

Penwood Fund

STUDENT THEMES
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Name

Section

Teacher

1939-1940

STUDENT THEMES
University of Pittsburgh

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*Almost any of these
illustrates any point you
have in mind*

STUDENT THEMES

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SECTION ONE: MATERIAL

1

THE BEST WALK IN PITTSBURGH

The best walk in Pittsburgh is out the Boulevard of the Allies on a clear winter morning. With a bound, the band of road lifts you from the billboards and the plate-glass windows, and there over the cliff at Bluff Street lie the Monongahela and the factories. It is exciting, the sudden view of river and roofs and splashing tow-boats, the view of railroads and gaunt hills all muddled together. But if you stop by the iron railing, you see that there is order to the strange, busy things below. Far across the river, streets run crazily up steep black ridges to the snow-hazed summits, where water towers and church steeples stand against the vague sky. At the foot of these hills in the slush and ice, alleys and straight tracks fill the land to the river, on which tugs trail waves of churned-up water. Straight below you, at Bluff Street, squat acres of sheet-iron factories linked by railroad tracks cutting and re-cutting, criss-crossing from one yard to the other. On rainy days this would be a picture of dirty browns and blackened purples; on clear days, with the snow and the sun on the hilltops, you think of the whiteness of fields and roads outside the town. The river sparkles, tugs move; and from the thousands of chimneys and smoke stacks wreath and twist curls of white vapor that soften steel roofs in the orange sun-haze.

2

FORGOTTEN ROADS

When I am in a hurry, I'll use the concrete highway; but some day when I have time to linger, I'll go back to the roads that people have forgot. In deep valleys, beside great bridges, or along the mountainside there are still these vacant roads that haven't been used for years; and they are worth turning aside to follow, for they are pleasant. Mountain roads I know best. They are only dim trails now, so narrow that the trees on both sides drop leaves into the gutters that have eaten

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away the road of fifty years ago. Scrub-oaks and pines have sprung up where once wagons passed loaded heavy with lumber and surreys bulged with the whole family. Bluegrass is blowing where tintype dandies rode on Saturday nights to see their sweethearts. The outer bank has fallen away, and there are only remnants of a path along which the young folks dallied after church. A tree has fallen across the wider place where teams could pass and where farmers rested their horses and talked trade. That gash across the road was long ago a still stream, a place to water the team on the way to town. But there is more to the road than hints of forgotten days; there is the quiet beauty of the present. Birds come there to eat the seeds of the wild asters on the banks; they flutter and chirp on every mullein stock and clump of golden-rod. There rabbits make their nests and sit solemn-eyed and still in their grass homes. They don't run away, for nobody comes along to harm them. The squirrels are bold; they run out on the overhanging branches, curl their fluffy tails over their heads, and scold the intruder. A partridge hen coos; little partridge feet patter over dry grass and then are still. A mourning dove calls again and again; but there is never an answer. In late afternoon, such a place is most itself. The evening wind is cooling the hills. A leaf floats down from a twisted oak and lies with its white side up in the road. Along the bank the tall grass is swaying and the slender weeds are bending and rocking in the breeze that blows through the pine. A thrush in the top of a tree swings and trills its throaty call, waits a minute, then calls again. The wind dies, the flaming sky fades to purples, grays, and blues. And then the night things come out. Fireflies flash under the bushes, crickets chirp by every stone, whippoorwills call from hillside to hillside, and far away an early owl hoots in some dark valley. Leaves rustle in the wind again, and birds twitter on low-hanging limbs. A turtle labors by in the dust, pauses only to lift his head and look about, then pushes on into the darkness. Slow, forgotten, he lumbers along a forgotten road.

3

CHARLEY RANDAZZO'S

When I am tired of efficiency, I sometimes go down to Charley Randazzo's fruit store. There is an easy intimacy

about his cluttered little place that I don't find anywhere else. I know the whole family. On a cold night when I come blowing and stamping into the store, I find Charley sitting in the corner by the cheap gas stove, which gives only enough heat to steam the windows. He has been reading a rumpled copy of *L'Opinione*, and now he pulls his little old-fashioned glasses down on his nose and looks over them. "Eh. 'Ello! 'ou ees?" he calls. I sit down on an orange crate by the stove and listen to Charley as he talks about business, ward-heelers, Mussolini, and Joe. Joe is the baby—dirty face, smeary hands, torn pants, and all. He goes crawling about among the bins, kicking vegetables over the floor, until at last he stubs his toe or bumps his head; then he sets up a squall that brings fat Mrs. Randazzo running. With eyes snapping and ear-rings swinging, she hurries from the living quarters in the rear and heckles Charley in several Italian dialects while she rubs Joe's head. The old man sighs and grunts and agrees until she goes away; then he sighs again and says: "M-m-m. Ver' fonny wooming, Rosie." Charley's naturalness affects everyone who comes into the store. Fred, the policeman, throws his mace into the basket of potatoes and, between bites of an apple, tells what Louie said when a lady ran into his car and smashed a fender. The waitress who rents a furnished room upstairs comes down with bracelets rattling. She has a rambling story about the fortune teller who stopped at the restaurant and told her fortune. She doesn't remember much of it, but there was something about a dark foreigner and a musician; she thinks Charley is the musician. Charley smiles, the waitress grins until the gold shines, and then she walks out with the biggest bunch of grapes she can see. The Irish woman who runs the boarding house around the corner hurries in to get some oranges for breakfast, "because all the boys like oranges, they do, and some of them don't care for corn flakes, they don't." But she must tell Charley how Danny, her little nephew, got locked in the closet today. Charley waits until she pauses for breath and then begins to tell her about the time Joe crawled into the ice box, "and the door—she's go shot." About the time that Danny is whipping the three colored boys from the next street, I realize it is late. I sidle around and pick up a little fruit, put the money by the broken down cash register, and go to the door. As I open it,

Charley calls, "Eh, be goot!" and as it closes behind me I hear him say to the Irish woman, "Yeh, my Joe, he's a bad wan."

4

DITCH WATER

One of my professors uses a phrase, "As dull as ditch-water," which may express his thoughts on some matter but which rather amuses me. Because, to me, ditch-water is anything but dull; in fact, it is one of the most interesting substances that I know. Did you ever look at a drop of ditch-water through a microscope? If you haven't, you should try it sometime, and get a glimpse of a new world of marvelous creatures. Probably, you will see a rotifer, a queer little creature which propels itself by moving the flagella, or arms, fastened around its body, and which looks much like a rimless wheel as it rolls along. There will be, also, a few amoeba, which look like drops of brown jelly floating in water. If you watch closely, you may be able to see how one of these creatures feeds itself. It has no mouth or stomach; when a particle of food floats by, it merely flattens itself and completely surrounds the food. When it has digested as much as possible, it unwraps itself and moves away, leaving the debris behind. You will also see some smaller creatures in the water. Some of these will be long and narrow, like a rod, and others will be round or oval. These are bacteria which have grown in the water and which live upon the waste products of the larger animals. Some of the bacteria will be swimming around in zigzag lines and others will not move at all. If the water does not dry up, you may be able to see the bacteria reproducing themselves. One of the long rod-shaped ones will suddenly break in the middle and two complete young organisms will go swimming off in different directions. Two of the round ones will float together, and then, shortly, each will break into two complete smaller cells, leaving four young organisms in place of the two parent cells. There are dozens of other creatures which you may watch as they wriggle about and devour each other. So you see that ditch-water isn't quite so dull as it may seem to be at first glance.

8

5

"I HEAR THE PEEPERS"

Until I hear the peepers, I never can believe that spring will come again. The first crows hold promise, and the tang of the thaws and freezes of March is encouraging, but there is certainty only after the last big thaw in March, when the creek is full and icy water stands in sheets in the pasture hollow and an April rain has some of the chill taken out of it. Then from down in the pond in the lower lot, I can hear the first peepers tuning up softly. So many people have never consciously listened to these musicians that I think I should explain that peepers are not birds; they are little sand colored frogs with black-streaked backs. They live down in the marshy places along the run and around springs and in ponds. Their winters are spent in the mud; but when that first warm rain comes to loosen their covering, they are out in the pond perched on old logs, grass hummocks, mud banks, and projecting stones, filling the hollow with their spring symphony. Since most people think of them as noisy pests and squawking nuisances, I like to mull over what the peepers mean to me. They are part of that earthy smell that comes from ploughed ground to mix with compost odors about the barn and the warm smell of animals in the stables. They call up for me the lowing of old Molly for her new and wobbly calf that is tied in the boxstall by himself; the hiss of milk into new tin pails; the spring serenade of the barn cat, Peter; the maples north of the house with the fat brown buds; the green mist that veils the crabapple above the garden; roads which are long stretches of fluid mud and which still tempt me to follow them over the hills that stand out against the blue sky; and brown spring runs, whose swiftness makes their waters rough-braided like shrunken buckskin. Of course, I did not hear much of the peepers this spring, for my Easter vacation at home was short. I have been hearing the squealing of brakes, the clatter of trolley car gongs, the beat of riveters, the moaning whistles of fast freights, and the deep voices of tug boats. With them I have been smelling and breathing forty different sulphur compounds, mixed with coal smoke and burnt gasoline vapor. I am in Pittsburgh this spring, but I am glad to know that the peepers are out again in Potter County.

9

HAYFIELD

There are hotter places than a hayfield, but I doubt if there is another place where as many things remind you of the heat. Everything looks hot. The Blue Tuscarora, just above the burned stubble on the hill, crinkles as though you were looking at it through cheap window glass; even the top of the mountain above the Big Slide is dim and smoky. In the next field the corn is yellow, and the blades are rolled tight for lack of water. A buzzard hangs becalmed above the field; his shadow creeps along the opposite hillside. Brown grasshoppers clatter out of the dead grass as you walk. Sometimes they fly against your face and hang clawing at an eyebrow. Swarms of gnats swirl along the ground or buzz above flat rocks that glisten in the sun. Yellow nitflies sing above the lathering horses and swing down to sting them under the jaw and to make them tangle the lines and shy. The hay is burned crisp and with every jab of the fork black dust flies out; it sticks on your wet arms and face, this sharp chaff, and under your collar it grits against raw sunburn. At the end of the field, where you stop to rest and drink and wash down the foamy cotton taste, you blow the chaff and kicking grasshoppers across the top of the water and flip them out of the pail. The water, which has been sitting in the field since dinner, is covered with warm bubbles which have collected at the edge of the bucket. You stand a moment wiping the sweat that hangs in your eyebrows and smarts the corners of your eyes; then you start back down the field, rolling wads of hay into bunches, tugging at the grass the mower has missed, ripping your knuckles on wild briars. And in the first windrow you step beside the smashed pulp of a turtle where green blowflies buzz and crawl.

ED RUSSELL AND THE ROSE GARDENS

I often think that some day I shall write a story about Ed Russell and the Rose Gardens Addition. From where I wait for the trolley in the morning, I can see the farmhouse and what used to be the old Russell farm. While I am waiting, I

can watch the work of transforming the pasture and the west wheat fields into a real estate development. They say that although the other children were glad to accept the offer of the Darwin Development Company, Ed refuses to sell his part of the inheritance, the house. It is a large house, built by Ed's grandfather when Wilkinsburg was still McNairsville and Russell's store was the biggest one this side of the Alleghenies. Then Yankee siding was fashionable, and gables were the height of style. Ed's grandmother probably was very proud of the white clapboards and the three peaks in the roof. Inside it must have been sunless because a wide front porch shuts off the light from the east and the big bay window, all bay and very little window, shuts off the southern light. Yet the house has a charm and a quiet dignity. In the old days it was the home of a wealthy retired merchant farmer and his big family: now Ed Russell lives in it by himself, gardens a small patch, raises a few chickens, and minds his own business. North of the house a brush-grown orchard each spring blossoms into white and pink. Later the orchard is the home of robins, cardinals, and orioles, which nest in the branches of the apple and cherry trees. Although Ed doesn't spray or prune his fruit trees, he works hard in his garden patch. Often in the morning I see him hoeing his corn and potatoes. Sometimes he stops to rest and leans heavily on his hoe like the man in Millet's Angelus. His angelus, however, is the noise of the steam shovel, the horns of trucks, and the shouts of workmen in the Rose Gardens, where another modern five room house is being built by the Darwin Development Company. This is the sixth house Darwin has built, anticipating the rush when people discover the "garden spot of Pittsburgh." The houses are all built in Spanish style: so the sign says. Wrought iron balconies, arched windows, and a red tile patio at the side prove that they are Spanish. From the street car all the houses look alike because the foundation plantings are the same. Although the sign says that the grounds were planned by a Harvard Landscape Architect, I think the architect must have several carbon copies of the same plan. On each side of the door are shiny cone-shaped evergreens, under the French windows that open onto the balcony are rusty arborvitae, and then in the left corner are two rambling rose bushes on a white trellis. Past the houses curves a white concrete road marked only by the muddy tracks of the trucks.

Its name, The Boulevard of the Roses, makes up for the cheap concrete and the skimpy sewers. Jonquil Lane, Honeysuckle Avenue, and Trillium Road cross the Boulevard. At least, flower decorated signs show where they will cross some day. I often wonder what Ed Russell thinks when he sees the sign marked "Honeysuckle Avenue" on the old cow path from the upper pasture to the barn, when he sees the Mack trucks and the steam shovels in the winter wheat fields, and when he sees the cheap veneer houses in the corn fields. I suppose I am silly and just imagining things, but I do know that not long after the Darwin Company put up their sign announcing the gala opening of the Rose Gardens, Ed cut down the ramblers his mother had trained along the picket fence.

8

↓ "YOU WANT TO ALWAYS KEEP AHEAD"

"You want to always keep ahead," Pop says; and he does. In his business, hauling coal, you've got to keep ahead because orders may pile up any time if there is a cold wave. People like to order their coal from him. He knows all the different kinds of coal, the hard, clean-burning coal, the soft coal that sticks to the poker as though you'd thrust the poker in burning tar, the surface coal unlike the deep coal from the center of the vein, and the coal from the different mines. People trust Pop to get them a load of good coal just as they would trust their grocer to bring them fresh vegetables and bread. Pop starts out early in the morning because he usually has a good many orders to fill. Often, he has his first load delivered before the people who ordered it are out of bed. If you watched, you'd see him making one trip after another on the boulevard all through the morning. He has only a small truck and he shovels all his coal off by hand, yet the man who tends to the yards says that he is the best customer they have. Pop hasn't much time at noon. Some days when he is pushed to keep up, he goes without dinner. The first thing he says when he comes in the door is, "Any more orders come?" And Mom answers, "Yes. There's one for 237 Maple Street either this afternoon or tomorrow morning." "I'll get it this afternoon," Pop tells her, "because you don't know what might

come up tomorrow. It might turn bad and snow." Then he talks about his morning trips. "You know this Mrs. Lensner down the street," he will say. "Well, she came running out with a bucket the minute I got there. She said she didn't have a lump and was afraid I wouldn't get there on time." When he has finished eating, he will look at the clock and say, "It's one o'clock now. I got five loads this morning and I've got three more on this afternoon. If I get started, I ought to be finished by five, and then I can sit down and take it easy." When the day is over, Pop is tired and dirty. At the supper table, after he has cleaned up, he figures how many loads he made during the day. "Well, I made eight loads today," he will tell us. "That means eight bucks. That's not so bad now, is it? Course, I had to buy five gallons of gas, so that makes it seven. But seven bucks is enough for an old man like me." After supper, when he has finished reading the paper, Pop starts to think about the next day. When the phone rings, he says, "Guess that's another coal order. That'll make six for tomorrow and just fill in the day nice." About ten o'clock, he is ready for bed because, "If you want to keep up your orders, you've got to get an early start in the morning."

9

↓ THE CHAMP

Usually Al has a heavy out-of-town date for Saturday night, but once in a while, checkered suit, gray derby, lavender tie, Italian cigar and all, he joins the curbstone gang in front of the City Bank on First Street. Then the talk swings early to boxing, and stays there as long as Al is on the corner. For Al was a boxer, and he won't let anyone forget it. What's more, he was a good one; don't forget that either. Perhaps you've never heard of Francetti. I'll admit that's quite possible, even if Al won't. Why should he? Isn't he the fellow who was robbed of a Diamond Belt championship on a rotten decision by the judges in 1929? And when he had turned "pro," didn't he climb up off the canvas six times in two and a half minutes, after the great Canzoneri had shoved him into a corner and busted two of his ribs and a nose at the start of the third round in a Detroit exhibition bout? Technical knockout, the crooked referee had called it when Al was a

little slow in coming for the next round. And those two Chicago weeks when he had trained with Billy Petrolle, the Fargo Express. Hadn't Billy said that Al could take a solid punch better than some of the boys who were in the big money? (Of course, it's true that Billy didn't hire Al to train with him again for his next fight, but Al has an easy answer for that. "Billy's smart, see? Do ya think he'd keep a sparrin' partner that might make him look bad? Not Billy. Billy's smart. I ain't never blamed him for droppin' me.") There's no doubt of it, Al was a real boxer, a top-notch, one of the best. Did I say *was*? Al still is. He's going to make a comeback. He's got it all planned out. What if at twenty-five the old wind ain't so good? And what if the old legs are a little wobbly? The old punch is still there, ain't it? You bet your sweet life it is! And those tricks the smart boys used to beat him with when he was just an inexperienced kid—why, Al knows *all* of them now! Just give him a good manager and a few lucky breaks; the rest is in the bag. Keep watchin' the newspapers; you'll be readin' about him. Why not? . . . Sure, Al, why not? Stand up straight and talk about it on the corner, Al. Then crouch low and shuffle out under the street light. Weave your punch-drunk head back and forth; show the fellows how to shoot that left hook; ask the question again in thick grunts from a swollen ugly mouth—"Why not?"

10

SICILY

All the scenes that I remember from my childhood in Sicily are of bright and sunny days. One picture I always recall first: from a rose-trellised balcony the vision of a white, cone-shaped monster far off. I had been told that it was Etna; as a volcano, it should have smoked always and sometimes spat out fire, but it lingers in my mind only as a peaceful giant fixed in space, immovable. My most vivid recollections, however, are not of places or of special persons, but of crowds; and these are only flash pictures, gone in a moment. A screaming mob of children trails at the heels of the town drummer, scurrying to keep pace with his alert march. A warm Sicilian day bathes the gray cathedral, the crowd oozing

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into every corner near it, the steps flaming with shawls—a rich mosaic of bright yellow, green, and purple; balloons—green and purple and yellow, too, and shaped into grotesque pigs and bloated kings—tumble into the air, straighten, and then shoot up to the sky. It is Easter in the Sicilian town. Again, the full glow of a Mediterranean sun pours on rows of wind-tanned peasants kneeling at the cathedral door; the symbolic Christ, riding on an ass, tramps the carpet of flowers to the tall portals and pounds upon them. There is Palermo on a bright day: a string of sleeveless arms files past a spectacled and bearded doctor who rips two straight marks on each of them; the sharp point of the scalpel flashes, and stings me, for I am part of this crowd. Then suddenly I am pushed beyond the reach of probing officials and dropped on deck of the *America*, a monstrous boat to a little boy who had never before seen a liner. Against the railing the crowd jams, shouting; and swinging at the ends of long cords, baskets filled with peaches and big blue grapes are jerked up. Suddenly the choked growl of the horn sends a shiver through the boat, swallows up the lesser noises, stirs the engines into steady vibration. And I am carried across the sea to stay forever.

SECTION TWO: PARAGRAPH PLAN

1

Thompson's Pure Food Restaurant on Madison Street between Clark and La Salle is the most unusual food emporium west of the New York breadline. It is all white. Long rows of pure white tables extend down both sides of the room, between which is a white, horseshoe-shaped quick-lunch counter covered with short-order china and tooth-marked silver. Men sit on the tall, white, mushroom-shaped stools and look over their soup into the white enclosure of the oval like so many frogs in ceremony on the edge of a pond. Their throats throb and their eyes move from side to side, keeping time with the rhythmic jab of the neighboring elbows. Yet there are especially good things to eat here. Great pyramids of fruit are piled on the table in the centre of the oval. Oranges and

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apples, row upon row, trimmed in white grapes and grapefruit and crowned with a pineapple, make you question why you ordered bananas. Copper boilers percolate coffee by the gallon and shine brilliantly when the man who applies the "shinum" gives them a chance. Then, too, there is a sound about Thompson's that is all its own. Even the hiss from the coffee urns is different—not the familiar Lion Brand. Dishes rattle, silverware clinks, and rubber-soled shoes tap the floor in a unison that drives the hovering memories of elevated trains and moving-vans away from your chicken croquettes and peas. The sizzling steam breaks the rasping sound of the chairs as they are dragged across the tile floor; the steady calls of the waitresses ease the bang of the tin trays; and the front door never bumps together without an echo from the cash register bell. Hold a sea shell to your ear and in miniature you will hear Thompson's, the many noises blended into one continuous roar. It puts you under a spell and makes you wonder what you are going to do after you finish your raisin pie. Queer place, Thompson's!

2

MARCH MORNING

For a hunter who is out at sunrise on a freezing March morning, there are many things to hear and to see. Then, when the first grey begins to come, the world is full of sounds. In the frosty quiet is the grinding of an ice gorge, and the sharp crack of the twigs of some willow or maple whose low hanging branches have been frozen into the moving ice. A crow in the top of a cottonwood caws sleepily; a mallard who has stood guard all night calls his mates, now, to go for their morning feed. And as the light grows clearer, the hunter sees the ducks begin their flight. First the blue-wing teal sweep along and are quickly past. Then the mallards come soaring above the decoys, the slanting rays of the sun brightening their big green wings and green heads. After these fly the smaller ducks—pintails, bluebills, blackjacks, and the rest. But the flying of the first duck breaks up the sunrise mood. Then begins the real business of the hunter's day.

NEW DRESDEN

Last Saturday I was in New Dresden for the first time in almost fifteen years. It was a pleasant world I found and little changed. After breakfast at the Penn-Dresden, a shiny new hotel, I wandered up one street and down another. Butler's old nickelodeon was still painted blue as it used to be when five of us stood in line Saturday afternoons with our nickels. Neuberger's restaurant on Schoen Street was just as it had been when we leaned against the counter chewing stale pretzels and gulping three-cent sodas. Mrs. Becker's house, a dingier white among its lindens and untrimmed lilacs, looked as it used to when Mrs. Becker taught us juniors in German school to sing DIE LORELEI and to wave our arms as the gentle little snow flakes fell at Christmas on *meinen Tannenbaum*. Above the trees the convent towers pointed to the sky, and the elms arched over the walk by the high school as they used to when I walked home. I was busy all the afternoon completing the sale of the old house; and when at six I turned into Roth Street, the sound of the bells of Saint Michael's was swinging down through the dusk. Fifteen years ago the six o'clock bells meant something to us. Six was our supper-time, and on Saturday Grandfather and Grandmother and I used to sit in the little diningroom behind the bakery, happy the next day was Sunday, with no bread to sell and no cinnamon rolls (our special sort had raisins in them) to put out in the tin trays, and no need of getting up early next day to give breakfast rolls to people some of whom came for them before seven. Saturday evening, Grandmother usually wore her gray sateen and the brooch with the purple stone in it, and Grandfather smoked his porcelain pipe from Munich, and in our shop all the shelves were empty, though the whole house still held the smell of bread and cookies, a brown crisp smell as I still think of it. After supper before I went to my train, I decided to see whether Mrs. Gross still lived in her old place. I counted three houses from the corner of Twelfth Street. Maybe Mrs. Gross did still live there. I went up the worn brick walk and by habit around the back and rapped at the kitchen door. As I waited, I wished I had not come; I wanted, suddenly, to run away. Silly, I told myself and rapped again. This time I heard steps cross the

A very simple
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H

floor, the knob turned, and a large woman in a blue wrapper faced me. It was Mrs. Gross. She stared, waiting. "I guess," I began, and then she smiled at me. Yes, it was Mrs. Gross, Grandmother's friend. "I'm Sarah Miller. You won't mind, but my grandmother . . . We—" "Ach Gott!" Mrs. Gross wiped her hands on her apron and her eyes smiled. "Why you're the little red-haired one, ain't you? Come in, do." "Thank you, I can't, I must . . ." But Mrs. Gross had me come in, and then I drank a cup of coffee with her in the front room, and we talked of pleasant comfortable old things in the half-dark until the street light stuttered on by the gate and Saint Michael's bells rang nine o'clock, and I had to hurry to get to my train.

4

FOR TROUT FISHERMEN

Trout fishing does not begin on a trout stream. It begins two or three weeks earlier; and most fishermen have a ritual of beginning they have followed for years. I have mine. I buy gut leaders, three to seven feet long and tapered to fine. Then I re-stock my three-compartment box with short-shank hooks in sizes six, eight, and ten, with maybe a card of three-hook gangs, number ten size. I tie my bait rod and tape it into shape. (I have junked the old one. The one what was first best is now second best, and the tackle dealer is several dollars ahead.) A level D or E line completes my outfit, except for a few accessories I have to buy, landing nets and bait. Of course, to most fly-casters, the use of worms is sacrilegious. Later on in the season, I agree with them, but early, when streams are fast and muddy, worm bait and worm tackle get the trout up. Worm digging is the best spring fishing chore. I drive around the country and find an agreeable farmer with a manure pile on the south side of his barn. It is not always easy to get worms early in the season, but hit it right and in a couple hours you can dig up a supply of blood-red worms, usually the best this time of the year. I take them home, pack a wet newspaper in last year's shell box, dump in the worms, and tuck a sodden newspaper around them. If

you want to be fancy, use sphagnum moss from a florist, instead of a newspaper. But the moss is not necessary; the daily news sheet will more than do. Each day after that the worms take on color, toughness, and pugnacity. Two weeks in the box and they are in a mood to defy dictators. That is right. Tough on the hook, clean and pink, there is no better bait for early season trout. The last of the ritual means sitting by the fire and calling up smoke dreams of other fishing seasons. I remember miles of roaring river, and dragging canoes across acres of quaking muskeg, and toting a tump-line over plenty of back-breaking portages. I have sat beside little fires and listened to the hermit thrushes in the hush of the evening; I have heard the wild calling of loons at moonrise. I have seen great, dawn-bellied trout roll up to a fly, and I have felt the shock of their first run come rippling along a rod, and heard my heart complain to my ribs as the fish taxied across the water on their tails. I catch hundreds of fish weeks before fishing season opens.

SECTION THREE: THE FACTUAL PARAGRAPH

1

ICEBERGS

The real sea-monster, feared by sailors, is the iceberg. An iceberg is a floating mass of ice large enough to cripple or to sink a ship that ploughs into it. Roughly, icebergs fall into three classes. Most icebergs in our northern hemisphere are the result of the coming of spring to the Arctic oceans. When warm weather breaks up the frozen seas off Labrador and Greenland, huge blocks of ice are cast out into the free water. These small fields of ice tilt and bob until they are in their best floating position, and then they are swept south into the North Atlantic shipping lanes. Bergs from northern Greenland often float on a 2000 mile trip down past Nova Scotia before they disintegrate. A hundred miles or so from their final breakup, the icebergs attain real beauty, with breakers rolling through glistening arcades and streams of sunlit water pouring down from their high pinnacles. But

warm winds and Gulf-stream water dissolve them. Next in number to the sea-water icebergs are the fresh-water icebergs, which appear as a result of "calving." From September to May, Baffin's Land and Greenland and Labrador are cross-hatched with frozen rivers. On the map these rivers mark the inland plateaus with solid straps of ice and frozen snow. Yet slowly, very slowly, these frozen rivers go on towards the sea. Inch by inch, thaw and freeze, thaw and freeze, they move downward towards the ocean cliffs. By almost imperceptible degrees they edge off the cliffs and hang, jutting out, an awning over the open sea. When the mass of ice hanging over the cliffs can no longer support its own weight, it drops to the sea, with a booming crash and much splashing of water. These giant ice cubes are said to be "calves" of the river that litters them. Caught in the currents and swept out into the ocean, they menace trans-Atlantic shipping. Only about one-ninth of the "calf" protrudes above the water, and jagged fields of ice underwater may extend for hundreds of feet on all sides of the central peak. Gradually, however, the warm waters off Martha's Vineyard melt them, and the Coast Guard rubs out the red pencil mark which has traced their torturous trip from the cliffs of Baffin's Land. The third type of iceberg is not composed entirely of ice. This berg is a fragment broken from a glacier and is usually filled with all sorts of land debris. These glaciers grinding towards the sea, scrape great masses of rock and soil, and collect even shrubs and animals. When the glacier slides into the ocean, a fragment a mile or so long may break off, tilt into position, and set sail. Such bergs are the most dangerous sort. As they melt, they release tons of rocks and earth and this shift in weight throws the iceberg about, changes its course, and adds to its speed. Coast Guard surveyors are not able to follow these erratic glacier bergs and warn sailing masters against them. And, too, the bergs of this last sort travel farthest into the southern North Atlantic. Dredgings have shown that glacial material has been carried as far south as Bermuda. All three kinds of bergs are dangerous to ocean travellers. The only protection against them is a monthly chart of their position published by the United States Coast Guard.

PENNSYLVANIA TOWN NAMES

Last week-end I was in Paradise for the first time. My Paradise is a very commonplace Pennsylvania town. In the railroad station at Pittsburgh, as I said, "One round trip to Paradise," I thought what a curious name my father's birthplace had. Pennsylvania towns do have strange names. There are towns with names like Paradise; towns with names from the Bible. Sabbath Rest is behind the Big Horn mountain. Down in Washington County, the Waynesburg Pike curves up a hill and through Ninevah. Salem, Lebanon, Nazareth, and New Jerusalem are in east-central Pennsylvania. Eden, Pennsylvania, is not a garden spot; there is no body of water bigger than a duckpond in Jordan Water; Euphrates is not on a river. Adam, Moses, and David show what characters from the Bible were admired. Another fertile source for names is the virtues admired by both religious and practical people. Frugality, Economy, Concord, Amity, Unity, Prosperity, and Harmony are towns about Pittsburgh. In other parts of the state are New Hope, Charity Landing, Faith Chapel, and Pleasant Unity. Up in the mountains one hundred and ninety-nine folks live in Brave. Perhaps Cash-town, with ninety-five persons, shows an admiration for another virtue. There is, of course, an Industry and a Fair-chance. Freedom, Liberty, and Soldier were named by people who did not forget some of the sterner virtues, and there is not only an Enterprise but a New Enterprise. A third group of town names gives clearly the origin of the settlers. Saxonburg was settled by immigrants from southern Germany. New Wales and North Wales show a nostalgia for the rugged hills of old Cambria. Besides New Wales, many other "new's" tell the story of who settled Pennsylvania. New Holland, New Germantown, New Oxford, New Tripoli, New Hanover, New Geneva, New Castle, and New Berlin are on the map, along with Albion, Caledonia, Andalusia, Scotia, Shamrock, Ulster, and Mexico. Over in the eastern part of the state, although it is not on the Tiber, sprawls Rome. Near

it is Troy. Poland, Slavia, Dalmatia, Swissvale, Moscow, Helvetia, Frenchville and French Lick, and Egypt, although they may not be names of the original homes of their inhabitants, show at least an interest in geography. Greek mythology is not forgotten. Towns are called for such gods as Mars, Atlas, and Apollo, and for such a demi-god as Ulysses. Homer is there, and so is Cassandra, and so is Echo and Arcadia. And the Greek Utica and Parnassus have their namesakes also in Pennsylvania. Then, too, there are many place names which are odd sounding, yea, funny, to anybody except those who live in the towns. Seldom Seen explains itself, perhaps, for it is off the beaten paths. But where did such names as Per Se, Eight-Four, Instanter, Bird in Hand, Half Falls, Fur, Shue Fly, Jo Jo Junction, and Chewtown come from? Were the founders serious in christening Mann's Choice, Husband, Desire, Bugler, Roulette, Panic, and Oval? There is a Hyde as well as a Seek; they are not, however, adjacent. Scalp Level, Standing Stone, Burned Cabins, Primrose, Plumville, and Peach Bottom have at least for me definite suggestion. The next time you are in the railway terminal buying a ticket to a town with such a common name as Washington, you may wish that you were going to Smokehouse, Safe Harbor, Transfer, Gazzam Mills Creek, or Rural Valley.

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SECTION FOUR: LONG THEME

PART ONE: INVESTIGATIVE

1

PENNSYLVANIA'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY DISPUTE

- I. Pennsylvania's "keystone" position
- II. Basis of the boundary disputes
 - A. Original charter
 - B. Interpretations of its phraseology
 - C. Limitation of discussion to southern boundary

III. Boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland

- A. Disputes
 1. Penn's claims
 2. Baltimore's claims
- B. Controversies
 1. Appointment of commission
- C. Surveys
 1. David Rittenhouse
 2. Mason and Dixon

IV. Boundary between Pennsylvania and Virginia

- A. Disputes
 1. Penn's claims
 2. Virginia's claims
- B. Controversies and hostilities
- C. Settlement and survey

Pennsylvania, because of its central position among the original thirteen states, has long been called the "keystone" state. And like a real keystone it has borne great pressure. The present boundaries of Pennsylvania are the result of the varying pressure which the states to the north and the states to the south exerted upon the "keystone" for more than a century. The history of its boundaries is, therefore, a history of disputes.

Inasmuch as the basis for practically all the disputes was the phraseology of the original charter a clear understanding of the charter itself as well as of the interpretations of its phraseology must be gained before the disputes themselves can be considered. The main part of the charter as recorded by George MacDonald in his *Selected Charters* is as follows: ". . . do give and grant unto the said William Penn, his heirs and assigns, all that certain tract of land in America, with all the islands therein contained, as the same is bounded on the east by the Delaware River from a point twelve miles distance, northward from New Castle Town unto the three and fortieth degree of northern latitude if the said river doth extend so far northward; but if the said river shall not extend so far northward, then by the said river so far as it doth extend, and from the head of the said river the eastern bounds are to be determined by a meridian line, to be drawn from the head of the said river unto the said three and fortieth degree of northern latitude. The said land to extend westward five leagues in longitude to be computed from the said eastern bounds, and the said land to be bounded on the north by the

beginning of the three and fortieth degree of northern latitude, and on the south by a circle drawn at a distance of twelve miles from New Castle Town northward and westward unto the beginning of the fortieth degree of northern latitude and then by a straight line westward to the limit of longitude above mentioned."¹ So indefinitely were the boundaries defined in the charter that almost upon Penn's arrival in America in 1682, less than two years after the granting of the charter, the question arose: What is meant by the word "beginning" as used in the charter? Two interpretations were possible. If the charter meant the fortieth and the forty-third parallels, as most historians have held,² then Penn's province was a zone which was three degrees of latitude in width, and which was bounded on the south by the fortieth parallel and on the north by the forty-third parallel. This interpretation would avoid disputes on the south, unless with Virginia west of the mountains; but on the north it would seriously conflict with the claims of Connecticut and Massachusetts west of the Delaware River. If the charter, however, meant the thirty-ninth and forty-second parallels, as some historians have held,³ then Penn's province was a zone which was three degrees of latitude in width and which was bounded on the south by the thirty-ninth parallel and on the north by the forty-second parallel. This interpretation, although eliminating any dispute with Massachusetts and lessening that with Connecticut on the north, involved serious disputes with Maryland and Delaware, as well as with Virginia on the south. The general basis of the disputes which arose over the northern and southern boundaries has been set forth. Although the northern and southern disputes were of almost equal importance and duration, the limits of this article make it necessary to treat only those arising over the southern boundary. To these disputes we shall now turn.

The main series of disputes and controversies, as well as the final surveys, involved the Penns and the Baltimores. The dispute, as has been stated, was based upon the inaccuracy of Penn's charter. Lord Baltimore contended that the fortieth

¹ MacDonald, G., *Selected Charters*, Vol. I, p. 185

² Pearson, S. M., *Penn's Land*, p. 49; Harvey, J., *Pennsylvania*, pp. 91-93; Wilson, W., *The Original States*, pp. 254-255

³ Murry, A. O., *Settling the Colonies*, Vol. I, p. 491

parallel was the southern limit of Penn's grant. When it was found that this interpretation did not include Philadelphia, the commissioners representing Penn's interests contended that the fortieth parallel began where the thirty-ninth left off, that is, at the thirty-ninth parallel. The Penn interests held that the King had intended to include the site on which Philadelphia had been built, and that his knowledge of the parallels was very inaccurate. To prove their claims they cited the fact that in the charter one of the points of the description of the southern boundary was that the line should join a circle with a radius of twelve miles about the town of New Castle; and, since such a line could not touch the fortieth parallel, it was evident that the king intended the thirty-ninth parallel as the line. Baltimore, a shrewd thinker sustained his claim by noting the fact that the circle in question could not touch the thirty-ninth parallel, and that, since it came nearer to touching the fortieth than the thirty-ninth, the fortieth was the parallel intended by the King. Then began a series of controversies between the Penns and the Baltimores. The dispute was carried several times to the King and council, and several times an agreement was reached, but each time Lord Baltimore found some excuse for not carrying out his obligations. Upon Penn's death, in 1718, Charles Calvert, the fifth Lord Baltimore, suggested to Penn's widow that neither resign land in the disputed territory until a permanent settlement could be reached. The controversies continued under this agreement until the death of Hannah Penn, in 1732, when John and Thomas Penn took a hand in the matter. Through a compromise which they made with Baltimore, the boundary lines between Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland were to be determined by a commission who, according to Isaac Sharpless in his *Two Centuries of Pennsylvania History*, should be guided by the following conclusion: "The line of Delaware should run west from near Cape Henlopen to the center of the peninsula, thence in a northerly direction, tangent to the circumference of a circle drawn with a twelve mile radius around New Castle as a center, thence around the circumference to the Delaware River. The Pennsylvania line should start at the point of tangency and run due north to a parallel of latitude fifteen miles south from the southernmost point of the city of Phila-

delphia and then directly west of the whole length of the province."⁴ Then began the series of surveys which resulted, not only in fixing the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Maryland, but also in determining a line which more than a century later was to separate the free from the slave states. Although in 1759 the English courts ordered the terms of the contract to be carried out, it was not until 1760 that the actual work of surveying was begun. Baltimore, who by his policy had delayed the execution of the court's orders for more than ten years, employed David Rittenhouse, one of the greatest mathematicians of his day, to survey the circle about New Castle. After three years had been spent in making this survey, the commissioners in charge apparently thought that the delay was another trick of Baltimore, or, says T. S. March in his *History of Pennsylvania*, "it is possible that they did not have all confidence in a colonial like Rittenhouse"⁵ for they imported two expert English surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon by name. These experts went over the circle which Rittenhouse had determined, but found that their line did not vary so much as an inch from his. In 1763 they began the famous line westward, which they fixed at 39° 44' northern latitude in accordance with the terms of the agreement. Through the center of a path twenty-four feet wide which they cut through the virgin forest, they surveyed the boundary. Every five miles they set up huge stones marked with the arms of Penn on one side and of Baltimore on the other, and between these at mile intervals they placed smaller stones marked with P on one side and M on the other. Each of the stones in this "stone hedge," as the line is often called, was brought from England by the famous surveyors. At the end of four years, or in 1767, after they had carried the line westward more than two hundred and fifty miles, the boundary-makers were compelled to discontinue work on account of the interference of the Indians, who failed to understand the proceedings. But the line had been carried beyond the limits of Maryland, and the controversies of nearly a century had been finally settled.

There still remained undetermined more than a hundred miles of Pennsylvania's southern boundary when the work of

⁴ Sharpless, I., *Two Centuries of Pennsylvania History*, p. 181

⁵ March, T. S., *History of Pennsylvania*, p. 181

Mason and Dixon was discontinued. Before completing the discussion of that boundary, though, we must consider the disputes which arose over it between Pennsylvania and Virginia. The claims made by the Virginians were based upon their early activity in the Ohio Valley region. First, in 1753 Governor Dinwiddie had sent Washington to protest against the occupation of the valley by the French. Later, in 1758, the Virginians captured the region from the French, built Fort Pitt upon the site where Pittsburgh now stands, and then held the region against the French for some time. Naturally a dispute arose between the Virginians and the Pennsylvanians over the possession of the region. The Pennsylvanians laid claim to the valley under the terms of their charter. They further maintained that the Virginians had built the fort at the forks of the Ohio as an outpost to protect their own frontier from the French, and that they had built the fort with the understanding that the land belonged to Pennsylvania. The dispute went beyond the stage of controversy, and hostilities began when the Virginians under John Connolly took possession of the fort and called it Fort Dunmore after the governor. When Connolly surrounded the house in Hannastown, a little village near the present site of Greensburg, where the Pennsylvania authorities had established a court to settle the dispute, a sectional war was threatened. It was only the opening of the Revolution, which absorbed the attention of both states, that saved blood from being shed over the matter. The spirit of comradeship which the Revolution inspired, however, seemed to hasten the final settlement, for in 1779 the contending interests reached an agreement whereby the boundary between the two states was to be an extension of the Mason-Dixon line to the end of the five degrees mentioned in Penn's charter, where the line turned due north to Lake Erie. In 1784 David Rittenhouse was called upon to complete the survey which he had started in the circle about New Castle. More than a century of bitter disputes and controversies had elapsed since the founding of Pennsylvania before the southern side of the "keystone" had set and finally resisted pressure from the south.

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SECTION FOUR: LONG THEME

PART TWO: PERSONAL

CAMP DALLAS SKETCHES

In a boy's life many changes take place during the five years between fifteen and twenty. New conceptions, new knowledge, new associations, new emotions succeed each other with a bewildering rapidity. Yet in the midst of all these disturbing elements, his thoughts go back to a few definite experiences, a few tangible memories of early youth, to things which he has felt and which he is glad to summon in order that he may hold them and cherish them in the chaotic, awful charivari of young manhood. And that is how these sketches of one boy's days and nights in a military summer camp came to be written.

I

The boy, hurrying from his sweltering tent at the shrill summons of the "top's" whistle, thought of the lines of a cowboy ballad-maker who had long ago wailed that after God had created the rest of the world fairly and to scale, He had gathered up all that he had left over—dry sand, bloated gila monsters, thorny cacti, bare rocks and diamond-backed rattlers among other things—and had dumped them into the hottest place in the world and named it "Texas." And when the boy had hooked his heavy pack on his back, brought his rifle up, and stepped out on the five-mile march, he found that the bygone minstrel of the plains had had just cause for his doleful lay. For as the column moved off down the dirt

road clouds of dust rose, the gritty particles sticking to his face and neck, already wet with perspiration. Soon they drifted into his eyes, his mouth, and his nose, blinding and choking him. Finally, however, a whistle blast from far up at the head of the column sent him veering across the road into a field of dry, parched Johnson grass, where the ground, sun-cracked and uneven, made walking hard but offered some relief from the thick dust of the road. Then, for the next mile or so, the boy stumbled along, frightening horned toads and jack-rabbits from their concealment in the tall grass. Slim, green lizards, too, flashed across the ground in front of him. But the back of his neck began to smart; his woolen collar rubbed against the sun-burned skin; the straps of his pack cut into his shoulders, and his hand, grimy with dust and sweat, could hardly grasp his rifle tight enough to hold it on his shoulder. When the column finally turned off the field into a concrete road and stopped for a few minutes' rest, he reached eagerly for his canteen and drank. The water in it was hot, and, to make matters worse, he swallowed a mouthful of the dust on its neck and cover. He had no time to feel sorry for himself, however, for the column moved out again. Then, as he brought his rifle to his shoulder (the metal so hot it burned his fingers) a cadet near him turned pale and toppled forward in a faint. The cadets halted, and after the commanding officer had hurried back, the order came to swing about and return to camp. All the way in the boy thought chiefly of the cold shower-baths and the clear spring-water fountains at the foot of his company street.

II

The paralyzing din began when a green rocket flared in the darkness and ended fifteen minutes later when the last goggle-eyed, trembling cadet had finally managed to fire his quota of ammunition. Rifle fire, clashing, echoing, and popping from two hundred flame-sputtering muzzles, formed the theme of the stentorian medley. Into this, at ten-second intervals, two heavy field-pieces jerked forward with an earth-shaking roar. Close to them sounded a broken, metallic clatter and tiny points of flame soared—machine-guns firing tracer bullets every fifth shot. Behind the machine-guns the automatic rifles hammered and clanked, their barrels glowing red cylinders in the blackness. Hand-grenades, thrown into

a deep pit, burst against its sides with fierce slaps. At regular intervals in the uproar a trench mortar went off with a dull "plop." And through the roaring, the sputtering, the overwhelming pandemonium, came barked commands, sharp whistle blasts, and the fizzing and crackling of rockets and firecrackers. The boy, who had been standing motionless behind the firing line, suddenly closed his mouth with a snap. Then he laughed, and, pointing the heavy, blunt pistol at the moon, he pressed the trigger.

III

The boy was sprawled on his stomach in the blazing Texas sun, whose suffocating heat had already forced the hairy green-blooded tarantulas, seen in the early morning, into their holes and had scorched the sand on which the boy lay until it was hot to the touch. The heavy wool field uniform rasped against his sweating body; the non-commissioned officer's whistle in his breast-pocket gouged his ribs; the sand worked inside his shirt, chafing and scratching. Two hundred yards down the valley a row of square, black and white targets, numbered, jutted from a long pit below. At one of these the boy was looking, and the more he looked the more the heat waves made the black bull's eye on the target wobble and dip crazily to his gaze. Someone touched the boy's shoulder and suggested that he soothe his eyes by resting them on the green sides of the valley, but he shook his head and reaching into the cartridge belt around his waist drew out a clip of shells. Clumsily he inserted them into the rifle which his sweaty hands had been holding tightly for fear that the sand would enter its gleaming bore or its smooth, clean magazine. The voice of the army officer who was coaching him came evenly: "Squeeze your trigger; let the black rest almost on your front sight; hold your breath just a moment before firing; hug the ground firmly and take it easy, kid." The boy heard him, but his eyes were on the square target and the tricky bull's eye which refused to stay in one place. And, too, his heart was thumping and his breathing short, for his rifle was heavy, bulky, and powerful, and the boy was young and had never fired one before. He squeezed slowly on the trigger as he tried to hold the sights on the wavering bull's eye. There was a full roar and the boy's

right shoulder jerked back. His thumb, which he had curled around the small of the rifle's stock behind the hammer, flew back sharply with the recoil and cut the boy's lip. But he did not feel it. His gaze was on the black and white target at which he had fired and which had sunk immediately into the pit. He was waiting to see if the men in the target pit would raise a mark on a long stick, to signify that his bullet had struck, or a red flag, for a miss, or a white disk for a bull's-eye, or a red disk, for a four. The boy forgot his bleeding lip, his bruised shoulder, the blinding heat, the sand—everything. It seemed long—maybe, he told himself, he had missed. He gulped at the thought of that. But his head came up and he turned, grinning, to the coach; a white disk had slid up from the pit.

IV

The sunset gun had long ago boomed out across the low hills and it was night. The boy, sitting on the edge of his cot in the darkened tent, could see the shafts of light from the other tent entrances crisscrossed on the ground of the company street. When the breeze blew the tent flaps back and forth the yellow beams were broken up by black, grotesque shadows. He heard, from farther down the hill, around the brighter lights of the camp store, the rattle of soda-water bottles and the bursts of laughter and talk as a last group of cadets, returning from the girls and the motion-picture theaters in town, scattered to their tents at "Call to Quarters." As the last notes died, the lights, except for those in the guard tent and in a tent (where the instructing officers played poker) across the parade-ground, went out slowly, but the boy could still hear subdued scuffles and muffled laughter. Then, just as a great red moon began to rise above the trees, a bugle sounded taps. The long, sweet, melancholy notes rose and fell, echoing and echoing again, and something inside the boy seemed to swell and stir as he listened. After that the quick tread and clinking saber of the officer-of-the-day as he inspected the sentry were heard in the stillness. The moon floated high and its light grew brighter and the camp of seven hundred men slept. But as the silence increased there were minor sounds that grew in volume: the throb of a motor on the highway, the liquid notes of turtle doves in a grove at the edge of camp, and the howl of a hound-dawg in the dis-

tance. Gradually, though, they merged and were lost, and the boy, too, slept.

RANN'S FARM

I

Rann's farm, the boy decided, was a city in itself. There were, to be sure, only a few buildings—the smelly old barn, the shiny greenhouses, and the two or three homes. But it was a city, and an individual one. There were squares filled with blue delphiniums, white lilies, red and yellow gallardias, and the green leaves of lettuce and spinach. There was a hollyhock square for the skyscraper section; cerastium and forget-me-nots made up the resident parts; and, for all the trouble they caused, the rows of cacti should have been called "the slums." "Rann City" was a city with its own parallel and perpendicular streets, its own water supply, and its own laws. Its only connections with the rest of the world were the telephone and the vans that left with hundreds of flat boxes of red and white geraniums, pink ice-plants, and dark blue verbenas, and returned with the boxes empty, to be piled against the barn. And Rann City had its people, busy with their special work. Old Tim's job seemed to be swearing at the horses; he'd done it for twenty years and knew the right word if Jack or Jerry shied at a piece of newspaper blowing across the road. Jim stayed by the telephone to get orders. If the boy should come into the barn to hunt a hoe, Jim would tell him to get a box and dig three dozen hollyhocks and eighteen Chinese delphiniums. When he brought in these and a hundred pounds of dirt on his shoulder, Jim would have another order and the hoeing would wait a while longer. Pete went around the city as a policeman, making certain everybody was working. Just after he decided that he had to eat at least one of the small, red radishes in the field next to the cactus patch, Pete would amble over the top of the hill, and he would continue to brush his hands against the cactus spines, trying to dig up the weeds that were entangled with the plants; he waited until lunch time before he wiped the dirt off the sun-warmed radishes and ate them with his sandwiches. Even the newer workers caught the individuality of the place. They would remark that, "If it rains to-

night, we'll cut spinach all day tomorrow," instead of talking of baseball; it was Rann City, and only Rann City seemed important. He realized how important it was when Jim called everyone together at five minutes of six. "I've got an order for fifty baskets of pansies," he would say. "They've got to be at McKamm's before seven-thirty." In five minutes it was supposed to be quitting time, and he should have gone home; but he was still in Rann City. He had to look a hundred and fifty pansies in their bright eyes before he took off his dirty shirt and headed down the cinder road past the chrysanthemum plants.

II

Work was the theme at Rann's farm. It began when the seven o'clock whistles from Pittsburgh wailed over the blue-gray hills, and it went on, except for twenty minutes at noon, until the hands of the clock in the barn had almost circled. In the morning freshness it was pleasant enough to lie face-down on a board that bridged the gap between the sides of the cold frame and to tear out chick-weed that twined among the campanula plants, while he remembered *Green Mansions*, which he had finished the night before, or dreamt of hunting for orchids in the Burmese forests with Matthewson. But in an hour his legs were cramped and his knees chafed; in another, his arms began to tire and the sun began to burn deep into his bare shoulders. Then sweat collected in warm drops on his forehead, and ran into his eyes when he lifted his head; it made him want to crawl down into the slanting shadow of the board. The work had to go on, and it did, monotonously, until Jim called from the barn that he was to dig four dozen hollyhocks. Hollyhocks grew in clay and sent their tap roots deep; a dozen of them filled a box that ground into the burned shoulders as it bounced with each step toward the barn. The hollyhocks took four trips, and then the weeding began again. When the last chick-weed plant finally had been thrown to shrivel in the sun, the cactus patch had to be weeded. He couldn't lie on a board while weeding between the slabs of green spined flesh. Soon his back was aching as he bent over the plants, trying to avoid the spines but trying to pull the weeds up by their roots that hugged the roots of the cacti. Slowly he labored up a path, down the next (dragging a bushel of weeds) until the patch looked like a desert in

which the plants grew in rows, a strange kind of desert that was bordered by an apple orchard. After reporting to the barn, he was sent off with a hoe to the field where gladioli pushed through the ground like shoots of corn. Gladioli were his favorite flowers, and he broke the ground carefully around the pointed shoots. The field was big; it would take several days, he thought, to finish cultivating it. He followed his hoe which jabbed at the brown crust, while the sun moved toward the west. Wherever he was at any time, he could hear and see work, the all-important, going on. When he lay looking down into the cold frame, he could hear Tim, the stableman, cuss at the horses as they clumped on the cinders, drawing a heavy farm wagon. From the barn vague voices called orders as vans drove up to be loaded. A series of bumps told that boxes were being piled against the barn; a sweating man stumbled past from time to time, carrying a heavy box of plants. Then up in the cactus patch, he again heard Tim yelling at the horses as they pulled the plow through the soil. In the next field a half dozen workers knelt, pulling radishes and filling chips with their reds and greens. Far below in the flat an overalled figure in a wide straw hat with a dark hole in the crown turned over a strip of ground; the steel shovel flashed in the sun as it came up with dirt. When he moved to the gladioli field, he caught sight of the greenhouses. A blotch of red followed by ones of white and of green moved along the glass sides and were shoved into a waiting truck. A little later the sound of a motor made him look up. The truck was swaying down the hill. One more thing he noticed; when he heard the rasping voice of Tim again, he saw the horses pulling a float of pink and white dots—English daisies, he decided—on the way to the barn.

III

For him, rainy days at Rann's farm were pleasant days. They broke the monotony of working in the heat, of having dry-skinned hands, and of feeling warm, salty sweat on his forehead; they left a new, clean green where they found a dark, drab one. At the first sudden downpour he rushed with the rest of the workers to the barn and was sent out to cover the cold frames with sashes. He liked the rain beating at him as he helped to place the sashes over the snapdragon seedlings; he wished there were more sashes to put down when, a few

minutes later, he stood in the barn and wiped the water from his face with a mud-stained handkerchief. As long as it rained hard, he worked in the barn; with the other workers, he joined four chip baskets into a square and made piers with them almost to the ceiling. There was the smell of hay in the loft, and through the open doorway came the cool moist breeze. Downstairs the horses stomped now and then on the wooden floor; from the other end of the building the jangle of the telephone came up through the cracks followed by Jim's brisk, "Rann's Farm." An atmosphere of contentment seemed to fill the place until the rain changed to a fine mist, and everybody was sent out to cut spinach. Spinach cutting was an art. The knife had to be thrust into the ground just below the surface, through the stem that held the leaves together; if it cut too high, the leaves fell apart in the dirt. Even spinach-cutting was interesting when the dozen workers decided to see who could fill the most baskets. While his one hand threw a plant into the basket, the other was jabbing the dull knife at the next plant; he tried to keep up with the older men, and he might have if the sun hadn't come out and made lines of reflection on the wet leaves that stretched across the field. He stopped for a moment to look at the pattern they made while the others went on filling their baskets. Six bushels he filled with the wet, rain-washed spinach, wondering who would eat it all. Just after he finished helping to load the wagon with the baskets, it began to rain again, and he slogged to the barn through the mud, between the rows of drooping flowers. The rain fell steadily. It seemed to make the men who were usually sullen and uncommunicative jovial as they scraped up the mud in the packing room; they knew they could go home early if the rain didn't stop. It didn't; it beat on the roof and rolled off in streams that carried cinders with them as they flowed into the ditch. At four o'clock the barn was cleaner than it had been since the last heavy rain, three weeks before, and the work day was done. When he walked down the road he noticed the petals had been beaten off the Iceland poppies; the spikes of delphinium were broken by the weight of the rain; the pansies were pushed down into the mud. But the plants had a fresh green color that promised new blossoms for him to look at on the morrow, and he was satisfied.

IV

Always when he turned the last bend on his way to Rann's farm, he noticed the color. In the spring, he thought, it always seemed gayest. First the green brightened the dark ground and made the weak sunshine seem real; it surged like a wave in the low fields and then up the hillsides. Before it had time to grow dull to him, it was spotted with the dark blue of dwarf iris floating upon it and the pastel shades of long-spurred columbine lifted above it. A sprinkling of bleeding-heart ran along the road, and the pink of apple blossoms stood against the sky over the barn. Creeping along the hillsides, rock-garden plants sent out a few blossoms that increased daily until the hills were quilted in the pale pink of phlox, the snowy white of cerastium, and the intense red of dianthus. Down in the flat, acres of pansies lived their short life in a riotous splash of color that looked from a distance like a canvas daubed recklessly. Each pansy plant had its own shades, blended together; each one seemed to dare the rest to produce a combination as perfect as its own. Before the warm airy days of late spring merged into the breathless ones of summer, the red cups of papaver, the oriental poppy, with their tea-leaved spots of purple-black, made dancing blots across the field, their stems springing back and forth like bent piano wires. Then, with summer, came the one time of the year he liked the hollyhocks; they became spires of flowers; their common colors painting the broken ugly fence. But, towering above the other plants, the hollyhocks could not compare with the stately spikes of delphiniums. Delphiniums sent up flowers that copied the blue of the sky and the blends of pink and purple of sunset. Some were dark, like the sky at dusk; others were the pale blue of the sky just after sunrise. He liked the blue of the delphiniums better than the colors of any other flowers until the gladioli began to bloom. He never could describe the colors of gladioli. All he knew was that where delphiniums were delicate shades of blue, gladioli were all colors, just as delicate. He liked the whole field of them with their stems straight, their flowers drawn toward the sun. Each flower was, in itself, something to examine closely to see the markings and flushes of colors on its throat. It was not until autumn that the gladioli were replaced by other flowers. Taller than hollyhocks, the dahlias began to bloom, big coarse plants that filled the field with

dark green from which were sent up plaques of orange and pink and red and white and purple and yellow. From a distance they looked like big rubber balls, held from rolling down on the next year's pansy plants. Then when everything else was cut down by the frost, the chrysanthemums had their day to color the farm. They painted the field on the west and the north, and kept it painted until they were sent to the market in Pittsburgh. If there was only one thing he could remember about Rann's, he would want it to be a summer day he worked up on the hill and saw below the colored fields rippled in the wind and, above, the blue sky with the fluff of a white cloud floating in it.

MY FAMILY

There is no other family in the world quite like mine. I'm homesick for them. They're real folks, my family. Mother is the kind of a woman who wears checked gingham house dresses and wouldn't think of bobbing her hair. She feeds tramps and she can't resist agents; she subscribes to magazines indiscriminately, and buys books and patent broom-holders and aluminum kettles, because, as Mother says, agents have a hard time getting along or they wouldn't be going from door to door selling things. Dad is the kind of a man who likes to putter around the house. He gives the kitchen and the bath-room a fresh coat of enamel each spring. He takes down the screen door that sticks a little and planes off a curly shaving or two. Dad doesn't have to call the plumber when the sink gets stopped up, or hire an electrician when Mother wants another floor plug. Then there are six of us girls; anyone could tell by our names Mother's rebellion against her own substantial Mary Jane. We were born within a span of ten years, and now that we are grown up, passing acquaintances can't tell one from another in looks or temperament; but to Mother and Dad individual graces are distinctly visible. When the telephone bell rings, Dad says with pretended impatience, "Don't bother to answer it. It's for Helen. They can't have a thing in this town going on without her." After he came home from a visit to Hazel, who drives—well, some might say recklessly—Dad chuckled, "That

Hay! She's a catbird! Whizzes right through traffic thirty miles an hour." Mother says of Mildred, "She's a home-girl; a real treasure; just the salt of the earth, Milly is." And of Winifred, "She's particular. I tell you with the salaries girls get nowadays, they don't marry the first man that asks them." Gladys has always been the prettiest; we all admit that. We've managed to get all the enlarged crayon portraits into the attic, except the one of Gladys. It still hangs in Mother's room, an impossibly pretty little girl of three in a blue cashmere dress and white kid slippers standing on a chair with one perfect little hand on its back of twisted reed. "Really," as Mother would say, "people sometimes think it is a soap advertisement." When Helen, the youngest was six, Billy came. Bill is a Senior in high school now, a big blond boy with dirty hands and large feet, who terrifies us with talk about being an aviator. Girls don't interest Bill yet; he likes to putter around the house and the car with Dad, and Dad often remarks with satisfaction, "One thing about Bill, there's not a lazy bone in him." Bill almost always calls Mother "Girlie", a name that somehow tickles her a lot.

I often think of the mornings when we six girls were going to school and Billy was a baby. I realize now how full those mornings must have been for Mother. We had hired girls only intermittently, for even then housework was easy to find in homes where there were less than seven children. I remember waking on those mornings and listening to Dad shake the ashes from the furnace and Mother talk to the baby as she dressed him. I remember the smell of coffee. The routine of those mornings was pretty much the same, although the quarrels and games might vary a little now and then. Mother would come to the foot of the stairs and call, "Gracie-e-e. It's seven o'clock. Get the children up." She called me because I was the oldest, but Helen always came to life first, and she would tell Winifred, her bed-fellow, "You'd better get up. It's late. Mamma called Grace a long time ago."

"She did not," Winifred would counter. "I heard her. It wasn't two minutes ago. Let's see how many Ruth's we can think of." Then followed a list of girls whose names were Ruth. Gladys and Hazel weren't too old to enjoy this and were soon calling out Ruth's that Winifred and Helen

hadn't thought of. Sometimes one of them knocked on the head of the bed, "Tum, tum, te tum, te tum,—bet you don't know what I'm playing?"

"Star Spangled Banner?"

"Nope."

"Marching Thru' Georgia?"

"Nope."

"The Turkey Gobbler Said, Said He?"

"No, now listen" this time she tapped with the knuckles of both hands and made the time of *My Country 'Tis of Thee* very marked.

Again Mother would come to the foot of the stairs and call, "Everyone up? How's Milly this morning?" Mildred was the delicate one; she had anemia and we all envied her. She didn't have to get up; she didn't have to go to school; she didn't have to do anything she didn't want to do. But sometimes Mildred would get out of bed and faint before she had taken half a dozen steps, and that frightened all of us. Those mornings Mother would have her go back to bed for awhile and would bring her breakfast up to her and her raw egg and milk. The egg-nogs were really the worst part of anemia. Before we went to school, we all took our favorite belongings up to Mildred. Winifred took her paper dolls with the blue and pink crepe paper to make dresses of and the gold and silver stars to trim them, and she'd tell Mildred to use all the stars she wanted to. I would let her wear my Japanese kimono. Gladys would bring her kitten up. Helen would want to leave her new ball that she had saved her money for two weeks to buy. And Mother would carry Billy up and let him sit at the foot of the bed. However, Mildred didn't faint very often; usually the six of us were dressing at the same time and when we weren't held back by the common anxiety for Mildred, the arguments were hot and furious.

"You've got my stockings," Hazel would accuse Gladys.

"I have not." Gladys would continue dressing with calm indifference.

"You have, too. I know they're mine, because mine didn't have a hole in them and these have a hole in the toe and a darned place in the leg. See?" Hazel would say in one breath.

"I've got these on now and I'm not going to change them."

"I'll tell Mother."

"Tell her and see how much I care."

When matters reached this stage, it was my duty to intervene. "If those are Hazel's stockings, give them to her," I would command Gladys. But she scorned immediate submission to such authority as mine.

"I will if you'll help me with my 'rithmetic. Anyway, you haf to. Mother said if I came to bed last night, she'd make you this morning."

At sixteen, I hated the idea of being made to do anything. "Oh, she did," I argued. "I thought Dad helped you last night."

"He did, only we're not allowed to work problems the way he does."

"Well, you give Hazel—" But I was drowned out by Winifred shrieking to Mother down stairs, "Mother-r-r, you wash me, 'stead of Grace this morning. She don't pay any 'tention to your eyes or nose or anything. Will ya, Mother?" When the clamor was reaching its height, Mother would come upstairs to settle disputes, wash faces, comb hair, get knots out of shoe-strings, distribute clean dresses, and restore order in general. After that was breakfast, and, then, the scramble for coats, and hats, and gloves, and rubbers, and books, and grade-cards, and apples for recess, and handkerchiefs, and kisses.

Besides having to wash the faces and settle the quarrels of the younger members of the family, the oldest of seven children has other definite disadvantages. I ate at the second table so often that I learned to like cold chicken better than hot. Wheeling the baby is always presumed to be a pleasure by mothers. To push the carriage around the block was interesting enough when there was nothing else to do, but wheeling the baby every day when I wanted to play jack-stones or cut paper dolls or jump the rope, was a bore. There was one pleasant thing about it. Other little girls who didn't have a baby at home were envious. I could trade pushing the baby for a ride on a bicycle any time—only I wasn't supposed to do it. I was spanked occasionally for the benefit of the whole family, and I used to bewail that injustice. This happened most at night. We had to go to bed just when we were

having the best time; and after we were undressed and in bed, there'd be someone so wide-awake that she couldn't stay down. She just had to stand up in the middle of the bed and jump, and there was something contagious in the sound. Jumping led on to pillow fights and to making tents with the sheets. Sometimes all they did downstairs was to call up, "Better settle down, or I'll be up there." If there was company, they almost never came up. Usually, no one was taking any chances except me. When someone did come up, I was the one who was spanked every time. As the spanking of me subdued everyone, why waste energy on three or four? And the dusting that falls to the lot of the oldest! I can hear Mother yet. "Wipe the rungs. Don't just flirt the rag over them." I hate dusting to this day.

Mother is still as full of housekeeping enthusiasm as ever. She hooks rugs and pieces quilts with the industry of a bride. Each time I go home, something old is gone and something new has taken its place, but the shining oak mantels with the mirrors over them are still there. Dad won't let her paint them. He loves the glassy varnish and the fine grain of the oak showing through. The big upright piano with the ivory gone off several of the keys is still in the same corner; but the oak and mahogany rockers of my little girl days have given way to overstuffed and reed chairs. The green velvet rugs with the pink roses in the border were worn out long ago. Sedate monk's cloth draperies have replaced the lace curtains. Even upstairs there is hardly a landmark left. Winifred has the room that used to be Mildred's and mine. It is on the east side and pushes right out into the old apple tree. Winifred is a prosperous school teacher; she has had the floors done over, a sanitary imitation of hardwood. Her furniture is very modern, all Louis Fifteenth style in dark walnut. The dresser and the chiffonier have white linen covers that Winifred has embroidered in yellow. A yellow silk bedspread is reserved for rather special occasions, but sprigs of yellow flowers in the wall-paper are steady proof of Winifred's color scheme. Now there is always a sweetness and order about Winifred's room, but I remember it when the floor was littered with paper doll furniture and with paper dolls having a tea party where the refreshments were water, a slice of apple, a hickory nut meat, and a cracker. In those

days there was straw matting on the floor; the dresser was golden quarter-sawed oak; the bed was white iron with brass knobs on the posts. There was a crippled rocker not good enough to use downstairs. In the big bay window was a cretonne shirt-waist box for starched flounced petticoats and taffeta hair ribbons and sashes. I remember how the smell of apple blossoms filled that room in the springtime.

I'm going home in June. The apple blossoms will be gone, and probably the spiraea and the peonies, but the Dorothy Perkins at the end of the porch will be pink, and Dad's row of rose bushes along the fence will be at their very best. Anyone would know that our yard wasn't landscaped by an expert but Dad and Mother can make anything grow, and as the warm days pass we have roses, iris, sweet peas, nasturtiums, calendulas, cosmos, zinnias, dahlias, gladioli, asters, and marigolds, and finally the snow falls on the hardy chrysanthemums. Beside these there are clematis, the big purple one and the tiny white one, and honeysuckle vines, and a lilac bush, and an old-fashioned shrub, and a snowball bush, and a syringa, and goldenglow, and hardy sweet peas on a trellis. And there are two maple trees and two cherry trees, the apple tree and an elm tree, and a very small peach tree that we grew from a seed. All summer long the house is filled with flowers, the funniest bouquets anyone ever saw. If Mother has a way with flowers in the yard, she loses it when she tries to arrange them for the house. She makes a tight, small, compact bouquet and sticks it in any vase that's empty. We all tease Mother about her bouquets. I can hardly wait until I see her. I want to see her pin up her back hair after I've hugged her until she's all mussed up, and to hear her say, "Well, how've you been? How did school go?" I want to feel Dad patting me and saying, "She's fine, Mom. Look how nice and fat she is," which is Dad's idea of a compliment. Winifred will probably start in with, "Your hat's good looking. How much did it cost?" Helen will want me to teach her the Kinkajon and the Varsity Drag right away. Mildred, the fly-wheel of home machinery, will want to make me a sandwich and a cup of tea. I have questions to ask them and things I want to tell them, too, for letters at best are unsatisfactory. Someone has written me—we gossip about each other—"Helen and Bob K—— seem pretty serious. What do you think about it?"

He's a Catholic, you know." I want to know how radical a Catholic Bob is. There's really no reason why Helen should give up her religion any more than he should; which, after all, is a typical family attitude, I suppose. I want to see Jenny June, Gladys's little girl. Every letter has said she wasn't very well. I want to offer my advice and to smock some dresses for her. (The smocking will be more appreciated than the advice.) I have some new recipes for Mother: a foxy pineapple and shrimp salad for her club, and city chicken made of veal and pork, for an easy company dinner. I want to see Mother's new dining room, which she has painted white, and Winifred's new curtains. I want to talk baby talk to the canary, but most of all, I want to hear the old family joke when we're dressing for church on Sunday morning: "Shall we go in a body, or shall we string the procession out?"

SECTION FIVE: CONNOTATIONS

1

BLACK

Black: the dead locust limb that scrapes my bedroom window; crows, hundreds of them, perched like clothespins in the branches of a bare tree; the crooked lines of tar that fill the cracks on a concrete highway; the tip of Buddy's nose when it is wet; seven black swans, floating on a leaf-flecked pond; twisted Italian tobies in a yellow box; leeches squirming in a white earthen jar; burned gunpowder from my shotgun on the flannel cleaning rag; the lacquered Eaglerock biplane at Rogers Field; tiny cloves stuck in a baked Virginia ham; licorice, in elastic sticks and lozenges and squares; cloud shadows on fields of ripening grain.

2

CAPITAL GOODS

Capital Goods: The tensed face of a riveter, a mask as it stutters under the blows of his air-hammer; a Bessemer converter throwing focused stabs of light into a black sky; an

abandoned spur-line pushing through a jungle-swamp of cat-tails; a starling quick with cold, pecking at a snowy piece of suet in the railroad yards; the grinding, pitching buck of the cab of a dinky engine over a half-closed switch; the vertical rows of red lights marching up the casualty board in a steel mill; stunted, dust-layered flowers in a concrete bed by the cement factory; the black line of an oar boat on the horizon, with a lean, inverted pyramid of smoke set against the robin's egg April sky.

3

WASHDAY

Washday: white sheets flapping in the morning wind; line stretched taut and creaking with each shift of grayed props; broad footprints in the damp grass beside the garage; a clothespin lying half-hidden in the pansy bed; from the cellar, the steady hum and click of the washer; smells of gas and soap and steam and wet cotton; on the back porch, piles of rough-dried towels, smelling of wind and sun and rinsed-out soap, and spread on a yellowed newspaper.

4

FALL GARDEN

This stuff in my hand is from our fall garden: shriveled stem of dahlia, frost-blackened and evil smelling, with two shapeless leaves and a faded mass of flower; worm-eaten peony leaf, dirty with soot and sickly greenish-brown along the veins; crisp leaf of Swisschard, grassy-green with white veins in spite of the frost; wrinkled, tough-skinned tomato, blotched in green, yellow, red, and brown, with a fibrous stem; shoot of chrysanthemum, its petals old-rose tipped in yellow and brilliant against deep green; tan hydrangea petals the size of my little-finger nail and in a cluster as big as my fist; fall-growth of rose bush, its seven shiny leaves edged in purple and thorns, pink and soft, on an asparagus-like stem; hairy-leaved hollyhock that feels like a rough woolen blanket; deeply-cut mulberry leaf, gray-green and rolled up into a ball, topside inward; frond of fern, which shreds and gives

a spiey odor as I crush it; rotting, fleshy pulp of a water hyacinth oozing a rank juice; and a stick of pink rhubarb, wilted till it flops like a piece of cotton clothesline.

5

BRIDGES

Bridges—. First, the bridges of a pasture creek, where one far-away summer I could drop stones into a green pool; our iron span at Brady Street, as practical as a can-opener but full of power, like a heavy-muscled athlete in the thrust and compactness of its criss-cross girders; a carved six-inch ivory arch with ivory elephants passing over; planks the men used along the head gates above the mill, which we boys used to dare one another about; a covered bridge, faded red, on the pike to Waynesburg; a bridge I have, more than once, dreamed I had to cross—a shaky iron bridge in the moonlight, dark waves of flood-water running over its floor; one in Missouri, whose loose planks rattle at our auto's passing; in Normandy, neat high road bridges of stone, poplar-shaded on July afternoons; an Erie Canal bridge springing so clear that the lazy horse scarcely lowered his head when he pulled the barge beneath; in Arizona, a huge white concrete arch seven hundred feet above white water in the canyon; monkeys holding one another's tails, chattering and clambering along a thick creeper; the bridge on each of my mother's Indian Tree china, a half-round bridge, so moon-shaped the Chinese lady at its end never had a sporting chance of getting over, even to find her Bird of Happiness again; the long railway trestle at the edge of town from which, they told us, a crazy farmer hanged himself; great, magic, New York bridges; Pennsylvania road bridges, wholesome and ordinary; rainbows (which were bridges then); and sometimes, even yet, clouds in the west after sundown.

6

WHITE DRESSES

It's spring, and we'll soon be wearing white dresses again. White dresses remind me of the May Queen Processions: of

little girls in veils, pink legs showing through white silk stockings, green smilax wreaths set on wiry, curled hair; of little girls straightly kneeling, backs aching for something to lean against; of the strong smell of incense, the crisp turning of leaves, and the rustle of heavy silk vestments; of a shaft of dusty sunlight streaking across the top of a pew; of pink roses being set on an altar, their smell too sweet after the potency of incense; of one little girl's walking slowly into church, trying to remember the words to "O Mary My Mother"; of a thorn-pricked finger and the blue and white statue of the Virgin crowned with lilies of the valley and rose buds; of white-robed Dominican nuns, rosaries clinking as they marshal the little girls out onto dusty, cement sidewalks.

7

AFTER RECESS

After recess one drowsy afternoon in October, the teacher had us fold our hands and sit still enough to hear the clock tick. All shuffling of feet, all twisting and whispering stopped; we sat like sphinxes. Through the open window near me, came the scent of burning leaves. A buzz-fly bumped along the window pane. Milkweed seeds went sailing around the quiet room—drifting, circling, floating, and sometimes dropping low enough for me to give a puff and send them whirling up. Now and then I could smell the dusty goldenrod on the teacher's desk and catch the odor of red haws which the girls had, strung around their necks. Not a breeze, not a ripple of wind seemed to stir, yet outside my window the old oak kept rustling. I closed my eyes and listened. I heard the far-away echo and re-echo of a shotgun—then only the sound of the oak leaves and, again, the hum of the buzz-fly.

8

CIGARETTE

The poet said that things have a terrible permanence when people die. Tonight I crushed my cigarette in the ash tray and, while standing there looking at it, suddenly I was reminded of things past. My brother used to put out the ash

of his half-smoked cigarettes in that same way. There was the same flatness near the charred end where he squeezed it as he ground out the hot ashes; the same frayed end with tasseled tobacco and torn paper; the same little angle where the end was bent by the last push on the tray. For a week after, while part of him lay in the room downstairs, I found from time to time and in all sorts of places those little relics of him. Each had this poignant touch of personality which I tonight by accident have given my cigarette, distorted there on the ash tray.

9

DOCTOR'S HANDS

The Doc used to do interesting little things with his hands. Sometimes they were pink, chubby centers of seriousness. His head would bend over his desk and his fingers would drum, all four tips striking evenly. Then they would stop and press hard against the mahogany till white showed in the redness of his nails. When he was thinking he would rub his chin with the palm of his hand, and pinch the flesh of his neck into wrinkled pouches. It was never until he was really worried that he scratched at the back of his neck and with a playful finger tapped at the little bald spot on the back of his head. Then his hand would drop sharply, brushing away his coat to get at a side pocket where it could jingle coins and keys. Only when he was free from the cares of emergency operations and rheumatism diagnoses did his hands find their full expression. His pen lost itself in the immenseness of his fingers as he wrote to friends. He never wrote to business colleagues. He would listen to the radio, his fingers beating on the table in disorganized rhythm, his wrist jerking nervously with each ripple of saxaphones, with each staccato of drums. He would talk at times and his hands would measure to show sizes of steering-wheels, of books, and of three-months-old babies. When he smoked he used his little finger to point at things. It is really strange when a doctor's hands do anything besides making incisions and thumping at people's chests.

FACTORY

For Steve, life at the factory centered about a great many little things: threads of silk from the linings that stuck to his torn working pants and made bunchy designs in blue and white and red; tossing coins with Louie, when the boss wasn't looking, to see who would buy orange juice that day; running out to the men's room to get a drag off Feko's cigarette before he threw it away; the almost pleasant feeling of sweat under his arms; the new girl who still talked about high school; rainy days when the lights had to be turned on and big shadows rocked against the brick wall; the softball they played by the railroad tracks at lunchtime till the authorities sent a policeman over; wintry days when fingers were too frozen to bend for their work; telling Louie that he wouldn't show up for work Monday because he would be in Pittsburgh getting ready to register for the university and being laughed at by Louie and having his hair mussed. That was a life in itself and had nothing to do with nights that were spent up on Clella's porch; with evenings in hot classrooms in Junior College; or with letters that came every once in a while from Mike and Frenchie and from his mother.

RETURN

Celia sat on the rug, taking dresses out of the suitcase. Her room was just as she had left it. Sunlight was hot and bright through her window. She wondered whether she had been away, whether the weeks in New York were real. She got up and hung the dresses in the closet. Then she opened the window wide and leaned out. The garden was not quite the same. The white August lilies were in full bloom and the pumpkins had grown bigger and more golden. There was a fading green pile of cut grass in the nearest fence corner. Celia took a long breath and caught the fragrance of drying grass and of grape jelly from the next-door neighbor's kitchen windows. She turned back to the room. She took the amber-

backed comb, the hairbrush, and the hand-mirror from the suitcase and set them straight in their old place on the right half of the dresser. She started back toward the suitcase, stopped at the bed, stood still a minute, then lay down across the bed, stretching her arms over her head as far as they would go. The bedspread was pink and crisp and clean-smelling. She shut her eyes; sunlight came through the lids.

SEASONS

December:

The trees so small without their leaves; the sky so large, and the black sparrows larger on the empty ground. The quiet so long before each storm, and the snow, large white flakes, falling on the black cathedral.

July:

The sun blazing on the white courts; trees heavy and white with dust; a girl in a white dress, carrying the sun on her gleaming black shoes. In the park fountain, a small wet boy slides off the turtle's back.

May:

Small green leaves; small blue flowers; smells faint and sweet; thin clouds scurrying across the pale sky; boys out on the field, running the length and back again. Down on Panther lake, a bird skims along the shore, dipping its breast, and, then, shaking it.

October:

Crowds nudging up the hill; chrysanthemums and striped blankets; smoke wandering, climbing round and round from the piles of leaves; leaves parachuting down. I hear a bird, shrill and clear for a moment, and then the sound is gone.

POET'S CALENDAR

If your farmer is a poet, all the year will be a texture of

beauty. The rooster calls up the sun each day. A bluebird lights on the pasture rail and is gone before one can believe that such blueness exists. Late fall flies sing Sunday hymns. Milk pings into pails. A dog barks commands and entreats as he drives cattle to pasture. A V of mallards honk their call of spring. Guinea hens drift through the woods in the dark. Crows embroider pillows of snow. Cups and saucers are scattered under each oak late in the year. Roots, the sinews of trees, tighten to the ground along a ledge's lip. Mayflowers open. The crooked-up finger of a bean breaks the ground with urgent color. Beauty is powdered on the plums. Burnished pods shine with dark color. Horizons move as shadows lengthen at day's end. The hills close in and one can see, on the ridges, the great twisted oaks gaunt against the stars. Evening light glistens on sheep's backs. Moonlight halos the buds upon a branch. A gold moon edges the willow tree. One bright thing follows another, and the year stretches out as fine as Alençon lace.

SECTION SIX: PARAGRAPH METHODS
PARTICULARS

1

HAY RANCH

Out on the big hay ranch in New Mexico, we boys could always tell the approach of noon. A sense of mid-day would almost be forced upon us by the changing impressions of the natural objects. Up past Taos and the shoulder of Old Baldy, the first clouds of the afternoon, gleaming white in the reflected sunshine, would come rolling in toward the valley, accompanied by a faint warning of distant thunder. The morning breeze would suddenly die out, and the line of the distant mesas would become indistinct as the shimmering heat waves blurred their natural outline into a purple haze of light. The smoke of the coke ovens at Dawson, twenty-five miles away, would spread in a thin gray haze along the ranges of the Sangre de Christo. Up at Toril a switch engine whistled as it sorted out its daily assignment of stock

cars. Nearby, a herd of sheep, pasturing on the upper hillside all morning, formed a great gray patch upon the brown prairies as it rested in the sun. Mosquitoes forced by the heat took shelter in the short hay stubble. Blackbirds, after an ample breakfast of ladybugs and weevils, settled along the barbed wire fence. Everything was quiet except for the rustle of the mountain hay as we threw it into the shocks. It is natural that the native Mexicans should call it the "Siesta hour." Almost without a word or question as we finished the windrow, we stuck the forks, picked up the warm half-emptied canvas water bag, and started for the coolness of the ranch house and dinner. It was noon.

2

WINTER COLORS

Snow-splotted woods and fields when the sun shines on them are full of color. Shadows that fall dark on dead leaves and grass grow faintly purple on the snow. Thick green moss hides the base of a jagged black stump, and pale lichens cover grey tree trunks with a delicate tracery of silvery green and blue. In a sunny opening free from snow, fresh mullein leaves grow around withered stalks. The white trunk of the sycamore is mottled with green as pale as the mullein leaves, and with the mauve and grey of shadows. Willows by the river catch the sunlight on their burnished branches, and red buds and twigs of brush left by woodcutters gleam as brightly as the bitter-sweet berries in the thicket near by. Frayed yellow bark hangs from the birches growing at the bend of the wood road. Faint violet tinges the frozen river, deepens over the snowy fields to a shimmering film of purple, and gradually fades above the distant hills into the gray haze of the horizon. Beyond the river, over the white field, a vivid streak of red marks the flight of a cardinal.

3

SHADOWS

From the time they come in the morning till they fade in

the late evening, shadows are changing. Morning shadows are long and sharp. They don't *grow* long as they do in the evening, but with the first light of the sun they are there, suddenly and completely. These shadows are parallel, all of them pointing to the west, like grass under a wind. In the morning the row of five tall birches makes one long shadow. The smoke rising from the chimney makes a thin, nervous shadow that seems not to be on the ground but a little above it. The stabs of light that come through the cracks in the barn cut off the darkness into big shadows. Through the curtains of the window the sun prints a regular shadow of polka-dots on the scrubbed floor. Morning shadows make the newly plowed field a miniature mountain range. Between furrows are deep shadows and the sun picks out each small hill and makes it a bumpy range. There are the shadows near the small run, deep and cool, and damp. One bit of light through the leaves puts a halo over the sparkling water. In the afternoon the shadow of each thing grows shorter and sometimes fades. The trees with shadows bunched around their trunks remind me of old ladies holding up their skirts. The chickens, who have been pecking with their shadows always in front of them, now stand squarely on top of them. The five trees cast five short, blunt shadows. Afternoon shadows of clouds crawl across the field, and climb the small hill, and fall on the other side. Sometimes the clouds give one big shadow that the sun streaks through like a big spotlight. This light as it moves passes between a row of trees, just touching the branches of both rows; it jumps over two fields, one light with yellow wheat, one dark with purple clover; it goes across the stream, flashing for a moment before it, too, climbs the hill in a path of brighter green that sweeps to the top. A bird rising from the field lets fall a shadow which fades out as the bird circles higher and higher. When the bird sweeps down, the shadow suddenly reappears and streaks toward the bird, and always is there as the bird comes to rest. At evening, shadows are most alive. The freshening wind in the evening makes them nervous and impatient. Slowly they stretch toward the east further and further, but they are not so sharp or black as earlier ones. The fence shadow stretches across the road, and each wire climbs half way up the post on the other side. A dropping leaf starts a shadow far away from it, a shadow which streaks to the leaf and is blotted out by the leaf as it drops to the

ground. The five trees again make one shadow, long and narrow and dull. This shadow fades with the rest; and it is covered by the shadow of the hills; and the hills are covered by a bigger shadow.

SALLY

Everything at the dance seemed unbelievably lovely to Sally; it was all she had dreamed the dance should be. She was proud to be with a cadet; she felt the others were watching her as he followed her through the tables to the edge of the dance floor. Out of the corner of her eye she saw the grey uniform shoulders just behind her. Then they were dancing, and she could feel the bell buttons of his uniform pressing against her as they moved. If she leaned forward a little, she could, she knew, catch the top button of his coat between her teeth. He was humming the dance tune, and as he danced the music seemed to be gliding with them and wrapping them in its rhythm. It drew them with it. The lights were part of the happiness. They were everywhere, startlingly bright; yet in some ways the room was hazy and dreamlike. As they danced past the table, Sally caught the sparkle of her evening bag on the white cloth and the dull green of the ginger ale bottles huddled together. Beyond the table, they were caught by the orange searchlight that covered the orchestra and gilded their faces in a way that made her think of smiling jack o' lanterns. From the red and green and blue bulbs by the door, rainbow pinwheels circled on the waxed floor, and on the ceiling the cut glass pendants of the chandelier scattered shadows that were flying around and around endlessly, like hundreds of birds. Some of the magic was caught, too, in the rhythm of the dancers. One young girl in the arms of a tall boy danced past, her straight white satin dress swirling, her long crystal ear-rings catching the orange light. She noticed the girl's hands. One lay white and cool against the black of her partner's coat and only the tip of the fingers of the other hand showed as they were clasped in the blunt hands of the boy. Then the girl was lost in the crowd. Sally danced on. The world was lovely and beautiful.

SWEETPEAS

Very good
has resonance

There is a delicacy about the sweetpeas which makes them more attractive to me than any other flower in my garden. Notice the way the blossom is joined to the stem. It is merely poised there, the curved petal set on with such nice balance that at the least puff of air the flower sways on its long green stalk with the rhythm of the wind. And, too, their delicacy of color is beyond most flowers. Really, the only thing I can think of to compare them with is the clouds at sunrise. If you have noticed, the colors then are fresh and vivid from the light behind the clouds, though a faint mist makes them more elusive than the color of broad day. In the sweetpea the same airy translucent color is repeated—the wan white, the sober purple blending into lavender, the rose in infinite variety. And there are other things, besides—the dewy freshness that clings to it all day, the coolness of it, the faint perfume—which makes me think it different from the rest of the flowers in my garden, and sets it apart from all of them in delicacy.

UNDER THE BRIDGE

It is always cool and fresh under the old stone bridge. The bridge, with its moss covered keystone, arches the creek below the bend, where the willows come right to the water and birch and honeysuckle hang from the bank. The willows never let the sunlight come under the bridge, and it is there that the long pike lie and stare at the glistening walls and minnows loaf under the black rock that sticks its slippery surface above the water. On hot days, the cool breeze jostles the weeds that line the walls, and in the sand nearer the water, crabs hide under rocks. The sand is damp and loose; water quickly fills a footprint or the hollow where a stone had been. Snails and salamanders are there, and cool, flattish pebbles tinged with green. Dragon flies dart in and out of the heat but do not stay long. Water trickles from the walls that arch above the stream, and drips into the lazy current with sudden, metallic

plops. And, sometimes, a floating leaf will whirl in the eddy near the black rock before it sails out into the sunlight.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

1

JEFF AND THE SHOE

While I have been sitting at my desk, Jeff has been in the living-room playing with the Shoe. The Shoe is Jeff's own. Originally, it was a thin strapped black kid slipper of mother's, but one day Jeff discovered it in her bedroom while exploring the darkness of the clothes closet and promptly claimed it by the simple process of chewing off the buckle. He came down the stairs backwards that day, dragging the Shoe after him and letting it clump from step to step; if he had come down the other way, he would have been tripped up and thrown by the Shoe's bulk and his own puppy awkwardness. Now, as I watch him, he is trying to coax dad, who is hiding behind the editorial page of the *Sunday Times*, to take the Shoe and play with him. He holds the shredded strap between his teeth, and, as dad seizes the toe of the Shoe, Jeff stiffens his stumpy front legs and tugs. Little growls come with his breathing, his shaggy ears flop loosely with every shake of his head, and great ridges grow in the carpet before him. Then, suddenly, Jeff has lost his hold on the Shoe and it dangles beyond his reach. His frantic leaps fall short, and his jaws click shut on nothing. Finally dad relents; and once more the Shoe is in Jeff's care, for him to lick and chew and inspect all over again as if he had never seen it before. "Go lie down, Jeff. I'm through playing with you," warns dad as he pats the paper into place and tries to look determined. But one is never through playing with Jeff, and dad knows it. So I have to lure him into the cellar by means of a scrap of bacon and a line of ballyhoo, which he does not understand but recognizes from its tone as promising more bacon and probably a glorious five minutes rough-and-tumble. After I have returned to my desk, I hear a series of

sharp smacking sounds from below, and I know Jeff is playing with the Shoe again, running and striking the scarred Cuban heel against the concrete floor with each bob of his head.

2

CATERPILLAR

I had jumped with a parachute before, but I was uneasy as I stuck my head over the cowling of the old biplane and signaled the pilot to cut his engine. The roar died and the wires screamed in the wind. I grasped a strap and pulled myself out onto the left wing. The propeller cut a silver disk in the sunlight and its slip stream pushed my goggles against my forehead while thousands of tiny fingers tugged at my white coveralls. Fifty pounds of silk and web canvas harness strapped to my back became a hundred. The nose of the plane was pointed west into the wind, and behind us, through a haze of cloud, I could see the airport. Concrete runways were crisscrosses of thread over a patch of grey-green and the galvanized tin hanger was just a splash of reflected sun. Trees clustered below in dark green waves and cars were mere dots shifting on a maze of ribbon. The wing began to dip under my weight. Frantically, the pilot threw his arms over his head. Stalling speed! I remembered the direction my instructor had given me: "Grab the ring!" My right arm was already frozen to it across my chest. "Hold your breath!" I gulped and nodded to the pilot. Flat on my back, into nothing, I was falling. Then, for the moment, I seemed poised in space, watching the left rudder kick the stabilizer away from me. "Count ten!" Light and dark flashed as the cloud fogged my goggles. Head first now, I was falling faster. Wind screamed again in my ears. Trees were adding inches, then feet to their height and breadth. They blurred. All my muscles were turning to stone. "Pull!" My head snapped back, hard, and the straps bit deep into my thighs and shoulders. Then I was swinging there under a big puff of zig-zagged silk: swinging and laughing at myself because my shaking hand still clutched the rip cord, swinging and laughing because it was good to see that big puff of silk opened safely above me.

3

JEANNE

Jeanne's wedding was yesterday. Our family had been talking about it for weeks, planning its details and fixing up the house, but, somehow, that she was leaving us for good never struck me until I saw her walking down the stairs, her hand on my father's arm. She looked beautiful then, and almost holy, her face flushed and her eyes bright. Dad was solemn, very serious in his black suit. Jean and him, together, one so young and expectant, the other so wise and sad, I shall always remember. For he was sad, and, suddenly, so was I. I remembered nights she and I went down to the kitchen to have secret cups of coffee. Those nights were fun; we would laugh and talk about school or a party or some other unimportant thing. Once in a while we were serious. She would talk earnestly, her forehead knitted and her eyes dark. I remembered the silly little arguments we used to have, and her telling me afterward she was sorry she lost her temper. I remembered the way she walked. It was curiously her own, her head back and her shoulders squared, and her eyes straight ahead. She looked a person right in the eye, with no faltering or evasion. I remembered that she would sit up half the night coughing, her body hunched in the bed, her face white, but smiling. She had had asthma since she was a baby, and when a coughing spell hit her, it left her breathless and weak. I remembered the first dance she went to. She had a new dress for it and she came into the living room to us. She was going to a dance! I remembered all this and much more of her life and mine as she came down the stairs. I knew I should miss her but, in a way, I was glad. She was entirely happy. She was starting on a new way, and I hoped she would have all the luck and success that there was ever to be had.

4

THE IRONIE

I have never told anyone about the ironie; but in ten years

I have not forgotten. The marbles lay scattered on the rug where Gay had left them when he went to read the funnies. They were yellow and red and green and blue like my marbles in the flannel bag at home. In the middle of them was a big ironie. I had been looking at it ever since Gay had got the marbles from the cupboard. Marion had one her brother had brought her from Pittsburgh and she had beaten me with it Friday after school. Gay's ironie, I thought, was even bigger than Marion's. It was hard and heavy, and it had flicked the commies away when Gay snapped it. I picked it up. At first, it was cool, but it grew warm and moist in the palm of my hand. When I held my hand out, it rolled from my slanted fingers and slid along the edge of the register. I picked it up and dropped it again. It fell on the carpet and rolled under Gay's feet, scattering the commies; and Gay did not notice. I sat on Uncle John's foot stool and I held the ironie in the folds of my skirt. Then Dad called that we should go. The ironie was in my hand. I got my coat from the hall. I stood behind the door and jammed my fist into my sleeve and slipped the ironie inside my glove. I got into the back seat of the car, alone. Mother and Dad were in front. When Gay and Uncle John came out to see us off, I blew my breath against the other window and made bunny faces in the steam. The ironie was a lump under my glove. It pulled the cloth into wrinkles on the back of my hand.

NEGATIVE DETAILS

1

I CHOOSE SANFORD

I should like to spend my vacation in Sanford, a little town in Ontario. Sanford, though, has nothing that even hints of vacations. It has no seashore and even a swimming pool is hard to find. Few persons in Sanford have heard of World's Fairs or Expositions. A country fair with fat cows and overgrown squash gives them the excitement and news they need for months. Sanford is not at all a country town,

either. It has a three-story hotel and a business section, white restaurants and red drug stores, a community center, and even a circuit court of His Majesty in City Hall. City Hall is really a park. There are trees and spouting Venuses and well-kept lawns. Transportation is not easy for an out-of-towner. Two or three taxicabs, no street cars, a few horses and autos, and many bicycles poke along the streets. Sons, fathers, and grandfathers still pedal to work and school. Sanford is not quaint. The people speak English perfectly, English without a slurred vowel or a clipped ending. The streets are paved, wide, and always clean. The houses are modern but never modernistic. I cannot remember ever having seen a curio shop or places for tourists. There is something foreign, though, about the street lights. They overhang the street on scrolled arms and are like fairy lanterns at night. They seem French to me. That is a happy thought; still, French street lights certainly do not count much in a vacation. No, I should like to be in Sanford this summer because Sanford is the place anyone, even a poet, might have harmonious thoughts about happy things.

2

JOHN

She looked at John sitting across the room and wondered why he was so different from other people. She had known him for nearly two years now, yet she felt sometimes as though he were a stranger. It wasn't that they didn't get on together. They had been good friends since that first night when they had washed the dinner dishes together and he had told her about his family after saying abruptly, "You look like you'd be interested." She remembered that after he had gone that night, she had told her mother that he was "nice, but queer." Everyone thought him queer. The kids in the neighborhood had stared when he went down the street munching a piece of stuffed celery, and Mother had thought it odd when he went around the living room, looked carefully at the pictures, and said that they were "all right" the first time that he came to visit. He was queer; but it wasn't just being

queer that made him unusual. Part of it was the way he seemed at times to be listening to something which no one else could hear. He looked like that now, she thought, with his head turned a little to one side and his eyes shadowed. There was an aloofness about him. Yet sometimes he was very gay. She thought of the lunches that John and Jane and she had had last summer, when they ate Welsh rarebit and lingered over their coffee, talking and laughing. He could be more fun than anyone else she knew. The difference in him, she thought, was something intangible. It was in the way he bent his head when he lit a cigarette, in the way he walked, and in the absent-minded way he missed trains and took the wrong street-car. She watched him as he went out into the kitchen. When he had gone she thought of what Jane had said of him: "When he's gone, you're never sure that he's been here." As she went across the room and poked a stick into the fire, she thought that that was what made him different.

THE YELLOW HAT

A funny thing about a yellow hat of mine is that I always have a good time when I wear it. Still my wearing it last Saturday was no real cause for my having a grand time with Mother marketing. There were other yellow hats in Broskie's market, which is run by a fierce little Jew, all of them newer than mine. Mine, furthermore, had a smear of lipstick across the crown—a trademark of a golf-playing brother who is apt to use hats as a gag if you talk when he's at the top of his swing. And, too, because of the smear, Mother kept ignoring me in a friendly way, whenever we bumped into any of her friends. Even when I deserve it, I dislike being ignored, and so it couldn't have been the hat that made me feel strong, a power to myself almost, and as if some marvelous thing might happen before I went to bed. It might have been the cheese. Cheese at Broskie's is cut in slabs. It lies, shining with cold, under a glass cover which all the salesgirls use for a mirror and which the Spanish boy is never done wiping. He is very young, the Spanish cheese boy, and he is afraid of the Boss. Slabbed cheese under glass, he told me that morning as he

rolled up his purple sleeves before starting to slice my order, makes you think of Athens and the buttery sound of water running over milk crocks in the springhouses. Just as I asked him how he knew about springhouses, he caught his finger in the slicer and blood ran red down the knife and hung in glistening circled edges on the cheese I was getting for Father's lunch. I thought he wanted to cry. Because I am afraid of the Boss, too, I bought the cheese anyway; but I think that only made him more miserable. So it couldn't have been the cheese or its clerk that made me wish I went to market every Saturday. Only second to Broskie's cheese counter I like his fruit counter where strawberries fill two stalls with a wild wet scarlet, and where everybody knows what I've come to buy; and I like the way Mother uses her hands when she punches honeydew melons to find out if they are ripe enough for Father. But I'd seen all this before in market without feeling as I did last Saturday: strong and well liked and as if something amazing might happen before I went to bed again. It wasn't the street outside. That is thoroughly a Whiteburg street: cluttered with trucks, with people I know waiting for their mothers and tossing cigarettes and club gossip from roadster to topless roadster. Ordinarily it might easily have been the street; but it couldn't have been last Saturday because, when I went out to the curb, it was to find my car parked with one wheel on the car tracks. Traffic behind a street car was blocked the length of the town. The motorman gestured furiously for me to come aboard and give him my name. Although I paid the dollar fine then and there, he only grunted huffily and failed to be in the least amused by my shoe's falling off when I jumped from the trolley to my running board. It's no fun to eat humble pie for a conductor who is counting the bites or to watch a Spanish boy who is bleeding and is just old enough to be afraid to cry; so it could have been nothing that happened in the market or in the street that had me feeling as I did. I swear I think it must have been what happened afterwards; Mother's coming down the street to find me, in the interested, gracious way she has of moving, and her saying, "Better have your hat cleaned," while she got into the car, and then saying, "Aren't you glad you're you? I am," in a casual way across the steering wheel.

THE CAT-BOAT

The cat-boat turned over with us today and I can't figure out why. It wasn't the wind. A perfect sailing breeze was blowing across the sound. It hit the sail's belly squarely, filling out the canvas to perfection; the little boat scurried along like a leaf across a field. It couldn't have been the waves. They were nothing but ripples stirred up by the western trades. The gentle ground swell only gave the cat-boat more speed. I know that it wasn't the crew. We were all experienced sailors. There wasn't one trick in the sailing log that we didn't know. I can think of only one thing that could have caused the spill, the dog. He must have been playing with the rope dangling from the centerboard pin and pulled it out. That made the keel let go, and over we went.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

1

OLD AND NEW

Old civilization and new civilization, old customs and new progress, have drawn a firm, straight line of difference between themselves in the Southwest. Where the Rio Grande and the snowy peaks of Sangre de Cristo descend together toward the sand plains of Old Mexico, the remains of the Spanish civilization which nearly three hundred years ago swept across this country now mark a sharp antithesis to some dirty mining town. Far down a twisting cañon, a coal town has sprung up. The rock-rimmed mesas stand out high over a group of frame buildings, power houses, and slack-dumps built up around the open mine shaft. The air is filled with noise and dirt and heat. Up from the sloping mine shaft comes a string of cars heaped full of coal; the taut cables slap on the steel trestle-work; the smoking, steaming engines jerk unsteadily on the meshed gears of the windlass. A steady cloud of sticky dust sifts as the tons of coal are poured upon the screens. A double row of coke ovens belch out clouds of black smoke into the hot air; and the breeze coming down

from the peaks catches it, buffets it, whirls it, and draws it out in a long streamer above the plains. Grease and men and odors and mules, electric power wire, steel girders, huge cranes, narrow gauge tracks, cinders, and choking gas, are everywhere in one unclassified jumble. Night and day are no measures of time. As one shift comes from the mine shaft, their faces pale through the smear of black dust, a whistle blares and a second shift descends. That same whistle, as it rings out and up above into the purer air, breaks the silence of a different scene—a Mexican village. A sun-bleached adobe church stands on a small elevation, so that the first and the last rays of the sun may strike its step. In the bright blue-trimmed belfry hangs a bell that was cast in Spain nearly three hundred years ago. The homes are gathered around the old church—little one-storied mud bricks, with projecting timbers of hewn pine that support the roof, deep-set door, and window casings with a string of ripe pimento peppers (to add a touch of red). Queer little outdoor ovens made of mud, hard and shiny in the sun, smoke lazily while the tortillas bake. It is all very quiet, very sleepy, very undisturbed. A herder lies in the sun on the hillside, half-asleep; his dog watches the drifting sheep. Horses, wiry under-sized mustangs, group together; occasionally they flick a tail or nip some pestering fly. Little brown children play in the warm dust of the road. Then as the sun sinks behind the rough-lined horizon, the sheep are driven into the mud-walled corals, the old bell rings in the evening, reddish homelike lights spring up from the windows, and through the night air comes the smell of roasted mutton and cornmeal and hot pimentos. It is the same life that these people lived five hundred years ago in old Castile. In the mine on the other side of the range the second shift is going down in the cage.

2

SHEEP KILLER

The farmers seemed satisfied as they turned home across the frozen field; the hunt after the sheep killer had been successful. There he lay on the ground just as they had shot him, the steam still rising from his sleek body which had been overheated in the chase. Only yesterday, as the sunset was

blazing red over a white world, I had seen him course across a meadow and leap a fence, headed, as I correctly supposed, for a sheep fold on the next farm. Then he had been a perfect specimen of a German sheep dog, long and graceful, with a bounding stride that sent his tawny body quickly out of sight. It seemed as though death could never take him. I felt in a small way honored that I had seen the outlaw off on his last raid. For weeks, Chris Kringle, as he was called in recognized society, had terrorized the country side. Every sheep fold had known a snarl in the dark, a leap, a crunch of bones, and a dying bleat as the ewe or lamb fell before the killer. Now, there in the wet new-fallen snow, lay the raider. His legs were tucked up and his muscles were taut, for he had been shot while clearing a fence. Fresh blood trickled from a hole behind his ear and reddened the trampled snow. His foam-flecked lips were curled back. His white fangs were all the whiter against his black muzzle. Glassy eyes stared between long lashes on which ice particles were already forming. Ears and tail were laid straight out as if caught in the middle of a spring. As I kicked snow over his body, I hated the thought of his going for carrion-crow meat. But, as the farmer said, "These blooded dogs are the worst when they run amuck."

3

TWO ALICES

Alice has taken dancing lessons since she was seven. First she clattered over the dining-room floor in black patent leather slippers, later she bounded up and down the hall in soft gray ballet shoes, and now, at twelve, she is everywhere on tiptoe in stiff pink satin. She was two Alices yesterday. When I got home, she took me by the shoulders (she is proud of being taller than I am), steered me into a chair, and said, "Now you wait here. I shall get my costume and show you my new steps." Alice's hair was curled tight around her head. There was a fluff of powder on her nose. She sat on the arm of my chair and went on talking. "I can do a bourrée. And do not mind, Minnie, when you see those ter-

rible socks over my shoes. I am saving them for the recital." She turned knobs on the radio until she had a waltz out of it and then she skipped out the door. I heard the banister wobble and every stair creak. I stared at the radio. It sat there, never moving but playing very hard. I looked at the piano and twisted my fingers. I did want to play Bach, but Alice would not like it. She never liked the piano, or Bach. Even when she was high on the third floor, listening to the music box in her back room, she could hear me and would call down to me. I folded my hands together and let the radio fill the room. All at once, there was Alice on her toes, scuffing and scuttling over the threshold to the middle of the room. She seemed taller. I had never seen her eyes so dark or her waist so slender. She pinched up her green gossamer skirt with two fingers and curtsied to me. I nodded back to her with a stiffness I did not mean. The radio overflowed in arpeggios. Alice began to dance. She twirled and swayed. She bent with delicacy to her finger-tips. I wondered where the blunt fingers were I had tried to guide among the piano keys. Her feet had never looked small pedaling a bicycle; now they arched high and scarcely touched the rug. She still had weight; the candlestick prisms were jingling on the mantel and the St. Cecilia was askew on the wall. We heard the front door close. Steady footsteps came down the hall. In the doorway Mother stopped and peeled off her gloves. She waited for Alice to finish her curtsey and for me to applaud. She had been looking very closely at Alice and she said, "Alice Ann, you go upstairs this minute and wash your elbows." Alice had both feet on the floor. Her fingers were round and childish again; there were angles on her wrists. Her knees were banged and scratched. "Ah, Mama. Just one more dance for Minnie."

4

"LIKE FATHER . . ."

It must be three years now since Mike and I went to high school. After school, over at the drugstore, our gang used to

sit till it was too late to do anything but go home. Mike would stride between the floor displays with a cigarette hanging from his lips and his hands deep in his pants pockets. He seemed taller walking that way, and his stooped shoulders more stooped. He would run his hand across the overlapping magazines on the news stand and zip the pages of the last one. Then he would walk over to where I was sitting, cock his cigarette eye-high and drop the butt for me to tramp on, and sip enough of my coke to wet his lips. We went to any number of parties together. Most of what happened at them centered around Mike's piano playing: his nicotine-stained thumb hitting sideways on the black keys; his nervous wrists bouncing up and down over the keyboard; his beating out four low notes, then a pause while he stamped time with one foot and picked up the rhythm again, and wagged his head; and his running his thin, fluttering fingers in one quick motion from the deep bass side at the left to the high, tinkly side at the right. Later, at one party, he suddenly remembered that he had not played the piano any that evening. Over in the corner, he spotted an old-fashioned upright. He sat down and played. At first, he played slower and slower until it seemed he could stand it no longer and had to speed up. Then, he played faster and faster until it seemed he could stand it no longer and had to slow down. And it was not until someone coughed that I realized there were other people in the room and that they had been just as hushed by Mike's playing as I had. . . . I saw Mike yesterday. Mike is married to PHEME, and they have a six-months old baby. When I met them, he was pushing the baby's carriage up Forbes Street and she was walking along, her purse in one hand and the other holding his arm. I walked back of them and put my hand on his shoulder. He turned. "Well, look who is here!" he yelled. PHEME smiled while we shook hands. She was pretty, yellow-haired, quiet. The baby sitting in the carriage was blond and his skin was the light, freckled skin of Mike. We walked up the street. I offered Mike a cigarette. He said, "No, thanks. Later." We came to a curb and Mike lifted the front wheels, let them down, then did it

with the back wheels. He looked across PHEME at me and said, "I hold him on my knee when I smoke and he never takes his eyes off that cigarette from the time I light it till it gets down to here." He brought his thumb and forefinger close together, just to the size of the butts he had used to raise eye-high and drop for me to tramp on. We walked and talked about what we used to do in school, and what each of us was doing now. He told me little Raoul made friends with everyone he met. Mike pushed the carriage ahead, let it roll, and caught up with it. We were in front of their house soon. I was sorry that I could not go in. I had to do a project for sociology. We shook hands and PHEME told the baby to say goodbye. Raoul said, "Bah," as I leaned over the carriage and he rubbed the heel of his hand across his nose. For a baby, his fingers were long and thin; piano fingers, I thought.

REPETITION

1

BEAUTY

I've been wondering what beauty is, what John Keats was thinking of when he wrote, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Beauty seems just one of those things that exists only in the mind, and since each mind is different, each conception of beauty is different. It resembles happiness in that different people find it in different things. Grandpa Williard has looked at the sunset every night for fifty years, and I doubt whether he ever saw anything beautiful in the sweep of color; Elinor, the hired girl, dishtowel draped over her thick arm, stands and gapes at the "beautiful sundown." Doctor Lawton beams and waves his hand inclusively when he talks about the digestive system of a frog. He thinks it's beautiful. With a tea cup grip on his fishing rod pointer, Professor Hawk gurgles awkward adjectives and gestures expansively in his effort to make the class see something beautiful in a cold grey stone wall. Mr. White slowly shakes his head and just as slowly repeats something or other about a tourist sleeping all night in a chamber of Peace. That, he says, is phrasing; that is beauty in writing. Granddad explains blueprints to me,

white lines on a blue background, which have absolutely no meaning for me, and wonders why I look dull and nod to indicate that I know what he's talking about. It's beauty to him, those white lines on blue paper. I wonder what it is that makes the beautiful beautiful. What is it about the sunset that makes it beautiful? Is it the blending of the colors, the change from gold to orange and rose? Is it the promise of the coolness of the evening and the restfulness of the night? Is it the things that sunsets remind one of? I am not sure that it is any one of these things. The same colors that one sees in the sky at sundown aren't beautiful on billboards or barns. And it seems very unlikely that a change in temperature would make a thing beautiful. So I come back to the idea I had when I started to define beauty: beauty is what anybody chooses. One day Tuggles took me out on a long dusty road. He had something to show me, so he said. We stopped at a field full of weeds. By a rotted rail fence, an old stone chimney rose like a gravemarker out of the foundation of the burned farmhouse. The smell of rotted wood was strong; the blackberry bushes were scratchy; a green snake slithered away through the grass; red ants upon whose home we were sitting explored my back. I didn't like the place. We leaned on a fence, Tuggles and I, and I was beginning to wonder why he brought me out there when he asked me, "Isn't it beautiful? This is where I was born." I've long since given up trying to understand what beauty it.

2

HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE

He didn't exactly like the way his family treated him. They didn't respect his dignity; that was it. Here he was a sophomore in high school and all of them treated him like a child. When he went out to skate with the boys, his grandmother called after him not to get his feet wet. That wasn't right. His brother laughed when he got dressed up and went to call on Madge. His sister ruffled up his hair when he stood in front of the hall mirror straightening his tie. Of course his mother was all right, but he wished she wouldn't call him Buggins in front of the boys. At Allegheny he was somebody. He was captain of the track team, associate editor of the

Towers, and student demonstrator in chemistry lab. Professor Fisher talked to him "as one sensible man to another." Once on class night the president of the out-going senior class had referred to him in the farewell speech as the sophomore most likely to succeed, most likely to do something for "our high school." Why, even the little negro who sold papers in front of Boggs and Buhl's called him "mister." Of course, he didn't want his family to be as formal as that. It would be silly for them to address him as "mister" when they called his father "J. P." He really didn't want the automobile every evening in the week; his allowance was more than most boys had: two dollars every Monday morning without fail. And he didn't mind sharing a room with his brother except that Daniel wore his ties. To be sure the family never interrupted him when he read proof on the *Towers* and they didn't haggle all the time about grades, comparing his report card with Myrtle's. But he did think they should consider him more in the matter of where they should all go on their vacation, or what people they should invite to Thanksgiving dinner. Now, take that about his shaving this evening. They all thought it was so funny. His mother laughed when she saw him using Daniel's razor, then she almost cried and she had said aloud, "My little Buggins isn't a baby any longer." That was just foolish. Most of the time at the dinner table they had talked about shaving. And his mother must have told his father, for "J. P." made some remark about straight razors' being better than safeties; but it took a man to use them. They didn't come right out about anything, but he knew what they meant. He wasn't silly enough to consider running away or anything like that; but he had made up his mind to do something about it. He'd start on his mother because she was the most sympathetic.

SECTION SEVEN: ORGANIC AND COMPOSITE PARAGRAPHS

1

PEACE AND THE SPRING

The newspapers carried heavy headlines tonight: Hitler's speech, disarmament conferences, threatening war clouds, treaties. The radios blared with exciting news today: the

mayoralty campaign, riots in Wisconsin, vice-rackets in the city, mass meetings. But this evening our neighborhood is celebrating peace and the spring. I've been sitting here on the back steps for an hour, watching Mr. Helm build a crude fence of wooden slats around his garden in the yard next door. The fence is to keep his baby, Mary Alice, from digging up the pansies and lady slippers and little rubber plants with her trowel and to keep Sonny Helm from racing his scooter over the cosmos bed. Whimpers come from Sonny, who is sitting on a stool in the yard, sucking the two fingers he bruised trying to make an airplane out of wood left over from the fence. Up in Rosenbaum's lot, the *Alley Rangers* are having a mushball game. I can hear the laughs from Mary Ellen and Virginia, the cheering section. Bob Boucek must be up at bat now, for I hear him shouting, "Come on! Put a fast one over!" Over in Uncle Raymond's yard, George and Junior are playing *Tarzan*. They have looped our clothes line over the iron bar that in summer supports the swing. I hope that Grandma will not come to the window while *Tarzan*, in his best school corduroy pants, is swinging high across the fence on the rope to catch the *Ape Man*. Mrs. Holstein has plumped herself in a rocking chair on the curb of the alley and is yelling her usual warning to Buddy Ernest: "Break them new shoots off my rose bush, and I'll have the police!" "The moths are terrible this time of year," she shouts to Mrs. Light-hill who has come to the doorway to shake out the table cloth. "And my man won't get those screen doors painted." Our family stayed outside in the yard the earlier part of the evening. Daddy counted the new buds on the locust bush, Mother picked the dead leaves off her begonia plant, and Grandma made a line with the clothespole to separate the dahlia garden from the row of sweet williams. Uncle Raymond and I sat on the doorstep, watching Sandy and Scotty, the terriers next door, play with an old mop. The world is buzzing with tension tonight, but in our neighborhood there is peace and the spring. For leagues and pacts and Nazis are things to read about, to shake one's head over and then, like the newspaper itself, to fold, put away, and forget.

GRAMP

At seven, I had Gramp as my friend. Sometimes you needed friends badly when you were seven, especially when your room grew dark and the clothes on your cupboard door were ghosts. Then Gramp was near, and, when I called, he would pad into my room on bare feet, his underwear showing below his nightgown, and hold the door open enough to put the hall light on the clothes, and I could see that they really were clothes and not any ghost with ulterior motives. When I cried he would put his wide hand on my cheek, and the hot tears cooled, and the skin felt itchy and tight where they had dried . . . Gramp's room was always hazy with smoke. It would sting in my eyes and my nose would hurt when I went there. Gramp had a most wonderful Morris chair, with a button in the arm you could push and the back would adjust itself, a little jerkily perhaps but with a luxurious elegance that made you overlook jerkiness. There was, too, a brass bed with a red quilt. On special cleaning days I took my nap in that bed. Theoretically I slept. Really, I spent most of the afternoon tracing the intricate pattern of the quilt with my finger, my tongue at one side of my cheek . . . Saturday mornings we went to Wilkinsburg to the cigar store. The store held a kind of heavy sweetness. The smell was like the smell from the thin wooden box Gramp gave me to keep my shells in. The cigar man had beautiful boxes, with Egyptian ladies on them and raised gilt letters. He had a gas lighter. It stayed lit all the time in a polished brass cup. Going home I wore the band from the cigar Gramp started on his way out. I would stretch my little finger, and admire the red and gold, and when we were almost home I would slide the band up to the knuckle and bend my finger until the band snapped apart . . . We read together, out of the same book, and when Gramp reached to turn the page, I would smooth the back of his hand and pull the loose skin so that it stood in little ridges. He made a fist and they disappeared . . . Sometimes Gramp went to Harrisburg or to see a Steelton cousin. The house would be empty. Then I would go with Dad to meet him. I would watch for his big stooped body to show at the end door of

the train. Before he was off the bottom step, I was hanging around his neck, my face on the stubble of his cheek. He would walk through the station in great strides, me beside him, half running. Each time he brought something. While he was gone Mother would say that I mustn't expect a present because Gramp really didn't have much money, and I would pretend a present didn't matter, but somehow I was by him when he opened his suitcase and always there was the present. I still have the last he brought, an *Alice in Wonderland*, with coarse paper and bad print and an elaborate imitation leather cover tooled in gilt . . . In his last illness, they took him to the hospital almost at once; and they say that just before he died he heard a nurse in the hall outside his door, and he said, "That is Merny coming!" He looked to the door, and waited.

3

MEDIAEVAL MANUSCRIPT

There is a charm about a mediaeval manuscript which a printed book can never have. Books that come by the thousands from power-presses have a sleek machine-made air. Of old manuscripts, however, no two are alike. The lambskin pages have been cut by hand; their beauty lies in their slight imperfectness. The lettering shows the painstaking concentration of individual effort and accomplishment. The precise initial letters—red, gold, blue, and black—are often exquisitely done; but the slip of the old scribe's pen, which placed a wavering line where it should not have been and changed the design, suddenly reveals to us the reality of that mediaeval monk. I remember one manuscript in particular. The first paragraph began bravely: the letters were perfectly shaded and spaced; the lines marched down the page with mathematical exactness. But after about three pages the letters seemed to have become tired: they lost their uprightness and slumped together, crowding and pushing in wobbly lines. Then came an obvious change. The lines again were orderly and perfect in detail, but the penmanship was not quite the same. The first writer had not been permitted to continue his work. Some other person had written the rest; and succeeding pages showed this same firm, sure lettering.

But, again, on the last two pages appeared the hand of the first writer. I think that he must have insisted upon finishing the book which he had started, and that the other writer must have consented, perhaps against his better judgment. In looking over this manuscript, any one would feel the personality of these two monks: one firm, decided, skilled; the other, eager and willing in spirit but weak in the actual doing. I cannot decipher either this fourteenth century manuscript or any other of mediaeval times, but I do like to hold them in my hands; to try to understand a word here and there; and, most of all, to weave, in my own fancy, the history of those curious and interesting persons who wrote so many hundreds of years ago.

4

CALIFORNIA BEACH

Of all the places for summer dreams the best is a California beach. There the blended sights and sounds form a quiet setting for fanciful thoughts. The old Pacific rolls in its oily swells with only a rippling murmur; the droning roar of the surf a half-mile down the shoreline rises from the tug of the waves on tons of pebbles; the white hull of a launch is dipping, dipping far out on the water, its regular exhausts sounding faint and thin. These sights and sounds are dreamy and far off; under the mood of them the quiet mind builds sweet, lazy air castles, to be forgotten and renewed.

5

TITANIA JANE

Titania Jane is six and she is making garden this morning. She is setting out a row of small, wilted plants. Pansies, perhaps, although one can never be sure; Titania Jane's garden is strictly her own affair. She is wearing her green smock and a green straw hat with a floppy brim. It is warm. She has taken off her gloves. She is wearing rubbers, shiny rubbers. She digs carefully, for fear of worms; Titania Jane does not like worms. With one hand, she presses each plant

into its hole; with the other, she pats black mold about the roots. It is an absorbing business. Her face is flushed and moist; a drop of perspiration trembles on her chin; there is a smudge on her forehead; she is not even singing to herself. She has forgotten everything, even her new watering can, beautifully crimson in the sun. Tony, the gardener, would like to help. He is standing near her, pretending to trim his rose bushes. But Titania Jane sees only pansies, acres purple, yellow, and white. And they will be hers, all of them. . . . Later on, of course, when the last flower has been patted into place, Tony will have to pick up the flower pots, the crimson watering can, and the trowel with the green handle. I, myself, will return the green handkerchief. Further than that, we can do nothing. Titania Jane's garden is strictly her own affair. . . .

6

“FRANK'S HOME!”

When I went into the kitchen this morning, I knew that something pleasant had happened. Mrs. Jamison was lighting the fire under the coffee pot. She smiled and said, “Frank's home!”

“Well, for Heaven's sake—,” I said. She held Frank's old plaid bath robe closer to the oven. “He's taking a shower now. He traveled all night.” The door from the hall opened and Frank stuck his head in. His hair was tousled and damp; his nose sunburned. We stood and grinned at each other, and I realized how much I had missed him. He closed the door and padded down the hall to his room. I pulled up a chair beside the stove, munched my toast, and drank my cup of coffee. I wiggled my toes in my slippers and tilted back my chair. Mrs. Jamison brought her sewing and we sat enjoying the warmth, and talking about Frank. “He ate four eggs for breakfast,” she said. Then she laughed. We talked about how well he looked and about the three pounds he had gained. Jane, wearing her blue robe, came into the room. It was fun telling her that Frank was home. She stood there looking surprised and glad. I plugged in the toaster for her toast. We went into the dining room and I had a second cup of coffee while she ate her breakfast. I felt relaxed and comfortable. The day stretched out before me, fresh and new.

MY VERSE

“I have been young and now I am old; but never have I seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread.” I am not old yet, but I believe this verse. I believe it only in the way I understand it: that any one who is simple and kind and has courage and does what he thinks best will never be defeated. I do not mean that he will have plenty of money. Of course good people may be poor, without a dollar in the world. They may not know where their next meal is coming from, and they may be living with unwilling children or in the cold charity of some home for the aged. I am sure my verse does not promise a regular income as the reward of virtue or mean that being good is a sort of insurance against want. Poverty may come to anyone, but poverty is not the worst that can happen—bad as poverty is; and it is against those worst things that my verse gives comfort. I had a great uncle, my grandmother's eldest brother, who lived with us when I was in high school. He is dead now. He had been a river pilot on the Ohio, and one of the earliest things I remember is taking a trip with him and mother on the *Silas Wright* to Louisville. He was a big gaunt very strong man then. He wore a blue uniform coat and on special occasions smoked a meerschaum a foot long, the stem of the pipe all carved with dogs fighting a wild boar. He had got it at a raffle in Cincinnati. He was a great man to me, king in his packet. I think of him as I saw him in his pilot house, holding the wheel with his big-knuckled hands or giving an order quietly through the speaking tube to make the packet do what he wanted. When he grew old, he came, as I have said, to live with us. He must have been eighty then. He hadn't saved much; and he wasn't able to walk well. He didn't care to read, but he would putter about in summer among our rows of vegetables and hardy flowers (we had half an acre about our house on the edge of the village). There wasn't anybody in our house or in our town for him to talk river things to, and anyway he didn't like to talk. I suppose he was not happy, exactly. How could he be? But he had something—a serenity, a power of rising above all the ill-health and isolation and dependency and old age. He had a strength greater than that of anything that could come against him. He does not seem to me

to have been forsaken. I think my verse promises a blessing like that to those who deserve it. My verse may not mean by a righteous man that kind of man Great Uncle Peter was. I do not know about that, and I do not especially care; but I am sure it does mean that qualities of spirit are the strongest things in the world. I believe this now; and so I believe my verse.

8

IN QUIET

Light from the street lamp, beating through the colored glass of St. Basil's Greek Catholic Church, slanted a plum-colored glow over the priest's face, over the uplifted rows of heads before him, and ended in dark shadows under the choir loft. It was the time of evening service. Everything was quiet; the place seemed at peace. Heads turned slowly to watch Anna Kajak walk up the narrow aisle to kiss the feet of the Lord Jesus. On the white pine floor, her wet shoes left muddy marks, heel and toe, like exclamation points. Heads, turning, watched her cross at the front of the church, and go down the aisle by the wall into the shadows at the back. There was almost no movement in the church. Stolid peasant hands, thick-jointed and chapped, lay on black satin laps or turned the leaves of the prayer book. Bright bows on little girls in the front pews ducked from side to side, and then stayed stiff and quiet. The men were seated in tight rows, their heads half-bowed in attitudes of respect and interest. The priest came before the altar. He took up the big gold Bible and held it before him and the little boys and girls stumbled out bashfully and kissed one of the four holy pictures on its raised cover. Then he placed the Bible on the altar. He turned toward the congregation, holding high, now, a small gold cup in which were the wine and the bread. The wine was the blood of Jesus; the bread was His flesh. While the choir was chanting the prayer, the priest ate and drank. Then he put the plate and cup back on the altar. As the priest had been drinking from the cup, the bells in the tower had clanged out even peals, which clashed against the walls and roof and broke into a million dings and dongs, and the choir had sung "Hristos Voskres's" to the pealing of the bells. The priest closed the

door of the tabernacle on the golden cup. The choir finished its chants. The bells stopped. For a moment the quiet was absolute, and in the quiet a sense of peace rounded off the jagged edges of earlier sounds. Then a baby woke and began to cry. The mother nursed it, her eyes wet and gleaming as she watched the priest swing the *cadelnicha* in an arch of smoking incense. He turned slowly, swung the censer toward the mother and child. She crossed herself above the baby.

9

TOMMASO

The new wine cask behind the wrought iron gate was labeled 1572; but for Tommaso, sitting on the stone bench by the fountain, the date was the beginning of life. Spring had gone as quickly as it came that year. From the top of Mount Guiliano the green plains swung down and rolled on to the sea; already the summer grass was tall enough to sway in the evening wind. The heavy leaves of the poplars that had fluttered all day, now, stirred by the winds from the Adriatic, bent in chorus with the branches. An hour earlier, the last shadow had gone from the sun dial; but the twilight was long this summer evening, and clouds, like the billowy angels of Michaelangelo's frescoes, rested, purple and gold, on the hills toward Gornolfo. Tommaso put down his book, drew his cloak about him, and moved the stone bench a little back from the fountain, for, sometimes, the wind dashed a spray in his face and, now that the sun was gone, the air chilled him as the mist dried. He looked at the nymphs in the center of the fountain and smiled; he felt that they smiled, too. Tommaso the logician, Tommaso the skeptic had come back to his father's estate and to the quiet of the Marches with a full soul and an untroubled mind. This evening, he did not search for logical concepts; he did not reason with his ideals. This evening, Tommaso accepted and was calm. For the first time, he saw the shadows of the trees strike across the fountain; he heard the first nightingale call from the cypress; he felt the coolness of the wind; he smelled the roses and green of night-fall. When he rubbed his sandals over the grass, he remembered a barefooted boy's staring at Fra Giovanni, who pointed a long finger to his crucifix and said, "I am that I am;"

Tommaso smiled; that was all so long ago. When the first blue stars fell into the fountain, Tommaso tried to scoop them up with cupped hand. The nymphs whispered. "Tommaso has returned," they said; and "Tommaso has found the stars."

10

AN ANSWER

I have been sitting here at my desk for the better part of an hour putting words down on paper. Before me on the stained green of the blotting paper is a pile of cigarette stubs and a smear of ashes, on the floor a scattered heap of half scribbled pages. The sun, sliding down toward the edge of the mountains in the west, slants through the window and down on my page. It lies in patterns on the jumbled heap of papers and casts a long shadow of pencil and hands across my desk. Through the open window a breeze blows warm and intimate with May. Sounds come up from the valley: the droning hum of a street car, an auto horn, the distant barking of dogs, and an indeterminate pounding from some machine hidden behind trees and the red roofs of the houses. In the yard, birds cheep or call in brief notes, piercingly clear. There's a smell of early peach blossoms, faint and elusive. For the better part of an hour I have been trying to write, and the torn sheets on the floor are my only answer. When I came up from downstairs I was sure that this time I could do it. This time I would write something. It would be beautiful and true; it would be real. It would somehow be an answer to these spring days. There is some quality about these days that demands things from people. When the trees are showing green and the grass is turning, when the far off mountains grow blue and close again after the grey February days, when the moon at night is young and new, one feels the need of expressing something in himself. And to find the expression is not easy. To take a stick and go down over the hill to the river, to lie watching the water slip past under the shadow of the willows, to tramp up and across the foot hills and the stretch of pasture land I can see, to grow tired and hungry outdoors would have served me two years ago. It would still be good, but now spring has gone deeper. Some

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other expression must come out of me; out of this vexing questioning mood of spring must come some certainty, some answer. I have called myself a fool, a sentimentalist, but that has done no good. Spring has crept in upon me, in spite of myself. So I have tried to write. About me on the floor is only a litter of paper. As I write, the sun is setting. Across the sky that has, this afternoon, been a cloudless blue, a few dark drifts of mist are ranging. The patterns of light have gone from my desk; the shadows of the trees in the yard are huge and tall. Soon the moon will rise, and the lights in the valley will flash on one by one. Evening will grow close about the house. Perhaps then, when the darkness has come and the world is shut out, I shall find an answer.

11

"HAWKS WERE BAD"

Hawks were bad: they were fierce birds that killed chickens. As a boy I knew that, for I lived in a country where all the shotguns were loaded and all the fence posts wore scarecrows. Hawks were bad: I had been given a shotgun for my twelfth birthday; grandpa had promised me a dollar for every hawk I killed. I went out to kill one. All the morning I wasted on Paylor's Cliff, where I had seen the great goshawks soaring. I waited until I was tired and ready to go home; then I saw the hawk. He was just a dot over the point of Scrub Ridge when I saw him; he wasn't even as big as the gnats which had been buzzing around my ears. But I knew that he was a hawk, for only a fighting bird could fly so easily and gracefully. He circled once over the Ridge, then dipped and swooped into the valley. He was coming close. He must have seen the bushes move, for just over me he rose and swung screaming. I was surprised. I had never expected him to fly so near; I had hoped only for a long shot across the tree-tops. As he came toward me, I fumbled, aimed a shaking gun—and didn't shoot. "He is gone!" I thought as the hawk slid behind the trees. "He is gone, and I didn't shoot." I thought how they would laugh at me when I came home. "Hunting all morning and didn't get anything?" they would ask, and then laugh. But there over the top of the cliff, the hawk was turning. His wings were almost vertical, his breast was flashing grey; he

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was coming toward me. He was a bird of prey, a bird living by strength of wing and talons. He was a hawk, not a fluttering bird in the bushes; he was a flesh-eater, a brother to the eagle. Other birds might flutter to safety, but he would soar back to fight. Again he screamed, again he swooped over my head, and this time I shot. He rose sharply, his wings crumpled, and then fell, faster and faster until he crashed through the treetops below me. I ran down the hill, leaping over rocks, tearing through the underbrush. I had killed a hawk! But when I got to where he lay, I didn't see the screaming hawk that had soared above me. He was only a heap of broken feathers. His wings looked awkward and heavy. And his eyes, the glaring, fierce, yellow eyes, were spots where the grey dirt stuck. His talons closed on nothing; he was dead. They teased me at home about hunting all morning and coming back empty-handed. They laughed at me, but I didn't tell them that I killed a hawk; and I didn't tell them that I cried because his yellow eyes were filled with grey dirt.

12

MY GREAT-AUNT FLORENCE

My Great-aunt Florence was born in the days when fathers slept with muzzle-loaders at their sides, not because there was any real danger from the Indians, but—well, just to be sure. Aunt Florence was a young lady in '61 when the Home Guard was slapping up and down the Muncie Pike; when the Beaverses and the Downses sat on the west side of the valley and called it the "War of the Rebellion;" when the Veeches and the Streeters spat on the rumps of their skinny Tennessee mules as they plowed up the east side of the valley and called it the "War Between the States;" when young people were "Mister" and "Miss" until after they were engaged. After that it took forty years to make Aunt Florence old; and it is thirty since then; so you might very well call her senile. And in many ways she is. Her walk is not a walk, but a series of steps in which each successive planting and pushing forward seems more an end than a means for getting about. She does get about a little, though. Of a morning her almost round figure, bright in gingham apron and sun-bonnet, sometimes finds its way to the rows of peonies that flank the gravel walk.

Here she does painstaking things with scissors, or drops a half-gloved hand to pull a bit of rag-weed. Afternoons, when the sun creeps along the rag carpet in the dining-room, she is there, sitting and rocking back and forth over a loose board. The sun doesn't seem kind to her then. Its light dulls her hair, sharpens the nose, yellows the lifeless skin, catches every bit of wispy mustache, deepens the cheek-hollows, and accentuates the unconscious rambling of lips and chin. But Aunt Florence doesn't know about these things, or doesn't care, for she claims the sun eases her limbs, and oils her "jints." If you stay to talk a bit, you will become forgetful of her senility, and enjoy her better part, the voice and the eyes. It is too bad that writers have made "twinkle" a trite verb, for it is the only one that can describe her when she talks of things she likes. She will tell you about the Home Guards, if you care to listen, as you used to; or about Jim Junior's organ, which he had wanted so much, and which she kept shiny new, even though he had been dead for fifty years; or about them crazy Downses over to the valley (My lord, she ought to know, oughtn't she? She married one of 'em.). And while she talks, the look of old times is there, the twinkle, if you don't mind, and the wave of her hand which can brush away half a century for you there in the sunlight by the rocker. Or, if you seem to like it more, she will tell you of the summer you fell off the gray mare, and how really funny it was, though she didn't dare laugh, to see your dirty bare feet sticking straight out of the water tank, where you landed, if you remember. She can even remember the day you pulled the tail-feathers out of Uncle Jim's best pullet. And she will tell you about it even in front of your best girl, whom you just happen to fetch along, and who will love you more and will want to go back to see Aunt Florence again, soon, though you won't for a long time figure out just why.

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HIS FATHER'S EMPEROR

The portrait he had painted of his father's emperor was worrying Ben. He was troubled not because the portrait was hanging over the mantelpiece where his Napoleon had hung. He was glad it hung there for his father and all the family to

enjoy. The Napoleon was in his own bedroom, and that was as it should be. He could have it to himself when the parties and dancing were going on downstairs. He liked, too, the knowledge that his father could come in to see Franz Joseph as often as he wanted. The portrait in the living room changed his father from a tailor on Craig Street into an Austrian nobleman entertaining his emperor. His father could go from his shop, where he had been remodeling a lady's suit, into the room where his emperor stood waiting for him. Ben was not worried, either, that the portrait was not well painted. It was painted "with a dash and knowledge," Mr. Collins, his art teacher, said, "remarkable for a fourteen year old boy." Ben knew it was good. He was proud of the bushy, white whiskers that grew out from the cheeks in two triangles. Their broad bases gave the look of durability and aristocracy that rulers should have. The shiny skin of the chin brought out the texture of the mustache that jutted out above it. Everybody admired the medals. They looked as though you could take them off by unpinning them. And that, though Ben didn't tell the family, was the trouble with the picture. The whiskers, the ribbon slashing diagonally across the chest, and the medals, they could all come off. Truth was, in time they would come off. He had thought that by mixing the paint with plenty of linseed oil, and loading it heavily on the canvas, he would get an effect of solidity and reality, the feeling of metal as it touched cloth, or of hair growing out of skin. The effect was there, but he had bought cheap linseed oil and a can of white lead house paint in a hardware store. He had mixed them with the oil paints that were left from Napoleon. Now, little globules were forming. He had found one on a big, bright medal. When he lifted the top off it with a palette knife, the paint underneath was wet. Then he knew that neither his father's emperor, nor his emperor's splendor, was lasting. He knew that under the thin layer of surface paint was the cheap oil that would never dry, that with its bubbles it would destroy the decorations, the white coat, and, at last, the emperor himself, whiskers, chin and all. He hated to tell his father. He himself was worried.

POLISH

Years ago—twelve anyway—I heard of *polish* with a new meaning to it. I was in the grade school then, being taught by nuns. During the summer I worked on the farm. Polish had meant shining my grandfather's high black boots, or silverware for Christmas, or Tom's buggy harness for the Sunday ride to church. Even these meanings, I thought pretty much for one word. That summer Jack Dempsey was training to fight Jess Williard for the heavyweight championship. My dad often went over to see Bert Waldron and talk about the coming fight and drink the old English ale Bert made. On one visit I heard my dad tell Bert he was going to send me to a college when I was older to get polish. As I said, the word puzzled me. I could not connect at all the bright pictures of college students in magazines at home with my work on boots and silverware and buggy harness. Yet the word, vague and strange, stuck with me. For almost a week I thought about it. Evenings, after hoeing corn or spraying the orchard trees, I looked at these bright pictures in the magazine. Soon I began to see it clearly. Polish meant the fine, long pants, the bright smile, and the slick hair in the pictures. Polish meant that you did not work on a farm. When you had polish, you never had to clean the chicken roost, tie up the tails of the roan team in the fall, or shine tomatoes and apples for market day. It was attractive, when you understood it—something worth looking ahead toward and living for. So the summer went on; my opinion of polish grew. In it I saw the fulfilling of my dreams under the buckeye tree by the house. Smooth clean pavements instead of a muddy lane from the barn to the gate; an auto instead of Tom and the slow, black buggy—those were part of it. There was music in it, too, bright lights, and happy and excited people. There were not, any more, the dark fields, the glow of a pipe in a chair by the pump. It was the top in all my hopes. . . . Then, eight years passed, I grew up and went to college—to get polish. Yesterday I was at home, to

tell my dad that I was to be graduated. He shows more years now, but he still remembered what he had said. We sat on the porch for a time. He smoked his pipe. All the while I thought of college, the farm, and this getting polish. I do not know whether I have got any of it; I am not sure I have the right kind. The wonder of hard pavements, lights, tall buildings has changed to the endurance of them. My dreams are not the dreams I had twelve years ago. I want, now, more than anything else, to live a life I once knew well. I want to smell green hay in the morning, rub my shoulders against the bark of the orchard trees, pull long, yellow carrots from the field, wash them at the hydrant, and then eat them. Those long rows of corn, I want to walk through them, with my feet in soft ground, my hands on the smooth handle of the hoe, and the sun hot on my neck. I want to get back to summer nights, black fields smelling of growing things about me, and fireflies hanging over the dahlia bed, and the thought of more sun, more stars, and more summer nights. Yesterday as I sat on the porch with my dad, I did not say a word about polish. I was pretty sure that I could not explain that this wanting to get back was the only polish I knew, could ever get. Perhaps it is just as well I did not try to let him know why I had come full circle. Twelve years is a long time.

