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Route 422
Pottstown, Pa.
Editorial

We have been foully betrayed. One of the first precepts we learned when we joined the Lantern staff was that no one ever reads editorials. Acting accordingly, we felt free to say just about what we pleased, secure in the knowledge that no one would pay any attention. We received a rude awakening after the last issue; some despicable sneak not only read the editorial but showed it to Shepherd. From Shepherd's subsequent comments, we infer that he objected to the article. He chose to overlook the nice things we'd said about him and apparently considered the remarks to be a reflection on his artistic integrity, or something. Perhaps we should not have described him as a master of double-talk; it may be that he hasn't really mastered it. If he had, then we would probably not recognize it as such. Recently we've had cause to doubt his subtlety as well; we can usually tell when he's going to sell something, if we happen to be listening. We still feel that he is harmless, but are somewhat less attached to him than previously.

Another radio station is now playing good music from midnight on, without benefit of esoteric patter, and it provides much more satisfactory listening. In all fairness, however, we must thank Mr. Shepherd for three things; first, after his talk at the Weekly banquet, that editorial probably received more attention than any other editorial that has appeared in these pages; second, we must thank him for his Saturday afternoon program that plays some really excellent music in between monologues; third, we've noticed that Shepherd has been much more intelligible in recent evening broadcasts—hardly the result of our editorial, but perhaps he has had similar criticism from other sources? Well, on to more important subjects.

This is, we suppose, a minor valedictory. We're expected to tell you how much we've enjoyed being editor this year, and to thank all of you good people for your cooperation. To those of you who have cooperated we do say, "thanks." To those of you who have disappointed us we can only say that we hope you'll do better next year. Our biggest problem this year has been that of obtaining suitable material for publication. This is the perennial problem for Lantern staffs. Our lot has been no worse or better than that in other years. Perhaps you've been appalled by the regularity with which the three column editorial has been appearing this year. We have hoped, before each issue, that there would be sufficient material to make it possible to get away with one column of editorial, but on each occasion we've been disappointed. To write at length and to write interestingly is a difficult task at best, and we realize that we have probably not succeeded. Each editorial this year (this one is no exception) has contained a plea for the silent, the shy ones, to submit their material. Each year the students in the creative writing courses have written large quantities of better than passable material. But the Lantern staff was able to publish only a very little of it, not because of poor quality, but because we only saw a little of it. The usual excuse is that "My comp isn't good enough for the Lantern," but how can that excuse stand up when one sees what putrid stuff is occasionally printed? Before you start criticizing the material we print, take into consideration the material we've had to choose from. Only a very few people are willing to let the staff decide whether or not their work is good enough. For the most part, some very interesting papers are allowed to moulder away, or are filed in the familiar circular file.

Not to be mercenary, (who would think of writing for money?), but writing can be a rather lucrative side-line and some people have found it a well-paid profession. If you are among those who will take a course in creative writing next year, it might be to your advantage to write always with publication in mind. Too often a student will think only in terms of the instructor, or at best, of the class. Criticism by the class is helpful, but the reaction of the entire student body, which reads not because it is interested, might give a more accurate idea of how successful a piece of writing actually is. Criticism, after all, is the only form of remuneration the Lantern can offer. We have little faith in the psychic benefit to be obtained in seeing one's name in print in a publication of such limited circulation. But one can get some idea of the success of an idea after it has been put into the form of an article, short story or poem, if a number of people see it and comment on it. The comments are usually sparse and usually favorable, which is no help at all, since a favorable comment may be of questionable sincerity, but if a comment is elaborated, we can get an idea of what to change in our manner of writing. All of this, of course, is written on the assumption that you are interested in writing. If you are not interested in writing you can still help improve the Lantern by reading it and making suggestions.

A few brief comments on this issue may be in order. We can't let Saul's cover illustration pass unmentioned—here and now we would like to say a word of thanks to our harassed artist for giving us three good-looking issues of the magazine.

The contributors to this issue are substantially the same as to previous issues. There are a few new names, but we must give our deepest thanks to the staff that has been responsible for the larger part of our material.

We're going to wind up another long-winded editorial by reminding you that a lantern can't burn without fuel and without some attention. While our lantern has burned others have been lit, have burned briefly and have flickered out. Still ours is going. But someone must provide the fuel. We are leaving the Lantern in the care of Miss Marna Feldt, who, we are sure, will do her utmost to see that the Lantern stays lit. You, our readers who will still be with the school in the fall can help her. Somewhere among you of the lower classes there are potential Lantern editors and as you read this, let us remind you that the surest way to the staff and the editorship is continued writing for the Lantern. If we were hammy or felt pseudojournalistic, we would probably draw our editorial career to a close by scribbling "30" under this, but we don't really believe in that sort of gesture so we'll just say, "so long—it's been real!"

Bill LeKernec
Gordon A. Armistead decided that Miss Thelma Tatnall had a mind as thin and shallow as the rice paper on which she typed. He was also convinced that she possessed all the characteristics that were repulsive to men; and it was not hard for him to understand why she had never married. She was an effervescent smarty-pants, he thought, and he disliked her because she knew all the answers—or thought she did. She pestered him with her middle-aged cackling and braying, and she was a threat to his sanity. Besides, she was a detriment to the productivity of the Gurney and Stauffer Advertising Company.

Mr. Armistead remembered the first day he met this flippant woman, and recalled that in the first few minutes he worked with her, he tired of her insipid platitudes and ceaseless babbling. Whenever he was talking she was not working, and this annoyed him. He would ask her to get the 1949 file on the Dunn account, and she would reply with a poorly affected Southern drawl, “You mean, suh, you wan that no 'count Dunn 'count?” Armistead would then nod his head stiffly and tap his fingers on the edge of his desk. On such occasions he imagined that Miss Tatnall’s remarks disrupted the serenity of his mind like a power-drill shatters a concrete sidewalk. If Armistead showed his annoyance, or became impatient with the portly Miss Tatnall, she would tell him to “take it easy, Greasy,” or “don’t get in a hubbub, Bub.” Her remarks were uttered so quickly and brainlessly that Armistead often found himself tied to a wall facing the punishment of her trite barrages.

Mr. Armistead had wished that Miss Tatnall would get another job, quietly expire, or even drop dead twice, following the advice of one of her very original expressions. Armistead had been in to see Mr. Gurney about her five times since he had joined the company in 1947. Each time Mr. Gurney had cleared his throat nervously and explained to him that Miss Tatnall had been with Gurney and Stauffer since 1935, and that “after all she’s the head of the filing department, and quite a willing worker when it is necessary to do night work.” Mr. Gurney’s speech was always the same. Armistead expected to hear it just as he had come to expect Miss Tatnall’s chatter about how her sister’s baby contracted prickly heat last week; or what her mother said about her rheumatism when they were having a damp winter in Chillicothe. Mr. Armistead was a patient and good-natured man, but he wasn’t when it came to “Steam Engine Tatnall” (his pet name for her because she was always puffing around and blowing off steam). Murder was one way to eliminate this woman; but such a method only entered Mr. Armistead’s mind for a few nervous seconds when he was thoroughly exasperated at her unbecoming sauciness. He believed in letting Nature take its course; although at times that course seemed steep and thorny.

On hot summer afternoons, when the traffic on the street three floors below Mr. Armistead’s window was at its noisy and irritable worst, Miss Tatnall always added to the impatient beeping and honking. She always made the atmosphere doubly oppressive for Mr. Armistead, working in his shirt unbuttoned at the collar. Sitting at his desk writing copy, he would be interrupted by Miss Tatnall gibbering about his pipe smoking. “My!” she would say, with a tone of innocent discovery which always anticipated sarcasm, “this office certainly does have atmosphere. The only trouble is that you could cut it with a knife!” And she would say the last word with a rising inflection of finality. Then she would jabber to one of the secretaries—generally Miss Reifsneider—that men have such disgusting, messy habits that it’s a wonder there aren’t more divorces. Mr. Armistead would then merely blow a few deep lungfuls of smoke toward the door of his office and continue writing on his lined, yellow tablet.

The Friday afternoon before the office group went to Mr. Gurney’s house on Long Island for a picnic (or as Miss Tatnall called it, “one of those wonderful whatchamacallits,” taking great pride in her alliterative prowess) Miss Tatnall was in a high state of frivolity, although the humid August day didn’t warrant such excitement. Mr. Armistead returned from his fruit-bowl lunch at Child’s and found Miss Tatnall humming songs tunelessly, and coming out with a few remembered words from these songs. “I’m in love with a wonderful guy,” she crooned artlessly, to the profound mystification of Mr. Armistead who wondered just who in hell the unlucky wonderful guy could be. Then, as she slammed the “L” file drawer closed, she sang out, “... That’s why the lady is a tramp.”

Mr. Armistead hung his Panama hat on the hat rack and tried to ignore Miss Tatnall—or Thel, as all the office girls called her—who imagined herself as Mary Martin one minute, and Ethel Merman the next. He decided that it was too sultry an afternoon to worry about Miss Tatnall. But he wondered if she was going to be so high and hilarious at Mr. Gurney’s picnic on Saturday afternoon.

The next morning was disappointing to the office crowd of the Gurney and Stauffer Advertising Company because the air was humid and breathless, the sky dull and leaden; and occasionally the heavens rumbled, sounding like someone moving furniture in an overhead apartment. By three-thirty it began to rain, and Mr. Gordon Armistead had to turn on the windshield wipers of his Studebaker sedan before he reached Mr. Gurney’s; and he was forced to run for the front door of Gurney’s house to avoid getting drenched in an unusually heavy downpour.

Mr. Armistead found that he was the last to arrive at the party. The “whatchamacallit wienie-roast” had definitely fizzled out, and in its place there was being formed a sloppily organized beer and cocktail party. As Armistead entered the house he heard Mr. Gurney tell the group that he was glad to see them, and how sorry he was that old Mother Nature had played tricks on his party; and finished his little speech by telling everyone to go ahead and ask for whatever he or she wanted to drink. After this, Mrs. Gurney shouted rather ineffectually for everyone to help himself to potato chips and pretzels, because there were plenty more in the kitchen. She then turned to her husband and muttered something about a case of beer.

When Mr. Armistead first saw Miss Tatnall she was in the process of reaching into the potato chip bowl and asking for a Martini from a pitcher Mr. Gurney
was carrying. Armistead heard her babbling and yakking to Miss Reifsneider and Mrs. Borda. As Mr. Gurney moved toward Armistead and greeted him, he heard Miss Tatnall describing the most adorable, pink bandana that her sister got at Macy's bargain counter just last week. Over the dull laughter and talking of the seventeen people in the room, Mr. Armistead was aware of Miss Tatnall's voice like the sound of a cap-pistol on a Sunday afternoon. She jabbered and squawked and ratted on: "Yes of course and certainly not I should think he and you're telling me I know and what a scream." Armistead held his heavy mug of beer between both hands, and then shifting it to his right hand took several swallows. He began talking with Pete Valentine, the art director of Gurney and Stauffer, who relit his pipe four times during the next few minutes of their conversation.

Outside the living-room windows Mr. Armistead watched the rain pouring down, and listened to the thunder bumping and booming in the sky. Occasionally the lightning crackled and flashed where he was looking, leaving a light jagged impression in his eyes for several seconds after the flash. The room had become unbearably hot and smoky, and Armistead wondered if Miss Tatnall was appreciating the atmosphere. He noticed that she was still jabbering to anyone who would listen, and was lolling about in an over-stuffed chair, while working on her fourth drink. Pete Valentine was telling Armistead about jury duty he had just had, and, as they both watched the effusive Miss Tatnall, a shrill-voiced little man in Gordon A. Armistead's mind shouted to a black-robed judge, "Your honor, we find Miss Tatnall guilty of extreme mental cruelty. We demand capital punishment."

Pete Valentine left Mr. Armistead to get some pretzels; and while he was gone Armistead sat down on a small chair. It was still raining outside, but there was less clutter and flash than there was earlier. The room was still filled with the perspiring office staff of Gurney and Stauffer, and Miss Thelma Tatnall was now chattering rather incoherently about "the advantages of a rained-out wienie-rost" —and being most amused by the tongue-twisting qualities of the last four words in her topic-title. Mr. Armistead watched Steam Engine Tatnall, who, as he thought, was certainly tooting a noisy whistle this afternoon.

Armistead was lost in a cloud of warm, white vapor as he thought of the cacophonous Miss Steam Engine. As he sat clutching his beer mug, and gazing across the hot room, he heard Tatnall's voice clanking and moaning, hissing and bellowing, and letting out a series of piercing squeals. Armistead drank all but one swallow of his beer and sat calmly waiting for Pete Valentine to return with some pretzels. It was hot, and he was tired. He closed his eyes. . .

Gordon Armistead was glad that Miss Tatnall had been drinking at Mr. Gurney's party. Since he had decided to bump her off it was the best idea to do it while she was half-crooked so she wouldn't know what was going on. Armistead turned over the various methods of murder in his mind as he drove over the Queensboro Bridge and turned off onto the shiny, wet streets leading to Miss Tatnall's apartment at the Windsor. He was surprised at the calmness within him; and several times at a red light he wondered if he was going to do a neat job, or botch the whole affair. At one point, when he was shifting into second gear, he forgot to push the clutch, and the gears screamed and scrunched for a second. He immediately heard a nasty, little voice inside him saying, "Take it easy, Greasy," in a sing-song way; and Mr. Armistead blurted out sarcastically, "Yeah, it's a long slide home," in an equally irritable tone.

While Armistead drove up Second Avenue he decided definitely that choking Miss Tatnall to death would be the easiest and cleanest method. He had read that strangulation was the quietest and most efficient in crowded places. As he backed his sedan into a small parking space, he decided to wander around the block until Miss Tatnall emerged from the subway exit. In this way no one would wonder what he was doing sitting in his car. He filled his pipe with tobacco, lit it, and got out of his car. He left the car unlocked—for a quick getaway, he thought with a sardonic smile that rarely came over his face. If everything went well there wasn't going to be any more "take it easy, Greasy" or "wienie watchamacallits." He was sure of it.

Gordon Armistead had walked around the wet city block for nearly an hour, and now stood looking into a drugstore window across the street from the subway exit. A sign in the window asked rudely, "Do you have hurry-worry stomach?" to which Armistead replied somewhat indignantly, "certainly not." He said this to convince himself that the dull feeling inside him was merely the after-effects of too much beer and pretzels. Nevertheless, Mr. Armistead was startled slightly when he saw Miss Tatnall walking toward the entrance of the Windsor across the street. She was not walking as determinedly as usual, Armistead thought. She was also humming loudly when she entered the Windsor.

Armistead stood looking into the drugstore window for several minutes, and then started toward the entrance of the Windsor. He had been to a party in Miss Tatnall's apartment several years ago, so he knew where she lived. In the dimly-lit vestibule he pushed the button under the card that said "Miss Thelma Tatnall." "They should have put that 'Miss' in italics," Armistead thought; "that would have been nearer the truth."

When the lock clicked, Armistead shoved open the door and walked down the hall to the self-operated elevator. He got in and rode to the fourth floor, stepped off and walked around the corner to Room 407. While he was waiting for Miss Tatnall to answer the door he heard a radio playing some quiet music in an adjoining apartment. He had seen no one in the apartment, and he hoped no one had seen him.

Miss Tatnall finally opened the door — flung it open — and greeted Mr. Armistead with a gay "Well, for Pete's sake; if it isn't old Mr. Armistead just back from the war."

"Quiet, you," he snapped at her as he stepped in the room closing the door behind him quickly. "Do you want to disturb the whole apartment?"

"Hey, what's the big idea?" Miss Tatnall asked as she backed away from Armistead to get a better look at him. She was still charged up from the liquid
boosting she had got at Mr. Gurney's, and it was impossible for her to be serious. She laughed nervously.

Mr. Armistead removed his hat, and unbuttoned his overcoat. "How 'bout mixing me a Martini," he said quickly to break a definite uneasiness inside him. He noticed that his hands were shaking slightly, and his palms were wet. "Yeah, a Martini, ... Thel. I'm thirsty." (It was the first time he had ever called her Thel, and he was not thirsty.)

"Gordon Armistead, you old sot!" Miss Tatnall quacked at him as she flowed into the kitchen. "Believe you're curning inca some old drunk. If you don't watch out this will be your lost weekend." She laughed a mocking laugh as she mixed his drink (and glasses and bottles, and emptying the ash-trays. The indoor picnic had come to an end. Pete Valentine shook Armistead by the shoulder. "Hey, Old Man," he said, "get a look at Tatnall over there on the sofa. She's had five Martinis and she's dead to the world."

"Five Martinis and she's dead to the world," Armistead murmured. "I know she is." He closed his eyes, and a smile crept over his face.

---

The Bell Dong's Song, "Marie"

(No apology)

O what is wrong, my ailing knight,

Alone beside the boiling sea,

Behind the empty cat-tail marsh

Where none should be?

O what is the matter with thee knight?

Thy face is like a walnut bark!

The morning shines; the earth is wet.

Feast thou the dark?

Thy head is like a flowerpot.
The dripping passion of thy brow

Water's flowers in thy face —

Thou need'st a blow!

"I dreamed that on a rocking chair

I saw an elf of midget size.

He had a head of orange hue

And azure eyes.

"He pointed to the rainbow sky

And showed me gold that dangled there.

I placed my golden stepladder

Upon a chair.

"I heard him sighing as I climbed;

(He rode upon a beetle's back.)

His song transfixed me all the way,

And I fell back.

"I fell upon his chariot steed

And galloped with him to his glen.

For twenty years I slept before

I 'woke again.

"Insomnia's fit now rest on me

As, yawning, I watch others sleep.

I listen to the owl's hoot

And birdie's peep.

"But nevermore shall I lie down,

For I must stand upon the harsh,

Cold shore beside the sea, behind

The cat-tail marsh."

JOHN IRWIN
On Observation

The topic for our consideration is one which is important to all of us who aspire to those heights of learning which will qualify us to take part in the election of a president. I come to you, however, as one of those unfortunate individuals who can tell how to write a book, but who cannot themselves write a sensible line. I therefore feel peculiarly qualified (in the true political tradition) for the task at hand.

Of course, I could change my topic. I could write *A Theory of Digression,* for I shall digress much before I am through. But such, as you can see, would be entirely too obvious, and thus I would not be filling the second qualification of noble, modern statesmanship.

The third qualification I have already demonstrated, for, as you see, I have begun my third paragraph without yet touching on my subject.

The facts about observation are this: An unobservant man can look at an object—say a tree—and the impression which is left with him is inadequate for enabling him to describe the tree as more than "some sort of big stick in the ground," or, if he is especially unobservant, he might require several visits to the tree before being able to recognize trees in general when he sees them. The observant man, however, asks himself questions about the tree, consciously or unconsciously. He says, "What are its characteristics?"

If he is inadequately supplied with intelligence, he will be unable to answer the question. Probably, though, he will answer the question something like this: "It is high; it is dark brown; it has flat, twitching, pointed flaps at the ends of its many arms, or shoots; its stem is thicker through than mine; it must be awfully lonely out here by itself."

You see, observation is more than merely looking. Furthermore, true observation is not automatic unless the object is of especial interest to us, e.g., an attractive young female (Bother the hair color!) in a French bathing suit. The observer does not merely look at such an interesting object; he observes (as opposed to stares). Every part of the object is subjected to careful scrutiny and is impressed indelibly upon his memory.

But a good observer does not depend upon his interest alone, or, if he does, he cultivates a cosmopolitan interest. He takes all knowledge to be his province and does not depend solely on his eyes for observation. (It is understood, of course, that in the previous illustration the observer must limit his method to visual scrutiny.)

Observation, then, requires paying attention to details by asking questions of oneself, developing an aggressive interest in one's environment, and paying one's income taxes if one is to go on observing.

My time is nearly up, but I have time for another digression.

Speaking of politics always reminds me of my grandmother, (a Dear Auld Republican) who would vote for Satan himself if he rode on an elephant. With her it is not a matter of observation. It is the age-long struggle between right and wrong. Satan's character is not a part of the matter at all—as long as he is on the side of right. However, God help him if he is on the other side. I have never shared my dear grandmother's opinions, but then, not only am I unobservant, but I am a dull politician.

Observe, if you will (Here is your chance to practice what I preach; the fates know I don't!), how before an election one's country is suddenly overrun with gangs of highwaymen and foreign spies of various colors. And to meet the challenge, many patriots and statesmen arise, point the finger of scorn, and with eloquent harangue condemn the curs and uphold with virgin loyalty the nation's immortal integrity (or something equally fine.) I must admit, though I am a very poor observer, that I am awed, and my head is bowed in respect at what I see. For, having failed to observe the degradation and baseness which has threatened my native existence, I have been warned and, if I vote right, will be defended against vermin of the rotten boroughs who are corrupting my country.

Now you can see as well as I how I might have gone on living blissfully unaware of the aggressors. But the fates (and the congressmen) have been kind.

My time is nearly up, but I have time for another digression.

Delusion

"It's a beautiful gown,—
who's the groom to be?"

"I don't know;
The first who calls," said she.

"It's an art to win a lady's hand,"
boastfully said he;

"Now take me."
And the one who called first,
talked endlessly.

FRED BAAS
The Student and
Dead-eye Danny Hill

A bunch of the boys were whooping it up
in the college-town saloon;
The juke-box in the corner was bawling
a ragtime tune;
Posed for a shot stood the local dart champ,
Dead-Eye Danny Hill,
And watching his luck was his coquette, the lady
that's known as Lil.

When out of the night (it was raining like hell),
into this foul atmosphere,
There stumbled a student fresh from his books,
dog-tired and ready for beer.
He looked like a fellow who kept to himself
and never got around,
Yet he stepped to the bar and emptied his glass
in a ritual profound.
We all knew who this student was and thought him
quite a pill,
But we drank with him and the last to drink
was Dead-Eye Danny Hill.

The student sat at the long black bar,
drinking beer after beer;
While we were gay in our careless play,
his lips curled in a sneer;
He turned to gaze 'round the smoky room, like
a little boy looking for fun;
His eyes were blue, his hair was fair, with
skin tanned by the sun.
And he seemed to say 'I'm here to stay,
and I'll soak up as much as I will.'
And with this thought he met the stare of
the lady known as Lil.

He downed his beer with a mighty gulp and made
his way through the room,
Till at last he reached the dartboard, lighted
brightly in the gloom.
He selected a dart and examined its point
like a noble connoisseur,
Then took his stance and shot the dart and
made its feathers whir.
The student sauntered to the board and pulled
the dart out with a jerk,
And all eyes were upon him, as he looked at
Hill with a smirk.

Now Dead-Eye Hill knew he could shoot as well
as that young punk,
But the way he looked Hill in the face took a
belluva lot of spunk.
The room grew tense, the voices died, and someone
bet a fin.
All eyes turned to Danny Hill, when Lil cried,
"Can you win?"
So Danny Hill slid off his stool and meandered
to the line;
"Let's shoot a game," I heard him say, and the
student said, 'That's fine!'
The student stood before the board with one dart left to shoot.  
And if he won this game he'd win Dan's sweet coquette, to boot.  
Sweat poured from his furrowed brow, and he began to sway.  
"I think he'll blow this game for sure," I heard someone say,  
"For Dead-Eye's score is hard to beat; he's played this game for years..."  
"A gimnurb!" someone shouted, and this voice was drowned by cheers.

A bunch of the boys were whooping it up in the college-town saloon;  
The juke-box in the corner was hitting a ragtime tune.  
At the end of the bar getting lost in drink, sat Dead-Eye Danny Hill,  
And the student left victorious with the lady that's known as Lil.

CHARLES J. STAHL

Spring Mutiny

The window's up high  
And a baby-blue sky's  
Playing hop with some math that's not working.  
Through the door that's caved in  
Comes one hell of a din  
That tells me I'm better off shirking.  
I must have been nuts  
To use up my cuts  
There's a quiz, but I'll pass it somehow.  
No use now to crack it—  
Get Pete and your racket,  
We'll put in a game before chow.

DINK

Lines Written in Rejection  
Near Maples

Try a verse of tripping measure  
For your reading public's pleasure.  
Give them new in couples sprightly  
Something to delight them nightly.  
Rhyme a rhyme with words grotesque  
Form a pretty arabesque.  
Verses tumbling down the pages  
Somehow do not please the sages;  
Poetic geniuses may suffer  
While people harken to the duffer.  
Ever have such things been so  
Ask me brother, don't I know?

Eliot, Pound, and e e cummings  
(the last inclined somewhat to slumming)  
Seek and find a willing ear  
For maudlin sobbing over beer.  
Fearlessly obscene... like kingdom come  
These will hold appeal for some.  
While walking with my trousers rolled  
I know he suffered; from a cold.  
The modern poet, whose allusions  
Only fill me with confusions  
Somehow cannot thrill me quite  
As making love or getting tight.  
Perhaps I care not to be pleased  
(have perhaps a mind diseased);  
Though modern poets I abhor,  
Romantics do not please me more.  
I do not like a verse Wordsworthian,  
Abominate the great Excursion.

Yet are some poets that I'll say  
Are great, like Frost or Steve Benet.  
A poet, Archibald MacLeish, we see.  
Need never say, but only be.  
And so we ramble on for hours  
Writing words and verse that sours  
On the palate all too quickly  
Leaving feelings rather sickly.

Rhyme and rhyme and rhyme again  
Rhyme it fancy rhyme it plain.  
Tell 'em what you think or don't think  
Tell 'em what you will or won't think.  
What foolish race is this we're running?  
Feigning brains and feigning cunning?  
The would-be poet will ever go  
From hell to hell, if he should know  
Full well this truth: he cannot write  
But only matches rhymes at night.  
Regardless of this basic truth:  
No poet he, but only callow youth.

MIKE
On September 2, 1946, at 7:30 a.m. I started on my long trek to Corning School. I was now in eighth grade and I realized this was the last year I could enjoy school in a one room country schoolhouse. On the first day the students usually came early to get a look at the teacher for that year. We all arrived at school early and the teacher had not yet arrived; so we gathered in a mixed group on the small cement porch and speculated as to whether or not we would have a new teacher or the same one as last year. One bright fellow immediately had the idea of tacking a paper on the front door saying, "No school today," and then scrambling into the woods to hide and await the teacher. It was decided that the idea was impractical at that time and it was cast aside. Finally, the teacher arrived and it turned out to be Mr. Schaffer who had been the teacher last year. He was a very efficient and well-liked teacher; so we started the year in a joyful mood. He unlocked and opened the door and in we scrambled, each running to get the best seats first. I quickly dashed to what was considered to be the biggest and best desk in the school and since I was now in eighth grade and had so many books I did not have to share my desk with anyone else.

We began with the usual procedure of morning devotions and then passing out the books for the year. I sat back in my seat, looked around the room, and each article I saw was related to some previous experience. My thoughts carried me back to my first day in school when Miss Billig was the teacher. She was a very pretty, but strict teacher who took us on field trips, devotions and then passing out the books for the year. The books having been distributed by the teacher, we returned to our desks. Resuming my observations from there, my gaze moved along the far side of the wall, and I immediately thought of the Halloween party which grew out of control and the two end rows had a sham battle. Walnuts, cookies, apples, pencils, and even books flew across the room. After the battle, windows were cracked, shades torn, and reputations ruined. In each corner in the rear were coat hooks which during the winter were always overloaded with the result that a pile of clothing was always on the floor. In the center was an anteroom, which protruded out into the main room with one door on each side leading into it. In front of this anteroom was a small bookcase of about thirty books of all types which comprised the library of Corning School. I can safely say that this was the only library in which I read every book which interested me. Beside the library was a card with all thirty of the pupils' names listed on it; behind each name was a series of stars given if you managed to get a hundred percent for the week in spelling and special stamps given when you made your monthly recitation of a poem.

The opening day business having been completed we were dismissed and as I entered the anteroom on my way out I saw the old water cooler in one corner, an old ladder in the other corner, and directly opposite the outside door was a bookshelf which served as a waste basket for paper towels and cups. I remembered one sunny afternoon after lunch Mr. Kohler, then the teacher, bending down to pick up the paper which was lying on the floor around the waste basket. At this instant someone had hit a long fly ball in a ball game outside and at the same time a girl had opened the door to go out. The door went open, the ball went in and hit the bending Mr. Kohler right on the posterior. My face was impressed with a huge smile when I thought of this.

Till this day I must confess that my favorite memories linger in that one room school house which has since been converted into an attractive home. The appearance has been completely renovated, but the knowledge that it was the old school house still brings back that never to be forgotten picture and train of events whenever I pass by it.
Spring in Valley Forge

The sun warms the earth again. Maple trees
Spread their new leaves, and winter is no more.
The horizon is misty; river and brook
Swell in the warm rain of spring, and the grass,
Incredibly green, softens the landscape.
Soldier, the winters here are harsh no more.
Your camp is somewhat changed from what you knew:
Cannon solemnly gaze down the valley,
Looking for a foe that never comes, while
Shot is stacked in welded piles beside them,
And visitors wonder aloud "How small!"
Where you existed in the freezing wind
Of that agonizing winter we've built
Replicas of your crude huts. Mud and logs!
But we have built today no stronger walls
To keep uncertainty out of our lives.
A small sign says "Greene’s Division camped here."
The regimental sites are marked. A tower
Overlooks the camp, and a sandwich shop
Sells souvenirs to Sunday passers-by.
We have built a memorial chapel
And a massive arch for the general,
Following the Roman custom. You see,
The thanks of a republic are expressed
On granite tablets after you are dead,
But we who read them are living letters
That spell your name across the growing land.
Your battles stir no feeling in these days,
We have so many new ones of our own,
But we do not forget you, for we now
Pour out the blood of our generation
To keep the trust you made with us that year,
The vital trust that makes our lives more sweet,
The air more sweet, the blossoms more fragrant
That glimmer pink among the dogwood trees
In Valley Forge on this warm day in spring.

David Hallstrom

The Locust Tree

Under the locust tree where we
Decided 'Not just yet'
A chilly greenness seemed to be
Where Spring and Winter met.

The locust branches — scant and sparse —
Gave us no fleeting hint
That maybe 'Not just yet' was farce,
And we too innocent.

But clouds can do so much
To change complexion of a second,
That at a solar touch
We found another world to reckon:

A world of April afternoons,
(With all those words include)
Of crazy, off-key, Nature tunes,
Sustained somehow in somber mood.

'Then have your way' was our reply,
And turned our dizzied heads to sky;
But through the locust tree the sun
Like dust seeped down... Spring had won.

William Lukens

Covered Bridge

Oh, covered bridge,
Symbol of a humble age
When buggies rolled across your lane
And broke the silence once again,
Fear not!

You alone have heard the flood's
Frightening roar,
The wanderer's footsteps upon your
Fissured floor,
The valley's wind working through your
 Widening grooves,
The sighs of lovers broken by
Impatient hooves.

You alone enfeebled by the
New machine,
Shrinking from its noxious noise and scheme,
Must bear its weight until your
Noble frame,
From this burden is rendered useless —
So they claim.

Oh, beloved span,
Symbol of a humble age;
If they should come to tear your beams,
You'll never leave us in our dreams.
Fear not!

Fred Baas
Melvin

Tawdry lamp shade on one side of me, ugly figurines on the other; there I sat on my shelf, I, Melvin the aristocratic teakettle. I could not even shine. The dust that covered my lustrous sides was too thick. I was certainly useful, you would think someone would choose me instead of a hideously pea-green plaster cat. Only two hundred coupons and still no one loved me, a poor lonely little teakettle. I had been happy in the big room where I was born. There were a lot of us there and we shared a big bin. It was warm in the room, and at night when all the people left the building we used to talk about the day's events, and wonder what the future held in store for us. Our bed of sawdust was quite soft and comfortable, and although I never voiced the opinion openly, I often thought how nice it would be just to stay there in the place of my birth, and enjoy the company of those about me who had been born and bred in the same place and had a common ancestry. I had almost begun to think that my innermost wishes might come true, when I was rudely awakened one morning, scrubbed until my skin hurt, and placed inside a packing case. I was packed in so tightly that I nearly suffocated. The case seemed to jog and bounce around, and I had the feeling of motion. After an interminable time, the case burst open suddenly, and I felt the fresh air once again in my nostrils. I had little enough time to rejoice when I was grasped in the hands of a red faced gentleman, who wasn't, by the way, very gentle.

"I'll take this here too," he said to someone I couldn't see. "Some'a them dopes is domestic, an' this here's cheap."

Me—cheap—an aristocrat among teakettles, a whistling teakettle, cheap! I put my whistle high in the air and ignored him, but when he stuffed me into the crate with the tin ware, I had to close my aluminum eyes to keep the tears back. You see, we utensils have a very definite class system. Aluminum, of which I was born, is the material held in highest esteem. Tin and wood are at the bottom of the social scale. So you can imagine my indignation when I found myself forced to associate with these lower forms. I was not aware at the time that there were any plaster objects near me, or I am sure I would have died of mortification. I kept my eyes closed from the instant I entered the crate until I was raised suddenly into space. The shock startled me, and I opened my eyes and lowered my whistle just as a grimy hand placed me upon the shelf of horrors, I have here-to-fore described. It did not take me long to realize where I was. I was being offered as a prize. I was on a shelf with many other articles, too gross to describe, and when someone won enough coupons at games of chance, he could give them to the red faced gentleman, who had purchased me, in exchange for one of us. The situation could not have been more horrifying. Here I was, an aristocrat, placed on the same level as those other common beings, and offered as a prize, just as they were.

Many weeks passed before I could bring myself to converse with those about me. However, one day I espied a Salt and Pepper almost hidden by, I shudder to say, a hideous, befigured, gilt clock. To be sure Salt and Pepper were tin, but even that is better than plaster, and so I resigned myself to tin. Ignoring the clock, I called to Salt and Pepper and introduced myself.

"I am Melvin," I said.

"Call us S. and P. for short," they replied.

Let me add an irrelevant point, but an interesting one. It seemed Salt and Pepper deemed themselves aristocrats among tin, and being bored with myself I did not strain the new found friendship by describing my own pedigree. After making polite conversation for a while, S. and P. informed me of a very unusual competition that seemed to hold sway among the shelves of prizes. It seemed that each wished to be among the most desirable, and the sooner you were chosen for a prize, the more you were esteemed by the comrades left upon the shelves. The present topic of conversation concerned a wood and tin carving set who was chosen the day after he arrived. This news raised my morale considerably, and I said, "I will turn on my charm immediately, and I shall be chosen today I am sure."

S. and P. looked skeptical, but believing themselves aristocrats, and therefore pledged to courtesy, they said they hoped so. But I will speak the truth to you. I will overstep my pride and reveal all. I was not chosen that day, nor the day after, nor for many weeks. I cannot describe this period to you because it is too painful. After a week my only friends S. and P. were chosen. It was a sad parting. S. and P. were exultant, but being aristocratic tried not to show it. I was dejected but brave. After this day time passed unnoticed. I closed my eyes and refused to regard the busy world. My wounded pride tore my mind to pieces.

One day toward the very end of summer, there was a particularly bad thunderstorm. The noise of the thunder claps had just raised me from my lethargy, and suddenly I tottered off the shelf and fell down, down into what seemed eternity. I might as well have been lost to the world, a neglected, heart broken vessel, void of all pride. I might as well have been tin! I was not prepared for the miracle that occurred a few days after this downfall.

One day toward the very end of summer, there was a particularly bad thunderstorm. The noise of the thunder claps had just raised me from my lethargy, and suddenly something struck me from the side. I toppled off the shelf and fell down, down into what seemed eternity. I must have lost consciousness, because when I came to I had some awful smelly lotion all over me, and the red faced gentleman was rubbing me vigorously with a cloth. The lotion was in my nose and eyes and although he finally got it out, I wondered if I would ever be the same. I could hear however, and my crushed ego fairly burst with pride, when I heard a young feminine voice exclaiming,

"What a darling teakettle, and look at it shine."

A deeper voice joined in,

"It's just the right size too."

"Does it really whistle?" the high voice asked.

"Sure does, Miss," returned my owner.

I'd never whistle for you, I thought, as he said this so confidently. By now I could see, and what I saw cheered me immeasurably. There before me stood an attractive young couple, and they both looked as though they would appreciate me at my true worth.
The red faced man still clung to me however, as he laboriously counted out the coupons. Finally he said, "Two hundred. Take 'er home with ya, and I hope ya like 'er. Ya got a real bargain."

Finally I was out of his grip! I was going to live with the nice young couple. The young lady, whose name I discovered was Jane, carried me very carefully out of the house of horrors, that had been my prison for so long. The air outside was clean and fresh, I took a deep breath and gave a contented sigh. I gathered from their conversation that Jane and her husband were celebrating their last day of vacation. The first thing they had done was to turn in their coupons and claim me. How proud I was! We climbed into their car, after a stroll on the esplanade, and drove to their cottage. Jane placed me in the center of the table as soon as we entered the cottage and then stood there and gazed at me.

"Oh Drew," she said, "It's the sweetest teakettle any one ever had!" I was in heaven! Jane and Drew were wonderful to me. They packed me carefully for the trip home and took me on a tour of the whole apartment as soon as we arrived in the city. Their apartment was small but very cheerful, and there were no plaster clocks about. We arrived home rather late, and I helped them make some tea. I was tired and it took all my energy, but I whistled for them in my very best voice. They were in the dining room when I started my song but they came running out to see me when I'd hardly sung my first note. I gathered all my strength and whistled merily enough to do myself and all my brethren proud. When I stopped they just stood there entranced, until they both turned to one another and spoke at the same time.

"Drew it was the best vacation ever," she said.

"The nicest one we've ever had Jane, and we'll always remember it," said he as he turned to me, "because we have the most talented whistling teakettle in the world to remind us."

After this they said a few more things which I couldn't hear because they didn't speak very distinctly. I was a little worried because I was cooling off and I didn't have enough energy left for a second performance, but my tears were stopped, for they suddenly turned to me and let me make their tea. Then they placed me on a nice soft mat to rest. I sat on this mat on the shiny white top of the stove whenever I wasn't doing something for them. Jane and Drew were a happy couple, and it was a pleasure to be with them. Every morning Jane would come, half asleep, to the kitchen and put me to work. My whistle became the signal for Drew to get up and come to breakfast. After every one of my performances, Jane polished me and put me on my soft mat to rest. It was a wonderful life, and I was so happy living in the pleasant light of their affection for one another and for me. Sometimes just for fun, I helped Jane play tricks on Drew. When ever she needed help in the kitchen she would put me to work and I would whistle away until Drew came to help her. They used to laugh at this. They thought it was a good joke that I could call Drew with better results than Jane could.

And so I lived in happiness, brewing their morning coffee and their evening tea and in between having fun just whistling for Drew.

The days passed in happy abandon, and I was so contented that many times I'd go into deep reveries, while counting my blessings. At last I was in the position I deserved. I was the aristocrat of the household, the favored vessel. I was in one of these contemplative moods one evening, and I was so engrossed, that it was quite late in the evening when I suddenly realized that it was past the time when Jane and Drew usually came home from work. The neat aluminum kitchen clock told me it was nine-thirty, and I came out of my reveries and started to worry. I waited all evening but nobody came. The apartment was quiet as death and the kitchen was black as pitch. I was really worried! I imagined all kinds of accidents and I began to feel almost sick.

Suddenly the room was rocked by the slamming of the apartment door. A light flicked on in the other room midst utter silence. Then voices rose, the voices of Jane and Drew. But they were new voices, short and sharp and awful to hear. They ceased just as quickly as they had started. The bedroom door slammed next and then I thought I heard someone moving quietly around the living room. There were no more sounds and soon the light in the living room went out. The floor creaked and the sofa groaned as if accepting an unusual burden. I heard no more. I couldn't understand it. Never before had Jane and Drew retired so quickly. Never before had they failed to come and see me, and have their tea before retiring. I was crushed and amazed that they had ignored me. All sorts of excuses flew through my mind, and finally I knew. I didn't want to face the truth, it was too sad, but there it was. Jane and Drew had had a misunderstanding. Their love for one another was abandoned in the light of their disagreement, and I too was abandoned. I was a symbol of their love, and I had been forgotten.

It was a miserable night for me. I could see the moon through the window, but its pale glow held no beauty. I couldn't sleep soundly, I dozed off only to wake, and worry, and hope for the morning to banish this awful nightmare of unhappiness. I must have dozed off again early in the morning hours because when I awoke the sunlight was pushing against the window and flooding the kitchen with its golden glow. I awoke with a happy start only to settle back into gloom as I realized again the horror of the night. The kitchen clock said it was six-thirty, and I knew it was too early for Jane to come but I couldn't recapture sleep. I was just sitting on my mat feeling awful when Jane suddenly appeared. She had come so quietly I hadn't heard her at all until she stood before me. I glanced at the clock again, six forty-five, much too early for her to be up. She did not waste a moment however. She snatched me unceremoniously from my mat, and filled me with water. She was very careless with me. Her hands, which usually were loving and tender, shoved me under the faucet and allowed me to remain there until I was so full I almost choked. I looked at her reproachfully but she didn't seem to notice.

Finally she snatched me up and whirled me into place on my burner. The heat clicked on and she moved swiftly and quietly in preparation. She had little to do as she set only one place on the kitchen.
table. She kept her eye on me constantly and I just
couldn’t understand her actions. Suddenly, just as my vocal
cords began to feel the slight caress of my
breath, she grabbed me from the burner and spilled
some of my contents into her cup. All at once I
realized what was happening. Jane, my lovely mis-
tress, was not going to let me call my master. She was
going to steal away in her unhappiness without seeing
him. I knew then, that unless I could think of some-
ting quickly, I would never again live in the light of
their love and happiness. I was terrified! Jane seemed
unconscious of what she did. Instead of emptying me
and putting me on my mat, she shoved me on the hot
burner again. But her negligence was my chance, and
I knew what I had to do. My neglected burner was
meltingly hot but I ignored the tickle in my throat,
and the steam within me grew and grew until I
thought I would burst. I waited until it was almost
unbearable and then I relaxed. The noise was ear
piercing. I warbled. I shrieked. My voice rose and fell
in shrill crescendo. I covered every note in the scale,
and the dishes on the shelves rattled in wild applause
to my majestic voice. Then, with one last heartrend-
ing shriek I stopped, for there in the doorway stood
Drew. He had appeared as if he had leaped from
his resting place to that spot, and he stood there so
tensely and with such a wild look that I trembled. Jane
stood by the table and she too seemed to be strung on
tight aluminum wires. There was a strange and awf-
sile silence as they gazed at one another. Then miracu-
ously they moved as if hurled toward one another.
The sunlight broke as if in a thousand jeweled pieces
as they stood before me vying with one another to
make their tumbled words heard. Tears filled my eyes
and through the mist I saw them slowly turn to me.
They spoke no word, but gazed at me, and then at one
another, and then at me again.
"The most wonderful whistling teakettle in the
world," Jane said, and she turned to Drew.
"The most intelligent teakettle in the world," he
answered. "A real aristocrat among teakettles, and
we'll keep him forever because he's a part of our love."
I saw no angels, but I, Melvin the teakettle, knew at
that moment where I was, and where I should always be.

• • •

Active or Passive

By now you know
You cannot hide
From what is so.
Therefore, decide
If you will tell
For men to heed
Of evil's knell
And its black creed
Which call men down
To sin's domain,
* * * *
Or merely frown
Upon Hell's gain.

HAL GOLD

Filler

We’re shocked to find
There’s too much space:
A look of woe
Spreads across our face.
The issue’s late,
it’s overdue;
Oh wurr, wurr.
What to do?
What can we do
In such a case,
But rhyme some rhyme
To fill the place?
An inspiration
From the blue.
We simply write
A rhyme or two,
And then retire
In disgrace;
This editor
We can replace.

Stag Night

It's that damn black and white
And it's turning the night
To a flamboyant world running riot.
There's nothing but noise
And I wish those frat boys
Would leave me in peace and in quiet.
I'm faking a grin
Though my heart's aching in
And I'm doing my best to be clever.
Why the deuce did I roam?
Come on, Pete, let's get home!
I'll never try Scotch again—never!

DINK

The Staff
The Spring Lecture

He stands strong and dark beside the dusty window
And quotes us dusty proverbs, winters-old;
The spring sun is stroking the silence of his figure
With fingers of gentle, warming gold.

We sit, prim and still, within our winter places
And copy down his words with darkened ink;
But while the spring sun is blazing on our papers
Who is to quote the wisdom we shall think?

Who is to know the fountains flowing in his soul
Which wash the dusty proverbs clean and new?
Who is to penetrate the silence, winter-old,
Which every year spring suns have struggled through?

Who is to know the secret rising of our dreams?
Who is to hear the crashing of their fall?
We are houses, silent, dim to one another,
Only a few souls enter them at all.

We are dark houses with winter-dusty windows,
Newly boarded, freshly painted, battered or old;
The spring sun is shining, stroking with its fingers,
Breaking through our darkness with its gold.

Early Migration

This morning's reeling flying north,
Stops by my winter's window.
I turn against the springtime sight,
And hope it soon will go.

How does this winged migrant learn
When time is right for flight?
I feel no hint of warming earth,
Nor sign of lengthened light.

Fly on, sure wings, to warmer lands;
Spring air has set you free.
The cold of winter still rests here,
So do not wait for me.

MARY YOST

A Beatitude

Blessed are they who dream a dream;
Or better still, who build one.
Who are their hearts to catch a star —
Their hands to carve the wagon;
Who hold their dream and carry through.
And if the star stops going,
Blessed are they who take the reins
Themselves and do the tugging.

JOAN SAPP

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