

TERROR

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PART ONE

PART ONE

TERROR

ONE ** TERROR

My ear hurt. The doctor came and stuck a sharp thing in my ear. I yelled. The pillow was all red. It was blood. I cried. It hurt worse the next day. They took me to the hospital. They put me on a white table. The room was white. They all had white dresses and white hats. They didn't see me. They walked around the room. They never looked at me. There was a white light in my face. It hurt my eyes. It made them all look whiter. Then they all came to the table. They looked at me. They didn't smile at all. They didn't say anything. They put a metal thing on my nose. I tried to breathe but something cho^{ke}d me. I held my breath and tried to get away. They pushed the thing in my face hard. They held onto my arms. They held onto my head. They wouldn't let me move. I tried to get away but I couldn't move at all. They held onto my head so hard it hurt. They pushed the thing in my face hard. I was going to ask them please let me go. I was all out of breath. I took one little breath so I could yell. I choked. The room was grey. I was scared. I didn't do anything! They wanted to kill me! Mother said I would just go to sleep. I didn't go to sleep. I thought I died.

I used to have dreams about our basement. Sally and

me had a swing there and lots of toys. We played games there when it was raining outside. Lots of other kids came and played with us. There was a dark place by the furnace. The furnace made a lot of noise. There was a fire inside the furnace. I used to have dreams about just me in the basement. The Devil was in the dark place. He smiled at me. He was very red all over and had a long tail. He had sharp horns on his head. He had sharp claws. I ran away crying but I never got to the door. I always woke up in time. I never liked that dark place even with kids there.

PART ONE

LOVE

Sally and me had lots of fun. We played games all the time. Sometimes we got mad and hit each other. Mother spanked us then and made us sit on chairs. We sat there and laughed. Mother made believe she was mad.

Sally had the best bed. She had a window so you could look outside. We woke up in the morning and then I always got in her bed. We looked out the window and told our dreams. Her dreams were best. She had dreams about Cousin Frank and us in the woods. We met bears and cows and lions. I think Sally made up her dreams. I never had dreams that good. We loved each other a lot. We camped in the woods a lot and then we always slept together. We hugged and kissed. She died a long time ago. I miss her a lot. Mother says Sally is in Heaven. She has lots of fun there. She plays games all the time. I will go to Heaven someday. Sally sure will have lots of dreams to tell me.

We moved away after that. I had a new school. It was a dirty old school. There was poison ivy in the playground. It was in a corner by the fence. I went to the school the first day and two kids asked me who I wanted for president. I said I wanted Hoover and they got mad. They said I better want Roosevelt or they would

push me in the poison ivy. They would have but there was a rich kid in our school. He was a swell guy. They were scared of him. His Father gave him boxing lessons. I stayed by him at recess. He came to see me in the hospital. He brought ice cream. It was very good.

I was in love with a girl in my class. Her name was Anna. She had long curls clear down on her shoulders. She sat in front of me. She liked me at first. She turned around and looked at me sometimes. Then she found out I skipped a grade. I was younger than her. She never looked at me anymore. The class sent me a card in the hospital. They all put their names on the card. She put her name on the card bigger than anybody else. The class said on the card I was going to be King in the Play. Anna was going to be Queen. It was hard to sleep in the hospital sometimes. There were little kids crying all the time. I thought a lot about Anna. I was going to be King and she would look at me then. I didn't get to be King. Mother gave me lessons at home. Then we moved away. I went to another school. I never saw Anna anymore. I lost the card. I can't hardly remember her face at all. I remember she had long curls.

PART ONE
ADVENTURE

We camped in the ^{mountains} ~~woods~~ a lot. We went mostly to Huckleberry Creek. Uncle Jack and Aunt Mary and Cousin Frank went with us. Daddy and Uncle Jack went fishing. Cousin Frank took Sally and me for walks. There was a big tree that fell down a long time ago where we camped. Cousin Frank always climbed up on the tree and pulled Sally and me up. We were scared but it was lots of fun. The tree was all moss on top. There were little trees growing on it. Mother and Aunt Mary got mad and made us come down. We always went up again. Daddy and Uncle Jack gave us periwinkles to play with. They are little bugs that live in the river. They live in little houses made of little rocks and pieces of wood. Daddy and Uncle Jack always caught a lot of fish. Mother and Aunt Mary cooked them. They made a big fire and cooked the fish in a big black pan. We ate them for supper. Cousin Frank and Sally and me always tried to see who could eat the most.

We had Thanksgiving dinner at a big restaurant in the woods. Then we climbed Mount Rainier. It was very hot and we left our coats on a big rock. We tried to find the rock after we climbed Mount Rainier. It took a long time and we thought we lost our coats. We laughed a lot looking for our coats. Sally and me told at school how

we climbed Mount Rainier. Teacher said we didn't climb Mount Rainier. Sally and me got very mad. Teacher had us draw pictures of Mount Rainier. Then she believed us.

Sally got sick and went to the hospital. Mother and Daddy and me went camping. It was after Christmas. It was very cold. Daddy went fishing in the river. It was a new river. We had never been there before. Daddy carried me on his shoulders out in the river. It was a lot of fun. I told Daddy I bet Sally would like it too. He would have to give us turns next time. He said he could carry us both the same time. I thought he was telling a joke. I asked Mother. She said he could. I thought she was telling a joke. I said I bet he couldn't. He would have to give us turns. Mother started crying. Daddy went off in the woods. Mother hugged me and I started crying. Sally wasn't ever coming home from the hospital.

There was a mountain by our camp. It was mostly snow. I think it is the biggest mountain in the world. They call it Whitehorse Mountain. I never saw the White Horse. Daddy and Mother never saw the White Horse either. We all looked for it too.

There were no mountains where we moved. There were woods on the other side of the street. Us kids picked up acorns in the woods. There were blueberries in the

woods too. There was a swamp in the woods. We had to jump across water on logs and dry places. One day we saw a snake in the water. They said it was a poison snake and we got all wet running out of the swamp. There was a hill behind our house. It snowed and we all got on a big toboggan and slid down the hill. They let me steer one time. I was scared. There was a stone wall on the hill. The toboggan went very fast. The snow came up in my eyes. I was scared of hitting the wall so I steered the other way. We hit a pile of cow manure. Everybody laughed. The manure was cold so it didn't smell bad.

There were a lot of tough kids at school. They didn't like me. I tried to stay with the rich kid they were scared of. He had a car that took him home after school. I had to run home after school. One time they caught me and pushed me off the sidewalk. I fell in the ditch. It was full of water. They wouldn't let me get out of the ditch. The man in the candy store made them go away. Mother was mad when I got home because it was snowing and I was all wet. She didn't want me to go to school anymore. Daddy said I had to fight them. He showed me how to fight.

I went to school next day. The tough kid that pushed me in the ditch yelled names at me at recess. I stayed with the rich kid. We always lined up on the

steps after recess. I didn't hear the bell that time and I was last in our class. I was on the bottom step. The tough kid ran around the yard after the bell. He always did that. He saw me at the end of the line. He ran at me. I heard him running. He wasn't in my class but he was running at me. I was scared. He was going to knock me down ~~on the ground~~. It would hurt. Teacher would be mad but he would say it was an accident. I got mad. He ran at me and he was just behind me. He was going to knock me off the step. I turned around and hit him in the face. He was on the ground and I was on the step. He was running so hard he ran right into my fist. Then I went up the steps. Teacher saw me hit him. He fell down on his back. He didn't get up. I was scared I killed him. Teacher didn't take me to the Principal. She didn't say a word. I was scared all day. I thought he would kill me after school. I didn't want to go home. I went out in the yard finally. He wasn't there. I never saw him again. I got a bad cold next day and never went back to the school anymore.

PART ONE

PRAYER

I say my prayers every night. I learn my Sunday School lessons. I do what Mother and Daddy say and what Teacher says. I'm scared of Hell. Sally and me always went to the show Saturday. Mother gave us two dimes for getting in and two pennies. We bought candy with the pennies. There were always cartoons and a serial and a cowboy picture. There was a magician sometimes. There were big red pictures about Hell outside the show one day. There was a picture in the show at night about Hell. The pictures outside the show were about people in Hell. They had no clothes and they were in a big fire. They yelled and cried. They wanted to get out. God wouldn't let them out. They didn't say prayers. They didn't go to Sunday School. They did bad things. A lot of kids at my school are going to Hell. I like some of them. I feel sorry for them. There are some kids are going to Hell I don't care if they do. I was scared when Sally died she was in Hell. I cried a lot because the fire hurts a lot. Sally and me were bad sometimes. She was scared a lot by those pictures. She said she didn't want to go to Hell. I cried because I was scared she was in Hell getting burned up. Mother says Sally wasn't bad. She says God knows Sally was a good girl. Mother says Sally is in Heaven. They have a lot of fun in heaven.

They play games all the time. Mother says I will go to Heaven someday. I don't cry as much now. I sure am glad Sally is not in Hell. Sally and me were twins. She was born first. She always told people she was older than me. I got very mad sometimes. It was only a game though. I am going to be a good boy always. I don't want to go to Hell. It hurts a lot. God makes you stay there always if you are bad. I want to go to Heaven where Sally is.

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PART TWO

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TERROR

The room was all white like the other one. The people were dressed in white too but they knew I was there. They knew I was a human being and that I was scared. I told the doctor how I hated ether and he said they would only use gas anyway. The nurse said taking gas is like going to sleep except it makes you laugh and act a little silly.

I got up on the table and laid down. The nurse and I joked around. Then she told me she was going to put a piece of cloth on my nose. All I had to do was think about something funny and count to ten and next thing I knew I'd be eating ice cream and I could go home.

The cloth wasn't bad at all. I could breathe the gas. It was sort of sweet and sickening but I could breathe without choking. I relaxed and took deep breaths and wasn't really very worried. The world turned a kind of grey color and I knew I was going to sleep.

Then the world tipped over on its side.

I tried to push it back but it tipped farther and turned upside down. This was awful. Something had gone wrong. I had to get out and tell the nurse something had gone wrong. I heard the nurse yell. Out there people were running. They grabbed my arms and legs and

shoulders. I fought harder. I couldn't get away. Finally I was tired out and gave up.

The world turned right side up. I was inside a tube. The walls were made of grey smoke. I took a deep breath to get it over with and the walls started to spin. I wasn't moving at all but the walls were spinning. I was all alone in the tube and couldn't even hear the people outside anymore. The walls were making a loud roar. The walls began to spin faster. I was getting dizzy. The walls went around and around faster and faster. The roar got louder and louder. I wasn't alone in the tube. There was something down past my feet. I couldn't lift my head to see what it was but it was something frightening and it was getting closer.

I had to get out. The walls went around faster and roared louder and the thing was getting closer. It was coming up the tube to kill me. The people outside knew I was going to die. They didn't care. They were trying to kill me. I had to get out. I took all my strength and I didn't give them any warning. All of a sudden I pulled away from them and I escaped! I busted right out of the tube through the grey walls!

I screamed!

I had fallen into another tube! This one was spinning even faster and roaring even louder! Only it

wasn't grey! The walls were all bright colors of red and green and blue and yellow! It was horrible! I screamed and screamed and fell back into the grey tube and the walls roared and I died...

The next night I had the dream the first time. The dream always begins near the end. There is something chasing me. It's too big to fight. It's bigger than anything on earth. It's too fast for me to get away by running. Even in an airplane I couldn't get away. It's just too fast. I am running and running. I am out of breath but I don't dare slow down. There is a house ahead. There are people in the house. I will be safe there. It is right on top of me. I get up the steps and have time to pound on the door. But I always know that even if the door is opened right away the Thing will get me first. That's when I scream and wake up.

I'm awake but the dream isn't over. The Thing didn't catch me because I woke up. But it hasn't gone away. It is in the furniture and in the fireplace and especially just outside the window in the darkness.

After the first few times Mother and I knew what to do. She gets out the cards and we start playing casino. At first she wins all the games because I'm looking at the furniture and the fireplace and the darkness outside the window. She wins so much I finally start watching my cards. Then we're winning and losing about even and I'm busy picking up spades and aces and watching for Big

Casino and I forget about the darkness. I get sleepy and finally go back to bed. I know I won't have the dream again tonight. Some other night maybe but not tonight.

PART TWO

LOVE

Every week or so we used to come in town to visit cousin Ken and Amy and Louise. They took me out to play with the neighborhood kids. There was a girl named Teresa. She was Amy's best friend. One day when we were about to go home Ken told me that Louise had told him that Amy had told her that Teresa had told her she loved me.

I thought about Teresa all week and the next Saturday when we went in town I was sort of nervous. We played with the neighborhood kids and Teresa was there. She stayed close to Amy and sometimes they both looked at me and whispered. I stayed with Ken feeling bashful. Kind of wild, though. I mixed in the middle of every game and laughed and shouted.

Then gradually all the kids went away and there were just four of us in the yard. We all sat in the lawnswing, and Teresa and I were in the middle. We were all laughing and I was feeling wild. I tried to kiss Teresa but she turned her head away and giggled and I ended up kissing the back of her head.

There were a lot of little kids peaking through the hedge and Ken and Amy had to keep chasing them away. Ken and Amy kept chasing the kids away and I kept trying to kiss Teresa. She always giggled and turned her head away. Once I managed to kiss her on the cheek. Her cheek was very warm. Finally there were so many kids peaking through the hedge Ken and Amy couldn't chase them all away

and finally Teresa ran away home. I began to feel very ashamed with all the little kids running around laughing. Just before we had to go home Amy brought me a letter from Teresa. It was awful! She was moving away. I might never see her again. But she wrote her new address in the letter, and it ended, I Love You!

I kept the letter hidden in my desk at home. When I was doing homework I'd sneak it out and read it over and over again. Very often I took a sheet of paper and wrote, Dear Teresa. Then I would stare at the paper and try to think of what to say. I could never think of anything to say except, Dear Teresa, I love you. It looked silly on paper. I couldn't say that in a letter. I might be able to say it if I could see her again. I got a map of the city and figured out where she lived. There just wasn't any way I could get there. Even if I did what would I do? Go knock on the door and say I had come to see Teresa because I loved her? So I never wrote. After a couple of years I didn't look at her letter anymore. Finally I lost it.

Year before last we had a Halloween Party at our house for my best friends at school. Ben was there. Last year Ben invited me to a Halloween Party at his house. My folks drove me to Ben's house and then left. I went in the house and there were girls at the party. I knew Ben had a girl friend but I didn't think he would have girls at the party. I sat in a corner and wished it was over.

Ben's mother brought me a plate of food and I ate it. Then she left the room. All the grownups left the room.

Then Ben's girl friend said we were going to play post office. It was awful. I was sitting by a window and I wondered if somehow I could get the window open and climb out without anybody noticing. Then I could hide in the woods until my folks came to pick me up. Boys and girls kept going in the next room. I knew they were kissing each other in there. I didn't see how they could come out of the room with everybody knowing they had been in there kissing each other. I sat in the corner and hoped nobody would notice me.

Finally Ben's girl friend said there was a letter for me and I had to go in the room. What made it so awful was the girl that was in there with me. She was very beautiful. She was in the grade below me so I didn't know her even to say hello to. But I had been noticing her around school and she was the most beautiful girl in school. I used to think about saving her life sometime. Maybe she would be kidnapped or something and I would happen along just then and save her life. Sometimes when I saved her life she didn't have any clothes on. It was all right because I was saving her life and I wouldn't hurt her or anything. But it was awful to be in the room with her. I was very ashamed. She stood off in a corner of the room and didn't look at me. Finally Ben's girl friend opened the door and said I could come

out. A lot of other boys went in the room with her and I bet they all kissed her. I was sorry I hadn't kissed her. I had to go in the room again. I didn't know the girl at all but she just threw her arms around me and kissed me. That was the only girl I've ever kissed. Except Sally and she was my sister.

PART TWO
ADVENTURE

One day when I was in the Sixth Grade the Captain of the Schoolboy Patrol came in our class and whispered with our teacher. They both looked at me. Next to the Principal he was the most important person in school and when he came toward me I was very excited. He asked me if I wanted to be on the Schoolboy Patrol. It was raining very hard and the kid who was supposed to be on patrol didn't show up. I was very proud to be on the Patrol. Wally was the only other kid in the Sixth Grade who got on the Patrol, and that was in the spring. I was on the Patrol almost the whole Sixth Grade. I was Captain of the Schoolboy Patrol in the Eighth Grade. Wally was Lieutenant.

I also wanted to be Valedictorian of our class. I was the smartest kid in the class. But there were three girls who always got A's in music and penmanship and I always got C's or D's. At graduation our class didn't have any Valedictorian. The three girls and me handed on the Torch of Learning to the four smartest kids in the Seventh Grade. But I gave a speech as Captain of the Schoolboy Patrol. Also they gave me \$5 for winning the American Legion Essay Contest on How I Can Help Make America Strong. \$5 is a lot of money. I get 65 cents each time I carry my paper route and I have 175 papers and my route is 12 miles long. I get 50 cents from

Doctor Green every Saturday and it takes all afternoon to mow his lawn and weed his garden and rake his leaves.

I turned out for football in the Sixth Grade. The Coach put me on the Midget Team. I weighed 105 pounds and Midgets are supposed to weigh only 100 pounds but I wasn't good enough to be on the First Team. All the other Midgets were a lot smaller. Some of them were only 70 pounds.

I played left guard. I only got into one game. It was the first game of the season. When our team had the ball I was supposed to run at the kid across from me and block him with my shoulders. Every time the ball was hiked I ran at him but ~~before I could block him~~ he knocked me down and ran into our backfield.

When the other team had the ball I was supposed to run at the kid and knock him down and get into their backfield. Every time the ball was hiked he knocked me down. I never got into their backfield at all except when their backfield ran all over me going down the field. A couple of kids were sick that day and there weren't any substitutes. That's the only reason the Coach let me play the whole game.

I turned out for football in the Seventh Grade. I was too big for the Midgets. The Coach had me on the bench for all the First Team home games. Once he took me on the road ~~to the "Stimment" Beach game.~~ I was the only substitute he took and I thought for sure I'd get in the game.

In the third quarter they were only ahead 18-0 which was the closest game we had all season. Then they got two first downs in a row and the Coach had me warm up. I ran up and down the sidelines. Our team only had 11 jerseys. When a kid was taken out of the game he had to pull off his jersey and give it to the substitute. I ran up and down the sidelines thinking I was finally going to get to wear a First Team Jersey. But they scored a touchdown and on the kickoff our half-back fumbled and they scored another touchdown. The Coach suddenly noticed I was still warming up and he told me to sit down on the bench. I didn't turn out at all in the Eighth Grade.

I turned out for basketball in the Seventh Grade. At one turnout a tough kid from the Fifth Grade pushed me out of line while I was waiting my turn to make a dribble and a layin. I pushed him back and he said he wanted to see me outside. He was waiting outside after the turnout. Every time I punched him I hit his arms. Every time he punched me there was an explosion in my head. I punched his arms. He punched my head. Finally he stopped and I went home. Mother saw the blood all over me and made believe it didn't matter. Dad didn't say a word. He looked serious but he didn't say anything. I didn't want to turn out anymore but I did.

It was funny about that tough kid. When his cat had kittens he offered me one and I went to his house

to get it. He lived down in the Garbage Dump Valley. It was where we all dumped our garbage. When it rained in the winter the Garbage Dump Valley flooded. The houses down there were up on blocks. To get the kitten I had to leave my bicycle on the hill and walk on planks to his house. He was older than^{ly} me even though he was two grades below me. He was very gentle with the kitten. I took the kitten and petted it and thanked him. I walked over the planks to my bike and put the kitten in the basket. I looked back to his house and he waved. I waved back. I couldn't see why he punched me in the face that time. And then gave me a kitten. But I didn't hate him anymore. I guess I felt sorry for him. The way he felt sorry for me, I guess.

Just before Christmas Vacation the Coach asked me if I could turn out during vacation. I was very thrilled because he only asked six kids to turn out. This meant I was on the First Team. ~~I~~ I couldn't turn out because I had to have my tonsils out. I didn't turn out in the Eighth Grade.

I joined the Boy Scouts in the Seventh Grade. It was hard to get anyplace. All our Troop did was march around and play baseball. I kept reading the Manual and asking the Scoutmaster to give me the examinations. I made Second Class in three months and I made First Class in four months. Most of the kids in the Troop were only Second Class. I started getting Merit Badges

and I made Star Scout in only four months. For the Merit Badges there are Examiners outside the Troop. The way I'm getting Merit Badges pretty soon I'll be Life Scout. I won't ever make Eagle because the doctor won't let me get my head under water so I can't get Swimming and Lifesaving. But our Troop has never had an Eagle and only one Life so Life is a very high rank in our Troop.

After I made Star the Scoutmaster had to make me a Patrol Leader. He didn't want to because I was younger than most of the kids. But they were all Second Class. Once I got my own Patrol I started building up the Troop. I have talked a lot of good kids into joining the Troop. We have the best Patrol in the Troop. We go on Patrol Hikes and we have Patrol Meetings. Every week my Patrol members pass examinations. Some of them will be First Class soon. One of the older kids in my Patrol was Second Class for two years. Now he has finally made First and is getting Merit Badges. The Scoutmaster has given him his own Patrol. We compete against each other with our Patrols in a friendly way. When I get to be Senior Patrol Leader I have a lot of ideas about improving the Troop. The Scoutmaster is a good guy but he needs help.

The only place our Troop ever hikes is the Tolt River. Once we tried to hike to Lake Hancock but the Scoutmaster got lost. It was raining and finally we camped.

Nobody could get a fire started. I had a big piece of chocolate in my pack that Mother made me take along so I didn't starve like the other kids.

I was the first scout from our Troop that ever went to Camp Parsons. This is the Camp for the whole Seattle Area Council. I saved up all winter so I could go. Camp Parsons is great. You go swimming twice a day and you can take a rowboat out by yourself. If you have Swimming Merit Badge you can take out an Indian Dugout Canoe. Every night there is a big campfire on a hill right over the water. The Assistant Camp Director stands by the fire and leads us in songs. Sometimes we are very quiet after a song and listen to the songs from the Girl Scout Camp way down Hood Canal. Then we shout out our next song and we know they are listening to us. We sing a lot of songs and then the Camp Director comes out by the fire. He has been Director for many years. When he first came to Parsons the Olympic Mountains were mostly unexplored. He wrote a book about those days which I hope to read someday. The Director comes out and tells stories about hiking in the Olympics in the old days. He tells about funny things that have happened in the Camp. Then we sing the Goodnight Song and hike along the trails to our Troops. The Camp Bugler plays Taps and we go to sleep.

One day I was initiated into the Royal Order of Raw Oysters. I had to go down on the beach and find an oyster

and open it with my Boy Scout knife. Then I had to eat the oyster right out of the shell. Some of the kids got sick. They kept trying to swallow the oysters but the oysters kept coming back out of their mouths. I swallowed my oyster the very first try. Then I painted my name and the year on the shell and nailed it on the wall of the Boathouse.

You spend part of your time in Camp. Then you can either go on the Cruise or on the Hike. I like boats but I decided to go on the Hike because all the best kids were going on the Hike. Anyway Dad had made me a Trapper Nelson Packboard before I went to Camp and I wanted to use it.

The Red Truck took us to the end of the road at Bark Shanty Shelter. I had never hiked with a pack before except to the Tolt River and the time we tried to get to Lake Hancock. They said we were going to Marmot Pass. I thought a Pass was a place where a highway crosses the mountains. Boy, was I surprised!

We started hiking up the Quilcene Trail. We hiked a long time, a half hour or so, and then we rested. We hiked some more and rested. At first I took out my notebook and marked down how long we walked and how long we rested. To make Silver Marmot you have to go on an Olympic Hike and then write down your hike log. After a couple of hours the Assistant Leader told me to stop marking down all the rests. He said I'd use up my whole notebook the first day.

We stopped for lunch at the Old Trail Shelter. The leader gave us pieces of chocolate and cheese and pilot bread. After lunch we started hiking again. We were hiking all together at first like we hiked in the morning. Some of the kids began to get pretty tired. When we got to Shelter Rock the Leader sent some of the older guys ahead. As they left I heard one of them yell, here we go up the Poop Out Drag!

Above Shelter Rock the trail is mostly switchbacks. A lot of the kids were getting tired. So was I. But it was very exciting. The valley was so far away you could hardly hear the river. It was roaring like always but it was a long ways off. Some parts of the trail were so steep that if you fell off the trail you probably never would stop until you were dead. It was pretty dangerous and very exciting. There was snow on some of the mountains and when you get close to snow in July you know you are way up in the mountains.

I gave up marking down all my rests. I rested a lot. But I passed a lot of other kids. Some of them were really ~~pooped~~^{pooped}. They just fell down in the trail they were so pooped. The sun was very hot. There are not many creeks on the Poop Out Drag. I got so thirsty I could hardly swallow. But I kept on getting up and hiking. Some of the kids I passed I was sure would never make it.

Finally the trail got flatter and the sun went down

behind the ridge. I smelled smoke and I walked faster and there I was at Camp Mystery! The older guys had been there a long time. I laid down for awhile and then I drank a lot of water. Then I had supper. The older guys had supper ready. We had rice and tuna fish for supper. They cooked it in Number Ten Cans. I could have eaten twenty times as much as they gave me but that was all there was.

After supper everybody went on hikes. The older guys climbed Iron Mountain. I was tired but it was getting cold and the fire was out so I went hiking by myself. I hiked up the trail above Camp Mystery and I came out of the trees into a really beautiful place. The trees all looked like Christmas trees. They look like somebody comes around and trims them every week. They don't look like real trees at all. The grass around the trees is green and very neat like somebody comes around watering the grass and mowing it. There are flowers growing out in the grass. I earn most of my money mowing grass and weeding flowers and trimming shrubs. I don't like grass and flowers and shrubs. But in the mountains the grass is beautiful and the flowers are beautiful and the shrubs are beautiful. There aren't any weeds, ~~Maybe that's~~ because the weeds in the mountains are all flowers. The grass never gets too high, ~~Maybe that's~~ because just when it gets high enough the snow starts to fall.

I hiked up on the trail. I found the source of the Quilcene River. It shoots out under a rock. I put my mouth there and for a second I had the whole Quilcene River in my mouth!

I hiked up above the source. Mountain meadows are very beautiful. It was almost dark when I got to Marmot Pass. The trail came up from the meadows to the Pass. I stood in the Pass. The sky was all sorts of colors. The mountains were sort of purple and black and mysterious. It was very beautiful. The Dungeness Valley was dark. It was already night down there. It was a long way down from Marmot Pass to the Dungeness. I could hear the river down there. But at Marmot Pass it was only sunset. Marmot Pass is more than a mile high. Down in the valley it was night. It was very strange to see day and night so close together.

I didn't sleep at all that night. It was too cold. In the morning we had oatmeal and cocoa and prunes. Then we hiked to Marmot Pass. Most of the kids climbed Buckhorn Mountain. I wanted to see what was down in the valley. Several of us went ahead down the trail. We had to walk across a snowfield. It was very steep and dangerous. If you slipped you would just keep on going. We stopped at Boulder Shelter to wait for the others. There are huge rocks there that have fallen down from the mountain. They must have made a terrible noise. When the others came we all hiked to Home Lake.

We went swimming in the lake. The water was very cold. There was snow at one end of the lake. You could swim only a few feet before you were numb all over. That night I didn't feel like eating. I knew I had Mountain Sickness. It was sort of frightening but it was very exciting.

The wind blew very hard that night. I almost froze to death. It was still dark when we got up and started hiking. I felt awful. Finally it got light enough to see where we were walking. Fog came up out of the valley and blew over us. It was very mysterious. We couldn't see more than a few feet. The fog was cold. I noticed the kid ahead of me had little drops of water in his hair. I felt my hair and it was wet too. We got to Constance Pass and the fog was blowing over the pass a mile a minute. We were all cold so we kept right on hiking up the trail. All of a sudden the fog got brighter and brighter and then we came out ~~into~~ the sunshine on top of Delmonte Ridge. Gosh it was beautiful. The wind was still blowing like crazy and sometimes it blew the fog over us. The whole world disappeared then and turned grey. Then the fog blew away and we were in the sunshine. It was like being on an island in the middle of the ocean. Only the ocean was made of clouds instead of water. Only the highest mountains stuck out of the clouds like islands. They had snow on them and they were very bright in the sunshine. It was sure

beautiful. I thought it would be fun to go swimming in the ocean but I knew it was just clouds. There wasn't any world at all except the clouds ^{that looked like an ocean} and the high peaks that looked like islands and of course us Scouts.

I'm going back to Camp every time I can. I was initiated into the Silver Marmots. I had to wear my clothes backwards one whole day at Camp. When I met a Scout who was already a Silver Marmot I had to bow down and say, hail to thee oh Mighty Silver Marmot! The marmot is an animal that lives in the meadows and whistles. I have a Silver Marmot pin to wear on my uniform now. When I get to be Senior Patrol Leader our Troop will go hiking in the mountains. Next summer at camp I want to climb Mount Anderson. To climb Mount Anderson you have to go across the Anderson Glacier. If you don't have dark glasses and boots with slivers in them they won't let you go. The night before the climb you cut alpenstocks because it is very steep going up to Flypaper Pass. The year after that I'll be old enough to go on the Mount Olympus Climb. You have to have an ice ax for that trip. They tie you to a rope because there are deep holes called crevasses in the Blue Glacier. Someday when I'm older what I really want to do is climb Mount Everest. Nobody has ever climbed Mount Everest. It is the highest mountain in the world. Lots of people have tried and some of them have been killed. George Mallory tried to climb Mount

Everest several times and he was finally killed. He was an Englishman. When they asked him why he wanted to climb Mount Everest he said because it was there. The next time he tried to climb it he didn't come back and nobody knows if he got to the top or not. I wouldn't care if Mallory climbed Everest. Actually I sort of hope he did. Before I went to Camp I was going to build a boat and someday sail around the world by myself. Actually when I went to Camp I thought I would go on the Cruise. But Marmot Pass and Delmonite Ridge were wonderful. I can hardly wait for next summer so I can climb Mount Anderson.

PART TWO

PRAYER

I don't worry about Sally anymore because I know she is in heaven. She was ^enever really bad and anyway God wouldn't send a little girl like that to Hell. Actually I don't think there is any Hell at all. God is too big for me to understand but I think He loves us too much to have a Hell. He is so big He can love even people who are bad. I don't think He could hate anybody enough to put them in Hell. My Sunday School Teacher says there is a Hell. She's kind of stupid though. Her grammar is terrible and she isn't very clean either. Our Minister is a very kind man. Sometimes he takes us older kids in a special class and tells us about the geography of the Holy Land and all about the Roman Empire. He never says anything about Hell. He just tells about the kind things Jesus did. Jesus is too kind to have a Hell. Everybody goes to heaven when they die. I'm sure of that.

I keep wondering what Sally does all the time in Heaven. I remember the games we used to play and camping in the woods. That was a long time ago. I wonder if she plays games or goes to school or hikes in the mountains or what. Maybe she is already a grownup. There isn't supposed to be any such thing as time in Heaven. Maybe you're a grownup as soon as you get there. If there isn't any time in Heaven then we'll be the same age when I get there. Of course she got there first. We'll probably argue about that. She was only an hour older than me

but she always told everybody I was her little brother. I'm not really scared of dying anymore. I used to be scared all the time thinking of my sins. I stole a cherrybomb when I was nine and only had enough money for ladyfingers and firecrackers. I do all my jobs around home like cutting wood and feeding the chickens but sometimes I talk back to my folks. Once Dad got very mad and we yelled at each other and I ran off and hid in the woods. I shouldn't have done that. Then I began thinking about girls without any clothes on. I would have dreams about girls too and when I woke up I was very ashamed. But I enjoyed the dreams and that made it all the worse. For a long time all I could think about was I was going to Hell. I kept asking forgiveness for my sins but afterwards I would go on sinning. I tried to be really sorry for my sins but I couldn't always be sorry. I kept thinking about Hell but finally I decided God wouldn't have a Hell. God is so big and we are so little. God couldn't send me to Hell anymore than He could send Sally to Hell. Naturally when we get to Heaven we have to ask forgiveness for our sins and be really sorry. And maybe God is a little mad at us for awhile. Just His being mad would be plenty of punishment. Anybody who wasn't sorry for his sins before sure would be sorry then.

The only thing that bothers me is I can't figure out

what to do in Heaven. I can see how it will be wonderful for a hundred years and a thousand years. Maybe even ten thousand years and a million years. It worries me to think about ten million years and a billion years and a hundred billion thousand billion years. Actually that's only the beginning. Eternity has just got started then. Think of the biggest number you can and eternity is more than that. Sometime or other people must get bored. Eternity goes on forever and ever. You must get so bored you've done everything that anybody can do and you've done it a trillion trillion times. Even if you get so bored you decided to sleep a trillion trillion years you'd have to wake up sometime. It doesn't matter how many years you sleep. When you wake up there is just as much eternity as there was before. It never ends.

Of course God is eternal and He has it all figured out. Because if eternity is frightening it wouldn't be Heaven. I know it will be all right but I wish He would give me some idea of what it's like. It scares me to look at the stars. I know I'm not going to Hell but it scares me to think of eternity.

I pray all the time. I say my regular prayers before I go to bed but also I pray other times. I used to think Sally would have God talk to me. Then I realized how many people there must be in Heaven by now. There is no time in Heaven so maybe God hasn't even met Sally yet. Of course He knows she's there and He is very very big

but it's a very big universe too. I don't matter very much. Except I know I do matter to Him.

The thing is that our Sunday School Teacher is pretty stupid. Most of the people in our Church are stupid and have terrible grammar. They aren't the kind of people my folks and me have for friends outside of Church. Our Minister is nice but he doesn't know much. I used to ask him questions and all he ever did was tell me to pray and the answers would come from Above. They haven't so far. I look at the other people in our Church and the kids in our school and it seems to me that if God has time for anybody He ought to have time for me. I don't expect Him to spend a lot of time with me. It doesn't even have to be Him. He could send an Angel. I know Sally would be glad to come. I dream about Sally quite a lot. Sometimes I wake up trying to ask her what it's like but she's always a little girl in the dreams. I keep expecting her sometime in a dream to be older and tell me.

I know I still sin but I keep asking forgiveness and I really do try to stop sinning and be really sorry when I do. It isn't easy all the time. I pray more than just before going to bed. Almost every day when nobody is around I close my eyes and pray. Often I don't think about anything else at all except I just pray to God to let me know. It doesn't have to be words. He wouldn't need words to tell me what I want to know.

I don't doubt it, that's not what I mean, but the thing is if only He would let me know He is really there and Sally is there. It doesn't have to be right away but I hope He lets me know soon because I'm getting more scared all the time thinking about eternity. It would only take Him or one of His angels or Sally just a second. Less than that even.

TERROR

LOVE

ADVENTURE

PRAYER

PART THREE

PART THREE

TERROR

It started on the way back from the Lillian Glacier. At first I thought I had bruised my hip sitting down too hard on a rock. But the pain didn't go away. After a few months I knew it wasn't a bruise but I didn't know what it was. Sometimes the pain was very bad and I couldn't walk without limping. When anybody was around I tried not to limp. ~~If someone noticed I said I had bruised a muscle. Afterwards I was careful not to limp when that person was around even though it hurt to walk without a limp.~~ The pain was always there at least a little. Once in awhile it started to pulse. The pain pulsed from high to low, hour after hour, and if I tried to walk the pain was like a knife. So I would sit down as much as I could. At home I often sat for hours pretending to read while really I was following the pulse and tensing for the high points and relaxing during the low points. I didn't want my folks to know because they would take me to the doctor and it seemd to me I had spent most of my life going to the doctor and going to the hospital.

After the hike to Lake Dorothy there was no keeping it a secret because it was all I could do to get out those nine miles on a crutch with the other guys carrying my pack and helping me. Mother took me to ^{the} Doctor ~~Blamper~~. ~~He's the only doctor we've ever really trusted. After that butcher back east cut my head into seventeen pieces~~

~~Doctor Klampfer put my head back together. He fixed up my ear and took out my tonsils and measured my eyes for glasses. Hips are a long way from his specialty but he didn't say a word about that.~~ He looked me

over and ~~at last he~~ said I had growing pains. Just stay out of the mountains for a year. When the pain is bad take aspirin and stay home from school and read books.

I had been trying to ignore the pain before Lake Dorothy but it was so bad then I was really frightened. I thought I might have to go to the hospital for a long, long time. It was a great relief when ^{the} Doctor ~~Klampfer~~ said I would have to stay out of the mountains only one year. I would miss the mountains that year but I would be able to go again in a year. A year is not so long. There was something to look forward to because in a year the pain would be gone and there was no reason to be frightened.

The pain came and went but it was always there at least a little. I went around for days feeling only that nagging soreness in my hip when I walked. Then it would start to pulse. One day it was pulsing so hard I couldn't go to school and I sat reading a magazine. I wasn't really reading, I was flipping pages and looking at pictures. Then I came to a page that was so terrible I forgot about the pulse. ^{Our} Doctor ~~Klampfer~~ is a wonderful kind man. He did his best but there was nothing he could do. The magazine told me. There was nothing anyone could do.

I was going to have this pain maybe for a long time and it wouldn't do any good to go to a doctor, any doctor. The most any doctor could do was put me in bed and give me aspirin. If there was too much pain and it continued too long then I would die. Nobody in the world could do anything but put me to bed and give me aspirin and wait to see if the pain stopped.

It was a terrible day. I had thought about dying before but I had never gone along from pulse to pulse wondering if one pulse might jump higher than any before and I would die, right here in my home, right now.

But I didn't, and the pain dimmed away next day, and was only a dull reminder the next week and I became wild and happy and starting^{ed} planning a trip in the mountains.

Then one night when we were at the show right there in the middle of the movie the pain came pulsing in hard, harder than I had ever had it. Only the pain had been in my right hip before and now it was in my left hip and sitting there in the dark I was so discouraged I just slumped back and tried not to cry.

It was in my left hip a long time, sometimes just a dull nagging soreness and sometimes almost more than I could stand. This time I didn't even tell my folks. No matter how bad it was I went to school. There might not be much time left and even with the pain it was better to go on living. I was pretty wild sometimes

at school I guess, during the pulses. But I wanted to go on living. I didn't want people to feel sorry for me and treat me like an invalid. I just wanted to be with them. Even if they thought I was crazy.

It dimmed out of my left hip and I was very cheerful. Right after a very bad pain goes away a person feels like singing and laughing and jumping around even if he knows the pain will come back sometime. But I was all the more cheerful because now that both my hips were used up maybe it was over.

Then one day it came back. It came back pulsing, and worse than ever, and it wasn't in a hip at all, it was in my whole right leg. It came back in the middle of Geometry class and it was so bad I broke out in sweat and had to hold onto my desk and bite my lip. The pain was so bad I wanted to scream and I felt the pain in my throat and was afraid I might scream any moment and the teacher would take me to the school nurse and I would have to go to the hospital. I didn't want to go to the hospital. I knew now I was going to die anyway and I didn't want to die in a hospital. I wanted to die at home with Mather and Dad and my dog and the chickens or die at school with my friends but I didn't want to die in a hospital. There wasn't any hope at all now. This was the third place the pain had come and each place was worse than before. There were going to be

other places if I got over this one. But all they could do in the hospital was give me aspirin and make me use a bedpan. Somehow I lasted through the day and got home. I told Mother it was bad but I didn't say how bad it was. She put a heatpad on my leg and I sat in an armchair with my right leg straight out on a stool with the heatpad on it. I sat there trying not to move a muscle. It was the worst pain of all. It was worse than the time the doctor lanced my ear and it felt like he was sticking that needle into the center of my brain. This was a pain so awful there wasn't anything else in the world. I wasn't a person at all anymore, I was just part of that pain. There wasn't any world except pain. It went on and on and I went to bed that night and pretended to go to sleep but I lay awake all night biting my pillow. The next morning I felt like I was walking through fire getting from bed into the armchair.

I sat there trying to beat the pain. I prayed and I prayed and at every high pulse I prayed right into the Heart of God. Then I ignored it the way Hindus do when they walk barefoot on red hot coals. Then I tried will-power. I concentrated all my strength on pushing the pain out of my body. Nothing worked. Then I got sort of wild and decided if I couldn't beat the pain and the pain was the whole world I'd join the pain and learn to like the pain. I joined in with the pulse and moved

my body in the rhythm of the pulse. I made it into a dance, my whole body was dancing with the pulse. I made music for the dance. I sat there all day long not actually moving a muscle or making a noise but inside I was dancing to music all day long. It was a terrible dance and the music was horrible but in a way it was beautiful and it was the only thing that helped at all. I danced to the music all that night and I got so tired I slept sometimes. When I slept I kept up the dance but when I awoke I had more strength to keep on dancing.

The third day I kept up the dance but now I knew it so well I could read while I danced. It didn't matter what I read. There was an old novel by Harold Bell Wright in the house, and it was the first book I could reach when I walked through the flames from my bed to the arm-chair. I guess I'm the only person alive who remembers Harold Bell Wright as a great writer. Every page of the *Eyes of the World* pulsed into my dance. I didn't see anything funny about it either. I was the young poor handsome hero. I was in love with the demure shy heroine with the blond curls. When the villains got their just deserts and the hero and the heroine joined manly chest and soft bosom I was so overjoyed I forgot the pain for a second wiping away my tears.

That had been the very worst one. But it faded that night. Next day I actually was able to go to school. By

the end of the week it had dimmed out entirely. And I was still alive!

I was happy and wild and most of my friends thought I was insane. I was waiting for it to come back. I knew the next one would kill me.

I'm still waiting. I have maybe a few days, or hours, or minutes. I'm going to live my whole loud life right now even if other people want to be quiet.

PART THREE

LOVE

I was paralyzed the first day in Lit Two. The teacher was calling roll and suddenly said Teresa's name. I looked across the room and there she was! There was Teresa! The teacher went on calling the roll. When she came to me I was looking straight ahead but I was watching Teresa out of the corner of my eye. I said, here! Teresa didn't turn. She didn't even budge. I didn't blame her. I should have written. In class after that I looked at her and remembered the lawnswing and wished I had written. If I had told her I loved her she wouldn't be ignoring me now. Then one day I saw her walking in the hall with the captain of the football team and I didn't think about her anymore.

But before that I spent a lot of time looking at Teresa in class. While I was still looking at Teresa I noticed that a girl who sat next to her was looking at me. So when I found out about Teresa I shifted my eyes a couple of degrees and looked at this new girl.

At first if I was looking at her and she turned and looked at me I'd turn away. And if I looked up suddenly and saw her looking at me she'd turn away. But after awhile when I was looking at her and she turned and looked at me I'd meet her eyes before I turned away. And she'd do the same.

One day when I was looking at her she turned and I didn't look away at all, I just kept on looking into her eyes.

She turned away after awhile. But then she turned back and I was still looking at her and this time she didn't turn away and we looked at each other the whole rest of the class.

We looked at each other every day in Lit. Then the teacher began getting nervous about us so we didn't look at each other the whole period. But when we did look we looked harder.

The trouble was that I had to start wearing glasses that year. I felt self conscious about them so I only wore them for reading. But without glasses I couldn't see across a room. So all that semester I was looking at that girl and I never saw her. I aimed my eyes in her general direction but all I saw was a blur.

The next semester we were in another class together. We were closer to each other in this room and the light was better. I got a fairly good look at her. She was very pretty. I wanted to talk to her and when we passed in the hall sometimes I said hello. She always said hello. The thing to do, of course was to get up enough nerve to stop walking and then say hello. But I always kept on walking.

I would have gotten up the nerve sooner or later. But one day the teacher asked each of us in class to stand up and tell our ambition in life. When she stood up I had my glasses on so I could see her. I looked at

her and listened. She said she wanted to get married and have a family.

I was really scared. I want to get married someday myself but the way she said it sounded like she wanted to get married right away and I knew who she had in mind. After that I stopped looking at her. She kept on for awhile and obviously was very angry. But it was pointless for us to look at each other. Our folks wouldn't let us get married. Anyway my folks wouldn't. I wasn't so sure about hers.

Actually to be honest there was another girl anyway. She isn't really worth mentioning because nothing ever happened. We were in class together all that spring. The reason I got to know her at all was that Bob and Bill and I decided just as a joke that we ought to run for the Junior Class Offices. I was the noisiest so we nominated me for President. It was funny but Bob and Bill were both elected. I lost to this girl by one vote. If I hadn't voted for her I would have been President. Not that I cared because it was all a joke anyway. But she was very beautiful. When the votes were counted and I lost she looked at me sympathetically. That's all it was, of course. But ~~she was~~ her being ^{the elected} President and both of us knowing I could have been President, ^{all last year} we said hello to each other in the halls. And all ^{this} ~~last~~ summer when the pain was particularly bad I used to lay in bed at night and try to speak to her.

~~I didn't know where she lived but I put all my mind~~
~~and all my soul into it~~ There was a radio program given
by somebody at Duke University. I didn't have much
hope but I figured I might as well experiment. I couldn't
go in the mountains anyway. One thing was for sure, and
that was that if anybody in the world had a chance to
send thoughts through space it was me. If I couldn't do
it nobody could. And if I made it, and she woke up in
the night listening to my voice, she would have to fall
in love with me. She couldn't help it. I was pretty
skeptical about Duke University but there wasn't anything
else to do ~~that~~^{this} summer. So I tried and tried. I kept
sending and sending. When school started up ~~this fall~~^{a few days ago}
and I saw her in person I was so tired out by talking
to her all summer I wasn't in love with her anymore.

PART THREE

ADVENTURE

We didn't make the summit of Mount Anderson. The snow was so steep climbing up to Flypaper Pass the leader had us move over onto the rocks. They were steep too and everybody dropped their alpenstocks. There were alpenstocks clattering all over the cliff and also a lot of falling rocks. Finally one of the rocks hit a kid on the head. He wasn't hurt too bad but we had to give up the climb.

The situation didn't look good. Many of the kids were so scared they couldn't climb down the rocks. The snow was terrifically steep and we had all dropped our alpenstocks. But the snow was our only chance. The leader kicked big steps out into the middle of the gully and glissaded down onto the Anderson Glacier. The theory was that if he wasn't killed then we should follow him. I don't know what the theory was if he had been killed. Anyway several of the older guys followed him down and they all made it. One by one we crept out into the middle of the gully.

When I got there I turned and looked down the gully. The glacier was a long long way off. The guys down there were tiny black specks. There wasn't any time to think because another kid was right behind me in the steps. So I sat down and lifted my heels and it was like being shot out of a cannon. In a second I was going a mile a minute and the snow was flying up in my face.

I kept going faster and faster and it was all I could do to keep my feet pointed downhill. Finally the snow wasn't flying up in my face and I was sliding along peacefully and at last I came to a stop. I looked back up the gully and there were kids all over the slope, sliding on their backs and their stomachs and some of them headfirst and some of them tumbling over and over in somersaults. Nobody was hurt but most of the kids when they stopped started hiking back up the gully looking for cameras and hats and dark glasses and sweaters and other things they had lost.

When I made Life the scoutmaster promoted me to Senior Patrol Leader. All the Patrol Leaders were kids I'd trained in my patrol. They recruited so many new members all the patrols were at full strength and we added a new patrol. We had regular hikes all winter, and so many kids were passing examinations and getting merit badges sometimes we even won banners at District Courts of Honor. In the summer we had troop hikes in the mountains to Heather Lake and Mount Pilchuck and Copper Lake.

^{LAST} ~~WELL~~ Summer ~~when I went to camp~~ I was a Senior Scout and had nineteen merit badges so I wasn't in a regular troop. I was in the Rangers up on the hill. The first day at troop assembly the Ranger Scoutmaster, Grant, asked everyone who didn't have swimming and lifesaving

to hold up their hands. I held up my hand along with several others and Grant turned to his Assistant Scoutmaster and said, sign 'em up! I was paralyzed. I wanted to tell Grant I wasn't supposed to get my head under water. But it was assembly and I couldn't break ranks. So the next morning I reported at the beach thinking I'd go along as far as I could and then tell Grant it wasn't that I was a coward but the doctor didn't want me to get water in my ear.

The trouble was that I had known Grant a long time at camp and during that first assembly he made me Third Assistant Scoutmaster. Also late ~~one~~^{that} night when we were all sitting around the fireplace in the Ranger Lodge he decided the troop needed some loot. He appointed me leader of the looting expedition. I led the expedition through the dark woods and we sneaked around and found an open window and got into the kitchen. Actually the cooks knew we were coming on a raid and that's why they left the window open and all those sandwiches and buckets of punch. But the raid was a tremendous success and we were heroes when we came back to the Lodge with the loot.

So I couldn't tell Grant and I went to the classes every morning and afternoon the whole week. Most of the classes were in lifesaving. The instructor demonstrated a technique and then we buddy teams practiced together. I was really lucky in getting the buddy I did. I was a

terrible swimmer. It was all I could do to keep myself above water much less a victim. But my buddy was a very good swimmer.

One of the first techniques we learned was how to approach a drowning victim. A drowning victim is scared and puts up a battle. My buddy approached me and I put up a battle but he subdued me easily and towed me off to shore. Then I approached my buddy and he put up a battle. He grabbed me the way a drowning person does and we both went like rocks down to the bottom. He brought me back up to the surface and I tried again. He didn't fight so hard this time but we still went right down to the bottom and he hauled me back to the surface. After that he didn't fight at all. He splashed his hands but when I made my approach he slipped his chin into my hand. He kept on slapping the water but he also kept his chin in my hand.

When we were practicing rescue tows I relaxed and he towed me all over the cove a mile a minute. When it was my turn to tow him I just concentrated on getting to the shore. The thing was that to keep myself above the surface I needed both my legs and both my arms. So when I had to swim with only one arm I was in bad shape. I started out towing my buddy toward shore thrashing along and making about five feet every minute. It was very hard work keeping my head above water with just one arm. After awhile I'd wonder about my victim and look back and

his head was completely under the water. It was awful, maybe I had drowned him. I would lift his chin out into the air. He would open his mouth and go AWP! It was such a loud gasp I was sure everybody in camp heard it but I didn't have time to think about that because every time I heard that AWP! my own head was going under the water. ~~To save myself I had to forget him.~~ Later I'd remember him and bring up his chin and he'd have another AWP! and I was going under. ~~This went on all the way to shore all week.~~ He was a good guy and never complained. I nearly drowned him a couple of times every morning and two or three times every afternoon. If he hadn't been a darn good swimmer and a swell guy we would never have made it through the week.

Friday afternoon all of us who were left in the class had to do the 250 Yard Swim. The farthest I'd ever swum was 100 yards. That was Tuesday, and then I was one of the last to finish. I was sure this was the end for me. I might make 150 yards, even 200. But I couldn't quit without trying and there were plenty of patrol boats. I wouldn't drown, though I'd have to apologize to Grant.

We jumped in from the north point of the swimming cove and started off in a crowd. I can do a sort of a breast stroke and an overhand and a side stroke and a backstroke but my kick is always plain dog paddle. I was about halfway across the cove when the good swimmers

disappeared beyond the south point. I kept churning along and finally got around the point. Some of the guys had already reached the Mariners dock. I side-stroked and breast-stroked and stopped to float once in awhile. Almost everyone had made the dock and there were only half a dozen of us still thrashing along. We were surrounded by about a dozen patrol boats.

One by one the others gave up and were hauled into boats.

I was the only one still going. Not very fast, though, and it was almost 100 yards to the dock. All the boats went back to the boathouse. Except one that kept sticking closer and closer to me. The two kids asked me if I wanted to quit and I shook my head. The bugle blew for supper call and they began to look a little irritated. I stopped to float and they rowed up close and grabbed me. I cussed at them to get out of the way and after that they followed along almost pushing me with the boat. The bugle blew for evening assembly just before I reached the dock. They were so mad they rowed away to the boathouse without a word. I ~~lay~~^{laid} on the dock a long time. I was never so tired. Walking up the dock every muscle in my body ached. But I was very proud when I got back up the hill to the Lodge and told Grant I'd made it. Because that meant I now had ~~Swimming~~ and Lifesaving merit badges and all

I had to do was go to a Court of Honor and I would be an Eagle Scout.

The second week I went on the Ranger Hike. I had planned to climb Olympus but Grant had a wonderful trip laid out. On one part we would sleep in the daytime and hike at night. There was a full moon that week and we would hike on top of Grand Ridge in the meadows. Some of our camps would be above timberline, maybe even on tops of mountains.

The first day we hiked fifteen miles to Dosemeadows. The second day we switchbacked to Lost Pass and dropped down into the headwaters of Lost River. While eating lunch in the meadows we saw a herd of about seventy elk, also three deer, a bear, two wolves, which are very rare nowadays, and a blue grouse with her chicks. It was really wild country. We climbed up Lost Ridge and hiked along the top of the ridge on snowfields and piles of rocks to the top of the Lillian Glacier and at sunset glissaded down to the meadows and camped. Next morning we were going up on top of Lillian Ridge to Obstruction Point and then we'd sleep all afternoon and hike by moonlight to Deer Park.

We never took tents on camp hikes. When I heard drops of rain on my sleeping bag that night I tried to ignore them. But it rained harder and harder so at daylight I got up and carried all my gear under some alpine trees. The whole party gathered there. It rained harder

and the clouds were so low and thick we couldn't even see the Lillian Glacier, which was only a few hundred feet above us. The rain began to come through the trees. Grant said it was an honest to gosh Three Day Blow and we'd have to haul for home.

We didn't take raincoats on camp hikes. We didn't even wear long pants, just Scout shorts and pajama bottoms for hiking on snow so our legs wouldn't get burned. We were all pretty cold and wet by the time we kicked steps back up the Lillian Glacier. At the top of the ridge the wind was blowing a hurricane. Boy, was it miserable! We had miles to go on that ridge. Most of the kids were very grim but there were three of us who hiked together and treated it all like a big joke. When the wind came howling in we howled along with it. We made up a song about what a miserable day it was, each one of us making up a verse in turn then all of us joining in on the chorus. Some of the grim guys didn't think we were funny and kept telling us to shut up. We didn't, though, until we got to Lost Pass and dropped down out of the wind. All of a sudden we felt sort of pooped. We were darn pooped before we got to Camp Marion. We made eighteen miles that day, only about half of it on trail. It was just drizzling at Marion and we managed to dry out our sleeping bags a little. Next day we hiked ^{fourteen} ~~eighteen~~ miles more down to Camp Elkhorn. Parties

were rained out all over the Olympics and we Rangers being older were the last ones picked up. That wasn't until late the next day. We'd thrown away most of our food at the Lillian Glacier so we didn't have anything to eat the last day and a half.

It was a great trip. Grant told me that having been to camp so much and being Eagle I could get on the camp staff the next summer if I wanted. If I wanted! A whole summer at camp, and it wouldn't cost me a cent! I could hardly wait. The first week of each period I'd be an Assistant Scoutmaster in one of the sections, then every second week go hiking in the Olympics as an Assistant Leader. I'd get to climb Olympus and probably several other mountains like the Brothers and Anderson.

It was at Lost Pass I noticed what I thought was a bruised hip but I ignored it thinking about spending a whole free summer at camp. In March three of us older guys from the Troop hiked nine miles to Lake Dorothy. In the afternoon we slogged several miles in the snow to the top of the ridge. Back at the lake we found a raft and paddled it out to an island. The raft was almost waterlogged so we went barefoot. There was snow around the shores and the water was like ice. That night my hip began to hurt something awful and I didn't sleep at all. Next morning I couldn't even walk at first. It loosened up a little but every step was

like having a dagger stuck in my hip. The other guys split up my pack and made me a crutch and took turns helping me the nine miles out. Then the doctor told me to stay out of the mountains a year.

At the end of sophomore year I was invited to join the Lynx Club. There are only fifty members so in a school of 2500 it is quite an honor. Especially if you make it as a sophomore, which is the first chance. Most of my best friends made the club the same time. We wear black sweaters with a big red and black lynx on the front. The girls have a Triple L Club and wear white sweaters.

I turned out for debate as a freshman and that's where I met Bill and Bob. We became good friends and the coach called us the Three Musketeers. Junior year we all made the team. We have a lot of fun in debate. We like and respect the coach very much but when he's out of the room we have eraser fights. He knows what goes on but pretends not to as long as we're quiet. The debaters who want to study sit on the floor under the desks. The rest of us line up at the front and back blackboards and toss erasers across the room. It's worth your life to wear a Lynx Club sweater to debate. There is nothing so satisfying as a direct hit with a chalked up eraser on a black sweater. One day another teacher walked in the room. He didn't see

any eraser fight, all he was was a bunch of guys all covered with chalk working problems at the blackboards. He had been shell shocked in the World War and when he saw faces peeping over the desk tops he got a sort of wild ~~look~~^{look} and ran out of the room.

Actually I can't speak well in public or think fast on my feet so I'm not much of a debater. Bob and Bill and I don't help each other out. Whichever of us is speaking has to put up with heckling from the other two. I'll be going along very seriously and they're both watching and listening seriously and then I come to the dramatic climax of my argument and they both bust out laughing. Not making any noise but just doubling up silently. We make all of our speeches from notes written down on cards beforehand but it is hard to even read notes with that sort of stuff going on.

In each debate one person speaks extemporaneously giving the evaluation at the end. The only time I've ever evaluated was when the scheduled evaluator came down suddenly with laryngitis. It was a very strange debate. We were visiting another school. Bob and Bill were debating someplace else. The audience didn't ~~know~~^e me. And I was too nervous to do any clowning around.

The thing was that before I ever said a word I was getting big laughs. All the other debaters were on the stage with me but they weren't getting laughs. If I

wrote down a note on my tablet or cleaned my glasses the audience giggled. My mouth was so dry I poured a glass of water and drank it. The audience laughed so hard the speaker had to stop.

By the time I stood up to evaluate I was almost too rattled to speak. I couldn't think at all. It didn't seem to matter. The audience was fascinated. They laughed at everything I said. After I finished my evaluation a bright young kid in the audience stood up and started asking questions, ~~about my stand on the subject, whatever that was~~ ^{Right away} He backed me into a corner ~~immediately~~. I kept tossing off answers and getting more thoroughly trapped every word I said. At last he had me pinned against the wall. He made it obvious that I had been speaking total nonsense, nothing but nonsense. I leaned on the rostrum and said in a loud voice, now listen my little friend. I hadn't any idea what to say next, I paused. The audience howled. Even the coach was doubled up laughing. The kid was so flustered he sat down. It was very weird because I haven't any idea at all what was so funny.

I had straight A's the first 2½ years. So did most of my friends except when they ran into an incompetent teacher. It was terrible to get a B. We were all nervous the morning cards were handed out. At lunch table we'd sympathize with anyone who had a B. Fortunately that happened very rarely. But somehow last year grades

didn't matter to me anymore. I guess it was because I was missing school a lot and having to work hard to catch up, and when the pain was bad I couldn't work at all and would have to work even harder when it finally stopped. Sometimes in class when I'd missed a couple of days and couldn't follow the lessons I'd look out the window at the new leaves on the trees or the white clouds shining in the sun. One time last spring our debate coach told us about the professor at a college back east who walked into the classroom and looked out the window and said to his students, gentlemen, it is spring. That's all he said and then he walked out of class and never came back. He went to Italy and became a philosopher.

Anyway, in physics last spring I couldn't see the blackboard from my seat because of the glare from the window. Some of the examination questions I couldn't read at all. The teacher would have moved me if I'd mentioned it but it didn't seem worth the trouble. The questions didn't interest me that much.

Also in solid geometry the teacher seated us alphabetically. That particular classroom had tables and we sat three at a table. It happened I was between two real rummies. That certainly wasn't my fault. But I was always tilting my chair back and twice during the semester I fell flat on my back. It made a big racket,

of course. The second time the teacher cracked, Mister Marlowe, I trust you have your geometry insurance paid up. Very funny. He had me figured for a rummy. I had him figured for a nasty old man the way he looked at girls when they walked out of class. Solid geometry is a cinch but it made me mad even to look at the book. I ended up with a B in geometry and a C in physics. Some of my friends pretended it didn't matter. Some were horrified. Everyone was sympathetic and when I laughed about it and said I didn't care they thought I was just putting on a brave show. But I really don't care about grades anymore.

PART THREE

PRAYER

I quit going to church after the Lake Dorothy hike. It was painful to walk that far and anyway I hadn't been going very often. Even when the pain let up I didn't go back. The people in church that are good are stupid and usually not very clean. The people that are clean and fairly bright aren't very good. Most of them are so stupid I wouldn't bother asking them questions. The ones I asked never had any answers. I decided the best place for a truly religious person on Sunday was anyplace but church.

I still say the Lord's Prayer every night. The only difference is that I think about it as I say it and put in real feeling. Actually it is a beautiful prayer and saying it the right way makes me feel I'm in a church. But it is a very grand church and there is nobody in it but me and God.

When I was younger I raced through the words because the main part of my prayer was at the end in the special messages to God like please take care of my folks and my dog. Also apologies for certain particularly terrible sins and asking for things like a visit from Sally and so forth.

But after I quit church I began putting all my feelings into the words of the prayer. It's best when I can say it out loud. At home I whisper but sometimes out in the woods when nobody is around I get down on my

knees and close my eyes and say the whole prayer out loud. Saying it out loud in the woods, all those old words and the strange grammar, it's like saying a holy spell. After the amen I make my mind a complete blank and try to focus my soul on God. I didn't care much for physics but I was interested in optics because in grade school I had a burning glass and spent a lot of time focusing sunlight on pieces of paper. It wasn't a very good burning glass and anyway there isn't much sunshine in Seattle. It was very difficult to start a piece of paper burning. I remember this when I'm trying to focus my soul and I don't get discouraged. After all this is something tremendously difficult but also tremendously important.

I'm not trying to focus any special requests or messages. Just my soul. I'm not asking God to speak to me or let me know He is there. I just want to let Him know I am here and I love God.

I have to be perfectly quiet. If a fly buzzes around or my knees get wet the whole thing is ruined. That is discouraging because I feel I ought to be able to forget my body and the world entirely but I can't. I worry about whether I'm good enough ever to be able to focus. Or maybe my soul isn't strong enough so even if I do focus on God He won't notice. Or maybe God is so far away the focal length of my soul is too short.

I keep on trying but nothing has ever happened yet. Of course maybe I am focusing my soul on God and He is testing my faith. Maybe I focus every time and He never gives a sign because He wants to find out if my love is really unselfish. So I try to be humble and not even think about wanting a sign from Him.

There are so many things going on. The pain doesn't seem really fair because I have sinned a lot but nowhere near as much as people I know that have never had a sick day in their life. Maybe the pain is a special test and I should be glad He is testing me so I pray during the pain being very careful not to ask Him to get rid of the pain. But it's all very tiring. The pain tires me out and the praying tires me out and also a lot of other things. Sometimes I get so darned tired I'm practically hysterical.

One Sunday I went exploring a new route through the woods between our house and Puget Sound. I expected to have lunch on the beach but got completely lost. It was late in the afternoon when I gave up looking for a new route and decided to crash brush straight west to the beach. But with all the swamps and ravines and blowdowns it was almost sunset when I busted out of the brush on the top of a sand cliff and slid down onto the beach. I'd been hiking on trails and crashing brush

about eight hours and I was pooped. I sat down next to the water.

I guess it was because I was so tired but that's the first sunset I ever really watched. Little waves were slapping and rustling by my feet and Puget Sound was a big blue plain spreading out south and west and north, sort of a shivering blue. The sky was a very calm and soft blue in the west. The little clouds were all shades of red and orange and purple and brown and yellow and so forth. The clouds didn't seem painted. The colors seemed to vibrate from the clouds. The sun went down very slowly until it got close to the sharp peaks of the Olympics. Then it seemed to speed up and practically dive into the mountains. While it was diving it shrivelled up and became very small and turned a bright reddish orange. In the daytime you can't look directly at the sun but now it was a small round ball of red fire and I could look directly at it and watch it dive down into the Olympics. Now the clouds vibrated stronger than ever and changed colors faster than ever and kept getting brighter and brighter. I could almost feel them vibrating in my bones they were so bright. The sky kept turning colors.

The most amazing thing, and this was what almost scared me, suddenly part of the sky turned green. Really green! It was a pale and delicate green and vibrating. I had never known the sky could be green. The

clouds and the sky vibrated until the colors seemed to come right through my eyes into my soul. When I saw the sky turn green I was so surprised my stomach sort of trembled ^{like I was getting sick} and then there was something filling up my chest and my throat was shuddering and the next thing I knew I was sitting there in the sand sobbing. I was surprised to find myself crying for no reason at all but I didn't care.

After awhile the colors weren't vibrating anymore. They were softer and felt like little delicate breezes. Then some of the clouds turned a very deep and tragic black against the sky. The sky was still a pale blue and white with ^{streaks} ~~shades~~ of pink. The Olympics got blacker and blacker. Sharper and sharper. They seemed to be rising up into the sky ^{as if the earth was tipping over}. The clouds and the sky faded out but the Olympics kept climbing up higher and more frightening. I couldn't believe I'd ever been brave enough to hike through those terrible black peaks.

Then it was like a curtain coming down. The sky above my head was dark blue and the dark blue moved down toward the Olympics. Then another curtain ^{followed it down}. A black one. Then there were no more mountains or sky or clouds. Just night and stars.

I began to shiver. I noticed Puget Sound was black now, and the lights of towns were sparkling on the black water. There was a wind blowing and ^{that was what} ~~it~~ woke me up.

At the edge of the waves I took off my glasses and splashed water in my face to wash away the dried tears. I didn't give a darn. I was so tired I could hardly walk home.

After that I began to watch sunsets. Every one is different. And every time I watch a sunset it seems to me nothing at all in the world is important.

TERROR

LOVE

ADVENTURE

PRAYER

PART FOUR

PART FOUR

TERROR

The pain came again many times. It ^{struck} ~~appeared in~~ my right wrist, then shifted to my left shoulder, and then ^{revisited} ~~touched~~ a hip ~~again~~, or ^{tried} ~~started up in~~ a knee or an ankle ^{or a bunch of fingers} or my neck. There were some bad twinges. Every twinge I expected to start pulsing. Sometimes there was the beginning of a pulse. Every pulse I expected to pound faster, harder. Every morning when I awoke my first thought was to examine the pain. All day I wondered if the pain would get worse today and start pulsing. At night I wondered how bad the pain would be tomorrow. When the pain dimmed out I was not so joyful anymore because I wondered where it would be next week, and how bad. Maybe tomorrow, maybe next week, maybe next month, the pain would come for the last time. Then it would go away forever. Or I would go away forever.

Even when there wasn't any pain I had trouble going to sleep at night. I would crawl in bed exhausted after days of pain and feeling grateful for the chance to rest. I would sink very happy toward sleep and suddenly jump up in bed terrified!

I was going crazy! Just as I was entering sleep I lost control of my mind. Ideas entered my mind without my putting them there. My mind was out of control, I was going crazy. I came fully awake shaking and sweating.

Sinking to the very edge of sleep and then jumping up in bed shaking, sometimes three or four times a night. Sleep was my only escape and now it was frightening to go to sleep. Every evening, at twilight, I began to worry about going to bed.

Even if there is no pain and I somehow cross that terrifying boundary into sleep there is always the dream. It is only every month or two but I never know when it might come. It's always exactly the same and always as bad as the first time.

This Thing--maybe it's Death or maybe it's God, I'm not sure yet--when I wake up it is in the walls and the furniture and the fireplace and it is outside the window in the night. It is in the cigarette Mother is smoking and it's in Mother, too, and in me, and in the cards.

I'm getting rather old to have nightmares. But I don't plan to have nightmares. I wake up and I'm screaming, that's all I know, and Mother is standing by the bed. I try to be nonchalant and say something about supper must have disagreed with me. Mother doesn't make a big production. She suggests we play a game or two of casino. Nothing strange about that. We've always been a family of card playing fools. Nothing unusual about us playing casino in the middle of the night. We play casino until I'm tired and then off we go to our beds. I go back to bed feeling safe. The dream has never come

twice in one night. Also I feel relieved because chances are it won't come again for at least two weeks.

So I lie in bed trying to remember what happened before I got to the door. Before I started pounding on the door and screaming for them to let me in. Also if I try to figure out what it is that is ^{chasing} ~~cheating~~ me. The next day I think about it too. And especially after a few days have gone by and I know I'm not safe anymore and the dream might come again any night.

PART FOUR

LOVE

Senior year there seem^ed to be a lot more girls in school than ever before. There were hundreds of beautiful girls, and several dozen I'd have fallen in love with if they'd ever blinked in my direction. But I was rummying around so much the girls that interested me wouldn't have noticed me even if I hadn't been so ugly. ^{I didn't care very much.} I couldn't be a smooth operator if I tried, and anyway it's more fun to be a clown. So what if I am childish? After all, I'm younger than anyone else. It's funny a single year should make so much difference but ever since skipping a grade I've always felt like an infant.

There was a girl named Laura in Senior Comp. Whenever I recited she not only listened, she looked. Sometimes I glanced in her direction. Our eyes never met. She was too quick.

It was a dark fall. Rain and clouds, drizzle and fog. Seattle doesn't have four seasons, just two. There is a season of warm rain, then a season of cold rain. But sunrise comes steadily later, sunset earlier, and the clouds grow thicker, moving toward winter. The twilight terror, the insanity on the edge of sleep, the dream within sleep, were ^{always with me.} ~~never totally forgotten.~~ The pain wasn't so bad anymore, but I knew how bad the pain could be, how it could strike from ambush. I was often wild and whirling. And sometimes lost in such black moods nothing in the world could cheer me up. But Laura was

somehow always part of the wild whirling, part of the blackness. Laura was thin, nervous, dark, intense. I halfway fell in love with her. Then I overheard a conversation and found she was taking Drama.

I watched her in a play once. She embraced an actor and wasn't at all embarrassed. She was like all the others, too darn sophisticated. She was studying me as a character, that was obvious. She looked at me in class because I was a character. I forgot Laura. Actually I didn't forget her, I said the heck with her. If she wanted to study a character I'd show her a real character! I was wilder than ever.

One morning I was in the Comp classroom early. I was always there early because Miss Groves had given me a key to the door so that before school I could use her personal library.

Classes didn't start for an hour yet. It was still total night outside. Suddenly Laura entered the room and said hello, and asked what I was reading. She being a sophisticated actress I made some sort of wisecrack. She wisecracked back, but for no reason seemed very nervous. It was night. We were alone together in the room. We were sitting only about three feet apart. We ran out of jokes all at once, both of us together. I looked at her black hair and her thin shoulders. She looked at the floor, and her breathing was very irregular and nervous. I was trying to think of something to say. Then the door

opened and a couple of kids came in and suddenly she jumped up and ran away.

Laura just jumped up and ran away! I was afraid she was sick, but she was in her seat when class started. After that I thought about Laura quite a bit. All the time, actually. I watched her in class, out of the corner of my eye, mostly. She didn't look at me at all. Except sometimes we met accidentally in the halls and she flashed those black intense eyes up at me and I was paralyzed. I had to do something about Laura. I didn't know what to do.

Last summer, a couple of months before I ^{first saw} ~~met~~ Laura, I became old enough to get a driver's license. I drew out all my savings and borrowed the rest from Dad and bought a Model A. Owning a Model A I knew I could, at least in theory, do something about Laura.

My memory is a blur. Not since I tried to kiss Teresa had I been so daring. It must have been one of those wild days when nothing was important anyway. Until we met in the hall and when I asked her Laura said she'd like very much to have a ride home.

We were shy in the Model A. She wasn't really sophisticated after all. She was just as nervous as I was. We had to talk about something. It was too embarrassing to sit there side by side and not say a word. We talked about ^{Miss Groves} ~~our teacher~~. Then about the books I was reading in her library every morning. Then

about that morning when Laura came in early and suddenly ran away. We were both quiet a minute. I raised my foot from the gas pedal a little. I took a deep breath, and then I asked why she ran away. She was confused. She laughed and babbled and finally became very serious and said her father didn't want her to go around with boys. She talked fast, almost mumbling, not looking at me. She was lying, I knew that. All I had to do was ask her for a date. The story was to make it easy for me. But I was paralyzed. I asked why her father didn't want her to go around with boys.

The Model A plugged along and I was paralyzed at the wheel.

Laura flashed her eyes at me and halfway screamed her father didn't like boys! At least, at least. . .

But, I said, but maybe, maybe he doesn't dislike all boys.

She said, maybe not all.

I said, maybe he wouldn't mind me. She didn't say anything. I said, Laura, maybe if you and I had a date and he and I talked together then he would, well, maybe. . .

My memory is a complete blank until I was somehow home telling Mother and Dad I was going out that night. They were very casual about the whole thing like I'd been having dates all my life. Mother didn't make a production, but she shined my shoes. In an offhand way

Dad showed me how to tie a necktie. I later discovered he slipped a couple of dollar bills in my wallet when I wasn't looking. And I still owed him almost \$20 for the Model A.

Laura's father met me at the door. I wasn't surprised that he was smiling and friendly. Laura's sister was smiling and friendly, though she giggled a lot. Laura's mother was smiling and friendly but awfully nervous.

Then Laura was on the stairs and we all stopped talking. Darned if I know how Laura had the nerve to keep coming down the steps with all of us so quiet.

I know this was my first date. I'm not positive about Laura. She told a lot of stories. I suspect this was her first date too.

Laura came slowly down step by step. She was wearing high heels ^{and obviously didn't trust them.} My knees were shaking too. She ^{was blushing and} wasn't at all sophisticated but she was so beautiful I couldn't look at her.

Laura certainly didn't look at me. When she finally made it down the steps her sister started giggling again, and patting Laura's curls here and there, and her mother touched Laura's dress here and there, and finally Laura's father helped her into her coat and then squeezed her shoulders ^{and kissed her on the cheek.}

We walked side by side down the steps from the porch, and side by side to the street. We knew they were

watching our every step. We marched like toy soldiers to the Model A. We got in the Model A.

Retard spark. Advance hand throttle. Goose twice with choke. Floor clutch. Floor starter. Goose once. Explosion! Advance spark, flip up hand throttle, shift into low, tromp on gas, release clutch, and away we fly! Now turn on headlights.

All the way from home I'd been planning things to say. But with Laura in high heels and so beautiful, and ^{with me} so awkward with my shoes shined and wearing a necktie I couldn't say a word. And Laura certainly couldn't start a conversation. I was the Man and the rules are the Man has to start things. I parked the Model A someplace downtown and we walked along side by side toward the bright lights. This couldn't go on forever. Suddenly I asked her what shew she wanted to see. After the long silence my voice scared her. She jumped a foot or so. That scared me and I didn't say ~~any~~ more. The first theater we came to I pulled out my wallet and bought tickets. It was dark inside. We bumped together in the aisle and I accidentally got a deep breath of Laura's perfume. My knees felt wobbly. Then we were in our seats, side by side in the dark. All around us were other couples. All the other couples were leaning their heads together and had their arms around each other. It was embarrassing. I wanted to put my arm around Laura but I didn't dare. The way

she was sagging in my direction and heaving deep sighs I was fairly sure she wanted me to put my arm around her. But it might turn out she was sagging and sighing because she was sick. She might feel insulted and slap me in the face. But finally she sighed such a long deep sigh and sagged so far I had to take a chance. I put my arm around her shoulders. It was amazing. She relaxed all over with a sort of quiver. Her soft black hair settled against my cheek. My fingers gripped her shoulder, my cheek pushed into her warm hair. Our knees touched. I never did find out how the picture ended.

After that we had a date every weekend. Sometimes two dates. During the week I always drove her home from school once or twice. We sometimes walked in the halls together. We didn't look at each other in class. It wasn't necessary. (9) One Sunday we took a drive and happened to get back to her home just at suppertime. Her folks insisted I stay for supper. I knew what they were thinking and it made me nervous. I knew it made Laura nervous too. But Laura seemed even more nervous than that. She seemed to be embarrassed to have me around at all. What with all my wild moods at school, maybe she was afraid I would go wild in front of her folks. It was a confused supper. Laura ate nothing at all, and just drank coffee, and was very cool. As soon as I could I said goodnight and walked out onto the

porch.

I knew there was no railing on the porch. But I said goodnight to the family and the door shut and I started down the steps wondering why Laura was so cold. Only I didn't go down the steps. I made a wrong turn and walked into space. Except for a gasp when my foot dropped into nothing I was quiet until I hit the rosebush. The deeper I went into the rosebush the louder I screamed.

I stopped screaming and became very quiet. The door flew open and Laura and her father and mother and sister charged out. They thought I was dead. Loud screams, total silence--it must have sounded fatal. But I crawled out of the rosebush and tried to make a joke of it. They all watched me walk to the Model A. I might collapse from wounds or internal injuries. Actually I was tempted to collapse. I wished I was bleeding or unconscious or something. Then it wouldn't be funny. But if I wasn't hurt it was just more clowning around. But I got to the Model A and drove home cussing.

I had never kissed Laura. I had tried once but she wouldn't let me. I respected her for that. But the day after I fell in the rosebush I began worrying about why she had been so cool. I had to settle things. I wanted to know. We met in the halls and she wasn't at all cool, she was like always. It was a great relief, and driving her home that night I was very happy and

pretty wild. Then as we were joking about this and that I told her I loved her. She got a funny look on her face and said you don't really mean that. So I stopped joking and said very seriously, yes, I really do. Then I asked if she loved me. She said she liked me and I was fun to be around but she didn't love me.

Tuesday at school I asked her if she wanted a ride home. No. Next day. No. Next day. No. Laura was gay and sophisticated and talked to boys in the hall and wouldn't ride home with me all that week.

I didn't have a date with her on the weekend. My folks pretended not to notice, and that helped a lot. I had my chores to do on Saturday but Sunday morning I didn't feel like working. Everything seemed pointless. I ^{slept late and then} sat around reading and was so depressed I couldn't take a deep breath. There was a heavy weight ^{my stomach} inside of ~~me~~ and when I took a deep breath it ^{exploded} ~~came~~ up as a sigh or even a sob and almost choked me. ^{I was getting by on shallow breathing.} I didn't feel like studying. I ~~picked up my old copy of~~ ^{read} Ivanhoe ^{all the way through that day} and Rowena was as lovable as every ^{this time} but ~~now~~ I loved Rebecca more, she looked so much like Laura.

After supper I walked in the woods until it was dark. That evening I read Tom Sawyer for ^{about} the hundredth time and wished I was a child again, ^{me and Becky Thatcher and Huck.} Growing up just isn't worth it.

It was completely accidental, but Monday morning I came down with stomach flu and was out of school all week. I was never very sick but I had to go to the toilet quite often.

I thought about Laura and became so sad one afternoon I wrote a suicide letter. I couldn't go on this way, I had to kill myself.

But then I had to go to the toilet and after an hour on the toilet the letter was ridiculous. I was still chuckling Monday. I couldn't tell anyone the joke and that made it all the funnier. Also I knew that Laura, being an actress and all, thought I was sick all week because of her. If I had limped into class Monday ^{looking} pale and wasted, Laura ~~probably~~ would have come to me after school and declared her love. I ~~almost~~ ^{seriously} ~~did~~ ^{considered} limp ^{ing} into class ^{for the heck of it} but spending almost an entire week on the toilet made the whole situation look silly.

She didn't ^{really} love me anyway and frankly speaking I can't imagine how any girl could love me. I'm ugly and loud and I clown around all the time. Someday I might meet a girl who could love me. I'll sure be surprised. Probably I won't live that long anyway the way things are going. Only one girl ever ^{really} loved me. I know what the psychologists say about that. At my age you're not supposed to want to kiss your sister. We were just little children then so kissing was all right.

But I love Sally as much as ever. The psychologists don't believe it but a person can be a normal man with all the usual desires and at the same time be so much in love he doesn't have any shameful desires at all. He just wants to love and be loved. He can do this even if there is no flesh involved, even if ~~one~~ the loved ^{one} is dead. I've been reading a psychology book I found in the public library. ~~The~~ ^{The} author has a chapter on brothers and sisters and also twins. As far as I'm concerned psychologists are all crackpots.

PART FOUR
ADVENTURE

Senior year was wild. There was always something going on at our table during lunch. Most of our noise was fairly intellectual, what with arm-waving and shouting about calculus or religion or politics. The monitors tried to ignore the noise, since they knew practically all the brains in the class were in our gang.

Sometimes after eating we held a seance. We all closed our eyes and looked solemn and put our hands on the table. Our minds caused the table to slowly and mysteriously rise into the air. We helped out our minds with our knees of course. Sam was a very slow eater. He chewed every bite about a hundred times. He was always still eating during the seance and finally he'd have to stand up to finish. The monitors pretended not to see the seances but sometimes the table slipped and the dishes smashed on the floor and then they had to notice and make us stop.

Other days when lunch was too quiet I recited poetry. I'd start pounding out a beat on the table with both fists and snarl when shall we three meet again in thunder lightning snow or rain. I'd pound louder and louder until dishes were rattling around. I roared, fair is foul and foul is fair, hover through the fog and the filthy air and ended with a wild scream. The monitors were nervous but there wasn't much they

could do. It was Shakespeare after all.

Lynx Club members were supposed to be school leaders so we were all assigned to various committees. Bob and Bill and I were assigned to the Football Pep Committee and had charge of the Pep Assemblies. We staged some good shows and the morning of the last game of the season, with Ballard, the auditorium was jammed. Almost the whole school was there, including many teachers. We had been working ourselves up for a smash climax ~~show~~. It was a monster production.

The curtain went up with violins playing Hearts and Flowers. I was standing at center stage wearing a red wig and a dress. I was weeping and sobbing. They were real tears too, because I was eating an onion. Bill was bumping back and forth in a rocking chair, whining and groaning, wearing a white wig and a dress and a shawl. Between bites of onion I declared to the audience in a falsetto voice, it is winter and it is snowing outside and unless I marry Olaf Ballardson he will foreclose on the mortgage and throw Gramma and me out into the cold! The door flew open and snow blew all over Bill and me and George charged in wearing a long black coat and a black hat. He twisted his moustache and chuckled and sneered, aha, me proud beauty! The Yell Team came bouncing out of the wings and the leader yelled, okay gang, come on, let's give three big boo's for Olaf Ballardson! Boo! Boo! Boo! went the

audience while Gramma and I wept and consoled each other and Olaf slunk up and down sneering at the audience and twisting his moustache. Olaf menaced us, sneering, unless you marry me, it's out in the snow for you both! He slunk out the door and snow blew in.

I got down on my knees and held up my clasped hands and cried, if only Abraham Lincoln was here! Ed charged through the door. Snow blew in. Ed is about 6 foot 6. He said, don't you worry madam! Abraham Lincoln will dispose of that knave Ballardson! I walked across the stage on my knees and hugged his legs and cried, oh thank you, thank you, Mr. Lincoln! Ed said, oh, madam, I'm not Abraham Lincoln! I'm just his Press Agent! He whirled around dramatically and pointed to the wings and cried, but here comes Abraham Lincoln now!

Bob, who is 5 foot 7, was Lincoln. He played the role wearing his Lynx Club sweater. We figured Abraham Lincoln would get a big laugh, 5 foot 7, in a Lynx Club seater. At rehearsal the whole cast laughed when Bob walked on. Now we were all looking into the wings, trying not to laugh.

We didn't even see him come. He didn't walk on. He swung out on a rope. It surprised the audience and they gasped. It surprised us too because Bob had invented this stunt at the last minute when he found a rope hanging down from the ceiling. It surprised Bob too because he

held on too long and was well into the upswing before he let go. He dropped ten feet onto the stage.

Ed said, here comes Abraham Lincoln now! Bob came swinging out through the air and crashed onto the stage. We all forgot our lines but it didn't matter because the audience laughed for about five minutes. This gave Bob a chance to revive. It was lucky he had no lines in the play. When the audience was quiet Ed made a speech about Lincoln being a great guy. Bob grinned and looked eager and whenever his Press Agent said something noble about Lincoln Bob struck a serious pose or took a bow.

The Yell Team bounced on and led the big traditional school yell about Lincoln! Lincoln! rah! rah! rah! and so forth. In four years of high school I never heard anything to compare with that yell. Ed strode offstage with Bob running to keep up and Olaf Ballardson came slinking through the door and stuffed me in a box and started sawing the box in half. The Yell Team bounced out and led another Boo! Boo! Boo! but Olaf sneered at the audience and kept on sawing me in half.

Suddenly the Press Agent charged on stage and cried, halt, villain! Ballardson dropped his saw and yelled, coises! foiled again! He cringed as Ed stood over him making a speech about how Ballardson must pay for his crimes. The Yell Team bounced out and led the

audience in Give 'Em the Ax! the Ax! the Ax!
Then the Press Agent knocked Olaf Ballardson down.
All this while Abraham Lincoln was dancing around
behind Ed scowling and shadowboxing. Olaf slunk out
the door sneering, you have not heard the last of Olaf
Ballardson, my fine feathered friends!

I crawled out of the box and jumped up into Ed's
arms. That surprised him and nearly knocked him down
because it wasn't in the script. It was a stunt I'd
seen in a Marx Brothers comedy once. He managed to
hold me cradled in his arms while he made a noble
curtain speech about what a great guy Abraham Lincoln
is and how next time Ballardson won't get off so easy.
Bob was walking up and down taking bows and shaking
his hands over his head and grinning like an idiot.
Ballardson was poking his head out of the wings and
sneering, just you wait until this afternoon! When
Ed finished his speech he carried me offstage and
Gramma jumped out of her rocking chair for the first
time in the whole play and screeched, don't you worry,
folks, everything is going to turn out all right!
The Yell Team bounced on and the leader yelled, okay
gang! Let's hear three great big ones for Gramma!
The roof practically shook with Gramma! Gramma! Rah!
Rah! Rah! GRAMMA! The curtains closed.

There were a lot of teachers who didn't think the
play was funny at all. The principal didn't think it was

funny. Neither did the vice principal. Neither did the school board members who had been invited to see a display of real school spirit. Along about lunchtime there was talk about probation for the ringleaders. But by the time school let out nobody was very eager to put the ringleaders on probation because that would wipe out a large part of the Lynx Club and the Honor Society. So after school the principal simply asked us to remember that Abraham Lincoln was a very great American and just now great Americans should be treated with special respect. There weren't any more Pep Assemblies scheduled so we could promise easily. After all the time we put in it's a shame Ballard beat the tar out of Lincoln that afternoon. I guess the school left all its yells in the Pep Assembly and didn't have anything left for the game.

Actually I didn't have the slightest idea what the principal was talking about until a couple weeks later. I had been walking in the woods the way I always do after Sunday dinner. It was a dark, wet day and I was feeling despondent about school and everything. Especially now that there were no more Pep Assemblies. It was quite late when I came out of the woods. I wasn't even in the yard when the front door flew open and Mother charged out. I was scared. Something awful had happened. She was yelling. I started running. She wasn't crying. Nobody was dead. That was a relief. But she was excited.

I stopped running. She yelled, Japs bombing Pearl Harbor! I said, what? Japs bombing Pearl Harbor! Pearl Harbor! Japs bombing Pearl Harbor!

I followed her in the house trying to figure it out. I had to think for awhile before I remembered where Pearl Harbor was. I was amazed at the Japs. I knew there were discussions going on back in Washington but I didn't think anybody was really mad, it was just diplomacy. There is always diplomacy going on, but bombing Pearl Harbor! They must have gone out of their minds! How could any nation attack the United States? How could any nation be that stupid? Didn't they know about our battleships and Flying Fortresses and the Marines?

Mother and Dad and I sat around the radio. The regular programs weren't on. This was irritating because I'd come back especially to hear Jack Benny and Fred Allen. The networks were pretty disconnected. One man after another said the same thing over and over again. They were all practically hysterical. Personally though it was shocking to have some of our battleships sink we had so many of them I couldn't imagine why everyone was so excited. It was amusing to hear the radio people who are always so calm getting so flustered and confused.

It was interesting to be at war but it wasn't

serious. Next morning at school I ran into First Period pulling up the corners of my eyes and yelled, I'm a Jap! I'm going to eat you all! A girl burst into tears and cried, my mother and father are at Pearl Harbor! She ran out of the room and didn't come back. I didn't make any more jokes.

Especially when I saw how the Japanese kids were taking the news. They knew what was coming. I didn't. It just made me sick when they were all forced to leave the Pacific Coast. It was a dreadful thing for our government to do. I've had Japanese friends all my life. If the government had gone to any trouble at all they could have gotten plenty of evidence to prove the loyalty of most of the Japanese.

Evidently nobody cared about the Japanese as people anymore. All of a sudden they weren't people at all, just grinning monkeys. Most of the greenhouses around were owned by Japanese. It wasn't long after Pearl Harbor before all the windows in all the greenhouses were broken. The family in our neighborhood had lived there for years and everyone liked them. I don't know who broke their windows. I can't believe it was anyone in the neighborhood. But the greenhouse was way off the highway on a private road. It must have been one of our neighbors. It made me sick.

When I thought it over the war was quite a shock.

It was shocking that a nation could be so stupid as to attack the United States. It was even more shocking that my neighbors could be so cruel for no reason at all. But everything became so strange after awhile the stupidity and cruelty were easier to understand. There were blinkers on the traffic signals and blackout paper on our windows and the radio stations went off the air at sunset. At school we had ^{not only} fire drills ^{but} ~~and~~ bomb drills and poison gas drills. There were anti-aircraft batteries in every golf course. There were barrage balloons all over the place. One afternoon I hiked down through the woods to the beach and when I came out of the brush onto the railroad tracks there was a guy there wearing a soldier suit and he whirled and darn near shot me. With a real gun!

It was strange everyone was taking this war so seriously but I wasn't too surprised. For a long time the whole world had been seeming stranger and stranger. The war was a part of the strangeness but the world was strange even without a war. Some of the things in the world were even more foolish and cruel and stupid and confusing than a war.

^{Senior}
In ~~Camp~~ Miss Groves asked us to write a theme. My Philosophy of Life. Junior year I had heard about a book called Proposed Roads to Freedom that was written while the author was in jail. It sounded funny so I got

the book from the Public Library. It wasn't funny, but it was quite interesting. Anyway when I sat down to write my Philosophy of Life I thought about the war and the tough times we'd had during the Depression and I decided I was an Anarchist. That seemed to me the best road to freedom. I also said in my theme that if the Golden Rule were taken seriously there would not be wars and fist fights. Also nobody would ever be out of work and starving while some others were sailing around on yachts eating steaks. Finally I said that Christ was a very wise and good man but God is a Being far too big for us to understand.

I didn't know Miss Groves very well then and I thought my Philosophy might make her mad but I didn't care. I didn't care if she gave me a good grade or not. I didn't care about grades or anything.

Actually I was feeling more lonely all the time. I was very close to my folks and had a lot of good friends but I felt lonelier every day. The main reason was I didn't think there would be many more days. The closer I got to the end the lonelier and more serious I felt. Also the more reasonable.

There was no point in being a slave to convention anymore. Even if a person has been a stupid cowardly clown all his life he ought to be reasonable when he dies. I've always thought conventional clothing styles are ridiculous. I started wearing reasonable clothes

to school.

When I came into First Period wearing a sweatshirt and bedroom slippers and ^{overalls} ~~blue jeans~~ everyone laughed their heads off. I was so darn mad I could hardly see. What were the hyenas laughing about? But then I gave up and went into my clown act. After all that was the role I had created for myself. Sometimes I wondered if I had created it.

Actually I don't think life is funny at all and I haven't a bit of talent as a comedian. If I did I wouldn't feel so bad about it. But people laugh when I'm trying to be serious. They think they're laughing with me when actually they're laughing at me. So I have to cover up and pretend it was a joke all along.

Miss Groves wasn't shocked by my Philosophy. She actually gave me an A, and invited me ^{to come} ~~in~~ during ^{study hour} ~~period~~ to talk about my Philosophy. We became friends. Spring semester I signed up for three classes with Miss Groves. Also her library was so much better than the school library. I spent all my study ^{hours} ~~periods~~ in her room. The only other class I had ~~that semester~~ was chemistry during Fifth Period.

Miss Groves never tried to change my ideas. I still don't know anything about her politics or religion. Several times a week we'd have long talks about my ideas. She suggested books on subjects that interested me,*

and often loaned me copies from her own library. I read the Mabinogion and Beowulf and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and some Chaucer and a lot of Shakespeare and Gulliver's Travels and Sinclair Lewis. For relaxation I read the whole humor section of the public library. All the Benchley and Thurber and Clarence Day and E. B. White ^{and Den Marquis} and all of T. H. White's books, the Sword in the Stone and the rest.

Also I read Vincent Sheehan's Personal History and what with the tragic love affair and the wonderful idealist Borodin, and that filthy Fascist Chiang Kai Shek who went down to Shanghai and sold out to the capitalists I decided I was a Communist. But right afterward I read a book by Louis Fischer that told the truth about Russia so I was never a Stalinist. There isn't any Communism in Russia, just state capitalism. Real Communists like me would have to fight just as hard in Russia as here. Russia stinks as bad as America.

I told Miss Groves how much I enjoyed Tom Sawyer and that as far as I was concerned it wasn't just a children's story it was great literature. She suggested I read more of Mark Twain. I had read practically everything he wrote, but that was in grade school. This time I saw a lot more in Life on the Mississippi and Huck Finn and Roughing It and the Connecticut Yankee.

She loaned me the Mysterious Stranger and Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven. I became an atheist. Pete had been a Communist and atheist for years but now with two of us on the same side we had some grand arguments at lunch. We really stirred up our Catholic and Baptist and Republican and New Dealer and Technocrat friends.

Actually politics and all that seemed to me like the war, they were beside the point. They were very important and worth arguing about but there were other things that were very much more important and couldn't be talked about at all, not even with Miss Groves.

There were days I'd show up in First Period and sit around all hour like I was in a cage. I had to get off by myself and think so I'd skip school and drive downtown and walk around the streets and through stores. I rode elevators to the top floors of buildings and then snooped around finding how to get on the roofs. It was strange to be downtown when everyone else was in class and to be on a roof where I wasn't supposed to be, looking down on the little people way down in the street.

Other days I'd come for First Period, skip Second and Third but show up for Fourth. Or other combinations. Sometimes I'd come to lunch and nothing else the whole day. I made grand entrances and grand disappearances.

I couldn't afford to drive my Model A around all the time so often I'd come to school on the bus and simply go walking all day. A couple of times I walked around the halls all day and didn't go to a single class. I walked to the Canal, to Aurora Bridge, to the Zoo. I caught a city bus back to school when the pain got too bad.

Miss Groves didn't care if I came to class or not, but when I skipped Chemistry I always got a slip and had to do hours in study hall. For awhile I had quite a few hours and this really puzzled the study hall teacher. Until spring semester I had usually been her monitor and now she never saw me at all except when I was doing hours. She was quite an old lady and didn't teach anymore, just took care of study hall. She never sat down but kept walking up and down the aisles of the study hall all day long talking out loud. She didn't talk to herself, she always talked out loud to the whole study hall, three or four hundred kids. A couple of times she stopped by me and put her hand on my head and talked about me to the whole darn study hall, about how I used to be a good boy and her monitor and a Lynx Club boy and she just didn't know what had happened that I was in there now doing hours. Everybody laughed, especially since I always made a point of wearing my Lynx Club sweater when I was in Rummy Row.

She would box my ears and walk away muttering and maybe ten minutes later clear on the other side of the study hall would bust out, I just don't know what has happened to the boy!

A few hours were fun but after awhile study hall was so boring I didn't skip Fifth Period very often. Anyway it was my hobby. Almost all my best friends were in the class.

Our chemistry teacher in the fall left school to take a war job. Our new teacher came out of retirement. He was calm and slow and almost completely deaf. We called him Slowfire. Our other teacher was always very agitated when a Bunsen burner flashed back. We got the idea a flashback was a serious matter. The first week of second semester our new teacher was involved in a demonstration and a burner flashed back. We practically yelled at him. When he got the message he didn't leap across the room at the burner, he finished his demonstration and then walked slowly over and turned off the gas. After that he was Slowfire.

He was a nice guy but he hadn't taught for a long time and was a little rusty. ~~Our first semester we had reversed everything that he was trying to teach us and a lot more.~~ Most of my friends still had straight A's and were worried about a new teacher who didn't know their reputations and wasn't very sharp. He could easily mess things up and give B's to the wrong people

There were suggestions the class really should be called Alchemy.

just because he didn't know as much chemistry as his students. So they all sat up in the front row to show him they were on the ball.

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→ Joe and I sat in the back row up against the laboratory benches. All the stoops and the rummies were in the back row but Joe and I sat there because we didn't give a darn. Joe and I had one standing

joke. When Slowfire was at the blackboard one of us would get a wet sponge from the lab bench and toss it right slap on the back of Frank's neck. It was a terribly uncomfortable thing, of course, sitting there listening to a lecture and getting a soaking wet sponge in the back of the neck. Frank would grunt and shiver and turn as red as litmus paper dipped in acid, starting at the neck and running right up into his hair.

The suspense was a good part of the fun. Sometimes we'd toss the sponge at the start of class. Sometimes just before the final bell. Some days no sponge at all. Then other days we'd get to class early and gather all the sponges from all the benches and lay one on Frank every five minutes the whole period.

Early in the semester Frank took the sponge with nothing more than a tremble because he didn't want Slowfire to get any wrong ideas. Later on he would turn around and shake his fist, sort of smiling and

grinding his teeth, very red in the face. Finally he began to crack wide open. He got so nervous about chemistry he sat quivering the whole period, keeping up a ducking and weaving motion with his head. And when the sponge finally landed he'd practically have a convulsion and would turn around and cuss us out in a whisper.

Of course Slowfire was so deaf he never heard any of the wet slaps or the whispers. He never saw any of the action at all except Frank mopping water off his neck with a handkerchief. After a few dozen times he began to look at Frank with a puzzled expression. He'd look slowly over the whole class but we were all sitting there hanging on his next word, especially Joe and me.

One day after we hadn't laid the sponge on him for two days in a row Frank forgot the sponge for a minute. Slowfire was doing a problem at the board and doing it all wrong and Frank was so fascinated by how wrong Slowfire was doing the problem he forgot the sponge. We hit him square and hard and wet.

He went off like a volcano. He jumped up and roared and snarled and groaned and picked up the sponge and wound up like Bob Feller and screamed, gosh darn you guys! Slowfire was at the board but he got some vibrations and turned around in time to see Frank lay the sponge right square in the middle of my face.

Slowfire just stared. He looked at me and I was laughing so hard wiping the water off my face he figured the whole thing out.

He sent me to Siberia. The rest of the semester I sat off in a corner about twenty feet away from anyone else. The really funny part about that was the final examination. Slowfire announced to the class that he was sorry but he had lost his gradebook and our entire grade would have to depend on the final exam. This really shook up my friends. Slowfire gave the most weird examinations. He had been retired a long time. There were suggestions the class should really be called Alchemy. Anyway with their straight A records for four years riding on this one examination my friends were all pretty tense. I sat off in Siberia completely relaxed with Slowfire watching me every minute. I finished the exam in about ten minutes and handed it in. Slowfire gave me a hard stare. My friends were still sweating. They chuckled when I handed in my exam. Good old Kit, the wild guy! Always good for a laugh! Then they buckled back to the weird exam. It was an objective exam and Slowfire had us switch papers and grade them ourselves. Except mine, of course, which he graded personally. I got 97 on the exam. The next closest was 88. It was a tremendous joke. Many of my friends were smarter than me and all of them had worked harder. They were baffled. All Slowfire could make of it was somehow

~~I had managed to cheat. He gave me a 11. That made it all the funnier.~~

The lab periods were the best, of course. Joe and I were lab partners and at the beginning of the semester we picked a bench position way in the back of the room.

One of the first experiments was making hydrogen and then blowing it up. Generate hydrogen and fill up a 25 cc test tube. Then touch a match to the tube and a little blue flame jumps out and it goes Thoop! and there is moisture on the test tube. This shows that water is made of hydrogen and something in the air. Oxygen, as it later turns out, though we knew it all the time anyway.

It was a great experiment. All around the lab people were making hydrogen and blowing it up. All around the room it was thoop! thoop! thoop! Joe and I were paralyzed. We set up a production line and averaged about seven thoops! to every other thoop! We graduated from 25 cc test tubes to 50 cc tubes, and then 120 cc tubes. Slowfire didn't notice though everyone else did. While they were thoooping! we were THOOPING! and after each THOOP! Joe and I sang our song, Richer, Longer Lasting Thoops, They're the Thoops from Super Stoops! Everyone had heard the Super Suds jingle on the radio about a million times so it got a big laugh.

After everybody else was through thoooping! and was doing analysis Joe and I kept on THOOPING! away like crazy. Then we noticed a supplementary experiment that looked good because it was labeled PERFORM ONLY UNDER SUPERVISION! According to the lab manual this experiment would also go Thoop! The manual said to take a 25 cc test tube but Joe and I had grown out of the 25 cc stage. The period was nearly over and we didn't have time to fool with a 25 cc batch or even a 120 cc batch. We rummaged around and found a tube that was a foot long and about three inches in diameter. The manual said to take 2 grams of this and 5 grams of that. We multiplied all the ingredients. We were in a hurry. We wanted to end up the period with the biggest THOOP! ever.

Well, we touched it off and we didn't get a THOOP!
We got a BLAAM!

There was a streak of fire and a BLAAM! and I went blind and deaf. When I could see again Joe was standing paralyzed like a statue holding the tube with both hands. I was standing paralyzed like a statue holding a dead match over the tube. The vibrations got through to Slowfire. Our friends hissed at us and by the time he reached the back of the room Joe and I were doing analysis. Slowfire looked up at the scorched place on the ceiling above our bench and the black dust settling down all over the room. He looked at Joe and me and we were busy doing analysis. ^{Everybody was busy doing analysis.} Nobody had noticed a thing. Slowfire felt

Just on speculation though he sent me to Siberia. The rest of the semester I sat off in a corner all by myself.

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vibrations but there wasn't any proof.

One day I skipped after First Period and walked over to the University District. I spent most of the day wandering around the campus and on the Avenue. If I lived until fall I was going to school here. It was very depressing. These people were so old and sophisticated. It was a terrible day. I guess that's why I decided to hurry back to school. I just had time to make Fifth Period. Earlier in the day I had bought some balloons. Not for any particular reason except I hadn't had a balloon since I was a kid. But walking back to school I blew up a balloon and suddenly I had an inspiration. I walked as fast as I could. The last few blocks I ran. Even when there isn't much pain I have to limp when I run but I ran anyway.

All the science rooms are on the top floor. So that if anything goes wrong the roof may be lost but not the foundations, I guess. I was out of breath by the time I ran up the three flights of steps. Fourth Period had only a few minutes to go. This was Slowfire's rest hour and he was downstairs. The Chemistry room was empty. I started tying balloons to air jets. It was slow work and fortunately Joe came in right after the bell. On the bus that morning I'd been pretty wild and when he didn't see me around school all day he expected something and that's why he was so early. We had six balloons tied to air jets and the jets turned on at very low pressure

before we heard Slowfire coming.

We were studying Chemistry when he arrived. ~~Joe~~
~~asked Slowfire a question about a puzzling paragraph~~
~~in the textbook. We listened very intensely to the~~
~~explanation.~~ Slowfire saw that we had reformed. ~~When~~
~~the rest of the class began coming in Joe and I went~~
~~to our seats.~~ Slowfire smiled at me ^{way out in} ~~as I went to~~
 Siberia. I think he was about to tell me I could go
 back to my old seat but all the vibrations confused
 him. So he went to the blackboard and started his
 lecture.

Maybe it was Joe and me suddenly reforming but Slowfire had a particularly terrible time with this lecture. He made a mistake and discovered it and erased the blackboard and started over. He made another mistake, and started over again. Each time he turned around to explain the whole class was smiling. That confused him more than ever because he felt these youngsters were laughing at him. So he tried harder than ever.

But the reason everyone was smiling was that they could hear the air hissing. They looked at me and Joe and we were so studious and serious they knew something terrific was up.

The period went on and on and nothing happened. The air was hissing away but nothing happened. Our friends began asking Joe what it was. He just shrugged

his shoulders. They looked at me and I was fascinated by Slowfire. Then they really got nervous. Ever since the BLAAM! nobody had trusted us. Slowfire noticed the way everyone was sitting on the edge of their chairs. It ruined his memory. He felt he was making a stupid blunder that all these youngsters could see but he couldn't. He rambled around the blackboard changing things and changing them back and then erasing the whole board and starting over. Everytime he looked at the class they all had frozen grins and were perched on the edge of their chairs.

Air kept hissing into those balloons and nothing happened. You can't buy balloons like that anymore, prewar rubber and handmade in Japan. Joe and I kept glancing at each other. We were beginning to sweat. The joke was getting out of hand. Somebody gasped and I looked back. Then I looked at Joe and he was looking at me. Those balloons were four feet in diameter and still growing. It wasn't going to be a joke. Those were bombs. Somebody should shut off the air. We looked at each other and we were paralyzed. We couldn't move. Our friends were staring at us and starting to sweat. Joe and I had almost blown up the whole class once. They thought we had finally gone and done it.

Everybody except Slowfire knew about the balloons. When those bombs went off it was going to be terrible. Everyone was bracing for the blast and putting their hands

over their ears. Slowfire turned from the board and saw that his whole class was so shocked by his stupidity they were trembling in horror with their hands over their ears. He turned back to the board. He was going to solve this problem. He had to solve this problem.

It got worse every second. Every second the balloons held out meant the explosions would be that much worse. We all knew it and kept listening to the hiss. It was too dangerous to go back and shut off the jets now.

Slowfire turned and some of the guys had their heads wrapped in their arms the way they had been teaching us for air raid drills. Slowfire erased the whole board and started over and kept staring at his formulas and mumbling and shouting and breaking chalk. When he looked over his shoulder almost everyone had their arms wrapped around their heads and he went back to breaking chalk and smearing the eraser around.

Then it came.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The vibrations got through to Slowfire. But when he whirled around his class wasn't so much worse off than before. Several really nervous guys were on the floor and everyone had their arms around their heads. Nobody was smiling anymore. We were all staring at him with our eyes and our mouths wide open. Slowfire was in terrible shape. I felt awful. He wasn't a bad guy. He was a nice old man. He went back to the board and tried

to figure out what horrible mistake he had made.

He was smudging up the board and mumbling. We were all stunned. Really stunned. Completely paralyzed.

You don't have explosions in a Chemistry lab without people noticing.

We were all still stunned when the door flew open and a science teacher stared wildly around the room. He stood there in the doorway a minute and then he did an amazing thing. He did a standing broad jump into the room! He looked like a cork exploding out of a bottle. About three hundred science teachers stampeded into the room loaded with first aid kits and fire extinguishers and gas masks.

We were all still paralyzed. Science teachers were charging around the room with fire extinguishers. Science teachers were giving first aid to the kids on the floor. Science teachers were ganged up around Slowfire yelling, what happened? what happened?

Slowfire saw hundreds of science teachers charging around putting out fires and giving first aid and he didn't know what happened. The poor old guy went back to the blackboard trying to figure out what he had done wrong. The teachers kept asking, what happened? what happened? He shouted, wait a minute! wait a minute! I'll figure it out! I felt awful.

Then the fire alarm went off. I wanted to die.

Several of the guys in our class were on the Fire Squad. They knew it was a false alarm but it was their

duty to run to their posts when the alarm rang. The other classes on the top floor had heard the explosions. They had seen their teachers turn pale and run out. Then the fire alarm rang and they filed into the hall. Then they saw guys running out of Chemistry with a paralyzed look. The whole top floor of school almost went into a panic. They kept ranks but they really moved fast, and stamped their feet going down the steps.

Down on the Second Floor some of the classes in our wing heard the explosions. Then the stampede of science teachers along the ceiling. Then the alarm. Then the stampede down the steps.

In Chemistry we were still stunned by the explosions but we filed out in the regular drill pattern.

Coming down to the Second Floor I heard the Fire Squad Floor Chief tell his second in command ~~that~~ the Chemistry Class had been wiped out and that ~~the~~ whole end of the building was going up like a torch. I wanted to tell him he was wrong but the kids avalanching down the steps pushed me on.

On the First Floor I head the Japs were landing in Elliot Bay and had captured Fort Lawton and the little grinning monkeys had tanks on Highway 99 heading for Fort Lewis.

Leaving the building we passed a line of kids from the shop classes in the basement. They were carrying saw^s and hammers and T-squares and chisels because

they had heard the Japs were outside stabbing boys with hara-kiri swords and defiling girls.

It's darn lucky we had drilled so often. Otherwise Joe and I would have killed hundreds of students. But everyone stuck to the drill pattern. Outside some of the nervous kids broke rangs and ran home to save their families from the Japs. Others milled around looking for the part of the building that had been bombed flat. Finally the science teachers figured the thing out and told the principal and he came out on the steps of the school. He made a very hot speech about certain unidentified individuals in Chemistry. Joe and I expected the Army to come and put us in jail. But there was no proof, of course.

Joe and I spent a lot of time fooling around last year. We had known each other in grade school but it wasn't until we started riding the bus to Lincoln we became good friends. His folks were from the old dountry and thought a kid should go to work once he could read and write. So Joe didn't pay much attention to grade school and actually flunked one grade. At Lincoln several teachers took the time to let him know he wasn't stupid and once Joe found this out he became interested in classes. He began to get A's and B's instead of D's and decided to go to college. His folks became very proud of his school work once they understood. Then the war came along. Joe had started school

a year late and flunked a grade and he knew he was going to be drafted as soon as he graduated from Lincoln.

Last spring Joe and I began spending more and more time together. Almost every night after supper we'd take either his Model A or mine and drive down to the beach. There's a lot to do at the beach. Walk along the railroad tracks. Climb on the seawall. Dam creeks in the sand. We always ended up gathering empty beer bottles and tossing them out in the water for targets. We threw millions of rocks last spring and broke thousands of beer bottles. By graduation our arms were in such good shape we could throw rocks several hours at a stretch. When it was too dark to see the targets or when we ran out of bottles we walked up and down the beach.

There was a lot of traffic on the Sound. We began to realize the newspapers weren't telling us everything about the war. We saw battleships and aircraft carriers and cruisers surrounded by tugs. Even from the beach we could tell they were in bad shape. We began to wonder what was going on out in the Pacific. We had a huge navy but maybe it wasn't so huge anymore. Maybe the Japs weren't so stupid. Maybe our government had been stupid. Night after night we watched our huge navy being hauled back to Bremerton for repairs and it began to look like a long war.

Often we hiked up the beach until the sun went down behind the Olympics and the last color was gone from the sky. Then we walked back down the beach in the night, keeping our feet dry by listening for the splash and rustle of the waves.

Driving home I often talked about my hikes in the Olympics. It was almost two years since I'd been in the Olympics. I hadn't been in the mountains at all for a year. Looking at the Olympics every night just about drove me out of my mind. I wanted to go in the mountains so bad I didn't care if it was painful or dangerous. Joe had never been in the mountains but I made them sound so good we started planning trips. The trouble was that Joe worked weekends in a gas station. We planned several trips for summer but finally what with the war and everything we decided not to wait. Our folks didn't care if we skipped school.

I remember one time last March at Heather Lake. We were staggering around in snow up to our waists and the fog was so thick we could hardly see each other. We weren't going anyplace, we were just blundering around in the snow and the fog. The whole world was white snow and white fog. We sat down in the snow to eat lunch and suddenly realized that at this very moment all our friends were eating at the lunchroom table.

It was weird, Joe and I being up in the snow and the fog, cold and soaking wet and listening to avalanches

on cliffs we couldn't see. Meanwhile our friends were eating sandwiches in the lunchroom in their Lynx Club sweaters and worrying about whether Slowfire would give them B's by mistake. We laughed our heads off.

Driving home from trips we were quiet and depressed. But next day was always wild. After struggling around in deep snow and exploring mines and wandering through the woods school seemed ridiculous. School was warm and dry and protected. We had been up where Life is Real, Life is Earnest. School was a safe and stupid place.

Our friends were mystified. Joe and I were sick so often and always sick the same days and then came back to school looking so darn healthy and laughing our heads off. It was a great mystery to some people. But the joke was too good to keep to ourselves. We told some of our friends.

It shook them up. School was the only thing any of us had ever known. School was important. Joe and I were treating school like a big joke, skipping two whole days at a time to go hiking in the mountains. It made our friends nervous to have us around. We were wrecking the system. We were anarchists. What made them especially nervous was the fact they weren't sure the system was worth anything at all. Joe and I gradually drifted away from the other guys.

We had our Model A's for the beach and the mountains but gas was too expensive to drive them to school every

day. There wasn't much to do on the bus. Just sit there every morning and afternoon for half an hour. But then our busdriver was drafted. The new busdriver was a well known local idiot. It had always been his ambition to be a policeman. He got a correspondence school diploma and took examinations for the State Patrol but they wouldn't have anything to do with him. He flunked examinations in Seattle and all the other cities in the state. He applied at every small town for miles around trying to get hired as town marshal. Not even the county would take him on and if you aren't smart enough to be a deputy sheriff in our county you might as well go to the Zoo and see if there are any openings in the Reptile House. He was such a miserable guy and had so many miserable relatives the school board felt sorry for him and hired him to drive the bus.

The first day he drove us into the city without saying a word. Partly this was because he was having trouble driving the bus but mostly because he was rehearsing a speech. After parking the bus he stood up and glowered at us. He had bought himself a set of matching blue pants and coat that looked like a uniform. Also a very large and expensive hat that looked like a policeman's hat. He made a speech in policeman-type English telling us that he was in charge and he didn't want no trouble. If we didn't give him no trouble then we would all get along fine. Then he let us off the bus.

It was amazing and rather embarrassing to have an idiot like this in charge of us a half hour every morning and every night. Our old busdriver figured he was there to drive us to and from school. He never stopped the bus unless there was a fight or someone started crying. The ordinary rummying around, like knocking books out of a guy's arms or games of rock-scissors-paper were all routine.

Our idiot driver whipped the bus off the highway two or three times a trip and stood glowering at us in his policeman's hat. He told us he was in charge and all this horsing around had to stop. ~~We~~^{We} could talk and sing songs but the horsing around had to stop.

He was a completely incompetent driver. Shifting gears gave him a terrible time. We helped him out. We knew exactly the places he had trouble shifting and at those moments the whole bus would be quiet. If he shifted the first try we clapped. If he missed we'd laugh and whistle and stamp our feet. The back of his neck would turn red and he'd keep grinding the gears and grinding the gears and when he finally ground the gears together we'd all cheer and clap and stamp our feet like it was the Fourth of July. But we knew exactly when he'd have a free second to look in his rear view mirror and when his eyes hit the mirror the whole bus became absolutely silent. We were all sitting there in our seats smiling like angels.

The busdriver finally began to pin down the fact the noise always centered around Joe and me, probably because we looked the most innocent. I guess I looked even more innocent than Joe because one night at my stop the busdriver pointed his finger at me and said, you're off the bus! I just laughed.

Next morning the bus drove up at my stop and the door opened and the other kids got on. I started up the steps and he came charging out of his seat. He was so excited his policeman hat wobbled around on his head. He said, you're off the bus! I looked as innocent as an angel and asked why. He made a sort of strangled yell and started pushing me. I fell off the top step but grabbed hold of the rail and held on. He pushed harder and I dropped my books and held on with both hands. He kept pushing and finally my hands slipped. But before I fell my hands whipped away from the rail and clutched his expensive policeman hat. He was almost on top of me when I whirled and tossed his hat way off into the brush. He thrashed around in the brush moaning and whimpering until he found his hat. When he came back to the bus the door was shut. He pounded on the door and screamed and yelled. I was picking up my books and cussing a blue streak the whole time. The door wouldn't open and suddenly the busdriver turned around and charged at me. The door opened and a gang of the guys started piling out.

I fell onto the ground on my back and was so dazed and I jumped up and cussed him. He charged out the door not even looking at me but just at his expensive policeman hat.

The busdriver stood there brembling a minute and then sort of sagged and walked toward the bus. The door snapped shut. The busdriver walked up and down looking puzzled and dazed. I cussed him and the kids inside laughed their heads off. After a long time one of the girls opened the door and the bus left.

I had to appear at a special school board meeting to get back on the bus. I planned to put the busdriver away for good. He was a poor stupid peasant, a worm, but he had no class loyalty. He was a traitor to his class and a tool of the system. You don't hate a Cossack riding down the peasants because you know the Cossack is an ignorant peasant himself but you have to kill Cossacks because they have no class loyalty, they are tools of the upper classes. It was a lot of nonsense for ordinary decent American kids to suffer the tyranny of an idiot. The busdriver had to go.

But when I got to the school board meeting I couldn't do it. The busdriver was cringing and ducking his head and holding his policeman hat in his hands. He had found out I was the star pupil of our little country school and the only kid from the district ever to make Lynx Club and Eagle Scout and so forth. I could have stepped on the busdriver. But it's one thing to run a saber through the guts of a Cossack. It's another thing to step on a worm. So I apologized to the busdriver and

promised to be quiet. The busdriver was very grateful. He tried to shake my hand but I managed to avoid that, at least.

I wasn't able to step on the worm but as the spring went along I was sorry. He didn't dare touch me so he concentrated on Joe. When he stopped the bus and stood up in his policeman hat he told Joe to shape up or get kicked off the bus. The idiot became pretty clever with the rear view mirror. Joe and I and the Central Committee became more ingenious. We didn't sit together, we scattered. Agitators were stationed at all strategic points.

Operation Paper ~~bag~~^{Bag} was our favorite. Since Joe and I were knowⁿ as the chiefs we would both sit in the front seat right by the busdriver. We and the other suspected Reds would sit calmly and quietly through the Gear Shifting, though the Underground would carry on the good work and keep the busdriver nervous.

Then at a psychological moment, a few minutes after a Gear Shifting Area one of our Agents would blow up a paper bag and bust it. At that instant another Agent would yell, Blowout!

The bus would swerve all over the highway. The idiot was gradually learning to shift gears but he still didn't know how to change a tire. We knew this because one of the kids watched him practicing over a weekend.

The Gear Shifting and an occasional Paper Bag were interesting but by graduation none of us were deeply involved anymore. It was too easy to get a speech out of the busdriver. It was something to do but we all had other things to worry about.

The last day of school Joe and I met on the way to the bus. We were very depressed and walked along without talking. I was wondering about getting a job and going to college. Joe was thinking about the war.

Joe stepped up into the bus. The busdriver was waiting for him. The busdriver had been building himself up for weeks. The busdriver had to take charge this last day or else he would never ever be a policeman. The busdriver glowered at Joe and said, you sit in the front seat!

Joe certainly wasn't planning to rummy around this last day of high school. He just shrugged his shoulders and started for a front seat. But then I saw the way the busdriver was smirking. This worm thought he had beaten us. I had other things on my mind too but when I saw that smirk everything went red. I hit Joe in the back with a rolling block and knocked him into a seat in the third row. Another member of the Central Committee barged in after me. The rest of the Reds charged through the door and filled the first three rows.

The busdriver was paralyzed. It was the last day of school, the day he was going to take charge and just when he thought he'd won he was looking right square at three solid rows of Reds, the whole darn Central Committee and all the leading agitators and underground agents. Always before the Party had been scattered. Now he saw ~~all~~ his enemies in one united front and he was paralyzed.

We allowed the girls and the freshmen and the other enemies of the working class to walk up the aisle to the back of the bus. But when the busdriver made a sudden dive to get Joe by the neck he was blocked by the solid knees of the Red Army. He pushed by one set of knees and was struggling against the next set when he realized the first set had locked tight behind him. He panicked and battled his way back to the door.

At last the bus was full and it was time to go home. But Joe was not in the front seat. He was in the third row. And the first three rows were full of Reds. And in the fourth and fifth rows there were reserves, not genuine Reds, but liberals who would join the Popular Front in an emergency.

The busdriver was scared. But he couldn't quit now. He could never be a policeman if he quit now. He shouted, this bus is going noplac~~e~~ until that guy sits in the front seat!

The Red Army cheered and clapped and stamped. The busdriver sat down in his busdriver seat and pulled his policeman hat tight on his head and folded his arms and looked straight forward.

The street where the country busses park is an exciting place. Almost always there is a war going on because busdrivers are the same all over the world. There are a few good ones. We had a good one until senior year and Maple Valley District still had a good one. The rest were typical.

It had been a noisy spring and on the last day everyone was restless but chances for an insurrection didn't look good. The Maple Valley kids liked their driver. The Alder Leaf kids had actually rioted and torn up seat cushions in April and though no one was caught their school board scared them. The entire Broad Ridge bus was on probation because someone had pulled the spark plug wires in May. The Highlands bus came from a very rich district. The rich kids went to private schools, but the ones who rode the bus to Lincoln were too scared by all the money in the neighborhood to have a revolution. If anything was going to happen it had to start with our bus.

The busses had regular parking places on the street. Our bus was at the head of the line and always led the procession away from school. With the busses parked so close together it was easier for the other drivers to

wait for us to leave than try to pull out around.

Our busdriver sat several minutes looking straight ahead. Then the Alder Leaf kids started clapping in rhythm. The Broad Ridge kids joined in. Then even Maple Valley and the Highlands.

Our driver stood up and pointed at Joe and said, this bus stays here until you come up front!

The kids on the other busses saw him stand up and they could tell he was mad. The Alder Leaf rowdies swarmed out and the Broad Ridgers followed. With the street jammed no bus could leave now anyway so the Maple Valley and Highland kids came out. The girls and freshmen mostly stayed inside but all the Communists were around our bus cheering and the Liberals were on the fringes smiling and laughing even if they didn't have the guts to cheer.

Our idiot was paralyzed. He'd been fighting one bus-head of rummies and now there was a howling mob of revolutionaries.

He got up and ran out of the bus and fought his way through the mob and disappeared.

It looked like the last word. We had destroyed the busdriver but there was still the matter of how to get home. All the girls in our bus walked out. Girls are a sort of Fifth Column and evolution will take care of them if the revolution doesn't. Some girls glared at Joe going out and others screeched at him and

one slapped him in the face and said, I think you're just terrible!

Joe wanted to quit but the Red Army wouldn't let him. When our girls quit naturally the girls from all the other busses quit. The battle lines were drawn. It was the girls and the busdrivers against Joe, Communism, and Justice.

Being the last day of school there were plenty of town kids drifting around looking for something to do. Many heard the cheering and clapping on Bus Row and came to see the war. By the time the girls staged their walkout there were hundreds of kids milling around. Joe felt awful.

Then our busdriver suddenly appeared out of the crowd with his policeman hat tight on his head. He climbed into the bus glowering and smirking. Behind him came a real and genuine City Cop.

The Cop wheezed up the steps and looked us over. Then he mumbled to our busdriver and our busdriver was out of his mind with ecstasy as he pointed at Joe and whispered in the Cop's ear.

The Cop lumbered down the aisle. There weren't any knees in his way. He looked at Joe and said, son, they tell me you don't want to sit in the front seat. Joe looked at the Cop innocently and said, I very often sit in the front seat. The Cop said, son, they tell me that until you move up to the front seat this bus

won't go. Joe said, gee, I was wondering why we hadn't gone home before. The Cop said, son, it isn't a long way from the third row to the front seat, is it now? Joe said, it isn't far at all, if only someone had said something.

Before the Cop left he said to our busdriver, look here Mac, next time don't call me, call the National Guard, this is a bad bunch!

Poor old busdriver! He went to the police with a revolution on his hands and told the police how well he had handled the situation but how it had gone beyond what one lone busdriver could handle. He was hoping the Cop would have to hit us over the heads with his club, in which case the busdriver could help by hitting and strangling a few of us. It might just turn out that dozens of high school kids would have to be killed, many of them by our busdriver. And then our busdriver would be able to get a job as a policeman anyplace in the world, having killed a whole bunch of high school kids.

Our poor busdriver was completely humiliated that last day of school. The Cop scorning him. Then having to shift gears with all the cheers from our bus and all the following busses. Then having to stop for the girls who had walked about two miles and hated him as much as they hated us horrible boys.

The thing about busdrivers is they were never defeated. Hamlet comes to the end of the play and dies because

it's the only thing to do. A busdriver comes to the end and he apologizes and shrivels away and crawls along the floor, but he lives. A busdriver never dies. He creeps away ~~and~~ then comes back wearing the same old policeman hat. We whipped our busdriver over and over all last spring. But Joe went to war and I went to work and the busdriver is still there.

Joe managed to dodge the draft by enlisting in the Navy. When he came ~~home~~ on leave ^{after boot camp} school was already as far away as ancient Greece. But the busdriver was still with us. We had found the whole darn world is run by busdrivers. Anyway the Navy is, Joe was sure of that. And ~~at~~ certainly my warehouse, I was sure of that.

His last night at home we drove in my Model A down to the beach and walked up and down the sand looking for beer bottles. We joked about the busdriver and decided that the reason there is a war and the reason it is being bungled by Japan and being bungled by the United States is that there are so many busdrivers in the world, running the governments and managing the companies and leading the armies and navies.

After we broke a few dozen beer bottles and after the sun went down we drove home, laughing about the busdriver. But it looks as if that was our last laugh for awhile. Joe was reported missing in action last week. There are many cases where this means some clerk has filed

a guy's records in the wrong folder. The newspapers haven't described any big battles recently. But down at the beach in the evenings I still see ships being hauled in for repairs.

PART FOUR
PRAYER

Gradually I stopped saying the Lord's Prayer. It was during sunsets I came closest to forgetting myself and focusing my soul. But actually during the sunsets I forgot about God too. But there wasn't anything but God and so I prayed and prayed more and more. The more I prayed the more tired I was. I was getting to be a wreck. Something had to happen, I couldn't go on like this forever.

It happened in one afternoon.

Right from the first page of *The Mysterious Stranger* I wasn't reading a story I was living in a trance. It was a horrible experience and I can hardly remember anything at all about the story except my hair was standing on end and I was sweating. Before I got to the end I wasn't reading at all I was just turning over pages in a trance. My mind was going a mile a minute. I was more scared than ever before in my life but I began to feel strong too. I felt I was waking up from a terrible nightmare and the real world was even worse than the nightmare but I could either die right off or I could be strong enough to face the fact that the real world was worse than my worse nightmare. I didn't care how frightening the world was I wanted to live more than anything else. I turned over the last page and closed the book and sat there with everything whirling and roaring around me. Then I looked right straight out the

window of my room into the sky and I said out loud,
THERE IS NO GOD!

The first time I sort of cringed. There was no lightning and I said it out loud over and over again. I felt very queer all over my body. My head was swelling up and my feet were tingling and my stomach was tightened up like I was expecting a punch in the guts. I moved my arms and they felt like they didn't belong to me but were machines run by other machines inside of me. I felt like I was outside of my body watching it.

I said it over and over again and every time I felt bigger and stronger. There was a cloud outside my window and I was saying it to the cloud but whatever the cloud did I didn't care.

THERE IS NO GOD!

I had been dreading it a long time. Now I faced up to it. There is no God. There is no Heaven. There is no Eternal Life. There is no Sally.

Sally is dead.

All that there is left of Sally is what's out in the cemetery under the piece of granite and the grass. Except for what there is of Sally in my mind. And when I die that part will go too. When I die I'll be dead forever and Sally will be dead forever.

I've been reading a book by H. L. Mencken and I have to laugh thinking about the idiots who believe in God.

It makes you feel better to think you will not really have to die but just struggle through a terrible moment and then be in Heaven. Also when somebody you love terribly much dies it makes you feel better to think you will meet them in Heaven. And you aren't so scared of dying thinking you will see your loved ones again. Also when you see what a rotten world it is you don't go completely out of your mind if you know there is a Great and Good God up in the Sky who will see that virtue will triumph in the end. I can sympathize with the idiots because I tried very hard to believe. I think for one thing I just couldn't face the fact Sally is dead. But a person has to face the facts. It is cowardly not to face the facts.

I feel more lonely now than I ever felt in my life. I have awful black moods sometimes when I almost commit suicide. I don't mean I just think about it I almost do it. Several times late at night when the house was quiet I have opened up the big blade on my Boy Scout knife and held it against my throat. I've even sharpened it up to a razor edge but after sharpening it I've never got up the nerve to hold it against my throat. But I know exactly how to go about it. How to hold the knife in my hand and where to start and what I have to do with my arm muscles to kill myself instantaneously before I even have a chance to think about it. I wouldn't slash

my wrists. Most of the people that do that are fakes. They don't want to die. Actually I think most of the people who jump off Aurora Bridge are hoping they won't be killed. If you really want to kill yourself you do it the way I've been practicing. You have a very sharp knife and hold it tight in your right hand and put the blade under your left ear. Then all you have to do is make one motion. Just push your fist against your neck and pull the knife. I don't know if I'll ever do it but I know ~~exactly~~ how to go about it.

It is a terrible world. People are cruel. Even if they weren't cruel and actually loved each other it would be a terrible world. But people are just naturally cruel. They all pretend to be Christians or Buddhists or Jews or Moslems and all the religions have something exactly like the Golden Rule.

But everybody hates something. And if you hate anything at all you become cruel. Maybe the only thing you hate is hate. But if you hate hate you become cruel to get rid of hate.

I wouldn't get mad about religion if the people actually believed. If Christians actually turned the other cheek then I would not hate Christians.

I don't ^want to hate but it's such a stinking world there is no chance for a person to live without hate. It makes me sick to think about the trouble we have in the United States with wheat and hogs that nobody will buy and

good grief how happy the Japanese would be to have all this wheat and all these hogs dumped on them. But we have to kill Japs because they are killing us.

I don't suppose I'll be in this world very long anyway and I really don't give a damn. But as long as I'm in it I will not be a coward. It's a rotten world but that's what it is and there is no pie in the sky. People are mostly stupid and weak and scared and that's why they are mostly cruel. If I can be a little wise and a little strong then maybe I won't be quite so scared and can be kind at least part of the time.

There aren't many people have ever tried. Mark Twain and Bertrand Russell and H. L. Mencken tried but they still ended up hating. I suppose I will too. It's very lonely looking right straight at reality and trying to accept it the way it is. Probably I'll either go out of my mind or start hating. I want to keep on living and figure this thing out but maybe I'll pull that knife across my throat if things get too tough.

TERROR

LOVE

ADVENTURE

PRAYER

PART FIVE

PART FIVE

TERROR

A wisdom tooth became impacted, my jaw ballooned out and pulsed with pain, and I made an appointment with an extraction specialist. The waiting room was so crowded I feared a long dreary afternoon and complained mildly to the receptionist. She said I would have to wait only a few minutes. I scarcely had a magazine selected when she abruptly called my name. I reported to her desk and she handed me a key, and directed me two doors down the hall. The second door down the hall turned out to be a restroom. I ~~under-~~^{obvious} ~~stood~~ and performed my duty, then returned to the waiting room and handed in the key. A few minutes passed and again the receptionist abruptly called my name. A nurse appeared and conducted me through an interior corridor into a room and sat me down in a dentist's chair. She left and I was alone a minute. Another nurse entered and tied a bib around my neck and tilted back the chair. Another nurse entered and clapped a rag over my face. Good Christ! They were going to gas me! I hadn't bargained for gas!

My first thought was to make a run for it. I shuddered and one of the nurses asked if gas made me nervous. Well, being almost a grown man I wasn't eager to inform the pretty young maiden gas terrified me. But I did suggest it might be wise to strap me in. I was tense, but after all some people throw gas parties and

say it's better than drinking. So I relaxed and breathed in the prescribed manner, deep and regular. Damned if I didn't begin to feel like laughing! I sank down through the familiar grey fog. But it didn't spin. I felt I was an utterly weightless being, a soul, a mind, drifting gently through the interior of a large cloud high in the sky. Wonderful, really wonderful! Much better than drinking, never had I experienced such a delightful freedom from the world!

My mind became exceedingly clear and accurate. Baffling problems were solved easily and instantaneously. In Philosophy I had recently written a paper on What is Truth? Now all the difficulties were disposed of without effort. Marvelous! I seized this opportunity to solve all the problems that have baffled every philosopher since Thales. I gathered momentum, my mind was moving at a terrific pace through one problem after another. More problems crowded in, more and more, and I moved faster and faster. I heard a clock ticking and I knew that this clock was my life and I must solve all the problems before the clock stopped. I was roaring headlong through the grey dim cloud solving problems, and then--

The clock stopped!

I was dead!

For an instant in the abrupt complete silence I was

terrified. Then wild with exultation! For now that I was dead I need no longer solve problems with my intellect, I could directly experience truths! Beautiful clear immediate intuitions!

I was in a vast dim cathedral striding effortlessly toward the distant Throne. On the Throne was the Truth about~~X~~ Truth, the Essence of Reality, the One that remains while the many change and pass.

I came to a flight of steps and climbed eagerly upward to the Throne in a delirium of wonder and glory, for at last I would Know!

I reached the Throne and turned my face upward to the Truth and--

SCREAMED!

Reality is EVIL!

The Truth is Evil!

The One is Evil!

I screamed and screamed and fell unconscious back down the steps.

A voice was saying, it is all right, everything is going to be all right.

I opened my eyes and looked at the nurses who were holding me and I said, nothing will ever be all right again.

I was running and running toward the house. I ran longer than I had ever run before. There were more steps than ever before and it seemed the steps would never end.

At last I was pounding on the door. And this was the first time I had time to yell for help and call the names of the people inside. I heard them moving around just beyond the door, and I realized they would never open the door because much as they loved me they were afraid that if they opened the door the Thing would come inside and get them too. The Thing was as swift and immense as ever but this time it held back exactly long enough for me to realize there was no help and then it came to engulf me and I screamed and screamed.

I awoke screaming in broad daylight.

I sat up in bed dazed and trembling. Through my window I saw the legs of people moving along the sidewalk I heard their voices and I heard automobiles on the street.

I had not had the dream for two years and now it came in daylight. And the horror was stronger than ever before. The Thing that would have engulfed me had I not awoke was, as always, in the walls and in the furniture and in my books and my typewriter and the cigarette I was smoking. But now it was also in the robin outside my window, and the worm he was pulling from the grass, and in the grass and the sunshine.

There was no one to hear my scream, no one to play casino. I dressed and walked outside and onto the campus and I walked almost at a run, but even in the daylight

walking through crowds of students on their way to
8 o'clocks the horror continued. I walked and walked
through the horror and at last it receded, it drained
slowly from the material world, the horror flowed
beyond time and space and gathered somewhere in a com-
pact concentration, waiting for the next time.

PART FIVE

LOVE

Ruth and I were in a class together fall quarter. It was a small class, and we soon knew each other well enough to say hello. Then one day during registration for winter quarter we met on campus and she was in a state of complete distraction. She couldn't decide what courses to take. Her advisor said one thing, a favorite professor said something else, and her father shrugged his shoulders and said she was a grown woman and could decide. But she wasn't a grown woman, and there were two courses she wanted but they came at the same hour, and on top of that were her music lessons. She was so excited and confused she mixed her languages and talked more in German than English. Accents affect me. I thought she was terribly cute.

Having just concluded Logic I cried, come! Let us reason! We sat on the Library steps. I asked questions and made notes from her distraught exclamations. I reduced the situation to its elements, and constructed syllogisms. I asked for decisions. Each small decision was easy. After she had made every small and easy decision I reviewed the constructs and the decisions and concluded by telling her exactly what she wanted to do.

Ruth had a good, though somewhat disorderly mind. She had been staring at the ground, concentrating on the argument. At the end she lifted her eyes in a bright-dawning smile. She waved her arms and thanked me in

German and English. I said, don't thank me, thank Aristotle. She thanked Aristotle so enthusiastically I requested the pleasure of driving her home.

Next quarter we saw each other on campus nearly every day, and occasionally I casually asked if she wanted a ride home. Not often, only about three times a week. It was absurdly easy to ask her for a date because Ruth was not like American girls, she wasn't playing the elaborate ritual game. I asked if she wanted to see a movie Friday night and she either said yes right away or said I can't, I have to be with my parents for a dinner. No mysterious denial implying other boy friends.

She was utterly ignorant of the ritual of dates, and I made no attempt to Americanize her. I've always despised the ritual.

When we went to movies we didn't hold hands or snuggle shoulders, we watched the movie. But coming out of the theater into the night we enjoyed the fresh air and the exercise. The late night crowds were old and sleepy and glum. We were young, and loud, and laughing. The sleepy old people glowered. We therefore were all the younger and louder.

I taught her the Greywolf Shuffle. We locked arms tight and lightly on the toes went three steps forward, one step back, then shuffle-to-the-right and shuffle-to-the-right and three steps forward, one step back, and

shuffle-to-the-left and shuffle-to-the-left and three steps forward, and so forth and so forth. After a few nights of practice we practically ran along the sidewalk, always in perfect coordination, zigging and zagging in and out of the clusters of sick old tired people, laughing like mad.

At the Model A we'd be gasping for breath and laughing. We didn't cuddle or look for a dark place to park. We rattled along the streets with her teaching me German songs. I supplied the noise and Ruth supplied the melody and accent. It was our great hope to be arrested by the FBI. There was a bitterness in the humor, of course, since she and her family were refugees.

But there was another Ruth.

One afternoon we were running down the beach, skipping around and over waves. We pulled up sharp at a wide deep creek, puffing and laughing. There was a footlog over the creek and in the wildness of the moment I swept her into my arms and carried her over the footlog and dumped her down on the far bank. I was puffing and laughing, but she wasn't laughing anymore. She primly pulled down her skirt and walked rapidly away from me down the beach. Later, in the Model A, she was quiet and proper and at her house formally thanked me for the courtesy of driving her home. What happened? Suddenly I was a libertine or an infant or both. I had

been the older, the rational one. Now I was the younger one, and a fool to boot.

I was more careful afterwards. I was frightened by this Old Woman Ruth. But careful as I was now and then when we were both wild children together I'd make some gross blunder, like putting my arm around her waist as we were walking along, or tossing off some small remark that implied affection. When the Old Woman was there immediately. I became even more careful. In any event the conventional physical contact would have cheapened the affair. That's the trouble with the American Ritual of Dating. The formulas invented by stupid and essentially cruel people have become so much a part of America even those who are intelligent and sincere and kind grow up thinking they have to follow the cheap and dirty formulas. I was very much in love with Ruth but if I had told a fraternity boy I loved her he would ask how far I had got and I would answer I had got noplacement. He would laugh and wonder why I was wasting my time.

I loved Ruth and someday I would hope to love her completely but for now it was enough to love her mind and her smile and her laugh. I was sure this was her feeling too, and that's partly why I loved her.

Our worst problem was her home. It wasn't too bad in the afternoon when I drove her from school. It was an expensive home but Ruth's mother was kind and

hospitable. Even though I wore dirty cords and a sloppy wool shirt and mocassins, I was a guest.

At night her home was horrible. I wore slacks and a sport jacket and a tie, but the slacks were too wrinkled and the jacket too loud. When Ruth's father made his grand entrance she and her mother seemed to shrink into the floor. I didn't shrink, but he made me feel I was a peasant sneaking into the castle. The gentlepeople could not have their servants throw me out. They were temporarily reduced from a former condition. They must pretend to be democrats. Later on, later on--ah, but just now you are most welcome, sir! I hated his guts. He was a goddamn German, that was the trouble. That's why Ruth and her mother stood there shrivelled up looking at the floor. I hate Germany and all it stands for. But of course Ruth is a refugee. So is her father. He is a Jew and has suffered. Though not a hell of a lot, since he happens to have a lot of money in our banks. There were times when I wanted to yell out at him, you goddamn German Jew! You're the worst kind of German! You're the worst kind of Jew!

But naturally I did nothing of the sort. I was polite and ceremonious, and somehow always managed to get Ruth out of the house. And once out of the house she went off like a volcano, and I'd stop hating Germans and Jews.

The affair ended so abruptly I was left breathless.

I didn't see her at school one Monday. I called and her father answered the phone and said she was taking a nap.

She was not on campus Tuesday. I called. She was not home.

Not on campus Wednesday. Taking a nap.

Not on campus Thursday. Not home.

Something was wrong. I wondered if Ruth was ill. Maybe there was something terribly wrong with Ruth and her parents were trying to keep it inside the family. They didn't know I was closer to Ruth than family.

Then on Friday morning I saw her. She was walking slowly across the grass in front of English Hall. She was alive! I touched her shoulder and had a joke ready, and then she turned her face up at me, serious and staring, and instantly looked back at the ground.

I knew that look. She was staring into eternity. And when a person sees eternity the loneliness is so awful and so permanent other humans don't mean much. I very nearly broke into tears. I wanted to tell her she would not die alone. We would die together and then it wouldn't be so bad for either of us. We would die with our arms around each other.

Naturally I said nothing of the sort. I asked her if she would go out with me that night. She cried, no! I said, tomorrow night? No! Sunday night? No! No! Any night, ever? No! No! No! I was choked up.

I knew she wanted to die alone but I could not bear to see her die. I must overcome her pride, and the only way was to throw away my own pride.

I had to see her again, ~~and tell her she was loved.~~
I begged for a date. I must tell her she did not have to go off alone into death.

Ruth was so confused and weary at last she gasped out, all right, tonight! Then she ran away ~~over the~~ ~~stairs~~ and I stood shocked and trembling.

I didn't go to my classes. I drove up in the mountains and sat by a river all afternoon. I was going to tell her. But also I was going to tell her that Medical Science is galloping ahead. Maybe she did not have to die.

The mountain shadows were cold. The river was roaring. I rehearsed the last speech aloud, Ruth, you will not go alone!

I didn't bother to stop by my room to change clothes. At this point it seemed silly to fiddle around with a tie.

I pressed the doorbell, shivering. Once she opened the door matters would never be as before because I was immediately going to whisper, Ruth, I love you!

The door opened and her mother was there looking terribly sad. She said something about she was sorry but he came before we expected and we tried to call you and we're sorry you drove over here for nothing but. . .

Ruth's mother said He Came Before We ~~Expected~~ . . .

I almost fainted. I was being pulled down the hall into the dining room.

They were at supper. The room was glaring bright. The Father was at the head of the table. Ruth was there. Next to Ruth was an Officer in the Navy. I was somehow in a chair at the table. The maid put a cup in front of me and poured it very slowly full of coffee. I watched the brown swift torrent of coffee splashing in the cup. I said to myself, well Kit, shall we cut and run? And back to myself, certainly Marlowe, first chance, let's get the hell out!

~~People around the table talked at me. I couldn't understand them. Most of the talk was semi-German. The Officer also talked a foreign language, Ivy League American. So I cupped a hand to an ear and begged, por favor? Por favor? Ruth looked disgusted.~~

I wanted to get the hell out, but there was this damn cup of coffee. I took a big gulp and scalded my throat and nose half out of my chair. Ruth was glowering.

~~So sinking back into my seat I put my hands around my throat and coughed and wheezed and choked and said, good coffee! A little hot! But good! I finished with some wild remark that the coffee was so magnificently warm I had an excellent chance of getting back home before I froze to death.~~

no pp

The hall with the coffee. I gave an all-inclusive 142

~~I hastened through the farewells~~ and made it to the hall and was running for the door. Then from so close behind me I knew she had been running too, Ruth whispered, Kit! Wait!

I turned.

There was Ruth, looking at the floor, limp, her shoulders all slumped together.

I took one step back.

She lifted her face, eyes closed, and said, I tried to tell you!

She was going to say more but suddenly I understood everything. I gathered her into my arms. She was limp but I gathered her in.

I put my hand under her chin. Her chin yielded softly and easily. For a moment her eyes opened and met mine. I told Ruth I loved her, and then I kissed her. And she held her lips for the kiss, but she was not kissing me, I was missing her. I drew away and she was sad and distant and old.

She whispered, I'm sorry.

I said, I'm sorry.

The third girl I had ever kissed. And that was the end of it.

Her picture was in the society page Sunday. I almost retched. One night I returned to my sorority while the dance was still in progress, and on the basement floor was one of my sorority sisters with her date. She lay

partly in and partly out of her party finery and I was so startled I said, excuse me. All she did was open her eyes and glare at me and then close her eyes again so I staggered past them into my room. Looking at the picture on the society page I shuddered. But I never saw Ruth again and gradually stopped shuddering.

When it was too cold to study in my room I spent evenings in the library, and afterwards had coffee at the Hot Kup on the Avenue and studied there awhile before going home. Ruth and I had been often at the Hot Kup. Almost always, alone or with Ruth, the same waitress served me. Several nights after the marriage she remarked, must be an interesting book you're reading. I had not really noticed her before, but after that we passed a few remarks when she brought my coffee. I looked her over in a disillusioned vulgar sort of way and she put on a show to match. I wasn't particularly interested and would have been glad to let it go at that. Then one night when she brought my coffee she lingered at my booth a hell of a long while, asking questions about the book I was reading. Later she returned and asked if I wanted another cup of coffee, because she was going off duty in a few minutes.

The responsibility rests upon Ruth. With her I had been an innocent boy. Now I didn't give a damn.

That night Nora became the fourth girl I had ever kissed. And the first girl I kissed many times, at length.

I walked home, very late, all hunched over. One night led to another. In the dark with closed eyes shyness succumbs swiftly to daring desires. Night by night I was less shy, night by night bolder. Embraces became so strenuous that what with the necessity to relax periodically a rhythmic quality entered. Caresses, ever more intense, ranged through all safe zones, ever closer to forbidden borders. One night in a moment of mindless passion my hand forced through barrier after female barrier of female clothing onto her naked breast. On following nights my hands made far easier and more major conquests. But at last there were certain mumbled indefinite objections, and one afternoon I slunk in and out of several drug stores before finding a male clerk. Even then I half-way expected policemen to burst in off the sidewalk and send me to prison.

The sacrifice was offered in total darkness. She lay rigid on the altar. Only afterward, as I apologized, did she show signs of life, crying herself to sleep against me.

The intoxication of the nights was proof against the days. I did not think of Nora apart from bed. By myself in class or library, or with her in movies or Model A, when I thought of her I thought of the coming night. For convenience I moved some clothes and toilet articles to her apartment. We had breakfast there together.

Her shift at the Hot Kup was ideal. Lunches and dinners didn't cost me a cent. On days off she cooked for me in her apartment. And after awhile she bought the movie tickets and the gas for the Model A, because after all I was a poor scholar and she had a paycheck. I was a bit shocked when she made me a present of a set of underwear and a new pair of cords. But after all, why not?

Interruptions in the routine were rare. Once she said she was visiting her family for several days. A month later she visited them again. But a month later, driving from the Hot Kup to her apartment, she snuggled up close and after crying a little told me she was sick. I would have to understand. She loved me and hoped I wasn't mad but she was sick. It was quite a jolt, but it wasn't her fault. However, being with her those days and nights without the intoxication to remember all day and anticipate in the night I began to listen to her and consider her as a person apart from a bed. After she was well we went on largely, but not entirely, as before.

She began to introduce me to her friends. Not in an obvious way. It was wartime and her friends were following their husbands from one base to another, or arriving home after long travels when their husbands were shipped overseas. Would I mind if so and so had dinner

with us? Could I drive her over to see such and such some afternoon? These friends were dreadful. Their conversation entirely concerned wedding gifts and babies and kitchens and crap like that. Nora was an outstanding expert on this crap and could discuss it for hours utterly fascinated.

I never went completely to sleep during these conversations. I was always aware of those times when the chatter dropped to whispers and there fell upon me the heavy appraising stare of the friend. If we were at Nora's apartment I had my books to read. But even if we were at the friend's house and I was flipping through the inevitable Reader's Digest seeking just one page that didn't unsettle my stomach, intuitively I knew that Nora was displaying me as an intellectual.

He just reads and reads all the time. Very valuable, sort of a freak, I lured him out of the jungles. Very close to capturing him. He's quite wild. Even dangerous! But he's getting a little bit tame!

Nora lacked the one symbol of success recognized in her class, a diamond. From scraps of conversation and miscellaneous smirks and giggles I deduced the manner in which she maintained status without the jewel. She talked of the University, how I was in the University, and her restaurant was near the University, and of course intellectuals aren't bound by ordinary conventions. To her very best friends, with whom she had been competing

most fiercely for years, I suspect she told all. The beast is not merely hearing capture, he is, in fact, already caged, whether he knows it or not.

My mind almost gave way during these sieges. Only the approaching intoxication gave me strength. And afterward there was a certain compensation, for in the darkness Nora tremendously increased my limited knowledge of female anatomy and sex habits. I noticed that this friend had outstandingly large breasts, and Nora told me how they hung way down below her belly button. The busty child had invented an ingenious procedure for putting on her brassiere, bending at the waist so that the breasts hung straight down, then with a well-timed bump swinging them into the cups. This one was sewed up too tight by the doctor after her baby and when her husband came home on leave he was simply furious. I learned all about the breasts of her friends, all about the physical dimensions and special tricks of their husbands, and an entire encyclopedia of interesting information extending geographically through her entire home town and historically through several generations of her family.

Then home from the wars came Nora's very very best friend. I endured three visits with this one. After the first visit I knew the sexual history of that girl from puberty through sixteen boy friends and loss of her maidenhead and two diamond rings and one marriage and a

childbirth and numerous furloughs all the way to her current pregnancy. After the second, driving along in the Model A, I cut short Nora's babble with a short, explosive, critical remark. Nora shut up, mad. The taut silence was broken by her agreeing the friend was nothing much really, but after all they had gone to school together.

That week Nora began to read a book. Each night she talked about the book. Having waited on table so long she had heard scholars excitedly discussing how much money Shakespeare made from his plays, how he invested it back home, who was his wife and where did she come from and what was she like. She knew what interested scholars, but Good Christ! Talking about Kathleen Winsor and her money and her football ~~player~~^{player} as if the subject was the author of King Lear!

On the weekend we once more visited Nora's very very best friend. The friend wanted to pick up the fascinating discussion of silver service and bone china, but Nora would talk only of Amber. Her friend was baffled, and therefore Nora, triumphant at having cut off the friend, turned her scholarly remarks to me. I cracked wide open and informed Nora, and her friend, I had not read the book, I was waiting for the movie.

The drive to the apartment was silent all the way. And at the established hour of taking off our clothes

we had a war instead. I had found her limit. I had found where the pride began.

I was pacing up and down making occasional small remarks about the mentality of cows. She was sitting making occasional small remarks about common courtesy and decency.

She had a convulsion. She snarled, you're so damn good! So much better than everybody! You and your books! You're not even a man! You're only a boy! I feed you and buy your clothes and when you first started staying here you smelled so bad I could hardly stand it! The only way I ever got you clean was by taking baths with you!

It was what I had been waiting for. I got my duffle bag from the closet and went around stuffing in clothes and books.

Her convulsion lasted somewhat under a minute. I was packed in not more than three.

She let out a sob or a sigh or a scream or something and threw herself on me like an animal.

If I had never learned to plan ahead I'd never have come to this point. I always go along with the passing moment inventing ways to handle situations as they turn up. Nora clawing at me and making sounds that chilled my bones, I invented a plan and went ahead with it. The only chance, the only way out, was to kill her love with deliberate cruelty. It wasn't hate, I wasn't even

angry, but I hit her with my fist right on the jaw. She gasped and staggered back, but she was on me again. I couldn't stop now, it was an awful thing I was doing but I hit her again. I pulled the punches but still I was hitting her, but she kept throwing herself on me with those horrible groans. At last she fell down in a heap and lay on the floor shaking and I tottered for a moment looking down at her and then ran out sobbing and raving, ran away from the pain I left behind, trying to forget the pain.

At my room I gathered up my mountain gear and drove the Model A through the entire long night. In a nightmare dawn I pulled on my boots and hoisted pack and tramped up the Dose trail. I stopped for the night at Camp Marion. After supper, alone in the dark mountains, I heard voices in the river. Through the steady river-roar suddenly a voice crying, Marlowe is a bastard! Or, son of a bitch Kit! Whispers too, like, little does the monster know! Or, once he goes to sleep guys! I built up the fire, and began a regular round of inspection, casting glances left, right, behind my back. I huddled close to the fire and listened to the river. And aside from the cries and the whispers came a steady voice, a sergeant calling, Hup, Do, Hee, Hor! And the boots stamping. The sergeant and the boots of retribution in the river, coming.

Idiot imagination! Knock it off! Very weary I piled logs on the fire and crawled in my sleeping bag. From the bag I continued to hear the army in the river, and continued to inspect the darkness beyond the circle of firelight. Then as I lay helpless in my bag they came out of the night on all sides, Nora's father and her brothers and friends and their husbands. They came slowly into the circle of light, and were not raving mad but solemn, and that made it worse. I tried to explain that it was kinder to be cruel for a moment rather than a lifetime. They didn't hear me and I started yelling but they kept coming. I was screaming and screaming and then the roaring fire snuffed out. I was staring into pitch black night. What happened to the fire? Where did they go? I was awake. I built up the fire, and kept it going. Sometimes I almost went to sleep, and then awoke startled, and tensed up straining my eyes into the blackness. One more hour of night and I would have gone incurably insane. But the trees began to form solid shapes in the thinning blackness. When I was alone in a dank wet forest of mere trees and the river was a mere roar of water, I collapsed into sleep.

Later in the morning I slogged through deep snow up the valley. At Dosemeadows I found the exact place I slept on that other trip so long ago. I ate lunch there, remembering the hikes from Camp.

I searched among the alpine firs for the Lost Pass trail and kicked steps up snow, and then crawled on my knees through snow, to the crest of Lost Pass. The cloud level lay a few feet above the pass. The peaks and ridges were invisible.

Lost Pass! Who was lost here? Or felt lost? Or felt this country was lost? "Lost," that is frightening. "Pass," that is equivocal. A pass between what? Between good and evil? Even then, how does one know which valley is good, which evil?

Each time at Lost Pass I lose something. Each time I cross over from one thing to another. At Lost Pass I felt the first twinge of soul-destroying conscience.

I descended to Marion thinking gratefully I'd easily fall asleep. I was exhausted, but I could not sleep, I dared not sleep. All night I piled wood on the fire and talked to myself out loud to stay awake, raving and yelling and daring the bastards to come out of the river and face me, come out of the blackness and face me!

Grey desolation filtered into the forest, creating trees and trail. I couldn't endure another night of river-voices and blackness-hoverings. Staggering down the Dose, three nights without sleep, three nights of pure nightmare, I had the most horrid ideas. Nora must have committed suicide by now. Very likely under conditions that suggested murder. Police were looking for me. Or maybe she left a very explicit suicide

At Lost Pass I felt the first twinge of hope-destroying pain.

note. I had never met her brothers but I knew they were burly violent men.

I was measuring the Dose Trail foot by foot, tottering, when around a bend in the trail two burly men fell upon me! I gasped and staggered back. But they retreated from me as fast as I retreated from them. I swayed, staring. They stared back, shocked. I ran past them. They did not pursue. Later I realized they were the first trail crew of the season.

I could not stand the darkness, the rivers, the shapes, the visions. Miserable Marlowe, Mountain Man! He hasn't the guts to live alone in mountains! I hit the bed in my \$6 room, somehow, sometime, and slept at last.

And slept and slept.

And centuries later awoke. Stretched. Yawned. Oh, it was good to be alive! And free! I puttered around my room all afternoon, eating crackers and smoking snipes and looking out my window over Lake Union and the ruined city.

I looked out the window far into twilight, free, wise, sad, calm.

Something stirred.

I turned. My door was open.

Nora in the doorway arms hanging limp and body all sagged together.

I wanted to slash my throat.

From viscera to throat to mind and soul I dissolved. Because she was there weeping in twilight. And when I took a step toward her, even now her face was splotched with purple.

But the world was spinning faster. We had a war within a few days of the mindless reunion. It no longer took much excuse to start a quarrel. She could no more forget the fists in her face than I. We were tougher, colder, crueler.

During my final dramatic exit from her apartment I did not weep nor did she, nor were there any fist-cuffs or screeches or moans. After a long bickering supper I stood up and put on my coat and said, goodbye, it is all over.

The next night I was in my room, staring out the window, when Nora appeared. This time I looked at her without a tremor. This time she wasn't slumped, she was standing upright.

She said, cool and loud, I think I am pregnant.

I gazed at the ruined city and said, cool and loud, I hope you will both be very happy.

I looked out the window a long, long time.

One evening I was standing on the fire escape of English Hall when the door opened. I was startled. I jumped. The girl was startled, and cried out, retreating, what are you doing? As she retreated into night I recognized her, and said, I am watching a total eclipse

of the moon. She recognized my voice, and was impressed and lingered to watch. Total eclipses of the moon are intellectually dramatic, but not visually; we talked of this and that.

Before the eclipse we had been to each other mere faces in English Hall, but afterwards Ella and I sometimes walked between classes. Our conversations were casual, since I was then living with Nora and Ella was involved with a mutual English Hall friend. The eclipse was our special and odd private experience .

Because of this Ella noticed my absence from school, and my distraught return. And I noticed she and Jack now passed on campus without speaking. Our encounters in English Hall stretched out from brief exchanges of wit to strolls around campus and the District.

The conversation was literary, and damn fast company for me. Ella had read every novel and play and poem I had read, and twice as many more besides. When she discussed writers and poets her eyes, always very bright and black, glittered with an extra dimension of excitement. But meanwhile little worry lines formed in her forehead, her voice rose in pitch and the words bubbled out faster and faster. To Ella literature was thrilling and important though perplexing and mysterious. A walk about campus with her was as good as any lecture, and better than most. She was particularly expert in contemporary literature, of which I was totally ignorant. T. S. Eliot was merely a famous name to me until the

evening she brilliantly recited hundreds of verses from memory, stunning me with a dying fall, that's the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper.

I enjoyed listening, but Ella insisted on hearing my opinions and I had none. My only defense was to declare I had read nothing since Ulysses, which ended the history of literature as surely as the Gothic cathedral ended the history of architecture.

Ella argued, but so much wanted to discuss that if I would not discuss contemporaries she would meet me on my ground. She shifted to the Edwardians. But until she told me I didn't know what an Edwardian was. We moved back to the Victorians, and I did fairly well for awhile. But the only area in which my knowledge exceeded hers was the Pre-Raphaelites, and one grows quickly weary of Pre-Raphaelites. I fell back to the Romantics confidently, being fond of Romantics. She was fonder, and my bulwarks were breached instantly. In a panicked rearguard action I declared Tom Jones was the only great novel in English, Blake the last great poet, everything had been downhill since then. She had read more Fielding and Blake than I, and also Smollet and Sterne and Pope. I broke and fled all the way to Shakespeare before making another stand. I was overwhelmed, and barely escaped to Chaucer dreading a final total disaster. Surprisingly, she withdrew. Though suspecting a trap, I counterattacked

and won a splendid victory. Due to a superb teacher I had a very good Middle English accent. I had the Prologue by heart, and scattered passages from various Tales.

But this literary war was all in jest. Our walks were not hostilities. They became longer, more frequent, imperceptibly, until we discovered we had somehow become close friends. The situations and feelings in drama, stories and verse were paralleled in our immediate experience. And walking as we did sometimes as many as eight or nine miles in an evening the relaxation of physical weariness was a factor. Drifting slowly along dark streets, mere shadows with voices, disembodied souls, we learned how to discuss frankly but discretely even intimate personal history. Our walks in the night seemed the long dark journey of life itself. We two intellects had by random chance bumped momentarily side against side, as in a torrent two bubbles of foam ride side by side an instant before one is swept over a falls and the other is swirled into a backwater--or before both bubbles blink into nothingness.

We were both just now beyond the ends of our affairs, the affairs that tumbled us headlong and unwilling into manhood and womanhood. We were both darkly disillusioned, our sweet dreams of romantic love nourished so many years of innocence turned sour in a

matter of days. Quite often our walks led to the Aurora Bridge. The Seattle suicide rate is one of the highest in the world, and since its construction twelve years ago Aurora has been the customary platform for the jump. We did not go there to jump, but leaning over the rail looking down to the waters of the Ship Canal we made perhaps our deepest explorations of black desperation.

In less than a month accidental between-class encounters evolved into regular evening-long walks. When Ella learned I had no stove and was living on baloney sandwiches, doughnuts and milk, she began inviting me regularly to supper. She looked in the grand literary style, though with hardly any money, since our combined financial resources were strained by the purchase of a pound of hamburger and a loaf of bread. Such complicated and mysterious meals I've never eaten. Once in awhile we said the hell with budgets and agreed to have a supreme meal, a meal to remember, even though it meant other meals would be simulations of the peasant diet in Afghanistan during a famine. Such suppers occupied the entire evening, for invariably I would be sent on emergency expeditions to obscure little groceries, the only place in Seattle that has the necessary oil or spice or pasta or bread or green.

By the most incredible of fortuitous circumstances, a coincidence so weird and metaphysically disturbing we could only laugh about it nervously, the year we became, separately and together, adults, was the wildest year in the recorded geophysical history of Seattle.

One night while I was tottering back to Ella's apartment loaded with greens and oils and breads the earth passed through the tail of a comet.

Fireballs plunged in the night, so startling bright I imagined I heard their roar. These were no specks of motion remembered rather than seen. Each flame roared from zenith to horizon and when it was gone I traced its passage backward by the luminous aftertrail, an ethereal streak of dust shimmering in the black sky. One such fireball would have made the night forever memorable. There were dozens of fireballs, scores, hundreds of fireballs.

I was late returning from my errand. Ella met me at the door with operative gestures and exclamations. I dumped my load of greens and oils and breads with such a staring eye and such wild words Ella cut her aria in midflight and came out with me to watch the tail of the comet. Without words, with only gasps, we walked miles and miles through the tail of the comet.

It was after midnight when she patched together the remains of our planned supper. We were hungry, and tired.

One night, by candlelight, Ella was teaching me the art of eating spaghetti. It was hilarious, for we were drinking wine. The wine had been the most difficult part of the production, but Ella had coaxed a friend of legal age into buying it for us. We were adventuring, and had the shades drawn lest we end the evening in Juvenile Court. Ella knew the theory of eating spaghetti, and became moderately expert after a glass of red, warming liquid. A glass of red, warming liquid made me a chaotic pupil. I lost a forkload of pasta in the vino and was fishing it out, and we were both laughing uproariously. We were laughing so hard the candle flame flickered in an odd manner. Wine was jiggling in the glasses. Dishes were walking over the table. It wasn't that funny.

Our laughter dwindled to chuckles and sobs and giggles. But the dishes were rattling and clinking and the candle flame was insane and now the walls were creaking.

A long way off was a rumble, a rumble of a huge truck on Roosevelt Way. But the rumble grew louder and closer. No trucks so huge come so fast down this

side street. The rumble came into the room, or rather under the room. The walls groaned and the door flew open and wine splashed out of our glasses and something in the kitchen smashed.

Laughter still frozen on our faces we were staring each other straight in the eye, gripping the table. The intuited message back and forth, this is the end! With our eyes we held on to each other to meet the end together.

The rumble moved away into the distance and the wine smoothed into calm red pools and the candle flame rose straight and steady.

It was a moment before we let go of that eye-embrace. A minute and a glass of wine apiece before we laughed again. We finished the pasta and then turned on the radio and finished the vino ^{list}ing to news programs. They said it was the worst earthquake ever recorded in Seattle.

Sometimes our walks began in daylight. One time we were discussing Wordsworth. I was reluctant to admit that Wordsworth could write any line of poetry that was worthless. Read the Prelude, Ella, you must know and experience the Prelude. Read it complete, not the excerpts offered by the anthologies. If you find it dull and worthless, then you have no right whatsoever to read his other poems. Ella would not

accept my position. If he is an artist his works are public property. Because he has written splendid poems he is not therefore exempt from criticism for his stupidities. Said Ella, I wandered lonely as a cloud that floats on high o'er dale and hill. . .

By the beard of the Prophet, she was using one of my favorite poems as the vehicle of her mockery!

We were passing an unweeded garden at the moment and I plucked a ball of dandelion seeds and held it before my eyes, squinting seriously. I interrupted her in mid-sentence, crying, look!

Those bright black eyes drew close to the white ball, the worry lines of mystified fascination appeared, her mouth opened in excited apprehension.

I held the stem of the white ball in my fingers, and drew my face close, repeating, in a whisper, look!

The white ball hovered above my fingers. Ella stared at the white ball, it is important and exciting and perplexing. I was staring at Ella. Our faces were some six inches apart. Almost I relented, almost I succumbed to something I hadn't even known was there.

But I did it. I blasted the air from my lungs and the white ball exploded in her face, in her open mouth, her bright black eyes, but most particularly into her black black hair.

She blinked and spit and coughed, and pounded me on the chest with her little fists. I held her off with my hands on her shoulders, laughing, and noticed that the white seeds in her black hair were incredibly like stars in a night sky.

The conversation dropped to a lower intellectual level. Ella pretended great anger. At a corner grocery she demanded, with operatic petulance, an ice cream cone. Said Ella, the very least you can do! Said I, how can you ask this of an impoverished scholar? Said Ella, I do not ask, I command, and require! She punched me on the arm and pushed me through the door, punching and pushing.

The grocer was Santa Claus. He had white hair and a jolly laugh. I've never seen such huge ice cream cones. Santa Claus was still laughing when we hauled our huge loads of ice cream outside.

We walked along in twilight licking our ice cream cones. Every block we passed under the examination of several families on porches quietly enjoying the procession of sunset into twilight and night.

Every person we met on the sidewalk smiled at us. The people on the porches smiled benignly down on us. Behind us we heard friendly chuckles. Nobody was laughing at us. Everyone was laughing with us, with those two young lovers walking along together licking ice cream cones.

At exactly the same moment Ella and I realized that we were assigned by the world roles in a play we knew, but had no intention of staging. But if our performance has been so captivating, let us not disappoint the audience. With eyes upon us we licked our ice cream cones more enthusiastically than ever, and laughed the more.

And yet the world is not always insane. As for Ella, I can only say that she was not meeting my eyes, and some of the half-heard remarks from the porches brought a blush to her cheek. As for me, I recalled the white stars in her black hair, and I looked at her sidelong as we walked, licking our cones. She was small, small and dark, nearly one of the Little People. But the proportions were superb, now that I thought of her in that way. Then too there was the way she moved, a fast strong walker, but every step was liquid, soft. Then too, those fierce fists, that bubbling voice, those ecstatic black eyes.

We walked and walked and walked. Streets we had never before visited. And after the ice cream cones were gone, without a word. We could not walk forever. At last we came to the bridge.

It was after midnight. We were exhausted, yet we had three miles to walk home after we left the bridge. How had we got ourselves into such a fix?

Well, how had we got ourselves into any other fixes? Leaning over the railing, looking down to the snakes of light on the black water of the Ship Canal, I talked of the mountains. To me the mountains are so important they are too private to discuss promiscuously. Ella was born and raised in Chicago, she had no idea at all what was in the mountains. I talked of mountains thereon the bridge, and on all the long weary three miles home.

Ella was as weary as I. She spoke slowly, with consideration. After one of my slow rhapsodies she said, I've never seen a mountain close. I said, oh you should, you must! She said, I feel I must, but I don't know how I'll ever get there. Said I, Ella, there is one particularly marvelous place you can reach quite easily. Deer Park. Ella said despondently, how could I get to Deer Park? It was true. She couldn't get there without a car. We walked along and I said, well, I wish I could show you Deer Park. You should go there, but of course I can't take you there, much as I want to. Why not? Well, it's a long way. The Model A isn't very swift. Can't go to Deer Park except on an overnight trip.

We walked along, tense. At last Ella said, what does that matter, overnight? Said I, to me, nothing, but this old business about a girl's reputation. . . She interrupted, it doesn't matter to me!

The drive to the mountains was unexceptional. We had often conversed without interruption longer than this. But now rather than walking we were riding in the Model A and on ferries. And we knew we would be together from early Saturday until late Sunday. However, it was important for Ella to see the mountains, and as her friend I should provide her the opportunity. The world would interpret our journey otherwise, but free spirits must not allow themselves to be enchained by the petty-minded world. We went off to see the mountains together, as we had been to the bridge together, not for any trivial purposes of the flesh. This was exactly our mutual view of the matter, though there was no need to verbalize.

But intellectuals and free spirits though we were, we had seen ourselves through the eyes of Santa Claus the grocer. Whatever our regrets, we were adults. Before ever we left the city I settled one thing with myself. I was not in love with Ella, but I could be. I was not out to "make" Ella this weekend, but she had a splendid mind and a superb body, and if that was the way she wanted the weekend to proceed I had no objection. One deep sigh and I would kiss her, and continue inexorably to a full communion of spirit and flesh. I am confident

Ella set out after making the identical decision. If I put my hand on her shoulder she would not resist. We were not in love as the Model A labored up the steep rough road to Deer Park, but we knew we could be in love any minute either of us willed the first gesture.

After supper we left our campfire and walked up the Blue Mountain road. There was no moon and we had no flashlight. We walked slowly, talking all the while of the marmots and meadows and flowers and sculptured trees and snowfields we had seen in the afternoon, that lay now all about us, invisible. Suddenly there were thumping sounds from unseen Beings all around us and Ella screamed and threw her arms around me. I explained about the deer in Deer Park, and she moved away. At last we were on the summit of Blue Mountain, high in the night above the world. I pointed out the clustered lights of Port Angeles, Sequim, Victoria, the distant blinks of Bellingham, Vancouver, the monstrous sky-glow of Seattle, the city itself hidden behind a ridge. We looked at the lonely gleams of farmhouses and ships in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Also south and west to the total night of the interior Olympics.

The night was extraordinarily mild. Now and then a cold sigh through the dark meadows, a gently crisp

breath of wind on our cheeks, then utter stillness and quiet except for the steady distant roar of rivers far ~~own~~ in the black valleys. We lay on the summit ridge of Blue on a narrow bed of flowers between two sheltering rocks. We lay on our backs, our sides barely touching, just enough to feel the warmth of each other. We looked up into the sky.

We talked quietly, almost in whispers. And not of past troubles or future hopes, not indeed of ourselves at all. We spoke entirely in lines of poetry, memorable phrases from novels and plays, notable expressions of ~~great~~ philosophic concepts.

It was doubtless her presence, her human warmth, that gave me the strength to look directly into the stars unafraid. Always before, alone, the terror had forced me back. Now I looked unblinking into the stars. Quite suddenly I was released, I was free, still on the mountain~~x~~, but weightless, hovering. The stars were no mere dots of light on a black curtain, the stars were fires in space. The sky was no black curtain stretched like a tent over horizons, the sky was immense and timeless night, and the stars were fires in space, a black space, billions upon billions of tiny flickering flames, tiny lonely daylights in a night so infinite and so eternal that the hugest and oldest star is only a brief lonely flicker. Billions of huge ancient stars

but it is night all over the universe and throughout time.

I was hovering breathless and dazed and trembling, I was as close as I had ever been to the final union, I strained and yearned, I hovered weightless this side of the boundary. But then I fell back onto the mountain. I did not cross, I did not fly off into the stars. I was exhausted and fell back beside Ella. It was not her fault. I could never have dared the attempt without her close warmth and quiet voice.

On the dark road down through the meadows we spoke very little. At camp I stirred up the fire and we sat side by side staring into the flames. Going to bed was complicated, for Ella had never slept out before. We slept separately. Our sleeping bags were inches apart. We talked awhile before we slept. Then we entered sleep together, but inches apart.

There was a final chance next day. We were no longer alone. There were picnic crowds all over Deer Park and Blue Mountain. But we had the Slab Camp trail to ourselves. We walked through the flowers in the sunshine, laughing and joking and admiring the scenery. In a little cove of meadow in a grove of alpine firs the lupen was at its lush blue climax of blooming, and with a sudden mutual

impulse we broke into a run. We ran into the secluded blue bay together, through the poignantly glowing lupen. Running along I caught her hand and her fingers gripped mine. Running along through the blue waves of lupen almost I pulled her down into that sea, and sunk us both under the fragrant blue waves. But we ran and ran, side by side, hand in hand. . .

It was a long day in the meadows, and watching sunset over the Olympics from a ferry, and eating a picnic supper in her apartment. Having lived together an entire weekend, having walked in past months hundreds and hundreds of miles through the city, there was an established intimacy. But we were quiet that evening, for the great puzzle we could not discuss.

Why weren't we in love?

We recognized each other as intelligent minds and rich souls. And as new adults we recognized each other as passionate animals whose fleshly raptures would complete our union of intellects.

During the weekend, from first moment to last, the chance was there. If either had made the first gesture the other would have responded. But we didn't fall in love. I'm damned if I can figure out why. It simply didn't happen. And if a total eclipse of the moon and the tail of a comet and an earthquake and a night on Blue Mountain and a wild dash through blue waves of lupen couldn't do it, what's the use?

After the weekend we felt partly married. We met as usual between classes and walked in the evenings, though sometimes now we went to movies instead. Suppers became meals rather than adventures. There was a tenderness between us. And no quarrels. Just nothing. We were despondent, we could not fall in love with each other, and perhaps we could never fall in love at all. I wondered if it were true that I was only half a complete soul. I wondered whether, if it had been Sally beside me atop Blue Mountain, would I--we--have gone out easily together into the stars? An academic question, of no importance.

In time--another season, another month, another week--Ella and I would have fallen in love simply to settle the matter. But her mother became ill. Ella went home to Chicago and hasn't returned. I haven't heard from her, and I haven't written.

PART FIVE

ADVENTURE

Thirty heads bent down as if in silent prayer. Sixty eyes bulged with strain, staring at the swirling brown lines and the whirling blue line^s.

Dr. Davis danced nervously back and forth. His patience gave out with a crackle and a bang. Well, what do you see?

Thirty foreheads beaded with sweat. Sixty eyes grew dim and bleary, staring at the brown lines and the blue lines.

Come! Come! What do you see? Mr. So and So, what do you see? So and So rumbled. Speak up, Mr. So and So! What do you see? Well, ah, the rivers all seem to run in sort of straight lines. Dr. Davis was delighted. Good! Good! His eyes flashed, he bounced on his toes. Why do you suppose, Mr. So and So, the rivers tend to run in straight lines? So and So made noises in his throat. What? What? In a tremulous voice, blushing, So and So gave a perfectly idiotic explanation. Excellent! Splendid! Any other ideas? So and So had proven himself a fool. Several of us called attention to the fact. So and So defended his idiocy with vigor. Other students disgraced themselves and were held up to scorn. The class progressed into a semi-organized turmoil. Dr. Davis darted back and forth, bouncing up and down, crying good! Excellent! Splendid! Twice each week we quarreled two loud hours

over a contour map. And each time the bell sounded the end of hostilities the brown lines and the blue lines had become for us a three-dimensional model of a landscape, an X-ray photograph of the underlying rocks, and a volume of geologic history.

When I changed majors Dr. Davis asked where I was going. Journalism--fascinating! Why journalism? I mumbled some ~~non sense~~ ^{non sense} about Vincent Sheehan and Louis Fischer. He nodded quickly, saying good! Excellent! However! Remember the method of Multiple-Working -Hypotheses! Remember! Use it! Use it in journalism! Report news just as you read maps! We can well afford to lose a geologist to gain so rare a journalist!

Abandoning the security of a technical education meant leaving old plans, old friends behind. To complete the break with the past I moved into the basement of the Kappa house. It was eery, living in a basement with all those pretty girls upstairs. The other house-boy was a senior in engineering, but for him, too, the dream of security was dead. His draft ~~active~~ ^{board} gave him until the end of the quarter. For his last months he had abandoned bridge trusses and metal strengths, and was taking freshman surveys of philosophy, poetry, and architecture. While we were washing dishes he recited poetry and talked about Kant and cathedrals.

Being a senior, and about to go to war, he wasn't as impressed by the girls as I was. One Chapter Night when all the girls were in their stiffest, most complicated gowns, he devised a plot. We served the entire formal supper solemn and unsmiling in our starched white jackets and our dirty cords. The desert was pie. Ordinarily dessert was pudding or ice cream, but Chapter Night dessert was always pie. Solemn and unsmiling we served the pie. Housemother first, of course, with the wedge of pie properly pointing at her stomach.

Every other piece of pie we served, solemn and unsmiling, with the wedges aimed the wrong way. Two plates of pie per houseboy per trip, we padded in and out of the dining room. There was a perceptible breeze from girls shivering and shaking. Some of the pledges nearly lept onto the table when their pie arrived pointing the wrong way. The thing was, there had been regular lessons about forks and soup and tea and lettuce and spaghetti. But no girl in the Kappa house had ever had lessons about pie that points the wrong way.

The housemother, a famous glutton, slathered impatiently over her pie, daintily mopping saliva from her jowls, until the girls were all served, and then, fell on the pie with a groan of ecstasy.

There was a simmering rattle of high heels chattering on the floor. Static electricity sparked and crackled

as Kappa girls shivered in their party gowns. Alone in her bliss the housemother gulped pie while the Kappa house moved toward the tragic end of its history.

The sorority president rose to her responsibilities. Knowing it might mean the end of her social career, trembling and pale, she just simply reached out and turned her pie around! It was a terribly brave thing to do. I'm glad she got away with it. Fortunately, the housemother was oblivious, ~~so~~ drugged with pie. A long sigh up and down the table, here and there a sob of joy, a silent tear, as sixty pies revolved to eating position, as the Kappa house celebrated its salvation with a feast of pie.

Since I could read a little and write a little I was excused from all but one quarter of Freshman Comp. Virtually all my time was devoted to a term paper on Chinese Communism. My teacher was very much like Miss Groves and left me pretty much alone, now and then suggesting books I might find helpful.

Chiang turned out to be even more vicious than I thought. I was furious, reading about the Extermination Campaigns led by Nazi officers on loan from Hitler. I was deeply stirred by that greatest epic of modern history, the Long March.

I was so excited and so goddamn mad I soon exhausted the useful library materials. I even sampled the

reactionary literature about China but it gave me acid stomach and insomnia. The Communist bookstore downtown had an entire shelf on China. I bought all the books and pamphlets I could afford and spent several afternoons there reading and making notes from others. A clerk and I had long conversations about capitalists and Chiang. She was a brilliant, beautiful girl and I could easily have fallen in love with her. But one day she invited me out to coffee and led the conversation away from Chiang to Spain, and I agreed about Spain, but when she came to Russia I got wise to her plot. Especially when we were joined in the booth by a loudmouth who turned out to be her husband. After that I didn't care how sexy she was, she was still a damn Stalinist, tricky as hell. I told them Russia stinks as bad as the United States and Communism in China is not the same thing at all as ~~the~~ Stalinist state capitalism. That was the end of the affair.

Pol Sci lectures were given in a huge auditorium. I enjoyed the way the Professor exposed the Catholic Church as a totalitarian institution but when he equated the likes of the Pope and Stalin with Chou and Mao I lost interest. His lectures were witty and he thought he was a neutral, but actually he was a Centrist, an enemy. Near the end of the term he assigned the entire class a theme. My Philosophy of Life.

I gave it to him straight. There were hundreds of students so I would not get through to him, but the reader who scanned my Philosophy might have a breakdown and that would be some satisfaction.

My seat was up near the auditorium roof. I was sleeping there quietly and defiantly one day when I was hissed and punched awake. The Professor was repeating, if Mr. Marlowe is here today, I would very much like to speak to him after class. I was prepared to be ugly but he very graciously invited me to coffee. I described at some length the disgusting situation in China and he listened as if it ^{was} ~~were~~ all news to him. When I ran out of steam he said, there is a great deal of truth in what you say, and Snow gives one side of the story very accurately but when I was there last year it seemed to me. . . . Trapped! Who could suspect that a Professor would go to China? As soon as possible I changed ~~to~~^{he} subject to John L. Lewis and Walter Reuther. Especially Reuther. I explained to the Professor that the future of government, of politics, lies in labor, and that I hoped to join the labor movement. Much to my dismay this struck him as an excellent plan. He suggested courses I would find useful, such as economics, and accounting and other depressing subjects. Above all he urged me to join a union immediately. Go make automobiles or steel or airplanes, or dig coal. Study

when possible, but first of all go to work and join a union.

It was wise advice. That was the trouble, it was too damn wise. Joining a union is one thing. I'd love to join a union. Going to work is something else again. My enthusiasm for a career in politics dwindled steadily after that cup of coffee.

There were more intriguing matters anyway. Upper Campus was nothing like Lower. For one thing girls were all over the place. None of them paid any attention to me and they all smoked cigarettes, which was slightly shocking. But they were around, and I noticed them.

After finals the Kappa house emptied in a single afternoon. The entire campus was abruptly evacuated. Everyone went away and left me all alone. I stuck it out a day and then went on an expedition. The first night I camped at Sequim Bay. While cooking supper smoke got in my eyes and I fell down and broke my glasses. That evening I sat on the beach watching a blurred sunset. And I smoked a cigarette. Next morning I drove up a narrow mountain road to Deer Park. Three days and nights I was alone in blurred meadows, stumbling around Blue Mountain, alone with blurred deer and marmots, and other unidentified things, alone with blurred fog streaming up gullies and now and then washing away the entire blurred world.

in cold blowing grey. Each night by my campfire I smoked one or two cigarettes and gradually got the hang of it.

The Kappa house was closed for the summer but I stayed on as caretaker, working for meals at the Phi house. Kappa is a lower middle class house, not flashy, but comfortable and entirely respectable. The Phi house is so far down the social scale there is actually a Jewish house that ranks higher. A girl is better off not to be a Greek at all than to be a Phi. To save her job the housemother was scrambling to keep Phi from bankruptcy. The cook was a Negress just off the bus from Georgia. She couldn't cook but was very humble among white folk and hadn't yet heard the news about cash money. The maid was fresh from England. She and all her family back to the Druids had always been in service. One Sunday she returned from church to find her master and mistress blitzed. She stood watching the flames until Churchill put her on a boat. The other houseboy wasn't a student at all. He worked in the shipyard^s. Washing dishes at the Phi house was his social life. The poor guy had trouble finding social life, I'm sure, since he had all the physical beauty and mental alertness of Boris Karloff before Dr. Frankenstein hit him with the lightning bolt. He had a crush on several of the monsters the house had pledged to keep

up mortgage payments. While washing dishes he often sang *The Road to Mandalay* and other classical favorites and the girls were sure he had a future in opera.

From the first it was obvious matters weren't going to work out. I unsettled the slave by telling her about the Emancipation Proclamation. I unsettled the servant by telling her there wasn't any King in America. The opera singer resented the monsters flirting with me. Not that I flirted back. It was all I could do to keep my supper ^{down} when the girls came by. Anyway he sang not one note when I was around.

The housemother was a careful shopper. She bought day-old bread and army-reject canned vegetables. The usual meat at supper was half-lard, half corn meal, seasoned with hamburger. When there was a roast it always ran out before it reached the kitchen. I'm not *fussy* ~~the reverse~~ ^{about food at all} but the night the potatoes and margarine both ran out and we proletarians suppered on tainted string beans and dry bread I discussed the matter with the housemother. The slave and the servant and the singer all grumbled about that supper. They didn't dare grumble to the housemother. It was clearly my duty to provide leadership. I was polite and said nothing about a strike or sabotage or a picket line. Said I, an honest day's wage for an honest day's work, that's all we in the kitchen want. Even on this petty scale it gave me a good feeling to be the voice of my

class, to be helping myself and at the same time helping my less fortunate comrades.

Next day at lunch the housemother called me into private conference. She felt I wasn't working enough to pay for my meal^s and should mow the lawn and vacuum the rug in addition to waiting tables and washing dishes. I requested reasons for this unilateral contract revision. She offered evidence from the cook that I invariably drank two, not one, but two glasses of milk at each meal. She offered evidence from the maid that most of my service was spent loitering around the kitchen, not working at all. I pointed out that the second glass of milk per meal amounted to roughly five cents a day, and that my time wasted standing around the kitchen was the fault of poor management. I suggested ways to improve house operation. She huffed and puffed to a stop, but after consulting notes retorted that a large part of my time on the premises was devoted to eating my meals. Said I, to be sure, but while I eat I am constantly on call to stop eating, perhaps in mid-bite, and serve the next course. I informed her John L. Lewis was speaking for me in stating that economic justice demands portal-to-portal pay.

That stopped her. That shut her up completely. All afternoon I savored the joy of winning a showdown with management.

That evening management met me at the portal and handed me my ration book (afterward I learned all the Red Stamps had been torn out--had I attempted to set up private housekeeping I could not have eaten meat, butter, eggs, cheese or milk for one year) and with great satisfaction informed me the opera singer had volunteered to assume my duties at no increase in wages. So much, thought I as the portal slammed shut in my face, for class solidarity.

I was left supperless outside the portal, but not hopeless. Ten minutes later and three doors down the alley I was eating supper in a boarding house. I washed dishes there the rest of the summer and at first found the atmosphere refreshingly free from sham and posture. But after awhile the freedom wasn't altogether refreshing. All the boarders were building ships or bombers or tanks. Most of the guys were waiting to be Greeted by the President. They didn't give a damn. After supper the bottles came out. Rum and water, no mixer, not even ice. Too damn much trouble to walk into the kitchen for ice. Work all day, slop down supper, pull out the bottle. The women didn't give a damn either. Work all day, slop down supper, and when the guys take a slug they won't notice the scraggly hair and smelly armpits. I washed dishes and watched the men and women beasts stagger out of the dining room, and the extra guys getting sick or

passing out.

It was disgusting. The most horrible war in history, the final catastrophe of the capitalists, the last proof needed of their incompetence to manage the affairs of mankind. What were the workers doing? Preparing to inherit the earth? No, they were drinking and screwing and earning money and throwing it away.

Politics became less and less interesting. I had been attending Trotskyite meetings all spring and summer but the boarding house made it all pointless. I quit going in the fall. By then I had discovered that every Trotskyite girl worth looking at was engaged to some Trotskyite agitator.

Since it was my major I tried a course in journalism that summer. The girls were all sexy and the boys were all smooth and the professor wore a bow tie. Had I mentioned the multiple-working-hypotheses or the Long March I'd have been laughed out of class. It's no mystery to me anymore that American newspapers aren't worth reading except for the comic strips and sports pages.

Another of my courses was with Dr. Jeremy, starting with Beowulf, moving through Sir Gawain, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser and Milton. The reading assignments were a delight but the lectures were dreadful. Jeremy has a sense of humor. His lectures are one joke

after another. ★ Jeremy joke takes ten minutes to tell, sometimes fifteen or twenty. At the punch line his aged little frame goes into a quiet convulsion.

The class was always absolutely silent. I was silent. He was such a fool he embarrassed me. I grew angry with him for debasing human dignity and instead of laughing at the punch line I snarled out loud.

One day, several weeks into the quarter, an amazing thing happened. He delivered the punch line and I didn't snarl, I burst into hysterical laughter. I couldn't help myself. I was wiping tears from my eyes. I was fractured, helpless, gasping for breath.

Suddenly I noticed everyone in the class staring at me. Except Dr. Jeremy, who was in his usual quiet convulsion. What had happened to me? Why didn't it happen to the others?

I don't know and I don't care. Dr. Jeremy and I had great fun the rest of the summer. For fifty years Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton had been his close friends. I was a newborn babe in this rich world of laughter, and every Jeremy anecdote was paralyzing. Of course, he and I were the only ones laughing, the sorority girls were puzzled, but they count for nothing. Merely a necessary evil so house-boys and scholars can continue eating while learning new jokes.

We were in Chaucer when I registered for the draft. That afternoon ~~at the library~~ seemed amusing at first, since I was confident the army would call me only after the women and children. In warm outer sunshine I chuckled, thinking of Thurber's War in Ohio. But within the wintry grey arsenal I stood in line with hundreds of other guys who were, with me, celebrating their eighteenth birthday today. It looked like a pretty healthy group. Most of them were going to war. Not me, of course. But most of these guys would go. I was ashamed to have been laughing minutes before. There was nothing funny about this war.

Joe was the only friend I had so far lost. But seven acquaintances from high school were dead. Bob and Bill and virtually all my other friends were in the service, waiting for God only knows what. Several were living from one scholastic deferment to the next, at the end of each quarter wondering if instead of another ninety-day reprieve they might get Greetings instead. Me, I'm a pacifist. But so is everyone else I've ever known. Joe sure as hell wasn't mad at anybody, not even the busdriver, really.

One week and two days after my eighteenth birthday I reported to an office building downtown for my First Physical. The doctor laid me out on a table and thumped me from foot to crown. With a nodding smile.

he said, you are a fine specimen of manhood! I wasn't sure how to take this. It was gratifying to be a fine specimen, but also ominous. For years I'd supposed myself a bad and sickly specimen. Now, just when being bad and sickly might be worth something, suddenly I was a fine specimen.

Five days after my first physical a postcard arrived in the mail. I-A! Good grief! Someone has blundered!

Three weeks I was I-A, alternately proud and despondent. Then one day in my mailbox were Greetings from Franklin Delano Roosevelt. At 8 a.m. on a bright August morning I reported for induction. All morning I stood in line naked with hundreds of other naked men standing in line. It was almost noon when I was handed my clothes and told I wasn't needed.

While dressing I listened to my comrades of the morning swearing total allegiance for the Duration Plus Six Months. My morning comrades were now men of war, and I was, as before, a teenager. All morning I was part of America's Young Manhood. At noon I was stricken from the human race. I fought my whole war in one morning. It was a hell of a war, too, and I ate lunch that day a cynical veteran, a member of the Lost Generation. The Lost Generation that nobody remembers losing, and nobody notices is gone,

and nobody will ever give a damn about.

After Milton and finals I applied for vacation work at the Naval Air Station and was hired. My first day on the job I filled out forms. The second morning a Lieutenant rustled the forms around on his desk awhile and then said, follow me! We walked around the Station. Now and then he stopped to watch a crew of carpenters, or painters, or excavators. Interested in what was going on, was the way I figured him. Sometimes he stopped and looked around the station, making a complete, slow sweep of the horizon. I wondered, is he nervous? Lost? A Nature lover? We walked from one end of the Station to the other, then back again. The third time we came to a particular crew of carpenters the Lieutenant spoke to the foreman. The foreman looked at me and cussed at the Lieutenant and we walked away. The Lieutenant spoke to an excavation foreman, a painting foreman, the head janitor in the administration building. They all cussed him out. Each time we walked faster. By 11 a.m. we were almost running. The foreman still cussed him out. It was almost noon when he cried, angrily, follow me! They need a man in the Boneyard. We double-timed up the hill to the Boneyard. This time he didn't ask, he told the foreman, a new man for you! He turned smartly on his heel and marched down the hill.

The foreman said, look me up after lunch. He vanished^h into a mountain of crumpled airplane wings. When the one o'clock whistle blew I set out to find the foreman. I wandered through crumpled airplane wings and smashed engines and junk lumber. The Boneyard was deserted. Sometimes I had an eery sensation of motion just at the corner of my vision, or a slight noise behind my back. I began to walk softly, slyly. A little after three o'clock, sneaking around a stack of fuselages, I found the foreman.

Said I, here I am. He put away his magazine looking disgusted. We walked through the Boneyard together, back and forth, up and down. At last he stopped at a pile of junk lumber and said, straighten it up. He vanished. Ten minutes later, the lumber all nice and tidy, I set out to find the foreman. Knowing the geography better, within half an hour I flushed him out of a pile of twisted propellers. Said I, what shall I do now? An animal snarl contorted his features, but he said not a word. We walked through the Boneyard together, back and forth, up and down. At last he stopped by the pile of junk lumber and said, pick up all the nails. He vanished. I picked up all the nails. I tracked him down. He bared fangs at me. We went walking together. He stopped by the nice tidy pile of junk lumber. Said he,

straighten it up! He vanished.

The foreman and I had no more trouble after that. Next day I bought a supply of books and found myself a comfortable bit of shrubbery on a knoll above the Boneyard. All in all, it was about the best job I've ever had. Read all day, nap occasionally, admire the superb view of Lake Washington and the mountains, for variety watch the airplanes taking off and landing.

The first interruption in the routine came my fourth day in the Yard. I saw a truck grinding up the hill with a load of airplane pieces. Out of curiosity I left my knoll and when the truck entered the Boneyard I was waiting. So was the foreman. So were fifteen other guys I'd never seen before in my life. It turned out they all worked in the Boneyard too.

The bodies had been removed from the airplane but there was quite a bit of blood. The foreman pulled the live ammunition belts from the wing guns while the rest of us watched. ^{Later} ^{trundled up} A crane ~~climbed~~ the hill and sorted out the wings and propellers and engines and fuselages into the proper piles. Then we all went back to our hiding places.

Though I had planned to work at Sand Point only during vacation, I was already designing a shelter for the winter months and scouting secret midday routes in and out of the Station when one day I saw the Lieutenant coming up the hill. But he.

wasn't walking, he was riding a little put-put machine. American Industry at last was filling the needs of the Armed Forces. I watched the Lieutenant and the foreman talk, and when they walked into the Boneyard I scampered down off the knoll and started straightening up the pile of junk lumber. The Lieutenant had come to see me. He was very sorry, but my physical exam had finally been processed and I was qualified only for Light Clerical. The Boneyard was Heavy Manual. He had looked all over the station but there wasn't a single opening in Light Clerical. The United States Navy could ill afford to lose me, but there it was. He mounted his put-put and put-put-putted down the hill. I spent my last day on the government payroll filling out forms.

When fall classes began I returned to Kappa. Sorority girls might be sham but they made me laugh. After a summer of retching I was ready to laugh again.

But everything had changed. The old Kappa of spring was gone. Gone with the old, laughing houseboy, now off someplace in uniform. I was alone. As a matter of fact there were only four houseboys left on all of Greek Row, all in sororities, the fraternities having been occupied by troops for the duration. Trouble commenced the very first week of school. Chapter Night we had cherry tarts for dessert. They were the cook's most famous specialty. After supper, putting

away the seldom-used tart-dishes, I found two extra tarts, hidden tarts, in the pantry. Someone was hiding tarts. I didn't know who, but I couldn't resist. They were magnificent tarts. I ate one. The cook caught me in mid-ecstasy and screamed and howled. The housemother didn't say a word. Her extra tarts were supposed to be [^]secret. But her hatred of me was founded on this deep passion of a deprived glutton.

The housemother was a clean-floor fanatic. Each Saturday on my hands and knees I holystoned the kitchen floor. In the spring I had been enthusiastic about the kitchen floor but in the fall I lost interest. The lower fell my interest in the kitchen floor the higher rose that of the housemother. One Saturday my first tour over the floor was judged unsatisfactory. I toured the floor again. The housemother was still dissatisfied. Said I, on my way out the kitchen into the basement, this floor is quite clean enough for any reasonable purpose.

Shortly thereafter several of the girls managed ~~by some ingenious engineering,~~ to transport the housemother into the basement. When I answered the knock at my door the housemother was coming apart. The powder that held her face together was cracking and the corsets that held her fat together were giving

off little ripping sounds as the seams opened. The two girls holding her on her feet were staggering under the immense burden. Wheezed she, Christopher, I want you to mop the kitchen floor until it is clean! Said I, my verbal contract is for me to mop the kitchen once a Saturday. Twice is too much. Three times is intolerable. She floofed and ~~sputtered~~ whiffled, it is not clean! Said I, it is the cleanest floor on the Row. It is the cleanest floor I've ever seen. I suspect it is the cleanest floor in the world. Powder was flaking off her face in a cloud and huge sags of escaped fat were straining her dress, and the girls were gasping from the effort of propping her up. Screamed she, you're fired! fired! fired! Get out of the house this instant!

The screams brought reinforcements from the girls in ready reserve, and somehow the housemother was transported back up the stairs, an engineering feat I consider at least as incredible as building the Pyramids. But before the housemother was well underway I stated calmly, I presume what you mean to say is you are giving me two weeks notice or two weeks pay. Said she, over her shoulder, get out! get out! Said I, this is a matter for the War Labor Board.

That afternoon I made a tour of inspection of Greek Row looking for the house with the largest

houseboys' room, the best housemother, the least work. The Alpha house won on all counts. While loading gear into the Model A the Kappa president intercepted me with a sweet smile and nervously said, I hope you will reconsider your appeal to the War Labor Board. We would be happy to discuss the matter of ~~severance~~ pay. I made a magnanimous gesture, saying, I'll waive my claims! Actually I hadn't the vaguest idea what the War Labor Board was, but obviously neither did anyone in the house. The Kappas were so grateful the cook insisted I have a nice little sandwich and glass of milk before I left. That night I washed dishes at the Alpha house, and afterwards wandered around admiring my three roomsuite in the basement, the grandest houseboy quarters on the Row.

I had come a long long way into the New World that seemed so strange and mysterious in the spring. Three sororities plus a boarding house, service with the Induction Center and the Navy. Also I smoked cigarettes. I no longer needed the security of an assigned course of study. It was intolerable to have my records in the Journalism Department. My inclination was to move them to English. But in their well-meaning way doubtless they would insist on giving advice. I moved my records to General Studies instead, where I knew they would leave me alone. I went through the catalogue as if I were a child picking out my own Christmas presents.

One quarter I spent more time on a two-hour course in Music Appreciation than all the other thirteen hours put together. The first class period the professor lectured on the symphonic form. Our first assignment was to listen to a symphony and analyze its form. I asked at the Music Library for a symphony. The librarian asked, which one? I said, any symphony, so long as it's a good one. She gave me a record album. In the booth I arranged my notebook and pencil and started the record player. An hour later I reeled out of the booth wild of eye. I returned the album and the librarian asked, was it a good one? Said I, ^{oh boy, great, just great!} ~~in a library a very good one~~ ~~My~~ ~~the notes I scribbled were completely~~ illegible but it didn't matter. I had plenty of Navy money in the bank. That afternoon I bought a record player and my own personal album of the symphony, and in my room played it once more before dinner, and twice after. It was past midnight when I finished a twenty page dissertation on Franck's Symphony in D Minor.

I spent all my Navy money for records and for a long time put in all my free afternoons at the Music Library or in record shop listening booths on the Avenue.

In time I left many early favorites behind, such as Tchaikovsky, except for the 1812 Overture, which

still fractures me. Shostakovich's 5th lasted longer, especially the Fourth Movement, which I always played at top volume when the girls were in the Chapter Room next door speaking Greek and swearing solemn oaths and drinking blood and whatever else sorority girls do during Chapter Meetings. I progressed to Beethoven Symphonies, Mozart symphonies and Brandenburg Concertos. The free chamber music recitals on campus introduced me into a new, subtler world. One does not march away from a Beethoven quartet, one drifts away on waves of pure soul. One does not drift away from Mozart, one dances away on the laughter of pure delight. However, I must admit I still get a wallop from Prokofief's March and Scene Infernal, especially when I'm drinking. And when world-weariness rolls over me like ocean surf I play Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde, and circle the earth high in space, gazing down with tears at the deeply unhappy, touchingly funny, poignantly beautiful world.

the Post Office. After Friday classes and dishwashing and study late at night I rode the bus downtown to

When all my Navy money was gone for music I went to work weekends at the old Terminal Annex, and through the night into morning cased mail or cancelled mail or bagged mail or loaded trucks. Home in morning of Saturday, eat breakfast, for supper, sleep all day. Awake and have supper for breakfast, another night at the Annex, home to bed, sleep all day

and then stay awake all night and go to Monday morning classes tottering and staring.

The graveyard is a valuable experience. the world is upside down! Day is night, night is day, black is white, white is grey! Through the eyes of the walking dead I saw dimensions of reality unsuspected by those who sleep at night and work at day.

The graveyard perspective shatters many conventional patterns of behavior. But a little shattering goes a long way. I quit the Postoffice to become guardian of the Campus Art Gallery. The pay was invisible but so was the work. Unlock the door and turn on lights. Sit at the desk by the door all afternoon reading. Turn off lights and lock the door. I was also expected to break up riots but hardly anybody ever riots in the Gallery. Often when I was tired of reading I studied the pictures trying to understand. I still don't know what I'm supposed to like in art. Probably I should be ashamed to admit it but several of the pictures in the Gallery seemed to me excellent. I've hung a few Renoir and Van Gogh prints in my room, and undoubtedly should be ashamed of that.

The first day in Philosophy Dr. Alexander announced that he wanted us to think two hours a day. However painful we might find it, think one hour in

class, think one hour outside. He then drew a chalk line on the blackboard, a circle, some dots, and miscellaneous smears. He asked, what do these have in common? They are all on the blackboard, all made of chalk, and all are white. He held up a sheet of paper and asked, what does this sheet of paper have in common with the marks on the blackboard?

~~He held up a sheet of paper and asked, what does~~

~~this sheet of paper have in common with the marks~~

~~on the blackboard?~~ Among other things, it too is

white. He pointed out the window at a billowing cloud. It is white. His shirt--it is white. As we were all competing to name white things suddenly Alexander pounced on us, what is White? What is your definition of Whiteness? A mixture of primary colors? When I look at a white object I don't see any primary colors! Vibrations in ether? When I look at a white object I don't see any vibrations! I don't see any ether! What is Whiteness? Where is Whiteness?

I wandered about the campus seeing Whiteness all around me. Also Blackness, Redness, Treeness, Cloudness, Brickness^o Forms, Essences, Ideals, not outside the world, but in the world, yet still somehow apart from any particular object in the world. Mysterious, grand, thrilling!

The week^s with Whiteness, agitated as ~~it was~~^{they were}, seemed a time of utter serenity by contrast with the following

episode of the Malignant Deceiver. How do you know you exist? How do you know a Malignant Deceiver is not ~~Tricking~~ Tricking you? How do you know you are anything more than a figment of the imagination of ~~the~~ a Malignant Deceiver? It was a shocking suggestion. Existence is constitutionally guaranteed every Free American. No Malignant Deceiver, no Alexander, is going to talk us out of our birthright! Students yelled at Alexander. He asked politely, how do you know the Malignant Deceiver is not dreaming up this anger of yours?

After two furious weeks we were all exhausted. But it was worth it. Alexander wasn't such a bad sort. One marvelous Friday he let us off the hook. All weekend I said to myself over and over, wondering, Cogito Ergo Sum!

Monday morning Alexander revised the statement to Dubito Ergo Sum. Or more accurately Dubito Ergo Dubito. Or perhaps, just Dubito. And finally, there is a doubt. Somewhere. In Someone's mind. The Malignant Deceiver had won after all.

Without allowing so much as a day for recovery Alexander hit us with the Billiard Balls.

Cried a student, if one billiard ball hits another, and the second billiard ball starts moving, of course the first one caused the second one to move!

Naturally! The first ball was moving and the second one was just sitting there until the first ball hit it, and then it moved!

Did you see the first one cause the second one to move? ✓ But did you see a cause? Did you see the first ball cause the motion of the second? Damn it, why else would the second ball move? Said Alexander, I haven't the slightest idea. Cried a student, every time a billiard ball hits a billiard ball something happens! That's proof! Said Alexander, every time I've seen two billiard balls collide they have changed course abruptly, but I've never seen that the collision had anything to do with it. I've never seen a cause. Moreover, I haven't seen all the billiard ball collisions that have taken place. Or that will take place. How do I know that the very next time one billiard ball collides with another they won't both turn into butterflies? How do I know the billiard balls will not pass right through each other? How do I know that the next time two billiard balls collide the entire universe will not explode?

After ~~two~~^{a few} weeks we were all so exhausted the subject was closed. We wanted to forget. It makes a person nervous, flipping a light switch, wondering whether the lamp will go on or whether it will burst into song. Toss a pebble in the air--will it go up straight, then fall down? Or will it keep on going out into space? Or will it sprout wings and fly away?

~~The quarter was nearly over but~~ ^(A) there was no respite. Alexander moved from the Billiard Balls directly to the Oil Can on the Other Side of the Moon. A very devout and hysterical girl cried, but I know God exists! I have faith! Mildly and kindly Alexander said, but I have faith that there is an Oil Can on the Other Side of the Moon. The poor girl came close to tears, but there was no way out. She couldn't have one without the other. If she wanted her God she also had to take Alexander's Oil Can on the Other Side of the Moon.

Two papers were required for the course. The first was, What is Truth? I was delighted to have a concrete problem. Such an important one, too. It would be ^a marvelous service to set the poor worrying philosophers straight once and for all. Alert and confident I launched into the list of recommended readings. So and so says Truth is this. Very convincing. But such and such says Truth is that. Also convincing. What does whozit have to say? Something else! And convincingly! And whatzit disagrees! Convincingly!

Every free hour I was in the library. Everyone defines Truth with such clarity. And every definition contradicts all the others. It was irritating. All this intense study should be rewarded with a final, absolute answer.

But I swayed from one Truth to another, I couldn't decide. Actually the matter was so simple. If only I could focus my entire mind and soul I should be able to burn through the obscurity!

Coming out of the library the afternoon before the paper was due I walked along concentrating, trying to break through. I had to find out! Otherwise how could I write ~~the~~ the paper? Something cracked me on the head. I staggered back a step. A tree had attacked me! I was minding my own business walking along and this tree came up and hit me! I glowered at the tree and then had the wild inspiration that if I grabbed the tree with both hands and pounded my head with it the ideas would be shaken into proper order, I would get the answer! However, I wrote the paper with no help from the tree. It was a frustrating paper and didn't settle a thing.

The second paper was, Why I am (or am not) a Supernaturalist. I had written this essay so many times it seemed at first only a matter of revising old work. But I had never written for Alexander before. I could not overpower him with bombast and poetry. For weeks I thought more than the required hour a day about the lectures, the classroom arguments. During many nights, and late into those nights, I pondered and revised. I cleaned a lot of

junk lumber from my mind, shed many lingering crudities such as materialism and mechanism. There are many white things, but there is also Whiteness. There are Billiard Balls, but who can show a mechanism connecting their motions?

What was I, then? ~~What was my proper name?~~
 By Christ, when the fullness of the revelation came ~~to me~~ it was almost a mystic experience. I was a naturalist! ~~A magnificent faith, naturalism!~~
 If the world is entirely natural, if there is only one order of reality, then goodness and beauty are not outside the world, but in and throughout the world. Evil and ugliness are in the world too. But Supernaturalists insist on removing the good and beautiful to heaven, leaving us on earth the evil and the ugly. Those of us who have not been and do not expect to go to heaven can rejoice in naturalism.

I haunted Dr. Alexander's office. At first I had to have a reason. I spent a lot of time thinking up reasons for calling on him. But there was never any need for a reason. At the time I was reading folk literature in an English course. Before long Alexander was guiding my investigations far more than my English professor.

Above all we talked of mountains. We talked of his mountain trips, my mountain trips, mountains we both hoped to visit. We talked mountains in the

Soon we didn't even pretend to discuss philosophy.

winter and in the spring, and when summer came he and I and his two sons drove to Deer Park and hiked through the flowers and ~~some~~^{scrub} of Grand Ridge to Obstruction Point, always on the very crest of the ridge, always with the sky around us, the Strait of Juan de Fuca north, the interior Olympics south. It had been years since I had walked the crest of an Olympic ridge, and it was splendid to settle at last the old score with Grand Ridge.

From Obstruction Point we walked in snow and flowers and rock along Lillian Ridge, then descended steeply into the meadows and alpine forest of Moose Lake. We were sprawled around our campfire contemplating a thin supper of sandwiches when a fisherman happened by and gave us an armload of trout. Dr. Alexander proved himself the most skillful broiler of trout in the world.

The next day we explored the meadows and creeks of Grand Valley, wandering past the two higher lakes, up snowfields, shale slides and broken rocks to a summit. In the afternoon we rested by a cold rushing creek. Dr. Alexander taught us the habits of mosquitoes. He allowed one to creep along his arm, time after time sinking in its proboscis. It was sickening to watch the slender needle sink into flesh, then withdraw. Suddenly the mosquito stood on its head and

and its abdomen turned red and plump. The mosquito withdrew, staggering and sodden. Dr. Alexander then slapped him.

Whiteness and the Malignant Deceiver and Billiard Balls and the Oil Can on the Other Side of the Moon, also Deirdre , also broiled trout and the facts about mosquitos, these are some of the major legacies I received from Alexander. Now they are attacking Alexander as a Communist. So what? Some of my professors are Republicans. Some are left-handed. Several are lechers. What is this, attacking a professor for his politics? Why not, instead, attack professors for incompetence? Because, of course, the faculty would be practically wiped out.

Alexander saved me from majoring in Philosophy. Said he, if you want to be a philosopher, major in something else. If you major in philosophy you will have to teach philosophy. Teaching philosophy is hard work. There is no chance to coast. Only with extraordinary energy can a person both teach philosophy and be a philosopher.

Alexander was speaking of himself. Teaching philosophy was hard work for him because he refused to coast. He had too high a respect for the rights of students. He felt even stupid students deserve respect, or at the least kindness.

When General Studies began to fret about my small-child-in-a-candy-store curriculum I moved my records to English, since I was on the payroll reading bluebooks. When a readership opened in Philosophy I switched my records, but when Alexander lost his allowance for a reader I returned to English. My theory was to keep the advisors guessing, never let them feel they have you nailed down. Intimate that next quarter you may move to History or Anthropology, or back to Geology.

One of my English professors was involved in an experimental theater on the Avenue. One day in late spring he pointed his finger at me and said, you look like an actor! Before I knew what was happening I was in rehearsals as one of a pair of preachers. The part was easy since we spoke in unison and Art, my partner, knew the lines.

I had lasted out the spring at Alpha without a class war and was for the summer caretaker of the entire empty house. It was lonely, and I always came early to the theater. Art was always there when I arrived, and we talked about classes and profs and literature and our lives and hard times. Art had been in basic training when one night in the barracks he awoke screaming. It would never occur to the Army that a person might wake up screaming simply because he was in the Army. An Army psychologist worked Art

over for several weeks and at last was so insulting Art got sore. You simply don't go around punching Army psychologists in the nose. After a few months in a closed ward Art was discharged. What with the *sadistic* Army psychologist ~~and his~~ and the months in the closed ward he continued to wake up at night screaming. The only treatment his psychiatrist found helpful was alcohol. Art described the wonders of wine so well I couldn't stand it. One night I told him I wanted very much to get drunk. The idea delighted him. Said he, let's get a bottle!

There was one difficulty about getting a bottle. Art was born and raised in a small town and until he was drafted there were only a few hundred people in his life. Strangers bothered him. Friendliness was extremely important. When he first arrived in Seattle he chanced to stay overnight at an obscure hotel downtown. A tavern in the same block was still the only tavern where Art felt an atmosphere of friendliness. So to get the wine we ~~traveled by~~ ^{rode a} bus downtown and back.

In our dressing room, with curtain time an hour away, we donned our suits of Christian black, accentuated our eyebrows, brightened our cheeks and lips, and then opened the wine.

What a marvelous liquid! The rich red wine in the glass was a delight to my eye, and then came the tart cool caress in my throat, the warmth growing within.

The quick sharp eye of my mind eroded away inconsequentials and gazed directly upon fundamental truths. Large pompous matters became idiotically ridiculous. The world was easy to solve now, and funny? Funnier than hell! Wine, wine, more wine! Bring on the dancing girls! Certainly wine is for the truth-seeker as important as the multiple-working-hypotheses and rational skepticism.

Where the hell's the wine? All gone! Can't be all gone! Gotta have more wine! What's time? Only 8:15, Chrissake! First preacher cue is 9. Chrise! Just make it we hurry like hell!

The bus was too slow. But the Model A was way up at the Alpha house. In the twilight we galloped at top speed up the Avenue. People stared. Why? Students often run along the Avenue. People are used to students running.

Suddenly we understood. They were not used to young ministers in clerical collars and suits of godly black sprinting up the Avenue. We began to giggle and tears ran down our cheeks. We began to sweat. The paints and powders became blotched and streaked. The sidewalks were crowded, and we dodged in and out jostling and apologizing. The population was startled. Some burst out in laughter. Others gasped in consternation. All were astounded to see two young giggling painted ministers galloping

headlong up the Avenue.

We piled breathless into the Model A and rattle-banged downtown to the friendly bartender. A light turned red and I skidded the Model A to a halt. At the wheel of the car on my right was an elderly lady. She was startled by the screech of brakes. She looked into the Model A. She gasped. Art returned her stare with a saintly simper and a most Christian shrivelling of his shoulders. She ducked her head religiously and simpered. They were simpering very religiously at each other when the light turned green and I let out the clutch and the Model A shot across the intersection like a rocket.

When we flung through the door of the tavern the babble ceased instantly. Art marched up to the bar and cried, in the name of God, one bottle of your cheapest burgundy!

Back in our dressing room we were hysterically discussing hypothetical letters to bishops when the door flew open and the director screamed, you missed your first cue entirely, you are now missing your second! We tumbled in all our smeared makeup out into the bright lights. We were mere seconds late. But the Hero had been waiting for our entrance, and he looked at us and forgot his lines. He stared at us helpless. We smirked back, with folded hands, like always. Then he remembered his lines--his lines from

the end of the scene. He yelled them out and continued to stare at us. This was the beginning of the scene. The other actors were paralyzed. This scene was the climax of the play and the Hero had skipped the whole damn thing. There was a long pause. Nothing was happening. Art saved the play. He stepped forth and brilliantly improvised a speech that adroitly brought the action back from the Hero's anticipated lines to the present moment in the plot. The other actors gratefully picked up the action. The Hero was furious. He had no more lines, he'd used them all up, and followed Art and me to the side of the stage and cussed us out, in whispers, from the side of his mouth, while smiling at the audience. He was smiling but his face was so red I thought his head might explode and ruin the whole show. He was still cussing when the scene ended in the Blackout.

All the lights went out in the theater. The entire cast was on stage. Everyone began the well-rehearsed shuffle off stage. It was always a troublesome bit, what with an enormous cast and a tiny stage and only one narrow exit into the one and only wing. The timing had to be exactly precise. Through repeated practice we were able to clear the stage in an average of two minutes, and in almost total silence. Speed and silence were vital to keep the mood intact for the scene following the blackout.

But the Hero was busy cussing Art and me. He was out of place. Immediately the rehearsed pattern disintegrated. Everyone became agitated and nervous. In total darkness one might easily make a wrong turn and topple off into the laps of the audience. I wasn't nervous. As soon as the lights went out I lost horizons and fell flat on my face, knocking down several other actors in the process, they knocking down still others. It was funny as hell and I could hardly keep from laughing. I crept around on the floor on my hands and knees clutching ankles. I could always tell a girl's ankle because of the scream. Actors kept struggling to their feet but I accidentally knocked others down. There were stifled screams, and whispered goddamits! and Chrissake what's going on? The audience was out of its mind. They thought it was all in the script until the director started yelling from the wing, come on! come on! The audience was fractured. At last the director broke the darkness with a flashlight and guided the actors into the wing. I came last, on my hands and knees. Art was the only one who thought it was funny. It was a comedy so actually the players should have appreciated the laughs they got throughout the last act but they knew the audience was still laughing at the blackout, not at their lines. What with the manpower shortage the director couldn't afford to boot us out of the show but for the rest of

a respectful smile. In jumping up I tripped. ~~It~~ I guess it
~~apparently~~ appeared to her I stood up and leered at her
and threw a glass of wine in her face and then tried
to tackle her. She ran out of the house screaming.
Art ran out the door after her trying to calm her down
but she just ran faster. Art and I finished off the
gallon. He caught a train next morning. At least I
think he did. I haven't seen him since.

Next morning the entire Board roused me from my bed. It was early in the morning, not even noon. The Chairwoman screamed at me while the Board stood braced like the Forward Wall of Notre Dame to repel savage assaults. It was too early to argue. Hell, I couldn't even see her very clearly.

Awaking again in the afternoon I realized I was fired. I went over to Pat's house and told him I was sick of living with girls. He wasn't hard to convince. There was an enormous female athlete in ~~the~~ ^{his} house. He could scarcely sleep at night for fear she would break down the door and rape him. We drove around the District looking for living space we could afford. Down by the lake among the abandoned lumber mills we found an empty house. It wasn't much of a house, sufficient evidence being the fact it was vacant during the wartime housing shortage. But we hunted up the owner and he was willing to rent it as it stood, for \$18 a month . Cash. No checks. In case the house fell down on us and somebody tried to sue him. It was totally unfurnished except for the kitchen stove, but we weren't worried about that.

That afternoon and evening we moved our clothes and books and other personal belongings from Greek Row to the \$18 house. After midnight, when traffic thinned out, we moved from Greek Row to our \$18 house a double-decker bunk complete with mattresses and blankets

and sheets and pillows. We also moved two chests of drawers, two desks, two chairs, a mirror, a complete set of cooking and eating utensils. Toward morning we moved a kitchen table and two more chairs, an armchair, a rug, a barrel of soap powder, a case of canned corn and a case of stewed tomatoes, a sack of potatoes, a brook^{er} and dustpan, a supply of light-bulbs and towels, a floorlamp and a doormat.

It was really an excellent house for the money, quite warm and cozy when the sun was shining and didn't leak except during rain. There was very little sunshine that winter and quite a lot of rain but we arranged our furniture to avoid leaks. During cold weather we bundled up in sweaters and coats. When the wind blew up through the cracks in the floor and our feet went numb we studied by the kitchen stove with our feet in the oven. We had no complaints about our \$18 house.

Our meals were nourishing. Pat was a master at frying liver and onions and could boil potatoes very decently. During the long summer at the Alpha house I had created a splendid recipe for hamburger steak. It was actually more of a fried meat loaf, what with the eggs and crackers and onions and scraps left~~x~~ over from previous suppers. Pat became expert at mixing the coloring into margarine. He claimed it gave him a sexual thrill. I experimented with ready-mixes and

and turned out creditable gingerbread and biscuits. My apple pies weren't entirely successful but the apples were always good once we managed to pry off the top crust.

Each Friday afternoon we drove to the liquor store and bought a bottle of gin, then to a grocery for hamburger and a large can of grapefruit juice. While the Marlowe Steak was frying we relaxed with gin and grapefruit juice cocktails. After all the steak was consumed we drew our chairs up to the stove, put our feet in the oven, and finished off the gin and grapefruit juice.

When there was nothing more to drink we went on expeditions. One night we climbed the roof of English Hall. That is, I did. Pat didn't quite make it. Sitting on the roof in the night I yelled sadly, there he goes! there he goes! while Pat~~x~~ clattered down the shingles laughing.

As winter progressed our expeditions became utilitarian. We used the darkness of night and the courage of gin to gather coal. One night a watchman discharged a shotgun in our vicinity. Whether or not he was aiming at us next day we bought a load of coal. To be fair we called the yard we'd been looting. The truck backed up to our door. Said the driver, where you want it? Pat and I stared at the enormous amount of coal in the truck. Who could imagine there would be

so much coal in one truck? We didn't have any coal bin. But we had to have coal. Said we, dump it! It was several weeks before we burned enough coal so that we could get in and out of burrhouse without crawling over a black mountain.

We directed subsequent expeditions to a restaurant on the Avenue. One night we had trouble getting the people to take our money so thereafter we didn't bother anyone with our money. When a crowd left a rear booth we followed the group to the cash register, chatted amiably while they paid their bill, and moved with them onto the sidewalk.

We probably would have had to find some new sort of expedition because beating the check was altogether too easy to be interesting. But Pat graduated the end of winter quarter. He could just as well have built bombers in Seattle, but was so chilled after a winter in our \$18 house he moved down to Los Angeles to thaw out and build bombers there. I hated to give up the house and all the excellent furniture and the barrel of soap powder and the mountain of coal, but \$18 was more than I could afford. Prowling around among the ~~abandoned~~ lumber mills I found an old building that had been a loggers' hotel fifty years ago. It was empty now except for several very old men. I rented a room for \$6 a month. Except for several popular women in a rooming house down the street I was the only

person in the neighborhood under seventy years old. I was known all along the lakeshore as the Student. My landlord ran a shoe repair shop on the ground floor. Often when I went in to pick up my mail he and his friends would be huddled around the stove. He'd offer me a bottle of beer and I would join them, and listen to stories of how it was fifty years ago, when the mills were running twenty-four hours a day and sailing ships from all over the world tied up at ~~lake~~ ^{lake} docks to load lumber. They remembered the first steamer load of gold from the Yukon, the Alaska-Yukon ~~Expedition~~ ^{Exposition}, and when the University moved out here into the forests still being logged, and the year the lake froze over.

Poetry had always seemed to me an archaic form of communication, ^{perversely} complicated beyond necessity ~~and~~ ~~pure personality on the part of~~ ^{by} precious creatures known as poets. I was not opposed to melody and rhythm in words, but Thomas Wolfe has melody and rhythm in his prose. Arranging words in verse form seemed pure crankiness. I did enjoy poetry with a real swing, such as in the Three Witches scene of Macbeth. And rhymes can be fun when someone like W. S. Gilbert gets to work. But by and large poetry interfered with my enjoyment of literature.

Dr. Holling had a hard battle with me. Another thing about poets that made me mad was compact utterance,

rich imagery, allusions, and all that crap. Why be so niggardly with words? Why not take a bit more time and say what you have on your mind instead of gasping out a few cryptic lines? After two weeks inside Tintern Abbey I was pounding my fists on the walls trying to get out. I was so furious with Wordsworth that when I escaped Tintern Abbey I wouldn't listen to another word.

Then Coleridge snuck up from behind and knocked me flat with one punch. I drifted where Alph, the sacred river, ran through caverns measureless to man down to a sunless sea, sailed about six complete trips with the Mariner, and suddenly one day was surprised to find myself murmuring, five years have passed; five summers with the length of five long winters; and I rushed back to loiter lovingly through Tintern Abbey and then wandered lonely as a cloud, even while moving forward with Dr. Holling into Don Juan, Chapman's Homer, and while weeping for Adonais. And as it happened, in another course that quarter when that Aprille with his shoures soote the droghte of March hath perced to the roote, I was wenden on my pilgrymage to Caunterbury, with ful devout courage, the hooly blisful martir for to seke, that hem hath hopen when that they were seeke.

I began to write poetry myself.

Greenness is Cleaness,
 Blackness is Deadness,
 Blueness is Trueness,
 But Redness is Redness.

After Browning I wrote PIP! PIP! HOORAY! PIPPA
 HAS PASSED!

God's in his Heaven,
 Dinner's at seven,
 All's well in the whirl,
 Unless you're a squirrel.

Not entirely original, I'll admit, but there is
 a small new twist of vision, I think. My best effort,
 though, was ODE ON A GRECIAN URINAL.

Of all the sixes born in Heaven
 Never one shall equal seven.

I've always felt there should be a second couplet
 but my poetic gleam failed suddenly and utterly. ~~It~~
~~have faded up to my limitations as a poet, such as~~
~~a heavy preoccupation with the Heaven-seven rhyme.~~
 There isn't any money in poetry anyway so I don't feel
 too bad.

During vacation I operated a plywood shaper in a
 lumber mill. At 8 a.m. I flipped the switch and all
 around the mill at 8 a.m. switches were flipped, and
 the sanders and the planers and the saws and the shapers
 spiralled up from a rattle to a rumble to a rising whine
 and a high roaring scream, and we hundreds of workers

became deafmutes, communicating by signs and gestures.

Battered by the torrent of noise I commenced shaping sheets of plywood. Fifty times an hour I pulled a sheet from the pile, shaped side one, shaped side two, shaped side three and four, flipped the sheet and shaped side one, shaped side two, shaped side three and four, stacked on a pile and pulled down the next sheet.

At noon all the switches were flipped at once, and all the shapers and planers and saws and shapers spiralled down. At 12:30, our hundreds of sandwiches eaten, our hundreds of thermoses of coffee drunk, our hundreds of cigarettes smoked out in the millyard, we turned on our machines, and the symphony spiralled up once more through music and beyond into pure noise, and beyond noise into a physical assault on the flesh. The noise could no longer be heard for the ears were stunned, but the noise could be felt inside the stomach and the head. It was a noise that flexed the abdomen, a noise that dissolved reason. I could not retreat into private reflection for the noise pounded into my mind pulsed into my marrow with the hypnotic monotony of endless identical sheets of plywood, each with four sides to be shaped, and four more sides to be shaped, through time without end.

Every afternoon, sometimes as early as 2:30, never later than 3:30, I received my private signal that

it was time to escape. It was a little bird gave the signal. I never saw the bird, for it hovered just inside my ear singing ever and over again, infinitely varied, a sweet and quiet little song. Coo-ee! Coo-ee! Coo-oo-oo-oo-ee! Coo-ee-ee-ee-ee! Coo-ee! Coo-ee!

Then I would float out of the noise, into a silence broken only by my sweet-singing bird, and there I would look down at my body shaping sheets of plywood, and the hundreds of deafmutes at the planers and sanders and saws, and shapers, down there in the surf of noise pounding their stolid, suffering flesh. My world was calm and quiet, easy as a dream, a place of peace and the gentle, pure coo-ee, coo-ee of my bird.

At 4:30 switches through the mill were flipped with a single motion, the noise spiraled down from a high roaring scream to a dying whine and a rumble and a rattle. I was back in my body, glad to be free of plywood, sad that my bird was gone.

When hundreds of silent men filed out in silence punching a silent timeclock. Out on the street I saw people silently move their jaws and lips, and automobiles flit by as quietly as bats. Even huge trucks, though I could feel the tremble of them in my feet, made no sound at all. Gradually there came a distant rumble of automobile engines, and sounds from moving human jaws. Horns honked, boats whistled, balls clanged, feet slapped sidewalks. By supertime I was

back in a world not only of sight and smell and feel, but of sound. But not all the multitudinous sounds of the exterior world, not all the symphonies of Mozart, then or now, seem to me so lovely as the song of my bird in that quiet place above the torrent of noise, the coo-ee, coo-ee, sung for me alone, my private birdsong.

After vacation I worked halfdays at the mill. But the bird never came on halfdays and without the bird the mill was an Inferno. I quit, frightened. The campus was so deliciously quiet and peaceful, almost as quiet as when I was hovering with my bird.

Therefore when the people in the English department began worrying about me I quit flirting and told them they could keep my records. If it would make them happy I was willing to take my degree in English. They'd had my records more often than any other department and probably deserved me by now.

Dr. Muller was the one who convinced me, and not by argument, by example. He had not the dramatic gesture of Holling, nor Jeremy's visible aura of rich scholarship, nor the pouncing penetration of Alexander, nor the bright-eyes of Davis. The first weeks in his course seemed routine, nothing at all happened. Muller wandered through Shakespeare, poked at him here and there, apathetically. Sometimes in mid-sentence he stopped and looked out the window as if he had forgotten the class. After a long pause he would finish the sentence

aware for any commentary, some of which I had to
I listened to Muller, over the weeks, I discovered that
the more frequently he looked forgetfully out the
window, the less audible were his remarks, the more
excited he was by the subject. And at such times,
if one could only hear what he said, the small
remarks were invariably worth transcribing exactly,
for later long, close study. Not rhetoric, but
remarks, Muller gave us. Nor were they, as first
seemed, random disjointed fragments. It was during
conferences over my term paper I saw in his method
a synthesis of the multiple-working-hypotheses, rational
skepticism, deep appreciation of the sounds of words,
the meaning of ideas, the historical context of man
and his literature. His scholarship was a sort
that could engage my full mind and soul and strength.

Bob came home from the Army before most of my
other friends, except the psycho~~x~~discharges. He was
one of those millions of guys the Army never found a
use for ^{but} kept standing around three years in case
something turned up. Every Friday night we drank beer.
At first it was an adventure since I wasn't old enough,

and didn't look old enough, but after being tossed out of several taverns we evolved a technique. Bob showed his I.D. to the bartender while I wobbled into the can, looking beaten and drunk. If the bartender served Bob two glasses we stayed. If he wanted to check my identification I wobbled drunkenly out onto the street and Bob followed and we went someplace else. Gradually several taverns got used to seeing me around and assumed they had checked me before.

~~We talked of Whiteness, of Malignant Deceivers, of Billiard Balls, of the Oil Can on the Other Side of the Moon. We talked of Canterbury and Elsinore and Tintern Abbey and Of Time and the River. We talked, in other words, about my university education. We~~

~~also went on adventures.~~ (9) We began drinking about 9 and closed up the tavern at 1. Then we adventured. We found there is no building on campus that cannot be entered by alert, intelligent, determined explorers. Why did we break into buildings? Because they were there.

One night, ~~wary of prowling buildings for the pure sake of it,~~ we decided to steal a cadaver. About 1:15 we crept up the alley behind the Anatomy Shack. We found a window unlatched. But across the alley was a glare of light. Bob crawled up on my shoulders and we tottered unsteadily while he unscrewed the bulb. Now the alley was black as a grave. I boosted him

through the window, and stood nervously in the grave-black night.

From the inner darkness came the wail of a soul in torment! We had found the cadavers. all right! We'd raised one from the Dead! I wanted to run but honor forbade me to abandon my friend now, in his ultimate peril. I quavered in the alley, but stood firm. Bob was beside me, babbling, trying to vault out the window. He fell back inside, moaning. But the Thing stopped wailing. It didn't get him.

He stood, shuddering, and lit a match. This wasn't the cadaver room at all, it was the cat room! Cages and cages of cats! We gasped and cackled with relief. We didn't have enough nerve to continue the cadaver search that night. But it seemed there ought to be some use for a roomful of cats. So that night we delivered cats to several girls we knew more or less well, girls who lived in basement rooms with windows left open a bit for ventilation.

The next Friday we returned. We crept down the corridor peering systematically into each room, not exactly sure what we were looking for. Were the cadavers in coffins? Hung on hooks like sides of beef? At the end of the corridor we opened the last door, and gazed with delight at row upon row of tables, on each a white form! The dim illumination from street-

lights showed only masses of gauze, but the shapes were unmistakable! We had found the cadavers!

But now that we had found the cadavers we weren't so excited about stealing one. They were heavy. The formaldehyde was penetrating the beer. We had no use for an entire cadaver but some token of the campaign was needed. Bob had a Boy Scout knife. We took turns hacking at a wrist. The knife was very dull. The beer faded fast. We carried away a hand as a souvenir but that raised another question. What do you do with a hand? It wasn't until next day we found a use for the hand, and by then we were sick of the whole business. We managed to get it wrapped up in a pretty package and in the mail to Bill, who had been discharged from the Army a few months before and was now at school in Berkeley. Bill's mother worried about him down there, whether he was getting enough to eat, and was always sending him pretty packages of cookies and candy.

That was the Everest of our Friday adventures. There was nothing else worth doing. Afterward we just went out to get drunk. Bob is now in school and the years of marking time in the Army have given him a ferocious double-time approach to learning. He rather frightens me, my pace being so much more relaxed. We still drink together but not regularly.

I'm concentrating on the union card. I enjoyed the gypsy scholar role but the lumber mill sobered me. The lumber mill, and Sand Point, and sororities. If I am not to be at the mercy of housemothers, lieutenants, noise--and busdrivers--I must build myself a citadel in the medieval serenity of the academic world. Whatever its faults it is the best world I have known. It is the only world with room for such men as Davis, Jeremy, Alexander, Holling and Muller, the only world with room for me.

PART FIVE

PRAYER

Day after day, line by line, I followed Holling
and Shelley through Adonais. From the great morning
of the world when first God dawned on Chaos. . .
The pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream. . .
Pure spirit shall flow back to the burning fountain
whence it came, a portion of the Eternal, which must
glow through time and change. . . He is a portion of
the loveliness which once he made ^{more} lovely. . . The
One remains, the many change and pass. . . . My spirit's
bark is driven far from the shore, far from the
trembling throng whose sails were never to the tempest
given. . . I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar, whilst,
burning through the inmost veil of Heaven, the soul
of Adonais, like a star, beacons from the abode where
the Eternal are. . . .

Lecture after lecture, line by line I followed.
Now and then, here and there, an image or a rhythm
spun briefly in a vortex that sucked me through the
words into the poem. But mostly I saw, not felt,
how beautiful it was. The poem as a whole was escaping
me, as if I were hearing a great orchestra performing
a magnificent symphony--but in rehearsal, with the
conductor constantly breaking off the flow to lecture
the musicians, then starting over again. There is
perhaps no other way to learn a a complex symphony
than to hear it in rehearsal with a great orchestra
and a conductor of genius. But learning a symphony

is not hearing it.

One morning in the English library I resolved to hear the poem. Enough of class study! Now I would read Adonais. But I could not read. I could only live. And as I lived I wept for Adonais-- Adonais is dead! He is dead. O, I wept for Adonais! though my tears thawed not the frost which bound so dear a head!

As in the mill I hovered above the flesh submerged in torrential noise and listened to my private birdsong, now I hovered above the book and listened to Shelley sing, mourned with Shelley, and with Shelley crossed beyond terror and love, and with one wrench of adventurous spirit passed into the One, into the Prayer. . . .

Hovering there in the library, swaying to the rhythm, singing the melody, I saw beyond the windows the fresh-washed blueness of the springtime sky and the billows of hurrying cumulus, I heard the cold spring wind rattling through green-sprouting trees, I felt an inner quivering, a lightness, a rising upwards.

I was moving through the cold wind, with the cold wind blowing through me. I was touched by the warm sun then swept by wind again, and there just above me, just beyond my outstretched arms, were the white billows racing through the treetops. A little distance

beyond the billows was the Blueness of the sky, and the sky was not only above it was all around the billows and the tree tops and me.

The cold wind was in my face but some other wind was carrying me along, for I had no body anymore.

The rearing white clouds, the vibrating blue sky, through these and beyond I must go... waves of green leaves into the white billows rushing through the cold fixed blueness when all at once the earth turned on its axis and cast me upward into the billows toward the cold blueness. . . .

Someone giggled.

A girl.

I stared at her, hating. But I arose from the green grass, wet from the morning rain, the green grass under the maple tree. There were hundreds of girls walking up to the Row. Hundreds of vile fleshly creatures, the more horrible that within that flesh was no inner illumination of soul. The chance was lost. Adonais went all for nothing.

The night on Blue Mountain I came close once more. No laughter to destroy the prayer, for I believe she was praying then too. But even with her warmth to sustain me in the terror I dared not adventure out among the stars, and fell back to earth.

It is terrifying to feel the turning of the earth, to go out near the stars.

One success would end the terror! But so many times so close, yet never breaking free. . . .

Ⓟ I was looking up through

Whenever I am strong enough I try again.

But I do not lightly try again.

Often I walk along under rushing white clouds staring at the path under my feet, lest the earth turn. The empty black night surrounding the stars I can rarely think about, much less penetrate, lest I at last look directly into infinity and eternity.

Sometimes in the mountains I feel strong, and wander lonely as a cloud through rocks ancient before life began and through flowers that blossomed an hour ago, but then when I look at the sky it is not a sky of earth, and in the wind I hear such strange utterance. . .

Sometimes I go clattering along hour after hour in the Model A, and then drop over the brink of a hill, and hear the roar of a vast ocean pounding against an immense continent. Running by the surf in the cold salt wind blowing from the poles of the earth I look out to the horizon where the ocean bends down to Asia.

Miles and miles I follow the battleground of ocean and continent, and at last lie down in the sand, firmly anchored in the continent, and watch the assault of the ocean.

Here comes our wave! The broad green swell lifts toward the sky and sharpens to a thin translucent crest, curls forward in midair, the curling crest hangs in the sky impossibly, and explodes. The continent shudders,

white foam hisses up the sand to my feet, pauses, slips back slowly, hissing, now more swiftly with a rattle and a roar, back under the already-tumbling crest of the next wave.

Every wave is a tragedy and I live each tragedy from prologue to catastrophe. But in a cycle of tragedies each catastrophe must be deeper and more total than the last, and it is not so with waves. The waves destroy themselves in so regular and measured a procession catastrophe becomes ~~too~~^{too} commonplace to stir pity and terror. I try to force the pace with my will, and at last am pushing each wave so desperately I crest before the wave, and must hang in space waiting for the explosion, and when it comes it is not as good as it should have been.

There are too many waves, and they are too slow. A rising storm would do it. Someday I hope to be at the ocean during a storm.

After the first hour of excited anticipation the ocean melancholy overwhelms me. The waves do not quicken, they pulse on with the monotony of eternity, and when Tragedy is the customary condition the end is not exaltation but fear without hope.

This is the way of the world. My God, what a horrible place!

I turn away from the ocean, I turn back to earth, and look into the sand. North and south between the

hostile forces of swelling ocean and stolid continental
jungle lies the disputed ground, the sweep of sand,
the grey band of sand.

But I smooth a pinch of grey sand over the
palm of my hand. I bring the grains close to my
eyes.

The sand is not grey.

In my hand are rubies and emeralds and diamonds
and garnets and amethysts and jets, innumerable
glistening jewels, for each grain of grey sand is in
fact a bright flame. . .

I can no more spread grey sand into jewels now
than I can stare at the clouds or the stars. Anymore
than I can pause in high meadows to study the petals
of lupen. . .

For I see the world ⁱⁿ ~~as~~ a grain of sand, all heaven
in a ^{wild} ~~wild~~ flower...

TERROR

LOVE

ADVENTURE

PRAYER

PART SIX

PART SIX

TERROR

One ordinary morning, walking along the Avenue from class to coffee shop, I glanced in passing at the newspaper stand. I was not much interested for the war was nearly over. I merely glanced at the headlines in passing to see if there had been another landing in the Pacific.

I stopped short.

I could not read the words at first.

The letters were immense. The largest headline I had ever seen.

I had to refocus my eyes to read the words.

ATOM BOMB. . .

I knew about bombs. For years there had been bombs. Bombs are the way we kill.

I knew about atoms. Atoms are the building blocks of the universe.

I felt a cold chill, and broke out in sweat. I stared at the headline. ATOM BOMB. I had never in my life heard that any such research was in progress and in high school physics I barely scraped a C. But I understood instantly. The ATOM BOMB exploded within me. The earth revolves on its axis and I have felt it move, the stars are bright fires in eternal night and I have been near them. Now the bright fires and the eternal night and the revolving earth with all its oceans and mountains have been made into a BOMB. Bombs are the way

we kill. We have learned how to make the universe into a bomb.

the BOMB was exploded in Japan and it was exploded on the Avenue and it was exploded in me, and it is exploding now and it will continue exploding forever through eternity. It is exploding forever backward into the past, it is exploding in my childhood and in ancient Rome and in the cave dwellings of Pleistocene man.

The BOMB long ago pursued me in dreams to the door and had I not always awakened in time it would have exploded. But now I cannot escape the BOMB's awakening, for I am awake, and the BOMB has exploded, is exploding, and will explode forever.

The BOMB has won the war. They say that now everything will be all right. But nothing will ever be all right again. . .

PART SIX

LOVE

Abby and I were introduced soon after she arrived on campus, while it was still to her a very large and frightening institution compared to her previous small liberal arts college. The person who introduced us considerably exaggerated my position in the academic hierarchy but I saw no reason to demote myself. Abby was impressed. Since we met in English Hall philosophy seemed to her the safest way to gain status. She scattergunned obscure allusions to Lucretius and Berkeley and Schopenhauer. I led her far out on the limb before quietly sawing it off, dropping the remark in passing that my home department was philosophy. She crashed to earth, scrambled around hysterically in Chaucer, quickly realized that error, and jumped desperately to Russian history. I asked knowing questions and she became rattled, thinking she was trapped again. But at length I abruptly confessed I wasn't sure who came first, Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great. She then confessed she had never read a word of Lucretius or Berkeley or Schopenhauer, but had only heard people talking about them. The class bell rang. We lingered, trading her sarcasms about land grant college pedantry for mine about Great Books schools where everyone is too busy talking to read the Books. The second bell rang and we went to our separate classes.

We saw each other in the corridors after that, always with a special sort of chuckle in our hellos. It was strange. I could talk casually to other girls but whenever Abby was around I became tense. The way she walked, always in a sort of awkward hurry, speeding up and slowing down, abruptly changing directions, threw me off ^{balance}. Once I saw her coming and decided this was the time, come hell or high water. But when our paths converged I was tongue-tied. Possibly she had seen me and was nervous too. Or maybe it was the odd way I staggered to a halt. She laughed hysterically and rushed away. It was a humiliating failure and I didn't try again.

In any event there was suddenly Ruth, and I had no eyes or thoughts for other girls. After Ruth was Nora. I had eyes for other girls now, and more courage. Abby chanced in the restaurant one night and as she passed my booth I hailed her, and we exchanged banter until Nora swooped down to clarify the situation to the competition. And after Nora I was so nauseated Ella was the only member of the sex I could tolerate. After Ella left I was perfectly convinced my fate was to be a lone wanderer, incapable of loving or being loved. What must be will be; there are many ways to live, and many men have lived alone. Perhaps they have not been happy, but certainly the companionship of a woman is no guarantee of happiness.

And perhaps happiness is neither possible nor desirable. A lonely, wandering, tragic life for me. A difficult and melancholy journey to be sure, but I would not lose my chance for a glimpse of the infinite by killing my soul with cheap and easy conventional dreams. Had my other image survived childhood I would not live alone. But she does not exist now except in me, and therefore I will live alone, the two of me that are only one.

One night I was sitting in a shadow on the Library steps pondering the world-view of Arnold, whose poems I had been reading that evening under the Gothic vault of the main reading room. The Library is false-Gothic, I know, but lacking direct experience with genuine cathedrals one can, in the main reading room, reconstruct the sense of the Middle Ages. I had done so that evening, and against that background had projected the poetry of Arnold, the sea of faith was once too at the full, weary of myself and sick of asking what I am and what I ought to be . . .

A girl came slowly out of the Library onto the porch. From the shadow I couldn't see her face. She stopped, indecisive, on the steps. Then she abruptly raised her face to the sky. The rather awkward, disjointed motion was familiar. With a sort of sag she half-tumbled slowly down the steps.

A streetlight illumined her face as she passed my shadow. Glad I, no stars tonight, Abby! She jumped straight up in the air, but came down laughing, guess not, looks like rain!

It was only the second time we had ever been together but walking along in the night we did not talk as strangers. I realized that ever since that first short bantering exchange some part of me had always been thinking of her, watching her intently every time we met on campus.

We walked on and on, startling each other with flashes of erudition, sniping at poses, attempting entrapments. It seemed easy and natural to have a cup of coffee on the Avenue, and a refill, and another, and when the restaurant closed we were amazed it was so late.

We were out in the night, walking. It was 3 a.m., and we had been talking since 9 p.m. But there seemed no way to part. So we walked and walked, scarcely talking anymore, walking steadily slower.

At last there was nowhere else to walk. We were at the door of her rooming house, no longer side by side, but face to face. The street was pitch black. It was time to say goodnight. But we stood finishing up scraps of conversation, in whispers, since it was nearly dawn. Then there were no more scraps, nothing possibly could be said but goodnight. But we did not

say goodnight. Whenever I closed my eyes I was asleep. When I opened them I awoke wondering if we would still be there at sunrise. She hadn't gone away, I could hear her breathing. I was probably dreaming anyway so I gathered her into my arms and said, ah love let us be true to one another for all the world is as a darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night. . .

I pressed her against me and kissed her hair. She leaned her face on my shoulder but said nothing at all. I decided she was either asleep or dead but when I whispered goodnight in her ear and took away my arms she turned and went inside the house. I walked the long mile down dark streets to the lake to my \$6 room too sleepy to decide whether I should be happy or sad.

I overslept and missed all my classes next day. In afternoon daylight, thinking it over, I felt rather silly, quoting poetry in the middle of the night. I blushed remembering. Abby hadn't said a word. Embarrassed, no doubt. Well, then, the hell with women! The hell with Ruth and Nora and Ella! Also the hell with Abby!

I sat that night in a far dark corner of the Library porch, pondering the lonely road of the wandering intellect. I gazed over the sparkling lights of distant houses, wondering how each of these houses had

come to be occupied by a family. How do a man and a woman ever become a family? How many of these families were created by love, how many by fear of loneliness, how many by wanting to be married like everyone else? I was startled by a close voice in the shadow, saying, no stars on that hillside, boy! Said I, jumping to my feet, the night there are I'm getting the hell out of here!

We walked to the Avenue and drank coffee, wild and whirling. An automobile backfiring on the street--we erupted in laughter. The waitress spilling our coffee--another laugh. Abby trying to smoke a cigarette, and choking--we laughed uproariously. An old gentleman at the counter glaring at our laughter--we laughed until we wept.

When the restaurant closed and we emerged into night we walked no more than a block before I stepped into a dark doorway and gathered Abby to me and kissed her. She met my lips, trembling, but warm. We walked arm in arm laughing at garbage cans and laughing at police cars and laughing at frightened cats, and in every darkness between streetlights we embraced and kissed.

At last there was no place else to walk. We climbed the steps to my \$6 room, remembering the years we had wasted, the years we had loved each other and been too shy to love. We loved as if we had

wasted all the years allowed the world, crowding all the wasted years into our one night together before the world ended.

As it turned out the world did not end and eventually we went to sleep. When we awoke it was nearly noon. It was broad daylight, and we were shy.

Night's one thing, day another. We walked up the hill to the Avenue and had breakfast together. When by accident our eyes met we blushed. It was difficult to talk, impossible to laugh. Somehow we began discussing the ocean and discovered a mutual passionate enthusiasm for the ocean. Inside an hour we set out in the Model A to the ocean. ^{Down with the city!} Down with school! Up the ocean!

It was marvelous at the ocean. We were there three days, until our money ran out, and a storm was howling the entire time. The surf was thundering as I've never heard it before or since, the cabin shook as if the gale might blow it away, and sometimes there was such an explosion on the beach we tensed, waiting for the cabin to be overturned by a flood of white foam and green water. However, much as we admired the ocean, particularly in a storm, we saw very little of it those three days.

After the ocean the city seemed insanely inconsequential. My \$6^{room} being too small we sought larger quarters and found that landlords, and particularly landladies, have odd fixations. A young man and a young

woman cannot rent an apartment unless they have a legal document. Landlords are not religious or moral but they know sinners tend to skip out on the rent. It was impossible to explain that Abby and I were not sinners. We were in love.

It wasn't that we had any objection to marriage. We simply hadn't thought about it. We were in love, we wanted to be together. When we found we couldn't live together without a legal document we decided to get married. On promising to produce a legal document very shortly Abby was able to rent an apartment. The landlady was suspicious, and often, sneaking in at night, it was touch and go whether I'd be caught. We definitely wanted to get married. Life was too nervewracking with a landlady setting ambushes.

However, we had extremely vague and inaccurate notions of the process. We knew there was something about a marriage license. Also somebody had to say a marriage ceremony.

We had too much pride to ask our friends what to do so I called a total stranger, a preacher. He told me how to get a license. We went to the courthouse and during the three day ~~sobering-up~~ interval required by state law often studied our license, tenderly, in our apartment.

Then one afternoon we took baths and put on our best clothes and walked arm in arm to the church carrying our

license. We were early. The door was locked. So we walked around the block. On the Avenue we separated our arms, somewhat self-conscious in our best clothes, but kept our hands clasped.

We returned to the church door, still early, and waited. At 3 sharp, the hour of our appointment, a shiny new automobile drew up to the curb. A football-player insurance-executive type swung up the walk. We ignored him since we were waiting for a preacher. But this fellow in the business suit cried cheerily, Mister Marlowe? He nearly broke my arm shaking my hand. His fatherly pat on the shoulder buckled Abby at the knees. We followed him through the silent church to his study. The walls were lined with books. It was a room not much different from that of any professor on the campus across the street.

He swung into his study and, begging our leave, sat down at his desk and ruffled through a heap of papers in a basket labelled IN. Abby and I felt young and ridiculous. Being in a church was silly. And it certainly was a very large, brisk clergyman. Our fingertips nervously brushed as we stood awaiting sentence.

Said he brightly, looking up, well, then, shall we start? Said we, by all means. A cloud passed over his face, but where are your witnesses? Witnesses? We ~~thought~~ you were our witness~~s~~. No no, I can't be

your witness. Okay, we'll waive the witnesses. We just want to get married. We have a license. But you must have witnesses, that is the law. Can't we fake some names? Fake names! Ah! there is a law! Abby and I clasped hands and turned to leave. Said he, no, don't go! We turned and he beamed fondly upon us. Said he, all is not lost! He consulted his calendar and chuckled, haw! There is choir practice this hour! Should be along any second!

We three talked about this and that, awaiting the choir. He asked about our past history and future plans, and there was no way to keep it from him, he discovered we had been but were not now nor would we ever again be Christians. Said he, well! I see! He no longer found the conversation interesting, and rustled papers while awaiting the choir. Abby and I, in the silence, scanned his library, and whispered to each other about the titles, and this made him nervous. At last the outside door opened and the preacher bolted out of the study and returned clut~~ch~~ing a pair of elderly singers. They were the genuine article, Early Christian Idiots. The decrepit old man, the withered old woman, they tottered into the study and gazed upon Abby and me with pure Christian love.

Now that the Christians in the room outnumbered the pagans our preacher regained his nerve. He began

to outline our progress down the aisle to the altar. In one voice Abby and I said, nothing doing, no altar, just marry us! Said the preacher frowning, it's not very far to the altar. Only a short walk. Won't take more than a minute or so. Said we, if you don't mind, no altar. We just want to get married. Said he, oh very well! I hope you won't mind if I dress? Said we, not at all. Our preacher disappeared in a closet. While he was banging around in the closet the elderly Early Christian Idiots gazed upon Abby and me with childlike smiles of innocent love. We could not help liking our witnesses. We smiled back. Damned if I could ever throw such darlings to the lions!

When the preacher marched from the closet in his black robes he was several feet taller than when he entered in his business suit. He was enormous, facing Abby and me. He spoke a short, tasteful sermon in Elizabethan English and joined us in the solemn holy rites of the church. We solemnly answered his solemn questions, feeling no inclination to laugh. Perhaps an inclination to tears, remembering how many millions of couples have been joined by these rites, the deluded millions who believed there really was a God in the church, the happily deluded millions who thought man was more than a temporary and unstable relationship between complex electromagnetic charges. There in the House of God, joined together as man and

wife by the Minister of God, we bowed our heads in prayer, even as we clasped our hands together tightly, knowing there was no God, but only we two. And when we kissed before God and our preacher and our witnesses it was our first kiss, it was the first kiss of creation, the kiss of Adam and Eve, unashamed, quietly and innocently passionate. It was a long and tender kiss and our eyes were bright-glistening as we shook hands with our preacher and our elderly Christian choir-singer witnesses, bless their idiot hearts!

On the street, in the late afternoon, we laughed about the Christians. But now that we were married in the eyes of the Christian God and the King James Version we walked along the Avenue with our arms around each other and didn't give a damn if anybody laughed at us in our good clothes.

What with the housing shortage not even our legal document had obtained us a genuine apartment. On the third floor of an aged house, an attic converted illegally into apartments, we shared a hall bathroom and refrigerator with two other couples. Our kitchen had been a closet until the sink and hotplates were installed. Our bedroom was not large enough for both a double bed and a desk. We needed a desk.

When friends came visiting they inspected the bathroom and refrigerator facilities in the hall, our

closet-size kitchen. In our living room, looking at the narrow couch against one wall, the desk against the other, they invariably asked, but where do you sleep? We pointed at the couch. Depending on the friend the reaction was either a blush or ribald laughter.

It was a narrow couch. But we were in love. There in the morning we awoke, there at noontime we had lunch together, there we met at night, and there we were together all the night. The couch was all the space we needed for a night or an eternity.

PART SIX
ADVENTURE

Who killed Cock Robin?

According to one theory he committed suicide to avoid exposure as a sparrow in costume. Others say his brief burst of loud talk was the blow-out of a punctured balloon. Others that after walking tall on campus during the war he died of fright when the eagles returned from battle.

Cock Robin, he thinks the Bluebooks killed him. He claims he wasn't a sparrow and never was scared of eagles and had plenty of wind left. He entered graduate school flapping his wings, feeling so strong he asked for, and received, two readerships, not one but two. There's never been such an avalanche of Bluebooks. The Bluebook Factory was running three shifts, Sundays and holidays included. I, Cock Robin, stacked the Bluebooks on my desk in neat piles. When the desk was covered with Bluebooks I stacked them on the floor. Our apartment was small. We were being crowded out by Bluebooks. Sometimes when I came home at night with another load of Bluebooks it was simply too depressing. Abby and I would take our supper money for the week and go drink beer. The rest of the week we had bread and milk for supper, surrounded by Bluebooks.

Dr. Firey is a kind, civilized man. Before the term was very well along whenever I stoppe'd by his

office and guiltily asked if there were any more Bluebooks he waved the question away and led the conversation to literary and philosophical matters. If my conscience forced me to insist he would admit to a little quiz or two, but he read the papers himself to get acquainted with his students, they were very tiny quizzes, reading them was a matter of seconds, not worth bothering me.

Dr. Blartow killed Cock Robin. He didn't lecture at all. He gave tests every day. When there was no more room for Bluebooks in our apartment I stopped visiting his office. He searched for me all over English Hall but I was hiding. He left messages for me with all my faculty friends. I stopped visiting my friends. He became frantic. He pleaded with the Department Chairman. He wanted his Bluebooks.

But to be honest Dr. Blartow was merely burying a dead bird. I died in a seminar that had something to do with counting commas and filing 3 x 5 cards. The professor needed a nap very badly and had trouble lasting out the hour. Anyway except for me he had seen all his students before. They were all taking the course the third ^{or} ~~of~~ fourth or fifth time. He knew he was going to see them all again. He wished they would go away. He was tired of telling the same people the same things year after year. My new face made him particularly tired, too tired to tell me what the course

was about. And there was always the chance, being young, I'd get discouraged and go away, unlike the tired old students who kept hoping the school would sooner or later give up and grant them degrees.

I died filling ~~out~~ 3 x 5 cards and counting commas. Dr. Scott mummified me. I had read Pope and Swift and Grey and Blake and Johnson and Boswell and Sterne and Fielding and Gothic novels. The Eighteenth Century was exciting when the term began. But day after day, week after week, Dr. Scott passed around the seminar table engravings of Palladian architecture. Nobody ever said a word about the engravings. It wasn't necessary. Dr. Scott and his students were old friends. They had been together many years and would be together many more. Scott couldn't give them passing grades_x because they were stupid. But they were nice, quiet people and he was used to having them around. My new face disturbed the musty atmosphere. One day I made a wisecrack about Palladian architecture to the girl sitting next to me. She did not laugh, she huffed haughtily, my Period is Eighteenth Century! It wasn't an answer to my remark but it did explain her look of constant pain.

Comma-counting killed Cock Robin, Scott mummified him, Diartow buried the dusty old bird under a mountain of Bluebooks.

One dark winter afternoon Abby and I drove away from the campus in the Model A and continued driving to get as far away as possible from Blartow's Bluebooks and Scott's Girl with an Eighteenth Century Period. An odd drive it was, very odd. On a highway we had driven many times before suddenly in the gloom there was a new road sign. It hadn't been there before. I had the weird sensation the road had never been there before, that the gears of the universe had slipped a cog and jumped us into a parallel, slightly variant continuum. The sign said Monster Canyon Road. What the hell! It can't be worse than Bluebooks. We turned into the dark winding lane. But there were no monsters in Monster Canyon. Rather disappointed we continued aimlessly along backroads. Somehow we arrived at the Green River Gorge. Late in the winter afternoon, a light mist falling, we hiked down the trail into the dark damp Gorge. We explored potholes scoured in the rock thousands of years ago. In twilight we stood by the white roaring water busy scouring more potholes, leaving them perched on ledges as it cleaved deeper into the earth to scour new potholes. River scouring potholes through time with^{out} end, even as scholars grind out dissertations.

I quit.

I had lived an exciting life within the cloister but within the walls I was dead. What is Outside?

Heaven or Hell? I knew about the mills where lonely men attached to machines work long years toward the grave in a maelstrom of noise. I knew about busdrivers and housemothers and lieutenants on put-puts and I knew about the BOMB. It was doubtless a cruel and dreadful world Outside. But the BOMB was Inside as well as Outside and in any event when a man is dead he has no choice. Be it Heaven, be it Hell, he must go.

Well then, my love, let us go forth! Bravely, with laughter, arm, in arm, true to one another, for all the world is as a darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night. At least the violence and ignorance Outside are the violence and ignorance of life. In the coldness of the cloister when breezes of life whisper through cracks in the wall the corpses shudder at the warmth. This dead soul of mine, it could stay within the cloister, the catacombs, the quiet tombs. I did not have to go Outside. But I felt myself an improper soul, haunting around restlessly rather than lying decently quiet beside all the others.

I quit, I left, I was gone! Abby and I, true to one another, went forth bravely into the night to find a new exciting life together on the darkling plain, trusting our nimble wits to save us amid the clash of the ignorant armies.

What could I do for a living Outside? ~~The only way my schooling distinguished me from the rabble of the~~

~~armies was that I could read and write. Literacy is rare on the Outside. For the excellent reason there is no market for literacy. Aside from that~~ All

I had to sell was that I was alert, young, and had a college education. An employment agency peddled me to a hardware firm that employed only alert young men with college educations. I was fortunate ^{enough} to be placed in the Management Training Program. The salary was shockingly small but this was to my benefit. There was a stock option plan for Top Management so small salaries at the bottom meant just that much larger dividends for me later on.

I was so exceptionally eager and alert the personnel manager gave me the opportunity to learn the business from the ground up. It was thrilling to be in the mainstream of American life. I would be the finest warehouseman in the history of the Company. One day the President would notice this alert, eager, cleancut warehouseman and promote me on the spot to manager of something. Then I would show, by degrees, what a good American I was. My teeth would grow long and sharp and drip blood daily. I would climb a mountain of slain enemies and someday I would triumphantly fling open the door of the Board Room and as my face twisted into a cruel smile the lions would rush in and devour the Directors. Later on I would enclose the Olympic Peninsula

with electrified fences and mine fields and retire there with Abby and the Boston Symphony Orchestra and several thousand faithful retainers. I would devote the rest of my life to good works through the Marlowe Foundation. ~~After sending all the residents to Australia I would present Canada to the United States as its finest National Park.~~ I wouldn't have time to be President but I'd hire a good one and buy him the best available Congress. There was always the chance of a proxy fight with Daddy Warbucks for control of the world but I was thinking up some angles. Infect Sandy with rabies on the sly or expose Little Orphan Annie as Stalin's unwed mother. Daddy doesn't mind cutting a few corners but basically he is too decent a guy to know about real ruthlessness.

I was assigned to a small branch warehouse, a two-man operation. When the other warehouseman quit the company delayed replacing him, reasoning that if I were genuinely eager I could do double duty for a week, maybe two. When I was nearing death and the warehouse was in chaos they would give me an assistant. Months passed. The warehouse was running trim and smooth. I was robust and smiling. The company was so delighted my wages were raised \$2 a week. Said I to myself, the first step up, you ruthless bastard! Already you've screwed some unemployed college graduate out of a job!

This first step up was a long one, far from easy. Often when a truck arrived at 3 p.m. and dumped tons of hardware on the sidewalk I considered calling the main warehouse for help. But always I overcame despair by willpower. The tons of hardware always were within the warehouse before 5. Often I staggered home to the apartment and collapsed into bed without supper.

The warehouse was old, at great expense transported board by board, stone by stone from ancient Egypt. The design presumed an inexhaustible supply of expendable slaves. There were two floors but no connecting freight elevator, only a ramp from the sidewalk. Over hundreds of centuries the wooden ramp had been polished glassy-smooth by the feet of slaves. Merely walking up the ramp required careful attention to balance. Hauling up a load was quite challenging. Very few Management Trainees had ever mastered the technique and some had been badly hurt before quitting. Apparently, despite college educations, they were not sufficiently eager and alert.

Pushing a handtruck up the ramp was obviously out of the question. I invented a way of towing a handtruck. By trial and error I learned the maximum load possible under various conditions, such as a wet sidewalk or insufficient sleep the night before. I learned those parts of the ramp where the grain of the wood offered best friction. During the trials there were many errors. Often I fell flat on my face, the truck

roaring down the ramp over the sidewalk crashing into the wall of the warehouse across the street. This invariably got a big laugh from my neighboring warehousemen, who swarmed out after a crash to watch me retrieve my scattered load, and encouraged me ^{the} on next try with such yells as, give her hell, Scab! Naturally, being Management, I couldn't join a union. It wasn't my fault.

I invented an improved ramp technique that on dry days increased load capacity 50 per cent. On the sidewalk, towing the handtruck, I made a quick tight circle gaining speed, then straightened out for three leg-bulging steps on the flat and charged up the incline. The impetus carried me far up the ramp before the run slowed to a walk. I knew the exact point when I might lose the load, and there called the reserves for Five Big Tugs with stomach taut and eyes bulging, and there I was--on the second floor with my load, or flat on my face with the juggernaut roaring out into the street. Though my union neighbors laughed they learned to treat the ramp as if it were a loaded cannon. No one ever stepped in my line of fire without first yelling for a truce.

I delighted in brutalizing my flesh to satisfy the demands of the job. My neighbors were right. I was a sap to fall for the old Management Trainee con. But having been a sap was all the more reason for me not to crack. I would not complain. I would thank whatever

gods may be for my unconquerable soul and body. I grew stronger day by day, week by week. I became invincible. The ramp was a trial of Hercules, but Hercules always won, Hercules always wins, it pays to shoot straight. On the ramp I was distinguishable from an ox only by my willingness to kill myself, if necessary, to do the job. When the hardware dumped on the sidewalk totalled an enormous number of tons, and I made every haul up the ramp with a maximum load, after several dozen hauls it was as if I had entered every event in a track meet and then played sixty minutes in a football game. Soaked in sweat, blind with exhaustion, bloody but unbowed, I would not be defeated. I rose above my body and watched with delight this brute on the ramp, the Undefeated Worker of the World. I might be a Scab now but when I retire to my private estate, formerly known as the Olympic Peninsula, I will look after my old Neighbors, the Workers in the United States and in Russia and everywhere. I'll put Walter Reuther in charge of this matter.

College education and eagerness were evident throughout my warehouse. Improved organization alone cut the work in half. Improved techniques cut the work in half again. With a berserker assault on each task soon the warehouse that traditionally kept two men busy all day was occupying me an average of two hours a day.

To fill the empty hours, while awaiting a call from the President, I brought books to the warehouse. I read an average of six hours a day. I could have carried lunch and averaged seven hours but preferred to drive home for a half hour with Abby.

I filled several gaps in my education. I gave myself a course in contemporary fiction, an ill-favored thing, but our own. Dreiser indeed wrote *An American Tragedy*, or would have if only he had learned to write. Hemingway learned to write newspaper stories but wanted to write tragedies. He wrote a story about how awful it is for a fellow with no balls at all, no balls at all, to be in love with a titled English nymphomaniac. I guess it would be awful to have your balls shot off in the war, especially with a titled English nymphomaniac around. I'll go so far as to call it a very very sad story but with all the liquor it sure was no tragedy. I was tipsy in Chapter One and by Chapter Four couldn't see the page. I passed out during the bull fight. Then he wanted to write a tragedy about the Big War. He almost made it but there were all those jolly times in the hospital and as penance he choked up and killed the girl in childbirth, which even in Italy happens rather infrequently, so it was a fortuitous circumstance, like having your balls shot off. He wanted to write a tragedy about Spain but got so excited thinking about the sleeping bag he almost

wrote a victory. It was a narrow escape. If that spent bullet hadn't hit the hero at extreme range the story would have had a happy ending. Another very sad story, like getting run over by a truck. Poor guy, he knew the world was in a mess but all he could do about it was write sad stories. Faulkner can write tragedies, or rather, one tragedy over and over again. At least give him credit for recognizing the South as a tragic hero. Frances Scott Fitzgerald outlined plots for the two greatest American novels and it's a shame he didn't write them. ~~the bootlegger and the movie tycoon - marvelous insight to present these as symbols of America!~~

I hoppety-skipped through America and then decided to take another run at *Ulysses*. This time I read easily, with full understanding. And I decided there was no point in reading any more modern fiction. The train had reached the end of the line. There are stagecoaches going out in all directions but who needs sagebrush?

Nearly every weekend that summer Abby and I were out rambling around the heather, investigating waterfalls, sleeping beside half-frozen lakes. Sometimes we went hiking with her friend Mary. Mary entertained us at trailside rests by creeping up cliffs. I once wanted to be a mountain climber but this was a marrow-chilling sport she demonstrated. Mary had a

tricky habit of suddenly discovering a rope in her rucksack whenever we came near steep rock. Cried I, none of that, Mary, I'm a coward. Ridge running, meadow walking, that's my game. One late summer Saturday night in a tavern, weary of cowering before a mere female-type hero, I recklessly agreed to take one fling at insanity.

The next morning Abby and I, quavering in the Gap between the False Teeth and the Tooth, watched Mary stride boldly across the South Face of the Tooth on a ledge an inch or so wide. When she disappeared around a corner we held our breath awaiting a convulsion of the rope, a scream. But from above, mixed in the wind, came the faint call, belay on! I did not want to go. Abby and I gazed fondly at each other. I had to go. We kissed and parted. For all we knew we should never meet again.

Knees quivering I crept inch by inch along the minute ledge, gripping the cliff with trembling fingers. I was at the corner. I was still alive. I peeked around the corner and nearly fainted. The valley was thousands of feet straight down!

The valley swam in haze. The rock blurred. There was no more ledge, only a thin rope dangling on a wall. I blanked out. I've no idea how I got around the corner, and up the blurred wall. Suddenly Mary was laughing in my face. Damned if I could see what was funny! She

placed me in the rocks and draped the rope around me. and yelled, belay on! Several years later Abby's head poked up from the wall, teeth chattering, eyes full of tears. We embraced and shivered and shook. Mary was already on the next pitch.

It was terrible. We were trapped. We could never descend unaided to the notch. Mary would never listen to reason. To her it was an enormous joke. Mary was someplace above, laughing. There were thousands of feet of cliff up there. No summit in sight, just more cliff.

I followed the rope to Mary, laughing Mary. I belayed Abby up. Abby fell on me, quivering. Mary screeched hysterically and scrambled up another cliff. Higher and higher in space we climbed, but always there was another cliff. Abby and I had died and gone to Hell. Mary was the Devil. Throughout eternity she was going to keep us terrified.

Once more I followed the rope to laughing Mary. I looked fearfully upward to the next cliff. Where's the next cliff? ~~There isn't any~~ ^{No} cliff. Just sky! It is the summit! Dammit ~~that~~ ^{just} I'm beginning to enjoy the mountain and the ~~damn~~ thing quits.

Next day the warehouse was a cramped arena for the soul that had flown through space--touching, granted, minute roughnesses in the South Face of the Tooth, but touching lightly. Over and over again I

climbed the South Face of the Tooth while charging up the ramp towing 150 per cent of possible loads. I hungered for another cliff. But Mary went off to Canada that week and Abby and I were once more hikers, though not entirely as before. Now my eyes often turned from the heather and the lakes upward to the peaks.

Sometimes in the warehouse I wondered when the President would notice me. I had learned the bottom of the business thoroughly and felt fully capable of entering the next higher stage of the Training Program. In one way I was pleased at the delay. Never in my life had I enjoyed so much leisure for reading, and with wages at that. Not much wages but what other company would pay me to read six hours a day?

After Ulysses I returned to Shakespeare. Being fluent in the language and familiar with the historical circumstances and undisturbed by classroom requirements I produced the plays for myself, devoting a full warehouse day to each major tragedy, half a day to others. I became obsessed with curiosity about his origins, how much he learned from his teachers, how much was his own genius. I started at the beginning on the cathedral steps, moved forward through English streets, fought the Pope with King John, roistered around with Gammer Gurton, chuckled at Lyly with the lords, was mad again with Hieronimo.

Then came the one I had so long avoided. What man is not embarrassed by his own name? There had been years of scholarly witticisms.

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 [→ I sympathize with the football player at Notre Dame ten years or so back. Bill Shakespeare was a good quarterback but he undoubtedly went through hell in his English courses. But there had been years of curiosity too. In the privacy of the warehouse I investigated.

I followed him down from Cambridge, the restless scholar striding into London town, wild of eye, a manuscript in his hand. Who is this Golden Boy? He is TAMBURLAINE the Great. Who, from a Scythian Shepherde, by his rare and woonderfull Conquests, became a most puissant and mightye Monarque. And (for his tyranny, and terrour in Warre) was tearmed, THE SCOURGE OF GOD. He is Barabas, The Rich Jew of Malta, who learn'd in Florence how to kiss his hand, heave up his shoulders when they called him dog, and duck as low as any barefoot friar, he is Barabas the Black Jew who to his villanous henchman~~x~~ confided, as for myself, I walk abroad a-nights and kill sick people greaning under walls; sometimes I go about and poison wells; and now and then, to cherish Christian thieves, I am content to lose some of my crowns, that I may, walking in my gallery, see 'em go pinion'd along by my door.

Golden Boy from the University, exhilarated by

playhouse cheers, carried off by admiring friends to the ale house, roaring out the darkness into dawn. But the Berserker's mind moves faster than his hand.

Goddam that was a wild crowd tonight. And all that was for me! Off to the ale house where my audience is here and now, no need to sweat over words alone in my room. Shout out the mighty line while friends see to it my glass is full! The trouble is my friends get sleepy and go home, they say they have to be at the shop early, or at court, or at the playhouse. Goddam party poopers are the curse of art! These guys that stay aren't worth my poetry. They're a bunch of crumbs, but they can drink. You goddam slobs, all you can do is drink! Who says I'm a hack? So I scribble a quicky now and then--what's wrong with making a fast shilling? Burned out, hell! Who says it? I'll be back on top in no time. I got ideas to throw away. And keep your bloody hands off my wench! ~~Goddam slob!~~

Too drunk to feel the dagger, there he goes, there spills the blood of the Golden Boy on the tavern floor, mixing with slops of ale and sack.

Twenty-eight years old, burned out, drunk, stabbed. It's lucky my parents were not English majors. Otherwise they'd have had second thoughts before putting my mother's uncle's given name with my father's family name. And they'd be nervous now, wondering if their Kit, already burned out and frequently drunk, will be stabbed in a

few years.

After Marlowe I understood how Shakespeare was possible. Considered alone Shakespeare seems inconceivable. Marlowe did not force the existence of Shakespeare but the existence of Marlowe allows us to accept Shakespeare without resorting to Baconian nonsense.

I skipped our Incomparable Wil to see what came after. Ben Jonson fractures me. ~~There's a humorist who could step out of the grave today and tomorrow he holding his own with Thurber.~~ But as even the worst Marlowe is exciting, knowing what is yet to come, even the most paralyzing Jonson is melancholy, knowing what has come before, knowing Christers will soon close the theatres.

One afternoon in the warehouse I was despondently getting the dregs of the age over with. Before setting down to the book I had finished every little chore. The sacks of fertilizer were neatly piled. The crated washing machines and water heaters marched in perfect ranks. I had washed the windows and swept the floor and polished up the handle of the big front door. The warehouse was perfectly warehoused and I sat in my office with my feet on the desk, reading rapidly and intently, hoping to finish Shirley's Lady of Pleasure before 5 so I could return the book to the library that night and move on to some happier age.

At 4 p.m. there was an annoying interruption.

A bum shuffled into my office and told ~~me~~ a sad story about just getting out of hospital and being hungry and could I spare a quarter for a bowl of chili. I snarled about inflation and the days when guys got by on a nickel for coffee but meanwhile flipped him a quarter and returned to Shirley. He didn't go away. The quick quarter left most of his pitch still unused. He mumbled disjointed clinical details and finally decided he should have asked for a whole pint instead of a shot. He rose back to a wail and praised me as a blessed boy and started telling about his sick friend who could use some chili. I cut him off with another qubk quarter and returned to Shirley. He mumbled the rest of the story to himself and then rose again to the wail, telling about how his friend ought to have some milk with his chili, but the way I tensed gave him the shakes and he mumbled and fumbled and said, you wouldn't have a smoke for an old timer would you kid? I gave him a cigarette and he shuffled out and I returned to Shirley.

I wasn't enjoying the play at all. The old bum didn't go away, he shuffled his feet outside my office smoking the cigarette, mumbling up nerve for another quarter. The old bum, the wino, why didn't someone stab him when he was twenty-eight? How many warehouses did he warehouse? Or did he mine mines?

Or log logs? Or fish for fish?

He shuffled away clinking his quarters and my stomach relaxed. I was almost through with Shirley's Lady. In a few minutes I'd lock up and go home.

Behind me was a Humph! I whirled to curse the presumptuous Humph! As I faced the Humph! it began Poofing!

It was, I knew instinctively, the long-awaited, the fabulous Mister Wall! Our President had come to raise me to Power! I gazed respectfully at President Wall, as respectfully as a person can with a book in his lap and his feet on a desk. I smiled respectfully, and respectfully but not slavishly, lowered my feet to the floor and my book to the desk.

He humphed! He poofed! He harrumphed! He burbled, haven't you anything better to do? No sir, I don't. He gargled, he whiffled, you mean there is not one thing in this warehouse that needs to be done? With the innocence of conviction I declared, no sir, not one thing. He garbled, and blooped ~~and~~

~~came up like thunder out of China or Burma or Mandala,~~

~~cross the bay, and whirled~~ out of my office. I

followed respectfully. ~~The flaming eye of Mr. Wall~~

~~charred the warehouse. Suddenly~~ His index finger

struck like a bolt from Zeus toward the floor--WHAT

IS THAT?

I was saying, that, sir, is a cigarette butt dropped by a bum who just now. . . but President Wall had vanished in a puff of smoke. At long last the President had noticed me.

Next morning there was a troglodyte in my warehouse. My training was completed. I was fired.

When I left the cloister I knew there were both cocker spaniels and tigers on the Outside. I expected Mr. Wall to be a tiger. An old one but with teeth. Mr. Wall is no tiger and he has no teeth. He is an idiot. Otherwise he would not have wasted my talent in a warehouse so long and then thrown it casually away.

How on earth does a Mr. Wall come to a position of economic leadership? Is our society so rich it can afford the leadership of idiots? Or is our society so idiotic only idiots can lead?

~~Busdrivers? Lieutenants on put-puts? Housemothers?
Mister Walls?~~

~~I walked on the Outside and what did I see but
a myriad demented monkeys and they all agree--chitter
chitter chitter!~~

Not that it matters. I don't think I could have been happy on the Olympic Peninsula knowing my overseers at U.S. Steel and General Motors were frying babies to scare fathers into producing more ingots and automobiles.

It was too late now to take the vows of the cloister. Christ accepts only virgin brides. Ruined on the Outside, dead on the Inside. Nothing mattered anymore except the South Face of the Tooth. Better a humble spook in the quiet cloister than a ruin Outside.

I identified myself to the University Placement Service as 10* 10* , Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude. The clean youngster rustled papers and flashed white teeth. He was an obvious 7-6 type with no Laud at all, no Laud at all. I told him to take it easy, I had no ambition in life, I didn't want to be Placed. All I wanted was a job. Clean and white-toothed 7-6 (no laud at all) was so grateful he spent an entire afternoon selling me to the Chemistry Department.

I was delighted. Abby was delighted. We had a job. We could eat, and drink, and read and so forth. The job had no future but what job did? Except maybe a BOMB^x. Eat, drink, read, love, hike!

One of the best things about my job was that it did not begin for a week. We had a free week for mountains.

We hiked fourteen dusty miles up the interminable Waptus to an after-dark camp at Lake Ivanhoe. Next day was our reward, the heather and talus and snow of La Bohn Gap, the rusted machinery and household

metal left by miners fifty years ago, the granite buttresses plucked and polished and scratched by ice thousands of years ago.

We fell asleep in the heather by a cold tarn under the stars. We awoke under a heavy swift sky, a grey ceiling that lowered relentlessly, engulfing Bears Breast and Summit Chief, pressing steadily down upon us.

In a roar of cold rain we straggled over snow and talus and meadow to Lake Ivanohoe, camping at nightfall under the tight-woven branches of an alpine fir. Rain and more rain, hard rain and harder rain, soaked through the mat of branches, soaked through our sleeping bags, soaked through our wool shirts and trousers, soaked through our skins, our bones. We did not sleep, we lay shivering together in a cold damp embrace.

When the darkness paled enough to reveal the trail we stowed our soaked gear in soaked packboards. Hauling pounds of water in our gear and clothes we hiked all day down fourteen muddy miles of the interminable Waptus. At dusk, in a delirium, we changed to dry clothing and climbed into the Model A. In Cle Elum the waitress brought a plate of bread and butter. Returning with soup she saw the bread and butter were all gone. She brought more. Returning with the hamburger steaks she saw all the soup and

~~all the basket of crackers and all the bread and butter were gone. She brought more bread and butter. We left half a piece of that serving so she would not bring more bread and butter with our ice cream.~~

The chemistry stockroom was even easier than the warehouse. The chemicals and equipment inside must go through the service window to the students outside. My efficient organization made the transfer so nearly automatic that I soon had as much time to read as in the warehouse.

As a Christian child and a Communist youth my social faith had always been excelsior! Onward and upward, let the ape and tiger die, grow old along with me, the best is yet to be, the last of life for which the first was made! But the Closing of the Theaters, and Ulysses, and the BOMB, these were matters to choke Rabbi Ben Ezra. In the stockroom, after dodging him some little while, at last I faced Spengler. It was even worse than I expected. I was infuriated by the typical smart-alecky German graduate student who couldn't write a dissertation that wasn't a gospel. I argued with Spengler all the way in the margins, cussing him out, confuting him, destroying him. I finished Volume One in a rage. To calm down I returned to English, the

proper language of scholarship, and quite obviously to Gibbon. For months I read Gibbon. As I had read Shakespeare and Adonais I read Gibbon. I read Gibbon with a fierceness that frightened my customers. I was sailing the Black Sea (Ahem!) with my fellow Goths (Ahem!) descending upon the coast howling (Ahem!) to ravage villas of the rich (Ahem!) empire (Ahem!) and at last would return from the Second Century and glower at the Ahem! which would humbly request twenty mile of acetone.

Gibbon gave me the strength to accept history. I returned to Spengler, but in Volume Two my marginal notes were confirmations, expansions, adulations of the master. It is a dark and wintry prospect backward to the distant sunrise but better gloomy truth than the cheerful ignorance of Rabbi Ben and the idiot brilliance in his eyes.

The world is declining, our world, the world of Faust. A new culture rises on the plains, a culture of the plains as there was a Faustian culture of mountains, a Magian culture of the cave, and before that the Appolonian, the Egyptian, the Chinese cultures. Our world is darkening toward the night, and in the east a youthful world is aw¹king to the strength of morning. We remember how once we awoke. Let us therefore move gracefully into our twilight. We are weary, but wise and witty. Let us be fellaheen

more amusing than Egyptians. Let us enjoy our evening pleasures and let us make fond sport of the young barbarians but let us not forget they are our brothers in mankind. Old men have the right to chuckle at the fierceness of the young, but old men should not envy the young their youth. Old men are beloved when they tolerate and instruct the young. But when they grow jealous, and hate, they either destroy the young, which is murder, or are themselves destroyed, which is suicide.

Spengler's chapters on science left me confused. While prowling through Eddington for clarification I learned of entropy. When two events are associated in the manner conventionally described as cause-effect, which is the cause, which is the effect? Which way is time running, forward or backward? There is no way to know. Just so we won't go out of our mind we postulate we are living forward in time. We point the arrow of time so that first of all is the firecracker, then the explosion. We do not say explosions make firecrackers. We say firecrackers make explosions. Pointing it as we do, the arrow of time moves toward a steady diffusion of energy. A candle burns, and heat and light and gaseous matter diffuse, and the candle is gone. Bit by bit, steadily and inevitably, the universe is running down. Therefore it doesn't matter so much that Faust is running down.

Gibbon and Spengler and Eddington are heavy going. For relaxation I investigated the recreational facilities of the stockroom. Compressed

air has fascinating possibilities. The stockroom service window faced an outside door. After careful study of the traffic ^{pattern} I taped a length of glass tubing to the counter and wired a connecting length of rubber hose both to the tubing and the compressed air outlet. With a glass bead flipped down the muzzle the artfully-camouflaged Gun was loaded. The permanent aim of the Gun was the average altitude from the floor, determined by thorough surveys, of female buttocks. Whenever a tight-skirted female student of average height chose to leave the building by the Target Door I turned the air full on, full off. Some girls screamed and whirled around looking scared. Others whirled glaring, making a fist. Others turned around giggling. But there was never anyone in sight except the scholarly stockroom boy reading his everlasting book. Gradually, though, the incidence of girls in tight skirts using the Target Door as an exit dropped near zero and I dismantled the Gun.

no pp [The reaction of sodium with water to produce sodium hydroxide, hydrogen and heat was highly entertaining, especially after learning about entropy. The chief difficulty was laboratory space. My first

bomb I dropped from the University Bridge. Fortunately it was a crude Model-T bomb, such as the one we used to blow up Nagasaki. For when I heard the BLOOP in the night and saw the flame on the lake I noted how long would be the run to shore should a prowler car chance by.

The Pond in front of the Chem Building was not only the closest but the safest laboratory. My second bomb was more sophisticated. The casing was a glass jar, weighted with lead to guarantee swift submergence, the warhead of sodium held in the casing by cotton wadding. I worked an hour one morning assembling the bomb and at lunchtime lobbed it casually into the Pond, hoping to escape notice. But chemists being what they are the splash brought scores of students rushing from the building. Bubbles broke the surface of the pond, and the crowd braced for the blast. Minutes passed, and nothing but bubbles. The crowd drifted away, the bubbles continued, but no blast. After twenty minutes of bubbling there was a dull bump as of a distant explosion, and a bit of smoke poofed up through the bubbles.

A very disappointing bomb but the design flaws were apparent. Too much lead had plunged the bomb straight to the bottom where the heat of reaction was dissipated rapidly. Too much cotton had inhibited

entrance of water. The sodium was in several large chunks which presented minimal reaction surface. For the third bomb I omitted lead entirely, reasoning that with proper bomb delivery to Water Zero, the center of the Pond, the bomb casing could be made to arrive with such a tilt it would instantly fill with water and sink. Careful delivery would also eliminate the need for cotton wadding to immobilize the warhead. Finally, I spent all of a gloomy winter afternoon slicing sodium into tiny particles.

Bomb assembly was at 4:55. After closing the stockroom at 5 p.m. at 5:05 of the dark winter night I made a completely successful delivery of the bomb to Water Zero. Though scores of students were on the circular walk around the Pond, homeward bound from labs, delivery was unobserved. As the bomb splashed at Water Zero I stood expectantly in the night, alertly noticing every phase of the experiment.

The permanent population of the Pond, thirty or so mallard ducks, flapped and quacked toward the splash. The life of a Pond mallard is uncomplicated. No migrations, no shotguns, and food comes regularly splashing into the Pond. The ducks came flapping and quacking toward the splash. The splash bubbled. But this was not the sedate bubbling of Bomb Two. The bubbling became a burbling, a churning, a frothing, a boiling. The front rank of ducks lost their appetite

and backwatered, colliding with the second rank still quacking forward.

The Pond exploded.

From Water Zero a pillar of fire roared up into the night. The night vanished. It was broad daylight. All around the Pond ex-GI's dropped flat. As the explosion echoed from building to building and the pillar of fire hung in the air I saw the thirty or so mallards evacuating Water Zero in full flight south. As the pillar of fire sank back to Water Zero and night returned I saw the fallout, little flames of burning sodium raining down around the Pond amid dodging students.

Stunned by the exultant horror familiar to modern physicists I ran through Geology Hall, out a side door, through the shrubbery, onto the Avenue. There was no pursuit. About three weeks later the ducks returned. I made no more bombs.

Among my steady customers was Bart, a chem engineer with black hair, wild eyes and a fiendish cackle instead of a laugh. One day he made a routine request for the cork-borers, a set of nesting brass tubes, each with a T-arm at the top. After sober examination he selected Numbers Seven and Eight. After scowling cerebration he purchased two corks. Knowing he was designing apparatus for his senior thesis I became deeply absorbed in the problem. Using the

Number Seven tube as a ramrod he pushed a cork through the Number Eight tube until it partly protruded from the mouth. Withdrawing Number Seven he then inserted the other cork in the top of Number Eight, pushed it barely inside, and this time left the mouth of Number Seven within the top of Number Eight. He held the apparatus in his right hand, inspecting it critically. His fingers curled under the T-arm of Number Eight, the heel of his hand was atop the T-arm of Number Seven. Abruptly he pointed Number Eight at my nose, the cork bulging from the muzzle, and screamed, your money or your life! He squeezed his hand and there was a horrid POP and a cork flew out and hit me in the face. I fell off my stool and he capered and cackled.

It was war.

I walked the corridors armed. Numbers Seven and Eight vanished from virtually every set of cork-borers in the building. He was armed and so were the five other seniors in his thesis lab. It was the Lonely Gun against Black Bart and his Gang.

I round a corner and down the hall is Black Bart or one of his Gang. We stop. We scowl. We walk stiff-legged, hands hovering over ~~the~~ hips. POP! POP! The fastest gun stalks off blowing smoke from his cork-borers. The slow gun sags against the wall, cork-borers clattering on the floor.

We did not invariably observe the Code of the West. Sometimes a Gangster would sneak up to the window and POP me right out of Spengler. Or I would throw open the door of the Gang Lab, a gun in each hand, and POP POP two of them out of their theses, and holster my guns and stride out tall and cruel.

It quickly was apparent the Lonely Gun was fighting impossible odds, ~~but they didn't~~ hand me a 10* 10* and Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laud for nothing. One day I loaded my gun as usual except that I filled the chamber between the two corks with powdered talc. I kicked open the door of the Gang Lab. Framed in the doorway, gun holstered, I gruffed, Black Bart, get your gun, this is the showdown. He buckled on his gun, sneering. We glowered at pointblank range, legs apart, hands hovering over hips. I yelled, draw, you bastard! POP, a cork hit my cheek. But I did not POP. I slowly raised my gun to his face, cackling. He was blinking and flinching, awaiting the cork. I fired. There was no POP. There was a POOF. Powdered talc exploded in his face. It was not Black Bart anymore. It was a coughing, choking, white-haired albino spitting out talc. I holstered and stalked out of the lab mighty tall and cruel.

The Gang was whipped, and knew it. Numbers Seven and Eight became available for cork-boring purposes once more. The Gang outnumbered the Lonely Gun but he had a huge arsenal and his energies were not split between war and thesis. Perhaps I should have left well enough alone. But one dull afternoon I blew a paper bag full of cigarette smoke. Then I ran down the hall, stamping my feet so they could hear me coming, threw open the door of the lab, leaned in cackling nervously, gingerly laid the paper sack on the nearest lab bench. Ominous blue smoke leaked from the sack, I slammed the door shut, and heard the entire Gang falling flat on the floor. Silence inside, then muttering. Outside the door I cackled. Inside, cursing.

Next morning Black Bart bought some routine supplies. He leered mysteriously as I weighed out chemicals. Once away from my window he cackled. One by one each member of the Gang came to buy routine supplies and leered mysteriously and went off cackling. I was getting rather edgy but the hours passed and nothing happened.

Late in the afternoon, as I was puzzling over Spenglerian mathematics, a torrent of running feet approached. I looked up, blinking, and the entire Gang was clustered outside the window, wild-eyed,

crazy with laughter. Bart, cackling, set down in front of my face a four-liter beaker full of noisily burbling foam and the Gang dropped flat on the floor. I fell off my stool flat on the floor and covered my head with my arms, tensing for the blast. The explosion delayed, the burbling continued. I chanced a shielded glance. There was a roar of laughter from the Gang, all clustered at the window looking down at me on the floor. The bomb continued to burble soap suds until the dry ice was spent.

The Lonely Gun was whipped, and knew it. For all my arsenal and energy and 10* 10* and so forth I could not hope to match the weapon systems of six senior engineers. The Gang was nervous, expecting retaliation, but I walked small, I couldn't think of a new weapon.

One day in the hall Black Bart charged out of his lab with an apparatus in his hand and suddenly my face was all wet. He was ten feet away but my face was wet. A washbottle!

I marched right back to the stockroom and built a washbottle. I spent hours testing each of the hundreds of atomizer bulbs in stock to find the one with maximum compression. I spent hours fitting rubber stoppers in bottles to find the firmest and most leakproof fit. I spent hours over a bunsen burner drawing out glass tubing into nozzle tips,

and further hours on the firing range testing each nozzle for caliber and range. Frequently I tested a promising weapon on a Gangster, none of whom ever left their lab without a washbottle.

^{But} Bart and his Gang were armed with washbottles knocked together in a few minutes, perfectly adequate for laboratory purposes, but certainly far from masterpieces of weaponry. Lulled into complacency by the indecisiveness of preliminary skirmishes, the Gang slept while the Longly Gun secretly forged far ahead in the arms race.

At last I was ready for total war. I had the finest washbottle ever built. The most efficient atomizer bulb, the tightest stopper-bottle combination, and the most superb nozzle in history. My washbottle was as revolutionary as the V-1, if not the V-2. Moreover, unlike the Gangsters, who fired only in actual combat, I spent secret hours on the target range.

With washbottles there is no question of a fast draw. The bottle is carried in the left hand at all times in the corridors. On encountering an enemy the nozzle is aimed, the right hand squeezes the rubber bulb. A stream of water splashes the enemy's face, and when the bottles are both empty the wettest combatant is the loser.

During the preliminary skirmishes sometimes I won, sometimes the Gangster. When at last I unveiled the Victory Bottle I instantly took command of the battleground. I won every shootout without exception. My secretly-fashioned Victory Bottle outranged the crude Gang bottles by four to eight feet. With perfect ease I splashed 500 mils of water in the face of my opponent and remained completely dry.

A few dozen drenchings and the Gang correctly diagnosed the cause of their defeats. Thenceforth a Gangster trapped into combat closed quarters to neutralize my advantage. But my Victory Tactics and my practiced professionalism of aim countered.

During the stiff-legged approach always I opened fire first and blinded the enemy. As he tried to close quarters I backed off, steady on target, dry, while he advanced blindly, squeezing wildly without aim. Invariably the Gangster was out of water while I was still steadily saturating the target.

Every Code*of-the-West shootout was a rout. The Gang turned mean and dirty and began to spring traps, darting around corners at close range. But though I might take 20 to 50 mils of water while retreating to my optimum range, eventually I would win, delivering my full 500mil magazine on target while the Gangster blindly sprayed the halls.

One day Black Bart dashed up to the window and shot me pointblank in the face. Instantly I was off my stool at optimum range. He fell back from the window, I followed. He ran down the hall and I vaulted out the window in hot pursuit, soaking the back of his neck as he dodged into the lab. I continued firing through the open door when suddenly the back of my neck felt wet. I turned.

Ambush! Three of the Gang appeared from nowhere. in a rank as disciplined as Kipling's Thin Red Line, three nozzles delivering a steady volley. I backed off. The back of my neck was still getting wet. I whirled and Bart and the other two Gangsters were advancing from the lab in a disciplined rank, volleying. I was hopelessly trapped. I attempted escape. The lines closed into a circle. I squeezed my bulb blindly but soon I was squeezing air, all my 500 mils were gone. I was blind, out of ammunition, helpless, wetter and wetter, absolutely soaked. When the firing ceased I blinked, and as the Gang backed away I saw they had new washbottles, they did not have 500 mil bottles, they had liter bottles! Dripping six liters of water I crept humbly to the stockroom.

I was whipped. It was pointless to engage the Gang. I had the Victory Bottle, the most sophisticated weapon ^f of the age but what can one magnificent washbottle hope to do against six washbottles admittedly

crude, but still six of them? Like the German Navy I hid my Victory Bottle in a foggy fjord, watching for the overwhelming forces of the enemy to slumber.

At last I sortied from the fjord. It was late spring, graduation was approaching, and the Gang was busy. Their theses must be completed and time was short. School and fun were nearly over, and in any event the Lonely Gun had been quiet since the Trap.

One fine spring afternoon I followed an assault route studied out during days of seeming defeatism. From the street outside the building I carefully climbed a large pile of junk lumber. From the pile I stepped, a long step, onto a war surplus gas tank temporarily stored against the wall. From the tank I hoisted myself onto the broad first-floor window ledge. I would not have dared the route without my experience on the South Face of the Tooth. It was still a touchy go, encumbered as I was with my Victory Bottle and a three-liter beaker of reserve ammunition. But I arrived safely at the assault position, weapon and ammunition train intact, around a corner from the Gangster Lab with a clear line of fire through the window I had opened earlier in the day when all the Gang was in class.

When the entire Gang was deep in experiment I fired a short burst at Bart. He straightened and quickly surveyed the entire horizon. I drew back around the corner. A pause, then another target, another burst. Another startled expression, another careful survey of the room. Another target, another burst, and another, and another. Soon all the Gangsters were glancing around suspiciously, and now and then fixing each other full in the eye for a moment, calculating. Not a word was spoken.

But after several wettings, and just when he seemed most deeply lost in science, Bart began whipping his eyes around the room in surprise examinations. He knew, intuitively, the Lonely Gun was responsible, but how? Elaborately casual he left his apparatus, inspected every corner of the lab, looked under tables. Abruptly he tore open the lab door and stared up and down the corridor. Returning to his apparatus he studied his comrades one by one. Meanwhile they were studying him.

Whenever work resumed I fired another burst. There could be no mistake. The Gang knew there was a joker around. Probably the Lonely Gun. But perhaps one of the Gang. Not a word was spoken. Everyone was thinking. Where was the water coming from? The leader of the Gang was of course most deeply concerned. His cerebrations were almost visible. Being a good

scientist he proposed every possible hypothesis and gathered the evidence for and against each. The window seemed least possible of all yet at last it had to be the window. He looked out the window, puzzled, but alert. Twenty feet to the street, smooth wall all the way, unclimbable, and no ladder in sight. No human could climb that twenty feet to the window ledge. The window ledge! Where does the ledge go? Could a person traverse? Comprehension was dawning. Bart's head was entirely out the window, he turned his eyes toward the corner, he understood, he smiled nervously, and at that moment I leaned around the corner and cackled and poured two liters of water over his upturned face.

What a victory! One of the great ambushes in the history of warfare! I was so hysterical I nearly fell off the ledge. Back in the stockroom I tensed for the inevitable retaliation.

It began next morning at 8 a.m. when I pulled up the wooden shutter of the service window. Bart was standing there, a statue, as if he had been waiting in front of the shutter all night. I staggered back a step. But Bart simply wanted three feet of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch tygon tubing. I snipped off the tubing and he left. Not a leer, not a cackle. I opened my book but another gangster appeared, quiet, unsmiling, and ordered 475 mls of C.P. ethyl ether. Another Gangster, and

Another Gangster, blank of face,
wanting $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch of platinum wire.

another, every five minutes, all morning long. Twenty-three grams of calcium chloride, five inches of 1/4 inch rubber tubing, a pound of iron filings, ten grams of iodine crystals, seven lengths of 1/8 inch Pyrex tubing.

All morning, one unsmiling Gangster after another. One dib of this, one dab of that. Obviously most were red herrings. Where was the pattern? What in hell were they building?

After lunch the same pattern. Except now and then an evil twisting smile. And the dibs and dabs were more sinister. A pound of sulfur. Twenty grams of sodium. A pint of hydrofluoric acid! Jesus Christ!

Then, for a long hour, no Gangsters at all. An hour poised on my stool at the window, listening, watching. Then Bart appeared! Not sober, not solemn, but with the most wicked glitter in his devilish black eyes! He wanted not much, merely a box of matches. A box of matches, for Chrissake! I gave him the matches and clipped one penny from his ticket. He grinned hideously and dramatically held the box of matches up in the air.

Something uncomfortable was going to happen to me. Most of this was psychological warfare, to be sure. But the blow was going to be more than psychological.

It would be physically uncomfortable. They wouldn't kill me, or maim me. But I had not exactly been conducting civilized Eighteenth Century warfare myself, what with talcum powder down the throat and liters of water in the face. Whatever it was I wouldn't like it. But there was nothing I could do to prevent its happening to me. And I could not run away and hide. This might go on for days. I could only tremble at the window.

A person cannot balance on the edge of a razor forever. The afternoon passed, there were no more Gangsters. No more customers at all. I decided I was safe for the day. Not for tomorrow, but for today. The entire Gang was in the Unit Op lab and I knew that the day before one of them had made a mistake and in Unit Op a small mistake can mean hours of extra work. The Gang had worked in relays through the night to finish the experiment. They wouldn't fool around in Unit Op today.

Tomorrow would be the time of fear, this afternoon was safe.

I was roused from my book by a thundering herd approaching from the Unit Op lab. This wasn't the Gang. Too many feet. Something terrible must have happened! The lab was going to blow up! Unit Op is a factory-scale lab. A blast in Unit Op means one whole corner of the campus changed into Ground-Zero

of Hiroshima! No laughter, just panicked feet! I tensed for the blast, I whispered goodbye to Abby, I looked infinity in the eye!

The Unit Op class crowded around my window, unsmiling, grim. So it wasn't the End. It was something awful but not the End. I didn't like the faces on these engineers. Why were they glaring at me? Who made this mob? Through the mob came Bart. Bart burst through to the window and with both hands thrust the nozzle of a fire hose in my face. He was not laughing. Good Christ! I missed the point! Bart is no comedian, he is a maniac!

He cackled and drooled and burbled and gasped and wheezed. He is out of his mind, he's going to do it, he's really going to do it!

I shielded my face with my hands and cried, Bart! Don't do it! Stop him, you guys! He'll kill me! He's crazy! Bart, for love of heaven! Don't, Bart!

But Bart held the firehose in my face and behind him I saw the Gang gripping the hose, braced against the shock. I stared into the nozzle crying for mercy, begging the Unit Op class to save me. Bart dissolved in shudders, his face disintegrated in mania, he shrieked down the hall, TURN IT ON!

I crashed off the stool and skittered on hands

and knees expecting any moment the crushing blast of water that would break all my bones and bounce me around like a rag doll. At the backwall, as far as I could get from the firehose, I sprawled flat with my arms around my head. The building was shaking. But no blast. I arose and returned to the window and Black Bart and the Gang were parading back and forth in the corridor with a ten foot section of fire hose. The Unit Op class was rolling around the floor, weeping.

Next day, through neutrals, I asked for terms. Bart demanded I turn over, intact, the Victory Bottle. I refused. I demanded his immediate subscription to the Hague Conventions. He refused. After several exchanges of notes and ultimatums the Neutral Powers mediated a compromise. At 5:15 that afternoon, with the Lonely Gun and Black Bart and his Gang drawn up at attention on the shore of Frosh Pond, a Neutral Power solemnly smashed the nozzle of the Victory Bottle, and threw it among the puzzled hungry mallards. It was, for all of us, a terrible moment. Several weeks later Black Bart and His Gang graduated in peaceful melancholy.

Peace was on the Chemistry Building, there was peace on the city, but in the mountains was adventure. Among the chem engineers were innumerable climbers. Often over the winter, between bombs and wars and books

I enjoyed hours with Karl and Fred and Mike and Jack, listening to their climbs, telling about my South Face of the Tooth.

In the winter, at Mary's urging, Abby and I joined the Mountaineers and enrolled in the Climbing Course. One night each week impressive heroes lectured lightly on frightening matters. Weekends on lowland rocks we practiced ingenious techniques. The lectures grew steadily more thrilling but no climbs were scheduled until late spring, long weeks away. / Winter

was endless. I fretted with inaction, eager to perform feats of daring.

The first Sunday in March there was no practice trip. After inspecting the sky Abby was well pleased with our warm, dry apartment. Not for me, however, was the soft life of ease, though in all honesty there was a moment in North Bend, looking out the restaurant window, when I nearly ordered a third cup of coffee. Ambition conquered sloth and at 10 a.m. I left the Model A, alone on the Mount Si trail.

Slowly I walked at first, setting a pace reasonable for the long ascent. But as stomach tightened and muscles warmed the pace grew by imperceptible degrees less reasonable. The valley farm-squares fell away below. Legs and lungs complained but maniac exaltation drove me groaning and gasping up out of the forest into snow. Suddenly green valley geometry and mountain

and snow vanished in a whirl of grey. I was in a grey cylinder and it revolved, and I toppled gasping into a soft cold cloud. It was quite dark when I raised my face from the snow. What time is it? Eleven? Impossible! Not dark enough for p.m. Can't be a.m. I left the Model A at ten. Watch must have stopped. Model A is more than three thousand feet below. But the watch is still going. Incredible!

Through a fleeting hole in the clouds loomed the snow-flecked blackness of the Haystack. A brute who gains more than three thousand feet in less than an hour must at least touch the Haystack before retreating. I trenched the snow with knees and hips, cleaved blowing fog with my nose, around phantom walls into a gully. I paused to gulp air, leaning chest and shoulders against snow. A sudden thought. What's below? A cliff! A long steep gully, and a cliff. One could easily slide down the gully over the cliff, one most probably would slide over the cliff. What's above? More gully. More snow. Steep! I must turn back now. This is all very unsafe. But mere yards away is the summit ridge. If only I had an ice ax. It would be good to do a complete climb. An ice ax would make the gully elementary. Actually there are only a few steps to the ridge. There is a cliff below. But a climber must temper his will in fear, must hone nerves sharp enough to slice panic. Upward now or never be

a climber!

Upward it is, kicking solid deep steps with feet and knees and hips, punching fists at the snow, jamming in my arms up to the elbows. Forget the cliff, think later of the descent, for now fix on the white crest slipping in and out of rushing cloud. Kick and wallow, punch and jam. One step at a time. The white crest is almost in reach. Once more, one more kick, now one more punch.

I punched through snow to emptiness. I withdrew my arm and peered into the hole. Wind from the hole blasted my face! I was looking at clouds! So much for tempering will and honing nerves!

I was nearly out of the snow and clouds when waves of pain began pulsing through my hands. In my bravery I had neglected mittens. I sat in the snow, hands in armpits, rocking back and forth with gritted teeth as dead white hands gained life and color.

Winter ~~that year~~ was exceptionally severe and prolonged. Not until late May did the Climbing Course take us to the mountains for our first practice on snow. All morning we scores of students, divided into teams of three or four each with its own instructor, floundered around learning the ice ax self-arrest and team arrest, ax-shaft belays, step-kicking and glissades. After lunch our instructor told me to take the team up Lundin, then disappeared. Without the direct order from an

experienced climber I would never have dreamt so rash a venture. But orders are orders. The first pitch above the snowfield was steep, wet, rotten rock, but not exposed. The crest of the ridge, however, was a narrow, tilted slab, flawlessly smooth, slippery with melting snow--and on either side was a gulf of cloud-filled emptiness. I managed the slab and the wall beyond, and belayed my shivering team safely to the summit. We were alone for nearly an hour before the next team arrived. I expected the trip leader to be impressed by my performance. Instead he bawled the hell out of me. I explained my orders. The fury turned to our instructor, ~~as~~ ~~investigation disclosed he had gotten cold and decided~~ ~~to go home.~~ ^{and} I was forgiven. ~~He never instigated again.~~ But error though it may have been, I had led a team on an ascent so treacherous it was considered safe only for experienced climbers.

Winter seemed endless but on Memorial Day spring came to the high country in an explosion of sunshine. Avalanches hissed nearby and rumbled in the distance while we scores of students, half-blind with glare, half-fried by sunburn, totally insane with peak-glory, followed our peerless leaders to the summit of Guye and thence along the ridge to the summit of Snoqualmie. Two peaks in one day and a long summer still to come!

The next weekend Abby and I climbed Sluiskin with

the crowd. The next weekend, in driving fog and occasional snowflurries we chopped icefalls of the Nisqually into ice cubes, and dangled on ropes within the blue silence of the glacier, learning crevasse rescue methods. That afternoon as we glissaded and plunged down to Paradise Valley, laughing and capering, Mount Rainier emerged from clouds, Rainier for which in theory we students were this day preparing. The emerging mountain was so immensely tall only the strongest and most skillful among us would be allowed the attempt.

Next weekend I was bursting for a climb but there was no club trip scheduled and Abby was still recuperating from Nisqually. I called Herb, my second man on Lundin. He was willing so we drove to Snoquaime Pass Saturday. After some discussion we agreed Huckleberry was probably about our speed. Certainly the name wasn't ominous. The weather was bad, the trail was covered by snow and screened by brush, but with careful routefinding and good luck we found Joe Lake at nightfall. In the bright clear dawn we saw Huckleberry. It was a hell of a shock. Huckleberry was no rounded berry patch, it was a sharp fang rending blue sky, poised to impale and smash presumptuous students. The ascent was obviously far beyond my ability but Herb was calm and confident.

A long snow gully and a simple rock scramble brought us into a notch ^{ab.ve} between two vertical chimneys, below

the final vertical hundred feet to the summit. Said I cheerfully, not too bad, one lead will do the worst bit. Said Herb, right! I can belay you from here. I stared at Herb. I'd sized him up as a nerveless athlete-type. I counted on him to lead the tough pitches. He had been so calm and confident. A brief discussion disclosed the calm confidence was based on an abiding faith that I would lead the tough pitches. I was terribly disappointed in my comrade.

But when I emerged from terror onto the flat heather meadows atop Huckleberry, and arranged a stance and cried, belay on! I felt ready for Everest.

Perhaps Everest must wait a year or two until a proper expedition could be organized for me, but Rainier was no longer so huge as to strain the comprehension of my hopes. ^(H) ^(I) ~~at~~ attempt Rainier a

student must first climb a major glaciated peak.

Next weekend a summer hurricane blasted all we dozens of aspiring candidates from the 7000-foot high camp on Mount Adams.

A terrible disappointment to lose my chance at Rainier. Why was I so merry and philosophical during the retreat? Mind you, I didn't chicken out on Rainier. I felt very bad about the hurricane on Adams. But Rainier is a hell of a big mountain.

The day after the Adams retreat Karl and Jack stopped by the stockroom window. They were cooking up

an attempt on a new route up Glacier over the Fourth of July weekend. Glacier is a Major. Mainier was hounding me down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind. I would have preferred to go with Abby and the crowd to Eldorado but Fate was unrelenting.

Saturday Karl and Jack and I hiked ten miles along the Whitechuck River to Kennedy Hot Springs. We could not see the mountain, we saw only trail and river and grey mist seeping through dark forest. Kennedy is in a deep hole a mere 3500 feet above sealevel. Glacier rises 7000 feet above Kennedy. Karl and Jack, experienced peakbaggers, were casual about the 7000 feet of invisible mountain. The weather was so miserable I was as cheerful as they at supper. But in my sleeping bag I felt very much alone. Not once had Karl or Jack grumbled about the weather. The start was set for 2 a.m. I could not sleep, I cherished each moment of safety, dreading the forced evacuation of my warm bag and the 7000 invisible feet of dangerous mountain. At midnight came an abrupt pitter-patter on the shake roof of the shelter. I held my breath. Pitter-patter dwindled to pit-pit--pat. I sighed. Then in a burst came a pit-pit-pitter-pat-pat-patter, and a pitter-patter-pitter-patter. Come on pitter! Come on patter! Come on pitter-patter! Pitter-patter grew to thrumathrumathrumathruma and broombroomabrooma brooma. At 2 a.m. I tensed, uncertain. But my experienced

companions breathed in, breathed out, and I fell ~~ecstatically~~ into delicious snuggling sleep, reprieved for a night, perhaps a year.

Late in the morning the rain dwindled to a drizzle and by noon to a mist. By afternoon there were occasional bright flares in the mist. ~~We Roman sybarites paddled around in warm bubbling water a dozen feet from the snow-cold river over brawling boulders, 7000 feet below the summit of Glacier.~~

no pp

Supper was cooking when a blue knife of sky slashed open the clouds. ~~Jocular kitchen bickering stopped. Reverently we raised our eyes to the sky. We ate holy pumpernickel and ceremoniously sipped tea.~~ At sunset the clouds thinned. While washing dishes in Kennedy Creek I sensed a sudden radiance. Turning from the pots and pans there above the cold river and black trees was Glacier, a tall shimmer of pink snow.

I slept tight as a top-octave piano wife. The first night I flunked. ~~Nobody knew, but I flunked. I was overjoyed by the rain.~~ Now I wanted to climb. At 2.a.m. my interior alarm clock exploded. The cold night shocked me past hysteria to mania. I, the innocent novice, grasped the foot of Karl's bag and stood him on his head and shook him out into the cold night and then did the same for Jack. My experienced companions stated their hopes for my

Future Life as I capered and cackled in the night.

On the trail by flashlight I was now the one without humor, oppressed by the burden of forest and snow and glacier above. Nor was there any certainty of reward for toil, for the route was unknown and perhaps not possible. After a silent hour switchbacking upward in darkness we left the trail^{and} ~~Why, I didn't comprehend, nor was the reason explained.~~ We blundered through sopping huckleberry bushes and over fallen logs. Then the forest tilted on end and we kicked steps up steep slopes slippery with wet needles. To make use of our ice axes for balance we stowed the flashlights, picking our way by means of a filthy grey illumination.

The forest matted in a tangle of interwoven branches. Following Karl and Jack I battled through the barrier, out of the forest onto a snowfield. I blinked branches from my eyes, spit needles from my mouth. It was morning on the snow. Not the bright morning of sunrise pink and sparkle, the dull flat morning of a day that never would have a sunrise. Karl and Jack were happily chattering, the route goes! Thought I, goes where? Our white snowfield dimmed upward into white cloud... The white cloud thickened upward into a dark ceiling of flowing sky. The ceiling was 500 feet above us, and 3000 feet beyond the ceiling was the summit of Glacier.

Karl and Jack were delighted by the feasibility of the route, by the weather, by my forlorn expression. Chirping and yodelling they ran along the snow ridge into the mountain, traversed onto a broad snowface, disappearing into the cloud. Alone I followed their tracks and alone I entered the swift grey cloud. Onward, upward, alone, I plugged onward and upward battered by salvos of cloud-scrap, deafened by shrieking furies of wind, immersed in flurries of blizzard.

~~And sometimes there was a frightening calm, and I hurried upward after my companions through world-dissolving fog.~~

Sometimes as I leaned on my ax, gasping, wind wedged open the clouds and far below I glimpsed mountains. And these cold mountains were not above me where mountains should be, they were below! From my altitude the lower mountains seemed small but I knew many of them were tall and cruelly difficult, and that was the greatest horror of all, that was what gave me the sense of having left the earth. The little black storms scuttling among the peaks below were comical as ^{scowling} Lilliputians ~~trying to scowl~~, but I could not laugh with a full-scale mountain storm above me. ~~I envied Abby, down there with the crowd on one of those little mountains, within one of these funny little storms.~~

Karl and Jack vanished years ago. No sun above,

no sky, no mountain, nothing above but steep snow and grey wind. No world below, only steep snow and grey wind. All alone I strive to maintain sanity in the grey roar of eternity. There is a trench of steps but where does it lead? How do I know who plugged those steps? The Malignant Deceiver?

There is no one to care. Below, far below this cold sea, somewhere on earth, on some quaint little mountain, Abby cares. But Abby is in one of those funny little storms and probably has no time to wonder how I am, or where I am. Karl and Jack are doubtless on the Moon by now. Looking for the Oil Can.

I collapse onto my ice ax. I miss the ax. I embrace snow. The storm is jealous. The storm is plucking at me to carry me off in the stream of grey eternity. But the snow and I embrace. The storm is not strong enough to tear me from my warm lover. I nestle my cheek into the soft pillow of snow. I fall asleep hugging the snow.

~~I fall asleep.~~ I dream. There is trouble in the dream. Something is wrong. I should not sleep. The truth awakens me. Snow is the Deceiver! Not the storm but the snow! I must rise, I must take one more step. Where? Up. Up where? Up What? ~~Up, up, up!~~ No questions--up! Just up! There has to be some logical explanation of all this since I am by definition a real person. I will not accept

any sophistry about Malignant Deceivers. I know I exist because I remember eating breakfast this morning. That settles that. Next question. How did I leave the world? Why did I give up the world for Whiteness? Whiteness roaring by my face and Whiteness roaring through my soul? Also why does some Whiteness roar over me and through me and some Whiteness hold still while I kick my foot into it?

Also if I am in the Whiteness what is that thing doing here which is not white? What is that blurred non-Whiteness? It is definitely non-White. It is also plural. It is a plurality of non-White shapes and they move independently of the White wind. Malignant Deceivers? Billiard Balls? I creep fearlessly toward the wind-independent non-Whites. Kari? Jack? Not on the Moon, but here?

While tumbling down through whiteness like a billiard ball, running and plunging, slipping and falling, while tumbling down snowfields through the ceiling into the world the fact infiltrated my exhaustion that I had been on top of Glacier! I had been two miles above the sea! I had climbed a Major!

Oh frabjous day, callooh callay!

At Kennedy, 7000 feet of elevation gained in a storm and 7000 feet of elevation lost in a storm,

~~Kari and Jack rested before breaking camp. But I~~

could not rest, I must walk and walk and walk to calm

my spirit.

no pp

Nine miles of trail calmed my spirit, soul, will, and mind. A mile from the car I toppled into mud. In twilight Karl and Jack pried from the mud with ice axes the lifeless carcass of Frankenstein's Monster. The Monster tottered and staggered, prodded by axes to totter and stagger on.

no pp

I seem to recall arriving at the car. I seem to recall falling onto the bed beside Abby. But perhaps I only know these things did happen and have convinced myself I remember.

Next ~~morning~~^{day} in the stockroom I did not read. ~~Until noon~~ I slept on my stool, chin in hand. At ~~quitting time~~ ~~lunchtime~~ I awoke and flexed my muscles. Every muscle from my toes and feet up through my legs and hips and abdomen and neck, arms and fingers not excluded, nor ears and mouth and eyelids, was magnificently strong, and flexible, and insolent.

no pp

[~~That afternoon~~ I strolled home through the District slowly, a relaxed giant pitying from my high strength the sick flesh of empty sealevel souls who suffer out their shallow days never suspecting the strength and glory we find walking through the sky two miles high. Had I not despised the poor twitching men I might have killed them by the dozens with casual backhand slaps. Had they been worthy of me I might have raped the whole Avenue of yielding females.

apartment, waiting all day today, all day tomorrow, for the telephone to ring.

I was feeling sick and wondering whether the symptoms meant cholera or Black Plague or both, and figuring how to tell the leader, when the Ranger began to inspect my equipment. First he ~~tired~~ tried to break my ice ax and then he snickered at my pants and laughed out loud at my provisions. The sneering way he initialed my form clearly expressed his opinion of my chances. He made me mad. I set forth from Paradise, 5500 feet above the sea, resolved to ~~stive~~ strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield, resolved to deserve the confidence of the Climbing Committee, to confound the Ranger, to triumph and if possible to return alive to Abby, but above all to triumph at any cost. I set forth in a careful conservative rest step, aware that to climb ^{14,406 - feet} Rainier I must sleep that night at Camp Hazard, 11,500 feet, a full thousand feet higher than the summit of Glacier.

The first steps are always the worst. I needed a rest while still within earshot of the laughing Ranger but would not give him the satisfaction. Above Alta Vista my legs loosened and my stride lengthened. Without a pause I glissaded down onto the Nisqually, crossed to the Snowfinger, plugged steadily up to the ridge and along the crest, stronger with every step.

I plugged along in steady reststep refusing the temptation ~~to go faster~~ to rejoice. Not until high noon, under the lava crags of the Castle, did I make my first stop and admit to myself I had won the battle for high camp. I sprawled in the soft volcanic rubble, luxuriating in bright sun and broad horizons. I was satisfied. I was at 9500 feet. In one haul I had climbed 4000 feet and Camp Hazard was now a mere 2000 feet above. With good appetite I leisurely lunched, high camp won, the summit a certainty.

After photographing the puny peaks of the minor Cascades below I smoked a final cigarette and shouldered my pack. Strangely, my pack seemed heavier than before lunch. Also my legs were no longer loose. But that's normal after a long rest. Grind out a tough hundred steps and legs and guts will shift back into high gear. Having done 4000 feet at one crack I planned a lazy afternoon. I would rest twice between the Castle and Hazard. But something was wrong. I used both rests while the Castle still towered above me. The sun--that was it. One item forgotten in my calculations. The morning warmth loosened my muscles. Now it is bound to be hot, too hot, and naturally I must allow an occasional cool-off rest. My legs are heavy. Too hot, that's why. A foot is a weight to be lifted.

~~Each weight lift trembles in my stomach. Too hot.~~

Insert
 There is no need to despair. I see specks far above. Some of the party went through inspection last night and started before dawn. Many of those who left Paradise with me are far below, only now ^{approaching} emerging from the ^{Castle} Snowfingers. Others are around me, slogging steadily upward or humped over studying their boots with sad expressions. My pace is slow but when I stop to wipe the sweat from my goggles I see climbers collapsing face down in the snow.

Not a bad idea, that, stuffing the face in snow. The sun is blistering hot. Rivers of sweat sting my eyes. This is an oven. Who would believe an oven could be made of snow?

A hurricane from the Poles blasts through the oven. While broiling on a spit I turn blue and drip long icicles of quick-frozen sweat. Then the sun sizzles away the ice and the quick-thaw spoils the meat.

There are other people. I pass people sitting in the snow mourning deaths of loved ones, perhaps themselves. People pass me. What's their hurry? There are other people but I can share neither their mourning nor their ambition. We are strangers. Each soul must find its own lonely way to high camp. There is no help from strangers. None of us have strength to spare in the fight for high camp. Charity to

strangers is suicide, which is not only immoral but illegal.

More of
 (1)

I climb alone, one step at a time. Ah, but now I am not alone. My friend has joined the party. I welcome him. He grows stronger and longer. But also he moves slower. I will not leave him behind anymore than he will leave me. ~~A guy who would abandon his own shadow doesn't deserve a friend.~~ *My shadow as I* We will stick it out together to the end, whatever that might be.

Above us there still are climbers moving upward so we are not yet near camp. Below us, mere notes in the glaring beam, are climbers still moving. Some of those below may fall short of camp. Possibly I will fail. Possibly those above will fail. Perhaps none of us will succeed. What if I should collapse, here and now? Who would notice, who would care? I rest-step past collapsed climbers and I do not stop, I do not care. If I fell into the snow and died nobody would notice. ~~Abby~~ *B. H.* would care but she is not in this world, she is so far below and so far away she is only a dream. ~~Abby~~ *B. H.* is at sealevel. To return to ~~Abby~~ *B. H.* I must first reach high camp. There is no longer a chance of going beyond high camp but if I can reach high camp there will be some leader to whom I can cry for mercy, who will help me return home to ~~Abby~~ *B. H.*.

and (1)

~~toward~~

~~The sun is sliding near the horizon. Already lights are blinking in the dark valleys. Here in the stratosphere the day lingers, by contrast with with night grows more brilliant, shimmers unspeakably sentimental variations on the red end of the spectrum--rosy-pink, sharply-scarlet, poignantly-purple--crap like that, crap that makes a person vomit it's so goddam ineffable.~~

Insert 2

There is an ice cliff, a glitter of pink ice, ~~a~~ high leaning wall. Camp must be near. Camp can't be above the ~~cliff~~. But what happened to the people? Where are the people? A disorder of frost-wedged rocks under the cliff. This is camp. It has to be camp. ~~But what~~. Bodies among the rocks. Human bodies. Cold and silent bodies sprawled where some disaster killed them. But not all. Several still alive, dying slowly, hunched over groaning, parka-hoods obscuring their agonies. No faces. Only hooded creatures. Maybe they are not dying climbers. Maybe they are the Killers, the Things that lurk in the rocks and crevasses. As each suffering climber collapsed at camp they killed him and ate his soul.

They're welcome to mine. I must fall down now. I am at High Camp, I am 11,500 feet above sealevel, farthest I have ever climbed above the warm salt ocean that gave birth to life, and me, closest I have

ever approached the sky that is the death of mankind and of me. Let them eat my soul.

A long while I lay in the rocks. The rising whine of the wind, colder, steadier, louder, shivered strength into my body. The ice cliff was skull-white. I stumbled and crawled toward the leaders to report my presence. They were huddled in the shelter of a rock wall mumbling and raving in the wind. ~~They were forming rope teams for the summit climb but without hope.~~ ^{But} Some of the names on the roster were motionless specks far below in the twilight. ^{And} Some of the people in camp were retching so violently not even the wind hid their misery. The summit climb was so improbable forming teams was a waste of effort. ~~Neither of the leaders cared much. One was sleepy and the other was sick.~~ ^{Neither of the leaders} They ~~finally agreed to go ahead and divide~~ the entire roster into teams ^{to} and let the ropeleaders worry in the morning about who made camp and who died in the night. ~~The problem was ropeleaders. There weren't enough experienced ones to go around.~~

~~One of the leaders saw me lying on my stomach a few feet away. He remembered my face but not my name. I told him my name and he wrote it on a card and handed it to me. So while I was trying to tell the leaders I had arrived in camp and would need help to get home I was made a ropeleader.~~

end of
2

insur
3

~~I crept away to the rocks and crawled into
 my sleeping bag, pulling some of the sharper rocks
 from underneath, accomodating^{ed} my body to others.~~

~~I~~ I tried to eat, but what Malignant Deceiver ~~reduced~~^{reduced} me into hauling canned baby foods to Camp Hazard? The smell of the chopped beef was enough. One look at the strained peas and I ~~had to close~~^{had to close} my eyes and ~~take ten~~^{took 10} deep breaths. I managed a can of chocolate custard but made the rest of my supper from pineapple juice and cigarettes.

~~The custard and juice and the warmth of the
 sleeping bag made the world real.~~ (9) I looked out over the state of Washington. God, who would have thought the old world had so much air in it? ~~On Glaciers I
 entered clouds at 8000 feet. From 8000 the low world
 seemed small, remote.~~ From 11,500 the low world is so far away it has no nonnection at all with my perilous position in loose rubble on the shore of outer space.

The tiny orange sun fell into the Pacific Ocean. The summit-flame of Mount Adams snuffed out. A sky-glow from the 3000 feet of summit snows above our camp lingered. The ice cliff loomed closer, leaning out, dimming into darkness. Far below in full night is the cheerful faint glitter of the lights of Paradise. Paradise is not for us. And now the sky-glow is gone.

Insert
4

JP

Now there are stars. Now the wind shakes the foundations of camp.

4

What hope is there for our party's survival, how can I any longer have faith in the Climbing Committee? I, who despair of reaching home unaided, appointed ropeleader! These rash men will lead us upward, upward to what they know, and I know, is disaster. High camp has neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain.

~~Forget the billion cubic miles of air between me and the lowlands, forget the cosmic urge that stirs this air, the howl around and the shudder below, forget the stars, the immensity of night at 11,500 feet above the sealevel where properly I belong and damn the Deceivers who told me I could climb Rainier!~~

A brilliance! A boom! ~~It's the BOMB!~~ ~~I am in terror~~ Another brilliance and another boom. Then brilliance, boom, brilliance-boom, ~~brilliance~~ Not ~~BOMBS~~ ^{or war} worse than that? ~~Cover my head, close my eyes,~~ ~~stuff my ears.~~ Still I see and hear. Hailstones battering my bag. Wind with a rising roar. The roar rises, and rises--~~it must stop now it rises,~~ ^{wind} ~~it~~ is going to tear rocks from cliffs and roll them around the sky like billiard balls, wind is going to rip dreamers out into space, through the ^{and lightning} thunder. I dare not sleep, ~~I embrace my mattress~~ ^{roar, at every} ~~of peaks,~~ at every rising/blast I press the cells of

5

LA

Creep deeper into the bag

It's the BOMB! Seattle is destroyed! The final war has begun!

(5)
 my body deeper into the minerals of the rocks.

~~A human cry.~~ ⁹ A death agony, the scream of a soul gazing into the ~~black~~ pit of Hell. By flashlight I inspect my wristwatch. ^{3:30} a.m. That was no death agony, ~~worse luck.~~ Forward, is the cry! Forward into the jaws of Death, into the mouth of Hell! ~~Am I dismayed?~~ I ~~know~~ someone has blundered. But not mine to make reply, not mine to reason why, ~~but to do and die.~~

There is a storm but storm is the normal condition of sky, and if a man loves peace he should not come up into the sky. I cannot, with honor, do anything ~~less~~ ~~than ride gallantly forward into the valley of Death, riding boldly and well, sabring the gunners there, charging an army, stormed at with shot and shell, into the mouth of Hell.~~

I emerge from the bag suffering the agonies of birth. Pull on ^{war surplus} parka. Then boots, frozen boots, crampons, rucksack, rope, ax. Bravely I cry to my team, follow me, men! Let's go! Rise and shine! Get the show on the road! I am their leader, they do not know I am going to die, they do not know we are all going to die. As their leader it is my duty not to tell them. I must lead them to death because this is the duty of a leader. I am sorry to kill them but after all I am killing myself too. I am no Napoleon, running away from Russia. I am a modern leader roped to my people.

(6)

All is chaos. The sound is wind, swallowing all the screams and curses and moans. Black night is shattered briefly by flares from distant lightning. The condemned souls tumble down steep rubble, ropes entangling, rocks rolling, confused flashlights aimlessly probing the wind and rubble, some nervously fascinated by the trembling ice cliff above.

Now is the time to retreat. We are only ten minutes from camp. With luck some of us might make it back alive. This dispirited doomed mob has no hope of climbing 3000 feet of mountain, wrecked as we are by the 6000-foot ascent to high camp and by the stormy night and by the thin air.

(7)

Suddenly, ~~it is~~ ^{it is} morning. The sun ~~was~~ warming the higher flanks of Rainier, flaring the crests of Adams and St. Helens and Hood. Some warmth of the sun seemingly reflected into our gully, or perhaps it ~~was~~ ^{is} the light of day chasing away the fears of night. Certainly the sun had tamed the wind. We were two score strong men rhythmically stamping crampons into steep crisp snow. Our leaders were competent after all. And I was a ropeleader! ~~A glorious morning!~~ Far below was an ocean of cloud. Adams and St. Helens and Hood thrust far above the billows. So did we. The taller of the Tatoosh summits poked out into the warm sun.

~~The gully tilted steeply upward into an icerail.~~

It was a comfortable pace but slow. Still, no teams were passing us.

~~In the horrefested rocks of the Wapowety Cleaver~~
~~my team and I took our first rest.~~ The cloud ocean was below, white billows shining in the sun. But where had the world gone? No Tatoosh at all and very little St. Helens and Adams and Hood. The cloud ocean had crept upward, ~~on little cat feet.~~ Too bad about the Tatoosh. And there goes St. Helens! Masters of no consequence. There was only one real mountain in our world and from the Cleaver we could see its summit, Columbia Crest, a sharp edge between the brightest of possible whites and the truest of possible blues.

~~From~~ ~~at~~ Wapowety we ~~left the Kautz and~~ traversed over the Nisqually Glacier, around a bergschrund ~~long I breathed in and out several hundred times while staring down into~~ ^{the} hugeness of ^{its} blueness so frightfully deep ~~it~~ seemed capable of swallowing up the entire mountain. We were in the saddle between Point Success and Columbia Crest. Our pace was--step! inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale--step! inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale--step!

~~There was only one small slope above us.~~
~~stepped and breathed and breathed and stepped.~~
 The slope was small but did not diminish. Step, breathe, breathe, breathe, step. The crest is no closer. I am infinitely weary of breathing. There is so little nourishment in the air. ↓

8

no pp

8

~~The sky was a serious blue,~~ The sky grew. We were not moving, we were no closer to the crest, but the sky swelled. Once it had been ^{far} ~~way up~~ above, ~~then it lowered toward us,~~ then it was all around ~~us,~~ and now the sky is below ~~us~~ as well. Below the sky is a white sea of ruffled cloud. There is sky and cloud below, there is sky around, there is sky above, and above is a crest of mountain, brilliant white, ^{whiter} than any cloud, and higher, and more distant. Under our feet is white snow, always more white snow under our feet. We take one step at a time and breathe for years before the next step but we can do no more, no man can do more than take one step at a time.

Hours of breathing, then a step, hours of breathing, another step, looking always upward to the boundary of blinding white and frightening blue. We are no closer to the crest but at least ~~we are no farther,~~ ~~at least~~ we are holding our own.

This amazing air! Gulp air, gulp air, and not grow dizzy! Indeed gulping air ^{steadies} ~~removes~~ the wavering ~~from the~~ horizon, whitens the ~~fading~~ snow, ~~sharpens~~ ~~the curves of clouds,~~ deepens the blue of the sky.

What happened to the boundary of blinding white and frightening blue? I spin a full revolution on my axis and see only a blue dome vaulting downward around the white mountain under my feet.

⑧
 This is Columbia Crest. I have climbed
 Mount Rainier. I have climbed Rainier and I am not
 dead. And if I die this instant in the middle of
 the sky leaning against the clean hurricane from
 the cold Poles, out here where the motion of earth
 can easily whip a tattered human into space, who
 would object to death atop Rainier? There is nothing

more beyond Rainier. Before Rainier was Marlowe-like
 Glacier Peak. But even if we survive the descent
 all beyond Rainier is Ben-Jonson-like afterplay.

Descending from Glacier I was wild beyond
 reason. Descending from Columbia Crest I was—I was—
 was just-just beyond-beyond-just beyond!

④
 The air at Hazard was ~~so~~ ^{intolerable} thick ~~I breathed it only occasionally~~ ^{for me, 14,414 feet tall.}

of The turgid stuff at Paradise ~~was intolerable~~ I could
 scarcely manage a contemptuous sniff. A gourmet
 accustomed to delicate broth is insulted by stew.

When I pushed open the door Abby knew I had
 done the fantastic, the impossible, that I was one
 of the Elect. At 3 a.m. on Sunday I crawled from
 my sleeping bag to die as bravely as circumstances
 would permit, and now at 10 p.m. Sunday I capered
 about the apartment telling Abby the agonies of
 Hazard, the honor of my leadership, the daring of
 my icefall route, the wonder of ~~having been~~ ^{being} that

~~me~~ 14,414 feet tall!

and I am
 14,414 feet
 tall.

Striding up and down the apartment, ducking my head to avoid the ceiling, suddenly an aroma stopped me in my tracks. The aroma caused a convulsion in my abdomen, a curious lightness in my head and an explosion in my salivary glands. Friday my appetite had been modest, thinking of the Unknown Third Mile. Saturday noon, at the Castle, I had consumed a candy bar and several cookies. Saturday night at Hazard, a jar of baby pudding. Sunday? One can of grape juice. What is that aroma? ~~What~~ ^{Where is that} ~~is that~~ aroma! I ate the hindquarters of a bull, I ate the potato harvest of a medium-sized Idaho-farm, I drank a swimming pool of gravy, I drank a tank truck of cold milk, I made a desert of a bakeshop of apple pies and a factory of cheese. Then I fell asleep telling Abby tales of Columbia Crest.

I was invincible. The next weekend Constance fell beneath my boots, Constance, the black crest of the Olympic horizon Joe and I used to watch in those good old pre-war sunsets. Shuksan, the most photographed ~~mountain~~ mountain in the United States, submitted tamely the next weekend. Then Abby and I went off to the Olympics together and I settled old Boy Scout scores with Anderson and LaCrosse. Denny was pleasant exercise on a Sunday afternoon. Over Labor Day weekend Fred and I climbed Baker, coldest

volcano in the Cascades, from the Boulder River. For relaxation next weekend Abby and I and Jack strolled over Tolmie and the following weekend we three hiked up the south side of the friendly volcano, 12,202-foot Adams. Now it is Autumn, time to remember a fine season, time to plan a second, grander year. But Berserker Karl proposes an October climb of Baker, and that weekend the temperature in Seattle barely rises above freezing, and with Abby worrying in frozen meadows Karl and I stand two miles high atop Baker, and two miles high in winter we look ~~west~~^{east} ~~in~~ to Idaho, southⁱⁿ to Oregon, west far into the Pacific, and north to Waddington in the British Columbia Coast Range. The next week I caper leap and sing in a blizzard to the summit of Granite Mountain, ordinarily a trail trip, but in this November storm a mountain so formidable only such a Berserk as I could live on its summit.

~~Some of these were contemptible little mountains, done~~le~~ft-handed in an afternoon for relaxation.~~

~~Giants at banquet tempt the appetite with oyster beds and migrations of geese before flexing their jaws for solid food.~~

~~Glacier, Rainier, Constance, Shuksan, on successive weekends, this was the month of Great Climbs.~~

~~A Great Climb is a weekend that exhausts every last particle of physical and spiritual resource.~~

(9)

(9) This is how we live

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~~Great Climbing is hurling into the polar plexus of fate one such weekend after another all summer long.~~

We leave Seattle in the dawn of Saturday, drive hour after hour, then hike ~~out~~ the remaining daylight ~~and energy~~ and collapse ^{in camp at dusk} ~~exhausted~~. We emerge from our bags while Sunday is no more than a fiction of the clock, we ascend silently through the night into morning, up the forests, up the meadows, up the talus, up the snow. In staring sun or flowing cloud we kick snow, we solve crevasses, we chop ice, we scramble rock, into the sky of the summit, be it blue and bright or black and lowering. We scramble down rock and skid down snow and ^{stumble down} ~~stagger over~~ talus and tumble ^{down} ~~through~~ meadow and forest. We stagger under packs ~~along trail~~ to the road, we drive ~~long~~ half-blind ~~heads~~ to the city, ~~somehow~~ we totter into our beds.

Heads hit pillows and ^{instantaneously} rebound for it is Monday morning. ^{Zombies totter} ~~Frankenstein Monsters topple~~ through mechanical Mondays. But Tuesday, muscles loose and strong, ~~we climbers are the life force~~ ~~Relaxed~~ ~~by rest and weariness~~ already we are tensing for the next climb. Wednesday choosing the mountain, Thursday studying maps and ~~tinkering with gear~~ and making up the party. Friday packing gear and confirming arrangements. Saturday off ^{again} to the hills, off on

another Berserker weekend, already glimpsing beyond
the total exhaustion of Sunday the Berserker assault
to follow, and the next, and the next. . .

There is no child wild as a climber, no lover passionate as a climber, no hero daring as a climber, no scholar wise as a climber, no anchorite God-mixed as a climber, no lunatic raving as a climber, no old man weary as a climber, no cadaver quiet as a climber.

I am a climber and in climbing I recapitulate my past from birth, I forecast my future to death.

Here on the mountain is all my past and all the past of mankind, is all my future and all the future of mankind.

It is all here in the hours toiling up the trail to camp, plugging a ladder up steepening snow, chopping steps in glacier ice, seeking holds on the precipice, gathering resolution for the entrance into the sky, for the flight outward into the clouds, into the stars.

Years and years ago I requested a moment of conversation with Heaven. With God if possible but if the Boss was busy any angel would do. Surely so minor an angel as Sally would have Eternity to spare.

Heaven was answering another phone. I grew older and God grew larger and therefore closer, for call him Father or the One that Remains or Spring-Summer-Winter-Fall, God is All and All is God.

I wanted only to be part of the All, to once, just once, sense my soul merging with the All. But whenever

the moment neared, whenever the roar of the river of eternity shook me free from the grip of particulars, prepared me for union with the One, always I was dashed back to earth, rejected from the stream.

Very well! I am unworthy of stars. But I am not alone. I worship Mankind, my two billion lonely companions on this spinning, wobbling, quaking whirling bit of matter.

It is easy to worship Mankind if one avoids Man. Busdrivers, housemothers, besotted bomber-builders, lieutenants on put-puts, smutty women and filthy men, and Mr. Wall inheriting the world. Add up all the excellent humans I have known and we have a brave little band but no world-soul. We have friends to cherish and love but we have no deity to adore.

Look now, where did our Prophets of the Popular Front lead? We killed Hitler and Mussolini and Tojo, though not Chiang and Franco and the busdrivers and housemothers and Mr. Walls, but we have won the Big War and soon we'll mop up all the little wars.

When?

As soon as possible but there is an embarrassing hitch. We're going to have to stop singing the Red Army Hymn. The Russians are good fellows at heart but ignorant. Their leaders have the suspicion ^{typical} of the conspiratorial mind. They can't believe we

aren't the Tsar.

Thank Ford for the BOMB! American virtue always triumphs in the end, pure virtuous Texas oil and Kansas corn and Washington timber and Montana copper and ^{Minnesota} ~~Minnesota~~ Iron and Chicago Hogs and Pennsylvania Coal and New York Money and Refugee Physicists.

Hail the dawn of Pax Atom! Mankind is fortunate America has the BOMB. What if the Bad Guys had the BOMB? Too awful to contemplate. But the Lone Ranger has the BOMB and with his faithful Indian companion Tonto he'll straighten out the Bad Guys. The Bad Guys haven't a chance for we are the Fastest Gun.

America is a mild sort of guy. He has a good sense of humor and is really very friendly. But he hates being nudged. Give him space at the bar and he'll stand drinks for the house but don't nudge him. He can blow up the whole world. He doesn't want to but he will if necessary. He felt very bad about blowing up all those Japs. He cried quite a bit when nobody was looking. But don't elbow him. He might call you out. Out on the dusty street at high noon.

You see, his feelings are hurt. He bought drinks for the house and gave the kids nickles for popcorn and thought everyone knew he is a hell of a nice guy. Instead they call him names behind his

back and even stand right up in front of him yelling, Fatty! Fatty! Fatty! It is very irritating, but by golly when they start yelling these things about Mother. . .

Where have we been led by the Prophets of the Popular Front? Onto a dusty street at high noon, the Fastest Gun walking stiff-legged toward a gang of yapping kids, toward the sinister blackbearded men hiding in the alleys egging on the kids.

There is no God in Heaven, no God within the world, and most certainly there is no God lurking within the soul of mankind.

Abby, let us be true to one another! For the world, which seemed to lie before us like a land of dreams, is really a crummy place, a darkling plain swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant busdrivers and housemothers and Mr. Walls clash by night with those of us in the fell clutch of circumstance, who are trying not to wince or cry aloud and are trying to grow old along with Rabbi Ben Ezra. . .

The world is an unweeded garden. . .

We are between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born. . .

The world, both worlds, all worlds are running down, and when the candle gutters out the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper. . .

Old Faust is dead, we are burying him away,
 for it's summer and we're running out of ice.
 Old Faust who fell in love with the face that
 launched the Iliad, old Faust, his way of life
 fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf. . . He
 should have died hereafter. . .

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps
 in this petty pace from day to day to the last
 syllable of recorded time--out, out, Brief candle!
 Gutter out your whimper!

Well, I have had my ups and downs but wotthehell,
 wotthehell, yesterday scepters and crowns, fried
 oysters and velvet gowns and today I herd with bum~~s~~
 but toujours gai, toujours gai. . . I know that
 I am bound for a journey down the sound in the midst
 of a refuse mound but wotthehell... Death and I
 will coquette, there's life in the old cat yet,
 wotthehell wotthehell.... Under the bleary moon
 I am pelted with old climbing boots an I caper
 sing and leap and wake the world from sleep, toujours
 gai, tougours gai. . .

So long as the Constitution guards my right
 to be equal in number of cards, what care I how my
 fortunes thrive? Dealer! Give me another five!

Love, let us be true to one another. . .

Let us be true to I, Tamburlaine, who by his
 rare and woonderfull Conquests became a most puissant

and mightye Monarque and (for his Tyranny, and
terroure in Warre) was tearmed, THE SCOURGE OF GOD!

PART SEVEN

TERROR

LOVE

ADVENTURE

PRAYER

PART SEVEN
TERROR

I wish for a Devil, a crimson one with horns
and a tail, a literal Devil grinning in a furnace. . .

I wish for a Door, a naively Freudian Door
that will never open however loud my screams. . .

I wish the Terror could be contained within
a dream. . .

But as the Terror grew my dream grew too slowly. . .

The Terror escaped my dream, the Terror is
abroad in daylight throughout all the world, and
within all the world, and within every man and woman
in the world. . .

The bright morning on campus when Terror escaped
my dream ~~but~~ the serenity of the lovely girls and
the laughing boys soon drove it beyond time and space. . .

Now the girls are haggard and the boys grim for
the Terror continued to grow and has fatally infected
them all. . .

The Terror no longer needs my dream. It ~~remains~~
~~the dominant backdrop for every scene but~~ has grown
far too large to base itself on the small province
of my dream. The empire of Terror still includes
my small dream and my entire small life as well, but
also two billion other small dreams and lives. . .

Two billion little souls, and aside from fifty
or sixty million dirty rotten villains all want a
world that is beautiful and gentle. Two billion little
souls, and except for the villains each overwhelmingly

prefers love to hate, kindness to brutality.

But the Terror has infected them all. Each by each the souls are peaceful. But clustered together the little particles of private Terror mass into a chain reaction of public Terror. The peaceful little humans cluster together into inhuman scowling mindless monsters. The little souls cluster together for protection from the Terror but the monsters created by their fear give Terror its final triumph, material reality and universal dominion.

The good little billions hide in caves to escape the new large Terror. Now at 1st they realize the monsters have no independent life and are nothing more than the summed-up fears of all the good little souls hiding in caves. But it is too late. In running to caves the good little billions abandoned the ~~outside~~ world to the rotten villains, the willing tools of the monsters, the scum of humanity so criminally obsessed with an obscene lust for power. the Assassination of Life itself is nothing more than one of many possibly — desirable political maneuvers.

These monsters nourished by fear now and then reach into caves and pluck forth screaming souls and eat them. Sometimes a monster scoops up a city and swallows good little thousands at one gulp. This frightens all the other souls, they fear more, and

the more they fear the fatter and crueller grow
the monsters.

There is a hierarchy of monsters. Small
monsters fear large monsters and their fear explodes
the large monsters into super-monsters. Super-monsters
develop super-appetites only satisfied by monster-fear.
To keep the fields of fear fertile Super-monsters now
and then eat little monsters.

The Terror nears final unity, the joining of all
manifestations into the One that will remain, the Terror
that will end the changing and the passing of the Many.
The Two Ultimate Super-Monsters, so hungry only Ultimate-
Super-Monster-Fear can ease the nagging bellyache,
warily circle each other over the world, glowering,
stalking stiff-legged with hands hovering over hips,
preparing to prove who is the Fastest Bomb in the World. . .

PART SEVEN

LOVE

Twelve ~~long~~ miles we hiked from Constance Creek, in twilight ~~and the way~~ from Honeymoon Meadows, in darkness the last long switchbacks to Camp Siberia. When we awoke there was nothing beyond the shelter but grey fog. We huddled over hesitant flames, silent until the simmering Number Ten Can burbled up a froth of hot black mountain coffee. Ah, bitter black boiled coffee! Ah, life! Ah, wilderness!

I dip the frypan into the bright radiance of the coals, drop a strip of bacon. It dances and sizzles twitching our noses, churning our stomachs and flooding our mouths. Smooth batter streams ~~up~~ into the wavering film of grease, expands to a perfect circle, swells slightly, bubbling. I scoot the blade of my Boy Scout knife under the ~~entire~~ circumference ~~of this magnificent circle~~. I jiggle the pan. The circle slides free. I dig in my heels and loosen my wrist. Abby, woman of much hunger but little faith, shrinks into the shelter. But I, resolute, unafraid, with a quick twist of the wrist, flip the pan! The circle rises, rises toward the sky, slowly turns, hangs a long moment in the air and falls back toward earth, but cool as a Yankee shortstop I thrust forth the pan and the circle slaps into the center, nut-brown and nostril-flaring.

This is the way I cook one hotcake in ten. Abby knows better than to laugh when one half launches into

~~the~~ air, the other half ^{sticks} ~~sticks~~, the launched half flops over onto the stuck half and the white bubbles glue together and the goddam mess has to be pried apart with Boy Scout knife. She pretends to be admiring the fog when I miss the catch and furiously kick the ruins into the fire. When the pan overheats and the cake is a shell of charcoal enclosing cold batter that is a hotcake for me. I won't give her the satisfaction. Nothing but perfect hotcakes for her, damn her concealed snicker!

The bacon is always good. Also the strawberry jam. It's difficult to ruin bacon or strawberry jam.

At 2 in the afternoon, ~~the existing~~ breakfast over, we strolled out into the fog. We tinkered with creeks, rolled boulders down moraines, criticized waterfalls, admired coves of mist-wet grass and mist-sparkling flowers. Having only the vaguest notion of our whereabouts we exercised our right as explorers to name up the landscape. We followed Pretty Creek through Pretty Meadows high into Pretty Basin. We scrambled over ancient moraines of the vanished Pretty Glacier. At Pretty Pass the fog thinned and above us loomed an ominous precipice of grey mud and vertical heather.

Abby cheered as I set out to attempt a solo ascent of the grim peak. She fell silent as I inched ~~along~~

under an overhang of dripping moss along a narrow goatpath ending in a steep wall of brown dirt riddled with marmot burrows. Fortunately a treacherously-louse clump of grass held the necessary half-minute and gave safe exit to the summit screefield of Der Scheissturm.

At campfire we discussed Pretty Geography. When fog swelled from the night compressing our sphere of light our shoulders huddled close.

The bright starlight awakened me. The cold breeze shivered to my toes.

I awoke here once before, years ago, a Boy Scout hoping to climb Anderson, trusting in my alpenstock of alpine fir, in my leader, in my merit badges.

Now I was a climber. With my ice ax and rope I was going to climb at last the first mountain I had ever really wanted to climb. And I was going to climb it with the first woman I had ever really loved.

Quietly I built a fire and frothed up coffee. Sacrificing artistry for speed I flipped a stack of adequate hotcakes.

I tenderly drew Abby's head from the bag and kissed her. She smiled, she did not awake, she pulled her head back into the bag. Once more I extracted her head, and kissed her. She smiled and mumbled and vanished into the bag. I grabbed her bag and shook her onto the ground. She scrambled to the fire. While

recovering from convulsions she noted the stars were still bright in a black sky and ^{stated emphatically} therefore I was ~~obviously~~ out of my mind.

We ate hotcakes and bacon. As we drank coffee she fell asleep against my shoulder. I was sleepy too, ^{but} ~~resisted~~ ^{resisted} the warm temptress.

The mountain was waiting. The mountain of my youth. I punched Abby up the trail.

The sun reddened the summit rocks. The sky shone pale blue. The white glacier curved up to brown cliffs. Around us drops of dew glittered reflections of summit-pink and sky-blue and glacier-white and cliff-brown. Abby awoke. In the wet sparkle of flowers and grass she laughed and capered. Said I, leap and sing if you like, my love, but please examine the headwaters of the Quinault.

From the Pacific Ocean a grey snake of cloud was stealing through the Enchanted Valley. We stood hypnotized by the ~~boiling~~ head slithering upward to Anderson Pass until around a bend in the Dosewallips slipped another sinuous wisp of grey creeping ^{from Hood Canal} toward the Pass.

We shook free of the fatal fascination and trudged out into the bright morning of Anderson Glacier. Below the narrow couloir leading to Flypaper Pass I stopped to plan a careful foute. I was shocked. The snow was dangerously steep ten years before. Now it

would be a disgrace to put on the rope. There was little time to indulge disillusion; the Quinault cloud was tumbling out of the valley onto the glacier. In Flypaper Pass we admired the Eel Glacier and Silt Creek--and the grey boil pushing out of the trees toward the moraines. As we climbed ~~diagonally up~~ the Eel Glacier the Quinault Cloud spilled over Flypaper, joined the Silt Creek Cloud, the merged forces following us upward.

Such menacing gestures would have terrified Boy Scout Marlowe. Climber Marlowe considered these mild Olympic clouds beneath contempt. We arrived atop Mount Anderson in a dead heat with clouds converging from the Quinault, Silt and Dosewallips. We had no view at all. But we had climbed Mount Anderson!

It was still morning when we sprawled in the meadows beside Anderson Glacier, far too early to descend into the forest. But we had been awake quite awhile. Beside the terminal moraine in a bed of grass sheltered between two boulders, we slept.

I awoke confused. I was in bed with Abby but our apartment was full of fog. No, not our apartment, but we are together, we are together in the mountains. Sleeping side by side in meadows. Ah, meadows! Ah, Abby! Ah, Wilder~~ness~~ness!

I saw the summit rocks of Anderson framed briefly in floating fog and white glacier dimming away in white

fog. Just think, Boy Scout Marlowe! Climber Marlowe has climbed Anderson! Abby sleeps. Abby cannot appreciate my surprised delight. Abby was never a Boy Scout. I'm just as glad Abby was never a Boy Scout. Abby sleeps warm. My kiss does not disturb her sleep but it makes her smile.

Anderson was only one of our many mountain honeymoons. Not all our mountain journeys are honeymoons. Sometimes within a high cold cloud Abby collapses in the snow and will not even answer when I encourage and implore. And when I curse and holler she sobs as our companions stand by embarrassed. When I pelt her with snowballs our companions are shocked. On Stuart I ran out of snow and had to use rocks. I didn't enjoy throwing rocks at her but it was that or thrash her with my ice ax and everyone despises a wifebeater.

If all the world were mountains life would be simple. Abby and I are never genuinely angry in the mountains. Our friends wear fixed expressions of surprise from so often seeing us together on a weekend after hearing us the previous weekend renounce our marital vows with all the world as witness. Our friends on the mountains see our violent Sunday melodramatics but never our private Monday smiles.

The city ^{is} ~~was~~ the insoluble problem. The higher and wilder I climbed the less tolerable ^{became} ~~was~~ the low monotony of the city. Frequently in the dreary wasteland

between Monday and Friday I drank beer at the Coalsack.

When I returned at midnight I brought Abby a bottle of beer and we fried hamburgers and listened to Mozart.

When I returned at 1 a.m. she awoke and we had a discussion. When I returned at 2 she was awake and we had an argument. ^{But} Discussions and arguments were always easily resolved. ~~My argument was~~

~~and my argument was~~

When winter came and there were no more mountains I returned at 3 and 4 and 5. Then we sometimes argued and loved. Or we argued and did not love. Or we did not argue, we did not love, we merely slept in the same bed, and whenever this happened I came home the next night promptly at 1:05 a.m.

~~I developed a thing about clocks.~~ ^(H) I became unable to see a clock during the night. Abby understood up to a point and therefore was tolerant, up to a point.

The calculus of my berserking and her understanding became precise. For approximately two months her understanding diminished in a steady curve as my berserking rose. The lines then crossed and we had a Great Quarrel. A Great Quarrel lasted approximately forty-five minutes, on the average.

After the Quarrel Abby would not speak to me for precisely three days, never more nor less. At the end of three days we were absolutely, totally, mindlessly, mathematically reconciled.

When the business of earning money interfered with drinking I ^{made the choice dictated by logic.} ~~faced a difficult decision. Close logical training enabled me to choose.~~ I quit my job and drank beer every weekday night. Abby ~~dis-~~ ^{was not trained in} ~~liked my logic, but her only concrete objection was the fact her job was buying my beer.~~ The intervals between Great Quarrels diminished ~~due to her inability to see the fallacy in her stand.~~

In the swift new pace always before a Great Quarrel there is a Preliminary Quarrel. Swinging lightly into our apartment I hear the critical voice of illogical Abby.

Bouncing affirmatively on my rational toes I speak from the stars and clouds and cliffs and glaciers, from Nietzsche and Spengler and Bibbon. Says Abby, you're drunk! Retort I, yes drunk my love, and happy to be drunk, delighted and overjoyed that I can be drunk, that I am alive to be drunk and there is a world within which I can be drunk. But I am disturbed by the implication of your declaration. Tell me, my love, what is it you are trying to say? What are you saying when you say I am drunk? Are you complimenting me or

or praising me or envying me? What is your position?

Abby turns to the wall.

With measured pace and calculated gesture and modulated voice I orate, lovely one, is it your position TRUTH is revealed only to a man with a bellyfull of MILK? Is it your position TRUTH is forbidden a man who was swallowed a pitcher of BEER? Is it your position that when a man has swallowed several pitchers of BEER he sees only the FALSE? Offer your evidence! ~~My now, flower of my passion, you know philosophy is my life.~~ Come, my love, let us dispute! No? You cover your head with blankets and creep into the wall? You freely abandon the seminar to my summation? Then let me say unto you, my love, that in BEER I see a strange complete world far different from the fragments of banal flotsam in MILK. I do not pretend to know if the BEER World is TRUE or FALSE. But then I do not know if the MILK World is TRUE or FALSE. Which is the narcotic? BEER, that drives reality into me like a knife and flings me through the cosmos on journeys beyond imagination? MILK, that blunts the world and ^{stunts} ~~blunts~~ me? Is not MILK the opiate, since when we drink MILK we work and eat and sleep and never think? Is not BEER the necessary condition of life, is not BEER our only way to remain alive? All I know and all I need to know is that in

BEER I am happy, in MILK desperate. Pragmatically, lacking objective reference, I can only infer BEER is BEST, MILK is Worst, and by definition BEER is more TRUE.

To such a Preliminary Abby's customary answer ^{is} ~~was~~ some pillow-muffled chuckle such as, a mighty line, Marlowe! Write it out in blank verse and I'll buy it!

And so to bed.

But some night soon thereafter I ~~would~~ topple home sodden and hear out in silence a vivid sketch of my personality. Then a Three Day Blow began.

One afternoon when I awoke I could not remember coming home. I trembled around our apartment feeling slimier than slug excretions, sensing some horrid mystery. I could remember nothing about coming home. Why did I look in the closet? Why did I hold my breath while looking in the closet?

I cooked supper and set the table and waited, trying to remember, catching briefly now and then a fuzzed shadow of a dream, a probably unpleasant dream. Abby should be home by now. I tossed and retossed the salad in twilight, in night, watching for her on the sidewalk.

I was staring so intently out the window the opening of the door took me by surprise.

I met her in the dark corridor. She was soft

and flexible, alarmingly soft.

I coaxed her slowly into the kitchen and turned up her unresisting face. But I did not kiss her. I ran away.

When I awoke it was evening and I was in our apartment. I could not remember coming home. For a moment I rejoiced, thinking it was all a dream, but on the kitchen table was a wilted salad. In a cold frying pan cold chops shrivelled in a cold sludge of frozen grease.

It was another twilight and I was trying to remember. I was gazing out the window down the sidewalk where Abby used to come at this hour. How long ago was that? Months or years or days? If only Lincoln had not been assassinated, if Roosevelt had not been sick at Yalta, if Grant had been drunk at Appomatox, if pigs had wings, if there were pie in the sky by and by, by and by. . .

The door opened.

It was Abby.

Abby motionless and tentative in the dark corridor.

I ran. She ran. We collided. Hours later we turned on the lights and cooked supper. Supper was in the old, familiar routine. After supper, in the old, familiar routine, we settled in our favorite chairs to read. At 11 p.m. she dropped her book like

a bomb and laughed, go on! I dropped my book as if I'd been shot, saying, whatever do you mean? Said she quietly, go on! I said, I wish. . . I stood there, but when she said it ~~once~~ more I ran out before her smile could break. This too was the old, familiar routine.

I was so overjoyed to have Abby back I made special efforts hereafter to get home before dawn. When she awoke in darkness I could say it was 2 when really it was 4 or 5 and she was so happy to have me home at 2 she fell asleep in a very friendly way.

One night the Coalsack Seminar forced a fantastic salient into the Secret of Reality. It was inconceivable philosophy should be denied Ultimate Truth by cheap trickery of the clock. When the Coalsack closed the Seminar carried on. The discussion became confused. I stopped for a moment to gather my thoughts and looked around.

Where was I?

There was Barney pushing gruel into the mouth of a slobbering infant. There was Lydia handing a lunchpail to a little girl, kissing her and telling her to run for the schoolbus.

What happened to the seminar? Where did it go? How did we get to Barney's house? I saw Tim on the couch and woke him up but he didn't know. I asked

Lydia but she went out the door to her job. Barney only giggled and put on plate of hotcakes and cups of coffee on the table and told Tim and me to eat.

Eat! Barney says eat!

A little girl going off to school, a little girl just the age of ~~me~~ ~~the~~ and school means morning ~~the~~ Abby will never --I can never--I ran out into horrid morning brightness.

We were weaving down a grey sidewalk when Tim asked me if I was okay now and whether I shouldn't go home or at least have breakfast. We turned a corner and huge masses of population choked the street.

Ambush! They've got me, they've finally got me! Tim grabbed my shoulder and suggested several hypotheses that had nothing to do with my deserved and overdue retribution. He herded me through the mob into a tavern. I calmed down after a couple beers because the crowd wasn't storming the tavern. Anyway the crowd was too full of little kiddies and obvious mommy-types and daddy-types to be a lynch mob. And everyone was looking down the street toward an approaching BOOM-BOOM-BOOM. When the BOOM-BOOM-BOOM reached us Tim and I were drunk again, drunk in early morning perched on the bar watching the Santa Claus Parade, for Chrissake. When the BOOM-BOOM-BOOM faded, when the street was empty, when

all the daddies and mommies and kiddes were gone
we climbed down from the bar. Tim was sleepy and
went home to bed. I was sleepy and I went home
to bed , non-daddy staggering to a home absolutely
kiddy-less and by now probably potential-mommy-less.

PART SEVEN
ADVENTURE

Not since Hiroshima had a newspaper headline stopped me on the sidewalk. U PROF SUSPENDED. A full professor can only be suspended for raping a crippled coed on the library steps at high noon. Eagerly I sought the name of the culprit, several candidates in mind. Alexander! Impossible!

Impossible indeed. The actual charges were not only possible but true.

In a daze I visited Alexander. He explained there had never really been a cloister at all, but only the illusion.

The Prosecutor paced in sneering silence. Alexander had warned me about the Prosecuto~~r~~ and his years of eradicating atheists who declared there was no Coolidge, his years of making the world safe for Jay Gould.

He whirled and stabbed me with a sharp finger and cried, what did this Alexander fellow teach you?

I gasped and tried to catch my breath but the finger waggled in my eyelashes.

I mumbled and coughed about Whiteness, Deidre, Malignant Deceivers, Broiled Trout, Billiard Balls, Mosquitoes, the Oil Can on the Other Side of the Moon.

My every word sent the Prosecutor into a convulsion. The Prosecutor skewered me and basted me in scorn and then ate me up and vomited me out.

Alexander tried to comfort me afterwards. He said I'd made a good impression on the faculty jury, I'd been a good witness, and anyway, it didn't matter, the whole thing was settled beforehand.

The President fired Alexander off the campus ^{whitewashed on the} and blasted him like a billiard ball to the far side of the Moon. The verdict had been prepared before the trial. The trial was merely a device for including the entire faculty in the damnation of Alexander, for giving notice to the world that we intend to have a Great American University here in Puget Sound. We hired our President (or was it the Coach?) from the Big Ten, we hired our Coach (or was it the President?) from the Ivy League, we hired our Halfback (or was it the Quarterback?) from California. We are building a University that will overshadow even Notre Dame and Georgia Tech.

Until we fired Alexander the world knew us only for Mount Rainier and Flying Forts and BOMBS. A grateful nation now accepted our leadership and welcomed the Soviet of Washington back into the Union.

My politics are founded on the inalienable right of every American to be a damn fool. I am a damn fool about mountains and beer. Alexander is a damn fool about mountains and Marx. But we are friends. We tolerate each others' foolishness. And the law

The jury acquitted Alexander of being a Malignant Deceiver but the President

tolerates mine, but not his.

Now that I at last had the franchise my politics ^{were} ~~are~~ irrelevant. No rational person could vote for Mr. District Attorney. The Preddergast county judge who blew up Hiroshima admitted the New Deal was a War casualty. The Pie-in-the-cornfield mystic was a hoax, and a clumsy one at that.

I didn't vote, I didn't follow the returns. I spent Election Night at the Coalsack with Bob and Rudy. When asked how we'd voted we cried, for der Fuhrer! Soon the swine will come to their senses and call for der Fuhrer and his U-Boat will surface and der Fuhrer will set right the tragic errors the world has made recently, misled by the Morgan crowd and the Stalin Gang and the English King and the Pope and International Jewry.

But by closing time the Missouri Mule had won! Incredible! Impossibile! We had hysterics imagining Mr. District Attorney twitching the tears from his tidy little moustache, and Mr. Wall and the Prosecutor gnashing their teeth and smashing the victory bottles of 1932 vintage champagne. We became just wild about Harry, Lord Harry makes his mistakes but he is one of us, right?

And what are we? Election night in the Pink Palace we withdrew our allegiance from Hitler and confessed ourselves liberals. Liberals though the

banner is dragging in the mud, liberals from habit rather than conviction~~s~~, liberals with qualms, wondering where liberalism can possibly lead us, wondering if our desired future would be even tolerable, much less good. ^{But it} Liberalism ^{is} ~~may be~~ fuzzy and dubious ~~too~~ there is nothing fuzzy or dubious about Mr. Wall, the Prosecutor, Big Steel, Big Auto, Big Oil, Big Wheat, Big Timber, Big Advertising, Big Navy, Big Air Force, Big Army, Big Science, Big BOMB. Perhaps our fuzzy dubious liberalism leads only to a distant disaster, but better a distant disaster than the immediate one proposed by the sharp and certain Monsters.

I have been a liberal too long, I can be nothing else but a liberal forevermore. A sad liberal, to be sure, ^{without the heart to be a fighting liberal} but I would rather sack Rome with Alaric, carry a pike for Barbarossa, wear the livery of Lorenzo the Magnificent, than be a liberal in the America that blew up Hiroshima and now walks stiff-legged on the world, hand hovering over hip.

Past history fascinates me more and more, future history less and less. There was a moment when history seemed to pause and allow politics a genuine option. After great pain a formal feeling came, the earth sat ceremonious as a tomb. The weary weeping billions chose a hundred men to sit around a table and choose a good future history.

Mankind balances on a watershed. Only half a dozen milleniums from fighting tigers for bare survival we have learned how to blow up the world. We are not animals, we are gods and can easily repeal the cruel laws of our animal history. We will not topple backward into the Valley of Animal Despair, we will stride gladly together into the Valley of Godlike Joy. Our delegates sit around a table pledged to outlaw the past of war, hatred and suffering, to frame a constitution for a future where war is illegal, hatred is illegal, suffering is illegal. The American Wheat Surplus will feed the Chinese Labor Surplus while it builds roads into the African Raw Material Surplus, and so forth and so forth. (H) The delegates began their discussions burd~~ned~~ by the weariness and tears of the human race. But our nimble leaders quickly sensed how rapidly we billions of souls brushed away our tears and regained ~~our strength~~ ^{our} powers of hatred and fear. The table became merely one more of the cruel old battlegrounds of history. The Holy Roman Emperor, on his knees in the snow, was penitent. The Innocent Pope in the castle of Canossa, forgave. The penitence, the forgiveness, were acts of war. While we talked peace we voted for more history. We voted for a Berlin Airlift, an Iron Curtain, a Korean Brushfire.

Our one mistake was sending people to the table to reconstruct history. We should have sent tigers.

The world, it is the old world yet. I am I, my things are wet. Liberal is as liberal does. As for me, it's all fuzz. We little chaps we work and cry but the ape and tiger they don't die. Nothing does remain to do but forget. Go climb mountains and go get drunk. Always, of course, always and always, doing the things we got to while repeating our favorite motto, toujours gai, wotthehell.

To the twenty summits of my novice season my ~~second~~ apprentice season, added Red, Si, Kaleetan, Kendall, Whitehorse, by the Glacier, Stuart, St. Helens, Thompson, Chikamin, Huckleberry, the North and South Peaks of Three Fingers, Rainier by the Ingraham Glacier, Rainier by the Emmons Glacier, Anderson, Dickerman, Cathedral, Daniel, Olympus, Barnes, Christie, Eldorado, Shuksan, the South Face of the Tooth, Baker, Chair, Bryant, Silver and Tinkham.

Red Mountain we climbed the first of April, Tinkham the last of November, and during those nine months I was in the mountains all or part of seventy-five days.

Many of the summits Abby shared with me, though frequently she was content with a good sleep at high camp. Some were Experience Climbs where as a member of the Climbing Committee I did my duty

instructing and leading novices. Many were Bramani Trips, adventures by our inner circle of fanatics, those of us who set ourselves off from the conservative nailed-boot mob by wearing war surplus army boots with rubber-lugged soles.

The ascent of Rainier by the Ingraham was a Bramani Trip. A blizzard cut short our triumph.

Long tense hours we lay ^{in our tent} listening to wind. Fred and Karl and I carried heavy overnight packs under the crumbling wall of Gibraltar through Cadaver Gap onto the Ingraham, hacked a stairway up the icefall, gasped over summit snow, and rigged our tent a few steps below Columbia Crest. It was midnight when

~~we all three~~ were awakened ~~simultaneously~~ by the sudden silence. Unsteadily, dubiously, we crawled out under ferocious stars. From Columbia Crest we saw a most gigantic night, a night that included the night on the Pacific Ocean, the night in Canada, the night on the Columbia Plateau, the night in Oregon. Far below were tiny twinkling lights of the little cities and towns of mankind. Little mankind. There, to the east, there he made the BOMB. There, to the north, he made the Superfort that dropped the BOMB. Tiny twinkling clusters of light.

The next weekend as routefinder for the Climbing Course ^{ascent of} ~~Sixty-Nine up~~ the Pinnons Glacier it was a marvel how rich in oxygen was the summit air which

before had been such thin broth. My only regret was to be on mere Rainier for I felt surplus strength sufficient for at least several thousand more feet of mountain. McKinley, Aconcagua, Nanda Devi?

My vacation trip in August was intended more for fun than glory. Jack and Fred and I were satisfied with bagging only Olympus, Barnes and Christie. Our most significant accomplishment was traversing the Olympics from the Hoh River to the Quinault, crossing the Blue, Hoh and Humes Glaciers. It was a yawker of a trip but also good experience for expeditions.

Labor Day a small gang of us climbed through busy roaming squalls of fog, rain, snow, thunder, and lightning. Now and then, here and there, ^{we glimpsed} peaks taller, wilder, sharper, icier than I believed possible south of Canada. When the clouds momentarily whirled away I stood atop Eldorado feeling like Keats looking into Chapman's Homer. The legends of the North Cascades were true.

In October I found the South Face of the Tooth unrecognizable. The narrow ledges had expanded to four-lane highways. The smooth walls now were staircases. The giddy gulf of space was the merest whiff of atmosphere.

Baker in late October was a genuine copperplated yawker. Late October is midwinter on Baker, sticking

two miles up into the Aleutian storm track. Between blizzards on the summit Mike hauled from his Trapper Nelson a cherry pie and an apple pie and a quart of milk. Fred and Abby and I were paralyzed. We rolled around the frozen summit choking on pie and milk.

With Baker we Bramanis scared the hell out of winter and every Sunday in November we continued bullying winter, and got six summits in a month the fearful tricouni-booted oldsters were spending huddled around stoves. Not until the first of December did outraged winter gather up sufficient wind and snow to hurl us from the high hills.

With half a hundred peaks in my bag, no longer a novice, no longer an apprentice, a hardened veteran with out-at-knees pants, mud-and food-stained parka, rock-scarred and snow-bleached boots, rusty and blunted ax and sun-faded stocking cap, winter was intolerable interference. For we Bramanis there was no pause between the second season and the third. We skied a little and snowshoed a bit but mostly prowled below snowline. We climbed icicle-dripping granite in Tumwater Canyon, rain-streaming boulders below Rattlesnake ledge, and sometimes in the city we walked abroad at night climbing trees and brick walls.

Most exciting of all were city seminars with maps and calendars and climbing journals planning the coming Season of Glory. Within our inner group of a dozen

fanatics innumerable startling schemes were proposed. There was the inevitable struggle between the polarities of anarchy and cooperation but by springtime various projects were hardspinning centers of purpose. We were no longer a cosmos of thin electrical charges but a universe of galaxies. A complex universe, of course, since each of we fanatics belonged to more than one galaxy.

For me the Season of Glory centered around Sir Donald, a peak I had never seen, a peak in the Selkirk Range I had never seen, a range in Canada, a foreign nation I had never seen. All winter I propagandized for my mountain. There were a few mild expressions of interest but Andy was the only Bramani to give so much as a tentative guarantee.

Dick listened politely to Sir Donald propaganda but always answered with Bonanza, 9511 feet in elevation, highest nonvolcanic peak in the Cascades. The one and only party that had climbed Bonanza had gone through a hell of avalanches and iced rocks and the final horror of a vertical flawless wall a full hundred feet high.

At Bonanza Meetings Dick discussed with Andy and Ray the vertical flawless wall, debated how many ropes and pitons and bolts we needed, bivouac rations, first aid supplies, rescue gear. I felt like a squeamish intern listening to old surgeons discuss their favorite tools for disemboweling patients. I

was all out of the hero mood. I was sick. But I was too cowardly to admit my cowardice. I attended all the Expedition Meetings and nodded agreement to everything because I was too terrified to tell them how sick I was. And now suddenly the only honorable way to disengage was suicide. Take a sharp knife to the throat and draw it--but hell's bells! If I'm dying this weekend, why not on Bonanza instead of the knife?

I enjoyed the boatripe from Condemned Row up Lake Chelan and didn't mind staggering under tons of iron to frozen Holden Lake. The blizzard that pinned us in our tent an entire day was a blessed ^{experience} ~~experience~~. Having seen the mountain I realized my half a hundred summits were mere training hikes. Above the bergschrund Bonanza rose a full thousand feet of deep winter, a steep thousand feet of avalanche-fluted snow flecked with ice-glittering rocks. I was awakened in darkness by the familiar, dread crunch-crunch-crunch of Dick eating breakfast. The treacherous blizzard had abandoned me during the night. The crazy men rushed upward. At the glacier I pointed out the sun should now be rising, but wasn't. Dick answered by running away up the glacier, Andy in pursuit, Ray falling in behind and towing me swiftly along on the rope.

Dick slowed at the bergschrund but without pause continued around the end to the wall. I followed Andy. I punched my boots deep into the steps and

stubbed my toes on rock. There was not enough snow
 in this snowfield. This, I remembered, was the snow-
 field that carried the first ascent party down in
 an avalanche. I jammed my ax shaft in for an anchor
 and the spike clinked on rock. The reports from
 above were frightening. Dick yelled, this won't go!
 Andy led an alternate route and yelled, I don't
 like mine--are you sure you can't make yours go?
 Ray and I were out of it, we could only stand steady
 and smoke cigarettes.

no pp

→ Each step up on this unsure route meant one
 more step down. Somewhere above was the vertical
 flawless hundred foot wall. The sky was thick
 grey without a hint of sun.

The snow on the rocks thinned. Now we were not
 climbing on snow underlain by rock but on rocks covered
 with snow. Dick and Andy, out of sight, shouted
 terrifying messages back and forth. And where is the
 Hundred Foot Wall? Four thousand feet below grey fog
 seeped over Holden Lake and wiped out our camp.

We scrambled up a rotten staircase to the
 summit ridge, into the sky, into the wind. Then as I
 stemmed up an icy chimney in a rotten tower I heard a
 howl.

So, here is the catastrophe. Probably on the
 Wall. Someone dead. Doubtless we are all dead.
 The glacier is gone and the cbuds are climbing.

Westward a blackness swallows the entire huge mass of Glacier Peak.

I hoist my head out of the chimney, blinking fearfully, searching for the Wall and my dying friends. But there is no Wall. A dozen yards away the ridge crests in a mound of boulders, and on top of the heap Dick and Andy are capering and leaping and bellowing, BONANZA! Soon Ray and I are capering and leaping and bellowing, BONANZA!

The summit register told us we did not have a Second. The local miners were restless. We had only a Sixteenth. But it was BONANZA!

In whirls of cloud we tumbled down the rotten staircase and slithered down the snow-covered slabs. Day was dimming out, suggesting a dreadful bivouac above the bergschrund. We dared not trust the thin snowfield. We tied all our ropes together, anchored the line to pitons, and Dick started down.

Out of the twilight swept a blizzard. We three were alone, shivering on a ledge, and the rappel line dropped into a silent night. Suddenly, disaster! I was out of cigarettes. Ray's years of experience saved me. He generously shared his emergency pack. Again, disaster! Both Ray and I were out of matches. But Dick's voice came faintly through the wind and Andy gave us his emergency matches before starting down. We were all back at Holden Lake in no time.

Bonanza, a great peak climbed in winter conditions, proved us invincible. We Bramanis ravaged the ranges in June though winter attempt^d to avenge our November insults by raging on far beyond its assigned limits. Lundin and the Tooth and Big Four and the Brothers and Pinnacle and Castle were my share of the loot. Fourth of July Weekend on Snowfield and Colonial the North Cascade giants surrounding us made the very lugs on our Bramanis quiver.

The Bramani assault on Boston Peak next weekend might have succeeded despite the heavy rain had we not chosen the wrong fork in the trail and arrived in early evening at the Dorothy Mine rather than Cascade Pass. The annual Rainier duty-trip wasted another weekend. But in late July there we were in the Northern Pickets, remotest of remote, most legendary of all the legendary North Cascades. Whatcom Peak was a late afternoon stroll from Perfect Pass but our next summit deserved its name.

Dick proved himself a genuine copperplated hero leading the Challenger schrund. I so much admired his ^{lead} ~~rhythmic stepkicking on the snow-covered icewall above the gaping void immensity of the schrund~~ I was willing to let him lead the summit ^{tower} ~~peak~~ as well. However, Dick not only has an excellent appetite for breakfast but is very unselfish. Noticing me sulking on a ledge with my camera focussed he offered me the lead. The

surprise and shock impelled me halfway up the summit tower before I discovered I had brought a camera but no hardware. I lowered a rope to my Number Two, who lent his hammer and hardware. All the camera-clicking made me so self-conscious I pounded pitons in every crack I could find. When the pitons were all gone I scrambled up the rest of the rock, posed against the hard blue sky until the cameras stopped clicking and then blayed up my Number Two. The summit register on Challenger held few signatures, a bare ten names, most of them Mythological Creatures. Dared I place my name in this roster, I, a mere mortal?

The next day we climbed Luna, an easy insignificant peak, for an interval of rest between Challenger and our ^{best} major objective, Fury. I think Luna bewitched me. I do not remember Luna as a climb. I remember glissading from our 5500-foot camp on Challenger Arm, glissading from early dawn down into the 4000-foot grey night of Luna Cirque. I remember slipping and sliding across half a mile of glacial wreckage, plugging up snow and stumbling over talus 4500 vertical feet to the summit of Luna, photographing and photographing, then loose-legged skidding down 4500-feet, once more over the cirque (dear friends!) and 1500 hysterical feet to our heather beds on Challenger Arm. I remember sprawling in heather on a ledge a sleeping bag wide, looking down into Luna Cirque (a savage

place! as holy and enchanted as e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted by woman wailing for her demon lover!) I remember sunset flame on wisps of cloud beyond the dark wall, the glacier-gripped 4000-foot wall, the cold wall darkening, the unseen wall roaring in the night. It was just as well we awoke in a full blizzard the morning after Luna for I had no heart to adventure on the cold wall of Fury.

The Pickets emptied my reservoir of hercism. With Sir Donald only a few weeks away I wanted relaxation. Therefore several of us tired Bramanis decided to get Sloan out of the way. Sloan is fairly big, almost 8000, and wherever you go in the Cascades there is Sloan on the horizon. But everyone climbs Sloan. Sloan is an expedition for novices and apprentices. For Bramani Masters Sloan is a cup of tea on a lazy afternoon.

A late departure from Seattle brought us to high camp late and thus in the morning we started late. Late, but not too late for despicable old walkup Sloan. We stumbled lethargically upward.

Suddenly Sloan ambushed us with a rock wall. What a swindle! We did not come to this miserable Sloan for rock climbing. We fumbled and staggered, blaming the rocks for demanding use of our hands and minds. Twice despicable little walls forced us to use shoulder stands. It was humiliating to do shoulder stands on Sloan. Sloan is a cheat. George was so

despondent he sprained his ankle hiking down the trail and it was nearly midnight when we reached Darrington. We were so ashamed we sat drinking root beer and eating ice cream and hamburgers until the restaurant closed.

Because of that miserable Sloan I went to work Monday with two hours sleep and only survived by conditioned reflexes. A routine Monday after a Great Climb. A humiliating Monday with nothing to show for the weekend but Sloan. I fell dead after supper. All night still have been well if Abby had climbed Sloan but she had loitered in a meadow and slept most of the day,

Abby was restless Monday evening. Couldn't sleep. Had to answer the phone. She shook me and said it's Mike. Eyes closed, I leaned against the wall. Mike asked about Sloan and I said it was a mess, a pure and total mess. I asked about Index. I was interested in his Index attempt and had been looking forward to hearing about it Tuesday but out of politeness I had to ask now, though I was asleep. He depreciated the First Traverse of the three peaks of Index, making it seem a flower walk compared to my sufferings on Sloan. Dandy place to sleep just below the summit of the Middle Peak in a patch of ripe blueberries. Bits of trouble in the notches but on the whole a pleasant weekend, home early to bed Sunday.

What amazed Mike was the North Peak. North Peak rises almost a vertical mile above the Stevens Pass Highway. Everyone sees North Peak. Everyone talks about North Peak. Everyone respects North Peak. Everyone dreads North Peak. How many times has North Peak been climbed? Eight times!

Said Mike, North Peak is a Fraud. We didn't even rope on North Peak. Why rope? The rock climbing isn't exposed. The exposed climbing is in cedar trees. How can a person fall out of a cedar tree? Mike was so entertaining about the North Peak Fraud I had to chuckle even though I was asleep.

God shrivel her black soul, Abby pulled me again to the telephone. Dick was full of energy and frustration. As Climbing Chairman he had felt compelled to ^{help out on} ~~do~~ an Experience Climb. He wanted the full story of Sloan but I wanted to forget Sloan and swiftly passed to Mike's story of the North Peak Fraud ending with a laugh, we'll have to climb the North Peak sometime. Dick pounced, I've been trying to get up a party for North Peak for three years. When shall we go?

I attempted evasion by saying, oh, sometime, sometime soon.

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→ Dick pushed me into a corner, when? Said I, cowering, how about September? Said he, not enough daylight in September, how about next weekend? Said I, but Andy and Abby and I are leaving for Canada next weekend. Said Dick, when will you be back? Said I,

well, not until September. Said Dick, then it's next weekend or next year. Said I, that's about the size of it. Said he, with such a good long vacation in Canada two days less wouldn't make much difference would they? Said I, ~~no~~ it's a good long vacation okay. We talked a bit more but I was asleep.

Drinking my third cup of coffee next morning I remembered the preposterous conversation. I asked Fred if he wanted to climb North Peak and we had a big laugh. The phone was ringing as I entered the apartment that evening. Dick informed me Andy was not only willing to postpone the Canada trip but for two years had been gathering detailed information about the route.

I couldn't eat supper. All very well for Mike to laugh about North Peak, his strength is as the strength of ten. The Sixth on North Peak was done by three Bramanis. They weren't laughing. A year later and they were still raving and babbling.

How on earth did I get mixed up with the North Peak? I had never stood below North Peak drooling and gasping with passion. To me North Peak was a dirty, ugly, nasty mountain. Never, never, not for one moment, had I longed to climb North Peak. Everest, yes, but not North Peak, ~~that bally terrible, disgusting mountain.~~

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday--every evening
Dick called to discuss pitons and ropes and flash-
lights and canteens and first aid kits and emergency
supplies.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday--every evening
Andy called to discuss the Rotten Wall, the Over-
hanging Boulders, the Cedar Cliff, the Escapement
from the Bowl.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday--every day at
work I anxiously watched Fred for signs he was
coming to his senses. He was no help. He thought
it was a yawker.

Each day my viscera became tighter, colder.
Each night at the Coalsack the dread loosened but
each morning the trembles of the beer were added
to the dread, the cold tight trembling dread.
Saturday morning I felt close to death but luck
was against me.

The effort of holding the Jeep on the highway
prevented me from screaming. My companions were
too hysterical to notice my impending disintegration.
The steep trail to Lake Serene sweated out the beer.
It was a hell of a hot day. I drank gallons of water.
The talus above the lake dried up my blood. We
camped within armslength of the first rocks. I
ate a small snowfield and crawled into my bag, rolling
over to face the valley, avoiding the 2400 vertical

feet of horrid cliffs above. Sleep came easily, sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care, the death of each day's life. But almost instantly I awoke in a panic, remembering. Frantically I lit a match to see my watch. Six hours left of sleep, of life. Six long, wonderful hours of life, of sleep. I awoke in a panic--still five hours, an eternity. Again--but four hours is forever. Three hours, two hours. Then the watch said one hour, sixty long lovely minutes. It said twenty minutes, twelve hundred superb seconds of life, one thousand, five hundred, one hundred. . .

The clock ran out. Dick had been thrashing around in his sleeping bag crunch-crunch-crunching. Andy had been snapping carabiners and sharpening his fingernails on the rocks next to his bag. The darkness had paled barely enough to distinguish rock from sky but it was the agreed hour and they shot like bullets from their bags. Fred crawled from his bag. If I hadn't been so sick I'd have said, okay, wise guy, you still think North Peak is a yawker? Andy ran up the cliff into the cedar trees. Fred was yanked out of camp like a puppet on a string. Dick noticed me fumbling with the rope as if I'd never tied a bowline before and said, better eat! Said I, not hungry. In the predawn gloom he peered closely at my face. You okay?

Well, just fine. He leapt into the cedar trees and I was all alone in our quiet camp. Then the rope snapped tight and pulled me into the cedars.

I followed the rope. I had no choice. I had a hangover. I was sick. But I followed the rope. Dear God, is it real? Am I on North Peak? The rope squeezed my guts and made me sick but I had no choice. The rope moved too fast. There wasn't time to untie and run, run, run away to hide in a back booth at the Coalsack.

The rope went this way and then that way along broad ledges through a cedar forest. It stopped. Dick was sitting at the top of a big mass of scabby rock. It wasn't ~~v~~steep rock, but dirty rock, rotten, weary, stale, flat and unprofitable rock.

I crept up to Dick and he frowned, you okay? Just well, fine, okay. The rope ran away and I was alone again gasping and clutching in a nonsensical heap of huge boulders. The rope stopped. It hung down loosely from a forest of cedar trees growing sideways on a vertical cliff. Muffled by the thicket, you okay? Belay on! I stepped up onto a cedar tree and clutched a cedar overhead and pushed with my feet and pulled with my arms. One limber cedar sank under my feet and the other sagged down with my weight. I chinned on a cedar tree shouldering other cedar trees aside and butting other cedar trees with my head. Chin

on a cedar tree and throw an arm over and then hang by armpits and grunt and wheeze a leg over and hug the cedar tree spitting cedar from my teeth and blinking cedar from my eyes. Then like a daring young man on a flying cedar tree, onto your feet men, and once more into the breach dear friends, for England and SAINT JAWJ! Once more, dear friends, and then once more, and then my groping hand clutches a thing which is not a cedar tree, and I blink the cedar and sweat away and find I am climbing up Dick's boot and he cries, almost in the Bowl! Two hours ahead of schedule! Doing great!

Canteen trembles to cracked lips. One swallow. Just one swallow for there is no water on North Peak and this sure as hell must be the hottest day since Hiroshima. Two large canteens in my rucksack but it is scarcely dawn and already the scorched air blisters my lungs. Nearly a vertical mile below the Skykomish River roars in its haste to dump water in Puget Sound which is already full of water. The injustice of it all, the Skykomish full of water and Puget Sound full of water and no water at all on North Peak. Very bad planning somewhere. A delightful wet roar! Marvelous day for a picnic by the river, drinking water, dabbling toes in water, watching water bang back and forth in the wet boulders. Said Dick, off we go!

The rope runs away. I have no idea where the rope is going. I followed the rope. As bottom man on the bottom team I am at the mercy of Malignant Deceivers. It's up the rope I go, up I go. Andy and Fred may be dead or dying someplace above or they may be already on the summit. Their fate has nothing to do with mine unless it turns out they are the Deceivers. This nervous rope, this blasting sun, these are my fate, my damnation.

The rope stopped and Dick said, here we are in the Bowl! For the first time since my sleeping bag I knew where I was. The Bowl, cirque of a vanished hanging glacier, is the most prominent landmark on the North Peak. And the Bowl is way hell and gone high on North Peak. All week Andy described the key pitches and the Escapement is the last of them. The Bowl was a snap, even a yawker. It was amusing to watch Dick step delicately up steep grass, traverse a log and then straddle a clump of heather and cry, belay on! It was amusing because the trap was so exposed that if a person fell he might easily splash right into the Skykomish. We were well into the sky and far ahead of schedule. I was thirsty but the hangover was sweated out. Mike was right. North Peak is a hoax. North Peak is a genuine first class copperplated yawker.

Near the top of the Bowl we caught up with Andy and Fred on a broad flat buttress of dirt. I swaggered

around the flat dirt laughing for the first time in days. But nobody else was laughing. Andy was pacing in the dirt, now and then jumping at the cliff, skidding back to the buttress yelling obscene words and phrases. Fred was sprawled in the dirt, glum. Dick rummaged in his food bag and cried, almost out of the Bowl! Beautiful morning! Time for breakfast!

I stopped laughing and sagged into the dirt and lit my first cigarette since the sleeping bag. Andy frightened me, the way he curse@ this rounded, rotten wall, this criminal wall where every depression that would be a bucket on an honest peak is stuffed up with dirt, fertile dirt busy growing grass and weeds. Fred frightened me, the way he sprawled in the dirt ignoring the rope that connected him to Andy, ignoring me, mad at somebody or something. Dick nauseated me with his crunch-crunch-crunch. How can any person be so hungry in the mountains?

Andy skidded into the dirt and shrieked, there isn't a good way! If the route goes at all it has to be in pure damn trash!

Madder than hell he crept up through the trash, crumbling off a steady dust storm of dirt and weeds and dead twigs in his wake, climbing up always just a little bit faster than the trash was falling down. The cursing cloud of dust and trash moved around a

corner. Between crunches Dick expressed his confidence that around the corner were great solid chunks of honest mountain. But sand and dirt and twigs and clumps of grass and an occasional small log continued to tumble around the corner.

Fred was still sprawled in the dirt staring at the Skykomish, not bothering to belay. Suddenly he yelled, six feet! The dust stopped, and a distant voice trembled, did you say six? Six! The dust resumed. Fred, forced to stand up, snarls loud, that's it! Andy has the full hundred feet of rope and is still making a cloud. Cries, Andy, no cracks in rock! No goddamn rock! Huckleberry bush though! Looks solid! Can anchor to huckleberry bush! Can you come up?

Fred mumbled something but I was busy lighting another cigarette and didn't hear what. Fred is always calm, everything is always a yawker. He looked unhappy as hell clutching and gouging up the wall of dirt and grass. Dick maintained a steady crunch-crunch-crunch watching the grumbling rise of the second cloud. I burned cigarettes.

Dick and I were straining our eyes into the dust cloud watching for descending fragments of friends when suddenly Andy's head poked out of the cloud. Cried he, this isn't very good! Okay but really, if you, I mean, that is, not bad but, look, why don't

you try something else? He withdrew into the cloud and all we heard, we on the dirt buttress, were curses and screams.

Dick stopped crunching and sprang to his feet. There was another possible route. Andy and Fred had climbed left from the dirt buttress into trash. To the right a pillar leaned against the wall. If the chimney between the pillar and the wall could be climbed possibly the wall above the pillar could be climbed. I resigned myself to following the rope into new horrors.

But Dick said, I've done all our leads. How about you taking one?

As on Challenger unselfish Dick fears I'll pout if he hogs all the glory. No point in pretending I don't want the lead. Dick is too damn generous. I must attempt the lead. I will fail but at least Dick will feel he has done the right thing.

In the distance Dick was crying, good! bravo! very good! He was forty feet below my Bramanis. How did he get down there? How did I get forty feet up here? In future I must remember to do all my rock climbing unconscious. It was a very decent little chimney. And I must be a very decent climber to earn a bravo! from Dick. I strutted up the remainder of my little chimney and was sorry when it ended. I stepped out on top of the leaning

pillar quite satisfied with myself and modestly acknowledged Dick's applause. I wasn't tired or thirsty in the least.

It was not a large pillar, barely a foot square, but in excellent taste. The skyside nourished an admirable cedar. No huge gross tree, this, but a polite shrub that unobtrusively screened me from the gulf of atmosphere without seeming to insult my courage. I patted its tidy branches.

Full of pride in my chimney lead I firmed my jaw upward to the final fifteen feet of wall topped by a delightful cedar forest. Hearing a renewal of curses and angry screams I glanced off to the left and chuckled at the fury of the dust cloud.

The fifteen-foot cliff was steep, virtually an overhang, but broken into a kindergarten playground of buckets and doorknobs. Smoothly I climbed two feet up the cliff and paused. With so many holds the choice was difficult. This one? No, it looks like a hold but (chuckle!) actually it's upside down. The North Peak insists on its little joke. That one? Well done, North Peak! I'd have sworn that was a hold but (yawk!) it's upside down. This? That? Here? There? What a yawker! All the holds are upside down. Very good, North Peak! Very very good! I was taken in completely. I thought you'd turned honest. Well

then, back to climbing cedars.

I reached up to the forest, I strained on tiptoes, I stretched my fingers, but the lowest drooping cedar branch was beyond my grasp, just beyond my grasp. I retreated to the pillar and breathed in, breathed out. I mounted the cliff again, and this time threw my shoulder out of joint and gained two inches, and whipped my wrist and gained a bit more, and then I gathered at the knees and cried, once more into the breach dear friends, for England and Saint JAWJ! I leapt. A modest leap, a careful leap. My fingertips flicked cedar, I clutched, and then arms and knees and chest were skidding down the wall.

Back on the pillar I breathed in, breathed out, breathed in, breathed out. Cried Dick, alarmed, what's the trouble? Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale, Cried Dick, impatient, what's the trouble? Cried I, no goddamn trouble, goddam~~x~~it, the goddamn thing just won't go!

Dick was irritated. From his belay he saw the playground of buckets and doorknobs, he saw me dabbling fingers in the cedars. Cried he, bring me up~~x~~! He scrambled up the chimney and went muttering by my stance and marched two feet up the cliff. He paused. He tried this hold and that one, ^{looked} here, looked there. He strained on tiptoes and stretched his

fingers. He retreated to the pillar and apologetically giggled, well this is what shoulder stands are for, wouldn't you say?

I faced the wall, embraced rock with shoulders, arms, fingers and forehead, braced my Bramanis on the pillar. Dick clutched my head and stepped onto my knee. I wavered. He put his left boot on my left shoulder. He let go of my head and his full weight came on my left shoulder. I sagged to the left. His right boot runched into my right shoulder and I sagged to the right. I teetered left, tottered right. Dick grunted up on tiptoes, bracing his Bramanis against my ears. He gasped, ^ahold! ~~Hold!~~ Almost got it! He tottered on my shoulders. I teetered on the pillar. He teetered on my shoulders. I tottered on the pillar.

Come right down to it, that is a damn small cedar on the pillar. If Dick falls he will do a backflip right over the top of the cedar. We are tied together. Even if I embrace the cedar how the hell can that tasteful little cedar stop Dick after a hundred feet of free fall? Even if it does what about me? The rope will slice me into two neat pieces. Shall I follow Dick down into the Skykomish River, a whole man? Or shall I stay with the cedar and divide into two neat halves?

Dick tottered, gasping, plucking cedar branches from the forest and dropping them in my face. I teetered, groaning. He tottered gasping, I teetered groaning. Then for a change he teetered and groaned and I tottered and gasped. He retreated down my body to the pillar.

Fortunately neither of us had bad breath. With just me and the cedar the pillar had been comfortable. There was a crowd. Dick breathed in, breathed out. Cried I, shall we dance?

We discussed our predicament. We can always iron in a route. Yes but the cracks are so rotten the pitch would take an hour. Retreat and follow the Dust Cloud? Probably should. But where in hell is the Dust Cloud? Damn their black souls, they're up! Yodelling, for Chrissake! That's too much! Easy for them to drop us a rope from the cedars. Hate to give the bastards the satisfaction. Right! Still, we've lost so much time, how are we on the schedule? Christ, we're behind, way behind! That does it then, give up the iron and pride and call for a rope.

We hollered desperately. An understanding holler answered. Excellent! One of them is now walking down to us with a rope. Dick filled his mouth and crunch-crunched. I lit a cigarette.

Where in hell is that holler? Why doesn't it drop a rope like it promised?

We hollered accusingly. A conciliatory holler answered.

All right then. Now they'll put on speed. More crunching. Another cigarette.

Well, for Chrissake, where is the rope?

It was crowded on the pillar. Dick and I were great friends but basically he did not approve of cigarettes and basically I did not approve of crunching. Then there was this damn cedar tree.

After an hour on the pillar Dick and I abandoned polite hollering. We cracked wide open. We shrieked, we groaned, we howled, we moaned, we gasped, we damned Andy and Fred to Hell, we prayed that devils might eternally devour their entrails.

We were gibbering, all three of us were gibbering, Dick, me, and the cedar, when a Smile materialized in the forest. Murmured the Smile, what's keeping you guys? The Smile froze watching we three maniacs dancing on the pillar. The Smile dropped a rope and Dick and I scampered up. The cedar was pooped and stayed on the pillar.

Fred explained as we hiked to the Notch that he and Andy thought our hollers were cheerful announcements of good progress. Everytime they heard our happy hollers they hollered happily back, good going, guys!

I crawled the last few yards of grass and heather to the Notch. An hour hollering on the pillar brought back my hangover. As I nudged my nose over the skyline Andy jumped up wailing, we're behind schedule! Andy soared up the dinosaur-spine cleaving the cauldron of sky into two equal parts and Fred swooped^{ff} in a following scowl.

Flat on my back I lifted my canteen. Steam hissed from my mouth. Cried Dick, is that your first canteen? I hissed, second! He knocked it from my mouth. I lit a cigarette. Said he, that won't help. Said I, it doesn't matter, doesn't matter to Alaric or Beowulf or Vercingetorix or Sitting Bull, this is the end, I am pooped, I am through. If I go up anymore I will collapse on the way down. You know, Dick, you know it, you are one of us, or that is, I am one of you, or anyway, we are all Climbing Committee, right? You and me, we got to climb safe. White Man's Burden and that rot. Right? Code of the West, etcetera. Right?

Dick took it very hard but very well. He said, right! Very right! He crunched around in his foodbag, between crunches spitting out, better safe than sorry, summit always there another day, anyway we have~~x~~a good view, at least we know the route now, only a very few have been here, ever, we can always come

back another day, intelligent thing is to wait here.

I hadn't even strength to smoke the cigarette. My body was destroyed. My body had performed miracles but was now destroyed. From within the wreckage I gazed into the immense sky, not blue, not true blue, a milky sky, skimmed milk, bluish, but not hard blue. There was a time when the destruction of my flesh amid so immense a sky would have allowed escape to Adonais.

But the world it is the old world yet, I am I, completely wrecked. Those bastards down below they say Sam we told you so goddamn their eyes.

Poor Dick. He was trying hard. Great view, better safe than sorry, we can always come back next year, at least we know the route now. Dick was awfully brave but when the crunch-crunch-crunch slowed to a crunch-crunch, and a crunch, and then to a muffled munch-munch, munch, munch, I thought my heart would break.

A moment of silence. Dick murmurs, sure close to the top! Silence. Then, hesitantly, care for some raisins?

I rise to my feet, I totter in the Notch with sky to the right of me, sky to the left of me, sky in front of me, volleying and thundering, and boldly I cry, Excelsior!

~~A man-ape seeing the sun emerge from a total eclipse could not fling so passionately from despair~~

(9) ~~to ecstasy.~~ (9) Before the last echoes of crunch-crunch-CRUNCH*CRUNCH died away Dick was atop the dinosaur-spine crying, BELAY ON!

Observing Dick's delight I felt Christian to my toes. ~~A good man I, a doer of good deeds, protected by Heaven, safe from harm.~~ Comfortable as in a good dream I flowed effortlessly from the Notch up the dinosaur-spine to the knifeblade of the ridge, observing with detachment the pleasure my hands and feet were finding.

What splendid rock! The best on the mountain. Solid, virtuous rock. Hard, sensual rock. Who would expect to find, in a Home for Over-Aged Whores, the breasts of Nefertiti?

Once more, dear friends, we walk on tippy-toes along the sharpened blade of the knife, teeter-tottering through sky with sky to the left, sky to the right, sky below, sky above, sky all around, volleying and thundering.

I am entirely in sky but for Bramanis alternately touching this razor-edge of sky-washed rock. The clean blade dives left and right down into sky, vanishes into lower skies, the two great lower skies arching up into the vaulting upper sky, all the skies joined in the one sky that remains while the

many skies change and pass.

My flesh is connected to earth only by Bramanis touching the blade of the knife, touching down lightly, and only one at a time, and bouncing quickly away. I am alone on the blade of the knife cleaving open the sky, my flesh is destroyed and vanished, I am moving unafraid into a miracle.

Well, if it isn't one damn thing it's another and this time it's crunch-crunch-crunch and we trudge-trudge-trudge on heather ledges to a heather plateau where Andy is capering in maniac glee waving a calico flag lettered on one side, NORDGIPFEL! on the other, BECAUSE IT IS THERE! Fred is leaping about with the familiar storm-faded Strange Device, our tattered banner that proclaims BRAMANIS UBER ALLES! TO REST IS NOT TO CONQUER! I faint, I die, I fail, my nose smashes through heather into dirt.

It is the rope, the rope, it is always the rope that rips me untimely from the womb! Out, out, brief rope! Out damned rope! Leave me a moment gentlemen prithee, leave me on North Peak for I should die ~~where~~ thereafter.

The sun melts amid the red western devils grinning and chuckling in their furnace. This is the Notch. Up Number One canteen. Number One

canteen ready. Fire one! One drop sizzles on my lips. Up Number Two canteen. Number Two canteen ready. Fire Two! Two drops sizzle. Mouth is still smoking, throat still flaming. The Notch! The Notch! There was a time when the Notch was our last full measure of ambition. We are at the Notch. We should have come here before thereafter.

Andy and Dick are moving fast. Not surprising. Andy and Dick have ambition. But Fred is moving fast. That's a scary thing. Only time I ever saw Fred move fast was on Big Four when that ice-boulder cartwheeled out of the slide-gutter and chased him sideways across the snow like it had a personal grudge. Fred climbs for yawks. He is moving fast and not smiling. Maybe we are all dead.

Interesting but not surprising. Like Russian novels in the end everybody dies.

Pretty sad about Russia and the other guys but I died already there on the knifeblade with sky to the right of me and sky to the left of me and the one sky above me remaining there volleying and thundering.

We slither down a rope onto my private pillar. I caress my Cedar, there there Cedar, our pillar is at least as good as the summit. You'll never miss it. Farewell, noble Cedar, and thanks for everything. From my Cedar down the rope we go, down we go, down

my decent little chimney to the dirt buttress.

We rope off the dirt buttress into the Bowl.

I'm dreaming away down the Bowl and in the house across the street the neighbors are up late, funny old Andy screaming obscenities and comical Fred mumbling in his beard and Dick crunch-crunch-crunching like crazy.

Brought to the base of the Bowl I flop amid flourishing flowers and buttress Bramanis on bulging green grass. Nicotine nourishing nostrils I hear the wet roar of the river. I hear the wet roar of the Skykomish River. It is night on the Skykomish River. By the river move lights of a train, lights of the Northern Pacific, lights by the shore of the river. Blessed are thee in the club car, blessed are thee drinking water, now and then seeing the river beside thee, happy and safe and unthirsting forever are thee blessed souls in the club car. Did you ever just once, in the club car, think there is in the world True Danger? Danger, Despair, and Death? Can you possibly grasp that just one mile above you four climbers are fighting for life? Fighting for life in the Bowl, dying of thirst in the Bowl, fighting in the night of the sky that remains in the Bowl of the North Peak (the Dark Bowl of ~~the~~ North Peak) the Dark Bowl to which Childe Marlowe did come,

the Dark Bowl because it was there...

I'm ~~no~~ the rope. I'm crawling up grass. Dick is yelling. I must have fallen down. Can't tell him. Try but throat closes. Canteen. We fight for it. He wins. Anyway can tell him now.

Okay ~~Dick~~. Okay but done up. Can't keep eyes open now in dark. Got to keep me on belay even resting. Mostly resting. Going to sleep. Can't help. Sorry but on belay you don't mind.

Say I, Chrissake Fred cut out the punching!
Too early get up!

He says, duffersitz time old man duffersitz time again old man.

~~Say I, okay okay duffershits. Where-a-hell Dick?~~

~~He flashes light and up there is good ol' Dick on belay.~~

~~Yell I, hi ol' buddy Dick! Where-a-hell Andy?~~

~~Fred flashes light and down there good ol' cedar trees whip around crazy where good ol' Andy keeps busy obscening good ol' world.~~

~~Mumble I, here we go duffershitsing month-a-May-month-a-May!~~

~~Say I, what-a-hell you doing buddy? Where your goddam rope? Can't duffershits no rope. You climbing down no rope? What-a-you? Hero?~~

Says Fred, stop rappelling there isn't any more rope. Go back to sleep till Dick gets here.

I awake curled up in just the softest and snuggliest pile of rock and stretch and yawn. There's a quiet yawk-yawk here and a steady crunch-crunch there and a grumble-grumble-grumble all around. There's a warm night here, a wet roar below, a warm night there, a wet roar all around, a black night all around.

Nobody has to tell me. I know where we are. Someplace below the Bowl and above the Bags. Andy is furiously murmuring obscenities into the cedar forest. Dick crunch-crunch-crunches, murmuring, keep up strength, we're okay, don't lose our heads,

~~Fred is silent.~~

I poke my nose over the edge of the ledge and look straight down into moon-sparkle on Lake Serene.

Moon-sparkle on wet-water close-under.

Marlowe should have died before this hereafter. Marlowe should have died while tippy-toeing on the razor, teeter-tottering amid the one sky that remains.

I did not follow the star to where the eternal are. My friends have saved my life this far down the rope, down the rope. I am now far too feeble to die.

Too feeble to die surrounded by such good friends.

But then Dick says, you okay? Ready to go down?

I mingle in moon-sparkle of Lake Serene,
 wet lake of life, far below, far below. Suddenly
 a vision!

Rattle dust from throat, rise on elbows, rasp
 out, Dick, easy to die now!

Only time I've ever heard Dick screech. He
 screams, don't say that! Don't say that! Don't
 think that! We're okay! Don't even think that!
 We're going to be okay!

So down the rope I go, down I go.

I don't fall asleep. Fred is putting my feet
 in holds and Andy is finding the route but I'm
 busy yelling up at Dick who is holding my rope.
 But my throat is closing up so I tell Fred,
 Dick got me wrong. I didn't want to die. Not
 really. But when I saw the moon on Lake Serene
 I understood how sometimes its's easier to die.
 Sometimes Life is such a hell of an effort and
 death is just going to sleep. Too much trouble
 feeling with ropes and holds and trying to breathe
 and so soft and easy to go to sleep. Nothing
 bad can happen when you're asleep. I didn't mean
 I wanted to die I just saw ~~how~~^{how} sometimes death
 isn't frightening it's easy. . .

Next afternoon at the apartment door I greeted
 Abby, the North Peak is out of the way, let's go
 to Sir Donald.

Said Abby, I don't want to go to Sir Donald. That's too long a walk on railroad tracks.

Releasing her from fond embrace I said, excuse me, love, but as I recall we were planning to ride a train to Sir Donald, right? Says she, if there weren't any trains running how would you get to Sir Donald--walking railroad tracks, right?

I cried, into the phone, what is the meaning of this? What are you people doing up there in Canada? We've been planning since winter. When are you coming to your senses?

Said the agent, awfully sorry to inconvenience you, sir. We'll do our very best, sir. They are conversing today in Ottawa. Could you possibly ring us up on Thursday, sir? Doubtless we can serve you on Thursday, sir.

Thursday we were assured service would resume Friday. Friday we were told the negotiators were slightly estranged, a fist fight or something, and had adjourned over the weekend.

It was a gloomy gathering that afternoon, Amy and Abby and I cussing the Canadian coolies and capitalists, ~~cussing the damn~~ for not providing a highway into the Selkirks. The months of planning were all for naught, Sir Donald was lost, our great adventure into foreign mountains scuttled by Canadian coolies and capitalists. The cussing

heated us from gloom into anger. Coolies and capitalists defeat the Bramani Summer Outing? Gook coolies and capitalists? Contumely not to be borne! Fie on Canada, it's an unweeded garden that grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature possess it merely! Confound their politics! Frustrate their knavish tricks! Let us take arms against this sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them! At our supper we had pa

That afternoon we crossed the Cascades and the Columbia Plateau, shuffling maps and guide books back and forth. We knew the Selkirks by heart, each river and glacier and summit, but all other Canadian mountains were a mystery. Someplace in Idaho by the side of the highway we cooked supper on a mountain stove. It was a supper we had packaged weeks before, happily labelling it "Base Camp Supper: Rice and Tuna." Eating mountain food on a highway shoulder in Idaho put us in a villainous mood. We almost had an incident at the border^{when} The neat little Empire-Guard asked if our intentions toward Canada were honorable^{and} Abby giggled out something about just popping in for the weekend to pick up a pound of opium and several Chinese bandits. ~~Andy was subvocalizing his opinion we should annex the bastards.~~

At midnight, ~~somewhere in Canada~~, we pulled off the road and sacked out under the prairie moon. Things were howling on the prairies. Abby hoped they were coyotes but Andy was certain they were Mounties.

Saturday was weird. None of us had ever before been abroad. We knew in advance, of course, every-thing would be inferior, though interesting. We were resolved to be circumspect. When the natives cheated us we'd smile and thank them and say, Jesus Christ Bless You! Canada is said to be a Christian Nation.

no ff

We stopped for gas. It was a dubious brand but the Jeep would just have to do its best. The price of the gasoline broke my composure. The native attendant informed me in an insolent Oxford accent that the Imperial Gallon is larger than the niggardly ^(Colonial) little American Gallon. The money he gave me in change was suspicious stuff. Not that I expected to see pictures of presidents. I knew all about this monarchy crap they have in Canada. But French is

a strange language to find on money. ^{Except maybe in} ~~Outside of~~ France, ~~at least.~~ ^{this funny money} It was ~~funny money~~ all the way around. Maybe ~~it~~ ^{took it seriously.} would work in a game of Monopoly but surely nobody was really fooled ~~by it.~~ But the Canadians apparently ~~didn't know the difference.~~ ^{humor the poor guys} They thought it was real money. So we decided to ~~play along with~~

~~the~~ and pretend we thought it was money. But we resolved to get rid of all the queer in Canada for it could never fool anyone in the United States.

We ordered strawberry milkshakes for lunch.

The waitress ~~placed~~ three glasses ~~on the counter~~ ~~and~~ filled ~~them~~ with milk. We ^{said,} ~~were all three getting~~ ~~ready to say,~~ miss, we ordered milkshakes. She ~~smiled and nodded~~ ~~and~~ poured strawberry syrup into each of ^{the} ~~our~~ glasses, stirred each with a spoon, and walked away. Our three mouths were all open, ~~ready to speak,~~ but we were stunned by these ~~these~~ Gook Strawberry Milkshakes! We were so stunned we gagged the slop down, fearing that if we demanded ice cream the Mounties would throw us all in jail.

The ~~strange~~ gallons and ~~funny~~ money and ~~medieval~~ milkshakes unsettled our reason. We didn't know what to do. We drove by a sign that said, Mount Eisenhower. We looked all over for someplace to complain because our maps said there should be a Castle Mountain here. There was nobody in sight except several American families watching their autos sinking into the highway. We offered help but they begged us to go on if we could. I hope they somehow made it back to the States. Their sacrifice required us to conquer. But We were too rattled to choose an intelligent field of battle.

~~Outside the Selkirk only a dozen or so place names~~ ~~meant anything to us.~~ A road sign said, Lake Louise

that way. We knew there were mountains above Lake Louise.

The route to the peaks begins on the Lakeside path skirting the gardens and lawns of the Penitentiary described in tourist literature as the Lake Louise Chateau. All along the path are benches. On the benches are dummies that look exactly like elderly English majors and their ladies. The caricatures are incredibly realistic. The walking sticks and tweeds and mustaches and eyebrows and Anglo-Saxon imperturbability are just perfect.

The dummies are so realistic we felt self-conscious. When we dirty Americans straggled by in our ragged mountain clothes, dragging our axes in the gravel, elderly English moustaches seemed to quiver, the elderly English noses seemed to sniff incredulously. I could have sworn I heard one of the tweeds mutter something about posting a letter to the Times. I call that realism.

Above Lake Louise the route is grim. Horses up the trail, horses down the trail. To we Americans it seemed the Empire might have provided equine sanitary facilities. If not w.c.'s then at the least off-trail places of convenience. ~~These fellows with shovels are courteously plucking at their forelocks, but they don't throw the horse shit very far. The tweed dummies on the horses don't mind. Were they genuine live~~

~~English they wouldn't mind. English majors and their ladies smell like horses. It's a class symbol. If they are too poor to actually own horses they buy horse perfume imported from France.~~

Gasping up the trail we agreed 54-40-or-Fight was too timid a cry. A shame we fought on the wrong side in those World Wars. America should now rectify the error. Take our boys out of Korea. ~~They're losing~~ and anyway Nobody cares about Korea. ~~We can't beat China but Canada is a cinch. We can whip Canada easy. What as a pacification effort. Relinquish the Gooks ~~to~~ are left will then we'll make~~ ship to Australia and ~~maintain~~ ^{small} Canada as a National Park. Canada would be a ~~fine~~ National Park but as a nation it's a failure. They make their gallons too big and their milkshakes without ice cream and the entire currency is counterfeit.

We stalked by the Plain-of-Six-Glaciers Tea Hut casting sidelong contempt for the ~~tweed~~ dummies on the porch. In twilight we threw down our packs and scouted for a campsite in the pleasant little bench of meadow among delightful streams winding through the grass. We are home in the mountains, high in clean mountains. But there is an odor. We squint, we peer, we stare. Every soft field of grass that seems from a distance suitable for sleeping turns out on close look not to be grass, not to be suitable for sleeping, but just a soft pile of horse shit. Every delightful stream of cold delicious water we find turns out on

second look to be filled with seeming-boulders that squish underfoot, releasing the Canadian aroma. We wander carefully through horse shit in the twilight. We decide to save the expense of relocating the Gooks in Australia. We'll draft them all into slave labor gangs and work them to death cleaning up our National Park.

The only clean ground was by the steps of the Tea Hut. We fired our primus and cooked our gruel and stuffed it down with shocking bad table manners. It was eery--in the dusk one could not be sure-- but were those rocking chairs moving? The wind, it must be the wind. But when we rolled out our sleeping bags on the ground there was a commotion on the porch.

It was a spooky, oddly humanoid voice, you won't sleep out, surely!

Whatever it was up there on the dark porch, we assured it we feared not the frost, the prowling beasts, the naked night sky.

The darkness on the porch was a turmoil of exclamations, can't sit idly by and allow this, Americans to be sure but in God's image, after all, White Man's Burden.

Begging your worships' pardon we think we can stick it. Not a question of can, question of should! Indian niggers got by without Bibles and postal service.

Obscene chaps, thank God Kipling put them straight, mail goes through now and missionaries are doing a good business.

Begging your highnesses' forgiveness, we thank your lordships but it's a matter of as how we don't have the money, if it please your majesties.

The porch was gasping and choking, can't let the savages perish outside our very bedroom windows, must apply to Missionary Relief Society, must get up a fund, form a Committee, ask Questions in the House. However, it was time for the servants to carry the dummies within. The Servants, to calm the quivering tweed, gave us permission to sleep under the protection of the Empire. When all the Tea Hut was silent we crept into the Hut and spread our bags on the rug by the fireplace.

The dawn sky was ominously dark, swift, and low but we hurried out onto the ice. No horses had been on the ice, it was as clean and cold as American ice. We gained courage on the ice and climbed bravely up the slot between steep cliffs of horrid Gook rock, under menacing cliffs of hanging Gook glaciers, under a swift, dark Gook sky. Onward and upward, carrying the banner with the strange device, BRAMANIS UBER ALLES, on to Abbot Pass!

A blizzard swept down from Abbot Pass, a blizzard swept up from the Plain of Six Glaciers. Abby began to

weaken. She yearned for our Homeland. She was convinced Ottawa had a finger in this. Perhaps even Downing Street. Andy and I wouldn't listen so she stepped in a crevasse. She knew her arguments were irrational and therefore did not fall to the bottom but stuck near the top. We hauled her out and I cuffed her around a little.

Lightning shocks away the night. Andy shrieks, the Mounties! Thunder trapped in a slot rebounds back and forth between Gook cliffs. Rocks rattling somewhere above. A long hiss, a muffled boom, the glacier shakes underfoot. Abby will not go on without the rope. Dammit Abby, the rope'll get wet! Abby sits down on the glacier in the blizzard. So we rope and the rope gets wet because of Abby. We are all getting wet but that isn't Abby's fault, that's the Gooks in London and Ottawa, in the Tea Hut, in the Penitentiary, in the Restaurant with the milkshakes without ice cream, in the gas stations with the gallons that are too big, in the banks that stack Monopoly Money in their vaults without so much as a chuckle.

By the clock it was early morning but by the lightning glare and the thunder shudder and the white drive of wind there was no time. We were at Abbot Pass. There was no blizzard inside the Hut but we were soaked and frozen. The gloom of the Hut was like the grave. We crawled into bunks under mounds of Hudson Bay Blankets so heavy we could

scarcely breathe. By the clock it was suppertime. We crawled out, fired up the primus, swallowed our gruel and burrowed back into our Hudson Bay Blankets.

Sunlight squeezed through a tiny window and squirmed into the Hudson Bay Blankets. It was a bright sun, someplace it was a warm sun. In our clammy tomb it was a cold sun. But it was sun. A Canadian sun but still a sun. It is immoral to sleep in the sun. Climbers climb with the sun. We burrowed deeper into Hudson Bay Blankets to escape the sun, our guilt.

But it is terribly difficult to sleep after twenty hours in the sack. Also there was the duty to make Canada safe for Americans. Andy and I, sustained in our agony by our will to Uphold the American Way, pulled down from the rafters our icicle-dripping clothing, encased our flesh in frozen armor, flung open the door of Abbot Hut, and braved the Gook Morning.

Screaming Jefferson and Liberty! we charged the Gook Mountain. The Gook Sun encouraged us up the short steps of Gook rock and long slopes of Gook rubble. Our squirrel guns halted the Thin Red Line, we dervishes broke the Hollow Square, we heathens will have King George for supper with the Governor-General and Kipling for sauce.

We reckoned without the steady application of moderate strength that characterizes the Establishment.

The mountain was a poor sort of thing, messy little steps of slobbery rock, heaps of rubble. It had no honest right to be so steep. In America a mountain like this would fall down in pure shame.

The Establishment glazed the short steps with verglas. Miserable ten-foot steps that should have been instantaneous scrambles were long agonies of upward slithering. The rubble-heaps that should have been hikes were glazed with verglas, and over the verglas were inches of powder snow.

We Colonials burst through to the South Peak of Victoria and stood at attention singing The Star Spangled Banner. But the Establishment had been toying with us. On the snow arrete to the Main Peak we confessed ourselves too few, too weak, too young. We turned back. Victoria is a mountain the Gooks climb lefthanded, backwards, eyes closed. America will be a long time growing strong enough to conquer the Empire. Sadly, from the South Peak, we looked west over the Columbia Trench to the Selkirks. There was Sir Donald, our beloved, yet even if the Gook coolies and capitalists had not conflicted how could we have dared Sir Donald when the cheap tricks of Victoria were enough to prove our alpine skills mere savagery?

The Gooks are big people. Gook mountains are too big for Americans. We drove north from Lake Louise sneaking melancholy glances up to the Gook Mountains, the huge impossible mountains the Gooks climb regularly, these Titan Gooks. We tried to look like tourists in case any Gook climbers were around.

We parked the Jeep amid moraines by the Columbia Icefield. We crept into an obscure alley between two moraines and slept quietly in the boulders. At dawn Abby volunteered to guard the base against foraging Gooks. Andy and I snuck up the glacier, up a snow cliff on a handy angling ledge, of snow, over a snow plateau along a snow ridge to the summit of Athabaska. We had climbed a Gook Mountain. A ten-or-eleven-or-twelve-thousander, or something like that. But everyone climbs Athabaska. We climbed Athabaska in a trench dug by several hundred people from Iowa. It was a humiliating experience.

We drove south from the Columbia Icefield. We agreed Gook Mountains are large, we grant they are large, but they have no style. To be great a mountain must have more than size. It must have style. These Gook Hills are big and strong but very crude. Our North Cascades are smaller but they have style.

We drove south criticizing Gook Peaks. Our

North Cascades are polite yawkers. Gook Mountains are gross belches. We drove rapidly over Kicking Horse Pass, hoping to salvage our vacation with a Labor Day Weekend in the North Cascades. My eyes were on the highway, the typical Gook highway with its cleverly concealed entrapments of crankcase-shattering boulders and hubcap-swallowing muck.

Cried Andy, damn it, that is a live locomotive!
 Said Abby, ~~the Gooks get up this show to tantalize us.~~ Don't you see? ~~It's all a fraud.~~ There never was a strike. Except against us. ~~Now we drive by and~~ They know our vacation is over so they blow steam from a locomotive. They are trying to make us think we are insane. Let's go home.

We were sick of Canada. Canada was sick of us. But Andy was nagged by that live locomotive. Said he, it's a trick, one more of their filthy tricks, but only by exposing their tricks can we make a case to the State Department. Therefore we marched up to the ticket window in Golden and cried, when are you swindlers sending a train to Glacier? The black-uniformed Englishman twitched his moustache and mumbled, next train to Glacier? Thirty-four minutes. Wish a ticket?

The bastard was pretending there had never been a plot against our reason. But we were onto that game. We forced his hand, crying, three tickets,

roundtrip.

We walked all the way from Golden to Glacier, from one end of the train to the other and back again, looking out the windows for mountains. The higher the train climbed the happier we were. These Selkirks were not alien heaps of brown rubble like the Rockies but familiar grey mountains, wet mountains with clouds and rain and brush almost as good as the Cascades.

There was a considerable crowd at Glacier to meet the first train. A fellow in uniform greeted us, identifying himself as the Forest Warden. More than that he was a climber. And when we dropped disparaging remarks about the Rockies he agreed, dreadful things, shame to waste your vacation there, but at least you'll have a look at real mountains now. To save us the hike he drove us to the Wheeler Hut. He is a Good Gook and with very little brainwashing will make an excellent American after the Conquest.

At best our chances for the summit were small. At 2 a.m. Friday Andy and I were shivering in the kitchen, eating cornflakes by candlelight, listening to rain on the roof. The night before we'd been brave about hiking in the dark on unknown trails through wet brush. A furious drumfire of rain sent us scurrying back to bed. In the morning we loitered around the Hut silently drinking coffee.

The irony of it. The bitter irony of it. I had never wanted to climb North Peak but I had climbed North Peak and in so doing thrown away Sir Donald. For three years the image of Sir Donald had been growing in my mind. First it was a name, a majestic name invoked by respected elder climbers. Then alpine journals sketched its history as one of the earliest centers of mountaineering in North America, the first basecamp of Swiss guides imported by the Canadian Pacific. At last photographs shaped it into a tall horn with clean quartzite faces and severely simple ridges. The mountain of dreams was close, somewhere above in the clouds.

In the Hut library we read about Sir Donald, looked at pictures of Sir Donald, but we hadn't the heart to talk about Sir Donald.

It was a dark drizzling Friday morning. We must be home Labor Day night for Tuesday work. We must therefore catch the Sunday train to Golden. This is the way the summer ends. Nastiness on North Peak, humiliation on Victoria, cheap victory on Athabaska, a relaxing weekend in the Wheeler Hut while rain washes the clean quartzite of Sir Donald. The winter months planning our first venture into foreign mountains lead to a weekend in Canadian rain. Thus ends the Season of Glory.

It was intolerable, simply intolerable. Were

we to spend the long winter remembering a quiet defeat in the Wheeler Hut? Trembling with coffee Andy and I threw our gear together and in an anguished convulsion flung out into the rain and mud. We were doomed. We knew we were doomed. Either way we were doomed. Better a quick and gallant doom now than the long doom of frustrated winter.

The route was a mystery. Our fragmentary glimpses of the country resembled nothing in the cryptic guide book and the sketchy map.

The guidebook said leave the trail and go up the Vaux Torrent. We didn't know this quaint Canadian term. Presumably a "torrent" was just what it said. We forded one torrent after another, torrent after torrent plunging from grey clouds. The guidebook mentioned only one torrent. The map showed only one torrent. No torrent had a signpost saying which torrent it was. Each time we forded a torrent we heard another torrent ahead. Maybe we'd go on all winter fording torrents, maybe we'd ford torrents all the way back to Seattle. What with the clouds and drizzle the whole thing was a fiasco anyway. We left the trail at a torrent that seemed as likely to be the Vaux Torrent as any other torrent we'd seen and struck directly up the torrent, scrambling among boulders, hopping over channels. The torrent revealed itself as the sum of two torrents,

two roaring torrents falling down two quartzite cliffs. A trap, a classically perfect trap. Between the torrent-drenched quartzite cliffs was a wall of gravel and boulders and sand and clay. So be it. Croz fell from the Matterhorn, Mallory vanished on Everest, Andy and I are doomed to be buried in a stupid Canadian gravel pit.

The roar of the torrents, the spray of the falls, were lost in the thundering cloud of our climb. We escaped the trap. An indubitable First Ascent. And a Last Ascent as well for not all the King's Horses and all the King's Men can ever put that Wall together again.

We rested. We were in heather. The drizzle had dwindled to a gentle mist. The clouds had retreated from our approach. Above moraines were cliffs, grey cliffs fading upward in grey clouds, but cliffs most palpably the footings of a mountain, a large mountain. What mountain?

Somewhere in the Greyness was a growing Whiteness. It was a Whiteness beyond any power but the sun. Supposing, just supposing, the weather is really improving. Supposing, just supposing, that mountain up there is Sir Donald. For the sake of argument say that mess was the Vaux Torrent. Where now? To do the Vaux Route we'd strike off to the right. The Vaux is the guide route, the tourist way. But

the book says it's not easy if you take the wrong chimney above the glacier. Often the bergschrund is impossible this late in the season. What if the weather turns good tomorrow and this is really Sir D and we can't cross the schrund or ^{wc} pick the wrong chimney? The Northwest Ridge is said to be more difficult. None of our respected elders from Seattle have climbed the Ridge so we have no basis for estimating the difficulty. ~~But~~ we could not miss the route. Ridges are positive routes. The Northwest Ridge is 2600 feet of climbing. North Peak was 2400. If we managed 2400 feet of cedar and trash we should be able to do 2600 feet of quartzite.

We turned left. It was the Northwest Ridge or nothing. Over moraines, around moraines, and up one final moraine, and the clouds continued retreating, releasing the skyline left of the mountain. The skyline was a col. Our memories of photographs were certain, this could be no other col than the 8200-foot Uto-Donald col.

The cliffs below the col were ominously steep. Gook mountains play a rough game. Gaining even a Gook high camp demands rock climbing. By Jefferson, we puny colonials would at least make a Gook high camp! Grimly we trudged to the cliffs, angling toward a narrow horizontal crack that appeared just

barely possible.

We paused, gasping, to inspect the crack. Strange, but the cliff was bending backward. The crack was looking more like a ledge. We trudged up moraines, we paused at the roping-up place. We stared. It was not a ledge. Paint a centerline and it would be a better highway than anything we'd driven in Canada.

This is the col. This is high camp. We are 8200 feet above sealevel, 2600 feet below the summit. We are at the foot of the Northwest Ridge. We raise our eyes following the clean cleaver of grey quartzite upward into grey cloud. We scramble along the crest of the col to the foot of Sir Donald. We have the actual mountain in our hands, under our feet. In a daze we sit down on Sir Donald just unutterably happy to have our bottoms on the bottom of Sir Donald.

^{Back}
~~In the col we chattered praise for quartzite,~~
~~all mountains should be quartzite, as we~~ cleared space for our sleeping bags by tugging boulders from the ridge and tumbling them down toward the glacier. Bits of blue were slipping through the clouds now. And each time we raised our eyes to the Northwest Ridge it was longer, higher. We expected momentarily to see the summit. But the clouds rose and the Northwest Ridge rose forever without ending.

We fired ~~up~~ the primus. The gale from the west

blew it out. We fired up again. The gale from the east blew it out. Fire up once more, blown out by the gale from the north, fire again, blown out by the gale from the south. One last try, but this time the gale is from outer space. ^{Before} The water in the pot ^{freezes over,} ~~is warm.~~ In with the instant potatoes and the corned beef, stir the gruel, the hell with trying to light the primus again. Though the corned beef is cold the inner man is hot.

While stuffing down corned beef and potatoes we observed a miracle. As the sun touched the horizon the cloud-ceiling burst into flames and shrivelled into wisps of smoke and vanished. The wind abruptly stopped. Spooky. Spooky but not supernatural, surely. ~~Rational beings need not~~ ~~fear.~~ But at 8200 feet, in sudden brilliance and silence, raising our eyes along the fully-revealed Northwest Ridge, looking up to the immensely-distant summit poised in the milk-blue sky, around us was a strangeness. Two lonely Americans at 8200 feet in Canada as the blueness of the sky yielded to the blackness surging from the east, the blackness pulsing with a billion fires.

We crawled into our sacks but we did not sleep. ~~for not only was the Northwest Ridge above but~~ With us was a Presence. It was a large Presence, and swift, and nimble, and hungry. We fought the Presence

with vile language, we fought with axes, we fought with boulders, primus stove, canteens, first aid kits. We fought until a darkness was dividing the stars.

Out of the sacks we gugged down cold cornflakes until a chill wind made swallowing impossible. We scrambled over frost-wedged boulders and shivered into the rope. Andy ran out of the col onto the Ridge.

Now is the hour. Here is the place. All those splend~~ed~~ dreams of glory, all those brave plans, and here I am on the first pitch of the Northwest Ridge, sick to my stomach, trembling with cold, shuddering with fear. All well and good to snap carabiners and talk big climbs in winter, anyone can buy maps and pitons. Here is the mountain I have wanted, here am I on the first rocks of the Ridge, and it was all for nothing. Better the weather had remained foul. For I can't do it. I can't climb Sir Donald. I can't do anything right. I'm sick. I'm a coward. I'm not worth the powder to blow me to Hell.

No excuse I can make to Andy here. Higher I could sprain an ankle or come down with leprosy. All I could do here is scream, dammitall Andy I'm yellow clean through, yellow streak down my back, yellow belly! Better to die than confess the truth. So I

follow the rope one lead, easy stuff, no more than a scramble, but my stomach is sick and my teeth are chattering and there is a halfmile of altitude above, a vertical halfmile of quartzite, and there will be shocking surprises. Gook mountains are too big, something will turn up we can't possibly do. Andy is cheerful, Andy is exuberant. Andy is obviously hysterical.

Andy offers me the next lead. My philanthropical friends will be the death of me. Might as well get it now. Easier to fall and kill my self than explain about my cowardice. The lead goes. The lead goes easy. I bring up Andy, he leapfrogs by, brings me up, I leapfrog by and bring up Andy. Quartzite is marvelous. Hard, clean, invigorating. Why fool around with granite and basalt and sedimentary crap? Why aren't all mountains made of quartzite? Down there! Way down there! Sun shining on the ~~Columbia River~~. Same damn ~~Columbia River~~ we have in the States. Warm day in Golden. Jeep will be a furnace soon. But on Sir ~~D~~ we have not only the sun we have the wind, the cold wind honing the sharp edge of our skill.

We yell greetings to our friend in the col far below. We wish the Presence good appetit~~x~~e. The summit is out of sight above, but not so far above as when we battled the Presence. Uto rises 1300 feet above the col. We leapfrog up the Ridge watching Uto

across the way. Now we are near the summit of Uto, now we are even with Uto, now Uto drops below.

There is sunshine on the Columbia and the hateful Rockies beyond, sunshine on the highest of the admirable Selkirks but no sunshine on us leapfrogging upward in shadow. Then we hop from the cold scoop of the North wall out onto bright crest. Into cold gale but also into bright glare. We are high in the sky, within the wind, swimming in Blueness. Tremendous spot for a picnic. We've been in Canada a long time. Not much left in the commissary. But we'll do well with sandwiches of pilot bread and chocolate-slab washed down with orange-ade.

Up the ridge we go, up we go. More and more Selkirks rise from the northern horizon, and the western, and the southern. Selkirks blossom on all the horizons and then shrivel below us. North and west and south the wild horizons of leaping peaks, sprawling icefields, lie below us, below we conquering Bramanis, we Bramanis Uber Alles!

Through blinding sun and battering wind on delicious quartzite we climb above the entire world into dense blue sky higher than all the horizons, higher into eternal space, higher than all mankind.

The Northwest Ridge is licked. The Ridge rounds over and down. Down? The Ridge goes down? Andy and I stare at each other. Neither one of us is a Malignant

Deceiver. We have done it. We have really done it.

This is no dream, we are not in the Abbot Hut under mounds of Hudson Bay Blankets, we are actually and positively and really on the summit of Sir Donald!

Only twenty-five minutes. That is all we allow. Time enough to consume all the remaining pilot bread and chocolate and orange-ade and click our cameras until they won't click anymore. But there is no time in Heaven. These twenty-five minutes on the summit of Sir Donald are eternity. Part of me will remain forever on the summit of Sir Donald.

This is eternity but also September. It is not yet high noon but night is close. We must go down. One last survey of the horizon, one deep breath, and down the Ridge we go, down we go.

Downclimbing is always more difficult than up-climbing. Perhaps we have spent our best energies. The easy cliffs of morning may be terrors in the afternoon.

Here it is. No more scrambling. The first pitch down.

How is it? Okay, not bad!

~~on~~ The next pitch. This was a bit of a trial on the way up.

How does it go? Pure and easy! Piece of cake!

There are no terrors, the quartzite is as clean and solid and lovely as in the morning. And now gravity

is with us. No need to hoist our too, too solid flesh. Gravity helps us down and we must only restrain its exuberance. No terror, no battle with gravity, we can climb free with full delight in the hard clean quartzite, in the relaxed rhythm of our muscles, in the unity of our rope team as we bound smoothly down.

Now in sun and wind on the crest, now in calm shadow of the cold north wall, we climb down the Northwest Ridge. This looseness ~~would be weariness~~ elsewhere but on Sir D looseness is freedom. We fly through bright blue sky, now and then touching the earth but only for the sensual pleasure of the quartzite. The sky is our natural element but we love the quartzite earth too well to launch out finally into the cold Blueness as we could easily do.

This is the col. This is high camp. We follow the ridge ~~ance~~ more to the summit, fly down the ridge once more to the col. If only the ridge could continue forever, this would be Heaven, to eternally leapfrog up and fly down the Northwest Ridge of Sir Donald, touching that exquisite quartzite, bounding through the cold bright Selkirk sky.

The sun is small. The Presence has eaten the wristloops on our axes. You are most welcome, you wonderful Presence, you best of all possible Gooks!

We scrambled and tumbled down ledges and moraines and boulders. We bungled and toppled through black forest by flashlight, and we staggered into Wheeler Hut and scooped supper and swilled water. Abby had been all the way to the Asulkan Glacier but Andy and I were too full of quartzite and sky to hear tales of the Asulkan.

What with battling the Presence we had not slept the night before Sir Donald. What with Sir Donald we did not sleep the night after.

In our bunks we praised quartzite fat into the night. We were still climbing the clean hard Ridge over and over again, up the quartzite and down the quartzite when our Good Gook friend the Forest Warden came by to haul us to the Station. We rode the train to Golden and picked up the Jeep and crossed the border.

Somewhere in Idaho the Jeep smashed into a curb and I was hurled into a bar. Said the bartender, what are you up to, buddy? Oh, I just flew in for some beer. How much beer? Oh, quite a lot of beer. No, make that a hell of a lot of beer! Nothing surprises Idaho. We progressed through Idaho drinking beer, Andy and I climbing up and down the Northwest Ridge, Abby walking back and forth on the Asulkan Glacier.

We were awakened by a courteous juvenile who asked if we could possibly move our sleeping bags and

Jeep since we were blocking the gas pumps and he was a Management Trainee and wanted to sell lots of gas so he could become president of Standard Oil.

It is very important that Standard Oil have a president. We crawled into the Jeep suddenly weary and decrepit, and drove home. Home to the world. The world, it is the old world yet, I am I, my things are wet. Home to the apartment in the District. Home to the job. Home to the old world.

The old world, but not the world as I saw it of old.

The real world is in Canada on the Northwest Ridge. Can anyone here in Seattle not be aware their world is beneath contempt? To me it is perfectly obvious these sick citizens have no reason to exist. They eat, they sleep, they work, they love, but that is all, they have nothing else, no reason for living. They exist. Shame on them. Better they lay down and be covered with dirt.

It is not enough for me to merely exist. I want to live. I cannot live in the city, in a job. This is a dehydrated life.

What can a man do with dehydrated life? There's an old recipe thoroughly tested by a millenia of Marlowes. Simply add beer and let soak and the dehydrated life quickly swells to full size.

Winter is a-comin in, lewdly sing, cuckoos!

Bob and Rudy had been at the Coalsack all the summer. Though not a total stranger rarely had I been able to finish a full blast. Being now too full of quartzite to nibble ~~Cascades~~ my best energies were available and we three weirds blasted to closing time every night. Mornings were bad. Afternoons were ^{just} tolerable. After supper I slept an hour, walked an hour, drank coffee an hour, a conditioning program that keyed my nerves to the proper Coalsack pitch. Night after night, every night of every week, I blasted at the Coalsack. The pace was too fast. By winter the strain was telling. My work was becoming sloppy and my blasting half-hearted. Something would have to give way. First things first is the only rational rule so I quit work and thereafter was able to concentrate entirely on drinking and do a proper job of it.

No two Coalsack nights were identical. I might be in a Browning mood, grow old along with me, the best is yet to be, Ford's in his heaven, martinis at seven, God bless America and ~~last~~ China, Bob might be, that night, critical of the new Buick, ~~skeptical~~ that Supergeneral, Emperor of Japan, was the promised Messiah.

Or Rudy and I would be sharing with our Great God Oswald the long view over the dark plain of sad

history past and present and yet to come. Bob would that night dissect the bones and nerves of Oswald, pickle them in cigarette smoke and shelve them neatly away in the German Section with Marx and Barbarossa and Hitler and the Brothers Grimm. Or Bob might still be delirious from a French movie, enraged that I hadn't time to see the movie because Hollywood westerns are the American epic and a priori the highest expression of the art. Or Bob might defend the Fair Deal while Rudy and I wished for the quick return of our Fuhrer. Or I would maintain the supreme genius of Li'l Abner while Bob stated the case for Little Orphan Annie and Rudy held out for Dick Tracy.

We three were the cadre, the hard core of professional drinkers. The Coalsack also supported a floating crowd of amateurs who could drink only one or two nights a week. One or more irregulars generally joined us. Some were girls who had been or were hoping to be seduced by Bob and/or Rudy. The theme of the evening might then be the crushing evidence against the claims of any female animal to be considered as a rational being. Some of the irregulars were Politicals. If it was a Liberal Political we mounted a three-front offensive against Bleeding Hearts, the Fair Deal, the Welfare State, the Vegetable State. A Trotskyite Political we denounced as a dreamy-eyed idealist. A

Stalinist Political was branded a State Capitalist, Revolution-Betrayer, Right-Wing, Deviationist, Treason-Monger, Assassin of Lenin, Marx, and the Worker. Once in a great while we trapped that almost extinct rarity, a Republican, and those were cruel nights. We were always genuinely remorseful afterwards.

There were innumerable nights, each different. Each was necessary for it is an infinite world beyond understanding without eternal exploration. Each night served the one great eternally-necessary cause of entropy. We energy-concentrations entering the Coalsack were diffused in talk, the energy-concentrations we consumed were diffused in sweat and urine and vapor. Each night we worked away diffusing energy. We diffused immense amounts of energy. Many mornings were so diffuse I was sure this was the final thin fog. By evening the cosmic dust was again whirling into star-clusters and nothing did remain to do but begin diffusing again. (9) The world is running down and so are we. Why save up energy? As the West declines let us lead it down. Perhaps it would have been more fun to sack Rome, extirpate the Arian Heresy, riot with the Blues and the Greens, go Welfing around or Weiblingening, buccaneer in the Caribbean, battle King George for Jefferson and liberty, carry the frontier over the plains to Oregon, free the slaves, prevent the Money

Trust from crucifying us on a Cross of Gold, walk softly but carry a Big White Fleet, Kill the Hun Kaiser and make the world safe for democracy, hoist Mrs. Grundy on her own petard, seek social justice for the ill-clothed, ill-housed, ill-fed, carry a rifle with the Popular Front in Spain. Perhaps it would have been more fun to Rise with the West but closed options are madness.

Let us decline! Let us gladly decline, not straggling and grumbling behind but running and chortling ahead, leading the decline. Anyway, when that Sun Made-in-USA ~~downs~~ (by ~~X~~Germans~~X~~and~~X~~Italians) *downs* on the World who wants to be feeling good? Drink enough at night to forget the BOMB at night and to feel in morning so awful the BOMB could not be worse. Drunk we don't care about th^e BOMB, hungover we hope for the BOMB, this is the rational formula. Up the Entropy! Up the Decline! Up the BOMB! Up the Beer!

Downward Faustian fellaheen marching into hell,
With the cloud of fallout sounding mankind's knell. . .

We at the Coalsack held these truths to be self-evident. We were irritated by the refusal of our rulers to accept entropy and the decline. Our rulers do not care about history. Our rulers are timid little souls scrambling around trying to be office manager, mayor, chief auditor, president, foreman,

senator, or vice president in charge of paper clips. The rulers know about the BOMB. but they know so much money is invested in the BOMB it must be exploded or all that money will be wasted. They hope the BOMB won't go off until they make office manager mayor chief auditor president foreman senator or vicepresident in charge of paper clips.

We at the Coalsack were irritated by the rulers closing our seminar room at 1 a.m. We were infuriated by Saturday. They closed us up at midnight on Saturday which means that on top of everything else deep down our goddam rulers want to go to Heaven of all places!

The Coalsack Barmaids were on our side but the Rulers gave them no choice. At the wall, you don't have to go home but you can't stay here, we strode from the Coalsack into outer darkness and descended on the Clock. Each night we strode tall into the Clock five minutes after the Coalsack closed and ordered one dinner of prawns and three cups of coffee. We enjoyed our prawns in the Tudor fashion. We chomped prawns, we brandished prawns, we wiped prawn grease from our mouths with our sleeves and belched prawn gas down the necks and into the faces of Mr. and Mrs. Babbit and Friends, the customers who made the Clock possible. Some Babbits were a little tipsy and giggling until we Fausts were served

our prawns. Topsy little Babbits went into delirium tremens when we ate prawns.

In late December the price of prawns exploded overnight from eighty-five cents to a buck-and-a-quarter. We demanded the manager. We brandished the menu at the manager. Didn't he appreciate our faithful patronage? Was he attempting to drive us from the Clock? Why this obvious and open and rank discrimination? He whispered soothing poppy-cock about the prawn crop failing in the Gulf of Mexico, prawns becoming museum pieces.

The Clock could not so easily be rid of us. We switched to oysters. For ninety-five cents we were served a platter containing three oysters, a mound of French Fries and a heap of coleslaw.

The League of Nations and the United Nations and the Unholy Alliance all collapsed under less weighty disagreements. How can three hungry oyster-lovers divide among them three unequal oysters? We debated this every night, and loudly, and at length. French Fries would have been easy to separate into three equal portions had it not been for residual tensions from the Oysters.

Battle each other we might on the Oyster Question and even the Fries. We fought shoulder to shoulder against coleslaw. We did not want Coleslaw. We asked the waitress to bring us a farth

oyster instead of the coleslaw. She conferred with the manager and said, I can't give you another oyster. We cried, tell your cowardly boss to keep his coleslaw and cut the price of oysters a fair amount, make it ninety cents, or ninety-two, or whatever value he places on his precious damn coleslaw. The waitress returned from the kitchen saying, oysters are ninety-five cents with coleslaw, oysters are ninety-five cents without coleslaw. But if you don't like coleslaw I can leave it off the plate. We shrieked, profiteers! If we pay for coleslaw give us our coleslaw!

When the oysters and fries were gone we divided up the coleslaw. We had to do something with it so we used it for experiments in Communal Eating. I lean back and close my eyes and open my mouth and Rudy, across the booth, places my coleslaw on his fork and catapults my coleslaw toward my mouth. When all my coleslaw is gone I wipe coleslaw out of my hair and apologize to the Babbits in the next booth for the coleslaw in their coffee and hair and then I serve Rudy his coleslaw.

From the Clock we progressed to the Pink Palace, to the Machine where we Faustian Fellaheen Faced Life. After long practice ^{with hips and bellies and fists} we mastered the Machine, each night leaving behind us unused free games. God tinkered. The Machine shrieked TILT if a drunken

fellah so much as leaned against it. We played
 the game with our fingertips, scarcely breathing.
 We mastered the Supersensitive Machine, ^{and} again we
 left free games. God tinkered. He steepened the
 slope so the ball plunged virtually in free fall.
 We flattened the slope by inserting matchbooks
 under the front legs, thus keeping the ball alive
 almost eternally. God tinkered. Inserting even
 an onion skin under the legs threw the Machine into
 permanent TILT. We met God on his terms. We
 accepted the supersensitivity and the steep slope.
 We developed a skill that was the marvel of the
 District. ✓ We flaunted free games in the face of God.

Fellahcen came
 from miles
 around to
 admire and
 adore.

Are we now in the Heaven our virtue deserves?
 No, for God resorts to the last unanswerable argu-
 ment of the cynical omnipotent. He stops tinkering
 with the Machine and lets it deteriorate. The ball
 plunges into the 10,000-Slot but we choke on our
 cheers for the light fails. The score goes to
 twenty free games but the Machine will not yield
 even one. God knows we are hooked. He openly sneers
 at our weakness by leaving the Machine in Tilt, days
 at a time, and his cynicism is rewarded for each
 addicted fellah each night spends a quarter in a
 desperate attempt to revive the Machine. God owns
 the Pink Palace. God is a crook.

Beer, oysters, the Machine, these required money. There were also food, rent, clothing. Abby grew restive. She is, after all, a typical woman. Talk to her about the BOMB and she answers with the phone bill. Tell her it is fantastic at this moment in history to discuss the price of groceries and she comes back, how about the price of beer?

It was annoying to think of beer having a price. But Abby was right. Beer costs money. So I worked a week delivering Christmas presents and several days delivering telephone books. People are so jolly getting presents and so interested in telephone books I began to take them seriously. Also the beer seemed to taste better paid for by my own labor. So to keep Abby happy I applied here and there for a steady job. Too much education for that job, not enough for that job, too young, too old, too tall, too short, too fat, too skinny, too blonde, too dark, too dirty, too clean, too intelligent, too stupid. I applied for jobs to keep Abby happy. Fortunately I was unemployable because I didn't want to work. What does work do but bring in money? What does money do but keep you alive? How long? Forever? No, not even the guaranteed three score and ten. Money built the BOMB which has to kill us all soon because we can't afford not to blow up the world and thereby waste all the

money invested in the BOMB.

Winter is the best season for drinking. Fel-laheen cannot endure the sun and winter nights are long and dark. But winter is mortal as man. The nights grew too short for oysters, too short for the Machine, too short except for closing the Coal-sack and drinking coffee at the Palace in despair at the approach of spring.

The cheap God of the Palace had not provided restrooms. The only outlet for beer and coffee was the alley, private enough on a winter night.

But I was in the alley and suddenly here were babbling children and chirping birds and bright blue sky.

What are children to me? Or me to children? I am a dirty old man. I am a villain, a dirty rotten villain. I walk abroad at night and kill sick people groaning under walls. The world is an unweeded garden and I the rankest weed of all. I am sick, sick sick of myself, and weary, weary, weary of asking what I am and what I ought to be. I was a children once and had a sister who was a children too but she died and I grew up to be a dirty old children and the BOMB is going off pretty quick. We are all ruined children we are all declining we are all diffusing into thin gas waiting for the BOMB.

We are inside the Palace discussing doom darker and deeper than any sea dingle dangle dingle when over our coffee, over our heads, suddenly the Goddess of Death hangs more terrible than any BOMB.

None of us ever recovered from that 8:30 a.m. Visitation of the Goddess to the Pink Palace. Bob and Rudy never saw her again, ^{and} ~~but~~ the constant terror in my eyes ruined the Coalsack and the Palace for them. Bob got a job. Rudy left town. In any event there was now virtually no night at all, no protection for we fellaheen. And the mountains would soon be melting from the snow. Whether I wanted or not soon I must go climb mountains.

but I did, almost every day in our apartment,

For the sake of my beloved Goddess, for the sake of my beloved mountains, I wrenched partly free from the Coalsack and Palace and actually got a steady position in another Management Training Program. I now repair electric drills and saws and hammers. When I repair electric drills very efficiently I will be promoted to selling electric tools. When I am several hundred years old I will be vice-president in charge of armatures or coils or roller bearings or something.

I won't settle for vice-president. I expect to be Daddy Warbucks inside of a year (Arf! says Sandy!) and there is no reason ~~why~~ I shouldn't be,

in about ten years, God. George Washington promised us that in the Constitution. Every American can be God if he works hard and shoots straight. It pays to shoot straight.

I have climbed Bonanza and Challenger and North Peak, and most of all I have climbed the Northwest Ridge of Sir D, not to mention a hundred lesser summits, I hold the undisputed lightweight beerdrinking championship of the District, I have eaten the most oysters, drunk the most coffee, and I have been the dirtiest villain, I have killed the most sick people groaning under walls, poisoned the most wells, and there is no rational reason why, before the entropy thins us all out, before the BOMB brings in the dreadful premature dawn, before the decline is complete, my talents should not make me wealthy. I don't want to be healthy and wise, just wealthy. If I am wealthy I can hire healthy and wise clerks to keep me wealthy until the BOMB goes off.

PART SEVEN

PRAYER

When I learned there was no Big Daddy in the Sky
I despaired, but Adon~~ax~~is rescued me and with Whiteness
all around I strained outward to embrace the stars.
When I fell back to earth Tamburlaine saved me from
smashing by enrolling me in his Horde of striving
human souls. Weary at last of striving I admired with
Gibbon and Spengler the glorious failures of Caesar
and Faust, and gazed with Eddington into the tragedy
merely glimpsed by Euripides and Shakespeare, the
doom of life to kill itself by living. Entropy,
Entropy, and Entropy! 'Thinketh He dwelleth i'
the cold of the moon (beside the Oil Can, which art God).

Where now?

Pray in church, pray in the forest, pray on mountain
tops, pray in blank verse and history, pray in beer, but
no prayer brings peace or understanding.

Where now? Where should I try next?

My life has always moved forward. Toward what
and I have never known but always there has been
some new crest beyond, always a chance the next valley
may be the one.

Where now?

Always another crest, another valley, but they
are more and more the same, less and less interesting.
Why go on? Why not stop here?

I dare not stop, I must keep moving, for space

and sky and stars and time and history are rushing after me. Perhaps there is a Door ahead. I see no Door, I doubt the existence of a Door, and even should there be a Door it would never open for me. But I dare not stop. Even if the motion is circular, even if I am chasing myself in a whirlpool, I dare not pause for thought, for behind me is that steady mounting roar, an avalanche of time, a tidal wave of space, that will engulf me if I stumble.

Pause even a moment, pause even for sleep, and the sky will crash over me in a thunder of surf.

I must not sleep. If I can stay awake, climb enough mountains, drink enough beer, there is a chance I can escape the drowning torrent of eternity, a chance I can run fast enough and far enough and find a new way to pray.

PART EIGHT

TERROR

LOVE

ADVENTURE

PRAYER

PART EIGHT

TERROR

I had been late, too late, at the Coaksack and Pink Palace Friday. Andy and I arrived late, too late, in Boston Meadows Saturday and arose early Sunday, too early. I led the schrund and plugged up a thousand feet of steep snow and at the top of the couloir stemmed and squirmed in the moat between rock and snow to the crest of the ridge.

While changing from Bramanis to tennis shoes suddenly I felt completely pooped. A reaction from the long tense lead. No matter, the summit is close and Andy is hot to go.

The crest narrowed to a thin blade of granite. To our left was an ocean of air and the distant roar of Thunder Creek. To our right was an ocean of air and the distant roar of the Cascade River. We stepped lightly upward into the sky, high in cold wind and bright sun, as on Sir D, touching lightly the hard clean granite earth.

There was a knick in the blade and a sharp tooth above. I assumed a comfortable sitting stance in the knick and belayed Andy around a corner of the tooth. He traversed out of sight. I was alone with the rope. The sun was warm. It was a slow lead. The rope was motionless a long while. I fell asleep.

I awoke in a vortex--I let go of the rope and grasped the rock--I was clinging to a wall leaning over

Thunder Creek--the world was tipping over--the earth was spinning on its axis.

The rope moved. The horizon steadied. Andy yelled and I traversed around the corner. Once more we walked along the thin blade of delightful clean granite. We stood on the summit of Forbidden surrounded by great mountains and glaciers, mountains we had climbed, mountains awaiting us. Eldorado and the Inspiration Glacier, Baker, Shuksan, Snowfield, Colonial, Terror, Challenger, Luna, Redoubt, Hozomeen, Logan, Goode, Buckner and the Boston Glacier, Bonanza, Magic, Spider, Formidable, Mixup, Dome, Glacier, Johannesburg, Sloan, Rainier, and far on the western horizon, floating above Puget Sound haze, the Olympics.

Forbidden Peak, Verbotengipfel, last of the great walks through the sky, first of the great spins of earth.

Two weeks later Dick and I investigated a new route on Duck Mountain. Above the glacier I plugged steps up the long couloir to a bottleneck. Dick led the steep pebble-littered slabs of the neck. We had fondly hoped to find above the neck a short boulder-gully leading to the summit ridge. Above the neck we found an extremely vertical chimney. Having led the treacherous slabs Dick generously offered me the

first attempt to escape from the couloir. I traversed outward from the couloir on easy connecting ledges, gaining some thirty feet of altitude. Then I ran out of ledges. Ten feet above were huge buckets, but between me and them rose nothing but smooth wall. I followed my highest ledge outward to the end and peeked around the corner. The first thing I saw around the corner was our campsite at King Lake, three thousand feet straight down the couloir and the glacier.

I withdrew and shook my head to refocus my eyes for close range. Again I peeked around the corner, ignoring King Lake. A step away was a small pillar. Only one step away and big enough for both my Bramanis. Above the pillar was an overhang but the rock was broken. A piton and a pullup would take me up the overhang and back around the corner into the buckets.

Three deep breaths, one long step around the corner and quickly-quickly the second Bramani follows onto the pillar. Keep the knees stiff, pound the piton with steady accurate blows.

The earth turned on its axis.

The wall pushed against my chest. I topped out over the couloir, out over King Lake. I was falling, I could scarcely reach the piton, but there are no holds, there is only the half-driven piton,

I have no choice, I must trust the piton, I grab the piton with both hands and press my face into the overhang, closing my eyes, hoping my knees will not collapse.

Steady, steady, the knees hold, the piton holds.

I finished driving the piton, snapped in the carabiner and clipped in ^{the} rope, pulled up the overhang, back around the corner, into the buckets. Dick leapfrogged by to the summit ridge.

It is one thing to know that the earth rotates on its axis. It is quite another matter to feel the spin, to feel the roar of space. Perhaps I have, indeed, made my greatest climbs. But these are great enough. Who could want more than Sir D? I will return to Sir D.

I returned to Sir D. Or rather, to little Uto, our measuring-rod peak of the previous summer. I was close to the Northwest Ridge, the clean quartzite highway through the sky. Looking across the Uto-Donald Col to the Northwest Ridge made me dizzy. I did not climb Sir Donald. The weather was bad, far too bad for Sir D. Every day that week there were idiots climbing the Northwest Ridge. Every day I wanted to climb Sir D but not once during the week was the weather right.

Then I'll face it, I can no longer stroll amiably through the sky, but I can still follow a tight

rope a few feet into the sky. The next summer I followed a tight rope around a corner on Spire Point and when the rotation began the thread of rope was too small and weak to hold me on the earth and the space-roar shook me from the mountain, I scrambled blindly in a spinning vortex and my belayer laughed to see me squirming on the granite like a beached whale.

Then I must give up not only the strolls along rock highways through the sky but even poking my nose over a hard knife of rock into the sky. There is still ice, I can still climb high on the great white volcanoes.

The next summer, sitting on 14,410-foot Columbia Crest, I dozed off in the sun and awoke clutching cinders, loose cinders avalanching off with me into space.

Very well. I am banished from the sky. I accept it. There are still the brilliant, fragrant meadows, the ice-polished slabs, the cold waters rushing from snowfields.

The next summer we wandered in fog over the heather and snow of Cadet, tiny Cadet, Cadet that is not even a climb but only a hike, the fog blew past me faster and faster, the fog began to spin, the grey world was spinning and spinning and spinning me off. . .

It is lonely in the spin.

Everybody knows the earth rotates. Anybody would think you mad if you yelled, the earth is rotating! You cannot tell your friends, you cannot even tell Abby, and in the spin the mind goes loose and they stare as you grip a clump of trembling heather, they smile as you babble wild words..

When friends suggested climbs generally there were household chores or social engagements. When I nerved myself through forest and meadow to high camp, invariably the weather in the morning was uncertain. If the sky was virgin blue without so much as a wisp of cirrus then breakfast disagreed with me or I had a touch of flu.

I counted on the mountains, the mountains were my last chance, and now I cannot go in the mountains. There was a time when the glimpses west to the Olympics, glimpses east to the Cascades, sustained me as I pounded up and down the city canyons. Now I pound up and down the canyons with my eyes on the concrete. The terror has pursued me from the horizons into the city.

One day I plunged down in an elevator and stepped out onto the sidewalk and the sidewalk lurched and heaved and swayed. Earthquake! Worst I've ever felt, worst in Seattle history! Catastrophe! The cornices will shake loose, I must get into a doorway! I staggered over the lurching, heaving sidewalk

into a doorway and braced myself, awaiting explosions of falling cornices, alert for sparking wires, shattering windows.

What in hell? What are the stupid citizens going? Why don't the simpletons seek shelter? This is a catastrophe, why don't the women scream, the men turn pale? Why does everyone walk up and down the sidewalk pretending nothing is happening? Idiots!

The earthquake subsided unnoticed by every soul but me. It was my own private and personal earthquake. My first but not my last.

I gave up elevators. What if, sometime, I fainted when the floor dropped out under my feet? The people would send me to the hospital. They would think me desperately ill. I could never say, no, I'm just scared of elevators. No person can be frightened by an elevator, unless, of course, he has felt the earth turn.

When it was necessary to climb high into a tall building I walked up the steps and down the steps.

But avoiding elevators is not the solution. I enter an office twenty stories up, or even ten, or five, sometimes even three, or two, and as I start selling I feel the floor heave up, and then the ceiling tilts over, the walls sag in and fall away,

I try to remember what I'm selling but the floor lurches and the walls pulse in and out.

There are steep streets in Seattle. Often I walk blocks out of my way for I cannot climb these streets, unless on my hands and knees which is out of the question. What do you mean, says the cop, you might fall into outer space if you don't hold on?

I don't know what to do. There is a tunnel. Morning and night I drive through the tunnel and it's only a matter of a minute but as soon as I enter the tunnel it begins to spin. It spins faster and faster like the grey cylinder of gas years ago and before I escape the tunnel my heart is pounding and sweat is blinding my eyes.

Last week it finally happened, what I'd been dreading. Accident on the highway. Traffic jam. I was stalled in the tunnel. Around and around and no chance to escape, and I gripped the wheel and squeezed my eyes and clenched my teeth and rolled around and around and around in the grey cylinder screaming and screaming and screaming. . .

I don't know what to do. I held on, I got through the tunnel that time but another spin will kill me.

I don't know where to go. The earth rotates. I know the earth rotates. Let it rotate! So long as

it leaves me alone. The rotation was in the mountains and I gave up mountains. It was in elevators and I gave up elevators. It was in office buildings and I gave up office buildings. It is in the tunnel and I can take the long road and give up the tunnel. But there is no escape.

Sometimes even at my desk, even at the dinner table, even in bed, I have felt a tremor.

Sometimes a tremor will continue to a tilt, a tilt to a spin, a small spin to the last great spin, the spin that will continue faster and faster until my fingers ^{fall} ~~fall~~ and I lose my clutch on earth and as I fly off into space I will scream and scream and scream in terror and that is all Abby and my friends will hear is my insane scream. . .

PART EIGHT

LOVE

Summers passed without Three Day Blows or trench warfare or anything worse than an occasional frontier skirmish. If I was often at the Coalsack at least I was rarely at the Palace. And weekends were for mountains.

But there were winters, long grey drizzling winters without mountains. And now the mountains were growing beyond hope. Winters were becoming a time to remember defeats past and to dread disasters to come. Once our apartment in the District had been a basecamp in summer and an expedition-planning headquarters in winter. Now it was becoming a place to quarrel on dark winter evenings, a place to sleep late in dim mornings after a night of entropy and despair at the Coalsack.

If we could escape the District, escape the bad dreams, perhaps we could break free from the steady spiral down to self-destruction. Weekends we drove beyond the most distant suburbs of the city examining abandoned log cabins and half-finished shacks. It was a hopeless search. There was no ruin so squalid the owner did not want at least a little money. We had no money at all. Abby earned enough to keep us housed and fed and clothed. My occasional jobs scarcely paid for beer and cigarettes.

It was a summer day. The Bramani Heros were far away doing marvelous things in the North Cascades,

a marvelous exploration we had planned together. But I was on Mount Adams, plodding slowly up the Northwest Ridge--the irony! There are many and many Northwest Ridges.

We were at nearly 10,000 feet when Abby once more flopped face down in the rocks. She sobbed, go on, leave me here, go on with the others. There was a time when I would have screamed, pelted her with rocks, thrashed her with my ax. Said I, the hell with it. Said she, timid, you aren't mad? I reminded her, and I'd forgotten it myself till then, that Adams was our first volcano together, back in the days of our attic apartment and the narrow couch.

We loitered down the ridge. Abby was hard to convince and it even surprised me but I didn't care about losing the summit. Why not? Why this sudden surge of joy?

Below the ridge, in a sunny green meadow, within the coils of a meandering snowmelt stream, we lay under the blue sky and smiled shyly face to face. I had been in love too long with the infinite. The infinite is cold and distant. A woman is warm and close.

Again it was winter. We were too sad, too much in love, too weary to quarrel. But we knew one more winter in the District would be our last. Again we toured empty lands beyond the city. If we were beyond hope, if each journey deepened our desperation, at

least the desperation was shared, it was ours together.

It became a game. Each Sunday we played with a new real estate office. We were dressed respectably enough and we were clean and obviously literate. We were vague about our financial resources, casual about the merits of country life, hypercritical of every property offered us. Had we not been so desperate ourselves we'd have pitied the real estate agents we plagued with our adult version of Playing House.

One Sunday morning we got our clutches on an exceptionally eager chap. His eagerness stimulated us to a new brilliance of virtuosity. We would warmly praise a property, we would hotly whisper, and then as he was already spending the commission we would grow cold. He would shudder, we would thank him and tell him we'd think it over and call him later. He would cry, wait! One more I just remembered!

It was Sunday night. We were tired of the game despondent that it was only a game. We wanted to quit but our agent scared us. He was so shaky and incoherent we feared his reason was gone. He cried, one more! Said we, just one more. He mumbled, you won't like it. Very small. Bad foundations. Well goes dry in the summer. Access road is a swamp in winter. Most unsalable house on our list.

We bought it. It was the house of our dreams. It was a house nobody wanted. It was a house we could buy without money, a house we could buy with bright eyes and fervid promises to pay monthly installments.

We moved into the crazy little house high on a ~~high~~^{hill} in a dank forest.

After years in the District we found it dark, quiet, and lonely in the woods. Just the two of us alone together in dark silence. We had been in our new home only a few weeks when one morning Abby abruptly vomited all over the breakfast table.

The mound of life swelled, and when I placed my hand on that warm visible expression of our love I could forget time and space and stars and Spengler. This Being kicking the palm of my hand was the reason for me, the reason for Abby, the reason for our love. We were born and we loved that this new life could be born, that life might continue, and if this answer does not satisfy philosophers it satisfied Abby and me during the dark, quiet nights in our forest home.

She was an exceptional child, marvel of the hospital, the nurses' pet, all day they were combing her blonde curls. At viewing time even other parents turned from their own babies to admire this marvelous child of ours.

As soon as she came home flashbulbs began exploding in her face at all hours of the day and night. If she so much as stirred in her sleep one of us would haul her from her crib and carry her around. If she slept too long we woke her up. We couldn't understand why she had colic. We took such good care of her, we loved her so much, why should she have colic?

Her intelligence was evident from the quickness of her eyes. Indeed, she was unusual in every way, walking at an age when most babies are barely crawling, talking when other babies were still gurgling. I built a trail for her through our woods. Etaoin the Cat, Tamburlaine the ~~T~~awny Scourge, Abby and I and our daughter, we took long family hikes along the Sally Trail.

Every weekend we drove into the mountains and picnicked by rivers. One drenched Sunday I asked Abby whether she thought the mountains were worth it today. We hadn't imagined she was able to distinguish a mountain from a cloud, but Sally immediately began storming, go mawntin, go mawntin!

Again the mound of life swelled within Abby. If Katy does not live in a steady roar of flashbulbs, if Katy sleeps quietly without colic, it is not that we love her less, it is that Sally keeps us so busy. But we could not love our Sally half so well did we not so deeply love our Katy. The two loves together

are greater than the sum of the parts.

Let us have a quartet of children, let us have a symphony of children--the counterpoint and the harmony increase all the loves!

I know the population of the world is exploding, I know we should content ourselves with 2.7 children, but let the Chinese and Christers abstain. Let anyone abstain but me. I want more visible love around me.

In Dark Ages bonds of internationalism fail, patriotism dwindles, we retreat from the world and hope in our family castles to fight off the rapacious robber barons, the raiding barbarians.

Let the intellectuals ponder the fate of mankind. I am not now and probably never was an intellectual. The life of the mind is the life of the exploding atom. Let the ^{increasingly} ~~more and more~~ brilliant young men ^{increasingly} make ~~more and more~~ efficient BOMBS for the ^{increasingly} ~~more and more~~ corrupt old men to brandish at one another. Let others do the thinking and the hating, let me concentrate on the loving.

I love my Abby and my Abby loves me. I love my Sally and my Sally loves me. I love my Katy and when my Katy is a little dder she'll wake up and love me.

That is all I know and all I need to know.

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PART EIGHT

ADVENTURE

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tore them all up and neatly folded the pieces and stuffed them in envelopes and mailed them to various people around the city.

Another important part of our training was liaison between the Star-Tribune and the National Advertising Service in the building across the street. It was quite a tall building for Seattle and being English Majors we called it the Dark Tower. Each morning a Childe Trainee to the Dark Tower came, carrying the morning mail.

There were wise guys around the Star-Tribune who asked if it wouldn't be cheaper to send a mail clerk across the street but they missed the point. The tone of the National Suite was maintained if the mail was delivered by alert college graduates in suits. Moreover, the ankle-deep carpeting in the National Suite trained us in balance and poise.

Next to ripping up newspapers and carrying mail most of our time was spent Controlling the Market. If a prospect wavered after the charts and graphs that prove the Star-Tribune is the only newspaper people read and the Second Paper is used exclusively to start fires and wrap fish, the Account Executive invited him to review the troops. When we three Controllers paraded by in our suits and ties and college degrees and clean bright faces it took a really

cynical guy to sign with the Second Paper.

The Market was divided in three Controls: North, South and East. (Puget Sound was West but we conceded that to the Second Paper.) We Controlled in two ways: by Surveys and by Promotions.

For reasons that were never clear but apparently had something to do with obscure family and/or sexual connections, the Grocery Executive seemed to Control the Dark Tower. Anyway we rarely Controlled Liquor or Automobiles or Refrigerators. Mostly we Controlled Groceries.

There were too many grocers to Control each by each so we Controlled the Grocery Market through selected Barometers. On a Survey each of us visited our Barometer Grocers and asked how Brand X was doing compared to Brand Y and Z. On a Promotion we tried to get our Barometer Grocers to cover up their windows with Brand X banners and clog up their aisles with mass displays of Brand X and send all their Brand Y and Z back to the jobber.

Grocery stores are very crowded. Star-Tribune Controllers are not the only ones out asking questions and pasting up banners. There are also Controllers from the Second Paper and sometimes even from little neighborhood papers. There are also salesmen for Brand X, Y, and Z cornflakes and Brand X, Y and Z soap and Brand X, Y and Z dehydrated olive oil and

self-propelled dustmops and decongestant toilet paper. There are also Regional Division Vice-Presidents who always wear \$200 suits and are followed by two alert Junior Salesmen and are taller and more handsome than the Grocers and always invite them out for a drink.

On Surveys and Promotions I had to stand in line with dozens of other Controllers and Salesmen. Even if a Regional Division Vice-President didn't swoop down and whisk away my Barometer he was generally too surly to answer my questions or look at my banners. I returned to the office exhausted. Not discouraged, however, for this was excellent training and the labor would lessen with increased skill. The experienced Controllers always returned relaxed and breathing easy. Of course, they had been wearing suits for years and years.

One day all my luck was bad. At every Barometer there was a long line of Controllers and Salesmen. Every time I neared the head of the line a \$200 suit and two alert Junior Salesmen carried away my Barometer. It was 4 p.m. and I was due in the office at 4:30 and my survey sheets were all blank and I was pooped. and my Barometers were completely Uncontrolled. Yet if I could not Control my Barometers I must hand in my suit and tie and confess myself unworthy of being

trained by the Star-Tribune. There were too many hungry little females dependent on my paycheck, not to mention our hungry little Savings and Loan Association. Sitting in the Jeep a block away from the Star-Tribune I Controlled my Barometers in five crooked minutes.

The Grocery Executive didn't catch me. He didn't accuse me or suspect me. Nor our Manager. Nor our Secretary. Nor either of the other Trainees. I was a crook but nobody knew. Or if they knew they didn't care.

Cognition! ~~Cognition coming up like thunder~~
 I understood the relaxed easy-breathing of my fellow Controllers after a tour of Barometers. There are better ways to spend a day than harzassing grocers. One may visit the zoo or the beach ^{or} see a movie or go home for a long lunch with Abby and Sally.

Controlling became even easier when we began Controlling together over an afternoon cup of coffee just before check-in.

Time and again we were praised as the best team of Controllers in the history of the Star-Tribune. Time and again an Executive rushed off to a prospect with our Survey in his hot hand and got the contract or rushed off to a client with our Promotion in his hot hand and got the renewal.

We were damn good men but still in Training and

that is why none of us were ever promoted to Manager of Market Control. Each solstice we had a new Manager. Each new Manager was introduced by the Chief of the Dark Tower. The Chief had studied to be a Jesuit but found there wasn't enough money in it to support a family. Each time he introduced a ⁿnew Manager we Controllers were dazzled. Such a pedigree! Such an education! It was our privilege to serve under such a Master, a favor to us to be Trained by such a Miracle.

There must be regular courses in Business Administration Departments nowadays because each new Manager went through the same routine. The first week the New Manager took the Gang to Coffee. The second week he humbly requested information about this detail and that. The third week he held a Conference and said, I know the department is screwed up but if you guys will just tell ^{me} ~~my~~ your gripes maybe we can really shake things around.

The fourth week each new Manager Took Charge. He taught us how to tear up papers and how to walk across the street and he taught the ^secretary how to type. Each new Manager was in Charge for about a month and then he began spending more and more time in Conference at the Dark Tower and come the new solstice the Chief introduced a new Manager.

Managers came and went so fast we scarcely had time to find out which Executives they were related to. Actually not all the Managers were relatives of Executives. Some were relatives of Fraternity Brothers of Executives or relatives of Sorority Sisters of wives of Executives.

For years we Trainees went quietly about our business Controlling the Market. Then one morning the Chief burst into our office. His eyes were wide, his face was white. The Chief marched right by the current Manager, the natural son of a childhood Pen Pal of the Aspirin Executive. The Manager was frightened and ran out of the office. The Chief didn't care. He didn't need a Manager. The Chief needed Controllers.

Cried the Chief, Mother Milk is not renewing!

We gasped. Take the glaciers from Mount Rainier, take the sewage from Puget Sound, take the stars from the sky, but take Mother Milk from the Sunday Review? No, Chief, say it isn't so, Chief! Since the Great Fire the back page of the Sunday Review has been Mother Milk in three colors.

The Chief was desperate. He was trapped. His fate was in our hands, in the hands of we three Controllers, his own fate and also that of his gracious wife, his numerous children, his thoroughbred Labrador retriever, his eager Boy Scout Troop, his

beautiful dahlias, the respectable Bank holding his huge mortgage.

Said the Chief, gulping pills, look fellows, all I'm asking is that you sort of tell a little white lie. I myself, just an hour ago, told a little white lie. God! \$2874 a week! Every week! Excuse me a minute--gulp! What I mean to say fellows, I sort of implied--gulp! gag!--\$2874--we've--you've--been Promoting Mother Milk--gag! \$2874--little white lie!

We called a cab and sent the Chief home to lie down in a darkened room with a bottle of pills, and a wet rag on his forehead. The Chief was scheduled to meet the Mother Milk people for cocktails at six that evening. We Controllers had eight hours to prepare a Closeout, a little white lie describing a yearlong Promotion.

We borrowed an artist from the Local office and put him to work with art paper and spray guns and lettering brushes. The Controller of the South sat down to write a yearlong series of letters and Jumbo Postcards to Barometers and Chain Headquarters. Our secretary took each finished fabrication and cut a stencil and mimeographed a copy which the artist then pasted in the Closeout.

Meanwhile the Controller of the North and I,

Controller of the East, were out photographing mass displays of Mother Milk. This was not easy for there weren't any mass displays of Mother Milk. As a matter of fact, despite millions of dollars invested in three-color back pages of the Sunday Review every week since the Great Fire not many local grocers carried Mother Milk. We found several friendly grocers with Mother Milk in stock and built monstrous towering displays. Due to the shortage of Mother Milk the structures were mainly composed of competing milks, dogfood, vegetables. Careful choice of camera angles was necessary to show only Mother Milk and the big banners saying "Advertised in the Star-Tribune Sunday Review." Then we dismantled the mass displays and put every can back where we found it, just as we'd promised the friendly grocers.

It was our best Closeout ever. The Chief told us that when the Mother Milk people gazed upon page after page of letters and Jumbo Postcards and photographs of Mother Milk mass displays in leading supermarkets, huge displays, each with the banner (covering the competing milks, dogfood, vegetables) "Advertised in the Star-Tribune Sunday Review," they nearly wept. The Chief thanked us for saving his Mother Milk, his wife and children and Labrador retriever and Boy Scout Troop and dahlias and bank. To show

his deep appreciation he gave us each \$2 and a box of chocolate-covered mints. The next week he visited our office again to introduce a new Manager.

It was easy, clean Training and the Newspaper Guild got us an occasional raise. Ripping up papers was a bore but there were plenty of Surveys and Promotions and since Managers never lasted long enough to understand what was going on we Controllers could often turn a Friday Survey into a three-day weekend, or by adding a Monday of sick leave contrive quite a decent little vacation.

Now and then Surveying Barometers in a coffee shop we conjured up a vision of we three Controllers approaching retirement age, sitting in a coffee shop Surveying Barometers. We laughed hysterically then we laughed soberly and then we laughed nervously and then we went out looking for other jobs. But English majors are unemployable. There is nothing an English major can do that needs doing. We could only exist in such a misty midregion of the American Economy as the Market Control Department of the National Advertising Service of the Star-Tribune, established specifically to do things that do not need doing, and ultimately not to do the things that do not need doing.

Actually we did have one very important function.

The Executives in the Dark Tower, paid enormous salaries for appearing to do but not doing things that do not need doing, lived in terror they were no more than the idiotic non sequiturs of a nodding deity who might any moment blink awake. We Controllers in our suits and ties and college degrees provided an objective reference for the Dark Tower. Whenever an Executive felt his wig coming loose he reviewed the Controllers in dress parade, sent them on Survey, and was reassured. The Controllers exist, therefore I, Executive, exist.

All in all it was not a bad life and personally I'd have been happy enough to go on Controlling the Eastern Market until Social Security started. But one spring solstice the Executives temporarily ran out of relatives and brought in the friend of a secretary's relative. Not having ~~any~~^{any} Dark Tower blood he didn't understand. He listened to the oratory of the Chief and took it seriously. We Controllers were not disturbed. The poor guy was probing a mystery as secret as that of life itself.

He tried too hard to understand and asked too many questions. The Executives recognized his disease, the disease that haunts the Dark Tower as hemophilia haunts the royal family of Spain. The Manager was infected with Insecurity. The frightened Executives

voted his death even before he had finished Taking Charge. But when the Chief handed him the Black Spot he threw it back, whimpering that he was not getting cooperation from the Controllers, admittedly it was a great team but there was one Controller who was going bad, becoming a troublemaker. The shuddering Executives desperately wanted to be rid of this disease-carrier but it was months to the next solstice and changing Managers before a solstice might rock the boat and awaken the Nodding Deity. Maybe the Deity wouldn't miss a Controller.

At the farewell party I consoled the Controllers of the North and the South for their weeks of suffering till the next solstice. They congratulated me for my escape, envied me as the random sacrifice on the Altar of the Dark Tower, whistled over the small fortune in severance pay the Newspaper Guild had prired from the Executives.

Home on the hill Abby screamed when she saw the check, more money than we had ever owned all in one piece. I had to slap pretty hard to make her realize I'd been fired.

One day on the Avenue I bumped into Bob. I was amazed he was still alive. He was amazed I was still alive. We had last seen each other years before, in a Pink Palace dawn.

During an afternoon of coffee Bob narrated the decline and vaporization of the old Coalsack-Palace

crowd.

Said Bob, we are all shadows now. The entropy has thinned us all into shadows. None of us are real anymore, there's been too much entropy. Some of the shadows have faded out entirely into mysteries. Some have floated to places where nobody knows what they looked like when they were real. Those who could not afford New York went to San Francisco, the deviants went to Los Angeles. Some of the shadows are still around ~~in~~ the District. You won't want to recognize them though. When you and I started fading we could claim the excuse of youth. Youth is almost always in some way beautiful. But these middle-aged shadows are grotesques.

Continued Bob, some of the more ingenious shadows have built masks and tricked a route into various odd, obscure, irrational corners of the American Economy. You, of course, were an excellent example, and it was just plain bad luck you were fired. The thing is, you weren't fired because you are a shadow. Right? You fooled them, you weren't caught. You just had bad luck. Right?

Basic training at the Coalsack and Palace had qualified Bob for employment as male nurse at a private sanitarium. For his excellent work a judge had promoted him to personal guardian of a wealthy dipsomaniac named Bigman.

The court allowed Bigman considerable latitude. He still had partial control of his money and he could still drink so long as Bob was with him. One night in a bar he bought a little radio station and scribbled out a paper that made Bob the manager. The next morning while Bob was asleep Big bought an airplane and left for Europe.

Bob ran to the judge and cried, I've lost Bigman. He's in Europe. The judge shrugged, not my jurisdiction. You're out of a job. Bob produced several documents ~~and~~^{on} cocktail napkins witnessed by two barmaids and the judge pronounced them legal, up to a point. That is, Bob was indeed true and valid manager of said radio station ~~except~~ and unless the Bigman bank balance within the jurisdiction of the Court seemed to be diminishing below an amount deemed by the Court necessary and sufficient to sustain litigation possibly consequent and unavoidable and therefore necessary.

Said Bob to me, it's a hell of a lot of fun running a radio station but I'm losing so damn much money playing Scarlatti and Vivaldi, and chamber music and oratorios and Shakespeare and Joyce the lawyers are sniffing around. They're afraid I'll lose so much of Big's money there'll be nothing left over to litigate.

Said Bob, I must have money coming in or the Court will take the station and give it to the lawyers.

I knew nothing about selling time but it sounded like more fun than ^work. I toured the advertising agencies. Occasionally an Executive deigned to hear my pitch. He invariably asked me to spell out our call letters. Then he asked, when do you plan to go on the air? Said I, we're on the air, we have been on the air a long time. Said he, oh, sorry. Do you have a Hooper or a Pulse? When I said I didn't know what a Hooper was and doubted we had a Pulse the interview ended. I toured retail shops. The owners listened because someday I might be a customer.

Nothing happened. The severance pay was almost gone, household bills were far in arrears. All summer I made the pitch, over and over again. I couldn't sell a nickel's worth of time. I became conditioned to go by reflex from the pitch directly into a graceful exit. One day a prospect who had heard my pitch seventeen times all of a sudden said, okay, I'll try some spots. I was already gracefully moving to the door. I stopped. I had actually sold time! It was such an eerily godlike sensation I had nervous fits digging in my briefcase for a contract.

At the station I spent hours brooding over the typewriter. Bob worried up and down past the typewriter. At last I went cluck-cluck-cluck and the typewriter went clickety-click-click and Bob went cock-a-doodle doo!

That first paid announcement unlocked the log jam. Other besieged prospects cried okay, I give up, we'll try it. And once we were running advertising total strangers called to say they had not been aware we were operating a commercial station but if we had advertising for sale we should try their uncle or old friend or neighbor. It was surprising to find we had listeners beyond our personal circle, strangers who could pick up our feeble little signal, who enjoyed Bartok and Mozart, madrigals and operas, BBC lectures and Puget Sound poetry and Tennessee jug bands and Congo drums.

We sold Italian stainless steel, French wine, Japanese fried grasshoppers, Danish furniture, Volkswagens, we sold Thin Ties, Ivy League suits and handmade jewelry, we sold records, books, pianos and high fidelity components. We promoted art galleries, art movies, ballet and symphony. We publicized a tavern with classical music on the jukebox.

And once we were incontestably in the business of selling advertising various shadows became bold.

They had not dared, before, to identify with our shadowy enterprise. But now they could seriously propose our station to Real People without risk of being unmasked. A public utility and a stock broker and two banks bought time. They made us seem so real and respectable that now and then even a shadow in an advertising agency slipped me a spot-order, albeit rather surreptitiously.

One day a well known Mythological Creature called me. For months I'd been writing letters to him and his brothers , Santa Claus and Jesus Christ. The ten minutes I was in his office were doubtless the least remarkable ten minutes of his day. To me and all the Shadows at the station those were ten of the most remarkable minutes since Eden and Sinai, or Hiroshima at least. A mere scribble of his signature and this Magnificent Mythological Creature doubled station revenues.

That night we held a Staff Conference. Instead of signing off at midnight we kept the teapot humming while arguing about whose turn it was to choose the next quartet. Though it was not unusual for our announcers to be drunk on the air it was unusual for so many drunk announcers to be on the air simultaneously. A number of friends stopped in to find out why we hadn't signed off yet. The conference might have continued another day or two

but a guest looking for the toilet opened the door of the transmitter, thus automatically shutting down the transmitter. The only announcer who knew how to start up the transmitter had passed out hours before and it was time for breakfast anyway.

Months passed, and years. We weren't getting rich but the lawyers were leaving us alone and we were having a hell of a lot of fun. The only news about Bigman was an occasional note from a French law firm (or German or Italian or Spanish) stating that M. (or Herr or Signor or Senor) Bigman was in residence^{ce} at a local hospital and would, perhaps, shortly be in a position to answer our correspondence.

This correspondence consisted of the regular reports Bob sent Bigman, or rather his last known court-appointed law firm. Some of us felt the reports might be dangerous medicine, especially the newspaper articles praising the wealthy, world-traveling patron of the arts who maintained our station out of pure philanthropy.

Bob argued there was no risk, Bigman had already lasted a year beyond expectations and was due to die anytime in single combat against a roomful of snakes. The reports were written with the estate executor in mind. Cried Bob, gentlemen, we can talk business to an executor. We can buy this station. We need no longer fear the Reals. We Shadows soon

will have our own permanent enclave!

One afternoon I came briskly into the station chuckling over a new account and strode toward my desk flexing my fingers to rap out a new series of spots. I stopped. I stared. At my desk was a man I'd never seen before in my life. At Bob's desk was another stranger. Where was Bob? There, slumped on the visitor's chair, wanly sickly smiling.

All four of us went to a dark bar. Big congratulated Bob and me on the job we had done. He was delighted we had followed his instructions so closely.

All over Europe he had been telling people how proud he was of his boys in Seattle. In England he had found just the man to assist us to even grander triumphs.

Big turned to the Fourth Man and asked, that was England, wasn't it? Said the Fourth, Belgium. Said Big, but why did they keep yelling Time, Gentlemen? Said Fourth, that was the next day, after the Channel. Said Big, oh yeah, the boat ride. Anyway, tell my boys about Bertrand Russell and Oxford. Fourth mumbled modestly. Tell them about when you were program director at BBC. Fourth shrugged humbly. Tell them about Juilliard and what Bartok said about your opera and that time you helped out Lenny Bernstein with the New York Philharmonic when he had the flu.

Fourth was a bit shy of Bob and me and too modest to brag but Big kept the table full of liquor and Bob and I got so drunkenly oblivious he finally loosened up and told us about his season conducting the Vienna Philharmonic and the year he managed the Bayreuth. Casals couldn't have a Festival without Fourth and when Pablo was ill Fourth sat in for him. But Fourth did not scorn the world of business. Fourth admired the concept of the **Renaissance Man**. Most of his advertising work was in New York though he had been Media Chief in Chicago for BBD and O but he knew very little about radio, frankly, aside from the BBC, of course, and the two years as consultant for WQXR while shuttling between Juilliard and Lenny.

When Bob and I sobered up a day or two later Big was on a slow boat to Hong Kong and Fourth was our boss. It was small consolation that Big later vanished mysteriously from the slow boat to Hong Kong. A week after Big was carried in a stretcher onto the slow boat Fourth fired Bob and me. The next week he fired the announcer. The next week he fired all the advertisers even including the Mythological Creature. Then he fired the judge and the judge fired Fourth up to the state hospital for shock therapy and the lawyers litigated the station.

Bob and I spent several weeks taking ^{shock treatment at} the Coalsack treatment ~~for shock~~. Said Bob when we emerged from the Coalsack, I've had bad luck. Nobody recognized me as a Shadow. I just had bad luck. But there are too many people around Seattle now who know me. Too many Real people. My chances will be better someplace else. Boston, maybe. Nobody ever goes to Boston. Possibly they don't know about Shadows in Boston yet.

Though there is a deep conspiracy to conceal the fact from outsiders, no rational insider really believes any advertising is worth anything. Any person who can sell advertising is assumed by his comrades in the rackets to be either a wizard, a hypnotist, or a blackmailer. Whether he is a Shadow or a Real is of no consequence; by selling he proves himself a successful crook or supernatural creature, and both are valuable. A person who can peddle one brand of snake oil can peddle any brand. Having peddled time for a shadowy little teapot I had a value in the Thief-and-Demon-Market. Several stations had been attempting to buy my black talents.

Radio stations are like dogs tracking a bitch in heat. Where Dog-Leader runs there runs the pack, so that an entire city of radio stations may all at the same time be yelping ~~Country red~~

Country and Western or Music and News,
Network Sound or Rhythm and Blues,
Teenage Scene or Down on the Farm,
Road Show or Broadway or Breakfast Alarm,
Baseball and Football and Ice Hockey,
Or the yummiest and coziest Disc Jockey.

Dog-Leaders always win, it pays to Lead Dogs.
But Dog-Two is not discouraged. He scouts the back-
trail and yelps after another, slightly lesser scent.
Dog-Three and Dog-Four follow his example and settle
for what they can get. If worse comes to worst
there are always local preachers who get a big
charge from a microphone in the pulpit, and the
Radio Missionaries in Los Angeles and Oklahoma,
and News Commentaries by Divine Right Texas Oil
Monarchists.

Still it is a hard decision for those far
back in the pack, whether to follow Dog-Leader and
take what's left over, battle Dog-Two or Dog-Three,
or seek some lonelier and weaker bitch. Many radio
stations, especially little ones with a poor sense
of smell, have nervous breakdowns.

When radio stations crack up they go to the Oracle.
Delphi is too far away but fortunately the Oracle
has a branch office in every major American city.
Sick stations creep to the branch office and sacrifice

repeatedly and heagily and eternally and then
the Oracle saves them.

When Bob hired me to sell Vivaldi and Shakespeare
I knew nothing about Hooper and Pulse and bitches
and Delphi. In the advertising agencies they told
me. They said they could forgive a poor sense of
smell but our station was downright queer. They
told me to go see the Oracle. I didn't, but as it
happened every station that sought me was sacri-
ficing to the Oracle.

I chose the Better Music Station. Bob had
called our teapot the Good Music Station. Once
we had some advertisers the Oracle set upna Better
Music Station.

I felt flattered by the promotion to Better
Music. Good Music may be really Good but Better
Music is almost Major League. Walt, the Manager,
hired me. Walt is an idealist but as he said, if we
are to sell music to the masses we must make
temporary compromises. We mustn't scare off slobs
with Scarlatti. For the moment we must nurse them
along on Scheherezade and Victory at Sea and
Polovetzian Dances and the Spellbound Concerto and
an occasional movement from a Tchaikovsky symphony.

Walt made good sense. He also let me name
my own guarantee. Walt is a swell guy. I went on
tour and switched all my Good Music accounts to
Better Music.

Pounding around town selling Better Music frequently I wondered whether my future lay in the Major Leagues with the Oracle. I wondered how he got to be the Oracle. By asking questions here and there I quickly learned his secret.

The secret was absurdly simple. His power came from the secret being revealed to him at so early an age. Despite inherited wealth and social position he did not attend an Ivy school. Despite inherited big bones and muscles he did not attend a Football school. He chose an old college with a good name, a decayed and shrivelled and impoverished institution.

An endowment here, a country club party there, implications of future benefits everywhere, and with the barest minimum of mind and grace and effort academic honors and student body leadership showered down. Even in a league of struggling little schools where all-conference tacklers averaged 169 pounds his 225 pounds of fullback were no certain guarantee of superstardom, particularly since he was neither fast nor clever. But he was not only big. He was ruthless. He played fullback with 225 pounds and with two each knees, feet, elbows, fists and thumbs. ^{and} As a freshman led his school to an undefeated season. Each opponent also lost its next two games. No game of the following three seasons was close.

No rival player really tried to tackle him and rival ballcarriers invariably either slipped and fell or passed or lateralled or fumbled. He made Little All America three times and senior year was Honorably Mentioned in several Big All Americas and turned down an offer from the Bears.

Despite fame and family connections he did not go to New York or Chicago or Los Angeles. He began his radio career in a small Montana town owned by his father. After humbling the small Montana town he crushed underfoot a village in Idaho owned by his uncle and then conquered Eastern Washington and Southern Oregon, a juggernaut Fullback terrifying towns, frightening county seats into submission merely by hulking like King Kong on the horizon.

Supercilious as Seattle^{is} about hinterland hayseed, the haunted neurotics in radio laughed uneasily exchanging Tales of the Fullback. When he marched over the mountains they gathered in dark bars and whispered the latest rumors of his campaign, the Looting of Bellingham, the Burning of Chehalis, the Rape of Aberdeen.

When at last the Legendary Fullback approached Seattle the garrison opened the gates. Cried the trembling populace with one voice, Oracle! Oracle! Oracle! Sneered the Fullback, Crapheads!

Whenever a shattered radio station abased itself before the Fullback and made proper sacrifice he reached in his spittoon, pulled out a Program Schedule at random, flung it in the face of the supplicant and sneered, play it, craphead! He then filed an application with the FCC for a 50,000 Watt Clear Channel.

Whether the station was a wheezing 1000 watt daylighter with a transmitter handbuilt by Marconi, supported solely by revenues from Southern Baptist Evangelists on Missions to Convert the Northern Baptists, whether it was a 250 watt teapot in a mine-country ghost town, once the sacrifice was accepted the neurotic station found itself applying for 50,000 watts and a Clear Channel. A terrifying sensation and naturally the supplicant licked the Fullback's shadow and slobbered, Oracle! Oracle!

The Fullback kicked out the supplicant's teeth, sneering, oracles are crap. Any craphead can ask the FCC for 50,000 watts on a clear channel. Ask the FCC for anything. It's cheap. Ask for all other stations in the area to be shut down. Ask the FCC to drop dead. Whatever you ask from the FCC the application will pend months before preliminary examination, pend more months before preliminary recommendations, pend and pend for hearings, pend and pend for preliminary rulings, pend and pend and

pend for re-hearings, appeals, secondary rulings, appeals, final rulings, final appeals and final counter-appeals. Meanwhile keep busy asking the FCC for a 10,000 watt regional channel, unlimited hours, a 5000 watt three-directional channel, change in transmitter location. Ask for everything and anything and keep on asking and you'll get something you didn't have before and don't have coming. Oracle, hell! That's crap.

When a supplicant drooled praise of the Oracle's supernaturally inspired Program Schedule the Fullback sneered, crapheads! Did it ever occur to you crapheads to take a trip around the country? Stop off in a city and listen to radio stations and copy down schedules of the ones with the heaviest spot saturations.

The louder the Fullback sneered out the simplicity of his formula, the more insulting he was to his clients, the more he was feared and revered as a Supernatural Oracle.

I found an appalling joy serving the 50,000 Watt Fullback, this latterday Barrabas, Black Jew of Malta, who studied physic as a youth, and practiced first upon the Italians, enriching priests with burials, and after that was an engineer, and in the wars twixt France and Germany slew both sides equally. Then he became an usurer and with extorting, eozening, forfeiting, and tricks belonging to brokery, filled

the jails with bankrupts in a year, filled the hospitals with orphans, filled the graves with madmen cursing him to their suicide deaths.

Half a year, half a year, half a year onward, into the Oracle's darkness I rode, into the thrillingly cruel excitement, into the darkness where Music is Better, a Shadow in darkness where Music is Better, a Shadow in darkness where Music is Better than Good.

When my great friend Walt, station manager, left for the east questing National Advertising, he announced that during his absence the 50,000 Watt Fullback would allow each Account Executive a five minute audience.

It was the morning when we were to gaze upon the Fullback. We Account Executives waited in our Executive Suite. Our secretary appeared at the door, wide-eyed. She whispered my name. I was the first chosen! Fellow Executives were shaking my hand, murmuring good luck old man, take it easy, nothing really matters this much.

I was there, face to face with 50,000. He swung his arm and the wind toppled me into a chair. He was rustling papers on the desk. Snarled he, who are you? Gulped I, Marlowe. Snarled he, what are you drawing? Well, ah, \$500. Snarled he, what are you billing? I coughed and cleared my throat and his fingernails

clicked on the desk and I yelped, 1500! He rustled the papers grumbling to himself, draws 500, bills 1500, been here six months.

The 50,000 Watt Fullback raised his eyes from the desk. A full minute that legendary sneer was upon me alone. Then he chuckled, Marlowe, you're dead. Clean out your desk and pick up your check and turn in your key.

I had been a quaking hunk of unstable chemicals. Bombardment by the sneer and the chuckle made me a critical mass. I exploded. The mushroom cloud mounted through the stratosphere, the atomic bullets buzzed east to the Cascades, west to the Olympics, south to Portland, north to Vancouver, It was a humiliating experience. I was the Device at Ground-Zero but nobody noticed because I was a Shadow. They never saw the cloud, they never felt the bullets, because it was a Shadow Bomb.

Crawling from the wreckage I heard the Fullback saying, get out of here craphead. Your release is on file. My release? What did I release? The only thing I ever signed was my Guarantee. Good old Walt smiled at me over the martinis and told me to write any old number in the Guarantee blank. Who can read fine print while naming his own Guarantee?

A full year later most of my accounts were still on the Better Music air, bound by my contracts. A

full year later Better Music was broadcasting my spots. I had been an excellent investment.

Alice and I did not plan to fall down the rabbit hole or step through the looking glass. Anyway it was fun for awhile. But it would have been bad luck if we had not been able to wake up when the Red Queen wanted to cut off our heads.

I enjoyed Wonderland. We had many amusing and instructive experiences there. But what if our girlish scream had not turned the Red Queen and her troops into a pack of cards? What if I venture once more into Wonderland and this time the 50,000 Watt Fullback cuts off my head?

Wonderland charms the tourist who sees only the White Knight and the Mad Hatter, and the other benignly insane inhabitants. Wonderland is a nightmare for the natives for they know about the Red Queen, the 50,000 Watt Red Fullback Queen.

Banished from Wonderland, unemployable in the Real World, what is left to a Shadow not quite ready to diffuse in thin gas?

Build a mask, a clever mask, Pretend to be a Real. It is impossible to fool the Wonderlanders but Reals are unsophisticated. I answered every halfway reasonable help-wanted ad in every newspaper. I filed the story of my life with every employment agency. I wrote dozens of letters, scores of letters, hundreds

of letters. I was interviewed and interviewed and interviewed. I was interviewed by gentlemen who doubted my experience selling advertising would help me sell plumbing fixtures, by gentlemen who felt that after my high life in advertising it would bore me to sell corn flakes in Bremerton.

It was a trap, a classically perfect trap. Too old for Management Training Programs, not old enough to be a Manager, too much education for manual labor, not enough specialized education for any specialized occupation, not enough guts to go back to Wonderland.

We were nearing the end. I was a blundering Shadow. My most ingenious mask failed to fool the most naive Real. There had been too much entropy. I was too dim. The mask was a masterpiece but even the witless Reals could see there was nothing behind the mask but a diffuse gaseous Shadow.

Abby and I discussed British Columbia. New England Shadows became Oregon Reals, Cockney Shadows became Australian Reals. Could a Seattle Shadow become Real in British Columbia? It is not an easy frontier, it is sometimes harsher and crueller than the Real World or Wonderland. There is no Mr. Wall, no 50,000 Watt Fullback, but there is winter, there are mosquitoes.

In addition to answering every halfway reasonable help-wanted ad I began answering the unreasonable ads offering dignity and wealth to mature young me^o with no experience or aptitude. They all turned out to be jobs selling insurance. Fire insurance, flood insurance, earthquake insurance, wind insurance, lawyer insurance, doctor insurance, mortgage insurance, job insurance, cemetery insurance, insanity insurance, insurance insurance. Even life insurance, for Chrissake. And one night I was watching a TV Documentary about Hiroshima and just as the mushroom cloud climaxed the TV switched to the commercial and damned if Hiroshima wasn't being sponsored by the Everything Insurance Company!

But with mortgage payments two months behind, power, phone and milk bills four months behind, with Abby fending off family stargation typing all day in an office, with all these insurance people begging me to become dignified and wealthy selling their crap, I wavered. British Columbia or insurance?

If it had been only me alone I'd have just diffused into a Puget Sound fog. But Abby was still visible and Sally and Katy were so real I choked up watching them at play. I flirted with insurance people, I corresponded with the Government of British Columbia, I began answering not only unreasonable help-wanted ads but insane ads.

One day while I was home babysitting and writing various distorted versions of my life the phone rang. At least the phone was still ringing. There was a fellow talking about some job. Apparently I had applied for this job. As he continued talking dimly I recalled a publisher-type ad, one of those magazine promotion frauds. But as he continued talking it became apparent the ad had been honest. This was a genuine publisher.

We met over coffee the next day. I told about Douglas Fir and Billiard Balls and the 50,000 Watt Fullback. He told about Iowa Corn and Existentialism and the Circus Acrobat who married great wealth and became a Publisher. We recognized each other.

We Shadows learn to recognize each other by secret signs not to be revealed to Reals on pain of annihilation. The Reals persecute Shadows, Reals are Anti-Shadowistic. They have no evidence but they suspect we stick together. They suspect that if a Shadow should slip by the Real Security Forces and become firmly established he would smuggle other Shadows into the garrison, a Fifth Column. The Reals have no evidence but they are right.

I flew with Friend Shadow to a place called Manhattan. ~~In an airplane, unfortunately. It was a terrifying trip. Most of one entire day we were~~

~~four miles away from earth. I would never have survived without the bottle Friend Shadow carried in his briefcase.~~

no pp [Friend Shadow introduced me to a Shadow from Texas Oil, a Shadow from Atlanta Cotton, a Shadow from Los Angeles Smog, a Shadow from New England Culture and several Shadows from New York Money. He introduced me to our commander, Captain Shadow. I even met our prince, the Acrebat who ruled all we Shadows and didn't care because he, himself, was a Shadow.

It was delirium. A fortress captured intact by Shadows! I was safe, Abby was safe, Sally and Katy were safe, for we had battled safely through the ignorant Reals on the darkling plain.

I had labored hard for my enemies, the Reals. I would labor like Hercules for my friends, the Shadows. With my Company Car and my Expense Account I flung out into the wilds of the Northwest. In Oregon I sold books amid green farms of the Willamette Valley, brown basalt of the Columbia Plateau, dry pines of the Siskiyou, surf and mist of the Pacific. In Washington I sold books in the fog of Puget Sound, the rain forest of the Olympic Peninsula, the sun and sagebrush of the Inland Empire. In Idaho I sold books amid slag heaps and up and down the Snake River. In Montana I sold books in mountains of naked rock

and over the high sky-encircled plains.

For the security and glory and fortune of the Shadow Fortress I sold and sold and sold. Perhaps not every book was a masterpiece. But the most worthless book on the list was indubitably more valuable than all the air time I had ever sold. Sell, sell, sell, that is the thing, save our Shadow Fortress, no matter what we have to sell.

I was bursting with Wonderland-type plans to sell more. I was looking forward to December in New York, to displaying my ideas to our Captain. A week before the scheduled New York Conference our Captain wired me to meet him immediately in San Francisco. The wire plunged me into despair. I had sold too much. Captain Shadow would cry, congratulations, you are promoted to the East! I would have to say, I don't like the East, I won't leave the West. Could I make him understand?

My plane arrived late in San Francisco and our Captain had only ten minutes to catch his plane to Dallas. He had just finished firing the Los Angeles Shadow and was on his way to Dallas to fire the Dallas Shadow. He had only ten minutes to fire me.

Captain Shadow felt awful about speeding up my entropy but the editors had been bringing in nothing but lousy books and expenses had to be cut and if he didn't speed up my entropy the Acrobat would speed

up his. Cried I, is there then, my Captain, no loyalty among Shadows? Said he sadly, it's every Shadow for himself.

Our Captain rushed for his plane but first he gave me a phone number. Said our Captain, eyes averted, call him, he's a rich young Shadow and he has some sort of scheme going.

I meet the rich young Shadow and his staff of Schemers. It was altogether the jolliest crew of Shadows ever assembled. It was an exciting scheme, far beyond the dull wits of Reals, worthy of shrewd Shadows. We were doing what would never occur to a Real, we were selling Shadow Books. As if pursued by devils, not even taking time to admire the scenery, I campaigned for Paperback Snobbery in Washington and Oregon and Idaho and Montana, I even invaded Canada and California. While scouting the Wasatch Front and the Tabernacle grounds I was intercepted by a telegram announcing the bankruptcy of the rich young Shadow, the diffusion of our jolly crew of Shadows. There I was, destitute in Deseret, with many a weary mile to trudge along the Oregon Trail to the Homeland.

Vilhjalmur Stefansson says the Arctic is Friendly, and he says an adventure is a sign of incompetence. Ah, Vilhjalmur, it is true! I have adventured all my life and here I am, still adventuring one slippery step

from disaster. My schoolmates, my contemporaries, they have been quiet and competent and now gaze calmly down from solid castle walls, safe from robber barons and marauding barbarians.

Some were always Real and have grown more Real with the years. But some are Shadows, and that's the puzzle. How do they escape the pogroms, how do they keep entropy under control? Why am I the Shadow that always gets caught?

Vilhjalmur said it.

A Shadow is never safe, not even in a castle, surrounded as he is by Reals. A Shadow must build a most clever mask and never ever let it slip. A Shadow must be competent and conservative. A Shadow dares not adventure.

Come to think of it some of my Shadow friends do not have castles. I had almost forgotten them. Did Art get to New York? Whatever happened to Dr. Alexander? I've heard nothing from Bob since he went to Boston. Some of us have disappeared.

Incompetent Shadows adventure. Entropy gets them. Thin gas, that's all there is left.

There is no hope. I might last a month or two with the insurance gang, no more. The winters are cold up there in British Columbia. Incompetent as I am we'll all freeze to death before Christmas.

PART EIGHT

PRAYER

I don't want to pray, I want to forget these long years of wasted prayers.

The earth turns (with a wobble) on its axis and revolves around the sun and scampers with the solar system through the galaxy and swirls with the galaxy into eternity and whirls with the universe through infinity.

This is none of my business.

If the motions will leave me alone I promise never to pray again.

I will work a little when I can. I will build trails in our woods. I will love my Abby, my Sally, my Katy. I will drink a little beer when I can, or sometimes maybe quite a bit of beer. I will walk in the mountains but not very high. I will admire alpine flowers but only the colors. I will collect rocks seeing only minerals. I will sit by rivers hearing nothing but water. I will cook on campfires that are mere oxidations. I will sleep in nights that are simple darknesses.

I will read newspapers but only the comics and sports. I will not read newspapers as history-in-making.

I won't bother anybody.

I won't pray at all if only the motions will stop, if only the stars and sky and clouds will leave me alone I promise I'll leave them alone.

PART NINE

TERROR

LOVE

ADVENTURE

PRAYER

PART NINE

TERROR

Am I alone?

Is all this a shadow show in my mind? Are these people, these cities, these mountains, these clouds and stars, are these my inventions, the dreams of a desperate mind terrified by loneliness?

Or am I the invention? Am I the toy of a child turned cruel by eternities of loneliness?

I think that I am not alone.

I think there is at least one other in the world.

I hear no clear message but I sense a demon with me. Whatever this world turns out to be I think there is a demon with me in it.

The ~~dream~~^{demon} impels me forward, always forward. There is a suggestion of a promise. A promise of what? It is not clear, but as I understand the demon the promise is that if I drive forward, forward always, there will be something someday. There will be something someday, that is the promise. The demon does not promise it will be good. I feel it will probably be horrible.

There is also a threat. A threat of what? It is not clear, but as I understand the demon the moment I cease my forward drive, the moment I pause for rest, the world will instantaneously end, the whole bloody business will just stop and diffuse into thin gas.

What was a Dervish? Why did he whirl?

What was a Dionysiac? Why did he revel?

What was a Berserker? Why did he howl in battle, bite his shield, foam at the mouth?

What was a Crazy Dog? Why did fortunate young men of the Crow tribe don the garments of death and hurl themselves alone into the enemy ranks?

Is this the role assigned me by that lonely cruel mind? Is this why he pursues me with a demon?

A demon that threatens extinction if I pause, that promises some vague horror if I drive forward forever?

~~No~~, no, let us be calm, let us be clear. There is no Malignant Deceiver except me, the mind is mine, there is only me, and I am my own demon.

This is my dream, my world, and I'm damn sorry for it. But there was no one to teach me how to dream. I had to make it up as I went along. I made mistakes. I know it now. I took risks. I knew I took them. Things have come out against me. Therefore I have no cause for complaint.

I try, I really try. I keep trying to patch up the Dream. I want it to have a happy ending. Or rather I don't want it to end at all but go along serenely forever.

There was that explosion. Frankly I didn't see it coming. It went off when I wasn't looking and it shook apart my dream and scattered fragments all over hell. It is no pleasure to dream now, no solace for loneliness, it is weary work holding the dream together.

~~loneliness, it is hard work holding the dream together.~~ If I had known it would come to this

I'd never have dreamed at all, I'd have just talked to myself in the void and when the loneliness was too terrifying, I'd have screamed and screamed.

But I started the dream and I can't stop now. If I could sleep for a little while, if I could rest, gather strength, then I could pull the fragments together and patch up the dream. But if I sleep the dream will vanish. I've worked so hard on this dream I could never start another. If I go to sleep I'll wake up alone, alone forever and forever.

I must not sleep, somehow I must stay awake with my demon self, I dare not pause, I dare not doze, else all is lost forever...

PART NINE

LOVE

I load the machine with shirts and socks and samples of snake oil. I kiss all the lovely girls goodbye, strap into the cockpit, square my chin, wave gaily at the cheering crowd, seal the door, fire up the engine and blast off.

Through grey fog and green forest I soar toward the crest of the range. Over the top I dive into sunshine and dry pines, into a foreign land. Days and weeks will pass before I cross back over into my grey and green homeland. And this first day of my long journey without a goal, lonely journey without a purpose, I must travel hundreds of miles into foreign lands.

The machine will carry me without effort of mine. Gasoline explodes, pistons pump, gears whir, wheels roar, lulling me free.

The machine slows, the way is blocked by a nuisance of a town clogged with farmers puttering along in rustic Sunday finery.

The machine frets through the puttering crowds, escapes into the Gorge and hurtles around brown curves of earth swelling into warm sunshine, under dark ribs of columnar basalt, following the sinuous river.

The machine bursts out of the Gorge into another muddle of tractor-drivers, frets through and escapes.

I relax to suffer hundreds of miles of sunshine and sagebrush. Exploding and roaring the machine carries me effortless and weightless over the sagebrush plateau, the scorched basalt plateau. All this was molten once, hot lava secreted by the earth, flowing slowly in a smoking, steaming tide. The machine carries me past the little village that terrifies the capitals of the world, the little village that builds the BOMB. The machine carries me over the Columbia River, over water from Canadian glaciers, water from the Vaux Torrent of Sir Donald.

I cross over the fabled River of the West into Oregon, another foreign land and not the last of this journey. There are many more boundaries ahead, thousands of miles before I see the Homeland again.

Climbing the second mountain range of the day begins the loneliness. The Blue Mountains are the point of no return, even if my nerve fails. It is now too late to go home today.

The machine surges around brown ridges and into green gullies, upward to the summit of the Blues, up toward the sky. The earth expands westward to the sun, the earth falls away below, ^{the} fields of ~~the~~ black dirt and brown stubble and green wheat fall below into serene geometric abstractions.

At the crest, among steep cones of alpine trees, I cast one last glance over the Columbia Plateau

thousands of feet below. Here the pioneers wept and whooped and kneeled to give thanks. From here the pioneers descended gladly from the Blues onto the gentle plateau.

This is the Oregon Trail. I am on the Oregon Trail with the pioneers. But I am going the wrong way. I am moving into the past, toward the Great American Desert and the unmarked graves, toward the discouragements and defeats of the East that sent the pioneers West.

I am going the wrong way, I am rushing into the past. My future is behind me and I am returning into my past.

The sun is nearing the horizon behind me and I am journeying into the vanished sunrise. Behind me in my future there was a home but that grey and green home is two mountain ranges away and I am advancing into my past.

How many days, how many nights, before the demon allows me to go home? Many days, many nights, very many nights. Has the world that many days and nights left? The world is running down so fast, now. Perhaps there are that many days and nights left in time. But how many days and nights before I run out of entropy, before I am a thin gas? The dank green forests, the grey drifting fog, will I

ever see home again, will I ever kiss all the girls hello? Its a small chance.

It is the dreary town of Huntington that wipes away my last hope. I have crossed the Cascade Mountains, I have crossed the Columbia River, I have crossed the Blue Mountains and I am deep in foreign lands. I have survived all these crossings ~~into~~ foreign lands. But at Huntington I cross into ⁹foreign Time. Without any fault of my own except that I am moving toward the sunrise, into the past, I have lost an hour of life. It is one hour later than at home. At Huntington I become abruptly one hour older, an hour I did not have a chance to live. It is not fair, it is an undeserved cruelty.

The machine carries me deeper into this foreign Time, over foreign mountains and rivers. Home Time falls away behind me in the future, I dive toward the sunrise, lost in the past.

I am wandering in a foreign time, in foreign lands, over a foreign earth. I am an Ancient Mariner, a Flying Dutchman, an Odysseus, a Lucifer, wandering the world alone, condemned for an unnamed sin to wander the world forever.

I am alone. I have lost my home. Alone and disembodied, a light swift unblithe spirit, I follow the curves of the earth, the warm hills glowing in

the sunset.

I plunge into the blackness of night.

I soar out of night into a trembling sunset.
I follow the soft curves of earth, the exuberant
swells, the secret black canyons.

The luminous earth passes under me ever
more swiftly, I move faster and faster over the tawny
mounds and into the poignant darknesses, onward
and onward toward the past.

Over flaming tips of earth around and down
tawny flanks of earth into private shadows of earth
I explore my beloved earth.

Swiftly and gently over the soft flesh of earth
I go to a rendezvous.

Somewhere in the past near the sunrise there
is a culmination of all my loves. Somewhere among
these swelling curves of earth there is a rendezvous,
soon I will be no more alone, I will be once more a
single soul, the two of us reunited into one soul.

On beyond the last touch of sun deep into night
the machine carries me forward into the past.

It is night. My machine stares at the stained
concrete of the Oregon Trail. All around the narrow
stare of my machine is a black foreign night.

I have missed the rendezvous.

It was there, it was close, I felt it, I felt
her, she was there and she was living and warm, but
the machine carried me past. I wanted to stop, I

knew the place, I told the machine to stop, I screamed at the machine but the machine carried me deeper into night, too deep into the past.

I missed the rendezvous, the machine carried me past, she is someplace back there in the night, she is dead forever now, dead because I missed the rendezvous, dead because of the machine. . .

So here I am in a place called Idaho.

I am writing my name but it is not easy to write my name. The machine is cooling in the stable but I am still trembling from the flight over the mountains and rivers, over the earth, through time.

This is Idaho. It is Night in Idaho. It is Mountain Time in Idaho. I am alone in Idaho, in Night, in Mountain Time.

I carry my luggage into the room and shut the door. Here I am, alone in a motel room in Idaho wherever that is. Alone in Mountain Time whatever that is. Alone in Night and I know what that is. I am alone for I missed the rendezvous.

I am alone.

I missed the rendezvous and now she is dead forever and I am forever the lonely surviving half of our soul.

The world has many names for me. They call me Voter, Taxpayer, Mortgagor, Debtor, Policy-Holder,

Employee) They call me Son, Husband, Father.

They call me Friend, Acquaintance, Neighbor, Enemy.

I am all these things, half of me is all these things.

But my other half is dead forever, dead because I missed the rendezvous.

Half of me is a man fighting for survival in a foreign land, half of me is a doomed little girl crying because she's scared of Hell. . .

PART NINE
ADVENTURE

At least I don't own any stocks or bonds and haven't any money in the bank. What with all my mortgages and notes and instalment plans and charge accounts I stand to make a good profit when the thing goes bust. When we g^ot to the Moon and find out there isn't any Oil Can that will probably do it.

The world is really getting up speed these days. It turns a whole lot faster than when I was a kid. Now and then I start thinking about something else and forget to hold on and wake up some weird place. One time I drank a lot of martinis in San Francisco which is a place where girls stand on the bar and jiggle around taking off all their clothes. This could never happen in Seattle. Another time I was in Saskatchewan trying to sell snake oil but there was a terrible language barrier. I knew about Saskatchewan before I went there because that's where they have the CCF but frankly I thought it was on the other side of Manitoba. I can't remember what I was supposed to be doing in Los Angeles but one night I had a very interesting discussion about shrunken heads and poison arrows with a nice old lady. Afterward she wanted me to go home with her but I said Abby wouldn't let me sleep with old ladies. That must be why she stole my wallet, she was mad, but it isn't my fault

Abby won't let me sleep with old ladies. Utah is an interesting place. They have an angel there that's a moron and what really shocked me at first was that everybody admits it. They call him the Angel Moroni. He's made of gold and he stands on top of the Tabernacle.

I woke up in New York one morning just around the corner from the Village. This was a real thrill and I sent Abby a postcard saying, here I am in the Village. All our friends were very impressed.

It was so easy finding the Village I thought if I just kept walking around I'd probably stumble on all the other worthwhile places like Broadway and the Statue of Liberty and Wall Street and the Bowery and Grand Central Station and so forth.

I walked up Fifth Avenue for awhile but nothing much happened so I went over to Seventh Avenue. There were some old guys there on the sidewalk waving furs in the air and shouting at each other in some foreign language. I sent Abby a postcard saying, here I am on Seventh Avenue and there are people talking a foreign language. Everybody in Seattle was fascinated.

I also tried other Avenues. It was exciting to be on Madison Avenue and Park Avenue but they didn't look the way I expected so I went back to Fifth Avenue, mainly because we also have a Fifth Avenue in Seattle so it was sort of homey. All of a sudden

a street came in on the angle and the sign said Broadway. I sent Abby a postcard saying, here I am on little old Broadway. That sure shook up our friends.

It was a very hot day and I was getting tired and still hadn't found Brooklyn or the Metropolitan or Harlem or Central Park or the Empire State Building or the Bronx Zoo. Then I saw a big hole in the ground full of people eating lunch. I sent Abby a postcard saying, here I am in Rockefeller Center. It made her very proud to be my wife and she was pretty insufferable with the neighbors.

I decided that was enough for my first day in New York so I started back to the hotel. I was tired and wanted to try the subway because that would really give Abby a thrill, getting a postcard saying, here I am on the subway. But the way the sidewalks were shaking it sounded like Hell down there. I thought about taking a cab because after all I had an expense account but I'd taken a cab from the airline terminal the night before and the guy made me feel inferior.

So I decided to walk back. One nice thing about walking in New York is the girls. New York girls are fantastic. Some have green hair and many have blue eyelids and they are all undernourished and very sexy. They all give you a sexy look as if they want you to

grab them and kiss them and so forth right there in public. They all look like the playbabes the playboys play with.

The girls were sexier than hell but I was getting so pooped~~x~~ I didn't really care very much about girls and sex. Then I saw a bus go by. I didn't know they had busses in New York. I watched a few busses and they didn't look too scary so when I came to a bus stop I stood there. I stood there alone on the curb for half an hour or so and then suddenly a mob ganged up in back of me and a bus stopped and opened its door right in front of me. There was a wow of a girl pushing her hip against mine, she was really sexy with that hip. I wasn't trying to make time, I was just being a gentleman and that was all that saved my life, stepping back that way, because if I had caught the full force of her elbow in my solar plexus I'd have been killed. The crowd avalanched after the sexy babe but when I stepped up from the curb the door snapped shut on my nose and the bus blasted off like a rocket. A block or two later I got my nose out of the door and fell off into space. I expected to end up as a smear of blood but somehow managed to land on my feet, running.

New York girls are sexy but tricky. I tried a couple more buses but every time I almost had it made

some sexy little eighty-pounder aimed an elbow at me and I cleared out.

So I gave up and walked back to my hotel. Not that walking in New York is any cinch. Drivers and walkers have a big war on in Seattle like every place else in the world but in Seattle there are rules, and policemen take a positive stand that there is a difference between right and wrong. In New York the policemen don't take sides, they aren't even umpires, they just keep score.

Every time I go to New York I come home and go to bed for a week or so. Then I recuperate by hiking in our family forest with our Girl Gang. We hike along the Sally Trail and the Katy Trail and the Liza Trail. When we get bored with the old trails we have a work party and build a new trail. Sometimes we go to the mountains and slide around in the snow and throw rocks in rivers and pick blueberries and look at the pretty flowers and collect pretty rocks. Sometimes we go to the ocean and camp in the driftwood and all of us hold hands in a long line and run into the water and yell and scream when the surf breaks against my ankles and Abby's knees and Sally's chest and Katy's neck and naturally I grab Liza or she'd drown. We bring home a part of every mountain and beach we visit. We are building a family-size mountain meadow at home and also a family-size beach. Someday

we hope to buy a glacier and an ocean. *Just small ones, of course.*

Then I am in Montana again and ~~Chicab~~ and Utah and Denver and Idaho and San Francisco and Oregon and Alberta.

Then I have to go to New York again. This is the hellish thing about being an American, having to go to New York. There doesn't seem to be any way out of it. A Cardinal only has to go to Rome once, to pick up his hat, but Americans have to go to New York every few months. Maybe not all Americans but it seems to work out that way for me. I never have figured what they want with me in New York. Everybody gathers around and stamps and hollers while the Superchief and the Captain whoop it up about how great our brand of snake oil is and how Brand X and Brand Y are actually nothing but mint-flavored turpentine and Brand Z turns radioactive when exposed to television. Then our Sorcerers hold a seance and reveal new potions and curses and spells. Then we are granted audience with Father Benefactor and he speaks in tongues during the ceremony of laying on hands which confirms and renews our magic. Then they let us go home but our stomachs are so upset and our nerves are so bad it takes a week in bed to recover. I suppose the thing is that our Superchief and Captain and Sorcerers and even Father Benefactor couldn't stand it without us. Snake Oil Peddlers

exist, therefore we exist, that's all that keeps them from screaming in the streets. This probably explains New York. New York can't believe there is a New York unless there are guys always milling around town just in from Iowa and Texas and Seattle.

In a way New York is quite a great place. They have the opera there and the ballet and the Stock Market and Eddy Condon and the TIMES and so forth. I'd hate to see ~~anything~~^{anything} happen to New York and am glad to help keep it going. But frankly I don't know how many trips to New York I've got left in me.

For one thing you have to fly to New York. In an airplane. They are in a permanent sweat back there and won't let you take a train or a bus or hike like our forefathers. They were grand people, our forefathers. When they wanted to get someplace they walked or rode a horse but for darn sure stuck close to Old Mother Earth. God didn't give them wings so they stayed on the ground where He put them.

God didn't give me wings either but there I am, almost all the time, flying back and forth, back and forth, between Seattle and New York. In New York they think this is normal, flying around two and three and four miles off the ground. Whenever I tell my Captain I want Flight Pay like they have in the Air Force for anybody forced by his superiors to get off the ground my Captain stares at me like I'm crazy or

or a coward or something.

Naturally I am crazy and cowardly after logging more hours in the air than anybody but Eddy Rickenbaker but the Captain can't understand because he likes it up there. He is strange in other ways too and that is why he is our Captain. He even uses our Snake Oil which I happen to know is lemon-flavored nitric acid.

It took me years and years to learn the trick of flying to New York. I don't want any money out of it, I just hope to spare a few Shadows a little terror. You are taking off for New York at nine in the morning so you open up the airport bar at eight. This is the hard part and frankly it is pretty bad drinking three martinis at eight in the morning when you haven't even had breakfast. But once you're on the plane, if you make it to the plane, you don't care if the engines are on fire and when the earth drops out from under you shrug and say, it doesn't matter, if the airplane company doesn't kill me the gin will.

If you're still alive when the martinis wear off and if the airplane is still in the air and not smashed all over Mount Rainier or some town in Idaho, you pull a little bottle from your briefcase and everything improves. Better safe than sorry, though, it's a long flight to New York, so don't make the bottle too little.

One nice thing about flying is the safety of it. Up there in the sky you're really safe. Much safer than those guys down below you sitting in their bathtubs. Bathtubs have a terrible safety record. When my motel room turns out to have a bathtub I play it safe and dirty. You couldn't get me in a bathtub.

I'll admit I never heard of a bathtub smashing all over a mountain or being blown up by a good customer of the insurance people or losing a wing because there was a stupid engineer in the Wing Department. Bathtubs don't have wings.

But when you're in a bathtub you have decisions to make. Shall I take a bath? Shall I drown myself? Shall I go to work today? Shall I kill my boss? Shall I rape my secretary? Shall I buy a Volkswagen or a Renault?

When you're in a bathtub you also have things to worry about. What if I slip on the soap and drown? What if my deodorant fails and my boss fires me? What if my wife shoots me dead because my secretary raped me? What if my Renault won't start this morning in plain view of my neighbor with the Volkswagen?

Once you get into a bathtub you are in trouble. You'll make several decisions there that will lead you straight to disaster. Several terrible things will happen when you try to get out of the bathtub.

Everything is simple and safe up in the sky. You can't make any decisions that matter. You can decide between Ginger Ale and Coca Cola and Scotch and Bourbon and a Martini and that's all. Nobody can hurt you very much. Your boss can't say, you're fired! Your wife can't say, I don't love you anymore! Your bank can't say, we're foreclosing your mortgage! Your dentist can't say, we'll have to yank 'em all out!

You get so you feel sorry for the poor guys down there on the earth in their bathtubs. Up here the worst that can happen is a wing will fall off or a bomb will explode in the toilet where that creep locked himself in an hour ago or we'll be struck by lightning or collide with some jet out practicing how to defend our way of life. Something simple like that, that's the worst that can happen to us up here. Poor guys down there in bathtubs!

Also up here we have Two Older Sisters. They are sure beautiful and kind and loving. It would be swell to go to bed with them except they are our Mothers too so naturally I wouldn't do anything like that, being from Seattle and all. Also up ahead we have a Father and an Assistant Father. They are great pals, more like Big Brothers, and if they can't get us through nobody, not Walter Mitty or God or anybody, can do it.

If you bring along a big enough bottle in your briefcase an airplane is as good or better than the womb.

The trouble with both airplanes and wombs, of course, is that sooner or later they make you get out. And there you are in Manhattan again.

One evening I awoke in my hotel room. I thought about going someplace for dinner or breakfast or something. I thought about getting dressed, or taking a bath, or at least brushing my teeth. In the twilight I looked down to the streets of Manhattan. I couldn't do anything. Looking down into New York I couldn't do anything at all. Finally I managed to light a cigarette.

While we were stepping lightly up the cliff,
Our strength harmoniously balanced between the
strength of sky and that of earth,
While we were moving through the winds from space
Where stars are sudden flares in dark time,
Then as we in our youth climbed hard rock
and white ice toward the peak,
Then below us in the valley the river slowed
and warmed,
Stagnated and putrefied.
Firs and pines and hemlocks toppled, phlox and
lilies and campion shriveled,
And the glaciers melted and the mountain decayed.

The nearer we came to the summit the more
distant we were from the sky.

It was not a stream below us now, it was an
ooze.

It was not a cliff before us now, it was a
slobber.

It was not a sky above us now, it was a miasma.
But we were still roped together in a team,
we had set out for a climb,

And it is not a climb without a summit.

We climbed on and on through deserts and swamps
and stinking sky,

We staggering old men. . .

Okay, maybe it's not a poem but it is a hang-
over in Manhattan, right? There isn't any money in
poetry anyway, so who cares.

We Shadows, some of us, are managing to keep pur
entropy down and our masks up. But now that we have
families we're trying to pull together our experience
into a system of Shadow Laws, hoping to save trouble
for our kids.

Fred, who likes research and hiking in the moun-
tains, had to go to Cincinnati, there there aren't any
mountains, to do his research, and just when his
research was getting someplace a financial wizard won Fred
in a proxy war and since the research wouldn't sell for

~~For~~ a couple of years ^{and} the ⁺ sock would sell right away if earnings took a sharp jump Fred was promoted out of research. Since then Fred has started a lot of researches in a lot of cities nowhere near any mountains and been won and lost and traded back and forth in any number of proxy wars and stock swaps. Out of it all he has formulated Fred's Law, the Law of Maximum Unhappiness: among any two or more alternatives that one will be selected which is least ^{satisfactory} ~~beneficial~~ to everybody and everything concerned.

I argue with Fred that though his Law is true it's not really a Law, it's an Axiom like entropy. No Shadow has ever denied it, nor any reasonable Real.

Not that I want to run Fred down but my Law seems to me a genuinely creative contribution to Shadow Philosophy. Kit's Law, the Law of Minimum Effort, states: if a thing is not worth doing it is not worth doing well.

Now I believe any Law must be tested by its consequences. There were still guys laughing at Einstein until Hiroshima blew up. One reason I have so much faith in my Law is that since I announced it literally dozens of Shadows have disappeared in thin gas and even a few Reals have started to fade. These are positive results and all the more amazing because I haven't published anything yet, just given a few informal lectures, and at that the audiences were so

full of beer + was surprised they could follow my mathematics.

The major critique of my Law has been made by Andy. Now I don't want to run ~~Darry~~^{Andy} down but he is trying to get to the Moon and he takes my Law as a personal attack. I tell Andy the only reason he is trying to get to the Moon is because there's money in it and he doesn't want to get to the Moon, he wants to quit work and go to Europe and collect fine old wines and bring them back and go hiking in the mountains. He admits all this but then he says the only reason I announced my Law is that I'm a lazy slob unwilling to do any work at all, even if it means being able to retire into the mountains. He claims he is not as lazy a slob as I am and he doesn't mind working temporarily if the job is interesting.

If we ever get around to publishing in the learned journals it'll make a swell scrap because Andy's Law, the Law of Negative Value, states: unless a thing is not worth doing it is not worth trying to do it. I wouldn't be a damn bit surprised if Andy makes it to the Moon.

Actually my Law is more general and Andy's Law is just a Correllary, Andy's Correllary to Kit's Law. But Andy claims it's the other way around.

There are other Laws being studied to see if the mathematics are sound. Committees are considering Law X, if at first you don't succeed never ever try again; Law Y, mankind's capacity for stupidity increases exponentially with the number of people there are and the total amount of history; Law Z, ^{at} that moment_x when things seem darkest, kill yourself. In my opinion all of these can be deduced from Fred's Axiom and my Law, and maybe Andy's Correllary.

There are plenty of other Laws but some of us are too sick even for simple addition much less non-Dimensional Geometry and Indeterminate Logic and Game-Cheating Theory so we have a Committee to consider which Laws are worth consideration by committees. On the whole we Shadows are quite a bit like Reals. After all, when we were kids we all wanted to be Real.

Nobddy should get the impression we Shadows are selfish brats and don't give a damn about Other Generations. We read a hell of a lot of history. It matters to us, it really does, what hapened in Mesopotamia and the Sack of Rome and the Thirty Years War and the Long March and so forth.

We have kids and they matter to us and we worry about their Generation. We have folks, too, and they matter to us and we sympathize with them for getting lost. They had every right to get lost what with the American Frontier ending so suddenly and recently and the Flu

Epidemic and then one Republican president after another and having to drink all that French absinthe and bootleg whiskey.

We woke up in the Great Depression. We knew from school America was a great country and George Washington and Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson were all swell guys and we knew that if they had been around during the Great Depression they'd have been just like us, members of the Popular Front. The War was a nuisance. It wasn't entirely beside the point though, and in a way it was the point. So we put our revolution on ice and buckled down to get rid of Hitler and Tojo so that later we could peacefully exterminate the Mr. Walls and 50,000 Watt Fullbacks.

After the War there wasn't any Hitler or Tojo but the American Mr. Walls and 50,000 Watt Fullbacks were richer than ever and there wasn't any Popular Front left at all. We thought the BOMB might shake brains into nations. It didn't. To keep China off our backs we had to pump blood into the Japanese Mr. Walls and 50,000 Watt Fullbacks. To keep Russia off our backs we had to pump blood into German Mr. Walls and 50,000 Watt Fullbacks.

The Great Depression, the War, the BOMB, a Brushfire War, a bigger BOMB, a Cold War, more and

bigger BOMBS, more Brushfire Wars, and now everyone is simply out of their minds trying to get to the Moon. It's all been very interesting, simply stunning.

I'm not Lost. I'm Stunned. I keep thinking I should have a message. But I don't have any message. Except, of course, that we are all doomed. But everyone has always known that. If the TIMES came out with a scare headline, WE ARE ALL DOOMED, what would happen? The Dow-Jones Industrial Averages would go up a few points.

One thing about being stunned. Our folks were kicked in the stomach and naturally they gagged and gasped and had that Lost Feeling. We were kicked in the head, and we saw stars, and it's a hell of a thing to see stars.

We're still stunned but we're getting used to it and are learning things our Lost parents missed, busy as they were scrambling for our next meal.

We know that many of our leaders were sincere and high-minded and intelligent youngsters but looking at the competition, and knowing Gresham's Law (bad guys always win, nice guys finish last, it pays to shoot straight) they became stupid, grovelling hypocrites. It matters not the slightest whom we elect. Whoever is leading when history demands a decision will make the decision demanded

by history. There is never more than one possible decision, if that many. Democrats or Republicans or Vegetarians, leaders stupid and grovelling and hypocritical by nature or leaders stupid and grovelling and hypocritical from necessity, the momentum of history makes their policies. Wise and obvious policies may be theoretically possible but leaders make the stupid decisions forced by history. As candidates for high office they may be Republican, Democratic or Vegetarian, but once elected they are merely leaders, flecks of foam on the crest of the wave.

A Stunned Shadow knows that A^etius, Tom Jefferson, Abe Lincoln and FDR were wasting their time. If Attila and his horde of Huns and Ostrogoths had overwhelmed the Last Roman at Chalens America would still have been discovered. If the Redcoats had crushed the Revolution the frontier would still have rolled to the Pacific. If the Confederacy had won independence there would still have been a Great Depression. If Europe had been retained by the Nazis and Asia by the Neo-Shoguns there would still be a BOMB.

History constantly gives the illusion something big is up, matters may go this way or that, we are at the Crossroads having a Great Debate. (Who knows what illusions lurk in the mind of man? The Shadow

Yawk! Yawk! Cackle! Whaeze! Gasp! The Shadow knows!)
 The Shadow knows all roads lead to the **Arena** and
 the **Catacombs of Rome**.

Look at **Egypt**. One damn **Dynasty** after another,
Pyramids all over the place, thousands of years of
 effort and trouble and expense and they end up with
King Farouk and **Colonel Nasser**. The **Greeks** whipped
 the **Persians** at **Marathon** and **Salamis** but then
Alexander marched east and **Mohammed** marched west
 so it came out the same. **Martel** discouraged the
Moors at **Tours** and **Ferdinand** and **Isabella** and
 the **Inquisition** finished the **Reconquest** and thereby
 left **Spain** wide open for **Generallissimo Franco**. **Joan**
of Arc so badly embarrassed the **English** they went
 home, making it possible for the **French** to have
 numerous **Revolutions** and **Empires** and **Republics**
 and also **Algeria**. **Elizabeth** smashed the **Spanish**
Armada and **Wellington** stared down **Napoleon** at **Waterloo**
 and **Churchill** orated the **Luftwaffe** away and in
 spite of the **Light Brigade** and the **Black Hole** of
Calcutta **England** is full of **Angry Young Men**. **America**
 has had the worst luck of all. **Plymouth Rock** and
John Paul Jones and **Manifest Destiny** and **Thomas**
Edison and **U.S. Steel** and **Making the World Safe for**
Democracy and ^{and} even the **BOMB** and then **Venezuela** throws
 garbage at our **Vice-President**.

the Model T and
 a New Deal and
 the Arsenal of Democracy

Abukir, Acre, ^{Actium,} Adrianople, Aegospotami, Agincourt, Aix, Alamo, Almansa, Amchitka, Angora, Antietam, Argonne, Armageddon, Atlanta, Augsburg, Austerlitz, Balaklava, Bannockburn, Bataan, Benevento, Berlin, Blenheim, Bonhomme Richard, Borodino, Bosworth, Bougainville, Bouvines, Brandywine, Bremerhaven, Bug, Bull Run, Bunker Hill, Cadiz, Cambrai, Cannae, Caporetto, Carchemish, Cassino, Cawnpore, Chalons, Chapultepec, Chateau Thierry, Chattanooga, Chevy Chase, Cold Harbor, Concord, Contreras, Copenhagen, Coral Sea, Courtraix, Coventry, Cowpens, Crecy, Culloden Moor, Cunaxa, Custozza, Czernowitz, Damietta, Dienbienphu, Dresden, Droghoda, Dunkirk, Edge Hill, Eggmuhl, El Alamein, Erzurum, Eakischeher, Essling, Ethandone, Eurymedon, Evesham, Eylau, Falkirk, Falkland Islands, Flodden, Fontenoy, Fort McHenry, Fort Sumter, Fredericksburg, Freiburg, Friedland, Gallipoli, Gaugamela, Gaza, Gettysburg, Granada, Granicus, Guadalcanal, Guernica, Hamburg, Harpers Ferry, Hastings, Helgoland, Heracles, Hippo, Hiroshima, Hogue, Hohenlinden, Hydaspes, Inchon, Inkerman, Ipsus, Issus, Iwo Jima, Jena, Jerez, Jericho, Jerusalem, Jutland, Kadesh, Khartoum, Killiecrankie, Kirk Killisain, Kolin, Konniggratz, Kossovo, Kulikovo, Kunersdorf, Kut-el-Amara, ^LKegnano, ^LKeipsig, ^LKeningrad, ^LKeporto, Lexington, Leyte, Liaoyang, Liege, Little Big Horn, Lodi, London, Lookout Mountain, Louisburg, Lucknow, Lundy's Lane,

Lutzen, Madrid, Majuba Hill, ^MMaleventum, Malplaquet, Malta, Manila Bay, Marathon, Marengo, Marne, Marston Moor, Melegnano, Midway, Mobile Bay, Mohacs, Mountain Meadow, Musa Dagh, Nagasaki, Nancy, Narva, Naseby, Naupaktos, Navarino, Neva, New Orleans, Nineveh, Normandy, Okinawa, Omdurman, Oriente, Orleans, Oudenarde, Oxford, Pavia, Pearl Harbor, Petersburg, Pharsala, Phillippi, Phillipine Sea, Plassey, Plataea, Plattsburg, Ploudir, Poitiers, Peltava, Prague, Prestonpans, Quatre Bras, Quebec, Quiberon Bay, Ramillies, Batisbon, Ravenna, Remagen, Rome, Roncesvalles, Rossbach, Rostov, Rouen, Saipan, Salamis, Samarkand, San Juan Hill, Saratoga, Seattle, Sedan, Sedgemoor, Seoul, Seringapatam, Shipkar, Shrewsbury, Sinai, Smolensk, Somme, Spion Kop, Spotsylvania, St. Albans, Stalingrad, Stamford Bridge, Steptoe Butte, Stirling, Stony Point, Suez, Sybaris, Syranuse, Taku, Tanagra, Tarawa, Tannenburg, Tell-el-Kebir, Teutoberger Wald, Tewkesbury, Thapsus, Thermopylae, Ticonderoga, Tippecanoe, Tokyo, Tours, Trafalgar, Frasineno, Trenton, Tripoli, Troy, Tshushima, Tugela, Turin, Ulm, Ushant, Utica, Vera Cruz, Verdun, Vicksburg, Vigo, Vienna, Wagram, Wake Island, Washington, Waterloo, Wilderness, Worcester, Xanthus, Yalu, Yorktown, Ypres, Zama, Zara, Zorndorf.

Who won all those battles? Who won all the wars?
Who won the 14,514 wars of the last 6000 years?

Nobody but entropy. In every war both sides are defeated.

But entropy cannot be thwarted by avoiding war, even if that were possible, for nations are defeated in peace by their leaders and even if leaders could be wise, which they can't, they could only slow us down slightly, or detour us briefly, on our way to the inevitable destination. Neither wisdom nor energy nor luck can deflect history for history is mankind and mankind has been fed up with life since the discovery of abstract thought. The only reason mankind stayed in business after inventing the Wheel and Fire, and hasn't filed in bankruptcy after Rockets and the BOMB, is the Continuing Debate, the First Great Debate, and the Last. Which way out is best? War? Pestilence? Famine?

Even for one lone man it's a tough choice between gas and gravity and a gun and sleeping pills and a sharp blade drawn over the throat in a swift rehearsed reflex.

If a lone man debates twenty or forty or sixty years, why be surprised if the billions of mankind with millions of sub-committees and thousands of committees and hundreds of executive committees and scores of Chairmen, why be surprised if mankind debates for thousands of years?

There has to be another War unless we can create new diseases faster than we destroy the old ones or

breed people faster than we grow food. Quite a few Reals are worrying about whether there will be another War, the Last War. Shadows know it doesn't matter whether or not there is a War. The future is guaranteed by the Law of Maximum Unhappiness.

What if Russia greeted us at the Summit saying, you win, we quit, you are the best, we belong to you, please send us governors. So we ship over a jetload of governors but before they land in Moscow our paranoid economy has collapsed and we're screaming, okay, you win, we quit, for the love of Lenin send us governors. So they ship us a jetload of governors but before they land in Washington Russia has collapsed.

Peace, genuine Peace, would destroy civilization as we know it.

So would War, genuine War.

What if we muddled along with Brushfires and Disarmament Conferences and Cold Wars and Summit Meetings until mankind lost the memory of Peace and War and knew only Ceasefires and Negotiations? Then we would still have Mr. Walls and 50,000 Watt Fullbacks, though in half the world they would be called Comrade Walls and 50,000 Watt Commissars.

We Shadows would still be Shadows. Even in Plato's Republic the Philosopher-Princes are Reals.

Only anarchy allows human happiness. Humans are incapable of anarchy. Therefore human happiness is impossible. I accept this syllogism. The ~~pr~~ premises are true and the conclusion is valid. I refuse to be confused by facts or logic. Facts are irrelevant. Logic is unreasonable. All attacks on anarchy consist of logically-organized facts. Anarchy is not based on fact or logic. Anarchy is not organized. Anarchy is indestructible because when our positions are attacked we aren't there anymore. Anarchists are perfectly safe because we can't be found, we aren't anything, we aren't anywhere.

It goes without saying that any Shadow still visible is an Anarchist. It's the very top rank like Eagle Scout or Thirty-third Degree Mason or ex-President or Cardinal. Nobody or nothing can take it away from you except the BOMB.

Naturally all bets are off once we get to the Moon because we'll ship up a rocket full of apples and sugar and cinnamon and Instant Crust and Betty Crocker and then, just like the long-haired preachers have been promising all along, there will be pie in the sky in the sweet bye and bye.

Don't try to argue with me because I won't argue. I'm right and anyone who needs convincing is too stupid to drink at my table. But don't take it

too much to heart because frankly I don't know what I'm talking about. I know nothing about anything. Except that the Cosmic is Comic and vice versa.

I am walking stupidly backward up a trail into strange new mountains. Any step may be the last, I may tumble over a cliff. But I am fascinated by the view. When I was down there in the valley, in the trees, I saw only trees. Now I can see plunging waterfalls, stark cliffs, sky-splitting peaks, peak-gouging ice. The close country is obscured by trees but the distant landscape lies naked as a map.

Do I tell the truth about what I see? I don't know. Certainly I do not tell facts unless they fit my truth. Truth comes first. Every person, every nation, every generation, reconstructs past facts to fit contemporary truth. One must first of all construct a truth, then tailor facts to fit. Raw facts are lumps and gaps and bulges and sags, there are too many here, not enough there. One must amputate and compress, one must invent and inflate.

As with a woman. First we construct our image of her beauty, and then with corsets and brassieres and stockings and belts and bustles and falsies and flounces and paints and bleaches and dyes and razors and curlers and tweezers and scissors and calicos and silks and shawls and sheathes and sacks and buttons

and bows and hats and high heels and sandals we
fashion from her formless flesh our image of her
beauty.

PART NINE

PRAYER

I decided to seek terms. Perhaps something could yet be salvaged. If not, obliteration would be no worse than slinking and skulking.

Beside the loud river at the end of the forest road I stowed food and gear in the Trapper Nelson. Seeing my bed and board for a week all in one snug bundle brought back the Great Trips of the Glory Years. First mountain sunset from Marmot Pass, first venture two miles above sealevel on Glacier Peak, first exploration of the third mile on Rainier, bounding down hard Sir Donald quartzite high in Canadian sky. And also the Thanksgiving Day Sally and I climbed Mt. Rainier and the retreat from the Lillian Glacier and Joe and I chortling in fog and snow at Heather Lake while our friends were in the school lunchroom and Dr. Alexander explaining the habits of mosquitoes in Grand Valley and Abby and I sleeping in the meadows beside the Anderson Glacier and Sally and Katy splashing in Lake Anne below the cliffs and ice of Shuksan.

And Forbidden and the retreats, flights, disasters, humiliations.

But by the river in forest I was safe. The sky was far away. And perhaps the terms would be generous, perhaps this would be the first great trip in a new cycle of Years of Glory. I pulled on boots and without even the customary last cigarette hoisted pack and without the usual slow warming-up steps ran from the car,

delighting in the jolt of boots on frail, crush of pack on back, gasp of lungs for air, geysers of sweat spouting from every pore.

Delight drove soft muscles and slothful blood three swift miles before the first collapse. I buried my face in rowdy water and breathed white froth.

Now sweat was chilled and it was night and in the river an army marched, the Sergeant counting cadence. I shivered and fled, but slowly for now there were switchbacks. Plod step by step upward to the east, turn, plod step by step upward to the west, turn, plod east, turn, plod west, turn, fall into soft earth, wipe sweat from eyes, gasp gold air, listen to the immense night, probe suspicious sounds with nervous flashlight. The river is roaring far below. The forest is black and silent. Almost silent, but not quite. The flashlight is growing dim. More switchbacks and more plodding and sweating and then more gasping and listening. The flashlight fades and I cannot see nor can I hear suspicious sounds. I unroll my sleeping bag on the trail and sleep.

Snowflakes melting on my face, wind roaring past my ears, cloudscrap dimming close green alpine firs to distant grey spectres. Upward one more, plodding through the summer blizzard above timberline, deeper into wailing cloud, over naked grey meadows to shelter. Firewood all soaking wet, heavy sky sweeping the surface of the black lake, gusts of snow invading the leanto.

Once more into the bag, dear friends, one more. Creep out in loud night and stew up a small pot of gruel over a scared little flame then once more into the bag, once more into the warm bag. Morning again but snowing still. Satisfy urgencies of body chemistry then once more snuggle deep into the warm bag. Sleep out the day, sleep out the week, never retreat, sleep out eternity if need be.

An explosion of light. White meadows glared into my cave, meadows now changing by some swift magic to green, and the sky was blue. Why is the sky blue?

After twenty-four hours in the bag it was slow, stiff work but I pulled on damp boots and crept out into the sun, blinking. There were still swift white billows close above and cold wind rippling the lake but there was blue sky and sparkling grass and warm sun.

I could not go very far because the weather might close back in. But it's difficult to sleep after twenty-four hours in the bag. A little exercise would help. I could not go all the way so there was nothing to fear. But scouting the first part of the route would help me get back to sleep. One senile step at a time, leaning heavily on my ax, I set out on the trail leading upward from the lake.

Out of the snug safe lake basin the trail climbed around a shoulder. Ahead the brown trail slashed across a steep green meadow. Very steep and very green,

and the brown slash was narrow. But knees were solid and pulse steady. Cautiously head turned, chin lifted, eyes rose grassblade by grassblade upward. Neck bent, heels and ax dug deeper in dirt, eyes contoured slowly upward to the boundary between earth and sky, the green dancing line, the blue frozen backdrop, ~~green~~ grass dancing on blue sky. *Nothing happened!*

Therefore I took a chance and left the security of the trail and climbed straight up through meadows. Few flowers were in bloom except phlox. I traveled twenty years in mountains and never saw the phlox. It seems incredible now, but after all, for many years I saw no flowers, only dots and lines and splashes of color in that misty-mid-region between low forests and high rocks and snows. When I began to look steadily into the color and separate the parts I first admired the flamboyant flowers, Indian Paintbrush, ~~Columbine~~, avalanche lily. These and a dozen other berserkers I learned over the years. Then one evening descending from a long weary climb I fell facedown in a cluster of white blossoms. It was a familiar flower, I remembered ~~having~~ lived with this flower twenty years. But the blushing adolescent, however ardent, needs to be seduced. And the grown animal, however hungry, hunts fullness and brightness. Phlox is a simple, quiet flower, a classic flower, most often purely white though frequently

with a modest hint of understated blue. Phlox is a formal flower, ceremonious as a tomb, but invalids after great pain sometimes find themselves incited by phlox to feelings of passion.

I climbed green grass and white phlox into dry heather and scree. The summit was only a thousand feet above but the summit was immersed in wild cloud. I could not go there. Still, nothing had happened yet. I could scout the route a bit higher. Certainly nowhere near those clouds. Even in the phlox a cloud might be disastrous.

I climbed ~~by~~^{dry} heather and scree into full-blooming heather. I climbed into a miracle. Signs and portents? In a quarter-century of mountaineering I had never witnessed such heather. Or is it I had never before looked so closely at heather? There were sparkling bells of white heather, warm bells of violet heather, radiant bells of yellow heather, all in full climax of blooming. Here was a hillock of luminous yellow, there a gully of glowing violet, there a wall of gleaming white. And there were ridges of mingled yellow bells, white bells, violet bells whipped and woven together by waves of cold wind.

I climbed heather bells to snow. I stopped, blinking at the brilliance. Now the summit was only a few hundred feet away and rarely did a cloud

obliterate the summit. But the snow was steep. And having paused I now saw the heather bells below were also steep and below the heather was the white streak of the Suiattle River a falling mile under my eyes and now I heard the roar and the echo of the roar and the re-echo.

I shook my head and kicked huge buckets in the snow, at each step ramming my ax deep lest the earth should lurch while I was poised in dubious balance on the slippery white waste.

Above the snow were heather bells again, but steeper than before, steeper than the snow and more brilliant than the snow. And the river under me, a plumb-bob mile beneath me, was louder than before. Solid heather handholds maintained my balance on tiny ledges on the heather wall leaning out over the river. A dozen yards above was the crest, a sharp blade of rock slicing blue sky. A dozen yards, and nothing has happened!

Then a cloud smashes against the summit and grey fragments tumble down swallowing up the heather bells and I clutch heather and bury my face in white bells, yellow bells, violet bells.

The wind sighs away. I am still here. But this is only a scouting trip and I have scouted far enough. As soon as it is safe I will go down. I sneak a glimpse. No cloud on me. No cloud below, only heather and the river. And no cloud above me either, only

the splinter of rock in blue sky. Rest a moment to make sure it is safe. There are clouds but none close. Now it is safe. Now I will go down.

Down? Yes, down. But there is more heather above. Heather is safe. A shame to quit before the heather does. Very well, I will scout to the end of the heather and then tomorrow, if the clouds are gone, I will do the rock.

Now there is no more heather. The crest is twenty feet away. The sky is shocking. A terrifying blue, and close. What makes the sky blue? Those swift clouds barely missing the crest, those damnable clouds unsettle the earth. It is trembling. It might be about to start turning. If only the clouds would go away! And the wind! Just when my balance is good the wind snatches and pushes.

Twenty feet to the crest. Twenty feet of rock. A few chunks of frost-wedged lichen-blackened rock. White swirling mysteries drive close overhead. A grey terror may blot out the world without warning. Earth may turn ~~at~~ any moment. It is only twenty feet to the sky. What makes the sky blue? I have never seen the sky so blue? Why so blue? Signs and portents?

But it is only twenty feet. Even if earth spins me dizzy and wind whirls me into mindlessness and clouds blot me out and blueness blasts me into

screaming mania after all these years I can crawl twenty feet. I can close my eyes and clutch rock and scream and squirm twenty feet even in the ultimate vortex of all my terrors and loves and adventures and prayers and maybe these are the terms, maybe this is how it will always be. Better to know. Better to know once and for all.

The sky is just above my hands and nothing has happened yet. One more step. I clutch the crest, pull it toward me and look over the crest into the blue. Earth is heaving up and down, lurching and swaying, but earth is not turning. One more step and I am head and shoulders into sky. Wind is pushing and cloud is roaring close but one more step and I am head and shoulders and hips into sky and nothing has happened yet.

If I step once more I must take my hands from earth, I must stand on the crest entirely in the sky, nothing holding me on earth but the friction of my boot-soles. One lurch then or one push then or one horizon-blotting whiff then and I am gone. Lurch, then, damn you earth! Push, you wind! Blot, you cloud! This close I will not stop!

I step up onto the crest, brace my feet, and then I relax my fingers and slowly loosen my grip on earth. Now slowly, very slowly and carefully I stand erect, balancing delicately on the crest in

the wind under the swift clouds. I do not see, I do not hear, I do not breathe, I do not think but I stand erect, I stand on the crest, I stand upright in the middle of the sky! And nothing happens!

I try a slow, deep breath and nothing happens. I brace my feet and stiffen my knees and spine and lift up my chin and breathe again, and again, steady, steady as she goes. Stiff and steady, never relax, it was when I fell asleep on Forbidden the earth first turned.

Earth has a gelatin-feel, wind is pushing, clouds are racing close and the blueness is worse than ever. But nothing has happened. Good enough! Accept the terms! Quit before disaster! Go down!

But nothing has happened. And in the old days I always had an hour on my mountain, in the sky, my summit sackout-and-feast. Do the terms allow summit sackouts?

Slowly, muscles under tight control, making no sudden motion lest I jar the earth, I scan the complete circle of the horizon. Steady, all steady, several minor tremors but all steady, steady as she goes. I sit down and slowly pull a candybar from my pocket and chew it with tight jaws, swallowing dry. I light a cigarette and warily enjoy the view north to Dome Peak, east to Bonanza, south to Glacier, west to Puget Sound, and down into the deep green hole of

the roaring Suiattle River.

I am looking down to the serene Suiattle a mile below when I sense an immanent tilt. It is about to tilt, I will be looking straight down a plumb bob mile to that white streak. I sweat, I puff hard on the cigarette, I clench the crest with my buttocks, I will fight!

I am ready for ~~that~~ tilt, I will fight the tilt! But earth does not lurch. Earth turns ever so slowly and the crest leans toward the valley and leans ever so steadily farther out over the river--and--I don't remember. I don't remember quitting. But I was in heather bells.

I was flat on my back in heather bells with solid mountain against my boots and buttocks and brain-case. I was lying in heather and it wasn't steep at all and I was looking out over the dark valley at brown clouds and white clouds and pink clouds sailing slowly from the Pacific toward the Great American Desert, sailing under a distant pale sky.

The heather bells were not steep. The snow was so flat I skated down without my ax. The terms were magnanimous. If I was no longer an empire at least I was still ~~s~~omething. After so disastrous a campaign I was lucky not to be pillaged and massacred and burned to the ground, ploughed under and

sterilized with salt and expunged from the history books.

I did not need the trail. I followed out the ridge toward the lake, side-hill gouging snow and scree close under ragged rocks of minor summits, then along a rounded crest of flowers. Long strides toward the sunset, kneedeep in lush grass and swimming flowers. Suiattle Valley to the left of me, the river roaring far below, Sulfur Valley to the right of me, the creek roaring far below, onward and downward I strode.

Sunset chargedⁿ clouds from swift cold threats to slow warm promises and howling wind to soft breeze and the horror of close blue sky to a distant wall, a benign ally against infinity.

In the touch of sunset white flowers became more than white, they became Whiteness, and around me was Blueness and Redness and Pinkness and Yellowness and Violetness and Greenⁿess. Soft winds stirred colors into a single swarm of Colorness.

Bounding along up to my knees in swimming richness of color with sky all around and sun falling in the west and the last scraps of cloud become ethereal flames, the soft cold wind on my cheek, I lost my body. I was blown through waves of the sea of color by cold winds from the snow, blown through flowers and sky and sunset.

The terms are excellent. More than generous. Only a few hours ago I clung to the brown slash of trail and scarcely dared raise my eyes to the meeting of grass and sky. And now I am on that boundary, I am hand and shoulders and hips in the sky with sky to the left of me, sky to the right of me, sunset ahead of me.

But also I am up to my knees in grass and flowers, and I do not want to leave the earth. The sky and clouds are magnificent but it is more marvelous to be within the rich color of earth, to be accepted by the earth.

In twilight I paused for the alpenglow on Glacier Peak, my first volcano. When the last poignant tremble of color faded, when it was a tall white presence above black valley night, I ran down dark meadows to the lake.

Did I eat supper? Did I sleep? I remember only the day, nothing of the evening or night. Just as I climbed up and down Sir Donald over and over again now I climbed up and down phlox and heather bells and brilliant snow and frost-wedged rock and the ridge of sky-washed Color.

Who won at Canossa? The Pope snug in the castle or the Emperor on his knees in the snow? The defeated Emperor craved terms. The victorious Pope granted terms. But who won?

The earth was solid, there was not a whisp of cloud nor a whisper of wind and the immensely-distant sky held only the merest hint of blue. Fourteen scorching miles of all too solid downtrail fried my feet and melted my bones and charred my lungs and dried my blood to dust and shrivelled up my brain and jolted it loose and rattled it around inside my skull. Punchdrunk and dessicated I came to the river. But I did not fall face down in the river.

On a hot sandbar by the swift cold water I stripped off the foul-steaming filth-begrimed garments of the ordeal. Naked flesh flinched at the touch of incandescent sand, mouth and mind and lungs and blood frembled with lust for the cold water. But still I did not fall into the river.

Sun-scorched sand blistered my stinking exterior, close loud cold water tantalized my chemically-deranged interior but still I withheld the river.

Then, howling in the mad joy of victory, screaming in cold shock, I immerse in the river, rolling around rocks come down from the peaks, gulping water from the glaciers, cleansing my exterior and renewing my interior with the river that only yesterday was a narrow white line through the forest, a fearful echoing roar a plumb bob mile under the heather bells I clutched, dreading the long fall into outer space.

Now I am part of that roar, I am yelling and hollering within that narrow white line and from freezing water looking beyond tall green trees a vertical mile to a crest of rock and snow and color and if anyone is up there now listening to the roar, part of that roar is me! And you guys down there analyzing Puget Sound, don't blame the sewers and pulp mills, not today. That pollution, today at least, is me! A yawker, a genuine copper-plated yawker!

I laughed all the way home. Home to where the Marlowe Girls, Abby and the Weird Sisters, frolic and play. Home, and a letter from Fred, unexpectedly paroled from Pittsburgh. Home, and a phone call from Andy, temporarily disillusioned about the Moon.

Wonder on wonder, miracle on miracle. I come down from the sky and Andy from the Moon and most amazing of all Fred escapes Pittsburgh. Years ago we asked, when shall we three meet again in thunder lightning snow and rain? Years ago we answered, when the hurly burly's done, when the battle's lost and won. Where the place? Upon the heath. We three Shadows for sure and maybe Mister Macbeth. Fair is foul and foul is fair! Hover through the fog and the filthy air!

And so we three, Snake-Oil-Peddler and Stock-Hydration-Researcher and Off-Target-Moonshooter,

climbed through thunder lightning snow and rain,
 the battle lost and won, to a ledge of heather
 on the top rim of a cirque at the foot of a snow-
 field. There in the help and the filthy air we
 pitched our hovering tarp. Then once more into the
 bags dear friends, once more into the forty-hour
 sleep. There we laid us down to sleep and prayed
 the BOMB our souls to keep and if diffused before
 we woke we hoped the world might notice our smoke.

Thunder and hail in the day--sleep, Shadows,
 sleep. Lightning and gale in the night--sleep, sleep.
 Soft snow at morning, climber take warning and sleep,
 sleep. ✓ Foggy noon, hurricane moon, so sleep sleep
 sleep sleep. All work and no sleep makes Jack a
 dull creep. Sleep, climber, sleep, for who knows
 what mountains rise when we have shuffled out our
 mortal sleep into that wakefulness from which no
 climber returns without sunburn, sore feet, snow-
 blindness, stomach sickness, stretched ligaments,
 or even summits? Who knows what secrets sneak
 around the sky? (Yawk! Yawk! Cackle! Wheeze!
 Gaspi) The Shadow knows!

I knew, there in the safe warm bag, I knew about
 the sky. The terms seemed generous at the time but
 what about Canossa? Who won? What about the river?
 Baptism or blasphemy? Had I violated these terms?
 Sleep, Shadow, sleep, and may choirs of gas diffuse
 the safely in thy bag.

Rain at seven, floods at eleven,
 so sleep, sleep.

But a Calmness came into our cloud and somewhere was a Whiteness. And what with the compulsions of chemistry one by one we crept out into the heather and the mild cloud, the slow cloud, the bright cloud, the steadily brightening whiteness of the steadily slower milder cloud.

Every climber has a personal style. On trail and rock and ice, in storm and disaster, each climber has a consistent style. Some say the essence of a climber's style is most fully revealed by tragedy. I say breakfast. The way a climber eats breakfast is the way he lives.

We three crept from our bags and staggered and milled around the heather ledge between cirque and snow, in the cloud. Then Andy abruptly stuffed his mouth full of sugar cubes and vanished in the brightening cloud. Fred groped in his foodbag and rattled pots and grumbled at the primus stove. I continued staggering back and forth on the heather ledge.

Long after Andy blasted off with sugar cubes, long before Fred's tanks were full of farina and eggs and pancakes and bacon and cocoa and applesauce I floated upward fueled by several cigarettes and one smashed fig newton.

I slowly followed Andy's steps upward in the snow, painfully loosening sack-stiff legs, tightening sleep-soft stomach, ventilating musty lungs, thinning

sludgy blood. Clouds retreated upward. Now the blood was circulating, oxygen and the smashed fig newton were getting through to limber legs. Clouds retreated. My steady rest-step gained speed but the clouds kept pace. I could not catch up with the clouds. Who cares? Who needs clouds?

A glimpse of blue. Another glimpse of the blue seen only between the last clouds of a long storm. A sudden gulf of blue beyond white clouds, that blue not merely paint on a two-dimensional ceiling but blue with depth, blue reaching from snow to infinity, blue not trapped on a point in time but moving from now into past eternity and from now into eternity yet to come.

Snow is blinding. Time for goggles. But where did the steps go? What happened to Andy? How did I lose the steps? I was watching the blue and now there are no steps and no Andy and no heather ledge and no Fred and the snow is steep. How did I get here? Where is everybody? Who won at Canossa? What makes the sky blue?

Steep snow is terrible. Kick steps in steady rest step, rhythmic hypnotizing rest step, and staring at changing slopes of snow unsettles innate perpendicularity. Pause, look out from steep snow seeking the horizon and it is not always where it

ought to be. Look where the valley ought to be and sometimes the sky is there instead. Must climb with one eye backward over shoulder holding the horizon in place.

Summit is above. If they still exist Andy and Fred are there. If they ever existed. The white wall steepens, vertical rock walls press in from left and right squeezing me into a funnel. Above the chasm white billows roll and blue deeps flare. The geometry is impossible. Blue sky and rolling clouds and vertical rock and steep snow and green forest below. Impossible.

Euclid's theorems don't work because all the triangles have either too many degrees or not enough. Newton's apples don't work because sometimes they fall sideways. Einstein has a finger in this but I don't understand what he's driving at. And who was the guy with the Indeterminacy? Eisenstein? Dusenbergl? Doesn't anything hold still? If an east-west inch doesn't equal a north-south inch how the hell can anybody climb steep snow? The earth ought to be flat and it ought to be the immovable center of the universe. It's not fair for the earth to chase around the sun and scramble after the solar system and the galaxy and the universe. With them all going different ways how can anybody climb steep snow?

It's not fair for the earth to be a squashed sphere ~~spinning~~ spinning on an axis. Not spinning true either, but with a wobble. That damn wobble is what fouls me up.

Snow begins to feel unsteady, snow is treacherous stuff, look to solid rock for security, admire a warm flare of living color but the flowers are growing sideways! Quick! Ram the ax deep! Where's the horizon? There it is--oh God! What a hell of a place to find the horizon! Hold on, hold on. . .

Now I know who won at Canossa. Now I know the baptism was blasphemy. It was an armistice, not a treaty, a generous armistice but I blasphemed and now there will be terms, a terrible peace.

No more snow, only shattered rocks and clouds and blue. And voices. Round and round it goes and where it stops nobody knows. Close eyes and clutch rock and climb, climb, climb because like the Coalsack barmaid used to say, you don't have to go home but you can't stay here.

Cheers and yells in my ears. Open eyes. Howl and roar and caper sing and leap for the summit is a rollercoaster in the blue insanity of space!

Andy and Fred chuckle and gibber and sob, they have never seen kit so crazy, Marlowe so mad. It is them, they do exist, Andy and Fred, And if they exist there are probably others. Maybe even Abby

and Sally and Katy and Liza. I hold the summit with feet and buttocks and rave on and on to avoid looking.

We are going down. Now we are down. And I'm still okay. No terms except obliteration but I'm okay. Here I am. Wherever I am I'm still here.

Where am I? In a litter of frost-wedged rocks. With friends, genuine people who exist independently beyond my deranged fantasies. And that is snow, genuine palpable snow. And above is an indubitable summit, and clouds and sky. And I was there. And I am okay. Good news! Who's got a candybar? Fred has a spare candybar. I chew up the candybar and smoke a cigarette and the geometry gets better. Not simpler, but better.

There is another peak. Andy from the Moon and Fred from Pittsburgh have to have that summit. Say I, you guys go get that summit, I don't need it. Say they, are you okay? Say I, just grand, you chaps get the peak and I'll go stew up a pot of soup.

There go the Shadows. I am alone. Soon I will go down to the leather ledge and make soup. No terms. The armistice stipulated unconditional surrender and my blasphemous self-baptism is not forgiven. There is no Empire anymore. Only an Emperor. Not holy, Not Roman, and with no empire, but an Emperor to the end.

Fire-hardened, ice-sharpened, storm-washed rock. Solid clean rock. Green grass ledges, violet clumps of campion, white scraps of snow, meltwater trickling through moss into brown dirt. Flakes of black lichen and green lichen on hard sharp grey rock. And here I am on the summit once more, but this time light-footed as Tanaquil, proud as Margot, ballerina prima suprema and clarissima.

I am altogether in the sky. Never has the blue been so deep. Never have the clouds been so dense, so dark, so close, so swift, so intent. Never has wind been so freely wild, never has the earth whirled so fast and wobbled so erratically.

But they don't matter anymore. Today I am confirmed. Now I am safe. I am nothing. I am nowhere. I have confessed my blasphemy and come to the sky not for terms but for judgment. Judge me, damn me. I don't care. It won't hurt a bit because I am nothing and nobody can touch nothing, not God, not even the BOMB. Judge me and damn me but nobody can scare me anymore.

There they are, the peaks, Hozomeen, Jack, Logan, Goode, Buckner, Bonanza, Stuart, Formidable, Forbidden, Johannesburg, Dome, Glacier, Sloan, Rainier, Olympus, Eldorado, Snowfield, Colonial, Triumph, Despair, Terror, Fury, Luna, Challenger, Whatcom~~b~~,

Shuksan, Baker, Redoubt, King George, Waddington.

There it is, the baked basalt east of the range. There it is, the sparkle of Puget Sound west of the range. Brown desert east, green valleys west, bright lands of the sun, subtle forests of fog. Great American Desert, Western Sea, Columbia Plateau, Pacific Ocean, what are these to me or me to them?

I lie down on the summit and cool and calm gaze right straight out into the sky. Clouds rush this way and Blueness the other way and earth turns and wobbles on its axis. Doesn't hurt a bit. Doesn't hurt because I don't matter that much anymore.

Who needs the hurt? Who needs to matter? It is good to be nothing. When everything was nothing why didn't it stay that way? What makes the sky blue? Why?

The judgment is kind. Why wasn't I obliterated years ago? No terms because I am nothing. When I thought I was a defeated something I craved terms. I was granted terms. But the war continued. Who won? Nobody. Who lost? Everybody. Then what judged me? Entropy. What was the judgment? Diffusion.

Now that I am a thin Gas it amazes me I fought so long. This is a soft and snuggly world. As

candy-loving Katy would say, it's a yummy chocolaty world. I feared clouds, isn't that ridiculous? When I grow up what I really want to be is a cloud. A white cloud rolling high in blue, Whiteness in Blueness, Cloudness in Skyness.

Obliteration is heavenly. I am complete, a complete serene nothing, not half a scared something. A Shadow is never free, he needs his mask and he fears the entropy. Only a Gas is free.

Is this sadness, remembering the Marmot Pass sunset long ago when I was an apprentice Real? Or is this the happiness beyond hope and fear? Free of lustful prayer I am also free of terror. My prayers were not worth hearing and how that I know it I am not worth terrifying. The earth and sky allow my quiet insignificant loves and adventures.

Sad or happy, who cares, it's all one, the one that remains while the many change and pass. Who weeps for Adonais nowadays? I used to weep for Adonais. Percy and me, we wept and wept until the neighbors complained. But what the hell, Adonais is dead and so is Percy and I'm out of cigarettes and it will be dark soon and I should be down on the heather ledge making soup.

Slowly along the rock crest savoring the sky. One final moment upright on the summit between the sunset on Canada, Columbia Plateau, North Cascades, Puget Sound.

Now down into shadow, bounding down dark rock out into bright twilight, plunging and skidding down snow, now fall down on the snow and slide down through roaring wind sailing through suncups cleaving a channel with bootheels, plummeting into a white storm of smashed snow, down past stolid black rocks toward the deep night of the valley.

The hell with the Moon! Who needs the Moon? Next time I live what I really want to be is a theme in a Mozart Symphony. Number Forty is my first choice, I'd be happy as any of these themes. I rule out chamber music because I want room for family and friends. What a wild world, all of us capering in a Mozart yawker!

Now slower, without wind but hissing in soft snow, heels in the air, knees drawn up, gliding down a sinuous gully, curving smoothly around the turns between rock walls, watching black eastern night engulf wan white western sky.

A small flame in the large night below. It is the heather ledge. The soup is stewed and restewed and overstewed. Cry Andy and Fred, where the hell you been? Murmur I, oh I been around, here and there, you know. Boy, what soup! Wow! You guys can really char up a soup!

Under the tarp and into the bag, stomach and legs soft from the climb, the conquest of gravity, buttocks and back bruised by the glissade, the acceptance of gravity, eyes dim from snow and mind loose from sky, a shadow slipping easily into good dreams.

Morning of the last day. Tear down the tarp, bundle up the bags, pack up the pots. Clean up the ledge, remove from the heather every trace of our residence. Now down.

Down from our heather homestead abandoned to the wilderness and the next pioneer. Down from the snow, down the cirque, down into green valley.

Thank God there is no room for Christians in the green valleys of the North Cascades. Cedar cliffs and avalanche alders and meltwater torrents and loose moraines and blowdowns and swamps and buckbrush and devils club, this is war and hate, savagery and cruelty and madness. No simpering Christian saint can climb in the North Cascades. A Jesuit maybe, but not Christ. Turning the other cheek in avalanche alder is instantaneous martyrdom.

Furiously down the green valley we thrash, then down the brown trail we sweat, pounding the dirt, hoping with each downward step to jolt the earth as it jolts us.

The peaks lift higher and we pound lower.
 Breakfast between snow and cirque, lunch in green
 alder, downward Faustian Fellaheen, ^{downward into Hell,} downward on
 forest trail toward supper.

Is this my wife I see before my eyes? Is this
 the face that sunk the Japanese fleet at Actium
 and refuted Plotinus and Aquinas with the superlogical
 propositions named Sally, Katy, Liza?

It is Abby okay and there is no more trail and
 she kisses me. She is beautiful and she is drunk.
 She twines her arms around my neck, a fork in one
 hand, a can of beer in the other, and murmurs, Kit,
 it's awful, we've lost the kids! She smothers me
 with passionate kisses and takes a deep gulp from
 the can and burps and says, won't you please look
 for the kids, they must be here someplace but we've
 got a salmon baking on a plank. We've been cooking
 it for you because we missed you so much but now
 we've lost the kids. They are wonderful kids but
 the salmon was so expensive we don't know what to do.

I free myself from the drunken arms and command
 her to take care of the salmon. I throw down my high
 country bindle, my compact home of tarp and bag and
 pots and join angry Andy and fearless Fred, newly
 escaped from their drunken wives. We stern fathers
 go seeking our abandoned children.

There are kids all over the valley. Kids howling in sticker-bushes, kids wailing for toilet accommodations, kids yelling in treetops and drowning in the river. We weary fathers run around saving our children, gathering them into a compact mob.

The kids scream and weep and drunken mothers cackle and shriek and toss green salad all over the valley. We fathers denounce Womanhood and open cans of beer and condemn Motherhood and go out rounding up strays.

Andy has tree-climbing kids who go as high as possible and then start thinking about how to get down. Fred has river-swimming kids who toddle as deep as possible into the water and then start thinking about how to avoid drowning. A clear case of heredity. After watching them eat breakfast one could easily predict that Andy would now be climbing trees and Fred wading the river to save their children.

And my children are equally predictable. I find Katy and Liza quietly sitting on the bank watching Big Sister Sally build a rock temple out in the river. Sally insists I help her complete this solemn structure. Off boots and socks, roll up pants, wade cold water. Architect Sally retreats to her baby sisters but supervises my selection of rocks and their placement in the temple. Sally is starting school

this fall. She will have schoolmates whose parents are psalm-slobbering Jesus-lovers. Soon I must tell Sally about Saturn, Loki, Old Coyote.

Now Sally is satisfied with the temple. And now she is hungry and leads Katy and Liza to supper.

The mothers, the wives, the drunken mistresses, they are leaning against alders and stumbling through gravel shrieking and gasping that the expensive salmon is baked and the green salad is tossed all over the valley and there is no more beer so you might as well come eat supper because there's nothing else to do but go home.

And so we fathers, husbands, rakes, chase children toward their tottering mothers. Andy has still one more tree to climb and Fred one more cataract to swim. They have sons, sons revolting against sedentary fathers. Lucky am I to have daughters who look to me as the quiet center of wisdom. Our Sister Sally leads Katy and Liza to supper.

Walking quietly alone under alders toward supper suddenly there is a can on a stump. Some miserable scared tourist left it, no doubt. It is evening clean-up time so I grab the can for garbage. But

But the can is heavy. It is a full can. It is a beer can. It is a full beer can. It is not a

rusty can full of rain. It is a newly-opened can.
It is a can full of beer!

Whose can? Whose beer? Who cares? Andy is up
a tree and Fred is in the river and our wives are
drunk. This treasure is mine. Quickly--lest a wife
or tourist enter a clam--lest I be discovered--
up to my mouth--hold it there and hold it there--
tilt head back--gulp it all down in one greedy
eye-bulging swill--.

While draining the dregs of beer from a can
The wan white sky of evening surprised me
Through pale-green waves of alder leaves.
I hung one startled moment outside time
Hearing mountain water crush mountain rock,
Cold water rushing down to civilized seas.
More slowly come the rocks,
The rocks of the peaks,
But every particle of the peaks goes down
to warm polluted seas,
The waters go, the peaks go, the alder leaves,
the alders, and the beer, and the beer cans,
And certainly you and I,
But possibly not the sky. . .