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THE IDOL — FALL 1975

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THE 1955 SEASON

Andy Pearce

The key was to roll into a ball.

This of course did not eliminate all of my problems, since one small action rarely does.

The darkness was complete, but not unpleasant. The humidity (sort of like having just walked through a warm spring rain) was total and fit like a glove. But it was not bothersome.

In fact, I could not ask for more really, except that I was not too crazy about rolling into a ball. I have never been noted for my knees, which were cramped at the time.

Now please don't ask me exactly what it was I was thinking about when I was clipped on the right side, but I am almost positive I was contemplating the upcoming season, since that was my passion back then.

"Hey, dammit, watch where you're going."

Someone had knocked into me, and, knowing in my heart that I had the right of way (if one can have the right of anything in the dark), I was very firm in my speech.

"Sorry, but you knocked into me."

"The hell I did."

Not being one to be pushed around I was steadfast. I continued on the same tact. "Listen, don't give me such a headache; you bumped into me." I flexed my muscles.

Sloshing to one side, I moved from the touch of a hand. It was bad enough that my knees were cramped and I had to listen to someone I would prefer ignoring; I certainly did not want a hand on my shoulder, especially one I could not see.

"So what do you think of the upcoming season?"

I was surprised that my detractor had read my thoughts, but I am principled and resisted his conciliatory remark.

"Hey, I didn't mean to bump into you," he explained, "but my neck has been cramped and it makes it hard to move around."

I waited a second before responding to my unseen companion.

"I don't think it's going to be a memorable season at all. In fact, all I can see for the immediate future is a series of setbacks." I really believed that, and still do.

He warmed to the conversation.

"No, you're wrong." His succinctness was enough to convince most.

"I'm game—why am I wrong?"

"Well, first, it's a new season. The new players will be coming out and showing everyone what they have.

"Yeah, but what is that?" I was skeptical.

He skirted my inquiry and plowed into an excited version of the new season.

"It will be harmonious and happy with lots of successful rookies. I figure they're up and coming, and they won't let anyone get in their way. You see," I know he was gesturing by the waves of liquid splashing into my face, "this is the year of the rookie. They can't miss this year—they have the talent, the knowledge and the desire to make it go."

This all sounded like so much hooley, but I knew I could not show him the right way. And with some people it is best not to try.

"...and skill. Why without these youngsters we have nothing."

He was wrong, but he sounded right. Which counts a lot sometimes. You see, I had been thinking of the new season for something like nine months and I did not like what I saw. With the youngsters or the veterans, I still saw nothing.

"Say," he continued, "maybe you'd like to go to opening day with me and we can check out the rooks?" His enthusiasm made my knees hurt more for some reason.

"No, I'd rather not go to the opener this year; in fact, I'm thinking of boycotting the whole season and not showing up at all."

"You're not serious!" He was horrified.

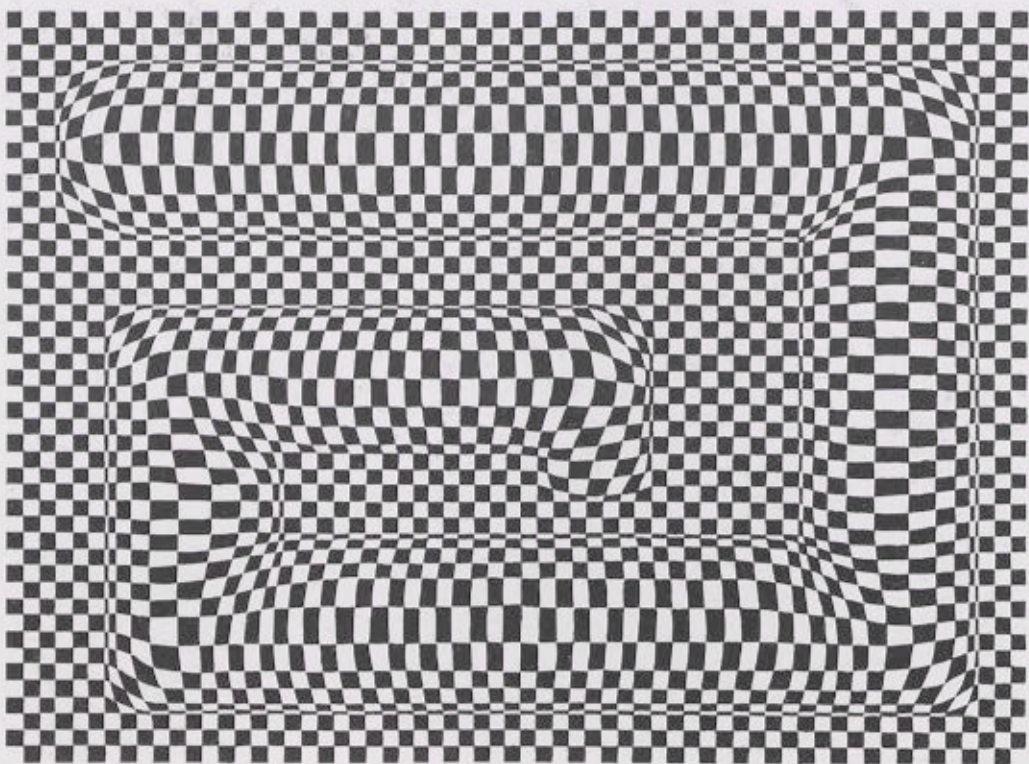
"I think I'll stay here and sit it out. After all, this place isn't so bad—except for my knees. There isn't even a thermostat to set—it's always temperate."

But before he could respond I felt myself being sucked and pulled into a nether region. In the confusion I lost the hopeful companion I had never seen.

The white light reflected against the white tiles, stinging my eyes; I squinted. A strong smell of ether congested my nostrils and I began to choke. Something in a white cap and mask and wearing an antiseptic coat leaned over me. And then the son of a bitch slapped me. I always thought I was pretty tough, but this was too much. The injustice overwhelmed me. I cried like a baby.

The season had started. And I had been right—things were not too great.

I only wish my twin brother had made it here to see it, because I hate to lose an argument.



A COLLOCATION

*An early summer swallowed
Spring like an hors d'oeuvre,
Sipping up crocus sap laced with
Pollen and cotten seeds,
Seducing maples red like a rogue
Whistling for blondes.*

*Many thought it overdue,
Ignoring the finesse by which
The snow was taken in the same move
As the dandelion.
But these unfeeling creatures
With hammock sags
And gagged eyes
Snub all gypsies in favor of
Pioneers.*

Aubrey K. Carton

TI-AN-ANKOU (THE HOUSE OF DEATH)

Scott Wittet

... The last person to die during the year, in each parish, becomes Ankou for that parish the following year.

*The New Cyclopedia of
Celtic Thought, Vol. 1, A-Car*

My father had a few acres near the village of Enes, in Callac. He was a simple farmer with no higher goals than to raise his children in the manner of his fathers, making his way in the world with as few ripples as possible. He discovered my mother when he was twenty-three, a good age to marry, and they lived for some time in the home of my grandparents. Their family plans were not small; things would have to change.

I was born third child of an eventual seven, four boys and three girls, on a beautiful autumn day. The lush Breton spring had long ago dried into summer and pleasant breezes had begun to come from the north, winds which would soon bring the tempests of winter but, for the moment, created a mood of cool serenity. The sun retired earlier, content in the quiet ripeness of the fields, the upcoming harvest.

My father began to look for a home for his growing family and a few months later he heard news of the death of a neighbor. The widow, childless, was going back to her parents. She suggested a reasonable price for the farm. My father sold his share of my grandfather's place and, at the beginning of the next year, we found ourselves in a new home.

At the time of the 'visit' we had been living there for nearly twelve months. The crops had prospered, the harvest had been good, and my mother was expecting again. The holidays came, joyous and exhausting times for us, a festival of richness and health. The family looked forward to the celebration of the new year. I was too young to remember all this. It was my father who told me many times afterwards.

"On the last day of December," he said, "your mother and I went to bed early. We wanted to rest up for the merrymaking. You three were already asleep in your room. I checked around the house, locking the doors, then I climbed under the blankets with your mother and soon slept too.

"Around midnight some noises came from the yard; I woke, listening. I thought that I heard footsteps in our room.

"I opened my eyes.

"The night was clear. The moon had risen and shone light as day.

"I looked around the room. No one!

"I was about to cover myself back up when I noticed a cold breeze on my shoulders.

"Glancing up again, I saw that the window was open. I thought that I had forgotten it earlier. I already had my hand on the shutters when I saw, there in the hall, not fifteen feet from me, a man searching through the closets, flinging coats and boots behind him as if he had misplaced something. He was tall and wore a black cloak that reached to the ground. A large felt hat kept the moonlight from his face. His head was shuddering spasmodically, jerking to the side as if he had some kind of nervous tic.

"I grabbed a poker from the fireplace and crept softly into the hall, hoping to surprise the thief in case he was armed.

"Within a few feet of him, I raised the bar up over my head, ready to end his frantic rummage then and there. He stopped. His head swung around; it spun on the top of his spine like a weather-vane on its iron stem. I froze, staring into a sight from hell.

"Beneath the hat brim his eyes were no eyes, but two little white candles burning at the bottom of two black pits. He did not have a nose. His mouth smiled a smile that joined the holes of his ears. It was he of whom the old women sing:

'They offer him gold but he'll not take a pin,

'I won't offer grace to any christian.

'Not to Paul, not to Jesus, nor to his mother,

'All get the same treatment, all fall together.' "

"I recognized Ankou—the worker of death!

"He rose awkwardly, making noises like old shutters. He turned the rest of his body to match his head. My arms still held the poker but were senseless and stiff. His cloak fell open and I could plainly see bones bare as the branches of a leafless tree save where tattered rags were attached to the skeleton by bits of putrid flesh. The odor of rotten meat came to me as he moved.

"With an evil grin Ankou raised his grisly hand and gripped my shoulder. Ah, not many know the meaning of fear as well as I!

"He spoke, 'I know how you feel, monsieur. One time I had to look Death in the eyes too. Fell on my knees and prayed, then. Wasn't very good at it, but what was lacking in grace I made up in desperation. Crazy, I felt. There's things just too big for words. All my begging went in his one ear and out the other. Then I just started babbling like a fool but I wouldn't give up, no sir, I wanted to keep living. It got darker and darker—no matter what I said—until there was nothing left to lose. Then they woke me up again.'

"He began to move, renewing his search. His actions were nervous and abrupt. The skeleton's skull was twitching again, bobbing and shifting from side to side.

"I've been Death for a year; now I'm going to be replaced. It's time for the final ride and I've got to pick up my old duds. Left in such a hurry last time, I couldn't even grab a hat.'

"He glanced into the closet but, satisfied that it was empty, began to poke his head through other doors. He went back and forth across the hall; he couldn't choose a direction. He opened drawers, then hurried to a cabinet, running in circles. After some minutes of this, he stopped and, bones rattling, collapsed in the middle of the floor. His head was shaking so violently now that I was afraid it would fly off.

"'Damn, I've got to learn how to calm down,' he said, wheezing. 'I get carried away. I start thinking and worrying. Then before I can sit and figure anything out, I get interrupted. My head turns. I see some peasant taking his last rites. I have to jump into the cart and burn down crummy back roads to watch him die. It happens all the time: I'm just settling down to get quiet, to sit very still and breathe and try not to worry. I think, "Quiet. Quiet like a mouse. Quiet of the tomb." I concentrate and relax, go limp and soft for a moment. But there's always a hint of a twitch, a little itchy spot that has to move. I reach over to scratch and an arm's in motion. Looking down at what's happened, my neck's in gear and it starts to spin, slowly. I try to catch it, not get out of control, but it's always a fraction of a turn ahead and goes faster and spins, flashing hundred eighty degrees. I see it all so quick then there's somebody about to go and I have to get there—a companion right through to the other side.

"'Sometimes I used to think that I could help, especially with the pain. Souls in anguish have a really bright, intense flame, like the height of awareness. I saw myself as a promise of rest, a host to the soft, dark, cold not-noise. I'd arrive and they'd know right away. They'd see a flash of bone, a

scythe. They'd see the shadow under the hat and they'd scream, scream busting my ears, shrill, loud, and horrible. I wanted to stop them—swing—blade slicing air, piercing skin, flesh, bone cracking and marrow spray. The fires diminished, slowly shrinking until only a spark was left to fade. They're phantom zombies now, probably happier than me if you can talk about it that way.'

"He paused.

"'Only some old ones, ready to go, could see beneath the brim, see that I'm driven and pulled. The felt hat hides the hollows of my eyes, the dead-giveaway picture of uncontrol—Ankou. Death.'

"A few tatters fell from his bones to the floor as the skeleton stood. Sighing, he bent to collect the foul pieces and methodically replaced them with shaking hands. He thought for a moment.

"'Listen, why don't you run and see if your wife put my stuff somewhere?'

"As he turned away I found that I could lower my arms, aching from their awkward position. He waited, staring out the window into the frozen yard. His team was making impatient noises as I ran to wake my wife.

"We found the old box of clothes and wordlessly slid it to the skeleton, trying to keep as much distance as possible. He started for the door, then turned. From the shadows he said to me, 'When you lay down, think about the end. Have your wife ready to run for a priest. He who is host to me has entertained his last.'

"The door slammed behind him. We ran to the window. Outside was an old cart, somewhat like the ones they used for funerals in those days. Two horses, one skinny and one fat, drew it through the gate and onto the road. Inside of the cart were the piled dead. Legs and arms hung over the edge, even some heads, human heads, yellow, grimacing, hideous! With the clatter of wheels and rattle of dry bones, Death was gone."

My father lived to see his four sons beget sons, to watch his family grow until he could count twenty-seven grandchildren. Maybe Ankou's lethal power failed after midnight of the thirty-first. In any case, the farm prospered and we were able to buy more land. By the time he passed away, my father was master of a small plantation. He spent his last years enjoying my kids, and my sisters', the newest members of our household. Many evenings were passed in front of the fireplace telling the old tale, often performing for critics more skeptical than we. Our children got their educations from books and graduates; they didn't have much respect for the explanations of grandpas. But he loved to repeat the story and swore it was true, right up to his dying day.



TRYING TO FIND A LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR THE FLOOD

*Beside the stream that hops and wriggles through
Sycamores with their ghastly anaconda
Limbs stands a dwarf, a bonsai maple, proud
And bitter hag, descendant of a race
Of bound feet. Once she wept, silently, cursing
Her solitude, her flesh like wet baled hay,*

*But then last night she shook her branches,
Sparrow claws against the gibbous moon:
The wind began to moan and rumble, and
A dragon murmured softly from among
The rushes, pledging swollen brown revenge*

Sam Hughes

Joseph Millett

He had sat in front of the library for a long time, the wooden slats on the bench making him irritable. Out of his shirt pocket he pulled a pack of cigarettes which had been bought several days ago but was still unopened. He found the red cellophane line and separated it from the rest of the pack's cover. He placed the three pieces of cellophane carefully beside him. Putting a cigarette in his mouth, he used up four matches to light it. He inhaled deeply. It felt like the smoke was expanding of its own will in his throat. His lungs filled to the point of bursting. It was his first cigarette, and the sensation startled him. The first.

The table, long, low and white, invited them, and they accepted, reclining on it. The talk had rambled from Tim, who worried her, because he had no one, to each of them, who had found each other. Then they touched and he was on top of her. He kept debating with himself, trying to decide if this was really what he wanted. As he took more of her clothes off his mind was losing as his senses became more and more confused. "Wait," she said. She bent her knees slightly and the room became an ocean of warm shadows.

He pushed the cigarette into the bench, and the red tip of the thing went black. He slipped the pack inside the cover and replaced it on the bench, over the burn mark he had made. He began to run. He took a set of marble steps three at a time, hitting the concrete pavement and then pivoting to his right. He ran with an even, regular pace. The scrape of his sneakers on the sidewalk sounded like a train engine.

"Now that all the furniture is in the center," he explained to her, "we cover them with the drop cloth, remove the old paint and then apply a fresh coat of paint."

"But that will take too much time. Weeks, maybe. We really can't afford it. It seems to me we'll just have to paint over the old. It should cover all right, I think."

"Covering up old paint isn't going to make the room any nicer. The new paint will chip away and the old problems will show through." He rubbed his eyes. "I don't know. I suppose."

"It'll be ok," she said. "You're trying to make too much work for yourself. You'll see. Angry?"

"Got a headache."

"That's from worrying about a lot of unnecessary effort." She tucked her dark hair into a painter's cap which was far too large for her head. It slid down over her eyes. She laughed and hugged him. He put his arms around her. His head throbbed.

The car had approached the intersection too quickly and hit an indentation in the road. It turned onto its roof, sliding for a few feet and then stopping. Its wheels spun erratically, like turtle's legs. That was the first thing he thought of as he ran to the car. There was a man and a woman in the front. They were in a fetal position where the roof met the windshield. He didn't see any blood.

In back were three children, each hanging by a seat belt, each bent at the waist. They screamed for their father. He screamed back at them once, then broke the glass on a fire alarm and pulled the switch.

He put his hand on her left breast as she slept. He found her heart beating. He tried to get excited. He thought about waking her up. He wanted to feel like a child, trying to imagine that the last twenty years of his life were a dream. Any minute he would wake up in his home, walk downstairs, see his parents constructing Christmas presents, and realize that the whole pattern was bound to repeat.

The train was not moving very quickly. He couldn't even begin to count the number of rainbow colored cars that moved past the laundramat window, as he looked at it through the rain.

"What do you see?"

"Nothing. Rain. Are your shirts done?"

"Yes," she said. It was more of a question than an answer.

As they folded clothing in silence he dropped his defenses and asked.

"What's keeping us together?"

"We are." She did not look up from a flower print button down, making sure everything was exact. He folded his pants over five times, until they were a brown lump.

"Let's get married," and he closed his eyes.

"Don't be trite. Why?"

He thought for a moment. "Security. Prevents accidents."

"What do you mean?"

"Well suppose something happened."

"Like what?" She fixed the pleats in her only skirt.

"I don't know."

"Are you all right?"

"Why all the questions?"

"I was about to ask you the same thing."

"That would be another question," he whispered, and a button fell off the shirt he was folding.

"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn," said Clark Gable, turning and walking toward the door. He offered her a little pop corn. She wept openly. He looked at her as she leaned on his arm. He touched her forehead, and it seemed smooth. He kissed it. She turned away, making a negative sound. He melted in the dark and pop corn.

"This is stupid."

"Don't be silly, that's not the point."

He rolled off her and onto his side of the bed. He quickly counted the cracks in the ceiling, stretching to reach for her.

"I don't understand."

"It's the first time it's happened. It's natural to be confused."

"Don't say that. I never failed."

"Shhh. Don't talk about it. Go to sleep now. Sleep."

He turned away from her. He set the alarm for six-thirty, and shut his eyes until the skin creased. He had no tears. She brought her hands to her neck. As her hands moved slowly down her body, tears made her sight blur, and the room became an ocean of warm shadows.

The train was not moving very quickly. He couldn't even begin to count the number of rainbow colored cars that moved past him, close enough to be touched. The alarm had never gone off. He had not slept that night and turned it off before it had a chance to ring. She would get a decent night's sleep. The rainy day was arcing gray through the sky. An open box car was approaching. As he built up speed, his sneakers scraped against the concrete; then there was a leap, and he moved without effort. He tried to close the door, but it was too heavy, so he watched the city slowly withdraw.



TOMATOES

*The tomatoes cling
round and cherub like
to the thick fanned vines,
September has won the race;
my orientation
lost somewhere in the dog days,
and the tomatoes are still
in teasing adolescence,
green and voluptuous.*

*Always they hang
procrastinating harvest,
insolent to the
first frost
as I draw more wool
around my feet.
Brave while the earth
enfolds its daily ration
of warmth
deep into its fiber;
brave and foolish.*

*Curse of the annual;
unable to learn
the previous season's
bitter bite,
and winter sows forgetfulness
into the soil;
amnesia to the mother
who must watch her fruits
rot for lack of wisdom.*

*My bones crack and plead
that the chill
may come late,
tardiness, the saviour of this lover;
he waits for the ripening,
and the death of this growing
will fill her daughter
with crimson seeds
until veins burst;
too much bleeding
for another spring,
loneliness will give birth
to empty fields.*

Jody Green

THE HANFIELD KIDNAPPING

Mark Wallace

Certainly the most baffling case ever to present itself for our scrutiny concerned the disappearance of Lord Balson's mother. Holmes and I had been holed up in our Baker Street quarters for seven weeks, I out of general lassitude and he for the simple reason that the criminal element of our immense city was at—or had been laid to—rest. We had slipped into the deplorable habits characteristic of our long periods of inactivity. I passed the daylight hours in the perusal of all types of literature, ranging from Caesar's treatment of the Gallic Wars to a handy little tract entitled *The Washerwoman of Finchley Common*, which I recommend for both those of a religious turn of mind and those in need of a religious turn of mind; every evening I retired before nine o'clock, or nine-thirty at the very latest. Holmes, who allowed himself no dealings with anything as useless as literature (excepting the scientific journals and the dailies), occupied himself in a different fashion. He sat for hours on end in the ratty armchair with his Aeolian lyre—the Stradivarius—and forced his usual godforsaken sounds from it.

I could not understand how this instrument would keep a man of his talents amused for such a long stretch of time. You will recall, perhaps, that Holmes had never in his career been idle for more than three consecutive weeks; and so it was with the concern of a friend and the knowledge of a doctor that I kept a careful watch over him. Foolish as it may seem, I thought that the great man must crack under the pressure of this "life of dignified otiosity." And in truth I at one point beleived my suspicions to be correct. One evening two days before the first incident—the visit of the secretary—Holmes had been working over some peculiar chords when suddenly he stopped. He sat up tense for a moment, set the violin aside, made ready to leave, and in fact did leave. Eight hours later, in the dead of night, he returned, and offered no word of explanation. Such was my fear, that in those eight long hours of his absence I took myself to the books—the medical encyclopedias, I mean—in order to attach his symptoms to some disease . . . but without success. However, I fear I have strayed too far; let me return to the story at hand. The long and short of it was that we had been seven weeks in the doldrums and needed a little push from the wind to get us once more going. The push came in the form of a simple knock on the door.

"Mr. Turbeck, I believe," said Holmes calmly, as the gentleman entered.

"How on earth did you know that!" cried the tall, rugged-looking man in utter surprise. He had a mean sort of face which I found from the start to be rather displeasing. "Someone has undoubtedly forewarned you of my visit."

"Hardly, Mr. Turbeck. Are you not aware that your picture, along with those of your employer and his dear old mother, has been in every daily in the nation over the course of yesterday and today?"

"Ah, it had slipped my mind," Mr. Turbeck said. "I have had other things to think about."

"I daresay you have," said my companion. "Watson, allow me to introduce to you Mr. Reginald Turbeck, Lord Balson's secretary and confidante, who is here most likely to request that we embroil ourselves in the investigation of this senseless kidnaping. You have read, certainly, the little in the press; the facts up to this point seem quite meager. The only thing definitely established is that Lady Balson is gone, and it is surmised that she has been taken against her will. Lestrade is at Hanfield, and has undoubtedly arrested one or two innocent suspects already. Well, Watson, can you be ready in two hours?"

"With pleasure, Holmes. It will be healthy for us both to quit these rooms for a while. But Mr.

Turbeck has not ventured to actually request our assistance.”

“Watson, you disappoint me. When one of the principle figures in an unsolved kidnapping comes to us, and when we see sticking from out of his pocket two yellow tickets for the twelve-thirty train to the scene of the crime, you can be reasonably sure that he means us to intercede. Am I correct, Mr. Turbeck?”

“Indeed you are, Mr. Holmes,” said the secretary as he handed my companion the tickets. “You might be interested to know, by the way, that Lord Balson has promised sufficient funds to make the journey worth your efforts, should you bring the case to a successful conclusion.”

“Ah,” said my friend with that familiar gleam in his eyes, “I think that the bizarre goings-on are in themselves well worth my efforts, money or no money. Now,” he added, ushering the secretary to the door, “if you will allow me to cut this interview short, Mr. Turbeck....I wish to do a little research before twelve-thirty, so that Watson and I may be in a position to judge this case in its proper light.”

“Well, Watson, what do you make of it?” he asked, after our visitor had departed. “A curious case, is it not?”

“Very curious, Holmes.”

“What conceivable motive could there be for kidnapping an old lady, for dragging her from her home in the middle of the night?”

“Money, I suppose.”

“But Mr. Turbeck mentioned no ransom note. The only other possibility seems to be revenge of some sort, either against Lady Balson herself, or against Lord Balson. Unless....” Here his voice trailed off as he pondered the problem. “Unless this is something along the lines of that Featherstone mystery some years back. Do you remember *why* the potter murdered Mr. Featherstone?”

“As I recall, we did not arrive at an acceptable motive. The potter himself never supplied us with one.”

“Precisely. And do you also remember my theory of the motive?”

“No,” I confessed.

“Whim, Watson. Fancy. Caprice. Call it what you will. He did it out of curiosity, old chap—idle curiosity. Of course we never proved that, but I thought it at the time and still think it. I myself have often wondered what it would be like to commit a crime. And in this present instance we just might find that one as curious as myself, but with fewer scruples, is the criminal. Enough conjecture, my friend. There is work to be done. First let us go through the accounts of this episode in the papers; perhaps we will uncover a detail or two of interest or import that had escaped us previously.”

Twelve-thirty found us aboard the northbound train headed for Hanfield. Holmes was silent during the short journey, and I knew he was turning the case over in his mind, taking the few scattered pieces of the puzzle and trying to fit them into a logical design as he had done so often before. Lord Balson’s carriage was at the station to meet us, and by two o’clock we came into sight of the magnificent estate which has gained such acclaim. It was autumn, and the myriad of maples and oaks wore splendour as is only to be found in England. The gallery of colors was truly stunning, and provided quite a contrast to our bleaker mission. Holmes of course did not notice the beauty that hailed our arrival, so intent was he on the scant details of the case.

Lord Balson himself was at the door to welcome us, and never have I been greeted by a more haggard countenance. The sallow cheeks faded into thick black lines under his eyes, which were heavily bloodshot. The mouth quivered, the hair was unkempt as a stable-boy’s; in all, it was the face of one who had recently been through a great deal of stress. Fortunately I had brought my doctor’s bag, as is my custom, and I immediately prescribed a sedative which Lord Balson promised to take after dinner.

When we entered the manor Holmes stopped by the main door, opening and closing it several times. Then he asked to be shown directly to Lady Balson's rooms. Our host led the way deep into an isolated wing of the old house where we came upon Inspector Lestrade, seated in the room where the abduction had taken place.

"Well, well. Mr. Holmes and Doctor Watson," said Lestrade, giving us his hand. "We've a tough one here, I'm afraid. Even the celebrated Sherlock Holmes will be hard-pressed to solve this little gem of a mystery, I think."

"Greetings, Lestrade. I suppose your men have gone over the scene thoroughly?"

"Indeed we have. But it's clean, it is, sir. Not a single clue."

Without further ado Holmes began a minute examination of the premises, which lasted somewhat more than two hours. Lord Balson did not speak once; rather, he looked on in amazement as my companion stood on chairs, crawled on the floor, leaned out the windows, searched in the closets, and even lifted up the rug. The room itself was in quite a disorderly state; it was evident that the woman had not gone freely.

"Well?" asked the inspector, as my friend straightened up and announced that he was finished with this part of the investigation. "Nothing, eh?"

"On the contrary," smiled Holmes. "We progress by leaps and bounds; indeed, more quickly than I had anticipated. Look here," he said, uncurling his fist to expose a tiny square of light green cloth. "What do you make of it, Inspector?"

"It's just a small bit of cloth, Mr. Holmes, and if you mean to suggest that this is a clue, then I think you've taken leave of your senses. Wait'll the papers get word," he added disdainfully. "The great detective's gone crazy."

"Watson, what do you make of this?"

"Well, let me see. Hmm. It's green at any rate. And small."

"It doesn't look familiar?"

"Should it?"

"Certainly. This piece of cloth means a great deal to the trained eye. As you know, my most recent monograph had as its subject matter the two hundred thirty-seven basic varieties of fabric. I am rather an expert in the field, and so you should believe me when I tell you that this is a bit of fine heavy Cashmere of the Bihouk type, once worn on the back of a goat in Kashmir, India. I expected you, Watson, to recognize it as being of the exact material as those ghastly gowns you brought back from the Afghan campaign; in fact, it is of a very similar color, if my memory serves me correctly.

"Well, we know that this does not belong to Lady Balson, for nothing in her wardrobe is made of Cashmere. Now," said my companion, addressing our host, "do you or any of the rest of the family, or the servants, own clothing from India?"

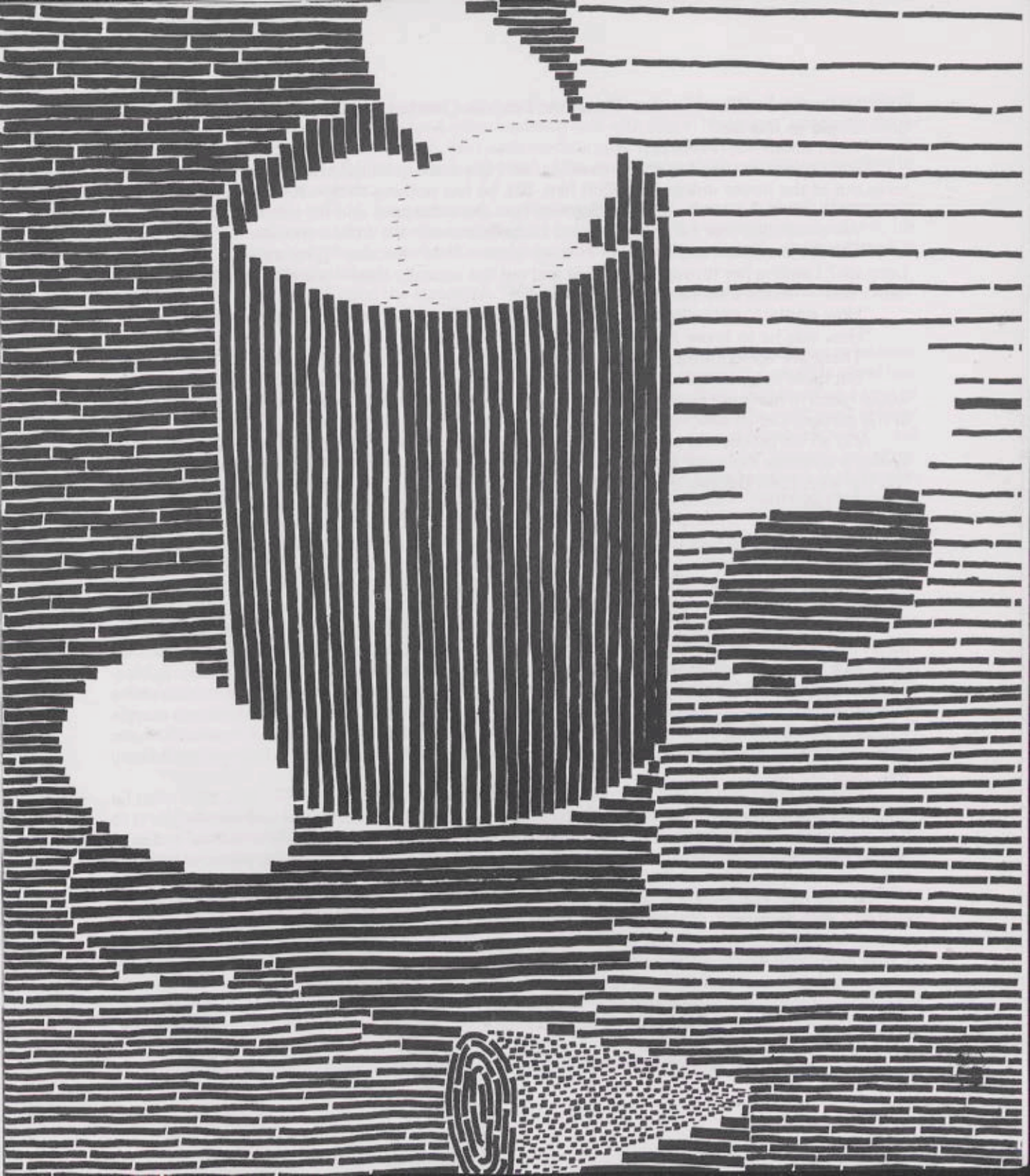
"Not that I know of. Reginald—Mr. Turbeck, that is—has a large collection of Oriental knick-knacks, but I have never seen him in Cashmere."

"Perhaps we would do best to check. If you will lead the way...." Our host was obviously reluctant at entertaining the slightest notion that the secretary could in any way be involved in the case, but he did lead us to Turbeck's quarters. A quick investigation revealed that the secretary possessed no Indian curios or costumes, only Japanese and Mongolian pieces, so we returned to the old lady's room.

"I am correct in stating that you, Lord Balson, have received no word of any sort from the kidnapper?"

"Yes, Mr. Holmes, you are correct."

"And is there anyone you can think of who considers you an enemy, enough to kidnap your mother?"



"No, that's a monstrous idea. There are, I am sure, men who do not consider me a friend, but none would go this far."

"What about Mr. Turbeck?"

"I don't think that he has many enemies, sir. He's more quiet than otherwise, and rarely ventures out of the house unless I am with him. No, he has nothing to do with this, I am positive."

"By the way, Lestrade, did you discover how the kidnapper and his victim made their exit?"

"We concluded that he must have led Lady Balson out the front entrance."

"The front entrance, you say?" Holmes gave a little chuckle. "Why not out the window, Lestrade? Leading her through the house and out the squeaky door—you did notice it squeaked, didn't you?—seems a bit risky."

"How was he to know the door squeaked?" parried the inspector with a smile of victorious logic.

"How was he to know it didn't?"

"There are no footprints in the garden beneath the windows; we checked."

"But these two marks here on the window-sill indicate that a ladder was used. Certainly a ladder would reach to the grass on the fringe of the garden, and the man would never have to once set foot in the garden. Let us descend, and see what we can find."

And so we proceeded out around the main portion of the house to the area on which Lady Balson's windows look out; sure enough, Holmes quickly found the indentations from the ladder. "By the way, Lord Balson," he said, still hunched over the grass, "do any of your servants or family have red hair?"

"No."

My friend now turned to the inspector. "Lestrade?"

"Yes, Mr. Holmes?"

"I would like to borrow one of your men, if I may."

"Certainly. Meacock! Come!" yelled the inspector.

Meacock came. Holmes spoke hurriedly to him, then sent him on his way. "Now, sir," said my friend to the eager and exhausted man, "the case seems inordinately simple, really. With any luck we shall have both the criminal and your mother before tommorrow morning." Our host's features blazed with the bright flames of hope; my companion's next words, however, extinguished them as with a bucket of water. "I fear, though, that she may have been hurt. You see, for an abductor to carry a wriggling woman down the ladder is clearly an impossible task. Of necessity she will have had to have been rendered unconscious. I understand that she is in poor health; a blow to the head could very well...end her life."

I was not surprised to find Lord Balson senseless in my arms. A shock like that, after what he had already been through, would have caused any man to faint. Fortunately I was standing next to him, and was able to catch his tortured body and lay it gently on the ground. Within a few minutes he had recovered, and two servants walked him inside. I saw that he was comfortably placed in bed, and then went back outside.

At this moment Meacock returned with a rush, and gave Holmes his message. "Just as I expected," said my friend. "Lestrade, you and your men should have little trouble tracking down a strong, wiry-looking man with dull red hair of medium length. He lives in, or frequents, the Charing Cross area. You would do well to begin the search immediately, as he is liable to flee the country when word gets out that we have recovered the victim, Lady Balson."

"What? Recovered Lady Balson?" Lestrade and I exclaimed in unison.

Astonished, we watched him set out without another word, scouring the ground with a lens, then standing, and finally starting off in a westward direction. Every half-minute or so he paused to examine the ground; gradually he disappeared from our sight, leaving behind him several in-

credulous bystanders. The inspector and I, along with two of the constables, stood around staring at each other in silence for many minutes before Lestrade said with pity in his voice, "I honestly think that this time he's gone, Doctor Watson. He needs medical attention without a doubt, sir." Lestrade then sent the two men off to Scotland Yard with word of the description of the criminal, and orders to begin an instantaneous search.

Forty-five minutes later Holmes returned, supporting a feeble old woman, evidently the missing Lady. Lord Balsom, who had by this time rejoined us on the lawn, ran—against my advice—to his mother, and took her, sobbing, into the house. Lestrade and I remained outside, flabbergasted at this display of my friend's talents.

"In all my living days!" cried the inspector. "Mr. Holmes, you have outdone yourself this time!" How in heaven's name did you find her?"

"You are incredible!" I said in wonder.

"Not at all," replied my friend quietly. "It was an obvious case. The criminal we know to be quite strong, since he was able to carry a body down the ladder. In the room I found two strands of red hair which must, by process of elimination, belong to the criminal. We also know that he wore a coat of green Cashmere. You can see that this man would cut an odd figure, one that the night clerk at Hanfield station would remember if the abductor had traveled by train. I sent out Meacock, who found the night clerk at his home and ascertained that in fact late two nights ago a man fitting this description had bought a ticket for the Charing Cross station. It was, I admit, a stroke of luck that the man had come by train and not by horse or carriage; regardless, though, Scotland Yard and the London police will soon have this man under lock and key. Won't they Lestrade?"

"Now," continued my companion, not waiting to hear the inspector's reply, "the criminal is not likely to leave the ladder standing, as it might set off an early hue-and-cry before he has had a chance to reach safety. He would not hide the lady first and then return for the ladder, for this course of action would also be dangerous. Nor could he hide the ladder and leave the lady; she might regain her senses in time to make enough racket so as to awaken someone. He takes, then, the ladder and the lady together, hiding the former on the way to his hiding-place for the latter.

"I set out armed with this theory, and it was therefore no surprise, after I had traced the criminal's path, to come upon the ladder itself. I quickly saw that half a mile away, in line with the house and the ladder, was a solitary cabin, wherein I found the lady in question. She was gagged, tied to a chair, and a bit hungry—but otherwise in a sound condition. So, Watson," he concluded, "I believe we shall have dinner, receive our payment, and return to London after a full day's work."

"Amazing," said Lestrade in awe.

When we were securely ensconced once again in Baker Street—and not, I may happily add, in a state of boredom—late that evening, my remarks turned to the day's events. "Holmes," I said, "even though we've been involved in hundreds of cases, and I have seen your method so often that it should no longer be surprising, you still never cease to astound me."

"Ah, Watson," he replied with a grin, settling familiarly into the armchair, "there is one other point in this case which may astound you more than anything ever has: They will never catch our strong red-haired criminal."

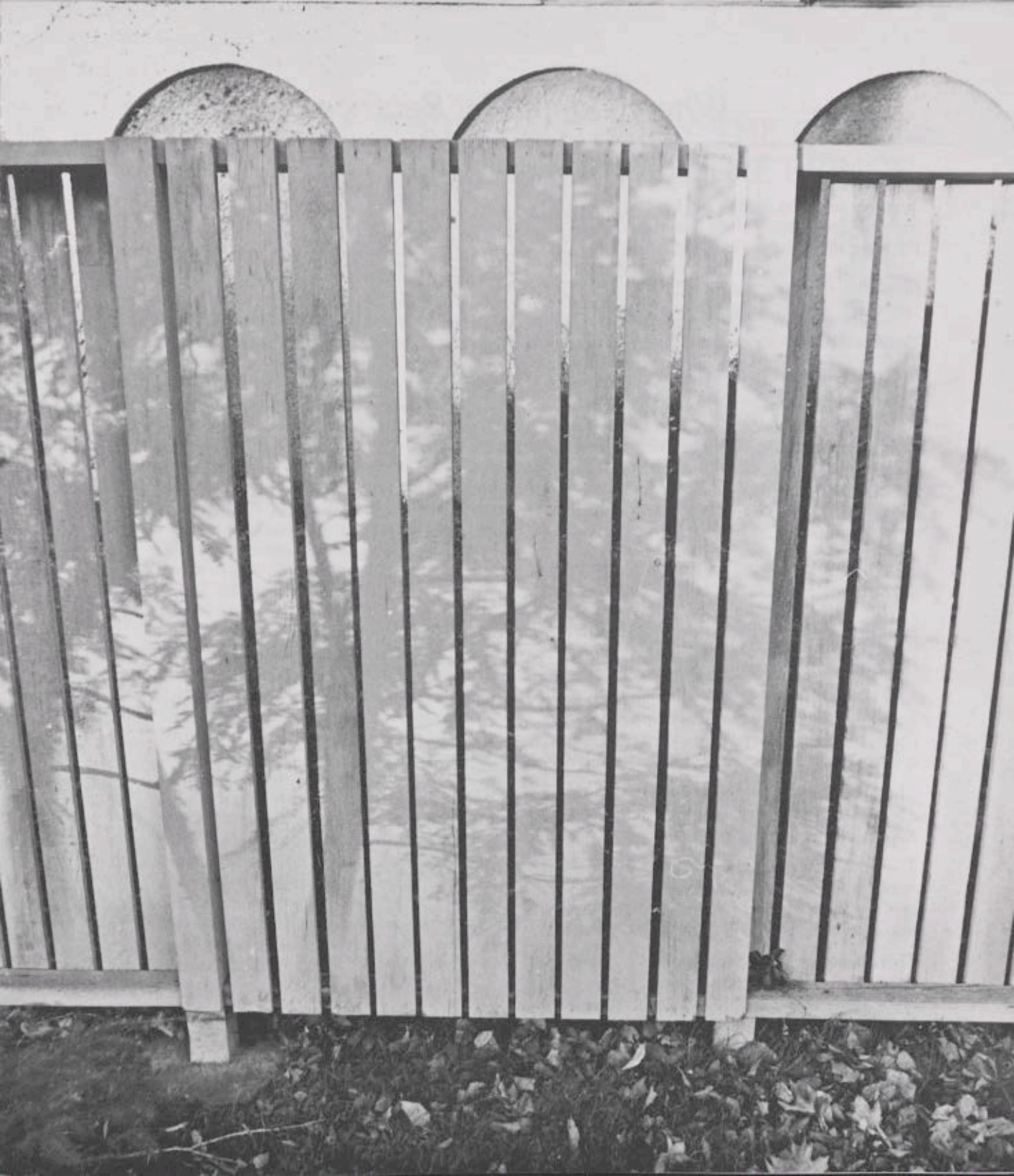
"Surely you don't think Lestrade and Scotland Yard are so completely incompetent as to let such a conspicuous character escape?"

At this Holmes sprang up and hurried to the bedroom. A few seconds later he appeared in the doorway holding a—a red wig. "Idle curiosity, Watson," he said as his lips turned into a smile. "Simple idle curiosity."

Then he resumed his seat, and picked up the Stradivarius which had been lying quietly by.

*When inside out glided time
grew details,
light, shadow
purpled on the steps;
your color
bled transparent.
While beach and the boat
sunstruck silent,
indelible;
hairsbreath moving sails
one decible more
enclosed you.*

Kathleen Hayes



Where Dante Met Beatrice

Last night,
infinitely swaying on the old bridge,
the day deep though into the night,
the river damp below my feet,

I saw the strangest weather,
two stars in the sky, light there together.

Yes I've heard your rhythms river,
two trees standing,
gold and brown their leaves were speaking,
underground their leaves were meeting.

But please tell me a complete progression
and do not let me
fall into the pale
cream
spot, the moon
fluttering a single time
solo
in the way.

Leaves fall off the trees to let me see
the way to one stone graffiti written *Liberta Sempre Dovunque*.
But how can I remember our moment in time, you and me here free?

And we were drinking and drinking a bottle of red wine,
and we sat alone above the river, down
cold yellow streets nobody except maybe
a whore standing still and straight; fakemate.

The gray eyes were rolled over too, in the shops.
Eyes of the morning how bright and crisp.
Eyes of the evening a cold steel mist.

The scales of windows and frames
hanging on fences of buildings,
and we thought only we saw the one and
two apartment lights on soft breezy bodies moving.

Then our eyes went together through the night's,
up the river, out the city, out of sights.
Now, all of this which was so pretty,
but how can I remember?

Bruce Harvey

KING ANTHONY THE GREAT AND PETER THE PRINCE

Kit Singh

The still mountains, rising out from the tip of the northeastern peninsula and curving inwards, like a pulled bow, were silent witnesses. The warm wind blew inland across the mouth of the bay disturbing the sleepy coconut trees as it spread out and sang its way up and over the mountains. The gentle waves came as night stalkers, swift and many, billowing and popping white foamy lather along the edge of the sand, and as they came and broke open they made low and persistent music. Up in the open and cloudless sky the moon hung high, her face broad and golden, and as she quietly chaperoned three young boys in the middle of the night, she turned the damp sand into yellow dust and the surface skin of the bay into a choppy sheet of shining glass.

"YooWhee! YooWhee!" shouted Anthony, as he leaped up furiously into the sky.

"YooWhoo, YooWhoo, YooWhoo!" shouted Peter, as he too leaped up wildly into the sky. Their shouts made me happy and bold as I followed them.

"Devils!" shouted Anthony.

"Devils of the night!" shouted Peter.

"Rum!" shouted Anthony.

"More rum!" shouted Peter.

I ran up with the bottle of rum. Anthony snatched it from me, uncorked it, put it to his mouth and drank heavily. Then Peter snatched the bottle from Anthony, put it to his mouth and drank heavily. Peter then shoved the bottle at me and I put it to my mouth and drank. As the hot liquid struck the back of my throat I choked and sputtered, and as it hit my empty stomach I belched noisily. At the same time I held the bottle out at arm's length and looked at it; it was half empty.

"Lord Jim!" shouted Anthony, as he pounded his chest.

"Long John Silver!" shouted Peter, as he too pounded his chest.

Lord! this rum making me more bold and happy, I thought.

"Robin Hood!" I shouted, leaping into the air.

Anthony and Peter spun around and checked my steps.

"What the hell you mean by Robin Hood?" asked Anthony. "Robin Hood is a damned pussy foot Englishman and we don't want any damned pussy foot Englishman here!"

"Blackbeard and Captain Blood!" I shouted.

"Aha!" said Anthony.

Then they turned and marched boldly up the beach, me bringing up the rear.

"Sharks!" cried Anthony.

"Sharks!" cried Peter.

"Millions!" I said, "I see millions of sharks."

"Sharks! sing!"

"Sing! sharks!"

"Rum! sing!"

"Sing! rum!"

"Sharks! sing! sing! sharks! rum! sing! sing! rum! ho! ho! ho! and a bottle of rum!"

"Wait" shouted Anthony.

We froze.

"I have an idea! ha ha ha!" he laughed. "Let us steal a boat and go out to sea."

Drunk as I was, I was still a coward at heart, but I dared not voice the cold fear that gripped me.

"Yes, yes, yes," agreed Peter, "A boat, a boat, a boat. A boat we must steal and a sailing we must go!"

The boys broke into a run, pulling me along. The beach was in the shape of a boomerang and it was at the other end where the little fishing village and the boats slept. Midway along the beach our cries ceased. We fell on our bellies and began to crawl, night stalkers with the wind and the waves. I looked up at the moon and quietly asked her forgiveness and blessings. She looked at me through glassy eyes.

After some quiet crawling we came upon a row of overturned boats. The first one was too big and heavy and the three of us couldn't budge it. The second one shifted and with great force we turned it right side up. Peter placed a couple of oars in the boat and we began to drag it down to the water. The boat was heavy and the sand was wet. As we could find no rollers on which to skid the boat down, the main rib dug into the wet sand and it was hard work getting the boat to sea. But we made it, and as the first wave splashed against the bow we leapt up for joy. We waded out waist high, keeping the boat steady. Then I dragged myself in. Anthony and Peter swam, for a while, one on either side of the boat.

When they came aboard our cries of boldness and adventure echoed in the distance. We had to keep the boat at right angles to the waves, that much we knew, for if a wave struck us broadside we were sure to topple over. It was my first experience at sailing, and as we bounced gently up and down on the choppy sheet of shining glass I was happy. The wind was still fresh and warm and quick. On the beach yellow sand highlighted the tall coconut trees. Beyond them the mountains were still silent. And away in a corner the little village slept innocently. Above, in the broad open sky, our chaperone hung patiently. Soon the land became a blurred thing of the past and the sea opened her bosom before us.

I cannot recall who started it, but suddenly there was a mad drunken scramble on board the boat. Anthony and Peter were trying to throw each other overboard. Anthony won out, and Peter disappeared. Then Anthony lunged at me and I screamed in fright, holding on to the cross board with both hands.

"Anthony, Anthony," I screamed, "Please don't throw me overboard. I cannot swim, I cannot swim, please, please don't push me over."

Anthony was too drunk to hear my cries. Soon I made a big splash as he tossed me out. Now it felt as if the sea had opened her yawning mouth and I sank. I stretched my feet a thousand yards down, but they touched nothing. I stretched my arms up to the moon but a dark cloud stood before her face. I screamed and screamed and the sea emptied her tears down my throat. I gulped and choked. I spitted and spluttered. And then the sea sucked me in once more.

When next I broke the surface everything had turned to a bright shiny light. For an instant somewhere the silver-plated form of Anthony was twisting and turning in a wild evil voodoo dance. Then he disappeared. Now, before my eyes, flashed my entire life up to that moment. I saw myself, a baby at my mother's breast, her smile warm and loving. I saw myself playing in the fields, talking to the birds, lying under shady trees. I saw myself walking to school, eating my meals, and reading my books. And as I began to go down once again I watched myself grow up.

Then I grabbed something solid. How strong and firm it felt. No longer was the sea sucking me in, for I was gliding along the surface. Then I was shoved up into the boat where I lay like a wet heap on the floor, coughing and vomiting. A moment later Peter climbed into the boat.

At the bow Anthony was still singing and dancing, making music on the near empty bottle of rum.

"Rum!" shouted Anthony.

"More rum!" shouted Peter.

Anthony took a drink and passed the bottle to Peter. Peter took a drink and passed the bottle to me. I shoved it away. By this time we were nearing land. Anthony stood erect at the bow facing the mountains, his left hand on his waist, his right hand extended forward clutching the bottle which glittered in the moon light.

"Land!" shouted Anthony. "I see land!"

Peter, who was rowing, shouted, "Land! I see land!"

"Ho!" shouted Anthony to the mountains, "Is anybody there? Is anybody there? This is KING ANTHONY THE GREAT. And with me is PETER THE PRINCE. Ho! Is anybody there? We are great Vikings and we have with us a slave now lately taken from the East and who was now lately almost drowned. Hark! We might need some first aid!"

Anthony kept on ranting and raging until the bottom of the boat scraped the sea bed. Then he and Peter dove into the water, and guided the boat in as they swam. With the help of the pounding waves which came like periodic and pulsing labor pains they dragged the boat halfway up the beach and then let it slump on one side. I jumped out and threw myself face down on the wet, cold sand, my arms and legs spread out, my fingers clutching the earth. I groaned amidst my tears, and bit into the sand sucking in a mouthful.

A short distance ahead of me Anthony knelt on one knee, his outstretched left hand clutching the bottle of rum, and his outstretched right hand clutching an oar. Peter was on both knees.

"I KING ANTHONY THE GREAT!" he was shouting, "and with me PETER THE PRINCE, claim this land in the name of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain..."

I dropped my eyes as Anthony went raging on, and I began to cry softly.

The still mountains rising out of the tip of the northeastern peninsula and curving inwards, like a pulled bow, were silent witnesses. The warm wind blew inland across the mouth of the bay disturbing the sleepy coconut trees as it spread out and sang its way up and over the mountains. The gentle waves came as night stalkers, swift and many, billowing and popping white foamy lather along the edge of the sand, and as they came and broke open they made low and persistent music. Up in the open and cloudless sky the moon hung high, her face broad and golden, and as she quietly chaperoned three young boys in the middle of the night, she turned the damp sand into yellow dust and the surface skin of the bay into a choppy sheet of shining glass.



*In summer
Driving through scrub
Under a washed sun
Past faded Coke signs
To the smothered boardwalk shade.*

*Bare toes
On concrete, splinters and sand
By double chins in black rayon sox
And oil slicked bikinis.
 The static voice of ray-ban cop horns
 Echoes the whistle of polaroid lifeguards
Till long past bed time
For all good buckets and shovels.*

*Each dangling from a six pack
Beneath the glitter ride
We watched the Sand Sculptor
At work in the cool tidal flat.
With delicate pats and a firm hand
She formed a portrait
Of some vagabond Poseiden
Glaring from the sand.*

*She left us considering
That grainy apparition
And the imminent tide
But, a renegade German Shepherd
And a toy poodle
 Pissed our dreams away*

Piedmont

ARTIST

*You have forgotten your brush and it lies,
Severed digit,
Six-and-a-half-week-old scab.*

*Your last painting stalls me from the wall,
Grates me, a block of bland cheese, with its clipped lines, slicing
The world asunder.
The pungent bleeding browns refuse
To blend with the streetlight yellows,
Like cinnamon in French toast batter they bely
The harmony you strove to represent.*

*Late into the night I drink tea—three or four cups—
And wonder why I cannot sleep.
Your brush eyes me, an appendix,
And I must paint your picture.*

*I try—an oil—but it is not good.
I discard it.
I glove your brush with a soft cloth, and hand
Them both into the garbage.
I give your painting to a neighbor, a sandy-haired woman in her late thirties,
Passing it off as one of my own;
The French toast I eat is tasteless without cinnamon.*

Mark Wallace

D-son Outbreak Laid to Food

Tests here today have identified the cause of widespread illnesses on Dickinson College campus.

Laboratory reports showed the illness that affected at least 150 students Wednesday and yesterday was caused by bacteria in an unidentified item on the college menu.

The dean of residential services, Steve Markwood, said test results this morning showed the sudden, brief, but violent illnesses were brought about by bacteria in food served in the cafeteria Tuesday night.

That unidentified food, Markwood said, was probably pre-prepared. The bacteria, the lab report states, created a chemical reaction that brought about the symptoms of food poisoning, although was not food poisoning in the technical sense.

Markwood said no new cases of the illness have been reported. Some students, however, continue to report discomfort, probably caused by previous violent vomiting.

Stricken students are being interviewed to determine a "common denominator," — one food they all ate that night. Markwood pointed out the possibility that only a part of the food in question contained the bacteria.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Sam Hughes

With all the talk these days about "equal time," "representative viewpoints," etc. etc. etc., I think it's about time the world had a word or two from the little guy. You may not have heard from us before, but I've decided to take matters into my own hands, for I think that you will find in my story a few things that may concern us both. All right, your race and mine have never been able to get along. I know that you've got a gripe or two about us, and I can see your point; after all, we're both mortal. We, on the other hand, have long been the victim of your ignorance, superstitious prejudice, and hatred, especially in the last fifty years or so. Right now lynching committees financed by your government are threatening to wipe out entire segments of our population, in the vain hope that you will all be able to live happily ever after until your teeth fall out and your bodies turn to cobwebs. You have attacked us with chemical warfare and sent in hired mercenaries to weaken us through civil war, and no sooner do we learn how to resist one infiltration than your self-righteous quacks send in another.

But I'm not really here to settle any grudges; I want to talk about a couple of problems that we both face, and maybe we can come to some sort of agreement after you hear my story.

I have spent the last five years in Carlisle, Pa. as a guidance counselor at Dickenson College. We are strictly an undergraduate institution, with a four-year program stressing, not suprisingly, career orientation in the sciences. You might say that we are a little traditional in our approach to learning, though of course we have to keep up with technology and the changing times like everyone else. Our program is fairly specific in its

guidelines and requirements: freshmen are assigned almost exclusively to colds, minor stomach ailments and pimples; sophomores handle the more advanced viruses; juniors, the more common major illnesses and intestinal disorders; and seniors usually investigate the more difficult and interesting cases, such as gonorrhoea and pneumonia, hopefully specializing in a small field of concen-

tration at some point during the year—an internship, if you will. We have always offered an exchange program with a wide variety of schools, and overall I feel that we offer a pretty challenging and well-planned program that, if successfully completed, practically guarantees employment in any field from typhoid to the trots. My main interest is like that of most who have reached middle age and hold a position of responsibility: stability. Our students are here to work and learn and prepare for a vocation, and I don't want this place to turn into a stockpile for revolutionaries.

However, much as we try to keep our little pests in line by advising, warning and threatening them, there are always a few who think they know better than we do and decide to make trouble. You know the type; always trying to turn a twenty-four hour flu into yellow fever, acne into terminal scabies, and so forth. Born hooligans. But the tragedy of our latest trouble is that the ringleader in the affair was one of our outstanding students, a normally well-behaved young germ with a brilliant future in gastro-intestinal disorders. AGTUC was a great disappointment to us all (I can't reveal his name, only his student I.D.), a classic case of a good bacteria led astray, and I'm afraid that it was the very freedom we allowed him that led to his downfall. We have always exempted our top students from curfew hours, though certain areas are strictly off limits. One place absolutely taboo is the Dickenson dormitories, and, for reasons known only to ACTUC, that is where he strayed to one night. I'm sure that you're aware of the appalling life style some of your children lead in college, and I won't bother with any details other than that which concerns us both. Do you know how many of your children smoke marijuana? Do you realize that pot leads to immorality and eventually insanity? Do you realize that *that* is what destroyed AGTUC? At least, that is the only logical conclusion I can draw. One day he was a brilliant, hard-working student with a great career in front of him, and the next he was the ringleader in a crude, banal and thoroughly low-rent act of rebellion. And since it is known that AGTUC was in a student dormitory the night before the crime, I have to conclude that it was a whiff of pot smoke that sent him over the edge

In any event, the next day, along with five of his impressionable cohorts, AGTUC slipped out of his classroom in an infirmary bedpan and zipped over to the school cafeteria. After splitting into pairs, AGTUC and his partner hopped into a big vat of chicken gumbo soup, while the other two couples began romping around in the baked beans and the diced peaches.

A word about the school cafeteria. It is run by a national food service called Saga, whose standards of cleanliness, quality of food and general eating conditions are so appalling that for us to poison their food would be downright redundant. In some colleges certain aspects of food poisoning are fascinating and complex, usually studied by seniors for their honors thesis, but when Saga is running the show only a very perverted collegiate bacteria would want any part of it. In fact, things recently have gotten so bad that we've been thinking of setting up a poison *prevention* course, one that would require our students to at least partially sterilize, say, those elephant scabs they try to pass off as hamburgers. It would have to be strictly limited to senior Poison majors, though.

Anyway, once AGTUC and his chums were in the slop, you might think that they would simply snatch a sulphur atom here and a chloride atom there and do the job themselves. But no, our boys couldn't stoop to doing the dirty work themselves; they had to go and bully the poor food molecules, (who in their post-thawing stage were so groggy they couldn't resist if they tried) into rearranging themselves just enough to make the Dickenson students who ate them start blowing lunch the next day like there was no tomorrow. I'm sure our boys had quite a chuckle over the whole thing.

We had to deal harshly with the offenders, for if such an incident is repeated at Dickenson while I'm still around, I can kiss my ions goodbye. In front of the entire student body, we stripped the five cohorts of AGTUC of their carbon atoms, and they are now quite harmless as insentient bits of industrial skunk cabbage. Unfortunately, and it pains me to have to say it, AGTUC himself managed to slip his bolt while awaiting punishment. That unctuous little thug! Last we heard he had hitched a

ride on a Saga delivery truck headed towards Albany. I shudder to think of the damage he could still do.

In conclusion, let me briefly state my pleas, which directly affect both our races. **PROTECT YOUR YOUTH—AND OURS—FROM THAT INSIDIOUS, CORRUPTING WEED, MARIJUANA.** It's causing needless sorrow for all, and will eventually destroy us if we don't destroy it first. Deal severely with all offenders—for we must wipe out that scourge of our youth.

And do something about that Saga food service, will you? Even to a germ, that stuff is repulsive.



SHADOWS

*She dims the lights,
her pupils already large
and as full as she can stuff them.*

*She takes and folds
specter knives into her flesh,
gores the soft meat
and yes,
the punishment for the negligence
of still soft meat.*

*The blood,
twin rivers from
synthesized canyons,
runs to a calculated clock.*

*The doldrums of the noon
pass with these torrents
into desired shadows,
but shadows of a lamp
placed to cast her necessity
on the rug.*

*She rolls that blood into its fibers
with the striking of the hour*

*another hour,
and still she barricades the day,
and so the wounds are purged,
open and wet,
and she fills them with oils
and myrrh
and she sighs as she takes them in,
but the wounds
only crust and scar.*

Jody Green

Sharon Grollman

I meet him in the Old City near Jaffa Gate. He nods his head, smiles. I do not recognize him at first because he is wearing a kafia wrapped around his head, knotted by the ear. I don't want to look at him. I ask questions about his day, what he did, who he talked to. The men sitting on stools outside their shops mimic me—"Come inside. I give you good prices." Omar tells me not to pay attention as I dig my nails into my palm—staring straight ahead. He says, "They are not nice people. They are not good for you."

I want to tell him about those shopkeepers who tried to touch me, who tried to love me through their clothes, pressing their bodies against me, pretending to see if the dress fit at the stomach. They stick their fingers beneath the waistband, touching my skin—then their hands move around towards the back. They press their bodies so close to mine that it hurts. I do not like them. These are Omar's people.

He takes me to a cafe near Damascus Gate. Israeli soldiers are sitting at a booth beside us. They stare at me. Maybe they know I am Jewish.

Omar asks me what I want to drink and answers the waiter in Arabic. Then he turns to me and says, "I like you, Shoola." I tell him we are too different. I do not want him to touch me.

"Why, because you a Jew and I an Arab?"

I want to tell him yes, to leave me alone, but instead I shake my head and mutter, "It's just not possible."

He presses me. "Why? You are good for me."

I tell him I am sick and leave before I finish my tea.

My grandmother loved me. When she was alive she told me stories. "The goys are no good. They fool you. They make you think that they want you to be their friends, but don't believe them... Do you think I'd want to see my little girl getting hurt? I'm only telling you, darling, because I love you... I once knew a girl, a beautiful girl. She looked like you. You had the same eyes. She killed her father. She married a goy and her father died two months later.... Her eyes weren't beautiful anymore after that. They turned into ugly gray slits.... She's in a crazy asylum now..... I don't want my little girl to go crazy... she's too pretty for that."

She told me about the Nazis and the Jews in yellow arm bands. Bed time stories.

I was afraid of the girls at my school with yellow hair and pierced ears. They were not my friends. Biology. Third period. All the kids from the poorer section of town sat in the back of the room, their desks pushed together so they could talk. I always walked in late because my second class was on the other side of the building, but I'd walk fast so that my legs rubbed together and my thighs burned. Slowly I'd slide open the door, quietly walking to my seat in the first row, trying to catch my breath.

I never raised my hand, but when the teacher called on me I gave the right answer, hoping no one in the back of the room would hear. They would call out, "Look at the goody, goody.... smarty pants"—then laughing.

Frank Dagnelli was in that class. He was one of the kids who sat in the back. He was on the football team and everyday he'd wear his blue and white varsity sweater.

I watched him in the halls talking with the girls with yellow hair and cheerleader uniforms. I'd dream about him, though I knew he was the kind my grandmother warned me about. When he saw me he called out, "Look at the Jew."

Little boys in yamekahs sitting on the wall next to the Israeli museum. "You are fat," one says. Another whispers in his ear and he repeats, "You are pretty." I sit next to them. The twelve year old is leaning on me, his hand on my thigh. He asks me questions in Hebrew that I cannot understand. He wants to look at my necklace, his palm on my breasts. I smile and tell them I have to go.

My grandmother loved me. She was the first to tell me about men. "Someday... but now you must be careful. These boys will use you if you let them touch you... They use girls until they're ready to get married... I'm telling you, if they loved you they wouldn't want to touch you.... Just don't pay attention and they will love you... You have such beautiful eyes.... You just watch out now, you hear?"

I wanted to tell her about Michael. He sat next to me in Hebrew school. He wrote me notes which I stuffed into my pocket so I could hide them in my secret drawer. I tried not to smile every time he touched my hand and I'd pull away. I couldn't wait to grow up so I could pay attention to men and they would still love me.

Half dream. I am in bed waiting for sleep. It is three A.M. Noises on the roof. Thumping, like people's feet. I am stiff, wondering if I should hide. The scene turns into a dream. The terrorists are coming to kill me. Dark, moustached faces.

I dreamt about the men with swastikas on their uniforms. They found out I was Jewish and they came to search for me. I hide beneath my bed, knowing they will still find me. When I hear them entering my room, I wake up.

I wanted to tell my grandmother about my dream but I couldn't move. In the morning, she listened, stroking my hair, brushing her lips against my forehead. She looked so proud as she went to the kitchen to make me something to eat. She loved me.

The Red Sea Hotel. Eilat. I have never slept at a hotel with a man before. I pretend I am on my honeymoon. We wait for our room at a café in the center of town, exchanging glances, while we share an ice cream. It is a hundred degrees and Australian men are sitting at the table next to us, laughing, smoking, drinking beer. I want to close my eyes, for sleep to come.

I have never been so tired though I slept for ten hours the night before. We don't talk. I pretend to be absorbed in my book, but I am conscious of him sitting beside me, reading *The Israelis*. I hope he is not bored.

The hotel. The woman at the desk is knitting. She gives him a paper to sign and I feel important because his passport, his money is in my pocketbook and I search for them without him having to ask. Room 107. The air conditioner doesn't work. I sit on the bed eating biscuits and cheese as he goes to the desk to complain. He takes care of all the details. I don't want him to see me eating. I am afraid I will get the sheets dirty.

He looks disgusted as he enters the room. I smile. The woman at the desk gives us another room down the hall. Dirty sheets from the night before. Faded green peeling walls. Rusty water. The hotel is too expensive but I consent to stay because this is what he wants. I am angry that I paid so much money.

He wants to take a shower and I want to sleep—to hide from this room. I imagine that I am in a hotel suite in New York City with chandeliers hanging from the ceiling that sparkle and change colors with the sunlight (Like the necklace that Omar gave me. We were walking in the market on an unpaved alley. He told me a woman gave it to him while she was dying. She was like his mother. He told me he wanted me to have it as he unclenched his fist so I could see the prism.)

But I can't sleep. I lie on the bed, staring at words in a book, listening to the rumbling of the air conditioner, the splurts of rusty water. The room is too quiet and I try to think of a pretty song to fill my head. I can only think of fragments so I hum them to myself, not too loudly.

The maid walks in without knocking. She asks me a question in Arabic, then in Hebrew, but I cannot understand. He will be out of the shower soon and he can answer her questions. She motions to a chair for me to sit in so she can make the bed. She sings a Beatles song, humming when she forgets the words. I eat cookies and cheese as I watch her. She is so pretty, so thin. I envy her.

She leaves and I return to the bed. He comes out from the bathroom and makes a sarcastic comment about the room. I want to say, "It's your fault. You're the one who wanted to stay here" but instead I nod my head and say, "Yeah. It's kind of bad, isn't it?" People aren't supposed to argue on their honeymoon.

My grandmother would be so proud. He has such strong hands and he's Jewish. He is my first boyfriend.

He is lying next to me, his arm around my waist. I offer him something to eat but he refuses. As he rubs my shoulder, I slowly turn towards him, wanting to bury my face in his neck. He loves me with his warm, wet mouth. He crawls on top of me, then leads with rhythmic movements. Our breathing becomes louder, quicker. I squeeze my hands around his back so I can feel his body shaking.

We are making love with our clothes on in a hotel room on white sheets and it is our honeymoon. He rolls over. He sleeps. I watch him, so proud. His pants are stained near the crotch. I am happy.





TANKA

*Butterfly dances
Quietly through my garden.
Swirling from the tree,
A leaf also rides the air -
Attempting to imitate.*

Delanne Stageman

