RUTH: I suppose so, but somehow that isn't much comfort now. (Bells rings) I'll get it. (Goes to door, comes back) Special delivery, dear. Do you have any change for a tip?
GERALD: (Hands her a bill) Here, give him this. (RUTH goes out)
RUTH: (returning with the letter and a small package) It's from Sergeant Mann.
GERALD: Read it; I'll be right back. (Goes into his den:)
RUTH reads the letter, getting more and more agitated as she goes
GERALD re-enters with his pipe, about to light it. Seeing the look on RUTH's face, he takes the letter and reads it.

GERALD: "Dear Colonel Anderson. Undoubtedly you have received by now the reports concerning Arne's death. However, there are a few things I would like to add to them.

I was not there when Arne was killed, but since he was extremely well liked by all the men, I heard about it quickly, and rushed to talk to some of the witnesses. They told a story of true heroism. Arne had apparently been shooting with the rest of the men when one of them was wounded in the eye. Arne bound up the man's wound and was about to return to his foxhole when a shell landed less than six feet from him, killing him instantly. This you know.

This you do not know. While talking to the men, I asked them how often Arne had fired. After some confusion, all agreed that they hadn't heard him fire once, but none were sure, for it had been in a battle. Curious, I took Arne's gun to ballistics, and they told me the gun hadn't ever been fired! I went to the company morgue, and examined his ammunition belt. It was empty. Arne had gone into the front lines, unarmed, and with no possibility of arming himself. He would not kill, and he died.

When going through his pockets, I found his little New Testament. The dog-ear is Arne's; so is the underlining of a verse. I suggest you read it.

I hope, sir, that in death, you will understand your son more than you obviously did in life. Sincerely, Sergeant Robert Mann."

GERALD is thunderstruck. RUTH is deadly calm. Pause.

RUTH: Read the passage.

GERALD is too stunned to move. RUTH takes the small Bible from him, turns to the dog-ear, and reads, but she already knows what it will say.

RUTH: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit shall you fight."

RUTH goes upstairs. GERALD looks at the Bible. Even now he has not cracked.

RUTH comes downstairs with ARNE's civilian photograph. She takes the army photo and places it on the mantle, and puts the other in its place. GERALD watches. She takes the Bible from him, and places it next to the picture.

RUTH: We'll put your army picture with your father's war memoirs, for it's as artificial as the rest of them. I prefer to remember you like this, (looks at the picture) even if it does all too well remind.
me of my own disbelief and intolerance. Could I have another chance, perhaps I could understand.

She looks at GERALD. GERALD can't meet her eyes. She turns and walks upstairs. GERALD looks at the pictures for a long moment, then putting a match to his still unlighted pipe, he follows his wife.

CURTAIN
It is fitting that the first issue of Calliope should also be the Semi-Centennial issue. For just as we hope that Western Michigan College will go on to even greater success in the years ahead, so too do we wish, as a part of that hope, that literary expression may continue to grow and improve apace. Calliope's predecessor, The Herald and Horn, has, until now succeeded in arousing and encouraging this literary expression. It has become increasingly evident, however, that the literary magazine cannot and should not continue to be merely an appendage of the Herald. And insofar as it does not seem feasible to expect any other organization or department to assume responsibility for financing the literary magazine, the most logical course seems to be to set it up on a self-sufficient basis by means of a nominal subscription fee. We hope that this may be effected next year and in succeeding years

Vice-President Wynand Wichers, Chairman of the Semi-Centennial committee, has made this issue financially possible and to him we express our sincere gratitude. Many thanks are due also to the Editorial Board: Dr. Robert Limpus, Miss Ruth Van Horn, Mr. Frank Householder, and Dr. Ralph Miller, for their work in selecting the material for this issue; to Richard Sinclair who did the illustration and cover; to the people who aided in production and distribution; and, of course to the contributors, both the ones who are published herein and those who are not.

For one of the most unpleasant duties of an editor is to edit, and we have, by necessity, been compelled to omit some material which in our opinion was otherwise excellent but which did not quite measure up to the quality of that which we have published. We hope, however, that this omission will not be taken as a discouragement and that we may expect further efforts from those not published in this issue.

R. C. R.