August 1984

# The Little Balkans Review, Fall 1984 / Winter 1984-85

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# The Little Balkans Review

A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

Vol. 5, No. 1 Fall-Winter 1984-85

## Rebecca Patterson

Literary Scholar

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A Southeast Kansas Literary and Graphics Quarterly

Vol. 5 No. 1



All glory comes from daring to begin.–Eugene F. Ware

Fall/Winter 1984-85

**The Little Balkans Press, Inc.**

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**This issue is dedicated with thanks to Bonnie George.**


**Credits**

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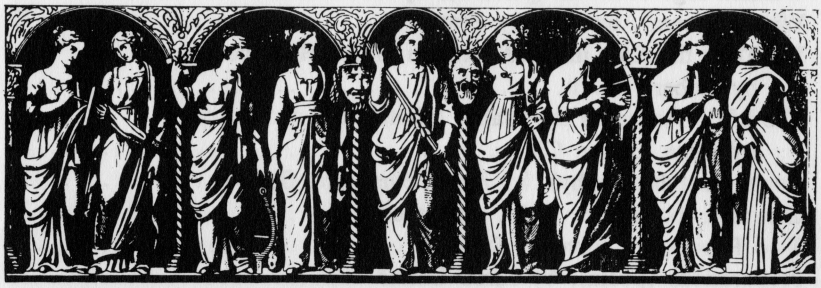


# Preface

With the beginning of our fifth year of publication, the editors decided that the first issue should be devoted to an overview of the *LBR*'s brief life, but we soon discovered that the variety was too great to encompass in a single issue. Therefore, this entire volume will contain echoes of earlier subject matter and artists, culminating in a fourth number which will be designated our official anniversary publication.

Our first issue almost five years ago featured William Inge, focusing on his year of teaching at Cherokee County Community High School in Columbus. When Colby H. Kullman presented the first (and only) chapter of the late William C. Young's biography of the playwright at the annual William Inge Festival, sponsored by the Independence Community College last spring, we were delighted to learn that Dr. Kullman would permit its publication in our pages. The echoes had begun to reverberate.

The fiction of this issues deals with aging—one story is about a woman reaching the traditional midpoint of life, forty, and the other is a sympathetic portrayal of a once-brilliant man in a nursing home. We thus had a spectrum from childhood (the William Inge article) to senility, with a humorous, feminist "middle." It was

Norman Mailer

Ted Watts

a short step in logistics then to flesh out the Seven Ages of Man, but unlike Shakespeare, we—with the assistance of the genius of Norman Mailer—begin with conception and—with that of Elizabeth Layton—close with life after death. Good materials about lovers were easy to come by, but we were stumped for a moment for a soldier in the arts. Who fought uncommon odds enough to be so designated?

The answer lay in the life of the late Dr. Rebecca Patterson, whose *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson* was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1951. Her biography, although now considered standard reading in Dickinson scholarship, so upset the academic and critical establishment at the time that she was the target of volleys of negative criticism that can barely be imagined by one not in that arena. Not only was her professional life and reputation at stake, but doors for further research were unceremoniously closed with resounding clangs. She enlisted troops from among former students scattered across the nation who photocopied documents necessary for her work but which were denied to her personally. Her "heroism" was magnified by her drive and determination to continue. The editors are grateful to one of her students, Dr. Juanita Laing, for writing her story for this issue.

It had been drawn to our attention that among the poems from the countries of origin of the citizens of the Little Balkans we had not yet published the works of a bona fide Englishman. It was with great joy, then, when Ken Melaragno returned from a summer's study at Cambridge that he brought with him a sheaf of poems by one of his professors, Glen Cavaliero. Here was the perfect poet to represent the United Kingdom, for Dr. Caviliero is not only an excellent poet, but one whose critical works include a study of John Cowper Powys, the Welsh novelist and critic who was extensively published by E. Haldeman-Julius in Little Blue Book format and whose companion for many years, Phyllis Playter, was the daughter of the founder of Pittsburg, Kansas. The luck of the Irish remains with us in our multicultural environs.

As Dr. Eva Jessy says (who celebrated her ninetieth birthday January 20), "So much to do and so little time." Please be patient with us if we are a little late. If you are a subscriber, we shall get four issues to you even if circumstances force us (as they did this time) to take two seasons rather than one to put everything together. The Powers-That-Be seem to make the years shorter anymore (to use a Balkanism). Nevertheless, we shall continue to attempt to bring you new information about the familiar and to make you familiar with the new in our midst.

The notices on the copyright page cannot express our appreciation to Words and Pictures Corporation for the generous use of their equipment in setting up this issue. And oh the hours saved, thanks to Miriam Culver of Chanute, in the addressing of envelopes: she's placed our mailing list on the computer. And we wish we could afford bushels of flowers for Bonnie George of Words and Pictures Corporation for all the times she assisted with typesetting problems. Thank you, Bonnie. Thank you all.

THE EDITORS

# I Got Two Kids and Another in the Oven

There we were,
a blur,
a void in the ovoid.
For the ova and the brat
like their punning formal familiars
the oven and the bread
exist in an intellectual relationship
an arbitrary declaration
of the will upon the flesh
so that the flesh body will.

Ah!
What if . . . it is not like that at all?
And seed swims into an eternity of closing spaces
and dying seas,
seed so adrenal in the whip of its race
that the royal procession into cavern
beyond feminine cavern
is felt not as majesty
nor tropical velvets of water
which murmur for birth
But in all despair as most desperate night.

Yes.
What if the seed be already a being?
So desperate that it
claws, bites, cuts and lies,
burns, and betrays,
Kills to capture the oven, be nectared
in yeasterly expansion.

One wins
Upon occasion
(assuming there is no diaphragm, jelly, condom, pill,
or coit interrump to gulp up a death on the
sandy sunlit beaches of a woman's belly
*wipe* goes a sheet like a winter wind)

One wins
one out of some multi-million other sons and daughters
not to be born

One wins
one more there is,
one more or less incandescent enthusiasm,
itch of the detumescent present,
new god, embryonic two-cell
good at murder.

Norman Mailer

# Adam's Ancestor?

The *Fort Scott Monitor* of August 1873 recorded the following, taken from the *Osage Mission Journal:* "We were shown by Father Ponziglione several days ago a geological specimen of the most remarkable character, obtained near the western line of our county. The specimen in question was obtained by blasting. It is that of the cranium of the human species, of large size, imbedded in the conglomerated rock of the tertiary class, and found several feet below the surface. Parts of the frontal, parietal, and occipital bones were carried away by explosion. The piece of rock holding the remains weighs some forty or fifty pounds, with many impressions of marine shells, and through it there runs a vein of quartz, or within the cranium crystallized organic matter, and by the aid of a microscope presents a beautiful appearance. Is this an antediluvian relic or pre-Adamic? The rock is of the oldest known to geology."—From William C. Cuthbertson's *The Genesis of Girard* (Girard, Kan.: The Author, 1984), p. 9. This book is available at 108 W. Buffalo, Girard, KS 66743, for $5.00. Please add $1.50 for postage and handling if ordering by mail.


**Photographed by Lee Moorhouse in 1899.**

# No Trouble at All!

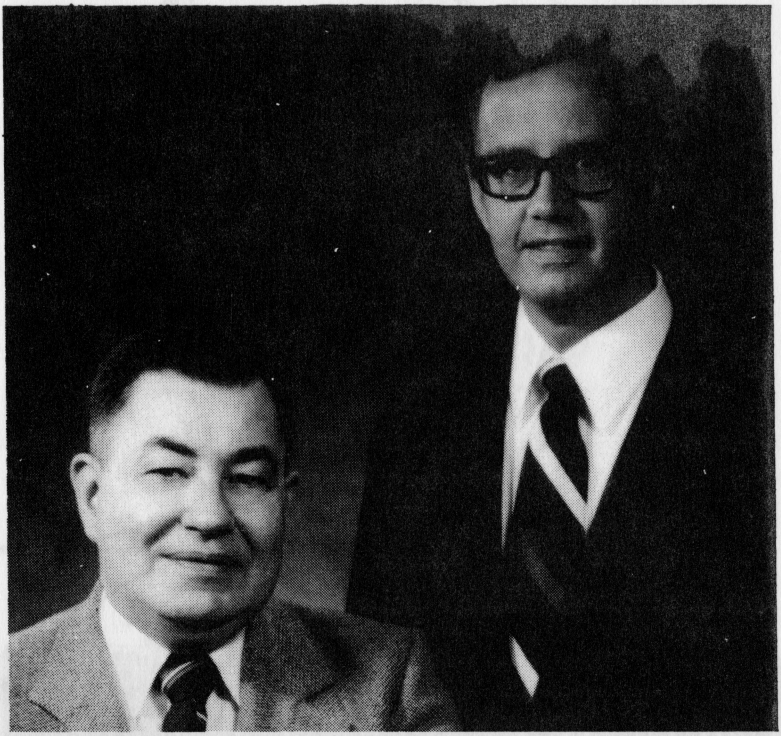
January is
snow, snowball fights,
lots of seasonal sights:
snowmen and
cute cold kittens
heavy coats
hats and
furry mittens
hot chocolate
colds
the color white
and lots of covers when
you go to bed at night.

Becky David

# William Inge: The Early Years

## By William C. Young

## Edited by Colby H. Kullman



**William C. Young and Colby H. Kullman, 1979.**

*In 1974, William C. Young, author of* American Theatrical Arts *(1971) and the four-volume* Documents of American Theatre History *(1973-1975) as well as contributor to the fourth edition of the* Oxford Companion to the Theatre *(1983), drew up a proposal for a life of William Inge, which was to be titled "William Inge: Compassionate Playwright."*

*Professor Young's interest in William Inge resulted from years of familiarity with his plays, was excited by the enthusiasm of his colleague at Baker University, next-door neighbor, and good friend Professor Emeritus Thelma Reinhard Morreale, and was refined during a graduate seminar in Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Inge, which he taught at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1974.*

*Only the first chapter of this biography was written by the time of Professor Young's death in 1979.—Colby H. Kullman.*

William Inge at Seven

Rod Dutton

"Oh, mam, come look! Isn't that the cutest little boy you ever saw?"

The girl who spoke was sitting in a porch swing watching a small, tow-headed, blue-eyed boy sauntering down Fourth Street in Independence, Kansas, one summer day in 1921. The child was dressed in a well-pressed white linen suit and had a serious look on his face. Billy Inge was on his way to give his recitations to another church group.

At the age of eight Bill Inge was already stagestruck. He loved to perform before an audience, to hear the laughter and applause that were all just for him, and to receive the gushing praises after the performance, even though he was shy with people. The shyness, however, did not show itself in his performances. He lost himself completely in his work.

And it seemed as though there was no end of opportunity for him to perform, for there were all sorts of community groups and various church organizations which were looking for local talent to fill their programs. Also, the schools provided talented students with many occasions to demonstrate their abilities, and little Billy Inge was a novelty. It was unusual to find such a handsome child who had a confident stage presence and recited so well. And to think it had all started when he had memorized a little jingle his sister Helene was to recite for her elocution class in school, a nonsensical piece but one he had learned without effort.

Hi-yo, Peter Johnson,
Come inside that fence;
I done told yo' yesterday
Yo' ain't got no sense.

The world of performance was Inge's way of attracting the attention he so desperately craved. Born in Independence on 3 May 1913, Bill was the youngest of five children of Luther and Maude Inge. In many families the youngest child becomes the spoiled baby of the family; but this was not the case with Bill, for the home into which he was born was a troubled one.

His father, Luther, was a traveling salesman for a company specializing in ladies' clothing, and this meant that he was at home very little of the time and was a stranger to his children. A tall, well-built man, who prided himself on his strength and physique, Luther Inge was a well-liked man with a ready wit and pleasing personality. As a salesman, he was a hard-working, energetic man who relentlessly went from town to town opening new territory for his company, showing new merchandise to old customers, serving as a source of news for smaller communities, and providing for his family to the best of his ability.

At the turn of the twentieth century the traveling salesman was a familiar friend in the prairie states, for the territory was populated with small towns, many of which were quite a distance from the larger population centers. The inhabitants of these towns depended on the traveling salesman to bring to the local shopkeeper the latest in fashions and household goods. And so there was a certain status attached to the job. The traveling salesman was a necessity of rural life.

The family of the salesman, however, often suffered because of his prolonged absences; and the wife had to be a strong frontier woman, acting as both mother and father to the children and managing the household to the best of her ability during the husband's absences. Households, then, were often matriarchal; and it

was as difficult for a woman to shift roles from an independent to a dependent personality when her husband returned from his trips as it was for the husband to return and assume a father's position in the household.

The children of such a marriage often suffered most of all, for they needed a strong father figure in the home, something missing most of the time. It was the mother who assumed the complete responsibility for the discipline and welfare of the children, and the temptation was to be either overly strict or to spoil them. And as times changed and hardships came to a family, so could the mother's treatment of her children change.

Because of the long absences of the husbands, wives depended more upon their own families and neighbors in times of perplexity and trouble. Bill Inge's mother, Maude, found one of her major outlets in constantly writing to her sister Helen in Wichita. A familiar sight for her children, as they were growing up, was their mother sitting behind a card table writing her letters.

Life was not easy for the Inges. Bill remembered that as early as the time when he was four years old there were three spinster schoolteachers boarding in their home, providing an extra source of income for the family. For young Bill Inge it was a very difficult experience, for he grew up in a home surrounded by women. It was to be an experience which would mark him for the rest of his life.

The Inge children had been born over a fifteen year period of time, so Lucy, the beautiful oldest daughter, was a young woman by the time Bill was born, and she had married and left Independence by the time he was eight years old. The second child, Luther, Jr., was born soon after Lucy had married and left home at the age of nineteen. A third child died. Bill's sister, Helene, was four years older than he and did not serve as a companion for him as a child. For several years they were the only children at home.

In a home where the father was absent for long periods of time, Maude Inge became dependent on her oldest son, Luther, Jr. She idolized him, and for her he could do no wrong. He was kind and loving to her, driving her on errands, listening to her problems. In a very real sense, Luther served as a "substitute husband," for she bestowed upon him the love she should have showered upon her husband. What a blow for her, then, when her beloved son eloped at the age of nineteen with a sixteen-year-old neighbor girl! She accepted the loss of her son with a stoicism she showed throughout her life; but this brave front was put to the test a few months later when Luther, Jr., died of an infection contracted while shaving. He left his wife pregnant. For a long time Maude Inge's grief was inconsolable. Her son's death was something she could never truly accept, for he was the closest and dearest person to her. For the rest of her life she reminisced about her dead son, questioning how God could have dealt her such an injustice.

This closeness between his mother and older brother was to affect his life profoundly, for in the mother's mind the older son was perfect and excelled in everything. Luther, Jr., enjoyed sports and hunting; Bill avoided them. Luther, Jr., had spent hours taking her shopping and listening to her problems; Bill, when he was old enough, took her shopping, but he did not enjoy it. There were always the comparisons, whether actual or implied, with Bill always the loser . . . except in one area: dramatic performance. This was one place where there could be no comparison, for Luther, Jr., had had no interest in drama.

**The Inge Home, 514 N. 4th, Independence, Kansas. Photograph by Shelby Horn.**

Independence, Kansas, was a good place to rear children and was, by the time of Inge's birth, already a cultural center for the area. In the 1900 census, Independence showed a population of only 4,852. The discovery of oil, however, in 1903 caused a large population growth, so that by 1910 Independence could claim 10,480 residents, a number which has remained relatively stable until the present time.

This was a prosperous town, with large spacious homes, tree-lined, gas-lighted streets, imposing churches, and fine stores. The Inge home on Fourth Street was a three-story, white clapboard house with a wide verandah on two sides. Well situated for schools and recreation areas, the home was only a short distance from Riverside Park, the town's main park, which included picnic grounds, a river for fishing, and a zoo. When Inge was a young boy, the first monkey island was built and became a point of great interest for children and parents alike.

In Inge's later plays and novels it is the Independence of the 1910s and 1920s that he is presenting, the town of his boyhood years, with the picnics in Riverside Park, the people of his childhood memories, and the entertainments enjoyed by the citizens of Independence, such as Neewollah. Neewollah *(Halloween* spelled backward) was originally started to prevent the young people from performing their usual Halloween pranks. Men and women, boys and girls, would dress in various costumes. A queen was chosen for the celebration, a parade held, and dances and entertainments took place in several halls around town. Young and old alike looked forward to Neewollah and made plans many months in advance.

Bill Inge found encouragement in his theatrical aspirations, both at home and in the community. His mother's brother John had once been an actor with a Shakespearean stock company, but he had been called home to work in the family's harness-making business in Wichita. He never forgot, however, his days on the

stage, for his first love was always the theatre; and Bill could always count on Uncle John for some good stories of his days on the stage. Then, too, it was a tradition in his mother's family that they were distantly related to the great Booth family, one of the most outstanding acting families in America during the nineteenth century. With a heritage like this, who could doubt that Bill Inge would succeed in his acting apsirations?

From the age of seven, when he first began to give his recitations and experienced the thrill of appearing before an audience, Bill Inge wanted to be connected with the theatre. With his best friend, Phil Watts, who lived next door, Bill set up his own "theater" in the Inge garage, where he wrote, acted in, and directed original productions. He and Phil charged one pin admission.

Independence offered many opportunities for any young person interested in theatre. The Beldorf Theatre was built in 1906 and was in use as a theater for over fifty years. Among the companies booked at this theater were the Graham Stock Company, the Clint Robins Company, and the Whyte Dramatic Company. Performances were well attended; and, since this was before the days of air conditioning, the management soon opened the Airdome, an outdoor summer theater, thereby allowing them to present live theatre the year around.

Another major theater opened in 1922 when the Memorial Hall was dedicated. The first show was a community theater project, a production of *The Pirates of Penzance* by Gilbert and Sullivan, but traveling companies were soon booked and the people of Independence were introduced to such performers as Will Rogers, Elsie Janis, and Sir Harry Lauder, and they saw such shows as *The Ziegfeld Follies, Green Pastures, Rio Rita,* and *Seventh Heaven.*

Nor was there a dearth of movie houses. White's Theatre was built in 1914 and for five cents admission fee there was an evening's entertainment. Martin and Osa Johnson, noted African explorers who lived in nearby Chanute, opened The Snark, which had a theater facade and entrance resembling the bow of Jack London's famous boat of exploration. Soon there were other motion picture theaters: The Best, The Main Street, The Strand, and The Booth. It was The Booth which introduced talking pictures to Independence on 8 April 1929, when it showed *The Bellamy Trial.*

In spite of his small coteries of friends, Inge was a lonely child who found release in the glamorous world of the films. His room was decorated with pictures of actors and actresses he had clipped from newspapers and magazines, and he kept scrapbooks of his favorite stars. Loretta Goodell, one of Bill's best friends who later married Phil Watts, estimated that she, Bill, Phil, and Vivian Jones (who later was actress Vivian Vance, best known for the *Lucy* series), attended at least three or four motion pictures each week. "The movies furnished us with a glamour that our own lives lacked," she declared.

Another popular yearly entertainment was the Chautauqua. Independence was on the Chautauqua circuit controlled by the Redpath-Horner Agency, which furnished complete entertainment for a community for a ten-day period every summer. Each morning there was "Junior Town," classes for young people interested in the arts, while in the afternoon and evening there were professional performances of classical and modern plays. On one afternoon of the Chautauqua the young people who had been attending Junior Town acted in some play which they had rehearsed during their morning classes. The Chautauqua was always a high point of the summer months.

During the 1920s the Toby Tent Shows regularly visited Independence and found a welcome audience. These Toby Shows were not a new form of entertainment, having begun in the 1850s when an actor-producer, Yankee Robinson, operated "Yankee Robinson's Opera Pavilion" in Rock Island, Illinois. By 1916 there were at least fifty well-known companies touring the midwest and furnishing family entertainment for the masses. The Independence-area Toby Show had Kansas City for its home base and was owned and operated by Ed and Maurice Dubinsky. These impresarios had four companies on the road: one in Oklahoma and three in Kansas and Nebraska. The shows became so popular in the 1920s that the editor of *Billboard* was reported by the *New York Times* in October 1925 as estimating that there were four hundred tent shows at that time in the United States, most of which played at least forty weeks per year, giving 96,000 performances a year for a total of 76,800,000 admissions. These statistics are startling in their enormity, but they do show the popularity of this form of entertainment during that decade.

The plays of the Toby Shows are always predictable, involving Toby, a freckled-faced, red-haired, country bumpkin who always outwitted a city slicker. But even with the stereotyped characters and the predictable action, people loved these shows; and in later years, during the time he was in college, Bill Inge gained some excellent professional acting experience with a Toby Show.

**Watts**

**Goodell**

**Inge**

**Ingleman**

**Photographs from the 1930 and 1931 Independence High School Annuals.**

Undoubtedly one of the great theatrical influences on Bill Inge, Vivian Vance, and their friends was a high school instructor, Miss Anna Ingleman, the first teacher in Independence to bring drama into the curriculum. As early as 1921 she had started the Dee Dee Club for all high school students interested in drama; and Bill Inge was active in the organization throughout his years at Independence High School, serving as secretary for the club during his senior year, 1929-1930.

Miss Ingleman was indefatigable in her work, never staging fewer than four plays a year. The quality of the plays chosen was not very high, but this was unimportant. The point was that the young people were kept busy working on the stage: acting, building scenery, planning lighting and costuming, engaging in all phases of stage activity. And Miss Ingleman must have had a thorough knowledge of what it took to attain a successful acting career, for she once told Loretta Goodell [Watts], "You're a much better actress than Viv [Vivian Vance], but she has guts and you don't." Loretta added, "Miss Ingleman made work on the stage exciting."

Perhaps Miss Ingleman contributed most to her students' dramatic education by taking them to see every stage show which came to town. On special occasions

she took them to Kansas City to see some great stars perform. Bill Inge was stage struck. Wanting to be an actor above all else, he would not be happy until he had achieved that goal.

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**Afterword: A Proposal for a Biography of William Inge, by William C. Young**

This work is not intended to be an exhaustive, definitive biography of William Inge. It deals specifically with William Inge and his plays, detailing the forces which shaped his life and ideas, making him into the compassionate playwright he was. A full biography will not be written for many years; indeed, perhaps it should never be written, for the last thirteen years of this tortured playwright's life do little to help us understand his craft and can only serve to show what the harsh, often unmerited, jibes of frequently ignorant critics can do to a sensitive artist of real talent.

*William Inge: Compassionate Playwright,* then, deals with Inge's boyhood years, his work as a drama and motion picture critic, and his great years, when he was involved in the production of five major Broadway plays, four of which were unqualified successes. It deals with the plays and the people who directed, designed, and acted in them, reflecting remembrances of those people about Inge as they knew him. The biography ends with the production of *A Loss of Roses* in 1959, his excoriation by the critics that led to a complete destruction of Inge as a playwright, and an analysis of why this play failed. A brief epilogue will chronicle Inge's last years and his death.

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# Winter

The dawning sun has struck the glass trees
charging the atmosphere with leaping color
fractured and refractured to near numb the eye

Music must be resounding from those broken rays
for something continually calls me
to stand in silence before the window

**Beverly Frazier**

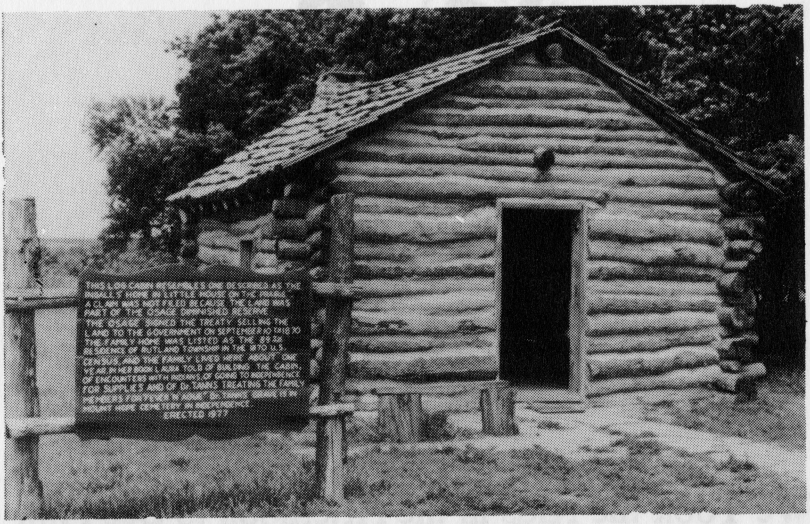
# We Took the Kids in the Afternoon to See Him

in his coffin
not because kids are afraid of death
    that we'll teach them later
no
we took the kids in the afternoon when it was quiet
when no one was around
so they could touch and feel and ask
"does he have makeup on
    how did they get the blood out
        are those really his gloves"
we took the kids in the afternoon so we could talk
about gloves and blood and makeup and
we touched his beard "he still feels like a lion" she said with
her fingers tangled "i still love him"

Bob Green

# The Little House on the Prairie

## by Edna Lemon Clay



**Thirteen miles southwest of Independence, Montgomery County, is a reconstructed log cabin on the original site of the childhood home of Laura Ingalls Wilder and her family. Wilder tells of the building of their home in her book,** Little House on the Prairie. **The family lived there from 1869 to 1870.**

**The marker at the entrance reads: ". . . a claim was not filed because the land was part of the Osage Diminished Reserve. The Osage signed the treaty selling the land to the government on September 10th, 1870. The family home was listed as the 89th residence of Rutland Township in the 1870 U.S. census. . . . In her book Laura told of the building of the cabin, of encounters with Indians, of going to Independence for supplies and of Dr. Tann's treating the family members for 'fever 'n' ague.' . . . Erected in 1977."**

**Independence PRIDE volunteers constructed and furnished the cabin as the Wilders might have had it. Nearby are a restored one-room schoolhouse and an early-day rural post office. The buildings are open from May 15 through September 15. Admission is by donation.**

# Center

## By Zula Bennington Greene

Center was a little town in the middle of the San Luis Valley, a town with low buildings and wide streets that needed no paving. The little rain that fell was quickly swallowed by the sandy soil. In the town lived the people who had created it, confident, energetic, full of pride and plans.

It had the image of a town on its way, not one that had been there. It was young enough to have the brash assurance of the builder and old enough to have acquired leading citizens who felt they had it made. These couples would go to Denver, a city exhilarating in fresh-mined gold, always traveling on a Rio Grande Railroad pass. Anybody who was anybody at all could get one. They went to theaters and cafes and brought home furniture and rugs, china and silver, then regaled their neighbors with tales of frolicking in Denver.

At the intersection of the two business streets in Center—well, make it one and a half—stood a round watering trough, fed by an artesian well in the center. Put a hole down most anywhere in the valley and water would burst forth like Moses smiting the rock. A spectacular sight was a well frozen into a cascade of gleaming ice, with water spouting above it.

On one corner stood the bank and next to it was the Center Mercantile Company, the only two-story building in town. With the valley spreading around it, Center had no need to stack up its buildings. The Mercantile was a general store, food on one side, dry goods on the other, and above it was the Center Opera House, reached by broad stairs from the sidewalk. It was a place for dances, for school entertainments, lodge meetings, and the occasional road show that appeared. In it I saw my first play, a melodrama that sent me into shivers of delight and occupied my thoughts and fantasies for months. The stage curtain was a mountain scene and tucked into the crags and crevices were ads of local merchants. One was my Uncle Frank's real estate business, Carney and Bennington.

About a quarter of the people were Mexican-Americans, who lived on the east side in houses made mostly by themselves. We knew a Mrs. Herrera, who in her spare time was making bricks toward building her own house, bricks of straw and adobe, dried and hardened by the sun. The town had only Methodist and Baptist churches. The nearest Catholic church was in Del Norte, twelve miles away.

Many of the Mexican-Americans had come to work in the sugar beet fields, but beets did not turn out to be a profitable crop. Then it was learned that potatoes could bring that Midas touch. It was said that one good crop of potatoes, sold on a good market, could pay for the land on which it grew.

It was called a gambler's crop. If a sudden early freeze came before the potatoes were dug, the crop was a total loss. No radio or television forecast the weather,

but farmers learned to keep a wary eye for signs. Along in early September, when the frost was not far away, to dig or not to dig could be a heads or tails toss.

Whole Mexican families came to the fields to pick up and sack the potatoes, making it feel a kind of holiday for both them and the farmer's family. Young children played; older children worked. In addition to pay by the sack, the pickers got their potatoes for the winter. The sacks had to be hauled to the market, whatever it was. In later years farmers built big cellars to store potatoes for future selling.

Papa was happy in Colorado. It had no mud, which he detested. The soil was light and sandy and easily worked. And best of all, too little or too much rain was no worry. Melting snow flowed down from the mountains to water the crops.

Mamma accepted Colorado and if she was lonely, nobody knew it. Unlike my father, who talked to everybody he met, learned their religion, politics, and family statistics in a few minutes of conversation, she was more reticent. She looked after her house and garden and chickens and applied her skills to her new home.

Wind blew every day, strong and steady, whipping big balls of dried thistle along the roads till they lodged in fences. Mamma hated the wind as Papa hated the mud and seemed to be fighting it with her hoe. She set out strawberries and currants and the lush red raspberries that grew to perfection in that soil and climate. She experimented with head lettuce, later to be a big commercial crop, and her sweet peas bloomed faster than they could be picked.

Gnats and mosquitoes were pests. The former got in their licks during the warmth of the day, the latter at evening, clanned gregariously around irrigation ditches. Papa wore a big red bandanna draped around his head under his hat for protection from the gnats. I wore newspapers under my heavy cotton stockings for armor against mosquitoes. George didn't seem to mind either. He and the Deitrich twins, Robert and Robley, and their older brother John moved too fast for mere insects. He had a bicycle and rode it with the grace of a circus performer.

The mountains enchanted us. Mamma, who in Missouri would stop her work to listen to a meadowlark, loved to watch the shadows move across the hills, and the sunsets flaming on the Sangre de Cristo range. Papa would come in some morning and say, "There's snow on Old Baldy."

We were all eager to go to the mountains and see how they looked inside. In August Papa took us on a camping trip with two neighbor children, Mae and Danny Jones. We went in a wagon, filled with a tent, hay and grain for the horses, coats and sweaters and fishing gear, dishes, bedding, tablecloths, and a considerable amount of food.

At horse-pace, the mountains unfolded slowly, a prelude that mixed meadows and ranches in with foothills and gave promise of grandeur to come. We were impatient to round each curve and see what lay beyond. The first night we stopped in a canyon beside a swift-moving stream. Papa and the boys drove stakes and put up the tent while the womenfolks unpacked the bedding and dishes and started supper. We peeled and fried potatoes, cooked ham and made coffee over a fire built on the ground, and ate to the music of water tumbling over rocks, with tall mountains standing by, pine trees making perpendiculars on their sloping sides. Mamma said she wished Julia was there.

After supper, water was carried from the creek and heated in a bucket for dish washing. The food was put away, the beds made, and we walked about until daylight began drifting away. Papa said he wanted to stop sooner the next night, so he could catch fish for supper. Mamma said she wanted to pack the things better in the morning so they would be easier to get to. By lantern light we crawled into our bed.

When everybody was asleep I slipped out of the tent to see how the mountains looked at night. They had turned from green slopes to high dark walls that leaned over the stream. Only the flowing water broke the stillness and it seemed to be a part of it. I stood fearful and awe-struck, then crept back into the tent and lay thinking of monstrous black mountains closing in on us.

In the morning, warmed by the breakfast of ham and eggs and coffee, we took down the tent, rolled it up, washed and packed the dishes, hitched up the horses, and were on our way, higher and higher along the canyon and across meadows. At noon we snacked on cookies and fruit and ham sandwiches and when shadows began creeping up the mountain sides, as they do early in the hills, we made camp for the night.

The third night we camped where we were to stay for the rest of the trip and set up housekeeping, beginning to feel we were experienced campers. Papa, as he did at home, cautioned us not to wander away and get lost and to be careful not to fall off a cliff. George and Danny leaped nimbly from rock to rock and went on exploring expeditions. Papa fished for trout and Mamma gathered wild flowers which she put in a glass for a table bouquet. Mae and I took off our shoes and stockings to wade in a little pool the creek had made, and found it was icy cold.

We climbed mountains that seemed the top of the world, but from each summit a higher peak beckoned, and when it was attained, others rose beyond. One day Mamma, Mae, and I were stunned to reach the top of a peak and see before us the great valley far away, looking like a big blue lake bordered by the distant Sangre de Cristo range. The glory and exhilaration of the hills were a joy that grew and deepened.

We made many trips to the mountains, but that camping trip with horses and a wagon was always the greatest. For every meal Mamma spread old newspapers on the ground, covered them with a tablecloth, and set the table as she did at home. In those teen years we did not know about paper plates, bedrolls, instant coffee, and packaged food.

In Missouri we had burned wood from our own land in our stoves. In Colorado people burned coal. No timber grew in the valley except willows along the irrigation ditches and trees that had been set out for ornament. To save money that would have been spent for coal, and, possibly, too, because he liked burning wood, Papa sometimes drove to the mountains with a team and wagon to gather the chunks of rich gnarled pine there for the taking.

By four o'clock he was up and at the barn to feed and harness the horses while Mamma cooked a big breakfast and packed his lunch. George and I, attuned to the day, woke at the sound of preparations and got up, not wanting to miss any part of the adventure. We had offered ourselves as wood gatherers, but were told we would "tire out" and that he wouldn't have time to look after us.

The wagon had been loaded with axe, saw, and hatchet and Papa was ready to start long before daylight. We all went out to open the gate and see him off, Mamma urging him to be careful. He went alone in the chill dark and we listened to the wagon wheels grinding on the gravelled road. The day was long with waiting. At evening we did the chores, ate supper, and in the soft dusk sat on the proch and listened.

Then it would come: faint and far away, the sound of wagon wheels at night and Mamma would go into the house and put more wood on the fire. What rejoicing

there was as Papa turned in at the gate, guided by the lantern held as high as George could reach. We shined the lantern on the wood, chunks of pine from trees that had stood tall on a mountain. Sometimes there would be odd rocks he had brought us. We wanted to know whether he had seen a deer, to hear about wild little unafraid animals and beavers making dams.

While Papa was eating and after the excitement had burned to a glow, Mamma would say she had been afraid he might have plunged over a cliff or cut himself with the axe and nobody would have known where to look for him

A load of wood from the mountains. . . . How dull it made buying a ton of coal in town!

In Colorado for the first time we had a "hired man" who lived in the house. In Missouri when we needed help, neighbors would come and go home at night. In his poem, "The Death of the Hired Man," Robert Frost gave him an image of pride—"He said he'd come to ditch the meadow"—but his true worth has not been acknowledged.

He came and went with the seasons and nobody asked whence or whither. He was likely to be middle-aged and have no connection with the community. He lived in his employer's house and ate at his table, but rarely had a room of his own or a place to keep his few belongings except in his suitcase under his bed. He accepted his place in the family as a matter of course and the family accepted him.

Nobody seemed to know much about him. He was there to work, for which he was given his board and a modest wage. His clothes were washed and mended with the family laundry. The children liked him. The farmer wanted his work. The farmer's wife wanted him out of the house as soon as possible. When he was no longer needed he moved on, but where he went or what he did there nobody knew or inquired.

But I do not think these seasonal workers thought of themselves as unfortunate—as in Frost's poem, "Nothing to look backward to with pride and nothing to look forward to with hope." They spoke often with pride of how they had stayed in the field and got the hay stacked before the rain came and they helped make plans for the threshing or talked about what should be planted in the back forty next year. They had a sense of proprietorship in the work they did and a feeling of independence in their coming and going.

Our "Shorty" Carver—he must have had a first name, but nobody used it—oozed self-confidence and concerned himself with what went on in the little town. He picked up more gossip than the sewing society and never tired of making jokes about the "Old Maid's Club," a name he gave to a group of unmarried working women. He had a native wit and in a different setting might have been a noted social commentator, both admired and feared.

Chris Hansen was a sturdy Scandinavian, young, good-looking, quiet mannered. He took his recreation at the pool hall and sometimes returned with a big box of candy he had won and gave it to me. This displeased Papa and his attitude ruined my pleasure in the gifts. I was fifteen.

How did a young farm worker drift into the condition of being a "hired man"? For one reason or another they had not married, but they were not as foot-loose and free as the tramp printer, the romantic vagabond of the road who showed up suddenly at a small newspaper office, worked a few days or a few weeks, and was off again. A hired man would stay as long as he was needed and the next year might turn up again and ask if there was any work.

**Zula and Florence.**

In May of the second year we were in Colorado, Julia gave birth to a daughter, Edna Mabel, and came near losing her own life. Mamma went immediately and the rest of us waited anxiously for news. I prayed long and earnestly and made bargains with God. A few months later she came to Colorado with her baby and we were all very happy. A son, Everett, had been born to Uncle Frank and Aunt Jessie about the same time and it was a summer of admiring the two babies.

George and I entered school right after we came to Colorado, he in the sixth grade, I in the eighth. George, with his quick speech, bright ways, and blond insouciance was soon a favorite. He had some minor brushes with teachers, but everybody knew he was there. I was soon a leader in my class—there were two of us in it. We came from a one-room country school and here we were in a town school that had five rooms, two upstairs, and I was in one of them.

The school library had more books than I had ever seen and I read all the time—the Horatio Alger books, the Jack London books, romantic novels, poetry. Florence Deitrich, a sister of John and the twins, was my best friend and we read books together, recommending them to each other.

I finished the grades that first spring, then started the two-year high school, and loved all the new studies. In the second year Mr. Hesler, the principal, made Julius Caesar come alive for me in three dimensions, all at the same time. In the literature class we read Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar.* In the ancient history class we studied about Caesar. And in the second year Latin class we read Caesar's *Commentaries.* Mr. Hesler was a scholarly man who, besides being the principal, taught four or five classes. He and one other teacher taught all the high school classes. His wife was a musician who that year composed a piece, "The Sinking of the Titanic," one of those descriptive compositions, heavy bass when the ship hit the iceberg, solemn music when the lifeboats were launched.

I had a crush on Willie Graham, a good-looking boy with wavy blond hair who played the piano and worked in the hotel, a large residence that had been converted into sleeping rooms. It was a secret crush. I wouldn't have dreamed of letting Willie know how much I liked him. I knew where he hung his hat and the first thing I did when I got to school was look to see if his hat was there, which meant *he* was there. All the girls liked Willie and he liked them. Several of us would gather round and listen to him play the piano. He never showed any favorites, liked to laugh and talk with all of us. In later years, when I would return to Center to visit my parents and would ask about Willie, nobody seemed to know where he was or what he was doing.

These many years afterwards I think of Willie and Mr. Hesler and of how Florence and I giggled about a Roman named Galba in beginning Latin, who occupied a similar position in our text as the boy named Dick does in the first grade reader—"Run, Dick, run. I see Dick run."

The Deitrichs had eight children and welcomed all their friends—for Sunday dinner or any time. On Sunday afternoons in the growing season the parents, Adam

and Carrie, walked out to inspect the crops, followed by all the children. Florence was warm and loving and laughing and I have never had a better friend.

On the last day of school after everybody had gone I went back alone and stood again in our room, looked at all the familiar things and touched my desk in a sentimental farewell. Next year I would be in another school at another place. What was my future to be? What would happen to me in the years ahead?

Suddenly and for the only time in my life I had an overpowering sense of something that was to come, something mysterious and shadowy and unknown. Tears flowed down my face. The strange feeling took possession of me, sharp and troubling, and is vividly remembered.

I had come to a turning point. The two years of high school had ended and my parents were considering where to send me to finish. They chose the Saguache County High School in the county seat town of Saguache, an Indian word meaning "blue water." It was a little town lying against the foothills at the north end of the valley.

The principal, H. Clay Marks, drumming up business for the school, came and talked to us. Papa asked, in the interest of economy, if I could take the last two years of high school in one.

"She can try," he said.

Room and board were arranged with a family in Saguache and early in September I went away to school—and to an appointment with someone toward which we had been moving all our lives. In later years I could not bear to think: *What if my parents had sent me to Monte Vista or Del Norte?*

# Carvings

When I was sixteen and in love
I opened out my Scout knife
and carved, "CM LOVES KW"
on every schooldesk, tree and barn door.
At thirty-nine, for what it matters,
the letters are still there --
Worn like ancient hieroglyphics,
scratched not too neatly, not too deep.

C.M. Anderson

# Avebury

We tramped until
The sky turned purple
And the sheep glowed
Like ghosts among the
Standing stones. We
Fenced crazily
With tent poles
Then went inside
To sleep next to
The barrows of dead kings
And I said
"What if our souls were
Unattached,
And watching us?"

# Grandmother's Ghosts

She sat in her grandmother's rocking chair,
White hair, dark wood, pale eyes not seeing me.
She told me stories of the Cherokees, how her father
Offered to sell her to the chief. She shook
The blacksmith's hand once. He was Negro
And she looked to see if it rubbed off.

Her face is like tissue paper.
They put too much makeup on her—
Ladies didn't need that stuff.
The tears remind me of those days
In Galveston when they were young, just married,
Collecting shells, salt memories
Like ghosts in the attic.

Olive L. Sullivan

# Preparations

A place I sought, before each of my three dashes: a room
of whitewashed brick and high rafters where sparrows
Threaded the dim light, where broken hurdles were stacked
against a bare wall, and splintered bamboo poles—
Where I would pray, wordlessly, not that I would win,
or not be hurt, but that I might begin to know
Where I was headed. Alone for a moment in that stucco building
with its smooth dirt floor and painted windows, put up
In the 1930s by unemployed men, part of the city park
they laid out, with its football field and track
Of clinkers hauled from the waterworks and pulverized
by hand—there to contemplate the task before me.

That their labor had preceded me, and that of others
before them, who built the town, I could not have known,
Was not taught by any of my teachers. Only sensed
all around me, in such preparations, in the waiting
To join them, some purpose I hungered for: saw it
in the way older men came, druggists and bricklayers,

Leaving their work to help the groundskeeper lay out
the lanes, watched them fussing with the lime dust
Sifting down from their aluminum-wheeled contraption,
guessed it in the ribbing the coach took for his habit
Of putting the watch to his ear during the distance runs
and comforting himself, like a puppy, with its ticking.

Shared its importance with them, without knowing why,
when the loudspeaker issued the final call
And the warmups came off, and I took hold of the blocks,
carried them to the lane, punched down and adjusted them,
Entered and tested my start on the tips of my toes
down the track, the other runners in their red silks
And yellow jerseys, some kneeling to clean their spikes,
others bursting out for five yards and returning now
At the sound of the starter's voice, his whistle
to the judges at the other end, his assurances
That everything will be as before, his words that seem
to be talking time away, the gun in the air, the hush—

A quarter of a century gone since those spring afternoons
when I knelt in that grace of not understanding,
Poised with my fingertips spread on the cinders,
offering myself as others had done before me—
And now I have come this far, hurled all that way
toward this page that opens before me like a lane
Of light and darkness, striving toward these words
bright as new string fluttering across the finish,
All that fury changing now, settling into long strides
and stanzas, answers to a prayer whispered long ago
In a white room, and blessed by the sound of sparrows,
high up, in a place I can no longer find, but still know.

Jared Carter

**Raven Hail** **Ted Watts**

# The Hawk and The Raven

Unehlanvhi (Oo-neh'-hla-nuh'-hee) is the Great Spirit; hisodi (hi-so'-dee) is the blue loneliness of enchantment; the seven skies refers to the seven heavens.

The Old Ones say
that not so long ago
as harvests go
a Hawk one day
flew out across the snow
for he would know
the secrets of the desert far away.

There in this land
of sun and sand and sea
and beauty
a Raven scanned
the heavens from a tree,
for she would see
the pattern that Unehlanvhi planned.

The Hawk flew by
and saw the lonely bird,
his flight bestirred.
The Raven sly
just sat and watched and heard
without a word
the beating of his wings against the sky.

Then he flew down
and perched upon a stalk
this mighty Hawk;
and on the ground
invited her to walk
where they could talk
of where the best of beads and seeds are found.

The time flew by
and talk was never through
between the two;
but he must fly
before the moon was new,
hisodi hue—
The Raven sang a song into the sky.

Come, fly with me
to where the siren sings
on silver wings;
she'll speak to thee
of rocks and rills and things
and golden rings
and all the seven skies above the tree.

Oh no, he said.
This is no time of song,
for things go wrong.
There is a bed
of cactus all along.
One must be strong!
You listen to the legends and you're dead!

Then he was gone
to winter's icy strand,
the lonely land.
She sang alone
and sifted through the sand
to understand
the pattern of the ice, and sand—and stone.

## Raven Hail

# A Letter on the Coffeyville Days of Wendell Willkie

## By Carl V. Rice

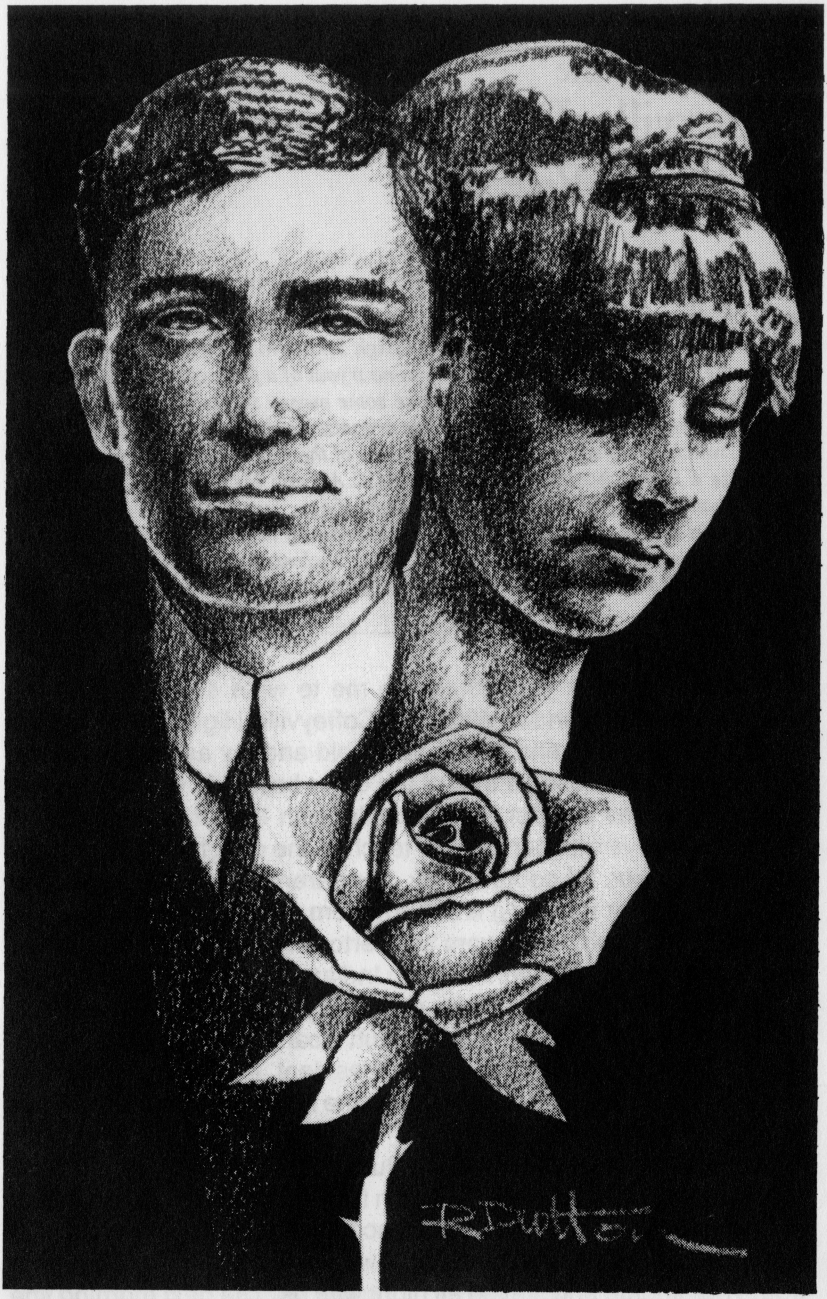
*After the future Presidential candidate, Wendell Willkie, was graduated from Indiana University, he went on to Coffeyville High School to teach history and coach track, basketball, and debate. "His job was no tryout of a profession," biographer Joseph Barnes tells us; "he took it to make some money so he could study law." Within a few weeks after his arrival, Willkie organized a debating team called "The Senate," which followed the rules of procedure of the U.S. Senate. He found time to organize a high school branch of the Y.M.C.A., and his basketball team won the state championship. "Only twenty-one years of age," we are told by biographer Mary Earhart Dillon, "he was the youngest member of the teaching staff, and the idol of all his students." We asked one of those students for his reminiscences (a student, incidentally, who became a distinguished attorney in his own right), and here is his reply.*

You mention that you would like me to write something on my association with Wendell Willkie at Coffeyville High School. At the time, I was fourteen and fifteen years old and my associations with him were not as close as that of the older boys. He was my history teacher. He was slender, enthusiastic, with lots of personality.

He was in love with our English teacher, the daughter of the town's principal banker. Of course, they, her parents, were not interested in their daughter marrying a nobody from Indiana and he resigned and left town. I believe he went to Puerto Rico to work for his brother in a distillery and later went back to Indiana and got his law degree.

The next time I heard of him personally was in December 1939, when he was a member of Paul McNutt's campaign committee seeking the Democratic nomination for President. (I understand he was a Democrat.) Then in 1940 he became the nominee of the Republican Party for President.

The English teacher died in the flu epidemic of 1918. About 1931 a classmate of mine, Harold McGugin from Coffeyville, was a member of Congress and had renewed his acquaintance with Willkie. I was living in Parsons at the time and his wife came by on her way home from Washington and stayed all night with us. The next morning she said she was driving to Coffeyville by way of Oswego. I told her that



**Coach Lewis Wendell Willkie and English Teacher Helen Dryer, by Rod Dutton, based upon photographs from the 1914 Coffeyville High School Annual.**

this was certainly out of the way. She said Wendell Willkie had asked her to stop by Oswego and put some roses on the grave of the English teacher, who was buried there.

If you are interested in any part of this, you are welcome to use it.

Sincerely yours,

Carl V. Rice

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*Coffeyville was to play still another role in Willkie's life in 1940, during his campaign for the Presidency. It was there that his first major speech was scheduled for September 16, the sixteenth speech on the tour, but the first with a national radio hookup. Mary Dillon tells us that Coffeyville had been selected not only because of Willkie's teaching there, but to dramatize the plight of the American small town: "Coffeyville, therefore, was to be a symbol of all towns. Furthermore, it was planned to show how the New Deal had injured this fine little community in the Midwest, by its public power program. Then it was discovered that Coffeyville had a very successful municipal electric system, and from its profits had paid the entire cost of street paving." The speech had to be quickly revised. Fifty thousand people crowded themselves into the ball park, now called Willkie Park, where he was introduced by one of Coffeyville's most famous sons, the great baseball pitcher Walter Johnson. As synopsized by Donald Bruce Johnson, "Willkie finally effectively centered an address on one specific issue which he called 'the preservation of democracy.' He declared that the President had lost faith in the American people and predicted that if Roosevelt obtained re-election, the nation would be placed under a totalitarian regime before 1944. He attacked the President's defense methods, his subterfuge in foreign policy, his lack of democracy, and his failure to delegate authority. He chided Roosevelt for his elaborate pretense that he hd been 'drafted' for a third term, and for pretending that he was too busy to campaign. The* New York Times *called the address 'in some respects the most telling speech that the Republican candidate has yet made'." "Almost before the applause had ended," Ellsworth Barnard tells us, "the train was on its way to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where another great crowd heard him invoke the great Democratic names in American history, claim to be their legitimate heir, and assert his inability to understand why any real Democrat would hestitate to support him. He was still hoping to split the opposing party."*

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**For Further Reading on Wendell Willkie:**

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Joseph Barnes. *Willkie: The Events He Was Part of—The Ideas He Fought for.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952.

Mary Earhart Dillon. *Wendell Willkie: 1892-1944.* Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1952.

Donald Bruce Johnson. *The Republican Party and Wendell Willkie.* Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. 46. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1960.

# Stream of Subconscious

Last day for warning—
the surgeon general
has five stars
on a tobacco can . . .
ashes to ashes
smoke to smoke,
can't get a lesson
in fascism
from some dictator
who needs summing up:
an explanation for the plan
a plan to explain
the lost last yesterday . . .
Warning: the surgeon general
has determined your life
and the direction
your soles will take
after that next puff
of acrid poison—
skullboned crosses
like the iodine
we used to drink
on the rocks in Kentucky—
bourbon Berbers,
hang us all—

if only we'd heard
the warning shot
and the quick trot
of regret
breaking from the gate
and running ahead
of the silk and surrey—
surely burley gold leaf
smoking in the fields
like a hamshank
and this is the last day
for your chuggin lungs
to heed the warning,
while the surgeon general
eats sturgeon babies
and generalizes the grand plan
into a solemn dirge—
words grave and final . . .
From dust thou art
and unto dust thou shalt return:
the dust cakes and bowls
of lost yesterday
blown across the land
like 30s topsoil—
grains of sweetblack earth
turned gray
settling in a ragged pantscuff
and waiting for the water—
Save me, Jesus,
the day is lost
like the ash of life
burnt yesterday on a cigarette
that carried the warning
I couldn't read.

Judy Belfield

# Poems

## By Glen Cavaliero

## On the Piazza

The faithful spill through bronze doors,
seeds shot from a sieve.
Their distant lords this day are merciful
as are the hooting Fiats to the white dove
that struts upon the steps
and coos of love.

Below umbrellas, quiescent among the tubs,
imbibers rest content
to catalogue the twilight, blessed
in feeling pleased at belonging to what they see.
The head waiter even
gets a pat on the back.

Unmartialled crowds move here and there,
cheerful in haphazard order,
no less incurious than the well-fed birds:
long hours of polishing, of knocking up a wall
absorb their hopes in habit,
blind to labour,

as blind they could be when the year's out
in a lunatic white air.
They'll burn for someone's gain and hear
God's word screamed backward like a brake:
such holy lives are mortgaged
for safe keeping's sake.

# On the Library Steps: Persephone

The sun drops shredded
through thick October haze,
mellow and copper as her head of hair
glowing upon this stony laden stair.

Her tarnished eyes are green
as brittle leaves that drop
with the dry, hard light beside the wall,
fatal and fading, overwhelming all

but steps that stretch and rise,
that arch with toil, and swing
down to the dark grove, gates deep in rust,
whose curling leaves alone wear gold on dust.

For a lost smile she stands,
imperial on the stair;
burns like a bush in the brightly dying air,
then turns and disappears in the foundry of her hair.

# Solo

A helm of sky clamps down his torpor like a smear
green upon the quaking verges of this walk
he treads through years of afternoons
when light begins to droop he then takes up
the hunt for what is never in an autumn
dark as these he stalks and holds the smell
of humus vapourising his old hunger
wafted up and down on tolling clappers
tongues that gabble on of loss of home of mother

# Valse Bleu

Concluded cotillions
have swept down the streamers
unfurled for the ball
on the night of the carnival
organdie swirling
to rustle of taffeta
drowning the orchestra's
diminuendo
slowly prevaricates
drawing the dancer
from balcony windows
out on to the terrace

where cypresses hint at
their spice-haunted message
of two figures gliding
from beggar to dreamer
to cling in a passion
of latinate lovers
embalmed in the moonglow
on southern verandahs
where thrilling cicadas
and honeyed mimosa
recall and arouse
the gratified kisses
that drowsed in the morning
when sun-buckled shutters
subdued the light day
with tenderness stroking
the worn-out contentment
of nights that are over

because never tasted
except in a fantasy
long past regretting
beneath the cold cloud
of daybreak's metropolis
lost with the dawning
realization
of all they have wasted
or never dared venture
spun to a halting
call for a taxi
to rattle them homeward
jangled old belles
for whom a staid organist
plays for their burning
the mourning measure
of love's last waltz.

Glen Cavaliero

# Good Angel

1
He gathers herbs. Guardian of a new season,
he treads an exhalation of wild thyme:

the scent decoys, sets up a chase
echoing in aerial caverns all about him.

Beyond is all he sees. Those eyes
are pitiless, themselves the gate.

2
From the south bring out your sword, Michael,
hot strokes to hack at creepers.

Here on your bristling mount
I crawl in each direction, winded.

Black is my felled intent;
the snake lies dead inside me.
Thrust
down, in strife raise up—so I uncoil
and spring.
The gale tears over
folded pastures, shot out from moor to moor.

It whips my hair; it punishes the berries.

Glen Cavaliero

# The Girl Who Became a Priest: A Lebanese Folk Tale

## Collected from Flora Murry Farris by Pat Kuhel

Once there was a woman who wanted to become a priest instead of a nun. She knew she would not be allowed to do so . . . so she dressed like a man and went to the seminary and studied and became a priest. She was given a parish in a small village, and the people thought she was a man. They never dreamed of a priest being a woman.

A few years went by and, one day, a young girl who was not married became pregnant. For a long time she refused to tell who the father of the child she was carrying was, but one day she told the villagers that the father was the priest. Since it was only the girl's word against that of the priest's, they did not press the matter. When the baby was born, the girl and her parents did not want it around to remind them of the girl's sin, so they took the baby to a nearby cave and abandoned it.

The girl who was a priest saw them leave the village with the child, and she followed them, fearing they meant to harm the baby. After the girl and her parents left, the priest went into the cave. She wanted to save the child's life, but she did not know how to feed it, since it was too young to do more than nurse. The girl-priest decided to try to breast-feed the infant, and, opening her cassock, she put the baby to her breast. The milk came when the baby started to nurse, and she was able to care for that child until it could be adopted by a family in a distant village.

The girl continued to act as parish priest for the village until her death. When she died, the villagers found a note she had written which said, "I'm a woman. I want a woman to take care of me for my burial." This was the first time that anyone knew that she was not a man.

**Rebecca Patterson, 1952.**

# Unraveling the Riddle of Emily Dickinson

By Juanita B. Laing

During the twenty-one years she taught at Pittsburg State University, most of Rebecca Patterson's students knew her only as an excellent English professor: thoroughly informed concerning a wide range of literature, demanding, and unfailingly fair. English majors, particularly graduate students who had greater opportunity to work with her, often developed an extravagant admiration for the professor, sometimes bordering on discipleship, a relationship she accepted and enjoyed with kindly, detached amusement.

Almost everyone knew she was a specialist—many said "authority"—on Emily Dickinson's poetry and that she had written a controversial book on the poet's life entitled *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson.* But few knew what a radical departure this book represented or how violently the book—and its author's scholarship—had been attacked by entrenched Emily Dickinson scholars. Many of Dr. Patterson's fellow teachers and some of her students knew she was still working on Dickinson's poetry, painstakingly classifying and tabulating images, comparing Dickinson's fondness for certain words with that of other poets, and tracing Biblical, Shakespearean, and Miltonic allusions. But few realized the extent of Dr. Patterson's commitment to the thesis she had expounded in *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson* or of her determination to keep an interest in that thesis alive, partially, at least, through a vindication of her own scholarship.

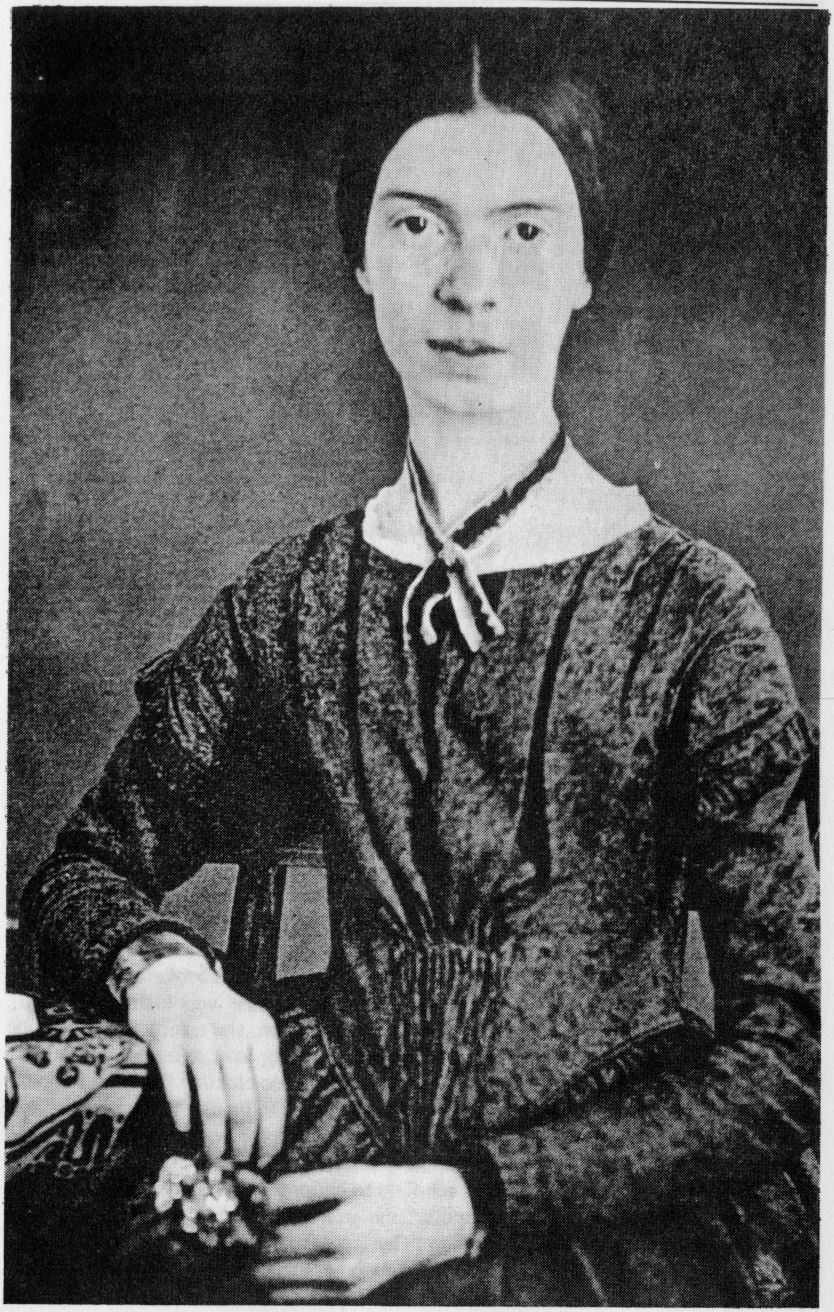
Emily Dickinson's life and poetry does indeed present a most perplexing riddle, one which many scholars have tried to unravel. Quite simply, the riddle is this: who was the object of the poet's affections? Her poetry is highly erotic. Many of the poems are addressed to a lover, and more than half celebrate the joys of love realized or lament the pain of love thwarted. They are vivid and immediate, suggesting intense personal experience, yet the identity of the lover of this shy, pathologically reclusive spinster, living in a small New England town, is unknown. None of the many theories concerning the subject has been very convincing. Some of the men suggested for this honor were scarcely acquainted with the poet—for instance, Major Hunt, the first husband of Helen Hunt Jackson, who seems to have met Emily Dickinson only once, at a crowded reception. Samuel Bowles, Judge

Otis Lord, and Benjamin Newton, correspondents of the poet, were at least known and liked by her, but there is little reason to believe any of them to be her lover. Dickinson's own family gave contradictory stories as to the identity of the lover. Her sister Lavinia—under a pledge of strictest secrecy—once confided a wildly romantic story, reminiscent of that of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, about Emily and George Gould, a poor young minister. According to Lavinia these lovers were kept apart by Emily's stern father whose forceful objections continued to operate even after his death. But the niece of the poet, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, did not confirm this story. Instead, she linked her aunt with several other men, most notably the Rev. Charles Wadsworth, a Philadelphia clergyman. But Mabel Loomis Todd, a close friend, neighbor, and first editor of the poems, emphatically denied all stories romantically linking Emily Dickinson with any of the men suggested as her lover, or indeed with any man.

Rebecca Patterson reports that she became interested in this riddle by reading *Bolts of Melody,* a collection of hitherto unpublished Dickinson poems edited by Mrs. Todd and her daughter, Millicent Todd Bingham. In the preface to *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson,* Dr. Patterson reports that she was "struck by Mrs. Bingham's reference to the 'too-much-loved woman friend'," as well as by the "highly personal character of many poems."[1] Patterson concluded that the poems "had been held back from earlier publication . . . because they were too revealing."[2] What they revealed, Dr. Patterson thought, was that the elusive lover was a woman.

According to her own account, Dr. Patterson reread the poems many times with increasing conviction. Of greatest importance were the poems addressed to another woman. In *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson,* Patterson writes, "A woman might conceivably write love poems to an imaginary man (it is probable that many do). . . . But no woman ever wrote poems describing a love affair between herself and an imaginary woman. Only the strong compulsion of truth would dictate poems so opposed to convention."[3] Patterson was also struck by the peculiar publication history of the poems, by the apparent reluctance of the poet and her relatives to subject the poetry to objective scrutiny. As for memoirs related to the poet, Patterson came to trust only those of Mabel Loomis Todd, the Dickinsons' close friend and neighbor. Emily Dickinson's sister, Lavinia, her sister-in-law, Sue Gilbert Dickinson, and particularly her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, seemed to Patterson to be concealing rather than revealing the true nature of the poet and the identity of her lover. Excited by the mystery, Patterson now began to search for the woman whom she believed to be the mysterious lover, and she concluded the most likely candidate to be Catherine (Kate) Scott Turner Anthon, a young widow whom Emily Dickinson met in March 1859.

Dr. Patterson was thirty-five when she read *Bolts of Melody* in January 1947. She had received her Ph.D. nearly ten years earlier and had spent the intervening years juggling the demands of teaching and research with those of marriage and the rearing of two children. Yet during the next four years, while teaching first at Stanford University and then at the University of North Carolina, Rebecca Patterson completed a monumental piece of research and writing. She combed university libraries and private attics for letters and memorabilia related to Emily Dickinson and Kate Scott Anthon. She read the books in the private libraries of both women, noting particularly that Kate Anthon often underlined passages relating to lesbianism, determining by ink and handwriting in some cases when the notes and underlining were made. She interviewed descendants of the relatives of the two women (neither



**Emily Dickinson, 1848.**

**The Dickinson Home on North Pleasant Street in Amherst, Massachusetts, from 1840 through 1855.**

Kate nor Emily having direct descendants), and with the help of fellowships from Houghton Mifflin and the American Association of University Women, she flew to England to complete her research on Kate Anthon, who had lived in that country most of the time from 1872 until her death in 1917.

The results of this intense research seemed to Dr. Patterson irrefutable evidence that Kate Anthon was indeed the mysterious lover to whom Emily Dickinson addressed many of her poems. Patterson established that Kate and Emily were extraordinarily close friends for approximately two years. During this time, Kate was a frequent house guest of Emily's sister-in-law, Sue Dickinson, living next door to the poet. When Kate was not visiting in Amherst, Emily wrote her lengthy letters filled with longing and erotic imagery, often including poems containing the same imagery. When, after a little more than two years, Kate broke off the friendship, Emily entered her period of despair. Fearing that she was losing her mind, she became extremely reclusive. But in her deep seclusion, she entered an extremely productive period of poetry writing, mostly concerning love and pain and death. Nor did the story end there, for Patterson, searching for clues to the complex personality of Kate Anthon, discovered what she believed to be pity for her friend and regret in Kate's later life, followed by what may well have been an attempt to suppress or at least delay publication of the poetry.

In spite of the reluctance of other scholars to endorse her efforts and their warning that her theory would be unpopular, the years of her research were extraordinarily exciting for Rebecca Patterson. The facts she discovered fit into the frame she had projected like tiles in a mosaic. Although her theory was based on circumstantial evidence, some of which had been destroyed or deliberately obscured, and although rival theories were legion, she became totally convinced that she had found the truth. She was "aflame" with her theory, according to Richard B. Sewall, one

of the Dickinson scholars whom she consulted, and "prudential advice" was completely wasted upon her.[4] Sewall admired her determination even as he disagreed with her premises. And it is doubtful, given her strong belief in its worthiness, that anyone could have turned her aside from publishing *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson.*

**Catherine Scott Anthon**

The book begins by quoting a Dickinson poem.

I shall not murmur if at last
The ones I loved below
Permission have to understand
For what I shunned them so—

Divulging it would rest my heart
But it would ravage theirs—
Why, Katie, treason has a voice,
But mine dispels in tears

Patterson interprets this poem as a cry of pain and reproach to "Katie," pain that the poet must suffer in silence because it is the result of a love she dares not name, that is, of a lesbian allegiance, an oblique reproach of "Katie" for her "treasonous" denial of that love. Accepting the poet's "permission . . . to understand," Patterson details a host of reasons for believing Emily Dickinson to be a lesbian. She deduces from poems and letters that Emily, in her youth, was greatly attracted to Sue Gilbert, who later married Emily's brother and became her sister-in-law, but Patterson believes that Emily Dickinson's true love, the woman who caused her to recognize her own nature most fully and whose rejection hurt her into retiring into her "prison," as she called her room, and writing many of her finest poems, was Kate Scott Anthon. Such a hypothesis explains not only Dickinson's deep seclusion, but also the hesitation of Emily and her literary heirs to publish the poems, which would inevitably raise questions concerning the lover. Patterson's book details how the results of her research fit together to form a plausible explanation of the mysteries.

*The Riddle* was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1951, and the reaction of established Dickinson scholars was immediate and vituperative. The roll of critics who condemned the book reads like a who's who of literatry scholarship: George F. Wicher, Richard Chase, R.P. Blackmur, John Ciardi, etc., etc. Rebecca needed all her very considerable fortitude to withstand the flood of abuse, for abuse it was. She had expected adverse reaction to a theory so novel and at such variance from the accepted concept of "Emily" as shy, "sweet," ethereal, other-worldly. But Patterson had thought that under calm dispassionate consideration the truth of her theory would become apparent and should prevail. But no such calm and dispassionate consideration ensued.

Twenty years later, John Cody, a psychiatrist writing his own answer to the riddle of Emily Dickinson, finds the critical condemnation of *The Riddle* exaggerated and unfair, even a bit dishonest. He notes that the critics concentrate less on the argument Patterson presents than on the manner in which she presents it. Complaining of the informality of her style and the paucity of evidence supporting her

theory, the critics ignore the facts concerning the poet's life uncovered by Patterson. Nor do they give just due to the fresh and penetrating insight Patterson brings to the reading of many heretofore puzzling Dickinson poems. Indeed, Cody points out that these "sound insights may have been crucial for the [unfavorable] response."[5]

He points out that only the sketchiest evidence exists to promote some of the theories concerning *men* who have been suggested as the inspiration for Emily Dickinson's poetry, and yet these theories evoked no such vituperation and have even been widely accepted. He concludes that the main stumbling block to the acceptance of Kate Scott Anthon as the lover of Emily Dickinson appears to be the critics' unwillingness to consider a lesbian relationship. Although the climate of opinion has changed considerably since 1951, this factor still remains a stumbling block in 1985.

Patterson's "provocative style," as Dr. Cody calls it, undoubtedly gave the critics some excuse for their rejection. *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson* reads more like a novel than a cautious critical tome. Indeed, had it been presented as a novel it might have achieved a popular success. The style is scintillating. The characters are believable and sympthetic. The poet's pain, often evoked by quotations from her own poems and letters, is palpable. As in any good biography, some actions, some conversations, are projected which could not actually have been known, but must be inferred from related events. Such inference, common enough in biographical scholarship, can nevertheless be used against the biographer and, in this case, it was.

Yet even in 1951, amid all the hue and cry against Rebecca Patterson's theory, there was some evidence that it had made an impact on the critical community, that it could not be ignored. Reviewers in foreign countries were far more kind than those in the United States, and almost immediately echoes of the theory became evident in European criticism of Emily Dickinson's poetry. Even in America there was one favorable review, that of Lawrence Perrine in the *Southwest Review.* Of more importance, perhaps, is a single commendatory sentence included in the otherwise unfavorable review of Thomas Johnson, the prestigious editor of the Harvard edition of Emily Dickinson's poetry. The sentence reads, "It may well be that Kate Scott [Anthon] has been overlooked as an important figure in Emily Dickinson's life, and that the friendship spurred Emily to a greater capacity for writing poetry."[6]

On such crumbs Rebecca Patterson's determination to keep her theory alive was nourished.

Soon after the tumultuous reception of her book, Rebecca Patterson's marriage crumbled, and she was newly divorced when she came, with her two teenaged children, to Pittsburg in 1954 to join the English staff of what was then Kansas State Teachers College. Her extraordinary talents were quickly recognized, and she became the editor of the *Educational Leader,* the scholarly journal which later became the *Midwest Quarterly.* For twenty-one years, until her death in 1975, Rebecca Patterson was a valuable editor and professor of English at Pittsburg State University. She saw her children grow up and pursue their own careers, and she achieved a satisfying success in her own teaching. But always, amidst her activities, she was working on research related to Emily Dickinson. In spite of all critical pressure, she had never doubted her theory for an instant, and she was determined to vindicate it with further evidence.

Patterson published several articles in the journal of which she was editor, but in 1971 she published two articles in major scholarly journals. "Emily Dickinson's Jewel Imagery" appeared in the January issue of *American Literature.* It was an

extension of observations she had included in *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson,* and she had the pleasure of seeing these once-spurned insights accepted without adverse reaction. Even more significant was the calm acceptance of "Emily Dickinson's 'Double' Tim: Masculine Identification" in the winter issue of *American Imago.* In this article, Dr. Patterson deals with Dickinson's references to herself as a boy and with the masculine name she gave herself. The reception of this article, too, gave Patterson hope that her theory of Emily Dickinson's lesbianism might one day be accepted.

During the sixties, Dr. Patterson corresponded with Dr. John Cody, a psychiatrist at the Menninger hospital in Topeka, who had written his psychiatric graduation thesis on Emily Dickinson and who later expanded it into a book. The correspondence was stimulating to Rebecca, but also proved a great disappointment, for she could not convince Dr. Cody (who believes Emily Dickinson was never "able to commit herself to either sexual orientation"[7]) that Emily Dickinson was a lesbian or that she had an affair with Kate Anthon. Dr. Cody did, however, give Patterson's theories the serious consideration for which she longed, and, finding considerable merit in her research, he advised her to limit her arguments only to the most convincing evidence and to give up the more nebulous "proof" of her thesis. He even proposed a joint article to be written by both stressing her strongest points. He writes, "I genuinely thought that she would be pleased, and I pointed out that her views, as reorganized and tidied up by me and backed up by my own psychiatric credentials and some of my ideas, might very well now be taken seriously by the academic community and given a more sympathetic second hearing."[8] But Rebecca believed her whole thesis and believed it passionately. She did not want her ideas abbreviated and "tidied up." She curtly refused and broke off correspondence with Dr. Cody.

In her view there was nothing else to do. She believed that she had discovered the truth and she would not be untrue to that truth, not even for the comfort which favorable recognition by the academic community would undoubtedly have given her. Although she occasionally spoke of Dr. Cody with great reservation, she still had sufficient faith in his judgment and fairness to submit her last effort to him. It was the opus on which she had worked sporadically ever since the disasterous reception of *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson.* This was a highly lucid, comprehensive, and unimpeachably scholarly work entitled *Emily Dickinson's Imagery.* The Kate Scott Anthon theory was still espoused, but it was not central to the study. With Dr. Cody's approval of the work, she submitted it for consideration. The University of Massachusetts Press published it in 1979, four years after Dr. Patterson's death.

Her work has been treated more kindly after her death than during her life. A few days after she died on 24 December 1975, her courage and determination were saluted by a resolution of the Gay Caucus at the Modern Language Association meeting in San Francisco. One year later the M.L.A. sponsored a seminar in commemoration of the silver anniversary of *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson,* at which numerous papers concerning the mystery and Rebecca Patterson's contribution to its solution were read. In 1978, the *Higginson Journal* devoted an entire issue to a Rebecca Patterson memorial. Such tributes are indicative of the slowly changing attitude toward her scholarship and achievement, but they do not signal a full acceptance of her theory. On that, the jury is still out. Rebecca expected that its deliberations would take a very long time, but she never doubted that her theory would eventually be considered the true answer to the riddle.

Dr. Patterson died of a stroke and high blood pressure; she was well aware of the precariousness of her health for several years before death came. The belief that her new book would eventually be published undoubtedly comforted her near the end. She had other work she wanted to do, she told her friends, further research, but she gave the impression of one who was, after all, satisfied with her life's achievements. She had done what she could for the truth as she saw it. And she faced her death as courageously as she had faced her life.

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**Notes**

1. Rebecca Patterson, *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), pp. vii-viii.
2. Ibid., p. viii.
3. Ibid., p. 223.
4. Richard B. Sewall, "Memorial to Professor Patterson," *Higginson Journal,* No. 18 (First Half, 1978), p. 1.
5. John Cody, *After Great Pain: The Inner Life of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 148.
6. Frederick L. Morey, "ED's Elusive Lover," *Higginson Journal,* No. 18 (First Half, 1978), p. 2.
7. John Cody, "Memorial to Professor Patterson," *Higginson Journal,* No. 18 (First Half, 1978), p. 2.
8. Ibid.

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## An Inscription in the First Edition of Emerson's Nature

Whatsoever—hidden—revealed.
Every idea & tendency—sooner
or later—triumphantly manifest itself.

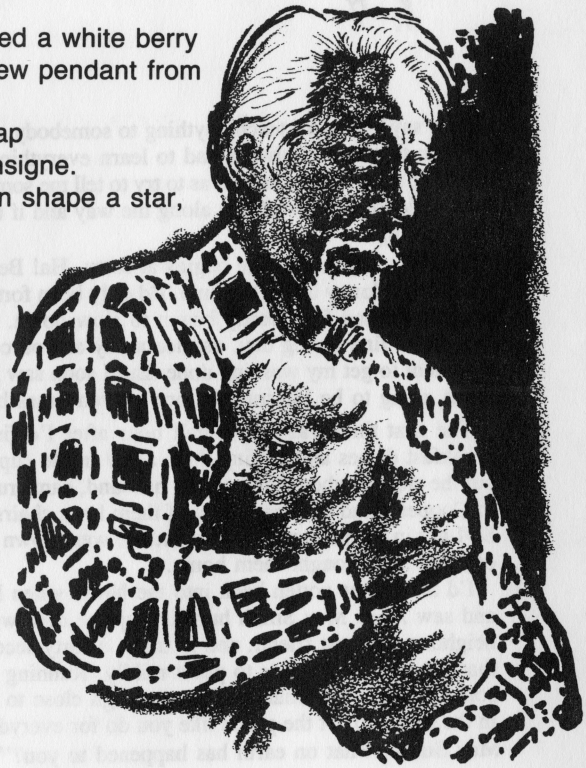
—Emily Dickinson

# Near the Convent

Near the Convent of the Sacred Heart
the missel thrush are singing faintly
as I advance upon their matin roost
with punctual summons.
"Take," I say. "Eat."
But now they do not pick the crumbled bread
I bring. "What trouble now?" I ask.

In affectioned time one bird broke off its
faint allitered measure, probed its breast
and spoke with winged inflection:
    Good catechist, caterer austere
    what implement now obscures your cross?
"Pious birds," I said, "cannot you see?
I wear a bandolier."

Then a second bird plucked a white berry
from the mistletoe that grew pendant from
their native oak and said:
    Pliant one, on your cap
    you wear a strange insigne.
"Red it is," I said, "and in shape a star,
but what is that to you?"
Again I proffered bread
but off they flew.



Loy Banks

# Life Begins at Forty

## A Soliloquy

## By Allen Gardiner

They say you can't teach anything to somebody who doesn't want to learn, and I reckon that's so. I always had to learn everything the hard way, you might as well pour sand down a rathole as to try to tell me something I didn't want to believe. But I've learned a few things along the way and if there's anything I know about, it's about *age.*

They'll tell you that life begins at forty. Ha! Begins to fall apart, I'd say, and who should know better than me. I'd only been forty a week—a week to the day—when it seemed I'd already begun to slow down.

It was a fine spring day, as nice a day as you could ever wish for, and it was my intent to get my washing done. But I soon saw it was one of those times when I was going to be interrupted forty-eleven times before it was over.

The first time was only a half hour after I'd finished washing and drying the breakfast dishes and putting them away in the cupboard. I was just about to sort out the clothes when Howard, my husband, came running in to say he'd been down to Cooper's and they had some of them lawn chairs on sale that I'd been wanting. So I got in the pickup with him and we went down there to see them. Bought four of them and brought them home.

I'd no sooner gotten back into the house when I looked out the south window and saw Alice May Smith hurrying up the driveway. Alice May was **our** closest neighbor, *my* best friend, and in truth, a forty-second cousin of mine, and to say that she was hurrying is to put it mildly. Running was more like it, and this was something for a woman who must weigh close to two hundred pounds. I let her in the side door of the porch like you do for everyday company and said, "Alice May Smith, what on earth has happened to you?"

She came on in the kitchen, completely out of wind and sat down heavily on one of the yellow-and-white checked chairs. I held my breath to see whether it would hold up, as she'd sat in the one which was about ready to give up the ghost.

"Addie Lewis," she gasped, while fanning herself with a long cream-colored envelope, "the most wonderful thing on earth has happened to me. If I could've found Harry I'd've told *him,* but I just couldn't wait to tell *some*one a moment longer. I'd have died if I had to wait a minute more!"

I couldn't imagine what she could possibly be talking about, but knowing Alice May as well as I did, I knew I would find out in due course of time—for all that she's my best friend she does wear me out—and got down a cup and poured her the last of the coffee left over from breakfast. I'd saved it for myself for a little later, but I decided she needed it worse than I did.

"Well," she said, her face positively aglow, while she spooned some sugar into her coffee, "you remember I told you about my old uncle down to Memphis—that he up and died here about four or five weeks ago? Now here comes a letter from some lawyer down there, and it seemed Uncle Abner left me a sum of money! Can you believe it?"

Now that would have been the last thing I would have expected Alice May to tell me, and frankly, between you and me, it made me cross. Not that I've ever been a jealous person. No, I've always had enough to live on and never begrudged anyone any good that came their way. And maybe at some other time Alice May's news wouldn't have upset me so, but it did, and that's the truth.

I know it was my age, I'm certain of it. There was Alice May, a good twelve years older than me and hardly a gray hair in her head, and there was me at forty, and halfway to salt-and-pepper, as they say. Sometimes in town I'd look on the drugstore shelves and think about buying hair color but Howard said he thought I should leave it alone.

I have to admit I was not kind to Alice May. I went beyond the bounds of politeness. "How much did he leave you?" I asked, and to my never-ending suprise, she said, "Ten thousand," as easily as you might say, "Gooseberry pie." Now at that very moment I *knew* there was more here than met the ear. If there's one thing I know about Alice May—and I know plenty— she never lets her left hand know what her right hand is doing. If she told *me* ten thousand then it was likely to be either considerably more or considerably less. I know this is so because if she could keep her husband believing for thirty years that that oldest boy was *his* child—which he ain't, and I know that for a fact—then she would withhold the truth from me about the real inheritance.

As I say, I know it was my age that was bothering me that day. When she told me about that money, I just felt like sitting down and crying, I did. I suddenly felt every minute of my age and a good deal of hers as well. To think about someone she hardly knew dying and leaving her all that money just didn't seem right.

"I was thinking about Harry and me taking a trip," she went on, examining her fingernails. "Of course, if we go to Boston to see my sister we might as well hop on across the ocean to see Paris. I've always meant to see it sometime."

I looked at her and suddenly wondered why I had ever liked her. Honest to God, she is not only *like* my mother, she even looks like her. They'll both live to be a hundred, mark my words, out of spite to everyone around them.

Well, I was no end put out and that's the straight of it. I began sorting clothes right in front of her—not that she bothered about it, she was so busy going over in her head all the things she might do with that money. I made little piles on the kitchen floor—clean enough to eat off of, Howard always said—the whites, socks and underwear, my housedresses, and so on, until I had about seven or eight piles. I had been aiming all week to get the wash out of the way but it seemed one thing after another came up and I couldn't get it done, and here it was Saturday morning and with all the interruptions I was no closer to getting it done than I was the day before.

It made me think. Here I was, just turned forty, when life was supposed to begin. and I was still doing my own wash. If someone had left *me* any money I would have gone right into town and bought me an automatic washer and dryer and then I'd have hired some girl to come in once a week and wash *for* me.

Alice May surely knew how to put me out of sorts. I was glad when she got tired of talking and went home, except knowing Alice May I thought it was more likely she would maker her rounds and before noon my phone would be ringing off the wall with everyone wanting to talk about Alice May's good fortune. By nightfall it would reach the local correspondent for the county paper; for all I knew it might be in next week's paper.

Howard came in not five minutes after she left—he'd been working on something in the barn with Junior—and he said they were going to run into town as some of the boys had talked about getting up a football game today.

I put a load of whites into the washing machine and started the agitator. Howard stood there, kind of half in and half out of the door of the porch, waiting to see what I was going to say. I was glad I had my back to him, I didn't want him to see my face. "Seems there are plenty of things to do around here," I said. "I thought you were going to spade up my flower beds today?"

"Well—" he began. Shoot, I thought, he might as well go as to be underfoot of me. Like as not he would dig up my bulbs, and then the fur *would* fly. After all, I thought, it *was* Saturday and he'd worked hard all week. "Oh, go on," I said, without turning around. I heard him close the door in a minute and pretty soon I heard the pickup start and he and Junior set off for town.

Men are like that, aren't they? If they can get half a chance to get out of working a home, they'll do it. They like to get out there and play that stupid game. Lord knows how they can enjoy half killing each other and getting all hot and sweaty, but I suppose there is some kind of male pride at stake in these things. All I know is that after a game Howard would come home raring to make love more powerful than ever—which is considerable.

* * *

RFD#3, Bear Branch—an address tacked on to my name for twenty years—ever since we were married, and Howard's been at the grain elevator in town that long, too. Why, if you ever came down through there you could find our old place—"Howard & Addie Lewis" is on the mailbox and everyone for miles around would know who we were. You'd know the place by the mailbox by the roadside, the white board fence out front, and by my flowers—iris and peonies, day lilies and daisies along the roadside, lilacs at the corner of the yard, and a couple of big plastic sunflowers that turn in the wind and keep the birds away. They used to say I had the prettiest flowers in the county.

Sometimes when I say the word "forty" aloud I think I've got one foot in the grave. I can tell you I had a terrible time coming to grips with the idea of it, and if it hadn't been for Howard I don't think anyone around Bear Branch would have known. But Howard's always made it a point to tell our children how I am three years older than him. I hate it when he does that!

I think he's always held it against me that he was only seventeen and I was twenty when we got married. His father had to sign for him on account of his being underage. We probably wouldn't have done it at all if Susan hadn't been on the way. At least that's one thing we didn't play up—our wedding date. I don't mind the kids knowing my age but I didn't want them counting up on their fingers—which they would have if they'd've known, especially Emma, our younger daughter, who is somewhat of a prude.

But I've got it all written down—when we were married, the dates our children were born, when they had the chickenpox and the measles and so on—all in my little white Bible which I've had since I was a girl, put away in a top dresser drawer the last I knew. They'll find it when I'm dead and gone, I suppose, and then they can think what they want to.

* * *

I finally got that load of washing done, rinsed out and wrung out, and I headed for the clothesline, wondering why the girls hadn't said anything about coming home for spring break but then they *had* both been home for my fortieth birthday. Howard had gone all out to surprise me and invited the neighbors for miles around to a barbecue in honor of the occasion. Susan, our eldest, who is a sophomore at college, up at Miami, Ohio, had some special stationery printed for me with my name—"Mrs. Howard Percival Lewis"—and my address on it. Emma, who's a year behind Susan at the same school, embroidered some pillow slips for me, using ever so tiny stitches.

The real surprise came from Junior, our youngest child, who's a senior in high school this year and the apple of his father's eye being six foot three and two hundred and five pounds in his stocking feet. This year he was on the "A" basketball team, which is all well and good but he's kind of slow, if you know what I mean. He shocked us all when he got me an orchid plant for my birthday—the first one I'd ever seen—and it cost him three months' allowance to do it.

Oh, I've got the best children in the world, I can't complain about that, even if they did come one right after another, three in three years. Mama said it was worse than royalty. Goodness knows what they'll turn out to *be,* but I said they were going to have a college education if I had to go out and get a job to keep them in school. Well, it's funny how things turn out, for my father died and left them all a trust fund. He was foresighted that way.

I started hanging out the clothes, thinking I'd scramble eggs and fry potatoes for dinner—I could have them ready to fry when Howard and Junior got home—when I saw the pickup sailing down the road, hell-bent for leather. *Now* what, I thought, as I watched the dust rise in huge clouds and scatter along the fields on either side before it began to die down.

I just stood there with one hand on the T-shirt I was ready to hang up, the toher with a clothespin ready to attach the shirt to the line. Howard screeched the tires to a stop and jumped out. "It's Junior," he said, "that Bailey kid ran smack into him, head-on, and Junior just went out like a light. They don't know what is wrong with him. They took him over to the hospital and I came here to get you."

I didn't say a word, I'm calm at times like that I set down the T-shirt into the basket of wet clothes, went in the house and unplugged the washing machine, and got into the pickup with Howard. He drove as fast as he dared all the way into town. I kept thinking all the way about life beginning at forty. What if Junior died? He was only eighteen— his life hadn't even begun at all. He hadn't even had a real girlfriend yet. What did he know of life?

Now, Howard and I never went in much for religion—although I saw to it my children always went to Sunday school until they were of age—and I'm not used to praying, but as we sat in the hospital waiting room I made up a kind of prayer in my mind. I promised if Junior came out of this okay, I would see to it that he *did* begin his life on the right foot. I would do something nice for him. Junior and I have never been very close, he's his father's son through and through. Susan was the only child I ever thought of as my own, she's the pretty one. I never worry about her at all—she'll go far in life.

No, Emma's the one I worry about. I never did understand her. I swear I don't know what goes through her head. She reads her Bible a lot and talks about saving the lost souls in Africa. Last summer she had a piece of paper tacked up in her bedroom. "Pray for the people in China," it read. "Gracious, honey!" I told her, "the people in China are probably praying for *us!*" She just smiled sweetly and went on reading a book.

I can't imagine Emma marrying. Still, I suppose there's things worse than being an old maid. Maybe if I had it to do over again I'd never have married at all either. I might have been a schoolteacher, saved my money and gone to Europe every other summer. Sometimes when I close my eyes I can see the little room—just a block from school—where I'd have lived, just one room with a floor lamp, a poinsettia against the north window for color, the little log-cabin quilt I'd pieced as a girl, a radio to listen to, and I'd have a gray cat for company. I could have been as snug as a bug there, and on very special occasions, school dances and such, I'd have put on a little rouge and wore a colorful dress.

Of course that was what I had my heart set on in the first place—a schoolteacher's life. And there I was, halfway through my junior year at college when I found out I was pregnant—not that Howard was the first man I'd been with, but well, there was no mistake about Susan being his. He'd come into town one Friday night with some other home boys. They'd brought some vodka and were looking for trouble, and some of us were so lonesome for home folks that we slipped out of the dorm, and well, you know the rest.

In *those* days it was an absolute disgrace what happened to me and it was worse with Howard only being seventeen. Mama cried for seven days and said she would never forgive me—and she's kept her word. All these years she's treated me as though I had the mark of the beast on my brow and Howard as though he were a leper. Every time she's come down from Cincinnati—where she moved after Daddy died—she's started on me. "I hear that Myrtle Grace Simpson and her husband have built them a fine house out on the Green Hills Pike," she'll say, letting it trail off so that I can make my own camparison between *my* fate and that of Myrtle Grace. Myrtle Grace and I are of an age, we went all through school together, and *her* husband has a drugstore. Sometimes I've wished Myrtle Grace was dead and her husband turned into a hoptoad.

I must say Howard has been long-suffering through the years, but I used to count the tall bottles under the sink after every one of Mama's visits, and I noticed a lot of them were missing.

* * *

Sometimes it don't pay to get up at all, and that day was one of them. What with Alice May's coming into a fortune and Junior lying there—who knew? maybe at death's door—in the next room, not to mention not getting the wash done, I tell you I was ready to start crying.

Well, pretty soon the doctor came out and said Junior was going to be alright, he'd just had the wind knocked out of him. He told us to take him home and to keep him in bed the rest of the day. We got him into the truck between us and we set out for home.

"Now honey," I told him, "we're going to put you to bed when we get home and we want you to get lots of rest. And tomorrow, remember, we're going to Aunt Louise's for dinner."

"Do I have to go?" Junior asked.

"Well, Louise is expecting you," I said.

"I'd rather go fishing," he said, rather sullenly.

It must be fairly said that Junior is difficult. Always has been, always will be. He's his father's son.

We got him home and upstairs to his room. I brought him my transistor radio that I keep in the kitchen in case of bad weather. I like to be prepared. I knew I would live to regret giving it to him. Then I went downstairs and started dinner, trying to continue where I left off with the wash. Howard went out to the barn to putter around until I called him to eat.

While I peeled potatoes I could hear the radio: *IN THE HEARTLAND,* someone sang. Yes, I thought, in the land of the heart I am barren. Too much, too soon. I thought for a moment I might suffocate. The day had been long, that was the problem.

Fancy coming into that kind of money, I thought, enough to take a trip to Europe—not that *I've* ever wanted to go traipsing off to those places where they come rushing out to help you out of your taxi and all you can think of is to say something like "Par-lee voo frawn-say" or some such. And what would be the use of that, you couldn't sit down to dinner easily, you wouldn't know what you were ordering half the time? I tell you, it wouldn't be worth it to *me*. I'd have to take along two bottles of antacid, and I'd be perfectly miserable all the time.

*LIFE GOES ON—LONG AFTER THE THRILL OF LIVING IS GONE,* the radio sang. Amen, I thought. I wondered who it was who said life begins at forty. I couldn't see how it began or even where it was *going*. I guess I never thought about it much one way or another, but I did know there were a lot of things I didn't worry about anymore, like getting stuck between floors on an elevator, or what it would mean if they were to dig up the bones of Jesus after all these years, and I got so I didn't worry much about Howard either.

*LONG AFTER THE THRILL OF LIVING IS GONE,* the radio repeated. Sometimes I used to stand at the kitchen window and look across our twenty acres, all cleared of brush and trees except for a row of hickories along the west side, and I'd wonder where they'd bury me when the time came. I'd wonder what they'd put on my tombstone. I'd like something from the old hymns, I supposed, like "In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me." Mostly I didn't worry about it.

I'd gotten my life insurance paid up and a little money put away for the kids—what I took from the egg money each week—they didn't know that and neither did Howard. It ain't good for your husband to know everything about what you do.

Yes, I'd got seven hundred dollars set aside in an old black purse in my second dresser drawer. Now *that* worried me—what if I died first and Howard married again; his second wife would get ahold of that money and spend it, money that was rightfully mine.

Well, I scrambled the eggs while the potatoes fried. I could hear Junior roll over in bed and turn down the radio. "How soon till dinner?" he called down. "In less than ten minutes," I shouted back. I was in for it. I could see that. I'd be making trips up and down those stairs for the rest of the day.

There were a lot of things I could have been, I thought. I might have gone down to New Orleans and become one of those really expensive call girls. Mama wouldn't have liked that better; sometimes I wished I had gone off and done it, or at least done *something*. I might have gone to New York, if I'd married Melvin, that nice boy I met at college. He wrote to me for a couple of years even after I was married. I never told Howard, but I kept his letters. I'd put them away in that old black purse with the money.

* * *

Well, I tell you it must have been my age that got to me that day, or just maybe I'd had too much of life in Bear Branch. I can't hardly explain why I did what I did next. Nothing like that ever happened to me before, and it just takes my breath away to think of it now.

I was standing there looking out at those hickories just fresh with green leaves, and at the blue hills beyond, and I wondered what on earth I was doing there, that spring day a week after my fortieth birthday, scrambling eggs and frying potatoes, running up and down waiting on Junior, getting ready for Howard's after-football lovemaking and getting grayer every minute I lived. Not to mention my not having a soul in the world to leave me anything.

I tell you there are those who would say what I did was downright indecent. I turned off the gas burners and went into my bedroom. I got that new blue dress out of the closet, the one I'd been waiting for a special occasion to wear. I put on a new slip and the blue dress over it. I took that old black purse out of the back of the dresser drawer, got the seven hundred dollars out of it, along with Melvin's letters, and put them in my *good* purse. I put on my Sunday shoes and I walked out of the house.

I walked down the driveway, out of sight of the house and barn and never looked back. I walked down the road about a quarter-mile when I was given a ride by the mail carrier, Russ Elliott. Russ and I have known each other since we were kids. "Addie," he said, "you look as pretty as a picture. Where are you headed?" "Russ," I told him, "I'm headed for tomorrow."

He never asked me any more questions but just drove along quietlike until we got to town; without asking, he took me right to the bus depot. I went inside and walked up to the counter. In a clear, strong voice I said to the man, "A ticket to New York."

Then I bought me a copy of the new *Redbook* and sat down to wait for my bus.

I need for me alone—what?
It takes no shape—
It is a longing—painful, sad—
It is an emptiness within.

I share with those who need my love
And they are real.
If only I could truly know them,
All trusting, all loving, giving—accepting.

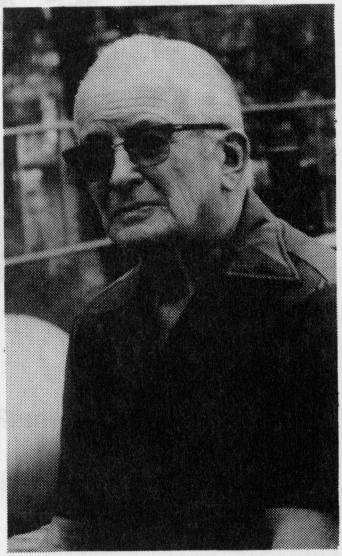
There is nothing I should want or need
For I have everything—yet sometimes nothing.
It's for the eye and the mind to decide.
But this body—directed by the mind—houses a soul.

Why am I here—what is my purpose?
Is it only to perpetuate?
Is there no end—no final page
To summarize my life?

# Bill A. Dickey

## Form, Texture and Heart....

# The Sculpture of Bert Keeney



**Bert Keeney, 1984.**

An open-air tower-studio of reinforced concrete imposes itself above the trees at 1919 S. Locust, a quiet residential street little more than a block's walk from Pittsburg State University. Of this work-in-progress, Bert O. Keeney modestly claims that it could never have been built without the help of students throughout the years. The tower is an engineering feat which promises to be an artistic triumph as well. What first strikes one is its soundness and perfection. Its impressive symmetry reveals no cracks caused by miscalculations. Engineering intelligence as well as an aesthetic sense has long been at work here.

But it was the completed works of art which Ted Watts photographed in September: works which Keeney says owe much to the Wichita Art Association, especially to Margaret Craver and Bill Dickerson, who encouraged him during the formative years of his career.

Born in Chadron, Nebraska, Keeney was graduated from that city's State Teachers College in 1936, leaving with his Bachelors of Art degree to teach at the senior high school of Winfield, Kansas. It was not long before his students were winning prizes and awards in the jewelry and metal divisions of the National Scholastic Art Contests. During this period he was editor of *Art Scoop*, a publication of the Kansas State Art Teachers Association. During the summer of 1941, he was an instructor of silversmithing at the School of the Wichita Art Association. His career was interrupted in 1942, however, when he joined the U.S. Naval Reserves, spending sixteen months at the Naval Training Station at Great Lakes, Illinois, as a metalsmithing instructor and fifteen months at Attu, Alaska, as an aircraft structural repairman. Upon the completion of his military assignments after five months at Kingsville, Texas, he entered the University of Kansas in the fall of 1945 to teach jewelry making while working on a master's degree.

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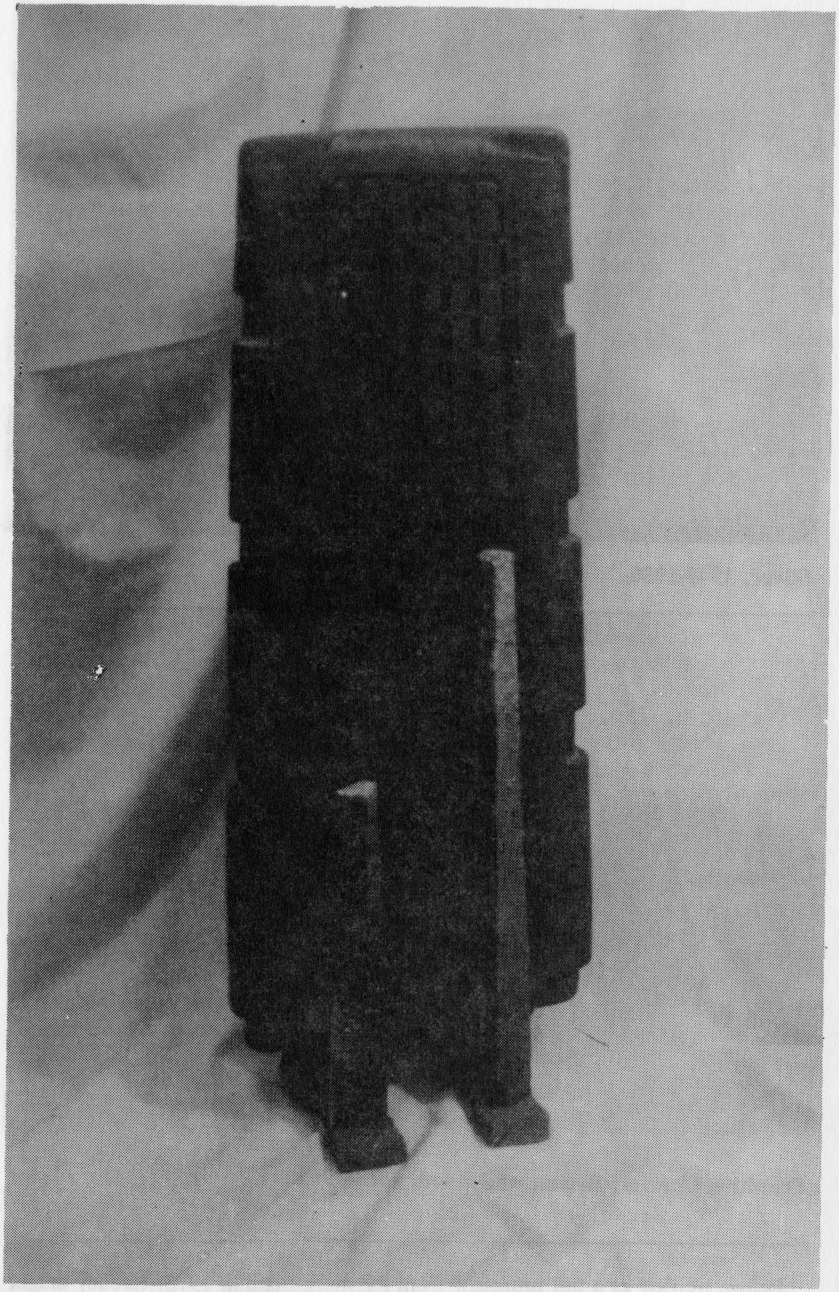
An opening in the Department of Industrial and Vocational Education at Pittsburg State University (then Kansas State Teachers College) prompted Keeney to move to Pittsburg in January 1946 as an art instructor. By September 1 he was promoted to the rank of assistant professor. During August of 1947 he was selected as one of the twelve outstanding teachers of silversmithing and jewelry in the United States to attend the Rhode Island School of Design to study under William Bennett, one of the foremost silver designers of the day and a teacher at the Sheffield College of Arts and Crafts, London.

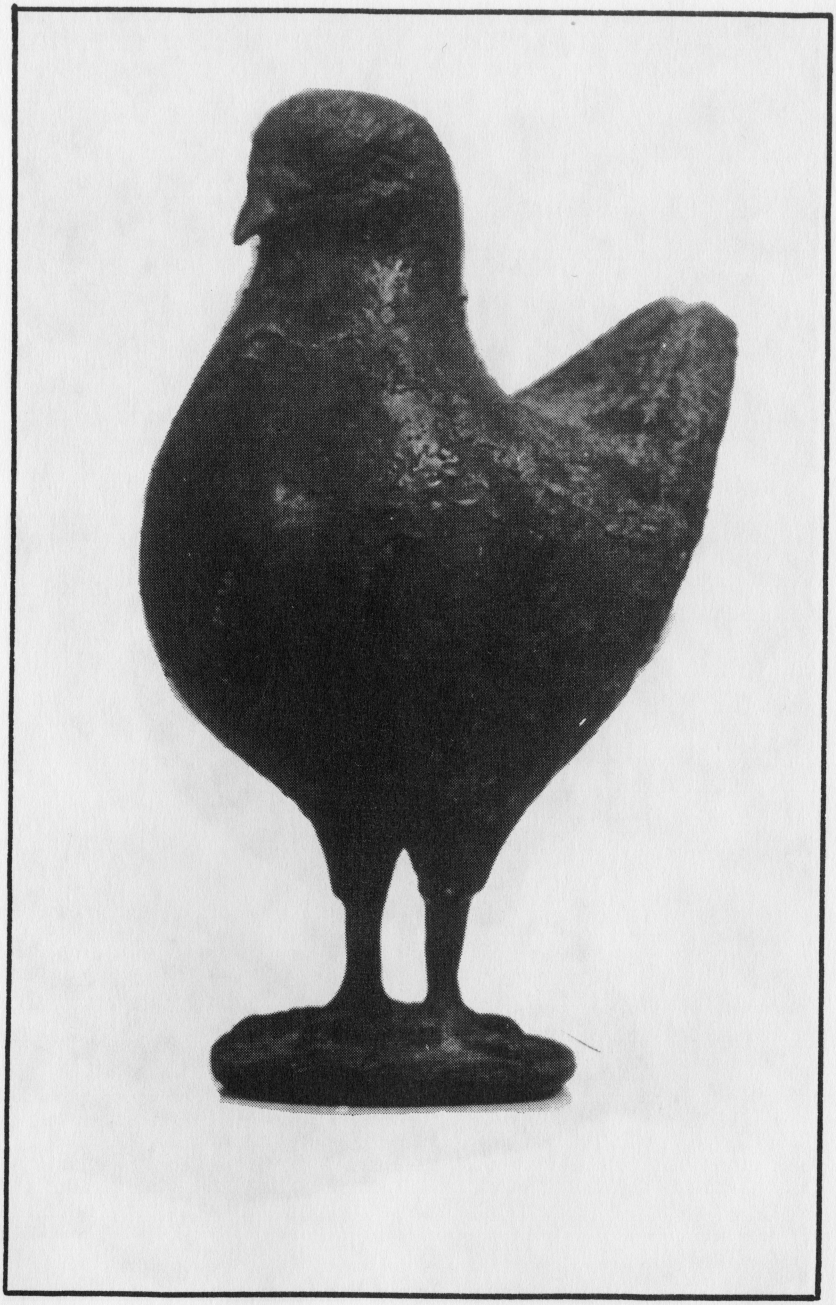


**Cast aluminum and ceramic, 1967.**

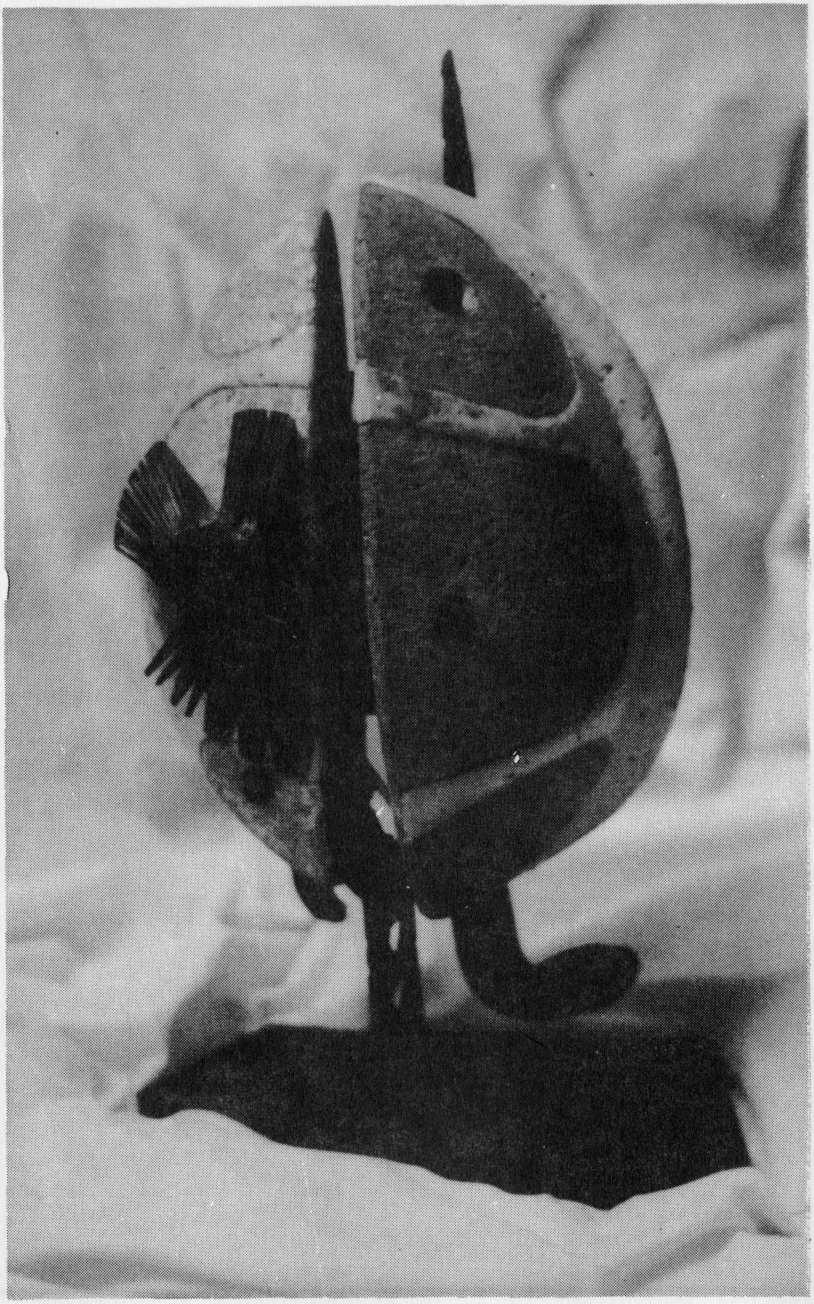
**Silver, 1947-1950.**

**Primitive Charter. Bronze and wood, 1962-1963.**

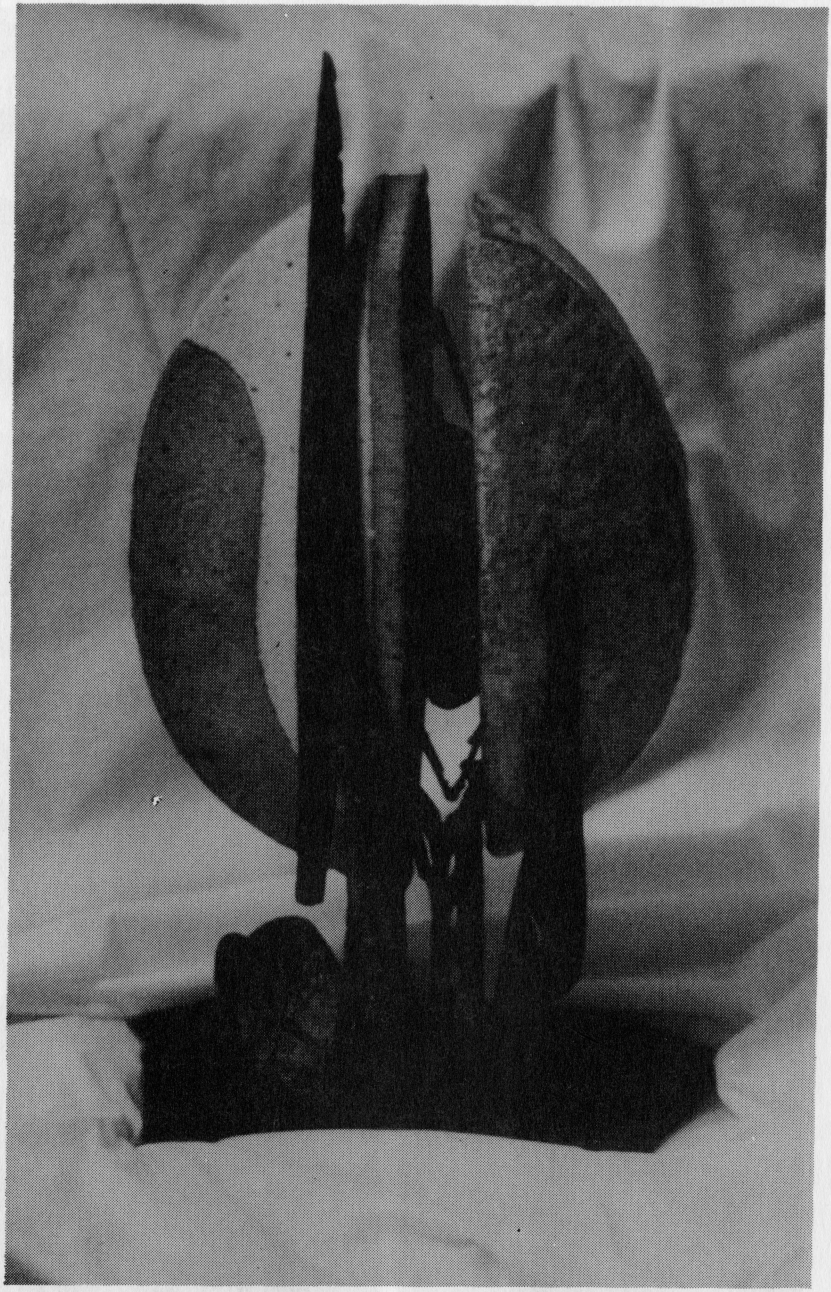
Before retiring as a full professor from Pittsburg State in 1970, Keeney taught many who have gone on to be professional artists. It is in *their* achievement, he states, that his pride lies.

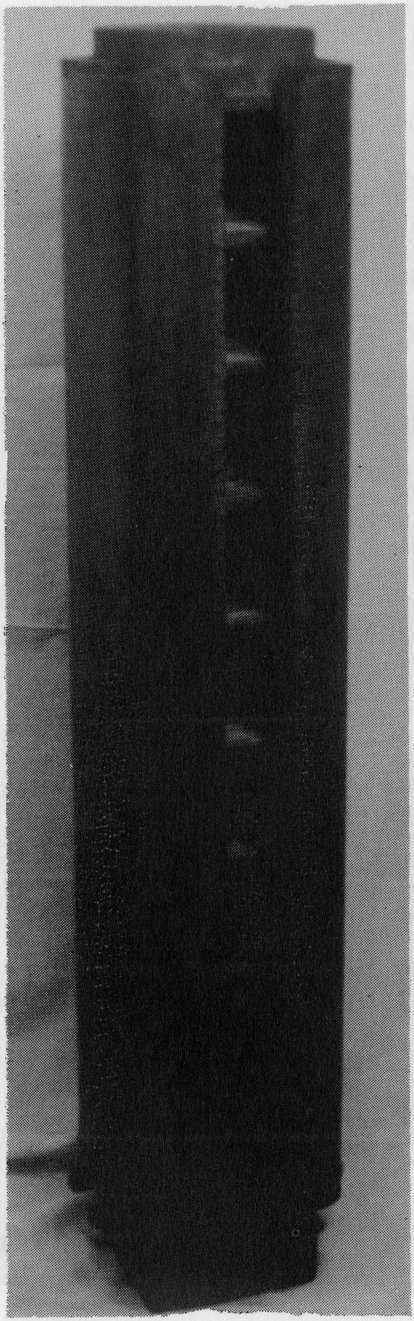


**Bronze, 1956.**

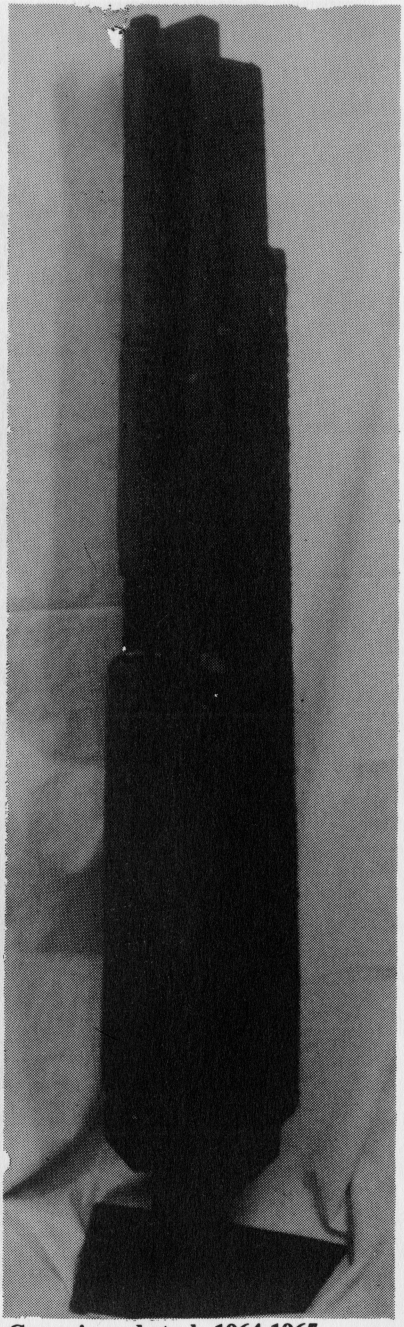


**The Seed Pod. Ceramic and steel, 1957-1958.**

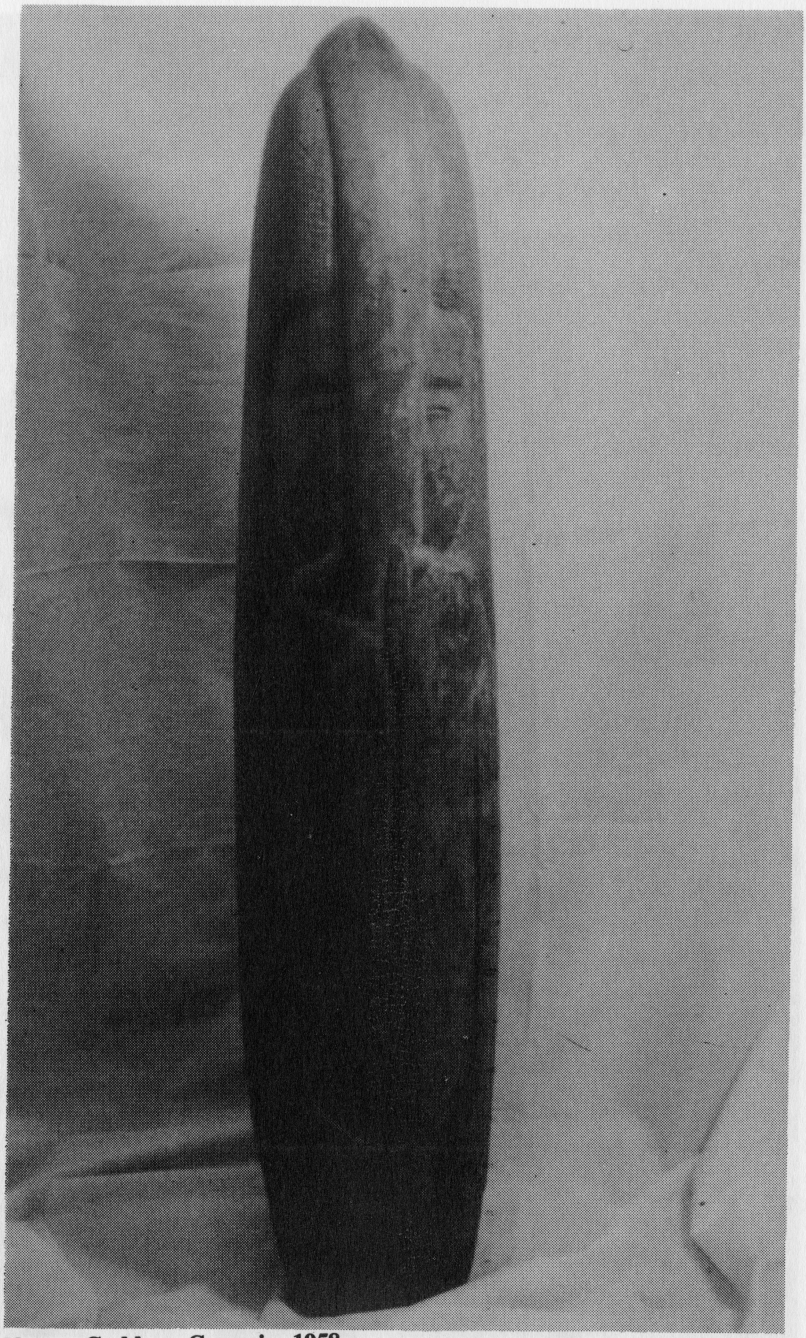




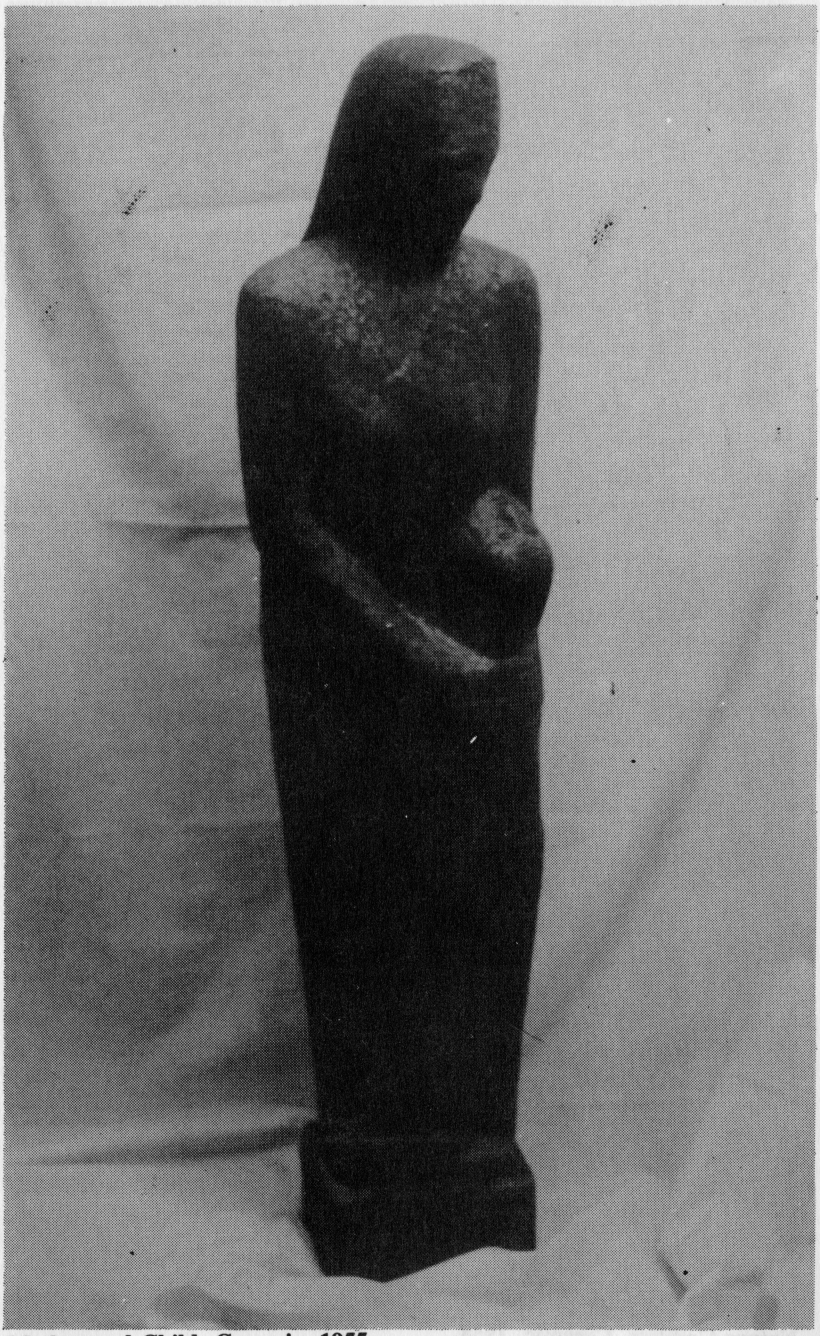
Ceramic and steel, 1964.



Ceramic and steel, 1964-1965.



**Nature Goddess. Ceramic, 1958.**

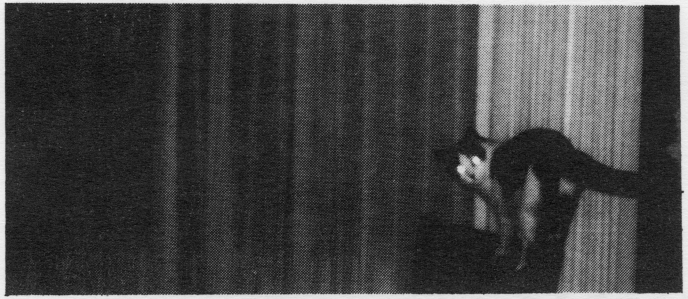


**Mother and Child. Ceramic, 1955.**

# Pastoral

Swallows, the weary workers starting
home from the fields, the gray husks
of the barns in the distance shelved
with golden hay, the sun spilling out
the day's last cerise light. And I am
inside, insulated from their hungers
and thirst, confronted by this empty
page, the sum of a life, knowing that
it must end, doomed to that knowledge;
I cling to my mortality as if it were
my lifeline. All is terminal. Pain is
another reason to continue. Outside my
slowly darkening window the old fields
grow lush, secretive, thrive and perish
under new moon and blazing sun, endure.

John T. Selawsky



# POEMS

## By Janet Joel

Alien Mac has not seen E.T. has not seen the sea or very much sky or the Cotton Bowl on T.V.
Mac and me have seen grocery stores house & yard house & still house house & room
for days we have stayed too much in this castle like Kafka content accepting
our personal maze we, Mac, have been goin' rats down to the pads we nibble our claws
anxiously thumping our paws the rhythm is wrong: this is all! this is all!
and we know this is not Mac knows best knows impatient with alien whiskers impatient
tail nervous Mac twitches & me we itches to go out & be Cat and get away
from Rat

Mac is about a lot somewhere Mac is & can thinking down through the magnifying glass closer Microscope Mac probes noting reflexes, Mac nudges cells latenight giddy from so much sight Mac tickles cilia making my biology giggle twirls the stethoscope light internal deepest veins respond expanding they dip & jump closing calmly to the right shape morning & I'm up Mac scans the charts tabulates new squiggles then tells me what I'm doing boil water scoop coffee this way outside that way the bus Mac really means it to me Sunny October Third, Boss—don't be the blues

# Tremors

poles dragging behind rope dangling what will settle us? stick tent camp all dials quiver Check the guidebook, Mac index: shelter residence home Which is it, Mac? as I step, new sites emerge how shall I hammer? lean-to mud quonset a solitary hive sounds fine walls sealed where? there are small things in my pocket now like clues one stone or is it a tooth? one tooth or is it a nail? one nail or is it a doll? can't trust fundamentals anymore plots shifting underfoot I try following old ground a hound devoted to trail anxious after territory anxious to guard I stop to let myself run out hold my head with hurt finding beneath my helmet Mac left directions: "pass the clustered quail hike three times around the stump and rest" Boss, rest

# GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION.

# $2,000 REWARD

## State of Kansas, Executive Department.

**WHEREAS**, several atrocious murders have been recently committed in Labette County, Kansas, under circumstances which fasten, beyond doubt, the commissions of these crimes upon a family known as the "Bender family," consisting of

JOHN BENDER, about 60 years of age, five feet eight or nine inches in height, German, speaks but little English, dark complexion, no whiskers, and sparely built;

MRS. BENDER, about 50 years of age, rather heavy set, blue eyes, brown hair, German, speaks broken English;

JOHN BENDER, Jr., alias John Gebardt, five feet eight or nine inches in height, slightly built, gray eyes with brownish tint, brown hair, light moustache, no whiskers, about 27 years of age, speaks English with German accent;

KATE BENDER, about 24 years of age, dark hair and eyes, good looking, well formed, rather bold in appearance, fluent talker, speaks good English with very little German accent:

**AND WHEREAS**, said persons are at large and fugitives from justice, now therefore, I, Thomas A. Osborn, Governor of the State of Kansas, in pursuance of law, do hereby offer a **REWARD OF FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS** for the apprehension and delivery to the Sheriff of Labette County, Kansas, of each of the persons above named.

**In Testimony Whereof**, I have hereunto subscribed my name, and caused the Great Seal of the State to be affixed.

[L. S.] **Done at Topeka, this 17th day of May, 1873.**

**THOMAS A. OSBORN,**
Governor.

By the Governor:

**W. H. SMALLWOOD,**
Secretary of State.

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Photographs for this article courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

# The Bender Hills Mystery

## by Leroy Dick, as told to Jean McEwen

### Chapter 10

Col. York came over from Independence again on Thursday. With him came Col. C. J. Peckham, Jim Snoddy, marshall of Fort Scott, and Henry Beers.

"Mr. Dick," Col. York said to me, "the citizens of Independence have raised one thousand dollars and placed it in the hands of my three friends here to trace the Benders and bring them to justice. I never saw the family except on the day I talked to Kate about my brother, but you know them—you could identify them. So I've asked these men to report to you instead of me. I reckon you won't mind helping to run those devils down?"

"You can count on me. And I surely hope we can find them."

Peckham, Snoddy, and Beers set out at once on their hunt for the killers. They learned that on the Thursday evening after Col. York's visit to Kate the Benders gathered their few personal effects together and drove to Thayer. The ticket agent at that place furnished further details.

"Yes, four people exactly answering their description came hustling in that night. After a lot of Dutch palaver I finally understood they wanted the earliest train to Humboldt. It was due right then. The old man passed me a ten dollar bill and didn't even have time to count his change. . . . They had funny baggage. Part of their

things were tied up in a white bedspread. And they checked a trunk. One of those old-timers, Doghide, I guess. Anyway, it was hide with the hair on it. I'd recognize it anywhere.''

At Humboldt it was learned that young John and Kate left the train and went south on the Katy and the old couple went on to Lawrence, where they bought tickets for St. Louis. At the St. Louis station the three officers talked to a baggage agent who remembered the doghide trunk and white bundle. It happened that a drayman stood near and overheard the conversation.

''Say,'' he cut in, ''I hauled those old parties to No.— Blank Street. Had a devil of a time making out where that old Dutchman wanted to go. I couldn't help noticing that trunk.''

The address he furnished proved to be the home of old John's sister.

''Yes, John and his wife were here,'' she told Peckham. ''They came on Saturday and stayed a week. I hadn't seen him for twenty years. I tried to visit with him, but he wouldn't talk much. Last Saturday morning I went out to do some shopping. When I came back, they were gone. It seemed queer, their leaving so suddenly without telling me. No, I've no idea where they went.''

The detectives canvassed the railroad stations, they made careful inquiries at all the river docks for a clue to their destination. Beers wrote me a discouraging letter. ''We have lost all trace of them,'' he declared.

However, a few days later they found a baggage master at the Frisco station who remembered handling that peculiar trunk. ''It was checked to Vinita, Oklahoma,'' he told them. They boarded the first train for Vinita. . . .

The unearthing of the eight bodies in Hell's Acre had furnished headlines that week for the press from coast to coast. If Albert H. Owen, boarding house proprietor near Denison, Texas, had followed the newspaper accounts and put two and two together a few hours earlier than he did, the Benders would have been trapped at his place on the second Sunday following their escape from Kansas, and we would have been enriched by the big reward offered by Labette county for their capture. He was still lamenting his obtuseness when he arrived in Parsons the next day with a remarkable story.

Milt Reynolds brought him out to my place in his carriage around Monday noon. His story, told to me as Reynolds raced his team back to Parsons that I might wire Peckham, Snoddy, and Beers in Vinita, added a startling chapter to the sensational history of the criminals.

''A big railroad gang is doing some grading near my place and most of the men board with me,'' Owen related. ''A little over a week ago a husky young German with a good team and wagon got a job with the gang. He lived in a tent with a young woman—his wife, I supposed. Yesterday morning I noticed they had company, an old couple.

''After breakfast the young chap came over to my place. We talked a while. 'We're going away today,' he told me. 'My folks want us to locate with them in Texas.'

'''Lots of good cattle range down-state,' I said.

'''I guess so. But the old folks want to go west. They've heard of a colony near the border. Do you know anything about such a place?''

''I knew right off what place he meant. 'You mean the outlaw colony. You bet I've heard of it. That ain't all. I've been there. And I was damned lucky to get out alive. Some of the most desperate criminals in the United States hide out there.'

'''Mebby so. The old folks want to settle close there and raise vegetables, dairy products, and such, to sell to the colony. D'you think it would pay?'

"'Well, it might, if anyone liked that business. Though such a notion wouldn't appeal to me. Look here, boy,' I warned him, 'that's the toughest place in this country. I used to be deputy sheriff here, and the chief and I went out there after a man we wanted. Traced him right into the colony. He and some pals were getting supper over a camp fire. We hailed him and he came over and shook hands, friendly like.

"'Lookin' for me?' he asked.

"'Nobody else,' says the sheriff. 'We're taking you back to Denison to stand trial for murder.'

"He looks the chief straight in the eyes. 'Listen, Cap, I'm not makin' any admissions or denials about that killin'. But I'll pass you a damned good tip. You lay low around this community, or you won't live to get back to Denison. Officers ain't welcome here. We don't allow no man or woman to be taken out. Get that? . . . Now vamoose.'

"'The chief and I had been in some tight holes. We'd handled some tough customers and always got our man. So we said we'd stay all night and think it over. Well, next morning at breakfast we saw men walking out through the trees loading their guns. We were soon surrounded. We hadn't a chance. It was just plain horse sense for us to get going—provided they didn't pot us on the way out.'

"'They wouldn't let an outlaw be taken out, eh?' That seemed to strike the boy agreeably.

"'Well, a sheriff from Sherman tried it. Had a posse of seven men. None of 'em ever came back. . . . The state often talks about cleaning out that den,' I explained to him. 'But the border line between Texas and New Mexico is uncertain. It has only been surveyed roughly. Nobody knows whether the colony is in one state or the other or both. So each waits for the other to do the dirty work while the cutthroats have things their own way.'

"'They seem pretty safe,' the boy said.

"'There was one officer who got his man,' I told him. 'The way it happened, an outfit rode into the old Sherman trading post from the west one day with a big herd of wild ponies they wanted to swap for wagons and supplies. They hung around for a few days. The boss was a big good-looking chap and an expert horseman. He got his trading through all right. The morning he was getting his caravan ready to leave, a stranger from Maine hit town with a view to locating in Texas. Everything was new and interesting to this Easterner. He stood and watched the caravan get in shape to travel. The boss was riding up and down, giving orders—mighty showy on a horse. Something about him seemed familiar to the Easterner, though he couldn't place the man. He kept watching, without appearing too curious. At last the son of a good family in Maine flashed into his mind. *He looks like that boy . . . his voice is the same,* the Easterner thought.

"'Now that boy had killed a man a few years back and disappeared. The longer the Easterner thought about it, the more certain he felt that this was the kid, grown up. He went to the deputy sheriff.

"'We'll head the caravan off,' the officer said, 'and you can look your man over again.'

"They drove fast, and by a cutoff got ahead of the outfit. Pretty soon here came the rider in the van. The deputy hailed him.

"'Where you headed for?'

"'West Texas. We've started a new agricultural project out there.' The boss spoke politely and used good language.

"After a short conversation the deputy drove on. 'How about it? Is that the party?' he asked the Easterner.

"'Yes, I'm positive it is. There's a big price on his head. What can we do about it?'

"'Do? Why, get him, that's what. We'll drive on so he won't suspect, then hold him up and take him back to town.'

"They waylaid the caravan again. The deputy drew a bead on the rider. 'I want you.'

"'What the hell do you want with me?'

"'That's neither here nor there. Come along!'

"And before his outfit got near enough to savvy what was going on they had him in the buggy and were racing back to Sherman. He confessed to the murder, and they took him back to Maine, where he was convicted."

But it was the young section hand I wanted to hear about. "You say that Dutchman and his folks left Denison yesterday?"

"Yes. Before noon, in the boy's wagon. He'd got it ready for that very purpose, I reckon. And to think," Owen groaned, "just by being dumb, I let him and that reward pass right on by."

In Parsons I wired Peckham and Beers at Vinita—Marshal Snoddy had returned to his duties at Fort Scott—of the Benders' escape overland from Denison, though they had already got track of the hair trunk from a Vinita agent. Owen returned to Denison that night and furnished them a description of John's team and wagon. They bought some good ponies and a light camping outfit, and set out for the Texas colony of outlaws after wiring me they had located the Benders' trail.

They traced the Benders easily enough for about two hundred miles westward. There the cattle ranches began to expand in size, embracing thousands of acres. The ranch houses were miles apart. Inhabitants were few, far between, and reserved toward strangers in that vast new country where it was the rule for a man's gun to speak more quickly than his tongue. Besides, so many trails went angling across the limitless range that they often questioned which one to choose. At last they lost all traces of the Benders. The immense solitudes seemed to have abetted the fugitives by blotting out all clues of their route.

The two men persevered. The colony lay to the southwest. They took the lefthand trails in the perplexing labyrinth of intersections and trusted to luck. They steadily advanced into the raw country. The cattle frontier of those days was boldly and gloriously hardboiled. Disputes were settled neither by compromise nor diplomacy. The six-shooter spoke a far more eloquent language.

At last at a ranch house Peckham and Beers picked up the Bender trail. Near El Paso it again vanished. Hiring a Mexican guide they crossed the border into Mexico. Their search was futile. Recrossing the Red River, they traveled north. They wondered whether the fugitives had avoided the colony after all and gone on to Arizona. Some miles north of El Paso, they inquired at a ranch house. "I haven't seen any such outfit myself," the ranchman said. "But we have a young wrangler who rides back and forth to our different outfits on the range. In fact, he's gone up-country about eighteen miles now. Ought to come riding in most any time. Best anybody I ever saw for remembering people. If he's met up with any strangers, he can tell you all about them. Better wait till he comes back."

The officers decided to wait. Toward evening the boy returned and was presented to them by the ranchman.

"Why, yes, I met up with those folks," he exclaimed when questioned. "On this very trip up-country. Gabbled a lotta Dutch lingo. I finally made out they were hunting some relatives near the outlaw colony. I told 'em I was heading that way

and they could ride with me as far as I went. We jogged along—they asked me questions about the colony. Seemed awful interested in it somehow."

The boy guided Peckham and Beers to the point where he had parted with the Germans. The cowboys on the range corroborated his story. But there oblivion again aided the fugitives, though the officers gleaned some illuminating facts about the colony from their talkative guide.

"They say it's an awful tough place. A hideout for cutthroats from everywhere. There's plenty of timber, and they live in tents and huts and duggouts. Those Dutchmen can keep tollably comf'table in their prairie schooner. But it won't be safe for you fellers to go in after 'em. . . . Hell!" he broke off regretfully, 'I sure was an easy mark, lettin' 'em get by me. Us boys coulda have a helluva spree with that re-ward."

Peckham and Beers were running short of money. They were convinced the Benders were safe within the colony ere this. It would be suicidal to attempt to capture them in that den of criminals. Much as they regretted it, there was but one thing to do—return empty-handed. They rode to the nearest railroad town, sold their ponies, and returned by rail to Kansas.

We were all keenly disappointed. "Surely," Col. York declared, "the Texas government ought to wipe out that nest of vice and bring those outlaws to justice."

I wrote to the Texas Rangers' headquarters in Austin, soliciting their aid in bringing the notorious Benders from hiding. They replied as follows:

"We do not know the extent of the colony in question. Would advise that you communicate with Fort Sill, as that would be the proper place to get government help."

Following their suggestion, I wrote to Fort Sill. Practically the same reply came back. Even the government did not know the extent of the colony, and there was no appropriation of funds for a survey of state boundaries.

Thus the search was definitely blocked. The fugitives were safe from the law.

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## Chapter 11

Just how long the Benders remained in the outlaw colony is not certain. After a time the old couple began to reason that excitement over the Kansas affair had probably died down, that they would be safe in returning to their old haunts in Michigan, where, resuming their former nomadic life among the logging camps, they would escape suspicion. Kate and young John did not take enthusiastically to leaving the colony. But their arguments failed to shake the old folks' determination to go back.

John and Kate refused to accompany them and demanded a financial settlement. This old John refused to make. "You two are young. You can make more money," he declared stubbornly. The argument resulted in a fight between the two men, which would have ended fatally for the boy had not Kate and her mother interfered, but which failed to separate the old man from his ill-gotten money. He and the old woman started north in the wagon. Coming to the outskirts of a little town near Denver, they camped by a small stream.

"You build a fire," the old man told the woman. "I'll go up to town and buy some provisions."

The woman built her fire and waited. She might have waited till the cows came home, for old John never came back. Upon inquiry she learned he had entrainedon the Union Pacific for points east, taking all the money with him.

She was resourceful, however. She put up a pitiful story of destitution to the citizens of the town. They raised funds to defray her expenses to Michigan, innocent of the fact that they were aiding a hardened criminal to evade the law. . . .

She had several children in Michigan whom she visited. She went here and there, hunting surreptitiously for old John.

Kate and young John stayed in the colony for some time after the old folks left. It seems that at last Kate became homesick for Michigan. Failing to induce John to return with her, she became friendly with a young painter, who, it appears, had wandered into the colony by accident.

One morning the painter was missing. Soon Kate also disappeared. They met at a point previously agreed upon and drifted on to McPherson, Kansas. They were frightfully poor. Kate was reduced to the necessity of borrowing her neighbor's washing machine to do her weekly laundry. This neighbor was Mrs. McCann, a woman of refinement and generosity, a church member and active in G.A.R. circles, who willingly aided Kate in her hard lot. One morning Kate came for the machine. She was half sick and in a bad humor.

"That damned ol' woman Bender brought me to this," she complained savagely.

"Bender?" gasped Mrs. McCann. "Do you know the Benders?"

"The old woman is my mother," Kate answered recklessly.

"Your mother! You mean—the Benders of Kansas?"

But Kate would say no more. Evidently she realized she had spoken unwisely. Mrs. McCann could elicit no further information from her concerning the notorious family.

"At least you know who your mother is," Mrs. McCann told her said. "It is more than I know."

"How's that?"

"I was brought up in an orphanage."

"That so? Where?"

Mrs. McCann mentioned the institution in Iowa.

Kate evinced sudden interest. "What was your name?"

Mrs. McCann told her. She thought Kate stared at her a bit strangely.

"Well, I'll be—and you lived there—till—"

"Till I married Mr. McCann after the war. He was an orphan in that home, too."

"Well," drawled Kate dully, "I've got to get at that washing."

Kate, Mrs. McCann felt, had cut the conversation abruptly. But of course the woman wasn't feeling well.

Not long after this Kate became seriously ill with fever. Since there was no one to care for her, Mrs. McCann became her self-appointed nurse, running in and out frequently.

Kate was often delirious. When her fever mounted she would rave and rage like a maniac. She would cry out to Mrs. McCann, "I know you, I know who you are. . . . I can tell all about you."

She repeated these statements so often, following her nurse with wide staring eyes, that the latter became deeply impressed, for it so happened that Mrs. McCann knew nothing of her antecedents, having been placed in the orphanage in her infancy, with no clues as to identity. She began to wonder whether this woman really was

possessed of information concerning her parentage. Though she told herself Kate's ravings were more probably the hallucinations of a fever-heated brain.

The painter had disappeared, leaving the sick woman entirely to the ministrations of her good neighbor. The delirium continued.

"The Benders are an awfully smart people," Kate would mutter. Then she would wander again into her old cry, staring up at her nuse, "I know you, I know all about you."

The fever left. Slowly Kate recovered. She was able to be up and around the house before Mrs. McCann dared to question her on the subject that lay so near her heart.

"What do you mean by saying you know me—that you can tell me who I am?"

"Did I rave and talk?"

"All the time. . . . Do you really know my parents?"

Kate evaded the question. "What else did I say?"

"You mentioned the Benders."

Kate was visibly disturbed. "What did I say about them?"

"Nothing much. Only that they were wonderfully smart people."

"I've not seen them for a long time. . . . But I knew your mother and father."

Mrs. McCann was deeply agitated. "You knew them? O, tell me—what were they like? Where did they live?"

But Kate was too weak to be pressed further at that time.

"We'll talk about them when you're stronger. You will tell me all about them, won't you?" Mrs. McCann begged.

"Yes, it will do me good to get it out of my system," Kate admitted. She kept that promise, and a few days later recited the following remarkable story of the younger woman's identity.

"Your mother and father lived in Windsor, Canada. Just before you were born, a woman and her daughter came to nurse your mother through her confinement. This daughter was about sixteen years old. She fell violently in love with your father. When he refused to have anything to do with her, she was angry and began to plan her revenge. One day she took a large meat knife, sharp as a razor, and went down to the cellar to slice meat for dinner. A few minutes later, she called out suddenly for your father. He thought something was wrong and ran down, unsuspecting. She sprang at him with the knife, slashed his throat terribly. He died right there.

"To keep the girl from being suspected of the crime, her mother put out the story of a man attacking the daughter and killing your father. . . . Maybe the shock of the whole affair was too much for your mother or maybe the two women put her out of the way to keep her from testifying against the girl. Anyhow, she was supposed to have died in childbirth.

"The nurse and her daughter took you and disappeared. They lived in Kentucky till the affair was blown over, then came back and put you in that orphanage in Iowa without telling who you were."

"But who were they?" Mrs. McCann persisted. "What was my name?"

"I—I don't remember your name. I didn't know your father very well," Kate evaded.

"Where were my grandparents? Why did they let those women put me in an orphanage? Why didn't they have them arrested for killing my father?"

"I don't know. I lost track of them. And it happened in Canada. Nothing could be done about it."

That was all Mrs. McCann could persuade Kate to reveal to her of her life's shrouded beginning. A disappointing story to a woman who had dreamed brighter dreams of her babyhood. A blighting revelation to an orphaned heart hungering to hear a story of loving parents and ancestors worthy of her loyalty. A severe blow to this splendid Samaritan whose greatest happiness she found in doing good.

One morning shortly afterward, she found Kate packing an old valise. "I'm going back to Michigan," Kate declared savagely, "to hunt up that old woman and make her fork over some money. She stole all I had." She left McPherson that day.

The tragic end of Frances McCann's parents haunted that young woman's mind. It seemed too horrible. It was a gross miscarrige of justice that their murderers had never been punished. She brooded over it day after day. At last she could bear it no longer. "They ought to pay the penalty of that crime," she declared. "What is more, I'm going to see that they do."

"Of course they ought," her husband agreed, "but what can you do about it?"

"I'm going to Michigan and collect every shred of evidence to prove they killed my parents."

"To prove who killed them?"

Frances regarded him earnestly. "I may be wrong, but I can't rid myself of the conviction that it was that terrible old murderess, Mrs. Bender, and one of her daughters who made me an orphan. So, you see, I must find out. I can do it—I just know I can."

She did go to Michigan. Possessed of a shrewd mind and a courageous soul, and carried on by an unflagging zeal for justice, her efforts as an independent detective bore amazing fruit. She satisfied herself that a notiously lewd character of many Michigan logging camps known as Mrs. Almira Griffith and her daughter, Mary, were unquestionably the slayers of her parents in Windsor, Canada. Going thoroughly into the case, she also learned the authorities had exhausted every effort to convict them at the time, and failed. This was a setback to her determination to bring them to justice. . . . But there was another way. She would collect evidence to prove that Mrs. Griffith and the woman known in Kansas as Mrs. Bender were one and the same person. She would present that evidence to Kansas authorities, who could prosecute the woman for complicity in the Bender atrocities.

The indomitable young woman went about her sleuthing methodically. She traced every clue, interrogated every officer or other witness possessing any knowledge of Mrs. Griffith and her criminal family, collected every word of evidence. She learned many things that must have distressed her upright soul unbearably. Yet she persevered. In all, she made four trips to Michigan to gather information, writing innumerable letters between times to verify rumors of fragments of testimony.

She delved into the family's early history. Mrs. Griffith was Almira Meik in the Adirondacks, where she was born. She was a large healthy woman with a violent temper and a cruel, vicious disposition, never expressing the slightest tenderness of human kindness. In her early girlhood she married Griffith, her physical opposite, a small, weakly man with a quinsy wheeze. To him she bore twelve sons and daughters.

Here, to Frances McCann's grief and dismay, was disclosed the—to her—climaxing tragedy in the whole sordid drama. Nothing short of the fact that her own mother was the oldest daughter of this ungodly woman, who snuffed out the life of her firstborn that her second daughter, Mary, might escape the gallows.

"My own grandmother!" Frances sobbingly confided to her husband. "It is unbearable."

"It doesn't make you any the less fine and admirable," he soothed.

When the first shock and sorrow of this discovery abated, young Frances was more determined than ever to insure the punishment of such a human fiend, notwithstanding their regrettable relationship. Never revealing her own identity, she continued to delve. She learned that Flora was the third daughter of the family, followed by a son, William. Next came Kate, whose real name was Eliza. The next two, a boy and a girl, died in infancy. After them was another boy, afflicted with what Mrs. Griffith termed "fits." Then there was Clara, Myra, and Ella, and another who died young. They drifted from the Adirondacks and settled in Detroit, where they lived up to the time of the murder of Mrs. McCann's parents just across the Detroit River in Windsor, Canada. Kate had told the truth as to Mrs. Griffith and Mary's flight to Kentucky with the orphaned infant and their later return to place the child in an orphanage in Iowa. Meanwhile the family had moved to Ionia, Michigan.

**John Bender, Sr.**

On her third trip to Michigan, Mrs. McCann learned at a Presbyterian hospital that old John Bender had been confined there with a serious illness some time previously. I imagine it must have been several years after his return from the Texas colony. Mrs. Bender traced him there and asked to be allowed to visit him. She must have intended to force a financial settlement. She sat waiting in the visitors' lounge. He approached from a rear room. He saw her through the open door, recognized her, and was so shocked by the unexpected apparition that he fell in a dead faint on the floor. In the confusion that followed, she slipped out, not daring to risk the questioning that was sure to follow. Shortly afterward he quietly disappeared from the hospital.

**(To be continued)**

# Autumnal

The sky is an old man's dream,
memories piled upon memories,
portentious, brumous, and gray.
The final plants of the garden
push toward what little light
there remains, stubbornly, not
with any true convictions. And
I labor most of these truncated
days gathering firewood, hoping
that the coming storms delay at
least another week. The driven
bees frantically fill the hives,
the drones barred from entering;
withered bodies are strewn below
the entrances. Orchards are long
since picked clean. A few leaves
hang on, as if solely from habit.
Gravity and the winds have taken
the rest. Thus winter waits, my
father picks the last asters of
the season, carries them inside,
places them in my mother's warm
and slowly vanishing hands.

John T. Selawsky

# The Afternoon of Henry Freeman

## By Charles C. Nash

The look of urgency was the same he'd worn when he'd left his office over Plummer's Pharmacy to deliver an infant, coax a child out of an attack of asthma, or tend to a badly infected toe. He walked past a cluster of carelessly dressed residents who, in the shade of an elm, were rocking and murmuring of celebrated grandchildren, past blue-haired Mrs. Fay Cudahy, who, like a frail figurehead, leaned precariously forward over her aluminum walker, feebly croaking, "Henry Freeman cheats at Bingo!" past rows of motionless pink and magenta petunias that lined the concrete walk to the driveway.

The black Chrysler looked much larger than he remembered it, looming and shimmering in the mid-afternoon sun.

He found it shockingly hot out here, like a lid being lowered. But that was nothing to the heat inside this musty, cavernous car of his. The blue vinyl burned the back of his legs. Slamming the door with quickly wilting authority, he drew a ring of keys from his pocket and tried to insert the round one in the ignition. It wouldn't fit. He squinted through the front window, grimy from disuse, and, noting that his bridge partner, Mrs. Judith McLaughlin, was leaning heavily on her gold-headed cane and fixing him with a baffled stare, wondered if he could be in the wrong car. But the melted spot on the seat beside him, like a severe scar on skin, reassured him. He slipped the square key in place, turned it, and was startled by the throaty roar that erupted under the hood. He shifted into reverse and watched gaping Mrs. McLaughlin, like a well-wisher on a pier, dwindle in his sight. In the middle of the parking lot, he shifted into drive, then fluttered his right hand in an abstract gesture of farewell to anyone who might be peering from between parted curtains. The car lurched down the winding driveway to Sycamore Street.

Was it the July heat or was it the sensation of being behind the wheel that was making him slightly dizzy? He relaxed his sweating back against the seat, canceling discomfort, looked beyond his own vaguely disconcerting reflection in the rolled-up window, and smiled upon the rich green world blurring past him.

Sometimes he lies awake waiting for the squidge, squidge, squidge of the night nurse's rubber-soled shoes. Making the rounds. Taking care. He likes her: she is a pink-plump girl who shows him out-of-focus color snapshots of her son. But when she opens his door and looks in on him, he has his eyes closed, feeling childishly like a prisoner in an old movie, hatching an escape plot.

He is a man who has been on his own so long, seen some of the world, buried a wife, never leaned on anyone. Now, if he wants to take a lone walk into the country, he hears behind him the metallic clank of hastily-thrown-open doors and the breathless condescension of the pursuing aide.

"Now Mr. Freeman, honey. You know you can't just start walking all around the county in your pajamas in November. Don't you?"

The sense of force being held in reserve.

He is wheedled and cajoled back into the warm white of the home.

He is cared for. Looked after. A passive object and source of amusement. Sometimes, opening his eyes again after the door closes, in the often-violated freedom of the night, he notes how his body lies on this always unfamiliar metal bed. His legs are drawn up, like an infant's.

Has he come full circle?

Unexpectedly, the asphalt turned into a dirt road that reminded him of a worn leather strap. He heard his tires grind and spit small stones, lifting a small cloud of dust. A mere nudge of the wheel, he was pleased to see, could send the car lumbering aggressively into the left lane. He pressed the accelerator.

"Slow down, Henry, for heaven sakes!" Alma cries, a blend of delight and outrage animating her face, making it beautiful. With one hand she's clutching her floppy white hat to her head, with the other gripping the door of the little black Ford.

"You turn into a headstrong maniac every time you get behind the wheel of this thing!"

"Come now," he replies, taking up his role in this ritual scolding, "driving only releases the real personality, like unstoppering the geni. Get used to the man you married, dear heart. Too late to try to change me now!"

They are flying along this familiar country dirt road, nearly leaving it at every bend, bouncing straight off their seats each time the car hits a water-filled hole in its path.

"Would you please drive as if you thought you had a future, and mind your machine!"

"I know every inch of this road," he shouts above the engine's feverish chiggity chiggity, turning his eyes to her, and knowing that that will make her even angrier, "like the nape of your neck!"

She taps his right leg with her gloved hand. "Only don't forget you're the last of the Freemans," she says resignedly.

They hurtle through this landscape painting, only Ed Tyler's cows looking up with a ruminant dumb interest. He tries to remember to ask her why she can never bring herself to call a car a car. For her it is always a "machine."

He blinked in surprise at seeing he had somehow blundered onto a paved street that widened like a blossoming thing as it approached a business section clotted with the brightly colored roofs and yellow plastic signs of fast-food restaurants. Before him he saw the red traffic signal, but by the time he could reach the brake, which brought the car to an abrupt stop and shoved him against the steering wheel, he was nearly halfway through the intersection. Stunned, he couldn't decide whether to stay where he was, go ahead, or back up. He looked in the rear-view mirror, but someone had adjusted it so he could see nothing but the back-seat upholstery. He chose to stay where he was, ignoring pedestrians who reminded him of ants comically circumnavigating an immovable obstacle. He squinted painfully into the sun that glared behind the traffic light.

Alongside him, an engine's roar that trailed off into a cascade of small explosions diverted his attention from the dull pain already glowing in his chest. When he heard it a second time he rolled down his window and stared, as at a new species, at a boy and girl, with suntanned skin and sun bleached hair, sitting in a glittering white Mustang convertible with red bucket seats. The girl smiled at him as perfect models smile, he thought, on television toothpaste commercials. The boy revved up his engine once more.

"Hey, old man! Want to drag!?"

"Not today, thank you, young fellow!" he shouted with an avuncular, dismissing wave of the hand that brought braying laughter.

By the time he looked again at the light it was already green and the unseen driver behind him was venting his impatience with an uninterrupted blast on his horn.

"In some kind of hurry, old fool?" he barked, rolling up his window with a ceremoniousness calculated to enrage.

The white convertible was just ahead of him now, and in no hurry, both its occupants, the picture of health, their hair fluttering like flags, scanning the sidewalks for friends. The red bucket seats were like rich flame.

A meager flame spurts from the last crumbling log.

"I simply can't see you as a doctor, Henry," Alex begins, mixing another drink at the sideboard.

It is the time of night when confidences bloom, but he is stunned by this.

"Why not?"

"You won't . . . no—you *can't* accept sickness."

"What doctor can accept sickness?" he laughs.

"You know what I mean." He won't be put off. "You have no sympathy with the underlying relationship between doctor and patient, the dependence the one has on the other, the obligation."

He tries to lighten this with a laugh. "Oh, I'd be a wretched patient myself, I grant you. Itching to be off on my own, trailing bandages and surgical instruments out the front door. But I can understand dependence in others. There's the difference."

He is gazing absently out the window at the rolling hills of Virginia, where he has come to spend the last days with his college roommate before taking a train to enroll at Harvard Medical School.

"True, independence is important to me, Alex. And what other honorable profession is going to give me the means to be independent all of my life? I'm trying to be realistic, don't you see?"

Urgent staccato honking beside him dissolved his composure. He discovered his car was crossing the middle line toward a frantically gesturing woman in a pistachio-green Volkswagen.

It seemed to be getting very hot again, but he didn't want to open the window to the sordid racket and abuse outside. He thought he remembered the car had air conditioning but couldn't recall which of the many knobs and buttons controlled it. He turned one and nothing happened. He turned another, and the interior was suddenly aflame with electronic rock music that sounded like metal grating against metal. Which knob was it? Shaken, he turned onto the first side street he could find and slowed the car until he could locate the one that could extinguish the awful blare.

What, now, could he do? There must be someone to visit, something to do or buy. There must be some purpose to all this.

> One of the smallest ragamuffins drops her ice cream onto the back of Eileen the Irish setter. And she, nothing if not flighty, backs into the card table, upsetting the punch bowl and all the glasses. The clatter sets off delighted laughter among the other children, and not until they chase her around the corner into the back yard does he notice Alma toting her overnight bag up the front walk. She has been to visit her sister.
>
> "What benign urge did you succumb to today?"
>
> "I thought you said you were coming home tomorrow!"
>
> "Ah," she croons, putting down her bag, "I've caught you red-handed. But at what?"
>
> "They've been very good until this moment."
>
> "They?"
>
> "The children from the orphanage. I called this morning on an impulse, and invited them all."
>
> "What a gesture!"
>
> "Well," he replies, looking for towels, "what good is the money and this huge ramshackle house if it's just for the two of us? There must be some purpose to all this."

PayLess reminded him of one of those huge corrugated structures thrown up for temporary storage of supplies in wartime. In the parking lot, on land where until three years ago his friend Bryce Peters had raised hogs, he parked beneath the thin stalk of a light fixture that would help him find the car. Passing tattered Independence Day Sale posters and the windowed arcade, alive with the futuristic beeping and blipping of computer games, he opened the heavy door and walked into a wall of cold air that reminded him that he was covered with a film of sweat.

Before long, at the Express Check-Out counter, putting down the clear plastic pack of plastic combs he had decided he needed, he was rummaging through his pockets for the velvet-soft dollar bill he was sure he had brought with him. Looking up, he noticed the clerk grinning and shaking his head.

"Just get out of bed, Pops?"

Abuse was everywhere, like heat. He looked at what he was wearing: powder-blue pajamas, wine-colored bathrobe, leather bedroom slippers. From a short woman behind him, her florid face set in a condescending grimace, came a faint clucking.

"What are you looking at, you old bat?" he inquired.

When he returned to his car he found it surrounded by others. Beads of sweat already began to prick out on his back and face. One ran down his nose and onto

his lip, another remained suspended from his eyebrow before dropping into his eye. The vinyl upholstery felt even hotter than before. He began to feel dizzy again, wondering where all these cars had come from so suddenly. He waited motionless for it to pass, but when it didn't he turned the ignition and shifted into drive.

The car lunged across the lane and collided, in a muffled crunch and tiny shower of bright plastic particles, with a red-and-white Oldsmobile facing him.

"Uh oh," he murmured.

He shifted into reverse without thinking and, the blood drumming in his head, pressed the accelerator. The car backed across the littered lane, past his space, and, with a shrill grating of metal, into the front of an artfully painted Chevy panel truck.

Wanting only to be free of this crowd of unfamiliar cars, he turned off the ignition and gazed out the window.

> Outside, crowds are still walking in the cool October dusk from their offices to the train stations for the commuter ride home.
>
> He and Howard sit at a booth, in the Cat 'n' Fiddle Bar, with a third drink, filling each other in on their lives since they left the battlefields of Europe ten years ago. They are the still center of this Chicago medical convention crowd.
>
> "And you, Henry? You never wanted to rake in the big money in specialized medicine?"
>
> "Start and end each working day inspecting nothing but feet? Or noses and throats?"
>
> "What's wrong with that?"
>
> He has been over this old routine so often before.
>
> "Nothing at all. But it wasn't for me. I only wanted to live my own life, be a G.P. in the town I know. People don't limit their maladies to throat problems in a small town."
>
> "Ah, yes, I remember," Howard interrupted, prodding the air with a swizzle stick. "Woodsomething."
>
> "Woodlawn. And I'm surprised you remember."
>
> "Kids?"
>
> "No. I'm sorry to say." Probing the never-healing wound.
>
> "Well," sighs Howard, "it seems to have agreed with you, that kind of life. And it must be good to practice where people know you as a neighbor as well. A total identity. The respect, too."

"Way to go Gramps!"

His eyes focused on two small boys circling the scene on bicycles. They seemed to him so brimming with sincere admiration that he was tempted to smile in acknowledgment.

Tired to the bone now, he got out of the car and stood surveying the spectacle of crumpled metal and plastic shards. He noticed a young woman, with a sandy-haired infant in one arm and a bulging brown grocery bag in the other, approaching him. As she drew near enough to see the damage she began shouting words he could not hear. Paying no attention to him, she stopped open-mouthed in front of the two-tone Oldsmobile, inspected its scars, and then, still bearing her bundles, and with fresh fierce tears in her eyes, turned on him.

"God damned old man! Do you see what the hell you've done to my car!? My new car! You crazy old man! I just finished paying $12,000 for this car! $12,000! What do you think about that, you damn fool!"

He gave it some thought.

"I think you got taken," he suggested softly, with a slight cock of the head.

When the police car arrived, its overhead light revolving, he did not see it. His eyes could see only a garish bright blur.

"May I see your driver's license," said the young officer flatly, already extending his hand to receive it.

A penny, a nickel, a clear plastic packet of plastic combs, and a long-forgotten folded orange construction-paper Bingo marker were all he could find.

"I seem to have left my wallet home today," he said.

"Your name, please?"

"Dr. Henry Clayton Freeman," he replied in a clipped voice, looking the officer in the eye. "And yours?"

The officer's pen stopped. His eyes searched the old man's face for impertinence, but found none. They returned to the form he was filling out.

"Name is Bill Fedders. Your address, Mr. Freeman?"

"Golden Hotel."

Officer Fedders looked up from his pad again. "Golden Hotel? Where's that?"

"Here in Woodlawn."

"There's no Golden Hotel in Woodlawn. I've lived here five years."

"My bet is he escaped from Golden Age Nursing Home over on Sycamore," offered the young woman. "Crazy old fool."

"Now you hush up!" he exploded with a hiss that brought a wrinkled promise of tears to the infant's face.

"Look, Mr. Friedman," sighed the officer, using his pen to tilt back the visor of his cap from his sweating brow.

"Freeman, officer. Free-man."

"Is it the Golden Age Nursing Home or what?"

"It's the Golden Hotel to me," he replied testily. "I'm about on my way back there now, as a matter of fact."

"Jesus!" cried the young woman.

"Is there anyone there I can call to come get you, or are you alone?"

"Alone. Yes."

"You have a driver's license at the . . . Golden Hotel?"

"As God is my witness," he protested, raising a pallid right hand.

"Okay, okay. Now. I'm going to let you drive your car back there, with the understanding that you drive *very slowly. Very slowly.* I'll be right behind you, with my red light flashing, just to make sure you get there in one piece. Can you understand me, Mr. Freeman?"

He pursed his mouth. "I am not in a coma, sir. Neither am I deaf and dumb."

Back in his car, thankful to be alone again, he found his eyes stinging from all this sun that not long ago had been so inviting, so liberating. Where was this pain coming from that was beginning to make breathing uncomfortable? And this grass that was stealing up his right side? The curb. Of course, the curb. He twitched the steering wheel to the left, but the right front tire had already jumped the little embankment, throwing his left side against the door handle, adding still another pain, sharper than the first. He took his foot from the accelerator and braced himself, as the car lost momentum, sheered some bark from a solitary oak, and came to rest with gentle finality against an implacable yellow hydrant.

He turned off the ignition. He removed the ring of keys and put it in his bathrobe pocket. He rested his head on his arms across the wheel, waiting for someone to take him the rest of the way home.

"Any wish at all?" she asks, and in her eyes alone he can detect,
from long practice, the brewing joke and banter.

"Anything you please," he repeats, with a kiss on the tip of her nose.

"Well, then," she begins, assuming that rare, extravagant theatricality with which she sometimes cloaks the heart's true yearnings, "I should want to die in your arms like this."

"One final apocalypse of passion!" he mimics.

And she is surprised.

"You're laughing at me."

He spreads her hair on the pillow, like a swimmer's on water.

"Then be serious."

"I think I am, you know. I wouldn't want to outlive you."

A solitary car passes on the road beneath the window beside the bed, its drone soon dwindling to silence, leaving only the intermittent song of a lark. The clock at the foot of the stairs chimes twice. For a long time there is not a sound to punctuate this timeless afternoon. A cool May breeze lifts the edge of the curtain like a diaphanous ball gown.

She draws the sheet up around her breasts. The spell seems broken. Gently, the tip of his finger explores the base of her eye, as if clearing away a fugitive tear, but only, on some random impulse, feeling, beneath the flushed and radiant skin, the edge of the bone that somewhere inside him he knows to be the skeleton.

---

# Laura Ingalls Wilder on Kansas

There was only the enormous empty prairie, with grasses blowing in waves of light and shadow across it, and the great blue sky above it, and birds flying up from it and singing with joy because the sun was rising. And on the whole enormous prairie there was no sign that any other human being had ever been there.

* * *

Deep in the lowest valley the creek was running, in the shadow of dirt bluffs. When Laura looked up those bluffs, she couldn't see the prairie grass at all. Trees grew up the bluffs where the earth had crumbled, and where the bare dirt was so steep that trees couldn't grow on it bushes held on desperately with their roots. Half-naked roots were high above Laura's head.

* * *

In the mornings the meadow larks rose singing into the sky. All day the curlews and killdeers and sandpipers chirped and sang in the creek bottoms. Often in the early evening the mockingbirds were singing.

* * *

The prairie had changed. Now it was a dark yellow, almost brown, and red streaks of sumac lay across it. The wind wailed in the tall grass, and it whispered sadly across the curly, short buffalo grass. At night the wind sounded like someone crying.

# Run That Cycle of Birth Around Again

Enwombed in seventh heaven, I curl up tightly
in my rockaby hideaway water bed
I'm wide-awake sound-asleep nightly
A livelong BEAT BEAT BEAT tells me when to EAT EAT EAT
More pablum keeps pouring in me, fed
from some plumb full supermart.
Now what's happening? What's all the rush?
Plumped-up pillows push down hard upon my head
Quash and squash, throe by throe, ebb and flow
What close quarters! What a tight spot! GUSH!
That was a tidal wave I know.
Why dispart me?
Why dispart me?
I don't want to go at all!
I'll squall—wa
wa—WAH—AA—A! WAH—AA—A!
This doting Mother's arms enclasp me
she holds me near her pounding heart

uncurls my fist to kiss it. She
breaths "Shush, my Dear! We're glad you're here."
My braggart Father (forgetting about nicotine and tars)
passes out cigars.

* * *

This is any place but heaven. This world is hard and cold
Wrongs, woe, war and pain. No one's sane. I'm looked at askance
hit by mischance, taxed, bugged, beat, bilked, or I just get old.
Still I try. I plan. I do the very best I can
in light of each and every circumstance.
I realize this earth is dwindling. Room
for everyone there isn't. Some don't deserve to live at all.
But not me! I have so much to do. Please, one more chance!
There are others of less worth, even some who lie in wait.
No! No! Not me! It's not winter, scarcely fall.
Just a minute! It's not that late!
Why does it have to be me?
Why me?
I'd lose my beautiful world if I went
I don't want to die! I'll never consent.
"Code Blue" Nurses come running, competent
Interns wheel in a machine, obey
Doctor's orders as they zoom
Do I hear a Chaplain pray?
Fey, I hold onto my last breath provident.
Pent, it sputters like a spit of snow. Whereat
"The brain wave's flat."

* * *

Mother Nature has cut the umbilical cord.
The afterbirth falls to the earth.
Somebody will bury it under the sward.
This Mother Mine cradles Her little Newborn.
"Welcome to Eternity. It's no more than begun.
You'll catch up quick, Child, I know."
I splutter bubbles like a spit of snow.
"A Chip off the Old Block, that One,"
Chortles My Heavenly Father.
In the height of His Glory
(Omitting the nicotine and tars)
He hands out cigars.

Elizabeth Layton

# Contributors

**C.M. [Mel] Anderson** (P.O. Box 432, Arma, KS 66712) is a familiar poet to our pages and other literary reviews ● **Judy Belfield** (804 Vine St., Joliet, IL 60435) is a "liberal arts student in a computer-tech world," having published in *Phoebe, Dog River Review,* and other magazines ● **Loy Banks** (3537 E. Prospect, Fort Collins, CO 835250, a transplant from Missouri and Kansas, teaches in the writing program at Colorado State University. His poetry has been published widely ● **Jared Carter** (1220 N. State Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46201) has two new books out: *Fugue State,* available from Barnwood Press (R.R. 2, Box 11C, Daleville, IN 47334) for $2.50 and *Pincushion's Strawberry,* available from the Cleveland State University Poetry Center (Department of English, Rhodes Tower 1834, Euclid Avenue at E. 24th St., Cleveland, OH 44115) for $3.50 ● **Glen Cavaliero** (29 Portugal Place, Cambridge CB5 8AF, England) teaches at Cambridge University ● **Edna Lemon Clay** (717 N. Hidalgo Ave., Alhambra, CA 91801) is a charter subscriber to the *LBR* and a delightful correspondent ● **Becky David** (2608 Omaha, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is in the eighth grade at the Pittsburg Middle School ● **Bill A. Dickey** (521 Utah, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is a professor and former chair of the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Department at Pittsburg State University ● **Rod Dutton** (212 E. Carlton, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is art director and vice president of Words and Pictures Corporation ● **Beverly Frazier** (Box 1914, Lawrence, KS 66044) is a talented poet to whose attention we were drawn by Zula Bennington Greene ● **Allen Gardiner** (5224 SW 19th Terr., Topeka, KS 66604) has worked for the Kansas State Library since 1971 as a consultant to public libraries and coordinator of federally funded programs ● **Robert Green** (55 W. Jefferson, Westover, WV 26505) is now a Lamaze teacher starting work on a master's degree in nursing ● **Zula Bennington Greene** (1205 Mulvane, Topeka, KS 66604), who writes daily columns for the *Topeka Daily Capital,* is recuperating from a broken ankle ● **Raven Hail** (2790 Jeridee, No. 25A, Dallas, TX 75229) is the author of a three-act play, *The Raven and The Redbird* (the Indian life of Sam Houston and his Cherokee wife), which has been used extensively in American Indian Social Studies by elementary schools through universities ● **Janet Joel** (1251 W. Muirlands Dr., La Jolla, CA 97037) is looking for a home for a three-book Mac collection (they're great) ● **Shelby Horn** (1212 S. Larson, Chanute, KS 66722) is working on a short story for a future issue of the *LBR* ● **Pat Kuhel** (1150 E. 1st, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is now working on her doctorate at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville ● **Colby H. Kullman** (604-10 Tyler Place, Oxford, MI 38655) is an editor of *Studies in American Drama, 1945-1980,* and a professor of English at the University of Mississippi ● **Juanita B. Laing** (Box 61, R.R. 3, Pittsburg, KS 66762) is an assistant professor of English at Pittsburg State University ● **Elizabeth Layton** (345 W. 3rd, Wellsville, KS 66092) has a new book out—*Through the Looking Glass: Drawings by Elizabeth Layton*—available from the Mid-America Arts Alliance (Suite 550, 20 W. 9th St., Kansas City, MO 64105) for $12 ● **Norman Mailer** (c/o Rembar, 19 W. 44th St., New York, NY 10036), a Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, is most recently the author of *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (New York: Random House, 1984), $16.95; $75 for the limited, signed edition ● **Lee Moorhouse** is one whose photographs are common in the area, but about whom no biographical data is known. Information is actively solicited ● **Charles C. Nash** (320 N. Spring, Nevada, MO 64772) teaches creative writing at Cottey College ● **Carl V. Rice** (2108 Washington Blvd., Kansas City, KS 66102), who was admitted to the State Bar of Kansas at the age of twenty,

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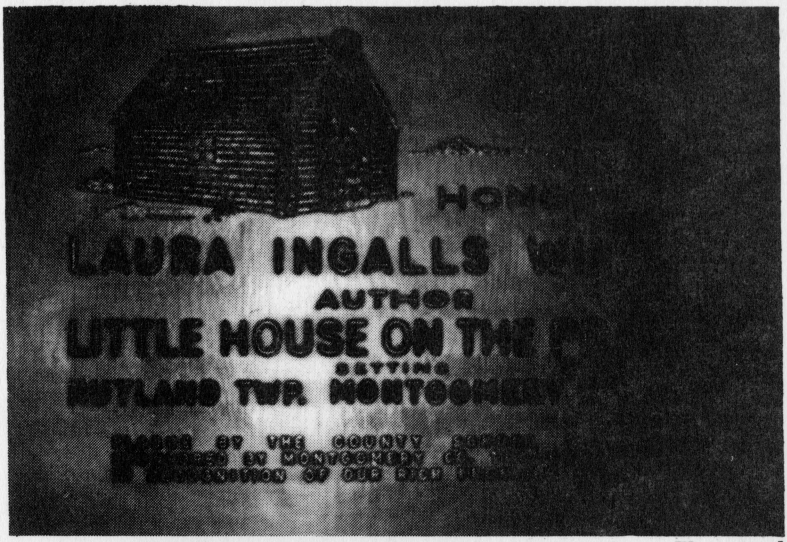


**Plaque at the Montongomery, Kansas, Court House, Independence. Photograph by Shelby Horn.**

Susan B. Anthony told the story of speaking in the little slab school house at Tontzville where she journeyed by oxcart in the very early days of her campaign for equal suffrage for women. Her subject was considered shocking, and the crowd was curious and hostile. At the end she asked all who believed that women should have the vote to stand. One single young man rose. His face flushed when the crowd tittered, but he stood his ground. This was Andrew Richards. He lifted Lucy Ann [Sullivan] to her feet, saying, "For Lord's sake, Lou, stand up. If you women haven't backbone enough to stand up for yourselves, no one else can stand up for you." From that day Lucy Ann was a dedicated worker in the cause of women's rights. Andrew and Lucy Ann made a pact that they would both be cremated and their ashes placed around a rosebush in the Girard cemetery, to make beautiful things grow, even from their dust.—From William C. Cuthbertson's *The Genesis of Girard* (Girard: The Author, 1984), p. 196. This book may be ordered from 108 W. Buffalo, Girard, KS 66743, for $5.00. Please add $1.50 for postage and handling if ordering by mail.


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