

ICARUS

CREATIVE WRITING SYMPOSIUM

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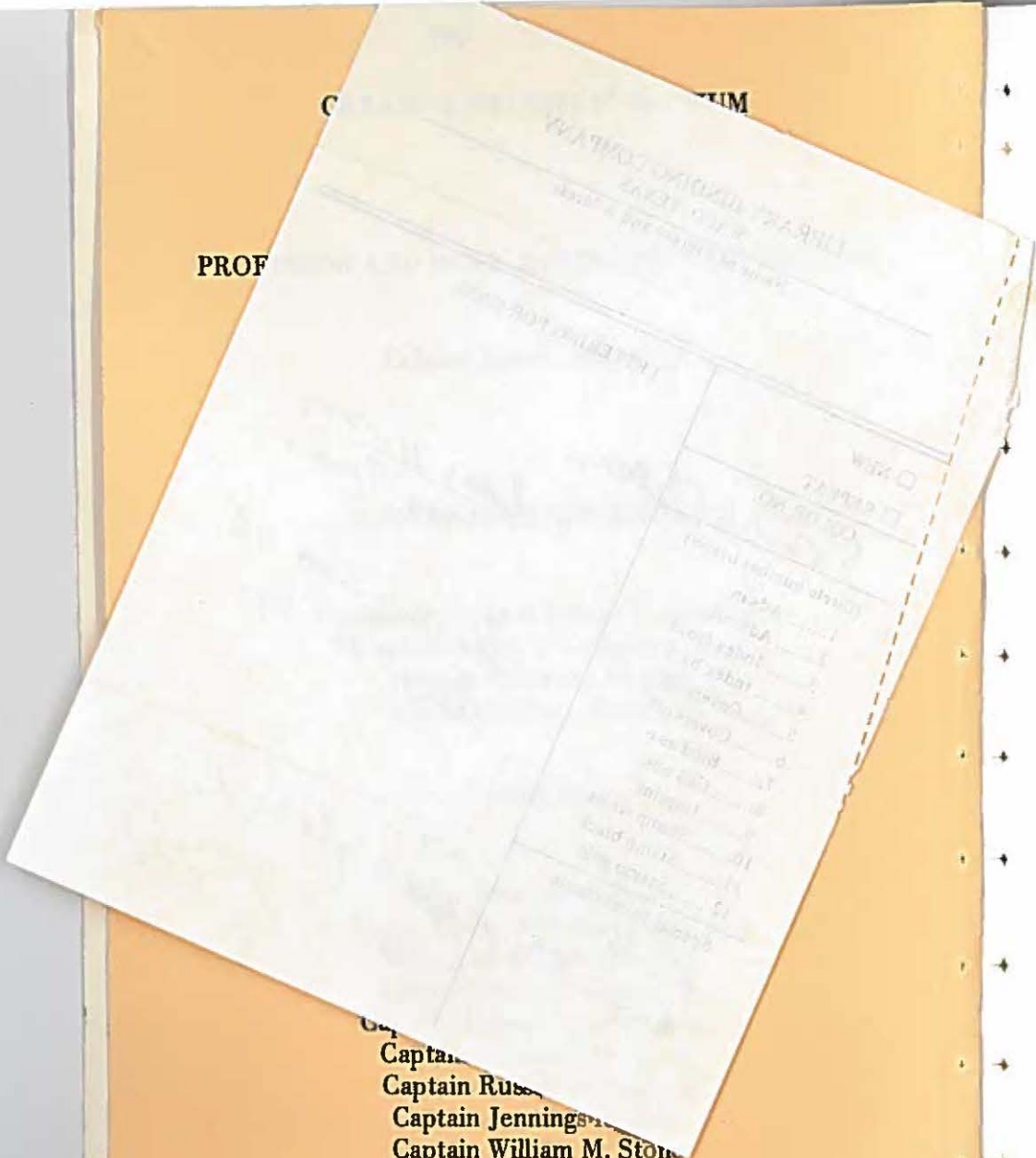
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ICARUS

A MAGAZINE OF
CREATIVE WRITING

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
USAF ACADEMY
1973



FOREWORD

Icarus is an annual publication of the Department of English, United States Air Force Academy. It is the vehicle for the best creative writing submitted in the English Department sponsored Creative Writing Symposium, which is open to all members of the Air Force Academy Cadet Wing.

The purpose of the symposium is to encourage cadets to express themselves creatively and to submit their efforts in competition with their peers. Volunteer faculty members in the English Department judge the entries and award first, second, and third places in the various categories. These and other entries receiving high scores are published in *Icarus*. The awarding of places and publication are the only forms of recognition accorded the authors.

This volume of *Icarus* contains the winning entries in the fifth annual Creative Writing Symposium. Although the competition included poetry, short fiction, informal essays, short drama, and drawing, we continue as in past years to receive large numbers of entries only in poetry and short fiction. We have therefore limited the competition to these two genres.

We wish to thank the many people who contributed to the success of the symposium—especially the judges who spent considerable time and effort in the extremely difficult task of deciding relative merit, and all cadet entrants, whether published or not, whose continuing enthusiastic response is the meaning of this project.

The opinions expressed in *Icarus* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the faculty and staff of the United States Air Force Academy.

The Editors

Department of English
United States Air Force Academy
23 February 1973

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First Place Poem

DOWNSNOW

Skis slap powder.
 Ski poles stab deep.
 White mist rises as virgin snow is sliced.
 The nylon skier slithers across the downy blanket leaving a zig zag crease.
 Sea of blue
 Desert of Whiteflashofgreen
 Face tingles muscles tense
 Breath of ice Sound of space Taste of cold
 The body descends the mind detached

DOWNSNOW

The mind ascends the body detached
Exhilaration . . . escapē

Skis halted.
Poles
planted.

DAVID DALEY
Class of 1974

First Place Story

MANUEL'S LAST TEMPTATION

"Actually, I was sure of myself, sure about everything, far surer than he; sure of my present life and of the death that was coming."

It was August 8. In seven days it would be the feast of the Assumption, and Manuel began preparations for his journey east to Chihuahua. It was a five day trip through the hot North Mexican plains that at this time of year were their hottest, but there was something about the cathedral and the big city that drew Manuel there annually. Certainly he attended mass in the tiny village south of his small adobe house whenever the priest came, but Manuel needed these trips to Chihuahua, if only to prove to himself that the outside world still existed. It was not that he was envious of the fast moving, modern life in the city or the city people with fancy clothes and automobiles; in fact he even preferred his simple way of life, but knowing that there was more besides himself and the villagers of San Maria del Rio gave him an inner feeling of satisfaction. Also, there were the cathedral and the high mass offered on the blessed feast day that did something indescribable to Manuel. He had lived his entire life in the Roman Catholic faith and had never thought to question it. To him God was someone who made him and had power over him so if he did not wish to burn for eternity, whatever that was, he had better follow the ten rules God gave him. This Manuel tried to do. It was in the cathedral though, in the ritual of the high mass, that Manuel truly perceived his religion. This was essential to a poor peasant for whom the

MANUEL'S LAST TEMPTATION

great pressures of living could not be assuaged by faith alone. The bishop who wore such regal garments, the majestic altar, the smell of the incense, and the chanting of the choir, all these brought forth some strange emotion in Manuel that he could feel manifest in the back of his neck and the tingling in his spine. It was as if God were present in the cathedral for all to sense. For these reasons Manuel took out two weeks a year from his small farm and much of his hard earned money to go on the pilgrimage.

It was evening now and Manuel came in to his meager house from the fields where he earned his living. Actually it was too big for him alone since the house was meant for a family of at least four. He had a wife once, but she died giving birth to Manuel's first son who had also died. After the incident Manuel prayed to God for the strength to overcome the tragedy, even though he could not understand why a God who loved him would permit such a thing to happen; but after all, God was all-powerful so Manuel stifled his doubts and lived and prayed on. It was after this that Manuel's trips to Chihuahua began.

He had already told his friend who grazed cattle near his farm to come by daily and see that his crops were irrigated, and now Manuel was laying out the two large water sacks to be filled tomorrow before he departed. Since there was no water between his home and Chihuahua, the skins had to hold enough for himself and his burro for the entire five day journey. Next he got out some money, food, and a few possessions he wanted to take along and then rolled them up in the blanket that would be his bed for the upcoming days. His preparations finished, he ate supper and then prayed in a corner of his hut before the small wooden crucifix which was mounted behind a clay vase full of wild flowers that Manuel

MANUEL'S LAST TEMPTATION

picked regularly. Naturally tonight he included a special prayer to St. Christopher for a safe and uneventful trip.

Manuel awoke early the next morning, ate, filled his water sacks, loaded up his burro, said a small prayer and departed for Chihuahua. As he left his home, the bright yellow disc of the sun had become complete over the horizon. Already the coolness of the night had dissipated, and the heat had reached proportions where only one who had lived his entire life in such a climate could continue. What little trail there was Manuel had all to himself since most life in Northern Mexico was carried on in a north-south direction, and few people ever journeyed east or west. In his four previous trips he met only one other traveler who seemed quite well-to-do but wasn't very sociable, however. Often, for lack of company, Manuel would have little conversations with himself, his burro, or with the things around him.

His first two days progressed uneventfully as he had beseeched St. Christopher. On the morning of the third day his travels began with sunrise as they had previously and throughout the morning his journey was quite routine. It was as the sun neared its zenith and the horizon in all directions was nothing more than a blur because of the intense heat waves, or false water as Manuel called them, that he got off his burro to ease its load in the sweltering heat. Manuel looked at the blurred image of the mountains off in the distant south and thought to himself that no matter where he went there always seemed to be mountains off on the horizon somewhere. At his home there was the large range in the west, today they were in the south, in Chihuahua they would be off to the southeast.

"You mountains are like the false water," he said to himself. "I always see you far away but can never reach

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you." He really wasn't sure if they existed since he had lived his entire life on the plains that were between all the mountains. "Well if you are or if you are not, I am glad to have you on this journey with me as these flat lands are not much company."

It was as he finished saying this that a rattlesnake struck out at his burro. Darting quickly to the left, the animal's right front leg slipped on a loose rock and buckled under its body, and the burro fell on its side. The snake slithered away as the burro fell upon the two water sacks bursting them, instantly sending the life sustaining water seeping into the desert sand. Manuel's lips quickly formed the familiar phrase "Jesus be with me." He soon saw this was not to be the case as the cries of his mule signified its pain. An examination revealed the protruding bone on the right leg which meant the only remedy was an end to its misery. Taking his knife Manuel cut along his friend's neck until the blood gushed freely and it died. Finding some boulders he covered up the carcass as best he could to protect it from the always persistent vultures which had already made their appearance from hell, or so Manuel presumed since that is the only place where such despicable creatures would be permitted to live. As the final portions of the body were covered, Manuel stepped back and said, "Please Jesus, whatever heaven You have for burros, please accept this one there also, as he has always done what I have asked and been faithful to me always. Amen."

It was now over an hour past Manuel's noon rest break and already his mouth was dry. Gathering what few possessions he deemed absolutely essential, he started off on foot. He walked till the sun was on the western horizon when he concluded rest was necessary. After eating some food he then

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cut into a large cactus to get what moisture he could. Manuel rested until the stars had become visible overhead and then refreshed himself from the cactus again. "You cactus will give me the strength I need to finish the journey," he said as he got up to continue on.

Manuel walked for about six hours into the night, conversing with himself most of the way about the stars, the desert night, and other elements of his world. He had already accepted God's new plan for him and had put the tragedy of that day out of his mind. It was after two o'clock when, overcome by weariness, he laid down to sleep.

When he awoke the next morning, Manuel realized his error in travelling at night: he had lost the trail. While drinking what he could from a cactus, he thought about his situation and concluded that the trail was more reliable in direction, and he had the slim possibility of meeting someone. So instead of heading east, he decided to get back on the trail. Looking at the mountains in the south, Manuel noticed that they seemed closer than yesterday so he reasoned that he had wandered off to the south during the night. "If you mountains are real or not, you have helped me find my way," he said while starting north confidently.

It was five hours later when Manuel realized that he must have been deceived by the mountains. Having already wasted enough time, he turned east and forgot about the trail as it was useless to him now. By this time his thirst was intense and could no longer be satisfied by the cactus. His strength was also greatly diminished, and he began to notice the effects of his weakness as he often stumbled and getting up became harder with each fall. "Please legs," he pleaded, "you must continue, please do this one thing for me."

Talking was evermore difficult because of the dryness in

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his mouth, and now Manuel was forced to stop every few minutes for the moisture of the cactus. "You cactus are real, and if I survive, it is because of you," he whispered. Manuel found himself praying more and more for the strength to go on, but he began to realize that it was up to his body in order for him to survive.

It was by late afternoon on the fifth day that Manuel fell and found himself unable to get up. "Why do you desert me in my time of need?" he questioned his body. "Why can you not continue for one more day?" But his body did not answer nor did it get up, so Manuel crawled until nightfall. The next morning he got up but had the strength to walk for only an hour. With the intense heat of noon, even crawling became impossible so that Manuel just sat by a cactus where he moistened the cracking skin of his lips and mouth. It was then that he saw the familiar black silhouette of the demon vultures circling in the sky overhead. "Get away," he shouted with what little strength he had, "you will get no nourishment from me." For the remainder of that day he lay there.

With the coolness of night he continued his walking, stumbling, crawling routine till daylight, when he found himself lying near another cactus, where he planned to spend the day. "Sun," he said as it climbed ever higher in the sky, "you are so like God, you are necessary for having life, but when you want you can take it also." Manuel again noticed his travelling companions, the vultures, but tried to ignore them since he would not allow their presence to discourage his struggle for survival.

"Perhaps it is all a dream," he said. "But what if it is," he replied as an after-thought, "the pain, agony, and despair are all real to me now and that is what matters." In his state of

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delirium Manuel did not notice that a vulture had lighted a few feet from him.

"Why don't you quit this senseless struggle Manuel?"

"Who is speaking to me?" Manuel replied with a start. Looking up all he saw was the vulture next to him. "It cannot be; I am being deceived again."

"Does it matter?" he heard the buzzard say. "I am asking you to stop this struggle for life in which you persist."

Realizing something supernatural about, Manuel quickly took the subordinate position at which the Mexican peasant is so expert. "But Señor vulture, what good would come of my quitting?"

"I would like to ask you, Manuel, what good has come of your life? Look at the pain and agony you suffer now, look at your past—a life of poverty and sorrow. There is no one who would even shed a tear if you were to die now."

"Señor, you look at pain and sorrow as things that should be always avoided, or that take away from life. I do not agree. I think they are a part of life, and it is one who has lived a life without them who is missing much more than I. Also, you forget that I had many happy and joyful times—my marriage, seeing my wife with child, working my fields, and many more; so I really did not live a life of poverty, but it was full of all the things that make up life."

"If you wish to look at it that way then you have lived life to its fullest, and there is no reason why you should go on."

"I think you are trying to confuse me, Señor. I admit that I am not a very smart man, but I do not think my life will be led to its fullest until I am dead. If you want a reason why I should continue to live, it is because I have enjoyed my life, and I think I will continue to enjoy it. Surely I am of a poor lot now, but I still believe being alive is good; and although I

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cannot put my reason into words, I prefer to lie here in pain and be with my friends the sun, the cactus, the mountains, and the land—all of which I am a part—than to die without a struggle. All my friends must struggle daily, the sun with the clouds, the cactus with the land, the mountains with the plains, and this is what their life is about. Even you must struggle with life for food to survive. If everything quit its struggle, there would be no mountains, no cactus, no sun, and you also would soon perish if there was no death for you to feed upon. Should I not also be expected to struggle for my life?"

"Suppose I were to tell you that I know you will not survive this ordeal."

"Señor, I have known for always that I would die in the future, so be it this afternoon or next year why should I stop now?"

". . . and if I were to tell you that your God for whom you persist in this folly does not exist. . ."

"If I am on the edge of death as you say, it is too late for me to do anything about that. He gave me strength in the past whether He was or whether He was not, just as the mountains gave me company whether they were, or whether they were like the false water. Also, this struggle is for my life, not God's."

"I have one more thing to say, Manuel, before I go back to the sky and watch your unsuccessful struggle. If I promise that neither I nor my friends will touch you if you submit willingly to death but will devour your flesh to the bone if you persist in your struggle, then will you give up?"

"Señor vulture, after I die my body will be like the rocks or desert sand; it will be useless to me."

With this the black demon took to the sky in a flurry. By

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now it was well into the afternoon, and Manuel again refreshed himself from the cactus and lay back to await the night when he could proceed to Chihuahua.

"*Padre nuestro, Que estas en los Cielos, . . .*" he started, but the words seemed to come more mechanically now than they had in the past.

As the last rays of the sun disappeared below the horizon, Manuel crawled on having totally dismissed the strange events of that day from his mind. He must have been dreaming or hallucinating. Through the night he crawled, and this unexpected burst of energy surprised even himself and rekindled his dwindling hopes.

With the approach of sunrise, though, Manuel stopped and realized he could not go on. It was as he made himself comfortable to wait out another day, that Manuel saw the twin spires of the cathedral at Chihuahua outlined against the dawn skies. He tried to shout for joy, but his parched throat bled from the strain and the cactus was of no help. When the sun had risen, Manuel again saw the vultures overhead and in his pain realized that the vulture was right—he would not survive, but still he held on tenaciously to his life.

Lying there on his back, his sight of the vultures obscured by the bright sun overhead, Manuel suddenly saw himself in the vestibule of the cathedral, and through its arched doorways he saw the large marble altar. As he viewed this, his words came back to him, "He gave me strength in the past whether He was or whether He was not," and he came to the realization that it was only his idea of God that mattered. Without Manuel there to believe, God, the mountains, the sun, the vultures, none would exist. All that mattered was his life, that he was living it and trying to hold on to it. If death should come, he had no control over it and would accept it as

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part of the natural order in his world.

By now the sun was well off in the west and just as a lone cloud blotted out its rays from Manuel, his hold on life lost its grip. The expression on the dead man's face was more of one who had just lost a good friend than someone who had died of thirst.

JOHN PETRO
Class of 1973

First Place Poem

THE MAN AND WOMAN CONFUSION

The song I sing
A tale of our trouble,
Woe of thy present,
Woes that will pang us
I sing of the sea-song,

Of dragons punctured,
The strain of peril,
And barks swept by the
Feet were all numbed
But love of woman,
Can keep me not
I sing of furrows turned,
Acres of barley broad,
The All Wielder, Lord Eternal,
Keep me worthy of eorl-trust; and my wife fertile.
Yea, I need a son, never more of the other—
And my woman had better make my son a brother.
His name shall be called Nicholas, man of dear love
and solace

And thereto he will sly and full privee be
And like a maid for to sec.

She was far more blissful for to see
Than is the sweet budding pear tree
Tasseled with silk and perled with latoun
Was this likerous wench, Alisoun.
But Absolon came, and left his mark

of sorrows unceasing—
the weight of our woe,
and woe of the past—
as long as we last.
of Naegling's splitting side
scream,

and Grendel killed,
the stress of toil,
boat-breaking sea.
with the biting cold,
or bestowal of treasure,
from salty whale-abode.
and by grace of God,
acres of wheat white,
and Erce—earthy mother,

THE MAN AND WOMAN CONFUSION

While hende Nicholas got the end, and ran into the dark
Leaving his 'labe and volumes for an epic lark.

He took the name of Knight of the Red Crosse,
Started escorting the Fair Lady, Fidessa,
Took a Sancho, Dwarfe, to keep his armour undross
And to warn him of the ways of sexy Duessa—
Taking him on crooked paths, that evil contessa
And vile woman, friend to Archimago:
Sorcerer beyond compare, sure to impress Ja.
Mother Church and Ave Maria; but Eve, ago,
Led Man to evil, and God sighed, "Ah. Go!"

And for today, men call their women fair,
Write her many names upon the washed strands,
Run hands through her hair and claim that they care
With sonnets, missives, and lute playing bands.
The ladies blush, twitter, and hide behind their fans.
After the repertory company has finished the act,
The courtiers lead damsels fair to dance,
Who, their favored men, untouching, attract,
While hoping for their epithalamic tract.
And our hero? He wonders how Duessa is in bed—
While hoping to get Satan for a pact.
Faintly, R. C.'s soul fills with awful dread
All too late realizing what he did,
And how he had lost his heavenly bid.

Romeo chased sweet Juliet to death,
Living his short spanned life one to die.
"My heart is yours" was his dying breath.
Now, side by side in a damp cool they lie.

THE MAN AND WOMAN CONFUSION

Led by her ever-promising beauty, he gave
His life for her unwanted face-burden.
She 'joyed her sight, not thinking of graves,
But Fate conspired, and stars brought all to end.
Noble Man chasing your mate through all time
Seduced by her wiles, led on by her allure.
But you can't win Heaven by practicing rhyme.
Rather, by St. Paul, avoid sex, stay pure,
Lead a good life, love your neighbor,
And God will prove to be no traitor.

Time falls swiftly by and we are slowly done.
A casual romance to her god, compassed
Only by his clothes, has its time long past.
Now she's looking after, tending for her son
Who knows what has been, to and for him, done.
His day flows with pleasant knowledge unasked
Of how to make a sweet trysting silence last,
And the best way to insure mutual fun.
Handy Nicholas, sensuous man, like you,
Has his moves and lines exceedingly well planned,
A beautif'ly developed body, tanned,
And his lover hits the bottle (she's aged two).
Love is but a game that will go unwon
Unless you both agree the other is the one.

But the debate on April is not yet done
Nor have our generals stopped predicting bomb run
Since the tootsie-roll gold is on their chest
They have no need to try their best
To end the wars—and their jobs

THE MAN AND WOMAN CONFUSION

Or to turn in their Cadillac fobs.
(Besides, a sabre, rifle or missile to most of us
Is an excellent symbol of/simile to a phallus.)

While Romeo Capulet's soul despaired of salvation
His corporeal form found the hard key to violation.
And, bless Archimago-Merlin, his sword found,
Unbound, and released Duessa's lips from the pound
Weight of the locked-well, secret belt
And she let her joy, unreservedly, undeservedly, be felt.
But the ocean's spray, Limpopo-like, flowed
Ashore. His salvation he had long since owed
But Fidessa stayed in the woods and prayed
While, in the wasteland of their bed, R. C. and Duessa
played.

By the Bible of St. John, Lennon: "Love is all you
need"
Which has been followed through ages by those of greed
And lust and perverted deed.

Now that paradise lost is, let one look
Today in any cranny or nook for a book,
Of secular cast, that tells of silver brook,
And lark, flowing gowns, and high love that lasts;
Without "But I can't." "Why?" she asks,
And, in yielding, he ruins the future's forecast by
their pasts.

MARK C. HARPER
Class of 1973

Second Place Story

TURNABOUT

The black pickup camper rumbled down the red dirt road. Two plumes of red dust trailed behind it. The man in the truck drove with ease. As one sun-burned arm hung out the window, his eyes searched for the place he wanted along the stream. The man crossed a cattle-guard and did not heed its meaning. As the truck roared past, it spooked a small herd of herefords. The cattle ran in the blind, dumb way only stupid cattle can. Stampeding through a wash, one would break its leg. The coyotes would not need to chase rabbits that night.

A mile past the cattle the man found the place he wanted. He slowed and turned the truck, and wrenched the gears into reverse. Backing up over two seedling pines, he stopped. Reaching for his new Stetson, the man slid down out of the cab. He wiped his face with a handkerchief and stuffed it back into the pocket of his new jeans. The day was very hot and and the man thought he would like a beer.

The man's name was Joseph B. MacArthur, and he was very pleased with the camping place he had found. Joe didn't look much different from other men in his society. Perhaps he was shorter than most, and maybe not as grey, but sill pretty much the same as others. Somchow, though, his plumpish body seemed odd for the cowboy clothes he wore: a poodle dressed up as a wolf.

Joe went around to the back of the camper and got his beer. He carried the beer down through the pines to see the stream. He sat at the base of a big tree and watched the water flow. Popping the tab off the can, he tossed it into the swirling water. Joe watched as it tumbled down in the

TURNABOUT

sparkling flow, flashing over the clean-washed stones. At the base of the riffle, a small trout would see it. Mistaking it for a minnow, the fish would strike and swallow it.

The late afternoon sun slanted down over the red rimrock, looking hazy and dust-laden as it flowed through the trees. Joe relaxed back against the tree and drank his beer. He smoked a Player's and thought about how he would enjoy himself tomorrow. Then he got up to go make camp. He dragged back a dead sapling he found to make a fire. He didn't really need it—his camper had a butane stove and heater—but Joe liked a good fire.

Joe went inside the camper and took out a steak and another beer. He put the steak in the oven and opened the beer. He opened a can of spaghetti and a can of beans and poured them in a pan, all mixed up. He turned on the gas and went outside and sat on the fender of his truck. Joe watched the stream. It was twilight now, and you could see the little bats swooping up and down over the water, diving for the insects of the evening hatch. Joe smoked another cigarette, there on the truck fender, and thought about how he was at peace for the first time in a long time. Then he went inside and ate his meal.

After he finished, he threw the garbage behind a bush and set the dead tree on fire with kerosene. He drank a cup of coffee laced with cognac and listened to the continuous "neek-breek," "neek-breek" of the tiny bugs along the water's edge. Joe thought that this was all very fine. Later, when he went to bed, he could see the moon shining off the high peaks, through the jalousied windows of the camper. He thought that was very fine too, and then the clouds covered it up. Joe went to sleep.

He woke up. There was a humming, buzzing sound close to

TURNABOUT

his ear. He had not drawn the screens over the window, and now there was a mosquito inside. Joe knew that when he woke in the morning his face would be lumpy with bites. He scooted down to the bottom of his eiderdown bag and went back to sleep.

The sun was already getting hot when Joe got up, but the grass was still wet. Joe knew it would be a good morning. He fried some spam and eggs for breakfast. He mixed cheese and onions in with the eggs because that was the way he liked them. He ate and then he got ready to go fishing. He put on his vest and his waders, and he took his split-bamboo fly rod out of its metal case and checked his fly book. The rod read "Orvis" and the fly book "Abercrombie and Fitch." Joe looked at the flies in the book. He chose a small streamer tied with badger and woodcock. He thought that it would work well, though he really knew that up here anything would work. He stuck a package of "pop-tarts" in his vest and clumped down to the stream to begin his day of fishing.

By the end of the day he had worked his way well up the little river and nearly back again. In his creel he had some small brookies and some rainbows, and one of the rainbows weighed two pounds. He was tired and he wanted a drink, but this last pool just looked too good. There was a long stretch of riffles that were almost rapids leading into it, and it was very deep, so deep it looked almost black. Near the end of the pool there was a dead tree in the water. It was a very old tree, and it had been in the water a very long time. It appeared very sinister as the evening shadows lengthened, its black, slimy branches twisting above the surface of the water. Joe sat in the moss on the bank and waited. After a while the surface of the water began to dimple with the rising of the trout. Then Joe saw the big one. It came up slowly,

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magnificently, to a may fly that had landed on the surface. He could see the full flash of its long silver body, and he thought that maybe it was the biggest trout he had ever seen. He was nervous now, shaking more from excitement than from the icy cold of the water, as he waded out into the riffles.

But still he cast slowly and well, looping out the false casts. The fly landed without slapping the water. He played out its drift, directing it over the hole beneath the tree. Nothing. The man made a smooth pickup and cast again, and once again the plastic floating line carried the lure past the tree. This time there was a small tug on the line, but the man knew instinctively that it was the strike of a small trout and not the heavy, full-bodied lunge he desired to feel. The man yanked up his rod, and the small fish came flying out of the water. Angrily he grabbed it and pulled the fly out, together with a few pieces of torn gill. The man tossed the fish into the bushes on the bank and started casting again. This time the big fish took. Feeling the burning sting of the barbed hook, it rose heavily out of the water and came splashing down on its side. The fight raged up and down the pool for nearly twenty minutes, but in the end the fish's natural strength was no match for the inanimate power of the man's nine-foot rod. The fish finned tiredly near the man's boots, its gills working furiously back and forth. The man grasped his net and stretched it out, while he balanced on one leg in the swift current. The fish made its last dash for freedom and the man, already tilting, lost his balance and hit the water. He tumbled down the stream, already sinking as the waders began to fill with water. Instinctively the man raised his knees, trapping the air inside his waders, and bobbed to the surface. Now he was calm. He knew all he had to do was float

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down the length of the pool and crawl out in the shallows. It was then that he noticed the moving line on the water. The fish was still on. Perhaps it could be recovered after he got on shore. Then he screamed as, carried by the current, he smashed into the mossy blackness of the old tree. The waders ripped, and cold water rushed in. The man scrambled at the slimy branches, trying to gain a hold, but it was no good. The heavy weight of the water-filled waders dragged him under, and he sank towards the bottom. Holding his last breath, he shucked the waders and swam desperately upward—right into the tangle of his own unbreakable line. The fish had returned to beneath the tree, bringing the trailing line with it. Wrapped inescapably in the line through his own furious thrashing, unable to break free, Joseph MacArthur quit. And as his dead body flowed back and forth with the living stream, his glazed and sightless eyes watched the little bats diving and swooping.

RICHARD P. KING
Class of 1976

Second Place Poem

PHANTASYLAND

"I'm entering the second sphere, . . ."
V.F. Khodasevich: "A Variation"

let's journey to phantasyland
(you&i)
my under-fed heart aches more each day-by-day
we've been sleeping & longing far too much and
all my world's getting lost in a hazy gray
why not come with me?: and i'll set you free—
we have . . . (& i'm tired of their lies and censure)
blankets of illusions
covering just we
you need a wind-in-the-face venture
(*daring!)
so again we make heretic liberty
forgetting the "Evil" of all our seething
slipping past rules of righteous antiquity
silence rent only by our rasp-hard breathing
searching azure stars while walking in the sand
euphoria found now in phantasyland

JAMES A. MCCLURE
Class of 1974

Third Place Story

THE LONG TWILIGHT

I

A brilliant tropical sun beat down on the city, causing heat to radiate upwards from the pavement and buildings. In an alleyway near the city's hub, Malendo stood flat against a shaded wall. He had time to think now, and to plan an escape from death.

Malendo was not a religious man. He worshipped nothing except his own meteoric rise to power. His star had fallen, however, in an equally precipitous manner. Now he was the most hunted man on the whole island, and could blame only himself.

He was close to 50, but his curly black hair gave him a younger countenance than his years indicated. Malendo was a big man, just over 6 feet tall with broad, powerful shoulders. His Paris-white silken suit betrayed him as one of the elite. It was a perfect target for the rage of the mob.

Indeed, he could hear the mob now, down in the Plaza de Armas about a quarter of a mile from his hidden alley. The chanting and roars of enthusiasm confirmed his worst fears—they must have apprehended some of the other worthies of the government before they got out of the harbor, and brought them back into the city for a public show before execution. Malendo slid his back down the wall until he sat on the edge of the alley's storm drain, and struck up a cigarette. The center stage act of the people's hideous little show in the square was still on the loose. Malendo wanted to keep it that way.

He had led a stormy life, drifting from the sugar plantations to the army, and finally, by revolution two

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decades earlier, he had become El Presidente's strong right hand. He controlled the army, the secret police, and the minds (if not the hearts) of the people throughout the island. But now the hated barbudos, the "bearded ones" from the central mountains had taken the capital with a lightning attack, and together with bribed army officers had turned the government into isolated groups of hunted fugitives. The people had risen against El Presidente's corrupt regime, and now, El Presidente was gone. He had fled west to Mexico, taking with him a sizeable chunk of the treasury, and leaving Malendo alone to face the retribution of the mob. Malendo's career as master of terror was at a close.

After a few minutes of contemplation, he rose and flipped the half-smoked cigarette absently into the gutter. Malendo was rested now, his eyes alert, his motions quick and measured. He padded softly to the alley's entrance and surveyed the street. The alley ran between two of the grand boulevards radiating out from the Praedo. There was no recourse but to take the Calle Empedrado, the boulevard which he had just entered. He swung right, away from both the Praedo and the Plaza de Armas, and began a long slow walk to the edge of the city.

The revolution and bloodshed had encouraged little business this day, and most quarters of the city were deserted. There were no automobiles on the boulevard, and none of the barbudos' troop trucks were in sight. Malendo had left his suitcoat and tie in the alley, and now from a distance looked like a rather well-to-do paisano, his open collar flapping lazily in the afternoon seabreeze.

For all this look of innocence, Malendo's mind was fiercely coming to grips with the problem of escape. A break for the harbor was a fool's move. It would be the best-guarded of all

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routes out of the city. The way Malendo was travelling would take him to San Ignacio at the eastern outskirts of the city, from whence he could easily disappear into the coastal forest. This would be best, as Malendo was sure he could find an illiterate peasant to shelter him, one who would not know his face. All he needed was time. . . .

A shrill scream broke the stillness of the languid air. As the scream died, it seemed to drain away Malendo's anonymity. He inwardly prepared for action and turned to view the author of such a noise, knowing in his guts that the scream was directed at him.

There, just outside a small shop door and still clutching her broom for support, was a poor, shriveled up example of womanhood. She was grayhaired and plain of face, except for the wrinkles, long and deepset, which suggested experiences with sorrow beyond her years. She was perhaps fifty, and she was pointing a stumpy finger right at Malendo.

"The devil!" she cried. "Manuel!" Here is the black one who took our son and murdered him on the Wall! Murderer! Satan!" She fell to her knees, sobbing hysterically. At this juncture, a large beefy shopkeeper stepped through the door with a sinister-looking machete, the kind used in the cane fields. His look of suspicion changed to open rage as he saw Malendo scarcely a dozen feet away.

"Malendo!" he bellowed hoarsely. All the doorways on both sides of the boulevard began to fill with curious and annoyed people. "Malendo, I kill!"

With these words, the beefy man rushed forward. For a second, Malendo remained fascinated by the situation. Once again, his visage had been recognized as the symbol of all things evil and miserable that happened to the oppressed people. Perhaps this was true, Malendo thought; he had sent

enough people to the Wall in his day. But he wasn't going to lose his life over such an argument now. He turned tail on the beefy man and fled down the street.

Malendo easily outdistanced him, but found that the street was now filling with people well aware of his identity and obsessed with the idea of watching him roast. He easily managed to dodge several half-awake peons, but a butcher with a long, blood-soaked apron finally brought him down with a powerful choke hold. Malendo knew now that struggle with a powerful choke hold was useless as he felt countless hands grasping his sweating body. He began to feel himself being pulled apart, and cursed the crowd for its brainless cruelty. He was a proud man, and determined now to die proudly without giving this filth a show of fear or cowardice. A man's voice, perhaps that of the beefy shopkeeper, cried "To the Praedo! Save him for the Plaza!"

With that the crowd took up the chant, and began to half-drag, half-carry Malendo back up the Calle Empedrado. He tried to keep his arms in front of his face to ward off the occasional blows and stones which hit him. One stone found its mark on Malendo's right cheek just off the corner of his short-clipped moustache, and he immediately began to feel the warm, sticky flow of blood on his mouth. The crowd seemed to derive much pleasure from this act; perhaps they weren't exactly sure before that he would bleed as other, less terrifying men do. This sign of mere mortality spurred the crowd on to a quicker pace as they approached the center of town.

An intensifying of the sunlight and the growing tumult of noise from the crowd indicated to Malendo that they had reached the Praedo, the very heart of the great city. He could not see around the people who held him, but he was sure this

was so. Soon, as word spread through the great square that Malendo was captured, a detachment of the barbudos broke through the ring of people and secured him with ropes. The barbudos were the true revolutionaries and knew how dangerous and resourceful Malendo could really be. They held him fast with a guard of a dozen armed and trusted men. Malendo looked at these men in their green fatigues and admired them, for they had beaten his secret police and bribed his army officers, but he also hated them from the very depths of his soul. In the center of the square, a man was addressing the crowd.

"My countrymen, here is the man who for twenty years executed your loved ones and stole your money!" A roar from the crowd ensued. Malendo was held aloft by his guards now, and could see his antagonist. The man was a barbudo, and judging from his appearance, probably their leader. Yes, it was Santini; the aquiline features, the gestures, the cigar, all as Malendo had read a dozen times in the police dossier. But he was speaking again.

"El Presidente has escaped. He has taken most of your hard-earned money with him, but he has left us his greatest treasure of all!" With that he pointed straight at Malendo, and the crowd roared its approval, pressing in on the guards from all sides. In their eyes he saw the same animal hatred and fear that he had seen a thousand times in the eyes of men he had sent to death.

"This monster took thousands of lives on the Wall of El Magullar. Let us take his life at that place. . . today!" Santini was finished, and jumped down from the central fountain. Indeed, he could not have said more, for the roar from the crowd was deafening.

"El Magullar! El Magullar!" The mauler. The prison was

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out on the lonely peninsula that guarded the harbor. Malendo felt a slight chill despite the heat, for he knew he was going to die there.

Santini moved towards the Presidential Palace on the far side of the Praedo. He had washed his hands of the whole affair. His men and the crowd would do what justice demanded.

With their burden, the barbudos moved slowly on across the square to the Via Cruce. This boulevard angled down to the bay, and as they moved, the crowd was joined by others who had grown tired of the sport in the Plaza de Armas. At the docks a small ferry was made ready, and with great difficulty, the prisoner and his guards managed to separate themselves from the frenzied crowd. The craft began to make way for the forlorn and rugged little peninsula across the bay, and most of the thousands left on the quay began to move off around the curve of the harbor on foot to try and reach El Magullar before the execution took place.

In the ferry, Malendo was promptly lashed to the towing block where he was blinded by the setting sun's fierce reflection off the water. In a few minutes, however, the vessel had come under the shadow of the mountainous peninsula, and Malendo mechanically turned his eyes towards the looming fortress above.

El Magullar had been built by the Spaniards three hundred years previously, along with her sister fortress, La Fuerza. They had never fired against foreign invaders, yet the number of native patriots killed by Spaniards at these fortresses was awesome, as was the number of patriots killed by other patriots since independence had been gained. Malendo considered himself a patriot of the highest order.

As the boat touched shore, Malendo was unbound

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immediately except for his wrists and led up the long unpaved Calle Amargura—the Street of Sorrow. In twenty minutes they reached the crest of the hills which terminated at land's end and became cliffs. Here stood El Magullar.

Malendo was ordered to sit in the dirt of the road while a half-dozen rifles were directed in his general direction. The lieutenant in charge of the detail was discussing Santini's "brilliant plan" with the captain whose forces had captured El Magullar earlier that same day. The two agreed that Malendo would be shot on the Wall as soon as the last political prisoners were processed out and set free. By then the crowd would have arrived to sanction the proceedings and make heroes out of the officers involved.

His head raised arrogantly in the air, Malendo finally had a chance to survey his surroundings.

The sun had just set, and the short, tropical twilight was already on the wane. The way up had been bordered with rocks and gorse bushes, but here around El Magullar stood small groves of mimosa trees, pleasing to the eye. On the headland at the far side of the fortress, he could make out the tall, elegant palm trees which had been planted before the Spaniards had left. These trees were famous, and could be found depicted on postcards sold all over the Caribbean. They were still now in the breezeless twilight, as still as death.

Malendo turned and looked south, back along the length of the peninsula. Beyond the groves of papayas, perhaps a mile distant, the first of the crowd could be seen, their numbers undiminished by the steepness of the climb. He smiled coldly. They were all coming, everyone in the city who could put one foot in front of the other, just to see if Malendo could really die. And he would—but just a little

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differently than anyone else ever had. Malendo knew what he had to do.

The barbudo captain approached Malendo and stopped directly over him, his feet planted a full yard apart, and stared down at his undaunted captive. Malendo returned the gaze until the captain broke off, turning his eyes hastily toward the coming crowd to hide his unease. Malendo's lip curled into a slight smile; his gaze had always unnerved those who feared him, and the fact that he was a captive made not the slightest difference. The captain turned back to Malendo, but now stared into the ground at his feet.

"Evil one, we must prepare for your execution before the crowd takes that privilege into its own hands." Here the captain straightened and looked again into Malendo's eyes. "To the Wall with you," he said evenly, and turned brusquely away.

An NCO began to bark commands, and Malendo's guards gingerly prodded him into a standing position. The little cluster of guards and captive began to move as one along the final 30 yards to El Magullar.

The Wall which all knew so well was the one landward wall of the tiered and bastioned fortress. The remaining walls gave El Magullar its pentagram-shaped outline, and were bordered by the foliated cliffs running down to the mouth of the bay. Only the languid palms along the windward wall rose higher than the edifice itself. The Wall was guarded along its entire length by a ditch well grown over by beach grass, yet still 15 feet wide as well as deep. A path wide enough for a man to walk ran between the Wall and the ditch for its entire length, and it was to this path that Malendo was quickly shuttled. His captors marched him across the drawbridge spanning the ditch and in single file took the path until Malendo stood at

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the center point of the bullet-ridden Wall. Here he was left, for with his hands bound and his guards at either end of the path, there was no escape, only the hastily-mustered firing squad in front of him, and the ditch below. Malendo had steeled himself for this from the moment of his capture. He knew the Wall and all it meant for him, but he would not lose his bearing. It was a small, almost senseless thing now, yet it was all he had left. Malendo stood ramrod straight, his massive shoulders set unhunched beneath his dirty silk shirt. His guards saw that he seemed relaxed even in this situation, for there was no quaking of muscles or fearful countenance as they had seen in the other maleficos rounded up this day. The barbudos were uneasy.

Behind the firing line, the droves of people were being held by a platoon of barbudos and disloyal troops who had just arrived from La Fuerza Castle, several miles up the leeward coast of the peninsula. The crowd was continuously swelling, for the not-so-fast were still arriving in small groups from the forest's edge. In the darkening twilight, the shouting, undulating mass appeared as a long, menacing snake to Malendo, a brainless serpent without head or tail. The white of the cheap cotton which most of the people wore seemed faintly luminescent, and contrasted with the dark green fatigues of the barbudos. Ten thousand eyes were fixed on Malendo, thirsty eyes waiting to drink up the revenge of decades. Malendo stared, fascinated. He had stood on El Presidente's balcony half a hundred times and watched the scanty crowds in the Praedo cheer their rulers; but never had he seen such emotion, such savage fervor as he now felt emanating from this crowd, a throng with a barely controlled passion for blood. His blood.

It was probably the jagged ditch more than the barbudos

which held the crowd back, and Malendo turned his attention to the now-black pit at his feet. Dimly, he could see the shine of the rust mold and white mushrooms which grew on the eternally cool north slope of the ditch. The end was close at hand; he could feel it. His mind began to wander in thoughts of years past. His years on the sugar plantations, his army days, a myriad of memories. Malendo looked deeper into the pit. Below the fungus slope, all was in the coming night's shadow. "Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. . . ." Malendo smiled. He feared nothing, not even his own impending doom. Dying meant little so long as he felt that he had reached the height of enjoyment and power. He was a self-made man, a ruthless and cruel individual who had sampled all the passions of life. Perhaps Malendo's lust for life was his only vulnerability—a lustless life of boredom would have killed him just as surely as the firing squad across the ditch. An existence without people to subjugate and minds to control was the only form of torture he knew he could not endure. Malendo at once pictured himself behind prison walls in just such an unthinkable environment, and shuddered for the first and last time of his life. His nerve quickly returned as he realized that this outer wall of El Magullar was the closest he would ever come to a prison.

The firing line came to attention and dressed down its rank. As if by some hidden signal, the crowd slowly began to quiet down and cease fidgeting. Malendo looked up, took a deep breath, and closed his eyes for a few seconds. To his left, footsteps on the path. A smooth, heavy stride.

"Don Malendo," came the deep cultured voice. Malendo turned and opened his eyes to see a major of his own army, a man of his own class who obviously was now with the

barbudos. Malendo at once felt a deep disgust for the man, but this feeling just as quickly dissolved into one of calm relief; here was a man like himself, and he felt a kind of awkward camaraderie.

The major felt it too, for he gave a slight, weary smile and touched his cap in salute. "Don Malendo, the execution will take place momentarily. Your body will be recovered by my troops and placed in an unmarked grave. Have you a last request, Sir?"

Malendo had decided on his final request while he sat on the road before El Magullar. It was a gamble, but his pride demanded the attempt. "Major," he began evenly, "I commanded firing squads at the Wall as a young teniente. I sent men to the Wall as a Minister of the government. I request to die proudly, as I lived. Allow me to give the commands at my own execution."

Their eyes met for a long moment, spanning years of service, hatred, and respect. At last, the major spoke.

"I grant your request, Don Malendo. Have your final moment of pride on this earth. It is your due. But may you burn in hell for all eternity!"

The major turned and brusquely quick-stepped along the path to the drawbridge. He crossed, strode to the end of the firing line, and hastily briefed the squad. There was an awkward moment of uncertainty until the squad understood the procedure, and the crowd began to murmur. Finally, the major stepped aside, and gave a curt nod to Malendo.

Malendo took a long, deep breath. Inside his mouth, he could taste the coppery flavor of blood mixed with fear. This seemed much like placing a revolver to one's head and pulling the trigger; but at the same time, it was in a way thrilling, and made Malendo feel that he was to an extent the master of his

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fate. He took another deep breath, flexed his knees, and knew he was ready.

"Detail, present arms!" Ten rifles came up to ten shoulders as if they were one. His voice had been commanding, and the crowd was now deathly silent, either from respect, or fear, or both.

"Take aim!"

In the dim evening light, not a man stirred. The wildlife on the entire headland was frozen in the dusky light of the western sky. Time had seemed to stop.

"Fire!"

In unison with the command, ten black barrels spit out death. Malendo's shirt seemed to jump out from his body, and he was immediately rammed into the wall. Slowly, his knees buckled and he began to fall forward into the black trench. For a brief moment, he could hear a triumphal roar leap from the crowd; then a roar inside his own ears blotted out all else. A tight vise seemed to crush his throat; then all was black and without meaning, for Malendo's mind had quickly followed his heart into death.

II

It was cold here.

The air was cold yet dry and sharp enough to keep away the bite of a chill. Malendo opened his eyes, tried to focus them, but all was glazy around him. He closed them, knowing that he was beyond life—his death had been too violent, too unimaginable to have been a dream. Besides, he somehow sensed an element of stillness completely alien to him, a stillness completely devoid of even the warmth or smell or vibrations of life. Utterly, entombingly still.

He opened his eyes again.

The dull aching gray patterns in his head resolved themselves slowly into colors, and finally a crystal-clear

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picture emerged. For several minutes, he lay there motionless, staring blankly. Then a realization of his surroundings suddenly broke through from the back of his mind.

He was in the nave of a cathedral.

The shock of finding anything of his lost world here was numbing, and for a moment he thought that he might have only been wounded at El Magullar. But who would have rescued him and brought him to a cathedral? No man on earth could have saved him. His memories of the shots and the ripping bullets in his heart came back again, and drove all thought of rescue from his mind. Besides, the stillness was unearthly, the silence deafening.

Malendo was lying on the floor of a great cathedral. He moved his arms from his chest where they were crossed and rose to a kneeling position. He could feel the cool, glassy marble floor, but could neither feel nor find a trace of his wounds. The cathedral then took his attention.

The bosses locked along the peaks of the arches were very high. Perhaps a hundred feet, perhaps a thousand Malendo could not gauge the distance, for the pointed arches were almost buried in a veil of fog. The rib vaulting came gracefully down to well-carved gothic pillars set out from the walls of the nave. Malendo was equidistant from both walls, and found that he could easily judge the size of the floor level. He was about ten feet from either wall. Turning now to examine the length of the nave, Malendo found at either end a concave wall of fluted columns covered with a somber gold filigree. Far above near the arches was a Romanesque wheel window of stained glass. It was obscured by the mist.

In the center of each end wall was a massive wooden door instead of the usual altar. Such a thing seemed unnatural, but that really didn't surprise him about this place. What did

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surprise him, however, was the voice from behind.

"The atmosphere of these places never ceases to amaze me."

Malendo whirled and came to his feet in the same motion. Barely five paces away stood a man of Malendo's height and massive build. Uneasily, he felt the hard gaze in his eyes and returned it, but for the first time in his memory such a level gaze seemed to look disdainfully *down* into his own eyes. To avoid being literally sucked into those huge black pupils, Malendo hastily examined the stranger.

His Vandyke and moustache blended well with the black Edwardian suit; indeed, the stranger could have been the king himself. Except for those eyes.

"Who are you?" came Malendo's first inevitable question.

"I will answer your second inevitable question first," said the stranger just before Malendo asked where he was. "You are within the haven of your god." His eyes gave the nave a disdainful glance.

Malendo, for once in his fast-paced existence, was slow to answer. Finally he almost whispered, "Do you mean I am in heaven?"

"Remember I said haven, not heaven. But I guess you could put it that way, though." His accent was that of a Briton.

Malendo let that answer set. "Who are you?" he asked again.

"I have been known by many names to many men. I am called Ishtar, Thoth, or Typhon. But perhaps you know me better as Mephistopheles, Beelzebub, or Satan."

Malendo just stared. El diablo. The King of Warlocks, the Master of Darkness. To argue the existence of such a creature was useless, for his own existence had ended some indeterminable time ago. Whatever he found here, he must

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prepared for it. Malendo mustered his poise, and concentrated on the situation from behind close-knit eyebrows.

This was something he had not wished to contend with. Actually, he had given little thought to any kind of afterlife, but apparently there was some truth to the time-distorted legends of his world. And, of course, there had been the very real and dangerous voodoo practices. As a child on the sugar plantation he had seen men sent to the grave by the black magicians. Here perhaps was the most powerful necromancer of all. Perhaps.

Malendo was quick to see the issue, as usual. "Why have you come for me?"

Satan cleared his throat. "I have come to make a bargain. Naturally I want your soul, but alas, you are well protected here, as this is part of the realm of your god."

"Not *my* God, demonio," was Malendo's automatic reply. "But why am I here?"

"That's easy enough to figure out, isn't it?" Lucifer's lips dipped ever so slightly into a condescending smile. "By derivation, religion means a bonding between man and his god. The cathedral is a link of this bond, the material link established by your god for all time."

The answer seemed acceptable, but Malendo remained on guard. "Why do you speak of Him as my God: I know Him not, but I do know that He is superior to the shadow of darkness."

Satan's face turned the slightest tinge of green. "My dear fellow, you forget an important fact. Mine is a religion far older than any other in existence on earth. I am a god in my own right, for I was worshipped tens of thousands of years before your god was even realized. I have been revered down

through man's history, and I will have adherents long after the relics of your god have turned to dust. Do you understand this?"

"I have seen your elements at work far more industriously than God's. That is, if you truly rule the force of all things evil."

"I *am* that force, and you know it. Remember the voodoo arts on your own island; you never truly believed, but there were many enigmas and inexplicable events surrounding the black magic. At least you let voodoo go its dark way unmolested. You do not believe in your god either, but he has claimed you by birthright and holds you here."

"Birthright? But I have never believed," was the indignant reply.

"True and admirable," said Satan cosily, "but long before you were free to determine, your impoverished parents had you baptized. The ceremony is merely ritualistic; however, in the afterlife it is binding. But my point is this: I am a god coequal in my necromancy with yours. You may exercise a choice now, between his domain or mine, and the baptismal rites will no longer be binding. Come from his protection and I promise you a rather more interesting eternity than you will find under his eye."

Malendo smiled. "The old roots are deep. All I know of your realm is the pain and horror."

"Nonsense!" Satan cried. "You are a man of substance and earthly pleasures, are you not? My cult is selfish and brutal, but so are you! We worship desires by partaking of the fleshy pleasure! Lust, sadism, all the perversions are waiting below for you!" Satan was working up a sweat at the top of his balding head.

"Those pleasures I want for free, demonio, without your eternity of torment."

Satan began to pout. "There's a price to everything, you know."

"A price I am not prepared to pay. Leave me, and let me explore my new world. There are others here like me, I am sure."

"Bah! I daresay you are better acquainted with those who have gone my way. Besides, there are not so many souls in the kingdom of your god as you may expect. All those you would expect to find below are there, along with many surprises. All of the fine stoic Romans and Greeks who worshipped Typhon or Saturn are mine, for those deities are two of my more ancient faces." Satan was becoming more relaxed as he recounted his triumphs down through the ages. "Who do you think created flies and pestilence for Moses to use against the Egyptians? Or pandered for the papal wives and mistresses during the Middle Ages? Or who indeed was the founding father of the anti-popes in Avignon?"

Malendo had educated himself in the Western cultures, and hardly believed any of this drivel. In point of fact, he really didn't care. But Satan's voice was the only break in the entombing stillness of the nave. Malendo really wanted him to keep talking just to dispel his own unease. Satan readily obliged him.

"The list by no means ends there! I was worshipped by your holy Knights Templar in fourteenth century France. I was Jonathan Swift's ghostwriter and Percy Shelley's tormentor. I possessed Nietzsche and damned Oscar Wilde! I am Dorian Gray and the Steppenwolf! I permeate the shadow of all minds in your world!" Satan was breathless with excitement.

Malendo had no way of gauging how true these claims were, but Lucifer's ranting was beginning to get on his nerves.

Besides, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was one of his favorite novels, and he resented this creature's pretentious claim to authorship. Malendo let down his guard. He wanted to explore the realm of this afterlife.

"Go away and play your game with a more gullible soul."

In a second, Malendo knew he had made a mistake. The creature had lulled him into a false sense of security. All at once, Satan was looming up over him, blotting out the rest of the nave.

"It is time for what the gringos on your island call the 'hard sell,'" came a deep, pounding voice from Satan's throat. His eyes were afire as he placed his hands on Malendo's shoulders, palms up. A faint smell of brimstone now pervaded the cold air, and Malendo noted detachedly that Satan had hair growing from the center of his palms. Now his eyes were captured by Satan's.

The demon began to speak slowly, in a low, rumbling tone. "*In nomine Dei nostri Satanas Luciferi excelsi!* In the name of Satan, the Ruler of the Earth, the King of the World, I command ye to succumb to the powers of darkness!"

"No!" came a weak cry from Malendo. He was mesmerized, a sensation he had never felt before.

"I open wide the gates of Hell and come forth from the Abyss to greet you as a brother! Let me bring you into my dark dominions!"

"No!" still weaker.

"By the Gods of the Pit, I command that these things of which I speak shall come to pass!"

Malendo could make no noise, for the vise-like grip of death seemed again to be at his throat. Somehow he managed to stagger backwards and fell against one of the columns where an image of Christ was cut into the filigree. It was

warmer here, and the creature did not appear anxious to approach the Christ figure.

Almost at once, Satan began to lose his towering height, and the eyes cooled down again to black coals. He stepped back, his face now emotionless and dry.

"Very well, fool," Satan sneered. "Go forth and see your god's salvation! Remember this: He will treat you with whatever you deserve. He perhaps knows how to torture you even better than I!"

With that he turned away. After a second, a sable pentagram began to form on the floor under his feet. Smoke arose from the pentagram, enveloping Satan. Malendo dimly saw a clenched fist rise from the smoke and heard a loud "Shemhamforash! Hail Satan!" Then the smoke was gone, and Malendo was alone. Only the pentagram remained.

Malendo walked slowly out into the center of the floor. He did not know how to take the creature; at any rate he was glad Satan had left only his little symbol. The nave was truly beautiful, he finally realized, but he was ready to take his leave of it. Malendo strode confidently to the closest of the two doors and reached for the handle. Surprisingly enough, the huge wooden portal swung outward effortlessly, without so much as a groan. At his feet, he noticed that the mosaic floor pattern continued out beyond the door. Malendo looked up.

Beyond the door was the nave of a cathedral.

The silence became deafening as he realized his destiny. A furious rage flashed through his mind, a rage born of futility. Malendo ran to the other end of his own nave and wrenched the massive door open.

There was another nave. At the far side of it, he could see that another one of the hateful doors was slightly ajar.

THE LONG TWILIGHT

Through it he could see yet another cathedral nave.

Ad infinitum.

An eternity sentence in a maximum security prison.

One thought came back again and again in Malendo's broken mind:

"He perhaps knows how to torture you even better than I!"

In the center of the floor behind him, the pentagram began to smoke.

JON ELLER
Class of 1973

Third Place Poem

DOES SILENCE IN A SYMPHONY OF SORROW

does silence in a symphony of sorrow
hammer the mute rhythms of his senses,
the muffled flesh of grief, with unkind chords;
or, hung raw in ocean air, does water's
voice sing the salty bobbing of a corpse
with an unblemished bellyful of weeds?

does music spurn the random, loving fingers
of the sea, where they read time's signature
like sullen braille in muzzle-tongued relief;
does a spark of song leap the finger's gap,
naked, to settle on his wine-dark grave?

does a hollow wind in a pageant of thorns
secure a gag of sand with its numb embrace?

do waves of words break on the shores of silence?

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

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RIFLE COMP

My seed of death
Roared slowly through the virgin target.
I'd aimed my gun carefully—
Dreamed sweetly of the shock—
And felt the strength of the charge as it left me—
Jerking my whole being

But what of the dimly seen target,
What did she feel?

MARK C. HARPER
Class of 1973

HUNG LIKE A LOVER

hung like a lover—
man
over his sax
stirs the swelling rush
with eager hips
to a tangled surge
of notes

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

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to



SO MANY PIGEONS

They perch in public places,
Like so many pigeons.
Loved just as much.
Their voices drift through transitions,
Their children too busy to follow.
The cold sun sets,
And walking to his house
After a long day
In his past,
An old man waves to
A passing bus driver.

MARK V. SCARDINA
Class of 1974

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MARIONETTE

scattering smiles
fir-headed
son of man
turns
a stiff-jointed jig
with clumsy strings

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

AT THE FLICK OF A THUMB

At the flick of a thumb
Or the twist of a coin
Mister
And ma'am
Or the flip of a card
Dangle
You do
At the end of a thread
Attending a penny's pleasure.

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

“Hello, Jimmy, how are you today?”

Jimmy woke up and rubbed his eyes. “Oh, boy. The nurse is here.” Jimmy was smiling.

He was dressed in his red and blue striped t-shirt and a pair of blue shorts. He put his sandals on and combed his hair as neatly as a child can. It was a beautiful day. It was always a beautiful day. There hadn't been a day without sunshine in so long that Jimmy couldn't remember the last time the sun wasn't shining. Jimmy didn't like rain or snow, anyway, so the sunshine was fine with him.

“Well, Jimmy, what shall I read to you first today? Do you want me to read you the funnies first, or shall I read you the sports page?”

Jimmy was excited. “I hope she reads me the sports page first,” he thought.

“How about if I read the sports page first?”

Jimmy grinned. “I wonder how the Yankees are doing. They're my favorite baseball team!” Jimmy was trembling with anticipation.

“Well, look here! The Yankees won today! And Mickey Mantle hit two home runs! They won 7-3.”

“Wow,” thought Jimmy. “Those Yankees are really good! When I grow up I want to be a baseball player just like Mickey Mantle. And I'll wear the number seven, too! And I'll hit lots of home runs!”

Jimmy looked at the nurse. She was so pretty. She was always so nice to him, and her voice was fun to listen to.

“Now let's read the funnies,” said the nurse. “Ha ha! Look here. There's a picture of a fat man giving his seat to two ladies. He's really fat! Boy, aren't we glad we're not that fat!”

Jimmy laughed his boyish laugh. “How funny!” he thought.

“And here's one,” said the nurse, “about a little boy playing hooky from school.”

The nurse kept talking, but Jimmy wasn't paying attention anymore. “School-yech!” thought Jimmy. He had gone to school twice and didn't like it. Of course, now he never went to school. He liked it that way. Now he could always play.

And when he wasn't playing, he was talking with his mom or dad or petting his dog, Lucky. Jimmy really liked Lucky. Lucky would jump up on Jimmy and knock him down and lick his face. And Jimmy's mother was always baking him cookies, or giving him apples and oranges and grapes to eat. For dinner every night Jimmy had a bowl of grapes and some cookies and milk. He really liked that!

“Wasn't that funny?” said the nurse.

Jimmy pretended he had listened and nodded very hard.

“What would you like to do now, Jimmy?” asked the nurse. “I don't have any games to play. Do you?”

Jimmy smiled and nodded. But Jimmy always liked to play them with his dad. His mom would sit on the floor and Jimmy and his dad would play their games together while his mom watched.

“Well, why don't you go play games, and the doctor will be here later to see you. I'm sorry, Jimmy, but I won't be your nurse anymore. I'm going to the new hospital. So when the doctor comes, he'll be bringing you your new nurse. I'm going to miss you.”

“I'm going to miss you, too,” thought Jimmy. But he was off and running, riding his bike down the street.

He was glad there weren't any cars on the street. Jimmy didn't like cars. Jimmy was able to ride his bike anywhere he wanted to, and he often rode his bike to the store for his mom. The storekeeper, Mr. Holden, was always really nice to

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him, and after he gave Jimmy his change, Mr. Holden would stick a piece of bubble gum in his pocket and pat him on the back. Jimmy would go running out of the store laughing, and he'd always run into Mrs. Thomas. She always laughed and said, "Hi, Jimmy, how are you today?" Jimmy would blush and get on his bike and hurry home so his mom wouldn't have to wait long for her loaf of bread. Jimmy liked Mr. Holden and Mrs. Thomas.

"Hello, Jimmy." It was Doctor Goldberg.

Jimmy went running to him.

Jimmy's dad had always said, "Dr. Goldberg is young, but he's good."

Dr. Goldberg looked at Jimmy. He ran a hand through his sparse grey hair.

"I have a new nurse for you," he said. Jimmy began to think of his other nurse, and was lost in a daydream.

The nurse the doctor was referring to was grey-headed and looked very stern.

The nurse looked at the old, yellow newspapers on the table and at the lifeless form on the bed in front of her. "Why are you talking to him like that, and why doesn't he move?" she asked.

The doctor looked at her gravely. "When Jimmy, here, was six years old, he was in a car accident. For the last fifteen years he's been completely paralyzed. He can't even open his eyes. But because we detect changes in his heartbeat, we think he can hear and understand us; so we try to add a little variety to the world that we think exists inside of his mind. We doubt if he's matured at all, so we try to stay on his level. And so as not to confuse him, we read him papers that his parents used to read to him."

"Where are his parents?" asked the nurse.

"They were killed in the accident."

"Do you really think he has a world of his own inside of

JIMMY

his head?" asked the nurse, more mystified than disgusted at the bony, colorless form in front of her.

"I don't know," said the doctor. "But if he does, I certainly hope it's better than ours."

Jimmy smiled at the nurse. She was so pretty. And she sounded really nice, too. . . .

S. L. GRIER
Class of 1973

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DANCERS I

dancing their deaths
in blistered air
parting the smoke
to stand
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wielding bundles of despair
with bloody fingers
writhing as fire
to spin their story
of screams
dancers
sweat anguished prayers

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

RED BADGE REVISITED

Bugles, trumpets, cymbals on parade
Forgotten in a single, searing, searching thread
Stitching its way through masses, muddy flesh

No lines of color and pomp
Only rows of sand, and steel, and wire
Brilliance surrendered with each devilish drumming of the
earth

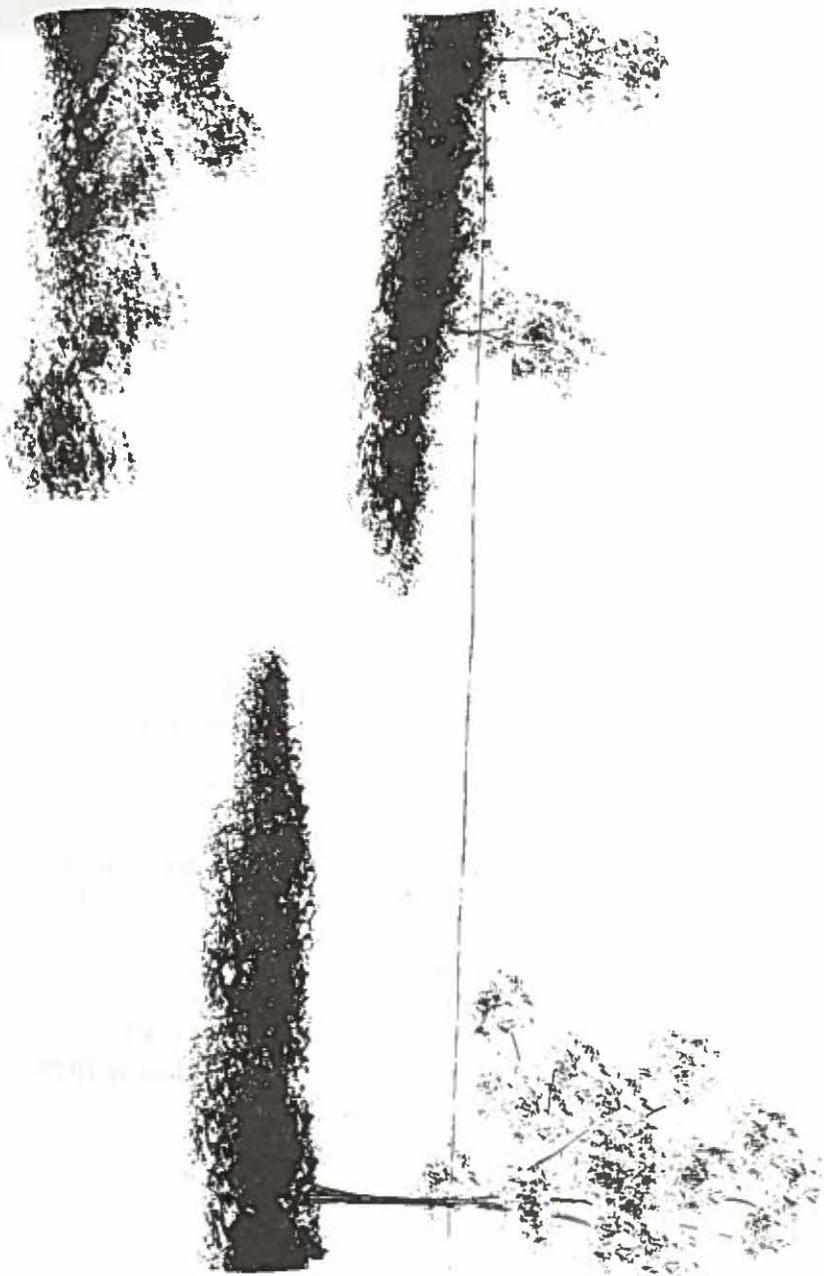
No Imperial Eagle inspires a thousand shining sabres
But the trudging death tolls onward
Rimsky-Korsakoff echoing through ghostly avenues
Disappearing into distant, dancing dust

A bygone day of breastplate and plumb
Silently summoned by bodies, blotched and still
A clash, a sing of the sword witnessed a champion's fall
Hundreds hurrahd where millions mourn

The mountains mock quixotic adversaries
The fallen mummies squelched by a clank, a rumble, a boom
And a sudden, silent smell that begets no Davids or Goliaths

WADE J. KEARNS
Class of 1973

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IT SNOWED LAST NIGHT

The last leaf
Didn't even have a chance
To fall.
They came.
One by one.
Each falling separately,
Together.
A white army harmless,
Powerful,
Covering in whiteness
All traces of my existence.
And for that brief period
Before the dawn and the plows,
I rested.

MARK V. SCARDINA
Class of 1974

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ALLEYS ECHO

alleys echo
the steps of a stranger
more wicked than those
of one who knows
the bricks and shadows of these passages
and where to set his foot
(in the corner)
especially when the way
is wounded with slashing shadows
and thrusts of naked electric bulbs

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

THE PARK

Where once the peoples marvelled
In the cool, green meadow fires
Caught in the giant's twisting fist
Their wind-kissed bodies praised the sun
Who sang and laughed alone.

Where once the couples danced aloud
At the totem's sacred feet
No more are they held
In the green springs of the forest's floor
That, ashen now, seldom laughs.

And towards the form-faced,
Vacant mates, staring at the hills
Of poles covered with the soot
Of winter, unwind under benches
On what remains of autumn's leaves.

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

THE VANISHING POINT

The sun reflected brightly off the yellow sports car as it glided along the interstate highway. Rod Jenkins, at the wheel, smiled as he and the car passed through the rolling countryside. It was indeed a beautiful day. The sun wasn't too hot. In fact it had been quite enjoyable driving with the convertible top down. Quite different from other days he had seen, he thought. Some days the sun beat down so heavily that it was hardly bearable to drive with it down. But today it was nice.

He had left his home in Indianapolis early that May morning destined for Colorado. He worked with the presidential campaign of Governor Robert Pastel of Indiana and was headed for Denver to help solicit support for the candidate in the upcoming state primary election. Pastel had already won several primaries and was considered the present front runner. Even so, the Colorado primary was a strategic one, for in that election the governor would be up against his ablest opponent, Senator Van Ellen, whose home state was the upcoming battleground. If he could defeat the Colorado senator on his home ground, the party's banner would almost certainly be his to carry in November.

He thought back to the first time he had met the governor. It had been many years before, while he was just a boy. He had been playing on a little league baseball team that summer. He still remembered the game that night because it was the first game in which he had hit a home run. Funny, the little things you sometimes remember, he thought. After the game his father had introduced him to the new partner at the law firm, Mr. Pastel. He took to him almost immediately. Pastel, who was unmarried, would often come to the house for dinner and when he did he would always spend a lot of time with Rod. Being an avid sports fan, he would teach him new

THE VANISHING POINT

techniques in baseball and other games of Rod's interest. Needless to say, he had really grown very fond of Pastel in those early years before the attorney entered politics.

He had been elected Congressman the year Rod started high school and had spent three terms prior to running for governor. Rod had been in college then and had actively campaigned for him, even though he himself wasn't old enough to vote at the time. Now that 18 year-olds had the vote, college students throughout the country were expressing their views at the polls. And that was Rod's job—focusing on the youth vote. Having only graduated from college a year before, he was the perfect pick to handle this area of Pastel's campaign. He had attended his first semester of law school in the fall but had taken the spring semester off to work with the campaign. For a long time he had had the secret ambition of someday entering politics and the practical experience he was now getting would be invaluable in his future efforts. He would, of course, continue with law school following the elections in November and possibly sooner, should the governor fail to win the nomination. He shook his head. Although he knew that was a possibility, he tried not to think about it.

He decided to turn on the radio. He'd been driving all this time in silence, caught up in his own thoughts. The static from the radio filled his ears. He reached for the tuner. For a while he couldn't find a clear station, as is often the case when driving on the highway. Finally he hit upon one. "This is KCMS Radio, 1230 on your AM dial, in Morganton."

Morganton, Missouri. Where is that? He got out his map. It looked like it was about 40 miles east of Kansas City. He looked at his watch. It was 8 PM. It was getting late, and he was really tired of driving. A quick calculation told him that

THE VANISHING POINT

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he had been on the road for several hours straight. He looked again at the map. Morganton wasn't very large. Chances were that a motel room wouldn't cost him as much there as it would in Kansas City. And besides, he liked small towns. He began to look for a road sign giving the distance to Morganton.

It was beginning to grow darker. He could see the sun sinking behind the low hills out ahead of him. He took off his sunglasses in the hazy twilight. The radio was playing one of his favorite tunes. One of *their* favorite tunes. His mind drifted back to her.

He had met her at a rally back at Bloomington, on the Indiana campus. He had known instantly that there was something different about her, something he had never seen before in a girl. But he couldn't figure out exactly what. She seemed to like him, too. They talked and he learned that she was a junior at the university, majoring in home-ec, of all things. He had always thought that home economics was such a useless field. After all, those things should be taught by a girl's mother, at home. What else was there to learn besides cooking, sewing, and family matters in general? He had just never understood it all. And yet now—well, now he was on the verge of falling in love with that same home-ec girl. That was even less comprehensible. He remembered how he had prodded her about it. But she had really stood up for herself. She'd sure let him know that she had as much right to choose a field of her own liking as he did. Maybe that was why he liked her so much. The fact that she had a mind of her own and didn't mind telling him so. That she didn't hesitate to stand up to him when she felt he was wrong. That she was not wishy-washy in her beliefs and wasn't scared to stand firm against things she did not think were right. That she did

THE VANISHING POINT

not do things she didn't want to do. In short, that she was an individual and had initiative of her own. Unlike many girls he had known. Yes, that was surely part of it. And she was physically beautiful, too. The memory of her long dark hair and slender body flooded his mind. Her soft hands so warm against his. Her tender embrace. . . .

DETOUR 1 MILE AHEAD

The sign pulled him back to reality. He frowned. The interstate had been so nice. He wondered how long the detour would be. Surely he must be getting near Morganton.

SLOW — ROAD ENDS 500 FEET

He downshifted, reducing to a safe speed. Off to the right was an older, two lane highway which looked as if it may have been the main road a few years back. He followed the detour signs, and pulled onto it, at the same time accelerating to the speed limit. The road wasn't too bad. In fact it was pretty nice to be able to slow down and enjoy the scenery a little more. He leaned back in the bucket seat and relaxed. He had intended to get farther than this when he left Indianapolis. That's why he'd gotten up so early. But he'd promised Carol that he would stop by and see her before he left. He hadn't really wanted to because he knew how hard it would be to leave. But he couldn't really help himself either.

He had knocked on her door at five past eight. He remembered because he'd checked his watch while walking to the door. Her mother had answered the door with her usual warm and cheery greetings. She was funny and he liked to kid with her. Carol liked him to also, and he knew it. She was

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very close to her family. That was the main reason she lived at home, although she really wanted to live on campus. Sure, she cited financial shortage whenever she spoke of it, but he knew the real reason. Her father couldn't see the sense in her living on campus and paying for it when she could live at home for free. After all, the university was only three miles away. He had to admit, the man had a point. And he suspected that she considered it as a valid one, too, although she never said so. Perhaps there was a fear of homesickness present, also. After all, when you've lived in the same house your whole life, that can certainly become a problem. And especially in such a close-knit family. But still, there were certain advantages to living on campus that simply couldn't be realized without first experiencing them. Such as learning individuality: who exactly you are and what you are really like. It could be a harsh realization. He knew that for sure. But he also knew the immense value that could come from that realization. It was all something he didn't think somehow he would have discovered for a long time yet, had he taken the path she had and remained home. But then they weren't the same people at all, were they? The results may have been entirely different for her. He just didn't know.

She wasn't ready to present herself this morning, as usual. It was always funny to him how she had to look her best at all times. It must be her Southern heritage, he had determined. It seemed to him that someday maybe she'd realize that it didn't really matter to him if her hair was a little mussed or that her make-up wasn't quite right or that she didn't have her contacts in yet. So long as she didn't come out in rollers he didn't really care what she looked like. Just so he saw her. That's what mattered. Maybe someday, he thought. Finally, she emerged and she looked more lovely

THE VANISHING POINT

than ever. Especially for a Saturday morning, he had remarked. They had sat and talked for awhile, then drove over to a nearby park. He always felt more at ease when they were alone for some reason. He didn't know exactly why. Just his nature, he guessed. They had talked and laughed as they always did. He wanted for her to go to Denver with him but at the same time he knew she was still in school and therefore couldn't. So he hadn't asked. Normally he would have flown on the governor's staff plane but he was planning to take a short vacation after the elections there, taking some time to visit some friends in the area and do some sightseeing. So he had decided to drive. It wasn't that long a trip; it could easily be driven in two days. And besides, he enjoyed his new car.

MORGANTON TURNOFF 5 MILES AHEAD

Good, he thought, only a little farther.

Another song was being played over the radio. He recognized it as an old Beatles song. When was it that it came out? Must have been around '64 or '65. Certainly no later. He liked it, though. He liked a lot of the old songs. It seemed as though they were better in a lot of ways than the ones that came out now. Of course that wasn't true in all cases. Take for instance the song he had just been listening to. It was very good.

It was amazing to him how little traffic there had been since he left. Maybe he had expected too much. Considering it was a spring weekend, though, you would think a lot of people would be on the road. Not so. Especially on this detour portion. He had only seen two autos so far.

Another sign indicated the turnoff to the town. He slowed

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and took the turn easily. The car really handled nicely. He bet it would really corner well with some of those new radials on it. He made a mental note to check into them sometime.

There was a crackling sound from the radio, then the disc jockey came on again. "This is KLBM Radio playing the sounds you want to hear. Here's a tune from five years ago. Buddy Holly with 'Rave-on.'" The song came over the waves. Uh-huh, that was Buddy Holly, all right. He remembered an album by him that his older brother had. But hadn't Buddy Holly been killed a long time ago? He could remember it vaguely. The D. J. must have made a mistake. The record was definitely more than five years old.

It was a typical, winding country road. Barely enough room for two cars to pass. It was getting darker, too. He turned on his headlights. The town couldn't be much farther.

Another song was playing now. Another old one. It must be an "oldies weekend" or something, he thought. He listened. At the end of the record the announcer came back on. "And that was a brand new release from Peter, Paul, and Mary. I think it'll be a big hit."

"Think it'll be a big hit?" It *was* a big hit. Several years ago. What was going on at that station? Someone playing jokes?

FAUNSDALE CITY LIMIT

He looked at his map. He didn't see a Faunsdale. It must be pretty small, he thought. But it would do.

He was coming up on the town. He had looked for motel signs but hadn't seen any. Off to the left were some fields of freshly planted corn, cooling after another full day of sunlight. It seemed likely that Faunsdale was right in the

THE VANISHING POINT

middle of a farming community. He had seen several farms since the detour. Perhaps that was the reason for the old songs. Maybe the town was just a little backwards or maybe the people just liked older things, natural things. The way ecology was getting so popular, this was surely a possibility.

His headlights caught a sign advertising a motel two miles ahead. He wondered if it would be a good place. Might as well see, he thought. He was getting hungry, too. Perhaps he would stop and eat first.

The lights from the town told him that it wasn't a very large place. He could see what appeared to be main street down to his right as he slowed for a stoplight. There were several stores, a bank and a newspaper office in the first block. There were a few cars, but not many. Something seemed strange about the place, but he couldn't think what it was. It was almost as if he'd been there before. The light changed and he continued on. He spotted a café and pulled in. Stretching his legs, he got out of the car and went inside.

The café was neat but a little dark. He sat down at the counter and picked up a menu. He noticed the prices right off. Oddly, they were a good deal lower than he had seen in a while. That was fine with him. Maybe inflation hadn't hit as hard here. And it was a small town.

The food was good. It was nice to have a good, hot meal for a change. He just hadn't had too many of those lately, it seemed. He decided to ask the waitress about a motel. She pointed out one a short ways down the road. He thanked her, paid his bill and left.

While putting the money in the cash register, one of the coins caught her eye. She stared at it.

Rod pulled in at the motel. There was a small swimming pool in the back, but no one was in it. He parked, then walked up to the office and entered.

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The man behind the desk was short and stocky with thin gray hair. He greeted Rod as he approached.

"Howdy. How are ya?"

"Just fine, thanks. A little tired now is all."

"Where ya from?"

"Indiana."

"Oh, Indiana, huh? Anywhere near Notre Dame?"

"No, I'm from Indianapolis." Cutting the conversation short he added, "I'm looking for a room for one. Do you have any available?"

"Well, son, I'm real sorry but we're full up."

Rod gave him a funny look. "Full? But isn't that a bit unusual? I mean, for such a small town and all?"

"Yep, it sure is. You see, there's a big wedding tomorrow and there's about 200 people from out of town here to see it."

"I see," Rod muttered. "How about other motels?"

"This is the only one and we're slap full. Even some of the townsfolk have been renting out extra rooms in their homes."

Rod thought for a moment. He sure didn't feel like driving any farther. "Do you think I might could get a room in someone's home, then?" he asked.

The manager hesitated before answering. "Well, I've got a room at my place," he said slowly. "How long would ya be planning to stay?"

"Only until tomorrow morning."

The man looked him over. He felt as if he were being X-rayed. Finally, he spoke. "Well, you look like a nice enough fella. And since you're only staying till tomorrow. All right, then."

"Fine," Rod sighed. "How much will I owe you?"

THE VANISHING POINT

The man thought for a moment. "Oh, how does seven dollars sound? And I'll throw in breakfast."

"That sounds just great," Rod answered. He pulled seven dollars from his wallet and handed it to him.

"Fine," said the manager. "Let's see now, I guess I'll need to show you over to the house. Let me get George to handle the desk and I'll be right with ya."

He disappeared into a back room. A minute later he was back. "All set. By the way, my name's Lansing. Paul Lansing." Rod introduced himself. They shook hands and started out the door. "Who do you think's gonna win the Presidency this year?" Lansing asked. Rod chuckled. "Well, I hope Pastel wins."

Lansing looked at him cross-eyed. "Pastel? Who in the world is he?"

Rod stopped in his tracks. He couldn't believe that anyone would not know who he was. "Why, he's one of the candidates for the Democratic nomination," he answered.

Lansing stopped and stared. "Oh!" he finally managed. "I guess he must be running against Johnson in some of the primaries, huh? You don't hear too much about those smaller candidates when they're running against the President. Now that Republican Goldwater might have a chance."

He turned and walked on. "Where's your car parked, anyway?"

Rod was still standing there staring at him. The question finally sunk in and he answered. Lansing walked toward Rod's car. "Say, that's a pretty one."

Rod caught up to him. "Mr. Lansing, what do you mean about Johnson being President?"

"Yeah, tha's a real nice car. I've never seen one like it before. You know, we don't get too many things like this

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coming through Faunsdale. What kind is it?"

"Corvette," Rod answered bluntly. "Mr. Lansing, about the President—"

"Mr. Lansing! Mr. Lansing!" A voice called from behind them. They both turned towards it. A young man was running towards them, obviously disturbed at something.

"Mr. Lansing, I need—my wife is—Mr. Lansing. . ."

"Now calm down, boy, just calm down," Lansing said, trying to console him. The boy was very nervous. He took several deep breaths, then started again, this time more comprehensible and in control of himself.

"Mr. Lansing, it's my wife. She's going to have a baby!"

Lansing laughed. "My word, boy, I thought the world was ending or something."

"Can you get a doctor? I think it's real close now."

"Sure thing, boy. We'll call one right now."

They went back in the office, Lansing with his arm around the boy's shoulders. It was obviously the father-to-be's first encounter with such a problem. Rod chuckled and wondered if he'd act the same way.

His mind went back to the interrupted conversation. He tried hard to collect his thoughts. Lansing had said that Johnson was President. And that Goldwater was running against him. And he'd never heard of Pastel. He shook his head. Was this guy loony or something? Goldwater had run against Johnson in 1964 elections and had lost miserably. Maybe the old man was just putting him on. Some kind of joke. That must be it, he decided.

Lansing and the boy came out of the office. They walked over to Rod.

"Look, son, I'm going to have to stay here until the doctor comes. I called my daughter and she's going to come and lead

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you over to the house. She should be here in a few minutes. Just keep your eye out for a new chevy, blue with a white top. I've gotta go and see what I can do until Doc Swanson gets here."

They hurried off towards one of the motel rooms. Rod got into his car and waited. About ten minutes later a car pulled up in front of the motel office. It wasn't new, but the rest of the description fit. He got out and walked over to it. A blonde-haired girl was behind the wheel.

"Are you Mr. Jenkins?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I'm Anne Lansing," she said.

"I'm pleased to meet you."

"Daddy says you'll be staying with us tonight, Mr. Jenkins."

"My first name is Rod. Yes, the motel doesn't have any vacancies and your father was nice enough to let me stay in your home for the night."

"Well, it's surely nice to have you. Our house is only a mile or so up the road here. Just follow me in your car."

"All right," Rod said and headed for his car. He got in, started the engine and turned on the headlights. He watched her pull onto the street, then followed.

It was totally dark by this time. He wondered about the baby. The doctor had come while he was waiting and had rushed into the motel room. He wondered where the baby would be delivered. He was still thinking about it when the car in front turned off the road and into the driveway. He followed. She parked, got out, then directed him where to park. She walked over to his car. The pale moonlight reflected from her golden hair. She was a very pretty girl. About 20 years old, he guessed. He always did have a certain

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attraction to blondes. He hadn't changed in that department.

She spoke. "I sure do like your car. Is it foreign?"

He smiled. "No, it's American."

"Where are the headlights?" she asked.

"They're hidden. They flip up when you need them." He showed her.

"Hey, that's pretty cool. I'd like to ride in one of those."

"Maybe later."

"Come on inside the house. We'll get your luggage later."

She led him up the walk to the door. It was an old, two story farmhouse but it was in very good condition. It reminded him of his grandfather's old house. They went inside. An elderly lady met them.

"Mother, this is Rod Jenkins," Anne said.

"Glad to meet you, Rod. Paul told us you'd be staying the night with us."

"Yes, ma'am. I'm glad to meet you, too."

A man came over. "And this is my brother, Ray," Anne said. He was several years older than she. They shook hands.

"Have you had anything to eat?" asked Mrs. Lansing. "We have plenty."

"Thank you, but I ate at a café on the way in."

"All right, then. If you'd like some hot apple pie later, you're certainly welcome to it."

"Why, thank you very much. I might just take you up on that."

"Very well. Anne, why don't you show Rod to the guest room?"

He went with her up the stairs. Their hospitality was astounding. He wasn't used to it, coming from an urban area. He was glad he had decided to stay there.

The room was quite lovely. There was a big colorful rug on

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the floor in front of the bed. The bed itself was of an old American style, brown stained with a high headboard. It was covered with an old, quilted bedspread. He bet that Carol would really go for that sort of thing. He turned to Anne.

"Nice room," he told her.

"Thank you," she replied. "It was my brother's room before he died."

"I'm sorry," Rod said, sympathetically. "How did he die?" No sooner had he spoken the words than he wished he hadn't. She looked at him hard.

"In a needless car wreck," she said finally, fighting back the tears. "Just last year."

"I'm very sorry," he repeated. "I didn't mean to upset you. I shouldn't have asked." Quite possibly he had been the first stranger to ask her about it. He truly regretted it and could have kicked himself for asking.

"That's all right," she said, having recovered her composure. "We thought we'd leave the room as it was and use it for relatives or guests we might have. Like you."

He smiled. "Yeah, like me."

"Where are you from, Rod?" she asked.

"I'm from Indiana, on my way to Colorado," he answered.

"I'm working for—." He started the same old pitch for Pastel. Suddenly he remembered what her father had said about the President.

She noted his sudden seriousness.

"Is something wrong?" she asked.

"Anne." Somehow he couldn't get the words out.

"Anne, this may sound sort of odd." He hesitated, bit his lip, then went on. "Anne, what year is this?"

She stared at him, tilting her head slightly to the side. After a long silence she finally laughed, thinking he was joking. Then she answered.

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"Why it's 1964, of course."

His jaw dropped. He looked as though he had seen a ghost. He sat down on the bed. It was now quite obvious to her that he wasn't kidding.

"You're quite sure?" he asked.

"But of course," she said. Pointing to the wall, she added, "Look at the calendar."

His head turned to follow her gaze. He hadn't noticed the calendar on the wall before. It confirmed what she had said.

"And Johnson is President?" he asked.

"Yes."

It was all beginning to fit. What her father had said, the low prices at the café, the radio station and the old songs. And her car—it was new to her, though it seemed old to him. But how could it be? It wasn't possible. And yet it had happened. Somewhere between here and the highway he had somehow slipped through the bonds of time.

"Anne, may I use your phone?"

"Sure, it's in the hall."

He went to it, raised the operator and placed a call to his home. His mother answered.

"Hello?"

"Hello, Mother? This is Rod."

"I beg your pardon?"

"This is your son, Rod."

There was a silence as the phone switched hands at the other end. A man's voice spoke. He recognized it as his father's.

"Who is speaking, please?"

"This is your son, Rod."

"Listen, I don't know what kind of joke you are playing, but our son is at this moment sitting here watching television."

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I strongly suggest that you stop with this nonsense, else I call the police." There was a sharp click as the other party hung up. Rod stood there for a moment, his eyes fixed on the telephone. All the time Anne had been watching him, trying to decide what was happening. She broke the long silence.

"Rod, what's the matter? You ask me what year it is and then the phone call—what is it? Do you have amnesia or something?"

He looked up at her. He wished it were such a simple thing as amnesia. He would have to try and explain the best he knew how. Or at least the best he *thought* he knew. He decided to start at the beginning.

"I left Indianapolis this morning headed west for Denver. I stopped for several hours in Bloomington, then continued the trip. I drove all afternoon and I was looking for a town to stay in for the night when I came across a detour on the highway. When I left the high"—he stopped suddenly, then went on—"the year was not 1964. It was 1972." He continued, telling her about the radio station, the café, his conversation with her father, and everything else he could remember since leaving the highway. She was understandably dumbfounded.

"And your parents didn't know you?"

"No, they said I was sitting there watching t.v. And eight years ago that's exactly where I would have been."

"It's all so odd," she said.

He had a thought. He took his wallet from his hip pocket. He had several credit cards with expiration dates printed on them. They supported his position. He showed them to her.

"See! I'm not crazy. I'm telling you the truth."

She looked at the cards and at his driver's license. After a while she spoke.

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"I don't know if this has anything to do with it, but . . ."
She stopped, not wanting to go further.

"Go on," he urged.

She took a deep breath. "Well, last night I had this dream. It wasn't an ordinary dream. It was like I was seeing into the future."

"You mean a premonition?"

"Yes, that's it. Anyway, I dreamed that something terrible would happen tonight at midnight. Everybody had been having a big time, with the wedding tomorrow, you know, and then all of a sudden I looked back and everybody was gone! I tried to tell Ray and Daddy about it, but they just laughed. I'm really scared about it."

People disappearing. Faunsdale. 1964. Suddenly it all hit home.

He looked at his watch. It was 11:45. He started down the stairs. "Come on, Anne, hurry!"

They scampered down the stairs and into the kitchen. Mrs. Lansing was about to cut the pie.

"Hello, Rod. Won't you join us?"

"No thank you. Mrs. Lansing, about Anne's dream—"

Ray burst out laughing. "Has she been feeding you that story too?"

Rod felt his face glow. "Listen! Her dream is true!" He watched their faces. "You're not going to understand this, but I come from the future and I know that what she saw in her dream actually happened."

Mrs. Lansing looked at him awkwardly. Ray started laughing again, louder than before.

"I think you're just a bit tired, Mr. Jenkins," Mrs. Lansing said finally. "If you'll just sit down and relax—"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Lansing, but I know what I'm talking

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about. If you and everyone else in this town don't leave it in the next few minutes you won't be here tomorrow!"

He studied their faces. Their thoughts could easily be read. They thought he was crazy. All but Anne. He had no other choice. He grabbed her arm.

"Come on."

They ran out the door and scrambled into his car. A quick glance at the car clock told him he had five minutes left. The engine sprang to life and the car roared out of the driveway. The road was clear of cars. He was glad of that. Four minutes left. The light was green at the main street intersection. He took the turn at high speed. The road narrowed heading out of town. Three minutes. He knew that he only had to make it to the edge of town. That was one of the very strangest parts of the whole mystery. Only the people inside the city limits of Faunsdale had disappeared. The people who lived in the farmhouses outside the town were not bothered. Two minutes. Fences, sideroads, fields, cows all flew by them. One minute. The headlights reflected off a sign ahead.

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING FAUNSDALE VISIT US AGAIN

The car zipped by. Rod took his foot off the accelerator. The car slowed to a safe speed. Rod sighed a breath of relief. "We're O.K. now," he said.

"How do you know?" she asked. "What did you mean back there about my dream being true?"

"When you told me about the dream I suddenly remembered the story of the disappearing town." He went on, "In 1964, all the townspeople of a small town in Missouri

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suddenly vanished overnight. Everybody. That town was Faunsdale." He stopped to let that sink in. "You have to remember that, to you, I am from a different time period. A time eight years into the future. 'Tonight' is already history for me."

She nodded, still noticeably dazed. The car continued along the old road. She closed her eyes, letting her head rest back against the seat.

"Where are we going now?" she asked him.

"What's the nearest town?"

"Morganton."

"Then that's where we're going."

He flipped on the radio. It was still tuned to the same station and another old song was on.

She had survived. He was sure that if he went back he would find all the people gone. But she had survived. He wondered. Had he in some way changed history?

The radio snapped him back. The song. It was *their* song. His and Carol's. He looked over. She was *gone*!

He brought the car to an abrupt stop, got out and ran back.

"Anne!" he shouted. "Anne, where are you?"

No answer. He searched the area but found nothing. He got back into the car and sat there. He knew what had happened. He had crossed back into the present. But she hadn't made it.

He drove on down the road until he got to Morganton. He found a truck stop open and pulled in.

A jukebox was playing in the corner. An old man was behind the counter. Rod sat down and ordered a coke. He noticed a Chamber of Commerce certificate on the wall. It was for 1972. He sighed. He decided to question the old man.

"Hey, what's the story on Faunsdale?" he asked.

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The old guy looked at him suspiciously. "Oh, nobody lives there now. Everybody thinks it's haunted. And maybe it is."

"Why do you say that?" he asked, as if he didn't know.

"Well, it was eight years ago tonight. Hank Strong, the newspaper carrier, noticed it first when old Mr. Jackson wasn't out waiting for his morning paper. He thought something must be wrong and went up and knocked on his door, but nobody came. He went inside to look but old man Jackson wasn't there. Neither was anybody else. Everybody in the whole town just poof"—he made a gesture with his hands—"up and gone."

"But what happened to them?"

"Nobody knows that to this day, son."

"What time of night did it happen?" he asked.

"The FBI was out there and they figured it must've been about midnight."

"I see." He took a swallow from the glass. "Weren't the people in the town itself the only ones to go?"

"Yeah, that was one of the weirdest things about the whole ordeal. I mean, if the Good Lord wanted to take those people he had the right to. The Good Book says 'in the twinkling of an eye' and I believe that, I sure do. You know, I got a brother that lives on a farm right outside of Faunsdale and everybody on the town side of him was taken and everybody on this side was left. He lives right outside the city limit. You know what I told him? I told him 'Jim, you better start straightening up otherwise you won't never be taken up to be with the Lord.'" The old man started laughing. Rod laughed with him. It was funny how the old guy had his own solution. He decided to try a shot in the dark.

"But wasn't somebody in the town left?"

"What do you mean?"

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"I mean, wasn't there someone who wasn't taken?"

"What makes you think that?"

He was really gambling on this one and he knew it. "Wasn't there a girl who survived?"

The old man leaned forward and spoke softly. "How did you know that?"

He was on to something. "I had relatives that used to live around here. They told me that there was a girl who wasn't taken."

The old man studied him for a long while. Finally, having decided he must be telling the truth, he answered.

"There was a girl—the mayor's daughter. She wasn't taken. We didn't let the papers get the story on her though."

"The mayor's daughter?"

"Yeah. He was sort of a figurehead mayor. You know, it didn't really mean anything. He probably made the most money, so they made him mayor."

"What did he do for a living?"

"He owned the town motel."

He was excited now. "How was it that the girl wasn't taken with the others?"

The old man drew in a breath and let it out. "Well, I never was too clear on that. It seems that there was a stranger in town and she'd gone for a ride in his car."

He almost choked. "What sort of stranger?"

"Just someone passing through."

"They never found out who he was?"

"Nope."

He took another swallow from his glass. "And what about the girl? Why did they keep her a secret?"

The old man looked at him hard. "Because she didn't survive."

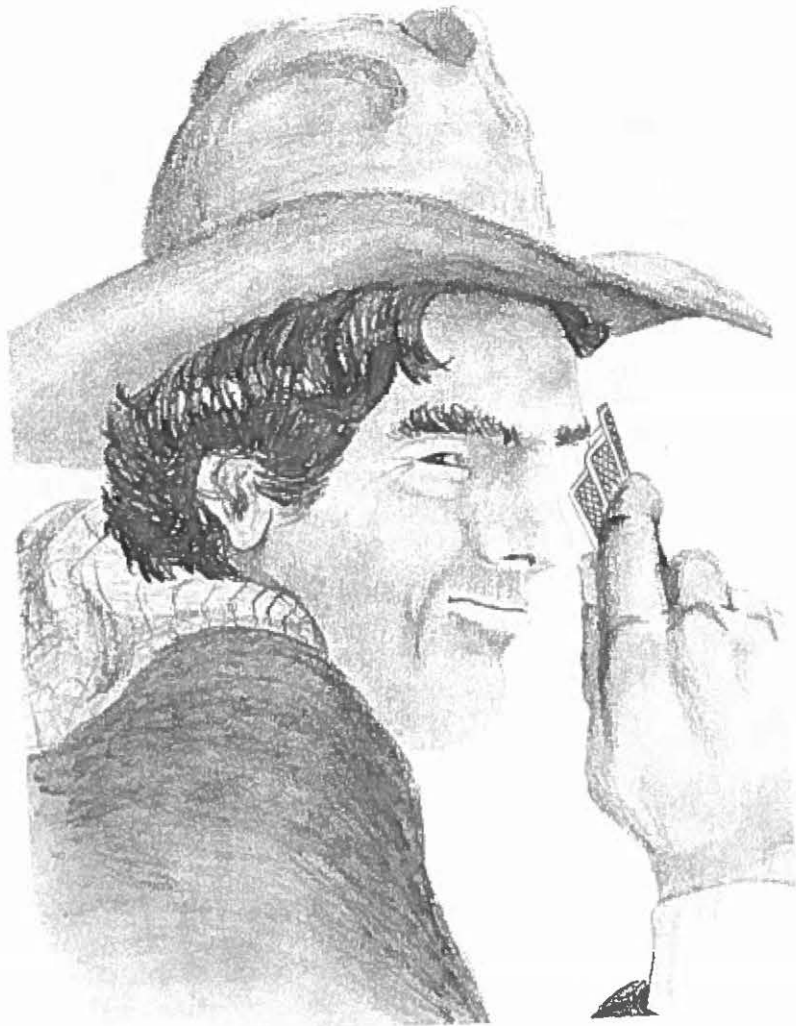
THE VANISHING POINT

Rod gulped. "But I thought—" The old man put up his hand. "Her body was found, but every bone was crushed. It was as though she's tried to go through a brick wall or something. We thought it'd be better if we just buried her quietly and let it look as if she'd gone with all the others."

Rod sat there in mute silence. So you couldn't change history after all. She had died the first time and she had died again. Somehow he had the power to move freely in time. But she couldn't. She had died trying. Not once, but twice.

He paid the old man and thanked him, then walked slowly back to his car. There was nothing left that he could do. He was tired. Maybe he would think about it tomorrow. Right now he was going to look for another motel. He still had a job to do in Denver.

MARK R. BALLARD
Class of 1973



A MEETING BETWEEN FRIENDS

The sky turned gray,
And the birds silently understood.
His eyes reflected the sky,
And I understood.
Yet, not long ago,
I would have looked up
And remarked, "I think it's going to rain."

Then, minds far apart
Could only be bridged with words.
Unfortunately, many times the river
Was really a sea.

With work, however, a boat was built.
And though the weather was sometimes rough,
And I had little protection,
I reached a friendly port across that sea.

Many boats have gone back and forth since then.
Bridges have ceased to be attempted.
The sea has become a pond.

It began to rain.
His eyes were reflected in a puddle
Slowly growing between us.
My eyes met his,
And sloshing, we ran together seeking cover.

MARK V. SCARDINA
Class of 1974

IN THE GARBAGE PAIL

In the garbage pail
A fly nods, curtly preying,
Over orangepeels.

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

TO

A then unknown person with unforeseen tenderness—
A slow, respectable dance;
A long, clinging conversation;
The slow start of trust;
The deep understanding of souls.
Long langourous lines of love
Wander slowly through our minds
Undulate aimlessly across our psyches.
And the unplanned merger of our souls,
In celebrating Life,
Left me the fuller for emptying,
The winner in spite of loss.

A person beautiful more in soul than body—
A quicky prim/proper facade;
A light, embracing laugh;
The quick start of affection;
The warmth of embrace.
Long loving lines of langour
Cloud slowly through our senses
Wave somnolently across our reason.
And the unplanned merger of our souls,
In celebrating Life,
Left me the fuller for emptying,
The winner in spite of loss.

MARK C. HARPER
Class of 1973

WINTER RUN

Silver specks descend from a smouldering sky
Dancing gaily to become
Stitches of a feathery sheet
Protecting the earth from the icicle air.
Into this crystalline dusk
We break
Pumping jets of vapor from tingling faces
As our limbs slice the chill.
Powder erupts from under each footfall,
Forming craters in our wake
That vanish
Under the infinite pelting of the tumultuous air.

DAVID DALEY
Class of 1974

VARIATIONS ON CUMMINGS

these children singing so stoned a
song of stone these
little children wounded with stones
for

ever these list
less children are stones
their song of
stone always

of stone are
singing
a song
of silence always for

ever
singing
eyes as
stones

HOWARD T. LUTHER
Class of 1973

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

David Daley is an aeronautical engineering major from Colorado Springs who has been on the Dean's List for five semesters. He is an avid skier and has lettered in varsity cross country and track. Prior to tying for first place in the *Icarus* poetry competition, he had one poem published in a high school literary magazine. He has an active interest in French language and culture, and is a candidate for the exchange program with the French Air Force Academy in the fall of 1973.

John Petro, a mathematics major, comes from Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. He received the Mathematics Department award for the best performance in advanced calculus. "Manuel's Last Temptation" is his first publication, but he hopes to write more. In addition to writing, his interests include photography, skiing, and philosophy.

Mark C. Harper's present home town is Willingboro, New Jersey. He is a humanities major and has been on the Dean's List for one semester. His main interests are auto design, music, and literature. Although he has been "messing around" with poetry since he has been in the 10th grade, his tie for first place in the *Icarus* poetry competition represents the first formal recognition of his talent.

Richard P. King comes from Camp Springs, Maryland. He is interested in history but has not yet declared an academic major. His other interests include sports and outdoor activities generally. The story included here is his first publication.

James A. McClure, from Cincinnati, Ohio, is majoring in history and concentrating in Soviet area studies. His interests range from Russian culture and literature to soaring, frog gigging, and his fiancée. His work has appeared previously in *Icarus* (1971 and 1972), *Talon*, a cadet magazine, and *Seven Hills Review*.

Jon Eller's home town is Alexandria, Virginia. He is a history and humanities major. His interests, in addition to English history and 19th and 20th century English and American literature, include numismatics, demonology, and science fiction. None of his work has been previously published but he is currently working on a novelette set in the South Pacific.

Howard T. Luther, a humanities major, comes from Tullahoma, Tennessee. His main interests include yoga, chess, swimming, and canoeing. He is a prolific poet and has had his work published in *Icarus* (1972) and in *The Writer*.

