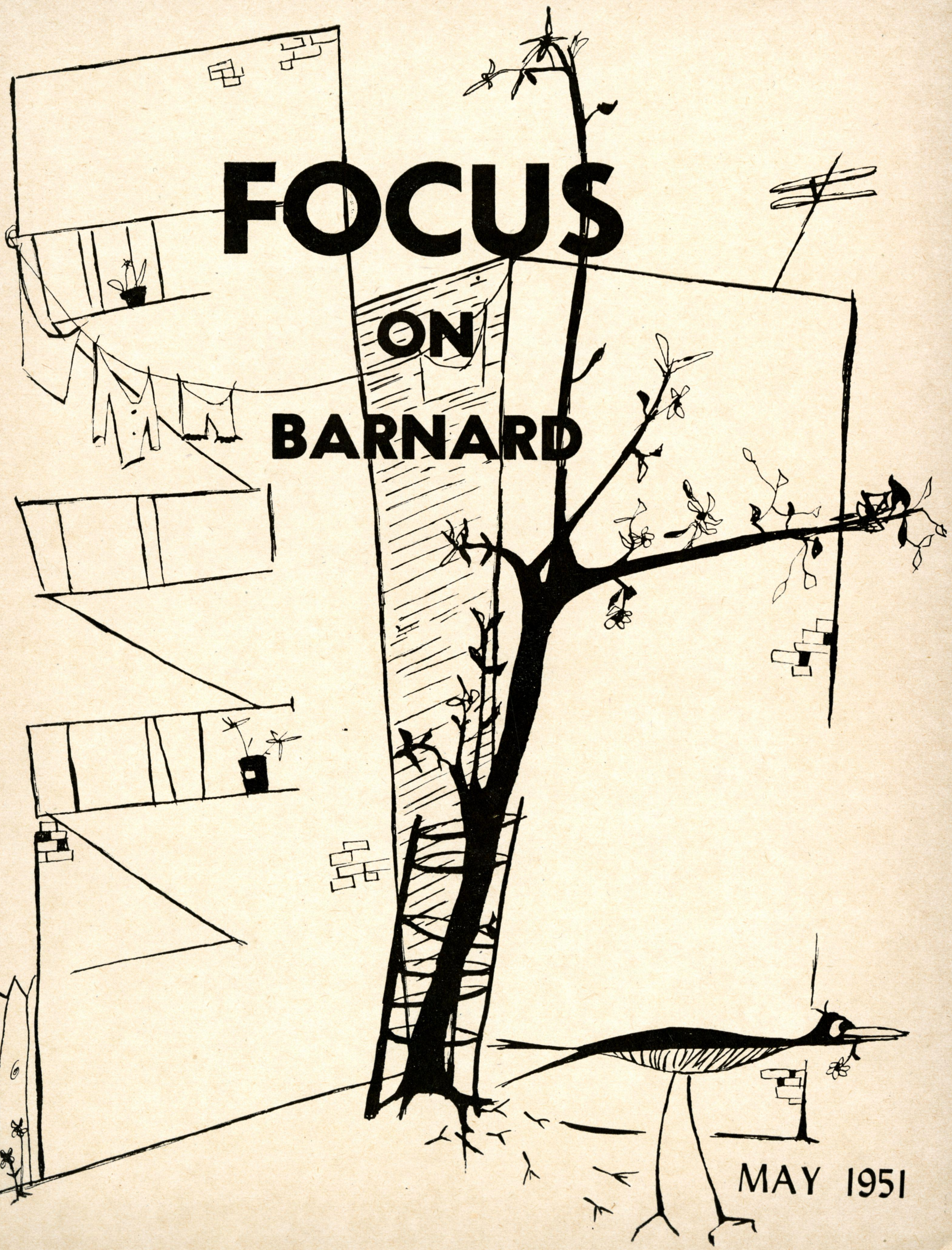
Dup.

FOCUS ON BARNARD



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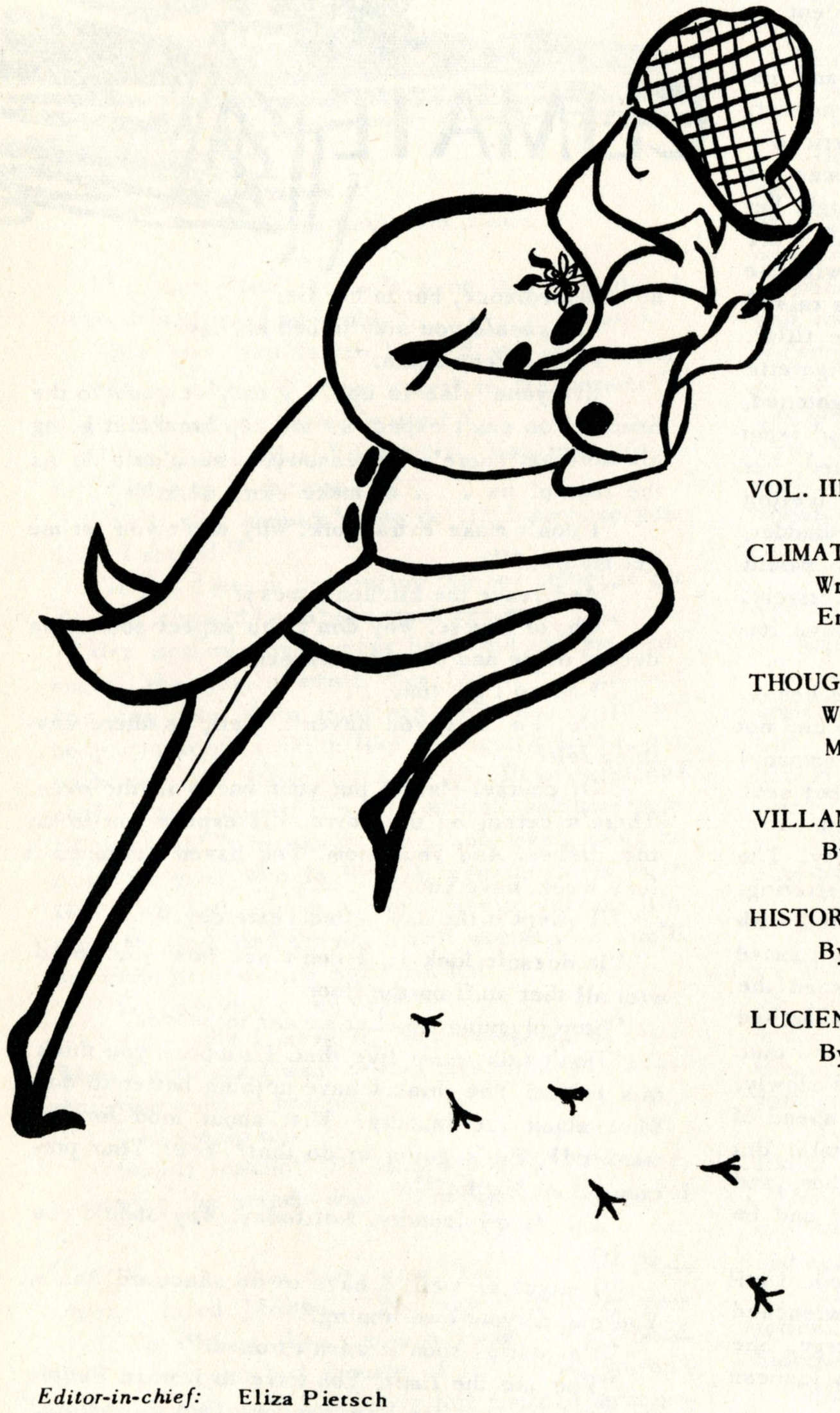


FOCUS

VOL. III MAY 1951 NO. 5

COVER by Gusta Zuckerman

CLIMATE

Sunlight could seldom get into her room under the eaves, but the walls caught and reflected every every nuance of light from the sky, meadow and bay, She lay there, slipping between waking and dream – buoyed by moments suspended and succulent – aware of the clear and early morning. . .

". . . They were out in their boat, she and her Aunt Martha, whom the family visited every summer. Her nut-brown, big-bodied Aunt. It was Jericho's fault; they had run on a ledge. But the boat was not hurt. (Her Aunt was laughing; that naked laugh, her lips the color of her cheeks.) Cautiously, after the sail was down, they poled her off the ledge with the longer of the odd pair of oars. The sail was raised again. Jericho trembled. The Aunt took the tiller. between her thigh and forearm. She lit her cigarette and hung it in her brown lips. She straightened, closed her hand over the tiller's knob, and leant back against the cooming. Her nose beaked, her eyes deep in her skull, she cut her course – feeling the hull sing in that peculiar gratifying shudder, against the press of water. Where Jericho would have to calculate, the Aunt moved instinctively. Staring along her course, she seemed to have forgotten her clumsy Jericho.

". . . Dreamlike, they were back in the house. Her Aunt held a baby rabbit in her lap. She had not scolded the shaggy cat (one of an endless company) when proudly he had brought her the prize, but sent Jericho for a saucer of milk while she freed the baby. The cat was sullen, and lapped scornfully. The Aunt hunched over the screaming rabbit, sheltering. Her head was too big for her body, covered with stiff dark hair. Under the huge head the body loomed squat and fecund. As her right hand grasped the rabbit so that he could not bite, the other searched his wounds. The hands were clever, large and taut.

". . . When the Aunt walked she moved slowly, pushing the big belly that had born many ahead of her in simple pride. Sometimes she was stern. But when she laughed others laughed with her; and always Jericho had a craving to know her and be taken by her warmth. . ."

A thickness of no-dreaming intervened. Until the lurid, excitable voice of her mother wrenched her from sleep, flaunting its harried energy. She sought to escape it by sinking again into laxness and sunlight summer morning.

"Jericho! came the voice. . . "Are you up?"

"Yes." She lied. Suddenly (for there had been no time as she slept again; and she had intended in an instant to be up) the voice attacked:

"I called half-an-hour ago . . . Now get up immediately."

She jerked out of bed - guilty. Ashamed not of her disobedience, but in her lie.

"Why *should* you stay in bed all day?"

"I fell asleep again."

"Everyone else is up . . . they've gone to the beach. You can't expect us to keep breakfast going all morning. There's no reason you shouldn't do as the rest of us . . . or make extra work."

"I don't make extra work. Why don't you let me get my own?"

"And leave the kitchen a mess?"

"Oh, of course. Why don't you expect something decent of me and see what happens?"

"I haven't got time. . ."

"No, I'm sure you haven't. Well, is there anything left?"

"Of course. Martha put your bacon in the oven. There's cereal on the stove. I'll expect you to do the dishes. *And* your room. You haven't cleaned it for a week, have you?"

"I swept it the day before yesterday."

"It doesn't look it; I don't see how you could with all that stuff on the floor."

"Stop plaguing me. Let me *eat* in peace."

"Don't talk to *me* like that. I suppose you think this is fun! You think I have nothing better to do? What about the laundry? What about food for the weekend? Who's going to do that? You? Your precious Aunt Martha?"

"I'll do my laundry. Not today. Why should you do it?"

"I might as well. I have to do mine and Ann's. You can do your own ironing."

"I'd just as soon it wasn't ironed."

"You are the *limit*. You have to iron it. People don't blame you for how *you* act. They blame *me*."

"I'd just as soon not see any of your people.'."

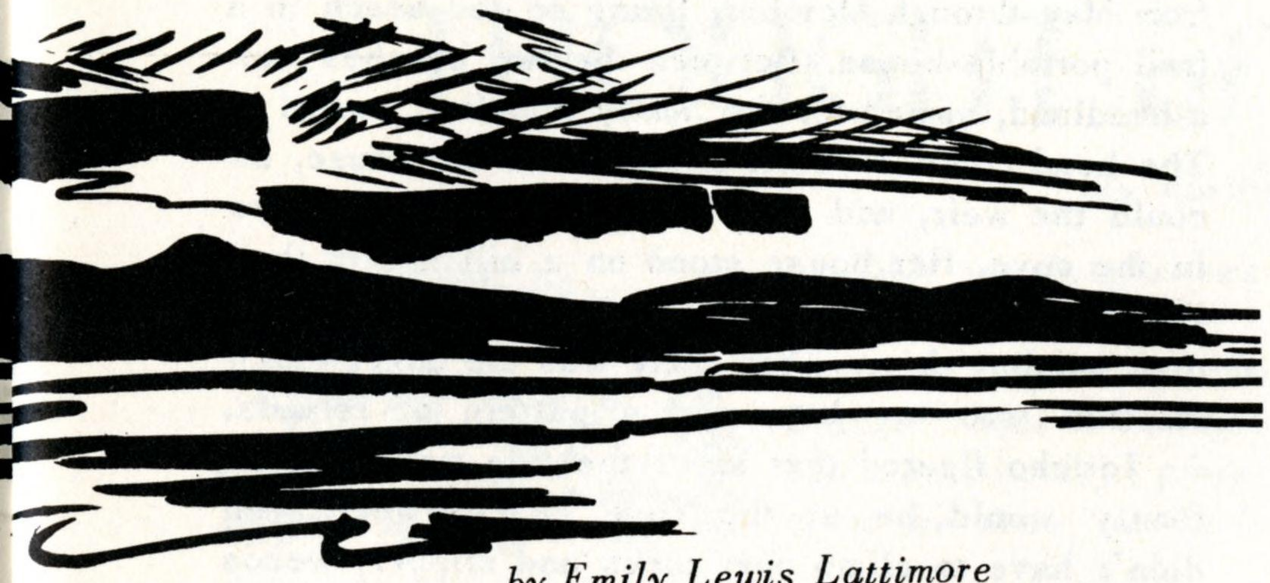
"What's wrong with them?"

"Prudes. Snobs. Proud of their ignorance. 'Well, I don't know about *that!*' they simper."

"They've got better manners than you have!"

"Bah! They're insulting to be near."

"Reverse snob!"



by Emily Lewis Lattimore

"I'm not. Here, *I* don't want this coagulated mess. It's all stiff and cold."

"It's your own fault! If you'd get up on time."

"Who ever heard of hot cereal in the summer?"

"*I* did, and it's perfectly good."

"You didn't think I'd want it. You just left it so I'd have to do the pot."

"Well, why shouldn't you do it? I suppose you think I should."

"If you'd begun by soaking the pot before it got all hard it would have been much easier."

Her mother's eyes went hard and opaque with anger, the pupils small, her face blanched and straining with white splotches under her eyes. Her body quavered, striking like an erected snake; her neck red, the loose folds of her flesh stretched stiff. "I don't care if it's easy or not!" she screamed. "Why should it be easy? Why should every thing be easy for you? Who in Hell do you think you are? God, I've had enough of your sass to last my lifetime. My God. And I'm not a well woman . . . You'll not come here with me next summer!"

"You say that every year!"

"This time I mean it. Now I'm going to town. When I get back I want to find this kitchen in order! And your room. A hog pen!"

"You should talk."

"Stop it Jericho!" She thrashed out of the house, slamming the screen door. "Not another summer of this!"

"You say that every year. You say that every year," cried Jericho. "You say that every year. Well I'm coming. *You* can stay away," she sobbed. All winter she had thought of it. It was the only place in the world that never fell short of anticipation. Her mother could stay in town with her father, and they could go somewhere else for his vacation. Ann could go to camp. They could stay away. They could stay away. They didn't love it. She ran out of the house toward the meadow, where the grass must already be hot in the sun and the earth hard and dry before it dropped to the rocky beach and the cold water that stunned. She ran to fling herself against the hot earth. Her mother was backing the car out of the shed. She saw her.

"Jericho!" she cried, "Where are you going?"

"Leave me alone."

"You can't go off like that."

"Leave me alone."

"Go back and do as I told you."

"Leave me alone."

"Do as you're told." To be meek would be so easy. To go back. Her mother would go to town. When she came home she would be kind. But Jericho *was* not meek. She turned and ran down the meadow to where it heaved into knobbly hummocks of weed and rocks, through white multitudes of daisies and tridents of bright fire-weed. Her mother hurtled out of the car after her. Jericho was weeping. She could not breathe well, could not run. And she was barefoot. She could not see the thistles. She trod on them and they stung. Her mother caught her by the shoulder, spun her around.

"Leave me alone."

"Don't talk to me like that! Who do you think you are?"

Stupid question. That was the whole thing. But she knew she was someone. She knew she was something different from her mother, and the question, its insult, goaded her anger. Tears flooded in her. Her feet burned. Her thighs cried sweat. Stubbornly she stood, her pain exhausting her – dizzy and flushed – clinging to the pain, grasping it for support, proud that she could withstand it.

"Answer me. Don't look at me like that."

"Don't look at me in that tone of voice?" mocked Jericho; her sobs shuddered like lurching smothered laughter, and she despised her mother. Her mother saw her sneer. Cruelly she slapped the ugly mouth, flayed it once, jaggedly, her hand shaking with anger and shame.

"You slapped me! You slapped me!" Jericho flailed her arms. She beat her mother aimlessly. "You should never slap anyone's face!" She spat the flesh-taste from her lips. Her arms were clumsy and heavy where they struck. She kicked.

"You're sick," said the mother. "You're hysterical." Her child was a brute, writhing in hate, hideous. "You're sick," said the mother.

"I'm not sick."

"Yes, you are; you couldn't act this way if you weren't."

"Leave me alone if you hate me."

"I do not hate you! How can you say I hate you?"

"You do, Leave me alone."

"Very well," said her mother. She stalked back to the car, one shoulder higher than the other. Jer-

icho, mute, watched after her. Then as her mother got into the car and started the motor, Jericho flung herself on the hot earth and drew her stinging feet close to her body, comforting them with her hands. She wailed to herself alone in the hot meadow, "Why, why can't they leave me alone?" and half dreaded, half longed that someone would find and console her.

She screamed until she was exhausted. Then she rolled over. A few swallows blew across the sky and darted into the barn where they had their nest. Her father and Ann were already at the beach and probably her Aunt was with them. Even her dog had gone; gulls glided; but the sun was too strong, it would blind her.

She was glad no one came. She would be horrified if someone came and seeing her sad and ugly should ask what was the matter. She was dizzy as she stood. She saw black, but gradually the black cleared away, and there were only spangles whirling, which she could not quite catch with her eye.

She had to stop every few paces to pull out a thistle-thorn, dizzy when she straightened after stooping, twitching with sob echoes.

Back in the house, she put the stale cereal in the dog's dish although she knew he would not eat it. Her mother always pretended he would. She ate her dried-out bacon, and threw out the sour coffee. She used the grounds to scour the iron skillet. She left the cereal dish to soak while she cleaned her room.

Again in the kitchen she stood with her arms in suds and warm water, gazing out the window at the orchard of pale old apple trees. There were a few young trees south of the others that had been planted the summer she was born; and they were already old enough to have born big wax-yellow apples for several summers. In the long grass of the orchard the cats liked to hunt, and once she had a cat that used to sleep under the rose bushes. As she gazed at the orchard, and the light playing through it softly, she remembered and rested and imagined; looking through the window over the sink she rose clear out of her tantrum and relaxed. She cleaned the cereal dish, and the few odd glasses and plates, and the sink. Shame licked her – she was ashamed of her tantrum – so she swept the kitchen carefully, after crumbing the table. She decided to take her lunch and go somewhere, to walk and explore the rest of the day.

There were two places the family swam. The nearer was a long stoney beach at the base of their meadow. The other was gently sloping, a cove, where a fisherman and his family tended their weir from May through October, living on the beach in a frail portable house. Between the two beaches was a headland, named for the family that first owned it. The head could be seen plainly from the house, as could the weir, and the coming and going of boats in the cove. Her house stood on a hill higher than the head, and there was a valley between, and a road winding down. Then there was the cove, which emptied into the bay, and a pattern of islands.

Jericho figured that since the tide was low, the family would be at the cove beach, where you didn't have to climb over rocks and slippery weeds to get to the water, but could walk leisurely to the edge. Jericho never swam there. She swam at high tide on the steeper beach, where she could plunge in. Straining her eyes for any sign of her family. She caught the shine on the fender of her Aunt's station-wagon. To avoid the troubled kindness of her father, the curiosity of Ann, the wet affection of her dog and escape the demanding compassion of her Aunt, (demanding but aloof) Jericho started toward the other beach, through the sun-drenched meadow.

Indian paintbrush strewed the leonine grasses with gaudy dabs. Rocky hummocks, pale with green-gray lichen froze against the blue bay and white gulls' swooping. Jericho meandered down the faint road to the beach, amid odor of sun-warmed strawberries and wild rose. Down the road until she stood at the edge of the sea wall between sweet-waxy bay-bushes, and chalky everlasting, thick and dry; and everywhere thistles, a few by the stone fence pressed among hard unripe rasberries, already deceptive soft – lavender and white.

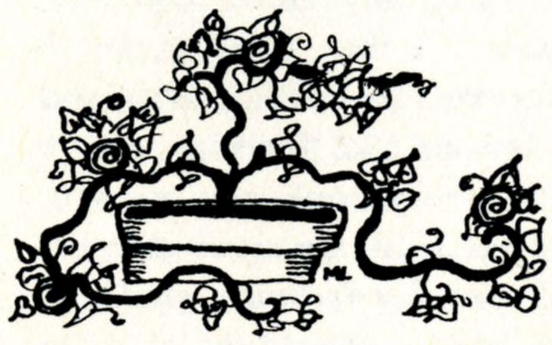
The earth was hot and fertile. Weeds grew in the meadow that had been sheep-land before the summer-people's time. The bayberry was ripe and the leaf sharply green. Already spruces were beginning to bear cones. They swayed heavy and pregnant in the breeze, or battled the storm hunched over, protecting their young.

Jericho knew a longing to bear; to be fruitful. It struggled in her; it could not yet be expressed. The bird swooped down and sang, piercing her breast. A psalm beat out: "I hunger to be broken, break me Lord; Take from my blind virginity the barren stone – And render life within me – Bring me close – To the trees, the wind's wide circle, and the smoke. I would be a blade of grass in the field, in the heat of the sun to bear seed for the wind to blow. It is time for the butterfly to die, And the caterpillar to rebuild his womb. I am no undine or urchin, no flower or weed. I am one young thing, waiting; And the birds' tune is no plainer than my song – Lord make me one small object, bearing fruit."

continued on page 14

THOUGHT of a ROSE TREE

By Marilyn Lerner



"All our thoughts are in the language of the old Logicians inadequate: i. e. no thought, which I have, of any thing comprises the whole of that Thing. I have a distinct Thought of a Rose Tree; but what countless properties and goings-on of that plant are there, not included in my thought of it?"

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge

There were sparrows scattered over the stone hexagons that filled precisely the space between lawn and lawn. On the other side of the even stone wall began a grassy slope that ended in the broad grey stripe of the river. Facing the wall was a row of benches, each a measured distance from the other, and planted between each pair, a narrow leafless tree. From where she sat, Julia could see one bony squirrel, crouched so that his tail exactly covered the line where the wall entered the ground. The squirrel imposed his own shape against the wall, against the neat pattern of stone on stone. When a moment later he was gone, the completed arrangement of parallels and perpendiculars was revealed. Overhead was the complication of line and angle formed by branches against the sky, one of them swayed down out of symmetry by the bird that clung to it. Julia stared at the tree closest to her as if she were trying to see what was in it, what it was doing. She felt like a child, left out, not knowing a secret that all the other children whispered about during recess hour.

"What does a park mean?" she said. What is a park? What *is* it?

There was a voice behind her. "Silly child, a park is a park, and only God can make one, so it stands to reason that only He knows what it is. Why worry?" Paul walked around the bench and sat down beside her.

"I want to know." she answered.

"My dear Julia, some things one can't know. Have you been waiting long?"

"No. Ten minutes. How are things, Paul?"

"Rotten. Now that my poetry finally has been published, nobody seems to want to read it."

"I read it."

"You're different."

An unknown woman passed, leading a dog on a red leash. A pigeon circled before them and swooped off to the left. Julia turned to Paul. His face was very familiar. The dark excited eyes, the mouth that meant, Julia thought, tolerance and judgement, a narrow square chin, and straight thin nose, high bridged, with a delicate curve at the end. Noses are significant, she thought, if souls have a shape, Paul's is the same shape as his nose. I know *him*, she thought, I know him as well as his nose.

"You need a haircut," she said.

"Oh hell, again?" He rumpled his hair with one hand.

She smiled a little smile of secret pleasure. Paul always did that when she reminded him of haircuts. "And a shave."

He looked helpless and pained. "But I just shaved this morning, just—one, two, three,—well, nine hours ago."

She had expected that, too. She went on with her little game.

"Have you written to your mother this week?"

"Ummm, not exactly."

She had known it. She grinned, and catlike, settled further down into her coat.

"Let's go somewhere and have a drink," Paul said, "You look like the limping hare."

"No, I don't want to. We don't have time for an upheaval. I have to leave in about half an hour. I promised Columba that I'd come up this evening."

"I suppose you have to go." He groaned. "All right, I'll come with you."

"But I thought you didn't like Columba."

He shrugged. "Oh, Columba—Columba's the gem of the ocean."

"But I thought you didn't like her."

"She's nice enough in her way."

"But you said you didn't like her."

"For heaven's sake, Julia, I changed my mind. All right? Is that allowed? I like her, I LOVE her."

"Oh." She filed it away—Paul hadn't liked Columba; he had changed his mind; now he did. That was settled for now. One more thing she knew about Paul. She began her game again, taking what he said and measuring it against what she knew of him, to see if she were right, to PROVE it.

"Columba introduced us, remember, Paul?"

"It will be two years in the spring. Julia! You have another birthday coming."

"Yes." She made a face. "I hate the thought of it. Nineteen. Too soon. I tried to hold it back by counting month birthdays, but that didn't make the time go any slower, and here I am, eighteen years, eleven months and two weeks old."

"Oh, be nineteen. I'll be twenty-five, and then we can be nineteen and twenty-five instead of eighteen and twenty-four."

"But that adds up to forty-four, not forty-two, and there's the difference."

Julia was satisfied. The conversation was as it should be. She reviewed mentally. There wasn't a word, a tone of voice in it that didn't fit into the whole picture of Paul. Maybe I don't know all the details, she thought triumphantly, but I know the pattern. This was her revenge on the park, this was consolation for being baffled. She would show it and herself. Whatever else wasn't wholly hers, Paul was.

"Heard from your Mother and Dad, Julia?"

"Mother is fine, and Daddy seems to love it in Mexico."

"I saw your mother just the other day, when I was up in Boston."

"You did? Why didn't you mention it?"

"Slipped my mind. She's looking wonderful."

How odd of Paul. Julia was displeased. She turned from the waning comfort of her little game.

"Paul, get a haircut tomorrow, PLEASE."

"Can't tomorrow. Got to see my publisher about the new book."

"NEW BOOK?"

"Yes, You see I have been keeping secrets." He put on a wicked leer. "Little do you know what evil lurks in the hearts of men. A brand new book. A novel, and almost done."

"But why didn't you tell me?"

"Just one of those things you don't tell."

"But why. That's not like you."

"I guess you know pretty well what it's like me to do, Julia."

"I guess." For a moment she felt strangely uncertain. The cloudy sky was darker and the park was filled with hesitant dusk. The wind from the river was cold and the branches swayed above their heads. Stop this, she thought, stop it right now. Leave it alone. " I finally got a complete Eliot."

"You're a real complete works girl. Why do you always invest minor fortunes buying the complete works of people?"

"It's important. It's the only way to know an author thoroughly."

"But Julia, you can't ever know an author thoroughly. It's hard enough to understand something without knowing what it is. It's even hard to see, really, much less understand, much less know. Besides, even in complete works, men never write all they think or all they are, any more than one person can tell another person all they think or are."

"Oh. I see." Her voice was becoming high and tight. Here it was again. It was like learning a new word and then finding it in every book you opened.

"I thought you said you told me everything."

"Darling, if I ever said that, I was being shallow. No one ever tells anyone else everything, or even knows everything that's in them to tell."

"I see." She couldn't say anything else. She tossed away her cigarette, flung it angrily at the tree, in a high arc. He did say it, she thought, he DID, and he meant it and it was true, it must be. Paul talked on, about people and places and the summer. Julia hardly listened; she gave all the proper answers, but she wasn't paying attention. She was annoyed at herself. Foolishness. Let it alone, she thought, let it alone.

Suddenly Paul turned to her. "Julia–do you love me?"

"For two years. And two years is a long time." This was better. This was sure.

"Two years is a long time to talk and argue and do the same things and love someone."

"And know someone." She couldn't help it.

"Knowing? Maybe. I don't believe that people ever really know other people. Look at Lear. But it's not the knowing that matters."

"I've never heard you say that before, Paul."

"We've never discussed it before."

She had known. She let him continue.

"You can't know someone. You can only love him You can't trust knowing, but you can lean on a love."

"But if you know someone, and that's why you love him?"

Paul looked at her curiously. "How? Can't be done by the complete works of. People do things for miscellaneous reasons, they say things they don't mean, and on the other hand, never say all they mean. No. Wrong way around."

Julia couldn't think of anything to say. She lit another cigarette for something to do. In the growing darkness, the trees had lost their definite shapes. Even Paul's face in the flickering light of the match looked changed, unknown, a stranger's face. Don't be silly, she thought, DON'T. But she couldn't stop the confusion. A rhyme kept clicking in her mind. *He thought he saw a garden door that opened with a key, he looked again and found it was a double rule of three.* Why do people look? she

thought; I wonder why. She felt hard and frozen. We must have been sitting here for hours, she thought.

"Paul? I asked this once before. Maybe you remember. Why do you write poetry?"

"Of course I remember. It was," he recited, "when Julia and Paul first met, and Julia asked why Paul wrote poetry, and Paul thought she was just a silly child, but he answered, quite truthfully, 'Because he had to,' and Julia looked up with amazing brown eyes, and said she understood, and Paul knew then that she did understand, and so he kissed her on the spot."

"I remember too," Julia said. And she was reciting to herself, Paul said it and Julia understood it, and when she did she thought, this person is like me, I can know him and love him. But Paul has said since that people never say all they mean, and sometimes not what they mean at all. Maybe Julia was wrong. How does she know. "Paul, please answer me. Why do you write poetry?"

"Because I have to." He answered simply.

It was quite dark now. Julia felt empty and not sure of where she was. This was a park, but what was a park? This was Paul, but what was Paul? She had understood the words, but words weren't enough. They never told enough. They never told anything. Paul was staring at the darkness, absorbed in thoughts, thoughts that she had no idea of. He was so quiet. Didn't he know that something was wrong, couldn't he tell? Julia felt very tense, and very cold. Please let's go, she prayed silently; please, please.

Paul yawned, looked at his watch. How normal, she thought, how nice. As if everything were still the same. She bit her lip. Please, please, say you want to go.

"It's brillig," he said, "and time for Columba. Five to six already. We'd better try for the bus."

She rose unsteadily, holding on to his arm. He in one world, she in another, Julia thought, and neither of them knowing the other's world. He grinned, "Now don't leave anything behind."

She tried to smile but her lips felt stiff. "I won't," she answered.

They walked together out of the park and toward the corner. Her heels clicked sharply on the pavement; she held her coat closed against the wind. Julia felt alone in a dark maze of a world, an ununderstandable, unknowable world. But Paul was of her world, she had known that. Of course—this boy wasn't Paul. She looked slyly up. It was too dark to see his face, but that was the answer. This wasn't Paul. They were at the bus stop now, she and the un-Paul. Julia stared at the black letters painted on the metal. There was a B, a U, an S. But what is it, she thought, what is it? Then she remembered the answer—this wasn't Paul. There was a bus rumbling toward them. Julia turned to him sharply.

"Now look, it's—" The words came shrilly. The bus stopped in front of them. The glare of the headlights setting them off in relief against the darkness.

"Oh no," she whispered, "it can't be." She stared, shocked, sorrowful at his face. The same, he looked the same. She wasn't tense or cold any more. She was crying slow, sad tears, that wouldn't stop coming. She was weeping softly and gently, out of pity for herself, all alone now. The worried eyes that were really Paul's looked down at her. With his hand, Paul waved the bus on. Julia could see the gaping faces of the passengers, distorted through the windows. It was dark again, and Paul's hands were holding her arms tightly, and his mouth was saying, "Julia what is it, what's the matter?" He didn't know, she thought, he really didn't know. But she couldn't answer him, because she was still crying, crying now at herself, for her foolishness, for the belief that hadn't been true. She shook her head slowly, and couldn't stop, but a moment later she was laughing, for all she could think of were words, like hexagonal stone blocks, filling precisely, not connecting, the spaces between two minds.

VILLANELLE–1951

by Mary Bridgeman

Does anybody know the reason why
They let the beetle on the yellow rose?
I only know that heroes mustn't cry.

The elephant has got too small an eye.
There aren't enough rambunctious kangaroos.
Does anybody know the reason why?

They clipped the horse's wings to make him fly,
But when a pigeon falls, nobody knows.
I only know that heroes mustn't cry.

There are too many beds on which to lie,
There are too many handkerchiefs to lose.
Does anybody know the reason why?

The salamanders will not multiply
When sawdust is the only thing that grows,
I only know that heroes mustn't cry.

Aren't you afraid that all your dolls will die?
That you'll forget which hand you ought to use?
Does anybody know the reason why?
I only know that heroes mustn't cry.

HISTORY in

by Patr

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. . .

Long before a child can read, he knows the tale of poor Humpty Dumpty by heart. For centuries Mother Goose has introduced children to English literature. Few of us realize that these simple rhymes were also our first taste of history and, very likely of satire.

In mediaeval England, where those who could read were few and books were fewer, public events were recorded and passed from father to son by by word of mouth in the form of rhymes or ballads. The names, the places, and the times were usually lost in the telling, but the romance of the outlaws and the Border wars have come down to us through these rhymes. When the printing press came to England, these ballads and rhymes were imprinted on one side of a coarse sheet of paper, illustrated at the top with a crude woodcut, and these "broadsides" were snatched up eagerly by the London populace and circulated freely in Tudor England. As the sole means the common people had of voicing their feelings toward the king and the government, these rhymes and ballads – simple as they are – measured the pulse of England.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
Not all the king's horses,
Not all the king's men,
Could ever put Humpty together again.

Who is Humpty Dumpty? The arch-villain, the Machiavel of English history – hump-backed Richard III. To Tudor England, Richard was a monster, the culminating result of the deposition of Richard II, the rightful king, by Henry Bolingbroke, which was followed by the devastating Wars of the Roses, setting father against son and brother against brother. Richard III had dispatched the survivors of the Lancastrian line and had smothered little Prince Edward V, the rightful Yorkist heir, in the Tower, and had made himself King. England rose up in righteous wrath against him, and Henry Tudor returned from France to lead them. Ignominiously defeated and slain on Bosworth Field, "not all the king's horses, not all the king's men" could have put Richard together again.

These lines had hardly lost their significance when a new rhyme was directed at Richard's successor:

I love sixpence, pretty little sixpence,
I love sixpence better than my life;
I spent a penny of it, I spent another,
And took fourpence home to my wife.

Henry Tudor, now Henry VII, did more than restore peace to England. His encouragement and support of the English merchants at home and abroad laid the foundations for the great British commercial empire, but his policy of taxation for this support met with considerable resistance from the common people, on two occasions provoking outright rebellion. They contrasted the miserly King with his wife, Elizabeth of York, whose love for masques and disguisings meant that the austere Henry frequently had to take fourpence home to pay for the expenses of these revels.

Henry's son, the huge and colorful Henry VIII, was a favourite of the rhymesters:

Robin the bobbin, the big-bellied Ben,
He ate more meat than threescore men,
He ate the Church, he ate the steeple,
He ate the priests and all the people,
And yet he complained his belly wasn't full.

and also:

Sing a song of sixpence,
A pocket full of rye,
Four-and-twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie;
When the pie was opened,
The birds began to sing;
Wasn't that a dainty dish
To set before the king?
The king was in the counting-house,
Counting out his money;
The queen was in the parlour,
Eating bread and honey;
The maid was in the garden,
Hanging out the clothes,
When down flew a blackbird
And snipped off her nose.

Henry VIII dispensed with his father's unpopular taxation, and paid for the splendor of his reign by dissolving the monestaries and seizing their revenues. The "song of sixpence" was the Church dole, and the Church lands were the "pocket full of rye." The blackbirds were the friars and the monks, and, more specifically, the "four-and-twenty" were the black canons of the order of St. Augustine at Newstead Abbey who responded to Henry's decree by dumping large chests with all their treasure into a

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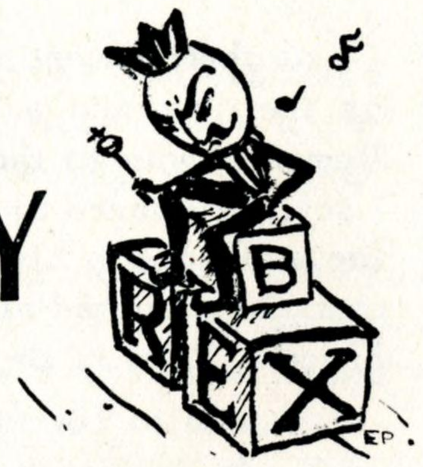

icia Drain

neighboring lake, while they made a "pie" of title deeds to sing melodiously when opened by the kingly percentor.

This rhyme also tells the tragic story of Anne Boleyn. As a lady-in-waiting fresh from France, she was hanging out her finery in the palace garden, and so dazzled King Henry that he sent a high-ranking "blackbird" to "snip off her nose" by breaking off her engagement to Lord Percy. Henry divorced Katherine of Aragon and married her, but no male heirs appeared, and, three years after the marriage, Anne was found guilty of incest and adultery, and the royal headsman "snipped off her nose."

Elizabeth, the daughter of these two, was more berhymed than any other English sovereign. She was "Gloriana", Spenser's *Faerie Queene;* she was also the "little pussy" whose "coat is so warm," the "fine lady upon a white horse," and of course, "Elizabeth, Lizzie, Betsy, and Bess." To her commoners the most popular aspect of their queen was her femininity. Her numerous suitors and their ardent courtship found their way into many a delightful rhyme.

There was a little man,
And he wooed a little maid,
And he said, 'Little Maid, will you wed, wed, wed?
I have little more to say,
Than will you, yea or nay,
For the least said is soonest mended, ded, ded.'

The little maid replied,
Some say, a little sighed:
'But what shall we have for to eat, eat, eat?
Will the love you are for rich in
Make a fire in the kitchen,
Or the little God of Love turn the spit, spit, spit?'

The "little man" is believed to be Philip II of Spain, who asked for her hand within a year of her coronation, but it might very well be any one of Elizabeth's suitors, for she used her sex as a diplomatic weapon, and she would rarely listen to an empty-handed proposal.

A frog he would a-wooing go,
Heigho, says Roly!
Whether his mother would let him or no,
With a roly-poly, gammon and spinache,
Heighho, says Anthony Roly!

So off he set in his coat and hat,
And on his way he met a Rat.

'Please, Mr. Rat, will you go with me?
Good Mrs. Mousie for to see?'

When they came to the door of Mousie's hole,
They gave a loud knock and they gave a loud call.

'Please, Mrs. Mousie, are you within?'
'Oh, yes, dear sirs, I am sitting to spin.'

'Please, Mrs. Mousie, will you give us some beer,
For Froggy and I are fond of good cheer?'

But while they were making a terrible din,
The cat and her kittens came tumbling in.

The cat she seized Mr. Rat by the crown,
The kittens they pulled Mrs. Mousie down.

This put Mr. Frog in a terrible fright,
He took up his hat and he wished them good-night.

But as Froggy was crossing over a brook,
A lily-white duck came and swallowed him up!

This is a step-by-step satire of the wooing of the aging Elizabeth (forty-nine) by the young Duke of Anjou (twenty-three), a brother of the King of France. Elizabeth was eager to gain the assistance of France in the Dutch wars against Spain. Catherine de' Medici was hesistant about such a positive alliance for her son with a Protestant, and the line "Whether his mother would let him or no" is an example of the stinging sarcasm often used in these rhymes. Mr. Rat is one Monsieur Simiers, whom Anjou sent to England to plead his suit with Elizabeth. The "cat and kittens" are Elizabeth and her ministers, who of course did not want an actual match. But Anjou was "swallowed" by a "lily-white duck" before he could bring France to the aid of England.

It may not seem respectful to call the Queen of England "Mrs. Mousie," but Elizabeth, always attentive to public opinion, knew that her people were paying tribute to her power and her cleverness in these simple rhymes.

Thus, if we can accept the allusions in nursery rhymes as accurate, we find that they achieve an even greater significance in our folk-lore than they formerly had. They are no longer just charming little jingles which long association has made dear to us. Almost every nursery rhyme we know might tell us something about past events. If only we could have realized as children that Mother Goose was teaching us our first history lesson – and a critical lesson at that!

LUCIEN

by Ann Loring Valentine

"You simply must sit still, Lucien," cried the Countess petulantly. "How on earth do you expect me to finish this? I don't think you can possibly realize how important this portrait is," she continued theatrically, "or you'd be more considerate."

Lucien, who was seated in an overstuffed chair, looked at her quizzically for a moment and rejected the impulse to tell her exactly how important he thought her painting was. His eyes wandered over to the beautifully equipped and furnished room which the Countess had converted into a studio. Traces of the Countess's previous endeavors were strewn in corners, their "importance" long since forgotten. A harp, a lute, a half-carved stone, a typewriter, a tape recorder, a European camera--so many beginnings, so many starts.

Then in a dark corner he noticed a small statue. It was of rough, unpolished stone--probably granite --and at first glance he thought it was simply a a woman's head. He saw that the Countess had put down her brushes and was lighting one of her long, monogrammed cigarettes. "All right if I stretch my legs, ma'am?" he inquired.

"Yes, yes--I suppose so, but *must* you call me ma'am--you know it annoys me."

"I'm sorry," he said wearily and walked across the room. Upon closer examination he found that the statue was a mother and child, the woman's cloak drawn over both of them to enclose them in the shape of a heart. It was the first thing he had seen since the Countess had, as she put it, introduced him to art, that had impressed him. "Did you do this, ma'--Countess?"

She turned from the mirror where she had been arranging her smock. "Oh, that. No, no--a very dear friend of mine did that--Genevra Knight. Poor Genevra--I must go see her. Such a talented child. Her work is nice, but she has rather odd tastes--bizarre. Pity she can't see *you*, Lucien, but of course that's out of the question because..."

At that moment she was interrupted by a knock on the door and a butler announced that Princess Romanoff was on the telephone. After she had gone Lucien continued to stare at the statue, than, catching a glimpse of his face in the mirror as he left the room, he clenched his great, brown hands and smiled bitterly. "Out of the question," he murmured.

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The ball room was crowded with people and smoke, waiters were dancing through the crowd with champagne, but there was no music. Nor would there be, for--all appearances to the contrary--this was an exhibition of paintings--twenty paintings to be exact -which were ornately framed and hung with great care and little taste on the spacious, shell-pink walls of the Countess's Manhattan castle. That the Countess's gathering could be called a show was disputable, for though her paintings were there to be looked at, so were most of the guests and the latter had the advantage of mobility. But in a sheltered alcove near the entrance to the room a small group was discussing the painting opposite them.

"It simply can't be the Countess's!" protested Lady Bliss. "Pedro, I've seen her things before. I *know* her work."

"Yes, my dear," smiled the little man. "But you don't know Lucien."

With this rather provoking remark he left Lady Bliss and her companions standing mystified before the painting – #7 'Lucien' by the Countess de Bois It was surprising.

The Countess was an avid but hitherto totally unrewarded painter. Her passion for art – springing from the notion that it was a frivolous and therefore chic pastime (her beginnings not having been as luxurious as the end she achieved, she sought constantly to enhance her aura of elegance) – had led her into every known medium of expression. In each she wallowed happily until total ineptitude forced her to give up and move on to another. For the last year painting had been her *raison d'etre.* She enjoyed this more than most of her experiments because she painted with the aid of a small lorgnette which intensified the most insipid colors and glorified the vaguest attempts at design, thus bringing out, or rather creating the praiseworthy aspects of her endeavors. Given a promising subject (and this was essential, the Countess's imagination being if possible several steps behind her facility), she would work furiously, adjusting and readjusting the invaluable lorgnette, until she produced a finished product. Finished was the kindest possible

word for her efforts, and since she had neglected to supply the critics with lorgnettes it was likely that she would receive a momentary shock when the reviews appeared.

Lady Bliss was amply flanked on one side by the Princess Natasha Romanoff. The Princess, who had made a killing in the cosmetic business, owned an impressive if unvaried collection of contemporary paintings. They were all portraits of the Princess. With them stood two young men named Tony and Alex who were, as the Princess put it, "rather novel" in that they painted as a team. Arriving in New York fresh from Los Angeles, they had been dismayed to find that their method alone did not win them a place among the *avant-garde*, but had recovered sufficiently to attach themselves to the Princess in hope of getting a commission.

This, then, was the group which the Countess found as she swept into the alcove where 'Lucien' was hung. "My dear," said Lady Bliss. "I'm truly amazed! Who is he – where *did* you find him? He's beautiful. . ."

"The expression," interrupted the Princess "The cock of the head, the enormous eyes – it is all too droll. I laugh here." She pressed her hand dramatically to her heart and smiled broadly. Tony and Alex giggled their approval.

The Countess blushed unbecomingly and gazed at her painting. "Ah, dear Lucien – I think I have caught something of his – his – well, spirit."

This remark caused a momentary lull in the conversation, and then Lady Bliss murmured, "I wonder..." The Countess ruffled, but no one paid the slightest attention to her. "I would like to meet your Lucien," said Lady Bliss. "Is he a professional model?"

"No, no," said the Countess. "You might say I *captured* him!" And she fluttered her hands helplessly as if it were a ridiculous allusion, though it was quite appropriate. "He applied for a job as a gardener last summer, and I was so intrigued by his face that it occurred to me to use him as a model. He didn't understand at first, but finally I persuaded him to pose. He's charming but rather odd – dreadfully shy. You see, his face is almost as amusing as my portrait and people are so apt to laugh. I think it's given him a bit of a complex, poor dear. He promised he'd be here tonight but I haven't seen him...Oh, there's Genevra! How sweet of her to come!"

They all turned to see a tall, pale woman standing in the doorway. It was Genevra Knight. A distinguished sculptress, she had herself an almost Parian look. A cloud of lemon-drop hair surrounded her head and she had hands like birds. Her admirers, professional and otherwise, were legion, yet she remained unmarried and was seldom seen in society. Various theories were advanced, but her reserve remained unchallenged. Genevra, at the age of twenty, when she was among other things a promising young painter, had lost her eyesight in a plane crash. It was a nerve injury, not disfiguring but completely hopeless. After a year of being sent from specialist to specialist all over the world by her incredulous family, she had rebelled. Since then – it had happened eight years ago – she had adapted herself to a life which she apparently found satisfying. She kept a large, sunny studio in New York and went to a tiny island off the Maine coast in the summer. Always she worked with a fervor which had at first alarmed her family and friends. But she had a calm, independent energy, sparked by gentle humour, which utterly dispelled doubt or pity. Her appearance at the Countess's opening was unexpected and very flattering.

"Darling!" gushed the Countess as Genevra joined them. "How too sweet of you to come – really if I'd known I could have sent a car. Have you had some champagne? Really, darling, I can't tell you how touched. . ." Here the Countess took her hand.

"But of course," Genevra smiled. "You didn't think I'd miss it? But please don't let me keep you. You must be frightfully busy – such a big night for you! Is Eve here?"

"Yes – hello, Genevra dear," said Lady Bliss.

When the Countess, followed by the Princess and her escorts, waddled off into the fray, Lady Bliss and Genevra seated themselves on a low marble bench. "Well, who's here, and is it too dismal?" inquired Genevra.

Lady Bliss looked around the room, bemused. Raised in England and the possessor of a genuine title, she enjoyed these displays of colonial barbarism and gaucherie. She was genuinely pleased to see Genevra, and answered cheerfully: "The usual crowd – plus the hungrier critics. I expect they'll mention the caterers kindly tomorrow. The paintings – well, you remember her sculpture. More gruesome than dismal, I'd say."

"Oh, dear," sighed Genevra. "The waste. . ."

"But there is *one*," said Lady Bliss. "Darling, it's really incredible. It's a portrait – miserably done, of course, but the *face* – really hilarious. The most ridiculous expression! Oh, I do wish I could explain. Somehow it's absolutely impossible not to laugh when you see it, and the longer you look, the harder you laugh. It's caused quite a sensation. We simply couldn't believe she'd done it, but we cornered Pedro – and even if he is her teacher, I

don't think he'd lie – and he said it was her's all right. He was quite mysterious about the whole thing – said something cryptic about this Lucien who posed for her, and disappeared."

"How fascinating!" cried Genevra. "And what does the poor Countess say?"

"I asked her about him. She said he used to be a gardener and that he has 'rather a complex' about being laughed at. But you know her powers of observation. – he's probably a manic depressive with geraniums sprouting from each ear."

"Oh, dear," laughed Genevra. "Too cruel, Eve! But I gather he's not here tonight. What a pity! I'd love to meet him."

Their conversation progressed to other topics until Genevra said she must leave if she were to get any work done in the morning. "I'm frantic because the gallery wants me to have a show this spring and I don't have half enough work ready."

"How exciting!" said Eve. "I think I'll leave too. I'm expecting a call from London tonight."

The ladies were saying their farewells when the butler called Lady Bliss to the telephone. "Oh, I expect that's Gerry. Do wait – I won't be a minute and I can drop you off on my way home."

"Lovely," said Genevra. "I'll be in the garden." She stood in the doorway for a moment, enjoying the musky, haunting smell of the familiar garden; then she walked softly across the terrace and seated herself on a bench to wait for her friend. Suddenly she heard footsteps scuffle on the gravel walk. She put out her hand and started to speak when a man's voice interrupted her:

"An' how did all the beeeautiful people like all the beeeautiful pictures?" crooned the voice. "Meant to come – art's s'important, Countess's s' important. . . guess you're important too, aren't you? Let me look at you. Ah, sure, you're important. If you're real, that is, but I'm not pos'tive – not qui' pos'tive about that – you're a little too gold. Take a good look at me, lady, and I'll look at you an' we'll figure it all out."

Genevra heard him stagger toward her until he was standing directly before her. He paused, evidently waiting for her to react. She lifted her face and smiled apologetically.

"Oh, my God," he cried, all his drunken whimsy vanishing. "Jesus, you can't see, can you?" And suddenly he began to weep, stood before her sobbing. "I'm sorry – sorry what I said," he cried brokenly. "But they beat me – she beat me. 'S a goddamn freak-show – called it art – had t' laugh – terribly important, an' I couldn't get away."

"Lucien!" said Genevra.

He laughed scornfully. "Sure – sure, 'Lucien' 's her name for me. I'm Lucky Lannon – a mick, see? My face, see – 's funny – 's a riot – three ring circus. Used to go to mass when I was a kid – sit in th' back so the choir – so the goddamn *priest* wouldn't laugh! Only one who never got any laughs out of the thing was my old lady – could've used 'em. You don' know, you don' know wha's like walkin' down a street an' you hear kids snickerin', an' people stare at you. An' sometimes they stop right in the middle of the goddamn street an' you keep walkin' past an' they start laughin' louder an' louder. So you go into a bar an' some lush slaps you on the back an' asks you how you do it. But it wouldn't be like that in there I guess." He waved his hand in the direction of the house. "They're too polite – bite their lips an' say, 'How do you do, Lucien,' like I was a kid or a. . . Ah, what the hell! Used to be a gardener – always liked flowers, pretty little flowers. An' you know something?" this in a tone of wonder: "They don't laugh – don't make a goddamn sound. . . not a goddamn sound!"

Hs voice had sunk to a hoarse whisper. Genevra sat in stunned silence, not trusting herself to speak. It was as though, in this one stumbling, raging voice all the wounded and scorned of the world had cried out to her, and for a moment she was overwhelmed with a sense of helplessness. Then she stretched out her hands and said softly, "Come here, Lucky. Let me look at you."

Trembling he knelt before her, and her cool fingers explored his face. When no laughter broke the silence, he lifted incredulous eyes and waited for her to speak.

"Lucky," she said, "Lucky, I'm a sculptress. My name is Genevra Knight. I want you to let me do a portrait of your head. Partly because it's beautiful" – he laughed, a broken, uncertain sound. "But listen – more because it's the only way I can help you, and I do so want to. Will you, Lucky? You can stay at my studio, and no one will bother you – please?"

"You're not kidding, are you?" he said wonderingly. "Ah – why, why do you want me to do it: I'm beat I tell you."

"No – you aren't – not really. You're frightened of laughter – so frightened you think the whole world's making fun of you. Do come with me now – please do! I think I can prove something to you – will you let me try?"

"Yeah – yeah, sure, I'll come."

"Stand up, Lucky, – give me your arm. 'Can we leave without going through the house again?"

"Yes – I'll show you."

. . . . .

Two items of interest appeared in the papers the following week. The Countess read the first, a callous review, with mounting indignation:

> "The Countess de Bois's private showing, though rankly amateurish, contained one portrait worthy of mention. Called 'Lucien,' it depicts a face irresistibly comic. One cannot but feel after examining the Countess's other work that it is the sitter rather than the painter who has transcended the medium in this instance, and that the Countess, like a child at a Charlie Chaplin movie, has been aware only of the most obvious and ridiculous aspects of her subject. It would be interesting to see a more mature treatment."

Her circle of friends found the second, an item in the gossip column, far more interesting:

> "The Countess de Bois's portrait 'Lucien', which has been the talk of the continental set, has now become a mystery. The model has disappeared! Anyone knowing the whereabouts of this droll young man please contact your reporter . . . he's unmistakable even in a crowd, we hear. . ."

"How could he be so ungrateful – after all I did for him," wailed the Countess.

"Shocking, darling," cooed the Princess, smiling. Tony and Alex agreed.

"I feel destroyed," she cried. "I really don't think I'll ever paint again. I told Pedro – the flame has suddenly died."

She waded through the ashes, and departed shortly for the Caribbean.

Lucky read the papers to Genevra, with a bitter laugh. She smiled determinedly at him but said no more on the subject. She had done what she could with words – her hands must do the rest. The winter passed quickly for both of them. The days when Lucky didn't pose (he was amazed how quickly her blind fingers memorized his face), he worked on Genevra's tools or built stands for her statues, and gradually he began to go out for walks again. The laughter he had feared so much seemed a part of the past – distant and inconsequential beside the reality of Genevra. When the spring came, he worked in her garden, and even his beloved flowers seemed less important. As the day of Genervа's opening approached, however, traces of his bitterness and fear returned. They planned to leave New York directly after the show.

"Gen," he said one morning, "listen, darling. Do we have to go to your opening – do *I* have to go? I just – those people – I don't want to see them again. You go and tell me what they say. We're so goddamned happy and if anything went wrong now. ."

But she was adamant. "If you left without seeing them, it would be like running away. You've got to see that there's nothing to run *from*, Lucky." Her determination and faith were unshakable. She had not allowed him to see her completed statue of him before it went to the gallery. It would be a revelation, not just to him, but to all present, and there would never be any doubt about its reality.

So, like two lovers about to be tried by fire, Lucky and Genevra drove to her opening. Lucky had taken a couple of drinks before they left, and as they pulled up, he turned to her and said, urgently, "Gen, Gen darling, listen. No matter what happens tonight we'll – we'll go 'way like we planned, won't we – I mean. . ."

She was impatient with him, sure of the success of her work and their love. "Of course – relax, Lucky. Oh, I'm so excited! I haven't had a show in three years, and we're horribly late. Come on, darling."

He helped her out of the car. They walked up the stairs of the gallery and into the hall where a maid took their coats. Genevra took Lucky's arm and they were just about to go in when suddenly Lucky said, "Listen, Gen – did vou hear that?"

"What, Lucky – what on earth – oh, no!" From within she heard it – low and distant at first, then mounting, cascading out – shouts of laughter. She paled, and moved to enter, but his hand restrained her.

"No, Gen, don't go in. It won't work. It was a crazy idea, but we can still go away."

"Lucky, Lucky – I can't – we've got to see. It's a mistake – it can't be you, I know it can't. We haven't failed."

"Oh, my God, Gen – oh, my God," and he was gone.

"Lucky," she cried, "Lucky!"

"Genevra, darling!" the Countess exclaimed, clasping her hand. "Ah, you missed it. Tony and Alex were quarreling over the Princess, and she came in with a new painter whom she had just commissioned, and they both – oh, darling, it was most *hilarious* thing. Why, what's wrong, darling? Everyone's too impressed for words with your work. . . Oh, dear, did I say something. . ." the Countess fluttered helplessly.

Lady Bliss took Genevra's hand. "The portrait, Gen – he's beautiful," she said.

She could fall on her face to the earth, the ground she had huddled against, and wept in frantic weakness. Or she could run free-light-footed, even along the stoney beach in a dance of joy. Tall and free she felt in the sun and wind, her back straight and lean and her legs like a clean beast's legs, unconscious and unfatted. Her hair blew out behind her and the salt wind washed her face. Her new breasts, budlike, pushed against the air. She scrambled down the bank, skirting the thistles with bright-eyed agility.

In the water was sea-weed, russet and dying, or green with wet bubbles, ripe with healing slime. The jelly inside was clear and colorless, soothing against a bite or a sunburn. Perhaps this curative power was not due to any chemical, but to the mystery, the cleanness of the stuff. Jericho would rub it on her face. It drew the skin taut, clean and simple. It made her free like a wild ancient. She obeyed impulse.

Under the bluff of the head was a slight inlet and the beach flattened. Here there were a few of the carnivorous white barnacles that pestered the shore. In the water were long whip-handles of kelp with glossy blades.

Jericho was too restless to swim that day. She climbed back over the sea wall into the meadow that crept up to the head, The forest was thin at the edges, but the floor already soft with needles. She walked to a small grove she knew, where there was shade but not thicket. On the way she passed two huge ant heaps that she knew would be there; but in her grove the needles had fallen in many layers, and would be protection from the ants as she ate. The ants liked the resinous sap, and wood-dust for their piles. Jericho tasted spruce sap. At just the right age and consistency it made a gum that was clean to chew. Its taste was bittersweet, for spruce smells sweet, and the sap is a concentration of the smell, but so strong that it is bitter.

In the clearing she ate her lunch. She buried her paper trash. She walked to the edge of the bluff to search out the old sheep path that trailed precariously along the cliff-edge. Finding it she followed it to a crumbling jut of land over the water. There was some dark green springing moss with reddish twigs and dry "flowers". How lovely it would be to lie on! She did not want to crush it. She stood at the flaking edge and threw her beer can to the sea. It hit a rock first with a clang and a flash of light on metal – then cockeyed into the water, where it bobbed until it filled and sank.

Every year, since the first time, when she was small and her aunt had led her, she had walked around the head. She knew the rocks by color and touch. On the South-west they were orange and crumbly. On the North they were greenish and there was a small cave. On the North-west they were black and looming, with great shelves and overhangs. Springs leaked from crannies in them; and each fell directly into the bay. All the rocks were spattered with the hard lime of gull-dung, with occasional patches of gray slime, unbleached and stinking. And there were pools red with rust and brilliant green with slime, warm in the sunlight, where the snails wallowed.

Where the banks or eroded earth fell toward the rocks flowers grew, small purple ones, and plants with curious leaves, some green and some vermillon. Here it was easiest to move between forest and shore. The old trees hung over the bank raking like retired masts toward the bay, bearded with smokey moss. The lower branches of the younger trees were white and stiff from lack of sun, sharp and easily broken, useless. Here and there the wool of an erstwhile sheep waved from a spikey twig. In the clearings huge-leaved green plants with clusters of violent berries sprawled searching for the sun. The grass meshed like fine hair. Even at noon there was "fairy spit" still clinging to it. Insects ran rapidly; everywhere were piles of rabbit droppings.

Finally she came out on the other side, after much intricate roving. There was nobody there, at the shallow cove, and the tide was much higher. It must be far after lunch. Perhaps the fisherman's family had gone to town for weekend marketing and the early show at the ramshackle movie.

She walked rather aimlessly, examining stones and skipping them. At a distance the beaches looked blue. From the water they were white; but scrutinized, each stone was different and colorful, some plain, some ringed, some mottled. Sometimes she shut her eyes, and with her fingertips tried to feel the colors. Sometimes she tried to tell without looking.

She found she had to urinate, because of the beer perhaps, so she climbed back into the forest along an old road where once as a child she had found while walking with the man who worked on their place, the skeleton of a sheep. It had not frightened her. She had taken the skull home with her, proud of her rare possession. The handy-man had known the sheep. It had been his land this head. He could reckon what sheep it must be, and what winter; but to her it was immeasurably old, dead, and not only dead but dry and bare; a relic. She was glad she did not again find such a thing, because she had had a feeling that she might. She crouched behind a tree, and as the warmth flowed from her into the earth, she felt that same communion as with weed jelly upon sore, or shock of icy water.

She climbed the hill that formed the main curve of the head, and came out in a rocky clearing stifled with tall blackberries, still dull and hard, and juniper. The berry plants were drab without the glossy fruit they would later have, like dry spinsters standing together. Yet the weeds were not barren, but would have their berries, juicy and black, hard and blue. It was a bleak place, spitefully crowded. Any other seed falling among the growth would never find the soil – the low brambles cowering among the rocks and the spindly berry-plants usurped the patch. She could not walk through the snarl, but skirted it and walked again into forest.

Here was another clear place, where the trees were far enough apart so that their lower branches were live and green, but everywhere was shade. After the rough clutch of weed, the forest dusk was gothic. In the midst there grew a small colony of indian pipe. A fungus, living on death, delicate and translucent. White. If picked it turned brown and stiff. But here it grew in utter stillness, damp and fragile. She lowered herself before it; beholding it. The bell shaped heads hung down with scalloped hollows close against the stalk, a few to a grouping. They had a faint flower-like odor. She knew she must leave them to their unstirring cool – must not touch them.

She rose, and walking from the wood, found herself again in the meadow that dipped and then sloped toward the house. The dip was swampy and tall cattails grew there, and hot purple flowers dandled fire along its border. But to one side the meadow was dry, and the way safe.

The clouds were gathering for the end of the day. The sun was well in the west. The long stretch of meadow waved maples, yellow and indian red. The row of aspens near the road shook silver. She walked up through the meadow, picking bunches of everlasting, bay, and yellow mustard. She crushed a few sprigs of yarrow in her fingers for the smell, but did not gather it – it always looked bedraggled. She picked armfuls of the other flowers – it was not destructive, there were so many – and she loved them in the way of wanting them. From the aspens she broke a few gleaming twigs, lingering awhile in the shade, so slight and shimmering after the dark spruce. The afternoon sun poured into the tender grasses of the grove's floor. A bower.

It made her sad, to linger and to hunger. She turned away, and as she climbed toward the house, saw the laundry flying from the line in flounces. She could not see anything of hers among the sheets and child-clothes. The laundry had distracted her; she had not looked where she was going as she watched it dance. Now her legs were itching with juniper prickels. Suddenly her arms were tired under her bouquet. She came to the house wearily.

"Mother," she called.

"What is it?"

"What time is it?"

"I don't know, look at the clock in the living room."

"I mean how long till supper?"

"Maybe an hour and a half. I'll be there in a minute."

"May I make some tea? I brought you some flowers."

"Oh I *guess* so," she came to the door. "My, you certainly brought enough! What are you going to do with them all?"

"They're for you."

"Well, you'll have to fix them. And don't make a mess. I spent all afternoon cleaning this kitchen."

"But I did it this morning..."

"You *think* you did. Where were you all day? I needed you to help me The fire in the stove went out – so I had to clean out all the ashes. Don't be asking for hot water. I was counting on you to stay here and stoke it."

"You didn't tell me."

"Last time I saw you you weren't fit to be told anything. Did you get any lunch?"

"Yes, I took some with me. Here is the bag."

"I don't want it. It's Martha's, isn't it?"

"Yes." Jericho was tired. She took her bouquet out and came back for some water. She had forgotten about tea. She sat fixing her flowers slowly.

The branches and trunks of the old apple orchard were gnarled and smooth, almost like driftwood but with the sheen of life instead of the polish of the sea. Not dry like driftwood; not aimless. The wilting peonies against the orchard wall were lush as they flopped to the ground all pink and white; their season almost past – the gamboge season of sun and butterflies.

Supper was late that night, and quiet. The Aunt made pleasant talk with Ann; and nobody asked Jericho about Her Day; so she could sit and muse, remembering. After the dishes were done, Jericho went again into the meadow.

The larches are feathery in the evening, and birds sit in them, high up, to catch the last glimpse of sun and sing to it until it fades.

This evening hovered, fragile and pale, the pinkish grasses soft in the afterglow, and the Queen Anne's lace turning individual faces to the sun. Loveliness had lengthened the day, so that the sky cherished the last rays even as the stars appeared.

Jericho wanted to say goodnight to her mother, who was tired, who was going to bed early. She

went to her mother's room and already her mother was in bed, looking thin in her sleazy nightgown, a book in her hand. As the sun went it left a deep glower of red upon the sky – and this scarlet flushed her mother's western room.

"You should turn your lights on," said Jericho, "You'll ruin your eyes."

"I know," said her mother. "I don't want to yet."

"I came to say goodnight; unless you'd like me to stay and talk."

"I have nothing to say – have you?"

"Not really. I'll go to my loft I guess."

"You do like that room, don't you?"

"Yes – in the morning and the evening I like it. During the day it's too dark and stuffy. Well, I really came to say goodnight." She bent over to kiss her.

"Good night, Jericho. Thank you for the flowers."

"Good night." And Jericho hastened from the room with the sunset light upon her. Her mother's lips were hard – she had meant to kiss her cheek; but they were hard because they were thin, and pulled tight over her mishapen teeth. They had bruised Jericho and now she ached, achedwith a hopeless love.

Campus Interviews on Cigarette Tests

Number 8...THE BALTIMORE ORIOLE

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Clean-up man on the baseball nine, this slugger doesn't like to reach for 'em . . . wants it right over the plate. And that's the way he likes his proof of cigarette mildness! No razzle-dazzle "quick-puff" tests for him. No one-whiff, one-puff experiments. There's *one* test, he's discovered, that's *right down the alley!*

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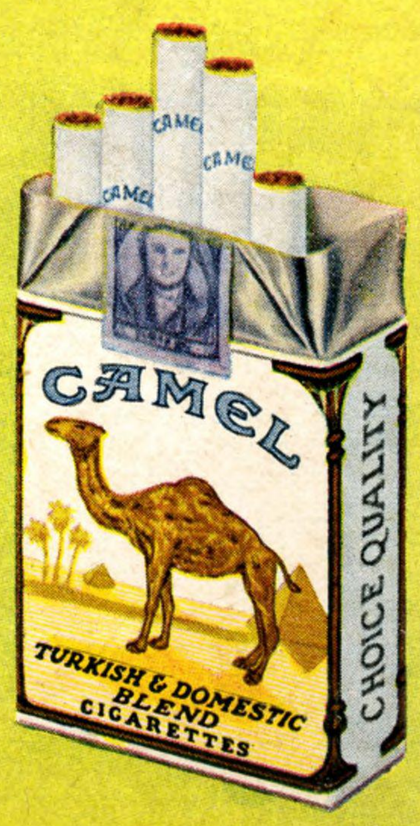

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