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The Lantern Vol. 21, No. 3, Summer 1953

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IN THIS ISSUE

ARTICLES...

Editorial ......................................................... 3
Millie and Murph ............................................. 4
Waxy ............................................................... 6
Nor Bars a Prison Make ..................................... 8
The Shows at Killapoosparrow ............................ 10

POETRY...

Sahonnet to a Mahodern Sahinger .......................... 7
In Each Man ... a collection ............................... 9
Mirrors ........................................................... 11
The Offspring of My Song .................................... 11
Come Sweet Night ............................................ 11
A Modern Ballad .............................................. 11
Uninvited ......................................................... 14
Study in Shadow ............................................... 8
Southern Mountain Song .................................... 8
The Introvert ................................................... 8
Conflict ......................................................... 8
A Moment in Flight .......................................... 8
Hiatus ............................................................ 9
Night Search ................................................... 9
To a Cat ......................................................... 9

.signal

Stud y in S h ado w ..............................................
M itzz T est ........................................................
C on A ict ........................................................
A Moment in Flight ...........................................
Hiatus ............................................................
Night Search ...................................................
To a Cat ...........................................................
Lines to a Rejected Contributor ...........................
The Old Professor .............................................

ILLUSTRATIONS...

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Editorial

"A college career is a composite of curriculum, activities, and social life. The curriculum leads the way over formal barriers to a degree. Activities and social life enlarge the student's viewpoint and help him to meet, in a small way, problems similar to those that will confront him in post-collegiate years. In contrast with the curriculum, implying individual effort alone, activities require a certain amount of cooperation. They are, therefore, of special value. There are many activities on the Ursinus campus representing most of the formal studies. The Weekly and The Ruby give future journalists an opportunity to practise their art outside of English classes. These two publications, however, report news and preclude, to a great degree, individual expression in the literary field. Therefore we feel that there is place for a literary magazine on the Ursinus campus."

The above is an excerpt from the first editorial written for The Lantern twenty years ago by its first editor, Dr. Eugene H. Miller. In this anniversary issue we think it wise to go back to that original statement of purpose to determine if, through the years, The Lantern has kept this purpose in mind and achieved it.

Dr. Miller spoke of cooperation in his editorial twenty years ago. Many times the work of putting out The Lantern has fallen to the editor alone, since it was easier to read the proof, dummy the copy, check page proofs, etc., oneself, than run after elusive staff members on campus to do the job cooperatively. We have tried to make this original idea of a cooperative venture a real one this year. Through it we think the staff members have learned a little more about publishing a magazine. We have had fun together this year—staff, editor, adviser—all working together, pooling ideas, literary taste and critical opinion. If we are to make any kind of formal leave-taking this is the time to say thank you to the staff, both literary and art, and especially to our adviser, Mr. H. Lloyd Jones, for being sincerely interested in what happened with, to, and about The Lantern. On this campus of student dominated organizations such an attitude on the part of a faculty adviser is doubly appreciated.

As cooperation has proved to be the better means to the end we of The Lantern are seeking, so we also feel that the "individual expression" for which we have created a place has been good. In our first editorial we lambasted the fearful ones who write "with apologies". We still believe in the justice of this charge. But we admire those writers who snapped right back at us, not only with reasons in defense of their take-offs but with other contributions in the same vein which also won enough votes from a severely critical staff to get into print.

In our first two issues we not only gave literary effort a place, which is our primary task, but also left the door open for those frustrated people on the Ursinus campus, the artists, who have no place where they can display their talents. We have tried innovations this year which have cost money but we believe you have enjoyed a better Lantern so the increased expenditure was worth it.

To quote Dr. Miller again, "The Lantern has been selected as the name of the literary magazine because it represents a distinctive feature of campus architecture, and because it symbolizes the light shed by creative work." Our range of material has been great this year and the "light shed by creative work" promises to continue to shine as long as there are those on campus who want to say something and feel they can say it best creatively. We believe that the mark of a writer is not so much whether he can write well but whether he has the drive which makes him feel that he must write what he thinks so that others can read it and think of it and on it themselves. It is our belief that many of our contributors, both of prose and poetry, have that drive. We may disagree on whether their writing is good but we cannot fail to agree that they write because they must say what they are feeling and thinking and thus they are qualified to bear the title "writer".

We would like to take this opportunity to thank a hardworking, reliable, and thoroughly congenial staff for a good year. Through financial problems and reorganizational problems they never lost the light radiated from the symbolic "lantern". We would also like to say good luck to you, Roland; may you derive similar pleasures, lessons and experiences from your term as editor as we have. The best we can wish you is as fine a staff of associate editors as we have had this year.

All this year the major criticism of The Lantern has been, "Why don't you have more prose material?" In this issue we have attempted to drown that criticism. We think you will find the lead story by Robert Williams both entertaining and enlightening. It falls in that ever-increasing field of writing called "science fiction". Most of this type of prose is extremely pseudo-technical and foretells of approaching doom. We admire Mr. Williams' ability to avoid both these faults and inject, instead, highly entertaining material.

Dick Richter's work is familiar to most of our readers and we are happy he has found time to contribute once more to The Lantern before graduating.

"A Package from the Past", by Paul Chalson, so well received by you in our last issue, is followed this time by Paul's narration of a man's inner feelings as he crosses the ocean on his way to war, and the experiences which make that unavoidable trip doubly unbearable.

William Lukens strikes back at us with another satire; this time on Hemingway's "Snows of Kilimanjaro". Recall the original as you read this take-off and we are sure you will find it extremely well done.

We will make no comment on the remainder of the issue. We leave judgment to you, as we always have. We will just end by expressing our thanks to you for being eager and interested readers.

Marna Feldt
Millie and Murph

Millie and Murph were a devoted pair. They were fond of each other from the very beginning. They did many things together and had great trust in each other. Whenever one of them had some kind of problem, the other one was always ready with the answer. As it happened, Millie and Murph were always looking for answers to something. Neither of them could get an answer alone, but together they found all sorts of answers to all sorts of problems. Everybody who knew Millie and Murph agreed that they were a terrific couple.

But they were also a very ODD couple. You see, Millie was a Machine and Murph was a Physicist, and more correctly he was called Professor Murph.

Now Millie was no ordinary Machine to perform ordinary duties like making toothpicks or lampshades or even such fine things as automobiles. As a matter of fact, Millie didn’t make anything except little marks on pieces of paper. Murph got a lot of answers from these little marks. Answers that you and I wouldn’t understand, but were still very important. They had to do with Energy and Mass, Velocity and Motion and other things which, in short, make the world go around, or at least so they tell us.

Millie was an Electronic Brain and she weighed 22.5 tons, containing almost a million little light bulbs and had enough electrical wiring to accommodate an average sized town. And all she did was make little scratches on a piece of paper. Now, just as Millie was no ordinary Machine, Murph was no ordinary physicist. You might say that any physicist who is capable of making something like Millie isn’t ordinary; but Murph was even more unOrdinary. You see, Murph did more than

Solve problems and
Read books on
Electronics and
Mathematics and
Other
Incomprehensible things.

Murph was also what some people call a CHARACTER.

For, once in a while, he liked to forget his usual work with Millie in the Electronics Division of the University and do things which some people call Crazy. Some of these things included

- welding the gate to Dr. Smythe’s courtyard. Since the gate was the only entrance to or exit from the Smythe residence, Dr. Smythe had to climb over his ten foot wall to get to the Chemistry building to teach his classes. Everybody laughed at this (and especially Murph). But Dr. Smythe didn’t laugh, nor did Dr. PLUNKETT, THE PRESIDENT of the University. When Dr. Smythe had his many laboratory assistants making hydrogen sulfide bombs, it was no coincidence that Murph, his clothes and even Millie smelled very much indeed like a ROTTEN EGG.

The PRESIDENT still did not laugh — but then you and I know that some people just can’t.

OR

the time that Murph and Millie did the homework for the students in Professor Jones calculus class. Murph charged ten cents per integration and a quarter for very tough ones which took Millie over three seconds to answer. Everybody laughed that time, too, (and especially Murph). But Professor Jones didn’t laugh, and THE PRESIDENT absolutely refused to laugh. He also didn’t laugh because Murph used the proceeds of his enterprise to purchase something called “Erin’s Pride,” which as some people know is a form of “Irish.”

Now we learn that THE PRESIDENT in addition to lacking humor and fine wit, also lacks the taste for some of the Finer Things. Now we have seen only a very few of Murph’s adventures; but at least they will serve to show us why some people call him a CHARACTER.

Now, as much as Murph’s work with Millie had pleased the PRESIDENT, his adventures as a CHARACTER had needless to say, displeased the PRESIDENT. After all, the PRESIDENT of a University carries a lot on his shoulders. He must worry about such things as

MAKING POLICY
and
MAKING SPEECHES.

He has to know something about a lot of things over which you and I do not have to worry. Do you know how many commas and semicolons occur in the Morality Plays? Well the PRESIDENT counted every single one for one of his many degrees. The PRESIDENT must also shake a lot of hands. This is related to something called ENDOWMENTS which are in turn related to something called MONEY. The University needs a LOT of MONEY to stay in business.

Well, with all of these worries, it is easy for us to see why the PRESIDENT is angry with Murph for being a CHARACTER.

It was not long after Murph’s latest adventure that the PRESIDENT felt obliged to summon the misbehaving Professor and severely Reprimand Him. The PRESIDENT told Murph that, in the future he must be a good boy (Murph was 52 years old) and act as a Professor should, because the Reputation of the University was a very important thing. It seems that Reputation is related to ENDOWMENTS too; and we all know now what ENDOWMENTS are related to.

So, we really can’t blame the PRESIDENT; but we also don’t think it matters much anyway. After all Murph was a CHARACTER, and it’s pretty hard to teach old CHARACTERS new tricks.

Murph listened to the PRESIDENT who was angry because Millie had a new contraption fitted on her that mixed a batch of Martinis every afternoon at four-thirty, olive and all. Murph,
you see, was a faithful observer of the Cocktail Hour, and as everyone knows, there is really only ONE cocktail in the WORLD, namely the Dry Martini—of which Murph was almost as fond as Irish Whiskey.

Murph confessed to the crime, but said with a twinkle in his eye that he took the contraption off already—besides, Millie just couldn’t seem to get the right proportions. She always added too much Vermouth. Murph’s comment, needless to say, did not make the PRESIDENT any more sympathetic—and of course we know he did not laugh.

So Murph left the office of the PRESIDENT after winking slyly at the Pretty, Young Secretary in the outer office. (You see, Murph always winked at Pretty, Young girls.) As he ambled down the street, he remembered the Stern Words of Dr. PLUNKETT, such as

Absolutely Uncalled For!
or
A Disgrace! (This was the Utter kind of Disgrace)
or
Totally Irresponsible
and
something about a College
Freshman that Never Grew Up...
and Especially (and this was the most IMPORTANT STERN WORD of ALL the STERN WORDS)

PROBATION .

Now Murph, twice as much as any ordinary criminal, hated this word, but it didn’t bother him much because Murph was an Important Man, especially to Millie. And of course, both were Important to the University. Murph knew this and he also knew that the PRESIDENT knew it. Of course, we know that Murph was a man of HONOR, too. He was not one to take advantage of a situation like this. But he was also a CHARACTER, and, like most of that strange breed of persons, he wanted to LIVE HIS OWN LIFE, PROBATION or not.

Murph returned to the Electronics Building and opened the door to the big room where Millie was. He looked up at her million little light bulbs and her miles of different colored wires. He thought that it was too bad about those Martinis. Well, it’s hard enough for most people to make a good Martini, especially if they have never tasted one. Millie hadn’t tasted one. After all, she was not a bartender. If Murph wanted a good Martini he’d just have to run over to Callahan’s bar and show him how to make one. Poor Murph.

While Murph was thinking about these Finer Things, there was a knock on the door. The door opened and in came one of Murph’s friends, Pegboard Pete. Pegboard Pete was a Psychologist. His name more correctly was Professor Peters. Murph and Professor Peters’ students called him Pegboard Pete, so that is what we shall call him.

Now, these two men always enjoyed getting together at Callahan’s bar on certain nights and talking things over. When they talked something over, it was usually over something else. That is, they usually talked over a few fingers of Irish.

One of their pet subjects was an argument about Psychology. Murph claimed it was “catalogued ignorance” and not a science at all. Pete’s view was just the opposite. This sometimes resulted in heated discussion. Once, I recall, the debate became hot enough to cause about sixty dollars worth of breakage in Callahan’s bar. It was three weeks before Callahan forgave them their right to separate opinions.

As I was saying, Pegboard Pete entered the room. Murph was glad to see Pete since he wanted to tell him about President PLUNKETT’S STERN WORDS, and in general, have an excuse to talk over something. Both men sat down and Murph proceeded to pour something they could talk over . . .

Pete was sorry to hear about the PROBATION, and agreed with Murph that some people are devoid of charity as well as good humor. But Pete had come to ask something of Murph. It was a simple request: he wanted to MAKE MILLIE NEUROTIC and OBSERVE her REACTIONS.

Now Murph didn’t know WHAT to say to THIS. After all Millie was very dear to him. Besides, if she had a breakdown (which Murph thought was impossible) it might be costly. Pete argued that SCIENCE was SCIENCE only because people experimented with such things. Murph agreed to this, but why make Millie neurotic? He argued that Psychologists started by saying people are neurotic, and then that animals are neurotic. This wasn’t bad enough! Now machines would be neurotic!

Pete calmed Murph’s ire long enough to assume a new approach: he made a gentleman’s wager with Murph that Millie could be made neurotic. The stakes: one-fifth of the finest “Erin’s Pride”. This appealed to Murph’s sporting instinct—and also to his appreciation of the FINEST of the FINER THINGS. Besides, he had great faith in Millie’s mental stability. He asked Pete how he would perform such an experiment, especially since Pete didn’t know much about Millie’s mental processes.

Pete explained that this was a very SIMPLE matter. People can be made neurotic by frustration. Now, what is a good way to frustrate? By giving the subject a difficult choice to make, such that no matter which alternative the subject chooses, his choice will backfire on him. Pete reminded Murph of the donkey that stood between two bales of straw not knowing which bale to eat.

Murph granted Pete this much, but how did it apply to Millie, who after all, could calculate problems better than any man, to say nothing of COMMON assses.

Pete explained that if Millie really was a BRAIN, and could perform mental feats as remarkable as man’s own feats and much better at that, she was ALSO SUBJECT TO MAN’S MENTAL FAILURES. Pete also said that all they would have to do was to put some CONTRADICTIONARY information into Millie’s brain and watch her try to choose between the two parts of the CONTRADICTION. Murph thought that this sounded reasonable enough, especially

(Continued on Page 12)
Waxy trotted through the crowded street on his way home from school. In his hand he clenched an old red baseball cap; it was too big for him, so he always carried it when he ran. He was trying to whistle, but his breath puffed out in sudden jerks as he bobbed up and down. A March wind raced along with him. He jostled a portly old gentleman coming in the opposite direction.

"Young tramp," he mumbled as Waxy danced away and disappeared.

Gramp hadn't told him exactly. But he was sure he knew what the surprise would be. He had been crawling into bed last night when Gramp called to him from the other room of their apartment. Gramp sat there with Ty, his friend, at the table. A trace of the devil was in his eye. Old Ty twinkled too, Waxy thought.

"Gotta surprise for ya tomorrow," Gramp said.

Gramp had said that many times before, but nothing ever came of it. So Waxy, who always felt uncomfortable when Gramp got these notions, nodded his head quickly and mumbled something and turned away to go back to bed. But as he turned, he caught Ty's glance. Ty whispered something—or seemed to. Waxy frowned and hesitated, and then he went back into the other room to bed. He lay in the darkness with his eyes open, listening to the mumbling of Ty and Gramp. He heard a crackly guffaw now and then.

It was different this time, for Gramp never got these notions in front of Ty before. He always made his promises after he and Waxy climbed into bed at night. Waxy always said "Yeh sure" in the darkness to Gramp and let it go at that, for he knew nothing would ever come of it. But it was different this time. Ty was here this time, and Gramp made the promise when the light was on and while he was still up—not in the dark in bed as usual. Awful different this time.

What was it Ty said? "You want it awful bad." No, it wasn't that. He tried hard to say it. "You're gonna get a dog!" Sure it was! That's what he said!

So Waxy had gone to sleep with a little dream dog, and today he had squirmed the school hours away in anticipation.

He skipped down the narrow street that was lined on both sides with tenement houses. He scarcely acknowledged the shouts of the other boys his age, who were already conducting their daily offensive against Heartbreak Ridge from behind steps, parked cars and fire plugs. He dashed up the steps, in the door with one leap, up to the third floor and in the door of their two-room apartment. Gramp should be home with him by now!

Not here! The kitchen was empty, but Gramp's old black overcoat was draped over the chair that he sat in last night. Waxy hopefully looked under the table to see if a dog was there. There wasn't. He decided to wait. Just went out to get him something to eat, probably. He took off his coat and went into the bedroom.

Gramp was lying on Waxy's bed. Gramp's bed was still mussed up from this morning. Waxy jumped with surprise.

"Gramp wake up! Where's my dog!" he shouted indignantly as he shook him. "Where's the dog you're gettin' me, Gramp?" His voice was shrill. He shook Gramp harder. His baseball cap slipped off his head and fell on Gramp's face.

Waxy stopped shaking him and picked up the cap and put it back on. He heard a cat mew in the alley out back. He walked out of the room. Slowly he put his coat back on, looking at the bedroom door, puzzled. He went back into the bedroom and turned on the light, though it wasn't dark yet. He looked at Gramp for a second and then suddenly looked under both beds. No, nothing there. As he bent over, his cap threatened to fall off again. He grabbed it and adjusted it firmly.

Ty. He thought of Ty twinkling last night and telling him the secret. He gave another quick glance under Gramp's bed and walked out of the bedroom, forgetting to turn out the light. As he opened the door to go out into the hall, he looked back and saw Gramp in the bedroom with the light still on. He left it on.

He walked down the hall recalling a cat they found in the alley once that was warm but wouldn't move. He remembered they had kicked it, but it wouldn't scream.

Going down the stairs, he met a neighbor from down the hall who always argued with Gramp and called him a lazy old coot. Waxy made way for him. The neighbor said, "Ho! Ho kid," in a flaccid voice, but Waxy, hesitating, didn't answer him.

Out on the street, the battle for Heartbreak Ridge was already over for today; the men were all safely holed in at their respective supper tables. The sun was drawing thin, angular caricatures of the buildings on the empty street. Waxy set out mechanically for Ty's. Ty was janitor of an apartment house about four blocks away and he lived alone in a room next to the boilers. Waxy went there with Gramp a lot in the winter time. Ty's place was always warm.

Turning the corner, Waxy broke into a nervous jog. But soon he stopped short for a moment, and then began walking mechanically again. The wind caught his cap and almost blew it off his head.

As he was nearing High Street, he saw a Negro with both legs cut off pushing himself on a sled with roller-skate wheels. He wore a leather cap with ear flaps dangling loose. His face was a mass of laughter, and he had an unlit cigarette butt in his mouth. He pushed himself along with gloved hands. Waxy thought he looked kind, almost like a dog. Waxy stopped and waited for him to come up to him, and when he did Waxy said:

"Gramp's like a cat—that one in the alley. I can't get my dog. You know—"

"Huh?" the Negro squeaked.

"You know, my dog."
“Huh?” The Negro grinned at Waxy and began to push himself up on the street.

“Hey, wait, won’t ya?” Waxy shouted, running after him.

The Negro wheeled around and, squinting his eye as if aiming a gun, shot the cigarette butt at Waxy. Then he pushed himself quickly up the street, trailing an idiotic stream of laughter behind him.

Waxy looked around for a rock to throw but couldn’t find any. “Bitch,” he said to himself. He hurried on now, for it was getting dark fast. A lone pigeon perched on a fire plug regarded him indifferently as he rounded the corner of High Street.

He joined the crowd that pushed its way across the street when the light turned green. Someone shoved him into a policeman just going off duty. “Easy there, fella,” the policeman said. Waxy paused and watched him disappear into the other side of the street. The light changed and he had to hurry to dodge the oncoming cars.

Now he walked quickly along High Street. In front of him a richly-dressed man was walking with a shiny, freshly-minted little boy at her side. As Waxy brushed pass them, he heard the little boy ask:

“What’s that up there, mother?”

Waxy was too far past them to hear the detailed explanation that followed.

He turned into a side alley. The wind made his pant-legs flap impatiently and a piece of dirt blew into his eye. A sheet of newspaper was tumbling capriciously along the ground towards him. It wrapped itself around his leg. He bent down and gently pushed it away and watched it run along. He heard it bark as it rounded the corner.

He opened a narrow door and went down a dimly-lit set of stairs to the boiler room. He looked all around, but Ty was not there. He went slowly back up the stairs, where a tall, young-looking tenant of the apartment was coming in the side door.

“Hi there, can I help you?”

“Where’s Ty?”

“Why?”

“Ty, Gramp’s friend, he runs the boiler down there.”

“Oh, the janitor. Well, he’s probably out running some errand. He’ll be back soon, I guess.”

Waxy looked carelessly at the man’s face in the half-darkness. “Oh, he said.

“Look,” the man said, “why don’t you just go down and wait for him. I know he’ll be in pretty soon.”

“Okay,” Waxy said after hesitating a while. But he didn’t move. The man looked at him, puzzled.

“Uh . . . don’t touch anything though.”

Waxy had decided: “When you lay down, you know, like on a bed, like Gramp . . . I mean like the cat . . .”

The man was puzzled and in a hurry: “Uh, yeh sure, Ty has a cat down there somewhere. You go down and see if you can find him. I’ll be seeing you, be good now.”

He hurried up the stairs. “But that’s why I didn’t get my dog,” Waxy said as the door at the top of the stairs closed behind the man. Waxy returned to the boiler room, and in a few minutes Ty came in.

“Hey, what you doin’ here?” Ty said, surprised. “Gramp laid down on my bed and didn’t get my dog.”

“Didn’t get the dog!”

“No.”

“Why not? He said he was. He told me last night.” Ty’s face cracked into a smile and he chucked Waxy under the chin. “He even showed me the money for it.”

“I know,” Waxy said anxiously, “I know but—can’t ya see? He laid down on my bed and that’s why he didn’t get it.”

Ty’s face straightened. “Laid down?”

“Yeh, you know, like that cat out in the alley that time.”

Ty’s face winced. “C’mon, sonny”

They hurried through the now-dark alley and out across High Street toward Gramp’s place. As they pushed along against the wind, Waxy felt that maybe Ty would fix it up so he could get his dog. Tomorrow, maybe.

“Hurry up, sonny,” Ty said.

When they opened the door to the apartment, the light was still burning in the inner room. The first thing Ty saw was Gramp under the bare light on the bed. He moaned softly to himself and walked slowly into the bedroom with his hat hanging in his hand.

Waxy ran ahead of him into the room and pointed at Gramp. “See!” he said.

“Yes,” Ty said. He reached over and took Waxy’s hat off for him and told him to kneel and say a prayer. Waxy frowned at Ty but did as he was told. Then Ty took him by the hand and led him out of the apartment.

As they went down the stairs into the street, Waxy looked up at Ty and said: “I’ll get it now, won’t I?”

“What, sonny?”

“You know, the dog!”

Sahonnet to a Mahodern Sahinger

YVONNE DuBois

Mahodern Sahinger, wahail, wahail;
Your tahbear will be of hano avahail.
The houtrahages of life yo mahoon,
And jahace the future wathith a grahoan.
Your he-a-a-art with gri-e-e-ef is far too bitten,
For you to saheh the lahesson plainly written:

To learn to live, you must learn how to laugh.
The fahirst and lahast are equal—half to half.
Ohaha, sahorry sahinger of lahament,
Give up the saheh for sweet contahent.
I sahuggest you find repenthe
By jahumping the rahieer—Lethe.
At leahest you can dry up your plahaintive cry.
Thee raheccord’s plahastic and wahon’t melt anywhay.
"This is the last composition I'll assign before the final examination and I expect you to incorporate in it dramatic personal conflict. You may use some event from your own or another's experience. It may be imaginary or perhaps something suggested by a newspaper account. Remember, the emphasis here is on the dramatic conflict. It would be wise not to burden your work with excessive detail but lead quickly up to your main scene. Now I want to read you some selections from . . .

I watched him read. He wasn't too old, maybe about my age, late twenties, wrapped up in his work, his life stretching out before him, all neatly tied together, chartered, secure. Year after year the young faces in his comp classes would come and go, some interested, some indifferent, and perhaps once every long while, the teacher's reward, a chance to nourish the spark of genius.

And here he was not even started yet, not even sure of what he wanted. Tryin' to catch up with these young faces, tryin' to swim upstream against the flow of time, against a current growing perceptibly swifter, already pulling him back faster than he could flail forward. The torchy voice of Ann Sheridan had caught its pathos once: "Time waits for no one, it passes you by, it's just like a river flowing out to the sea . . ."

"Maybe that's for me, teaching. Young kids, wide-open minds, mold 'em, steer 'em in the right direction, pass on a little of your philosophy, a little of the essence garnered from the knocks and bruises of your own life experiences.

Yeah, sure, I'm the one; you stupid bastard, you're so mixed up yourself you don't know whether you're comin' or goin' and you're gonna teach!

Naw, naw, he had to find himself first, get a groove for himself and stick to it. That was the trouble with him, he had this damn worm eatin' him, never satisfied, and how the hell could he be satisfied when he didn't know what he wanted. What'd the old man used to say—"Your eyes are too big for your stomach." Yeah, gotta find out what this life's all about. Maybe the answer's in these books, in this history an' philosophy he was talkin' . . .

"Well, you have the assignment. It's due next week and please use ink. That's all."

Outside, walking back to the dorm, one of the kids in the comp class caught up with him.

"Boy, you vets ought to be able to hit that assignment but how the heck are the rest of us going to write about dramatic conflict?"

"Well, we didn't all storm Iwo Jima or fly a hundred missions over Berlin, ya know. You might have had something more exciting happen to you than thousands of vets in rear echelon bases. And besides, if we did have something dramatic to write about, we'd have a harder time writing it. We'd have to be a Norman Mailer, a Jones, or an Irwin Shaw to do it right. How many guys saw action in the first World War and how many good stories came out of it? Two or three, same as this time."

"Yeah, but this is just for a comp; he doesn't expect a classic."

"I guess you're right there, all right."

Trouble with him was, everytime he sat down to write, he acted like an author. Time he wised up and knocked something out in an hour like the rest of the kids. Six, seven hours on a comp. He must be nuts. But that was part of the nagging—do it right, not just another assignment that had to be done. It was the need to meet the challenge, the fear of failing that subconsciously resulted in his constant procrastinating.

Back in the room, I dropped my books on the desk and stretched out on the sack to think about what to write.

So he wants character conflict, dramatic conflict, heh? How about the battle between him and his old man, when they'd actually started punching! Christ, the old man gave him a bloody nose and he'd chickened out, somehow couldn't hit the old bastard. That was always good—blood against blood. Or how about that deal on the ship, on the way overseas? That shook him up so much that even now about seven years or so later, he still tasted bile whenever he thought of it. That son-of-a-bitchin' MP colonel . . .

Late June, 1944, the ship was four weeks out into the Pacific, alone, in the middle of nowhere, under a burning sun. Three days out of the Canal she'd burned out some bearings and with them the air-conditioning and water-cooling systems. Below decks, in stifling compartments andholds stacked with tiered bunks six to eight deep, with barely a foot of clearance between, some five thousand troops sweated in their undershorts, got sick, played cards, read or bitched the monotony away. They were allowed on deck one hour in the morning, one in the afternoon. The decks of the holds, sporadically mopped, were patterns in mud, as, not infrequently, someone spewed his guts in a nauseous cough and splatter, thickening the already sour stench of sweating bodies no salt-water shower could relieve.

And behind him were sixteen months of stupid commands, orders, directives, regulations. The Army way, the channels, the hurry-up-and-wait, the sign in and sign out, the fool-up that had sent him on his way overseas without ever having a furlough. But never had the gap between EM and Officer been more distant or more flagrantly rubbed in. Day after day for twenty-eight days now, he had trudged up for chow, past the port-holes of the officer's dining room and tables set with silver and linen, down to the EM Mess, where he ate standing, the food slapped indiscernimately together on a tray. Day after day he'd gone topside after the PA had squawked, "the order of the day while above will be complete fatigues." Complete fatigues on a ship near the equator, in the middle of the Pacific ocean, in the heat of summer. No T-shirt, no stripping to the

(Continued on Page 14)
The Dance Hall Girl

She is loud and laughter-hearted and very much alive;
She shrinks the sharpest curses and she beats the hottest jive,
And her hair is always tangled and her mouth is hard and wide
And none can tell, to look at her, the heart that beats inside.

It's Rock That Joint!
And Go, Go, Go!
"No two-faced-man
Ever gets me low."

But when the evening shadows come, she sits awhile alone
And sings the poignant lyrics from the dances she has known,
Her lips are soft and yearning and the tangles of her hair
Are shining like a halo in the brilliant lamplight glare.

My Baby's Coming Home,
She croons in minor key,
To Each His Own... "I know
He is the one for me."

The Tired Ones

They sit on porches
With their work done
In the cool twilight
After the sun,
Rocking the young ones
Softly to sleep,
Whispering secrets
They cannot keep.

Time hangs suspended
In the still air;
Waiting and rocking
They sit and stare.

Quietly, patiently,
They wait to die.

Those who live fully
Never ask why.

In the street, couples
Laugh and pass by,

Trees stand motionless
Under the sky.

The Old Woman

The tired woman is crocheting
A pillow for her daughter's wedding bed.
She sits in her usual rocker swaying
With creaking, monotonous tread.

With glowing face she is repeating
Old tales from the past she loves so well;
From routine sleeping, working, eating,
There is little she remembers to tell.

The magic dances of her courting—
The first kiss, the ring, the wedding day—
Are all she deems worthwhile reporting
And all her daughter hears her say.

She is old and near completing
Her life, with the patterned pillow case;
But the points of her life are repeating.
Her daughter has dreams in her face.

In Each Man

In each man there is poetry underneath the prose.
In each man, the beauty of a quiet autumn tree,
The fragile dreams of love, the stirring fire,
The patience of twilight longing and desire,
The morning hope forever leaping free.
Life is a song, but the lyrics—what man knows?

The Small Ones

In the stifling silence, in the noonday heat,
The street lies bare;
Coughing motors and weary feet
Seek cliff-high walls
Out of the glare.
A white sun burns
With ceaseless stare
From a changeless sky.
The gutters are dry.
Crippled, ugly
With mottled bark,
A tree stands cactus-sharp,
Its shadow dark
And small at its roots;
Cut off, like its height
By summer blight.

There is no life
And no wind blowing
The signs of life
That still are showing—
The gutter trash.

There is small hope
In the dance of flies
Over the fruit
In open stalls
Or the flutter of curtains
From dark brick walls.

But two small children out of the street
Come running, playing.
They are too young to feel the heat,
They do not hear their mothers saying
"Get out of the sun."

They stir the gutter trash
With dirty hands
And climb the cactus tree.
They turn a hydrant on
And set its coolness free.

The Fragile One

His shoulders are broad;
His body is strong;
She carelessly taunts him
With laughter and song.

Her joy bubbles up
From a delicate face
As fragile and pale
As a porcelain vase.

He treats her with care
Lest she break into tears;
But he, too, is fragile,
Love-cracked through the years.

Oh, be gentle with laughter
And careful with song;
The heaviest china,
Once cracked, is not strong.
The Shows at Killapoorsparrow

(With Apologies to Ernest Hemingway)

"Funny thing is it's painless," he said. But it's awfully bloody."

"Bloody?"

"Yes; bloody, and painless," he said. He lay on the hot cot under the old, filthy chinaberry tree and sipped his tall, cool glass of milk-of-magnesia while the sun glared down on the Mississippi bayou.

"Too bad, dying here in this hideous, God-forsaken..."

... No good snake trap; she finished, and picked up a cigarette from the bamboo coffee-table.

"Do you think," the man said, "that Mambo will get through from Hattiesburg before I... these lousy backwoods places, and the roads a sea of mud." Two filthy, obscene, black crows came to rest on a dead elderberry branch close by.

"Drink your medicine," she said. "Let's not quarrel; it's bad for you."

"Nothing's good for me," he said.

It was all over, he thought. Death was breathing its germ-laden breath down his sweaty neck. When he was in good health he had feared death, but now death was nothing to him. But he would not be able to write anymore. This, more than death, obsessed him.

In his mind the large German Opel roared along the Belgrade to Zagreb highway. Olga turned her blonde head toward the east and looked up into the mountains and asked him in her low, sultry voice, "Are you coming back to Oslo." And he answered, "No, you see, I must stay in Trieste or be shot by Il Duce's carabinieri."

And she said, "Oh, of course." And the Opel raced on at one hundred kilometers an hour while the tires thumped in the concrete slabs underneath.

Smolensk was duller than usual that New Year's Eve. There was no snow, but a brown mixture of rain and sleet filled the air and choked you. The office clerks were making the best of their seven rubles' worth of vodka. The room was hot and smoky, and he was tired of gambling. He left the room and hurried to Sonya's house where there was always light and laughter. Sonya was playing her accordion when he arrived. They kissed and then ate some black bread spread with some foul-tasting cheese...

The sun had set and evening was creeping over the bayou. The obscene crows no longer cawed from the elderberry bush. He lay on his cot under a mosquito netting and watched the night move in around him.

When you didn't worry about it it was wonderful. It wasn't that it was her fault; she was not the cause. But she had loved it; she loved excitement. But she had told a lie; and to tell a lie means to die. He had lied too; he had to die, or live by the lie. If she hadn't lied then it would have been some other rich slut who would have taken him over the hurdles, dissipated his writing talent, and then left him. The talent? Yes, the talent, what or wherever it was. His talent was a telephone directory in which there were hundreds of vital names and most of them rich, snobby women who said they loved him for himself and not for his money and then left him. It was always that way when a man had been successful.

She came in sight, walking through the gray dusk toward his cot. She was still a good-looking woman, he thought; she had a pleasant body, and though she was not exactly pretty, there was something about her, and she knew how to ride; but she drank too much. She had been married at fifteen to the owner of a large sugar plantation and had borne that old, white-bearded fuddy-duddy eight children before she was twenty-five. But she still had a nice body, soft and well rounded. She moved closer to the cot.

He turned his head up from the sweat-soaked pillow. "Hello," he said.

"Here's your cod-liver oil," she said.

"I don't want it."

"You must."

"I must?"

"Yes," she said, "you mused the bed, and I'm going to straighten things up."

"I'd like to..." he said.

"Quiet!" she said. "Drink your medicine."

She left the terrace and he was once again with his thoughts. So this was it, he thought; this was the way he was to die, out here in this Mississippi bog after all the real living he had done. He had loved too much, drunk too much, expected too much of the women he had known. He was all worn out.

From his fifth floor apartment window he could see the rue Poinç with its bumpy cobblestones, and the sports climbing on their bicycles that Sunday morning after Pierre had died of a severed colon in a street brawl. The bicycles had moved noisily into the glaring sunshine, leaving him with his hangover. The wine he had had had not been good, but cheap, and cheap wine always leaves an aftertaste. He had tried to write that sunny morning, looking out over the roof-tops over all the hills of Paris. Little Monique, looking bloated and tired, had stirred from the sofa and moaned something about her headache, and he had told her, "Quiet, I'm thinking," while a light breeze blew several blossoms off the plant that sat on the window-sill.

The sultry and oppressive night air all but smothered him as he stumbled out of the Killapoorsparrow Theatre, Hattiesburg's tallest, white-painted burlesque spot. The show had been a poor one as always, and he had asked himself, "Why do I come to see these soft, over-ripe women perform in this filthy, obscene theatre?" and his other self had answered, "I don't know."

And he had stumbled on into the dark slapping at the eagle-like mosquitoes that attacked him.

His cot was still hot, and the Mississippi night moved over him and came in closer; and the closeness of the night was like the closeness of death that was breathing down his sweaty neck.
From the bayou came the sound of discontented, grumbling frogs while alligators snapped playfully at their webbed toes.
So this is it," he said as she moved closer to his cot once again.
"It's me," she said; "How do you feel?"
"Tell it to stay away," he said.
"Away? What?" she said.
"Death," he said, and dropped his wet, hot head on the pillow.

The morning stillness was broken by the threshing sound of an execrable old Ford that plowed its way through the foot-deep mud and groaned to a stop by the sugarcane shed.
"He's here at last," he said as he lifted the mosquito netting.
"Yes, Darling, we've been saved." "Wonderful Mambo, Mambo Meggs; you've gotten through," he shouted.

Mambo Meggs, the old taxi driver of Hattiesburg, came across the lawn to where he lay on the cot.
"Yasuh, I've done it. Me and mah Fohud has rescued you, Boss." "Mambo," he groaned, "help me to your truck so we can get started for Hattiesburg. I'm dying, Mambo."

She and Mambo lifted him and the cot and dragged him over to the mud-splattered Ford and put him in the back. She and Mambo climbed in the front and slammed the doors. The starter groaned several times and the mufferless engine clacked into action. The old Ford bounced into the dark green pine forest and sloshed along through the brown quagmire. After four hours he looked up from his cot and saw dimly a white tower. Killapoo-sparrow? Yes, that was it. He knew that he had fooled death. He smiled as the Ford bumped ahead.

The night was full of noises. The bayou was restless with the whisperings and whistles of the various birds. The sounds were almost human. She got up quickly from her bed and darted out to the cot. A strange animal howled a strange howl. She shined her flashlight on the ground next to the hot cot. The noise of the animal and the strange bird calls and the hot cot and the mosquito netting made her afraid and she wondered if Claypoole was sleeping, or if he was dead. The sheets were dragging on the ground. "Claypoole," she called. "Claypoole! Claypoole!"

She could not hear him breathing or stirring. "Please Claypoole! Claypoole!" she repeated.

The animal in the bayou made another strange noise. But she did not hear the animal since the mosquito netting was new and cheap and made a loud rustling noise.

**Mirrors**

_**Lucy-Jo Malloy**_

*God is the mirror of my soul;*
*The rain is the mirror of my sorrow.)*
*Thunder reflects my mind's turmoil;*
*The sun is the mirror of tomorrow.*
Millie and Murph

(Continued from Page Five)

since the Irish on hand would plainly not survive this day unless it were replenished by the wager.

So the two men bent their heads over some paper and started to conjure up some sort of HORRIBLE CONTRADICTION for Millie to digest. After much figuring and thinking, they finally found a problem that was suitable to the experiment. The problem for Millie was to produce on a piece of paper a ROUND SQUARE. Not a circle or a square and not a square drawn on a circle and not neither, but a

ROUND SQUARE—nothing more or less.

Murph walked over to Millie, looking up at her lights and wires, all the time having faith in her power to choose without becoming neurotic. As Murph fed the information to Millie, Pete picked up his clipboard to record her reactions.

Before we peek at the little scratchings Millie made on a piece of paper, perhaps we could profit by a little thought about her problem. A Mathematician would tell us that a ROUND SQUARE is "a Paradox of geometry involving two contradictory propositions." (He means that it can't exist.)

A Philosopher would tell us "it is an example of (hold on now) an unexternalized Universal that can't be reified." (He, also, means that it can't exist.)

A Psychologist would tell us "the subject's reaction to the stimulus ROUND SQUARE can only be realized through hallucinosis. If a round square 'existed,' we could have the first instance of a complete mass hallucinosis." (He means it can't exist, because if it did, we would all be crazy or some nice word for the same thing.)

Now that we know the odds which Millie must deal with, perhaps we can appreciate her problem a little more.

To this day nobody knows exactly what happened in that room over at Electronics Division, but it is safe to say that something strange happened. At 1:55 p. m. (EST) anybody in the hall of the building could hear a whisper, snorting, crackling, groaning sound that lasted for about a second. Then there was silence. After five minutes came another whispering, snorting, crackling, groaning sound... and another silence.

The janitor happened to be the only body in the corridor at the time, so he took it upon himself to investigate. He knocked on the door. Somebody opened it for him, but before he could ask any questions, this somebody slipped a few crisp bills in his hands with some terse instructions concerning the purchase of some "Erin's Pride". When the janitor returned he knocked on the door again, and once more before he could ask any questions, the purchase was inside and an echo of "Thanks—We need it" was in the corridor. He went back to sweeping the floor.

The only other outward evidence of strange goings-on were a few phone calls from that room. The operator at the switchboard was slightly amazed when an excited Professor Peters wanted to get through to the New York Yankees. Well, she knew that he was a Psychologist and that made him a bit of a crackpot anyway. She shrugged it off and went back to switching.

It was a three hour wait until the door opened. When it did, the gentle strain of an old folk song could be heard emanating from the lips of Pete and Murph that went something like:

"Twas the gath'rrrin of the clans, and all the Lads were there..."

Behind them were the remains of a party, and it is an UNDERSTATEMENT to say that both had been in their cups. In fact, they were STONED by all that fine Irish, Blarney-Stoned, one might say.

In his right hand, Murph held a piece of paper with some scratchings on it (his other arm was around Pete's shoulder). In Pete's left hand was a peculiar looking object (his other arm was around Murph's shoulder). It was hard to tell who was keeping whom from falling, but the two moved upright out of the building and down the street with some sort of indomitable will. (They were on the way to see PRESIDENT PLUNKETT.)

We may doubt seriously that PRESIDENT PLUNKETT laughed when two Professors stumbled into his office that afternoon. In fact, PRESIDENT PLUNKETT was never before as angry, and he will probably never be as angry again.

He frowned and sputtered, his left ear twitched, and his glasses dropped onto his desk. Poor Pete and Murph! They couldn't get a word in through the PRESIDENT'S squawking. They thought to themselves that the PRESIDENT was in no mood for explanations, so each placed his precious burden solemnly on the desk and stumbled out.

The PRESIDENT thoughtfully slammed the door for them after he caught them winking at his secretary on their way out. When he returned to his desk, the telephone rang, and, as he picked it up, he absentily stared at the two things that Pete and Murph had left there.


And the PRESIDENT just sat and stared at the two objects that Pete and Murph had left there. He just sat and stared for a full five minutes....

But THEN

He
Banged down the receiver
Picked up the objects
Stuffed them in his pocket
Ran out of the door
(Forgetting his hat, and overcoat)
Ran down the street and
Into the Electronics Building and
Into the room where

Millie was.
And then he saw what was HAPPENING. He saw Millie’s million light bulbs twinkling merrily to the tune of a whirring, snorting, crackling, groaning sound.

He saw her spitting out little objects onto the floor, and he saw Pete, Murph, and the janitor, and the switchboard operator picking them up and putting them in cardboard boxes.

Pete and Murph saw the PRESIDENT; but it was difficult to hear what he was saying above the noise that Millie was making. It was something about “Casey” and “ten thousand more.” Murph smiled and turned a switch back to a different setting. The janitor was piling the boxes which were now shoulder high, so he motioned to the PRESIDENT to assist him in this task. Dumbfounded, but willingly, the PRESIDENT grabbed box after box, passing them up to the janitor.

After an hour, Murph gave Millie a rest and everybody finished piling up the boxes.

Now, the President was still in a QUANDRY, so he asked Murph for an explanation. Murph said that when Pete and he tried to make Millie neurotic she didn’t get neurotic; but she produced a ROUND SQUARE. That wasn’t all. Five minutes later she produced a three dimensional projection of it, that is, a SPHERICAL CUBE.

Now, as Murph explained, they were quick to see the possibilities of such an object as a SPHERICAL CUBE, for not only does it roll on the ground like a ball, but it will sit on one of its sides like a cube as well as pack in boxes conveniently for shipping.

Murph also explained that what could be finer for such a thing than using it as a BASEBALL.

In fact, said Murph, that is just what they did, and it wouldn’t be long before all of the ball-clubs in the country would be using the SCREWBALL.

Millie was making SCREWBALLS at the rate of two hundred per minute at a wholesale price of ten dollars per SCREWBALL. They also had more orders than they could fill. Although sometime they would have to stop making screwballs and “retool” for such things as Tennis balls Ping Pong balls Basketballs and a few OTHER orders that Murph had forgotten about. The PRESIDENT was quick to grasp the situation and see if it could be used to his advantage, or as he put it, “FOR THE UNIVERSITY”. The PRESIDENT reminded Murph and Pete that Millie was built on University property with University money at University discretion, therefore giving the PRESIDENT, that is, the University, some sort of claim, or percentage of this new and rapidly growing industry. The PRESIDENT also said that the University was SHORT on MONEY.

More Facilities were needed.
The FACULTY was UNDERPAID, and
The PRESIDENT (of course) was TERRIBLY underpaid.

Murph said that an agreement could be reached on certain conditions.

These were:
Murph would become a Member of the BOARD and also be Vice President in charge of MAINTENANCE of the GIRLS’ dormitories.
Pete would become Chief of a new Psychological Research division for MECHANICAL NEUROSES.

And that both would receive a total of 50% of the profits of the SCREWBALL INDUSTRY.

Now the PRESIDENT was a shrewd cookie at percentages and quickly realized the amounts involved and felt that here at last was a most inspired plan. They agreed. To seal the agreement, the PRESIDENT asked if they didn’t perhaps have a little, well, SOMETHING on hand that they could agree over.

Murph explained sadly that his new shipment of Irish hadn’t as yet arrived, but there was SOMETHING on hand that was ALMOST as fine. Murph picked up a strange looking piece of equipment with a jar of olives on top and attached it to Millie. Within ten seconds, Murph, Pete, the President, the janitor, and the switchboard operator were holding MARTINIS in a toasting position.

There was a hearty “TO MILLIE”.

Murph smiled.
Pete smiled.
The janitor smiled.
The switchboard operator smiled.

PRESIDENT PLUNKETT SMILED,

BECAUSE at last, Millie was making Martinis with EXACTLY the right amount of Vermouth.

The following day a few people noticed that PRESIDENT PLUNKETT’s eyes were of a reddish color. This was attributed to the fact that he was pouring over the University books with his colleagues, Murphy and Peters, until early in the morning.

And a few people also wondered about something else in his eyes: a sort of twinkle that wasn’t there before.

And a few more people also wondered why his Pretty, Young Secretary seemed always on the defense—as if a man of such Reputation and Austerity as the PRESIDENT would ever make a pass—The PRISSY.

And still other people were reading an item in the Wall Street Journal.

“An amazing coincidence occurred at the close of the market today. It was found that stock in principal manufacturing firms of baseballs went down markedly, and that correspondingly, value per share in Erin’s Pride and Co., Ltd., distillers and distributors of Irish Whiskey, went up.

This, as yet, has had no repercussions, but it may indicate what we analysts call, a trend.
waist for them. Someone said the Red Cross girls had objected. But up in "officer's heaven," sitting in deck chairs, the officers wore shorts and chatted to the Red Cross girls, also in shorts. Nice summer cruise for them, through the graciousness of Uncle Sam. Day after day these things had rankled more and more because he passionately believed in democracy and America and "the huddled masses yearning to be free." In high school the Bill of Rights, the Rights of Man, the words of Jefferson. Crèvecoeur, Lincoln, had thundered in his ears and brought tears to his eyes.

The climax came in the afternoon of the twenty-eighth day out. He had gone to the "out-of-order" water cooler next to the stairway to the hatch.

The water was warm and oily, he rinsed his mouth and spat it out. A slight breeze came through the hatchway, so he waited until the lieutenant, the compartment OD, would tell him to keep clear of the stairs. But the MP colonel came through the hatch first and stopped on the stairs a few steps above his head.

He was officer-in-charge of all the troops aboard. By his orders, they'd spent the first four days out entirely below decks until the ship's captain had warned him of the danger of a mutiny. Everyone, including the officers, hated his guts.

Then loud enough for him to overhear, the colonel said, "God, what a stench, how do you stand it, Lieutenant?"

The disgust in the voice, the stupid arrogance of the remark, triggered the nervous system of a sensitive personality long irritated and lately aggravated to the breaking point by the physical discomforts of the voyage.

The blood rushing to his ears drowned out the lieutenant's reply. His breath tore at his throat through gritted teeth. His fists clenched and unclenched. If only he could get his hands on him, he'd tear the bastard apart. His throat—if only he could jump at his throat! He took a step toward the stairs.

The lieutenant, hand on his hip, near the holster, snarled, "Where do you think you're goin', soldier?"

Blood pounding in his ears and vertigo saved him. He got sick and vomited over the bottom steps of the stairway. Coughing and crying in rage, he held on to the side of the steps, suddenly so weak and shivering from a chill that he could barely stand.

"Just let me get my hands on him," he groaned through rigid jaws.

"Get your hands on whom, soldier? You better wise up and forget about that stuff. Anybody as stupid as that sonofabitch is bound to run into a bullet some dark night. Get back in your bunk and sleep it off; I'll check on you tomorrow," the lieutenant advised.

The chapel bells ringing for dinner snapped him out of it. His palms were wet with sweat again. Yeah, that's what he write about; that ought to be dramatic enough.

He picked up his towel and went to the head to wash up for supper.

Uninvited

Roland Dedekind

A man came to the house last night
With the roaring of the wind,
And tho' I had the windows shut
And doors, he still came in.

He blew through cracks and crevices,
And tossed dust on the floor;
He flung the papers of a desk,
And loudly slammed a door.

He brushed the curtains as he passed
Along the farthest wall;
He turned the pages of a book
Lying open in the hall.

When he walked too near the fire
Burning open in the grate,
Fing'ry shadows on the wall sought
Each crack to luminate.

But soon he tired of his sport,
Each corner to explore,
And quietly glided past me
On his way to the front door.

And though I hurried after him
With all my might and main,
He left the house as quickly
And as secret as he came.

I saw him out the window
At the garden's darkest edge,
As he whistled down the gravel walk
And brushed the barber'y hedge.
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