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Exile Vol. VIII No. 2

Authors
Harry Cohen, John Hunting, Anne Winget, Christine Cooper, Susan Delano, and Barbara Purdy

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Exile
Take thought:
I have weathered the storm
I have beaten out my exile.
—Ezra Pound
Contributors

Contributing to this issue of EXILE are seniors, ANNE WINGET and HARRY COHEN. Harry, whose story "... like before, on Nantasket Bay" won the semi-annual EXILE-Denison Bookstore Writing Prize, was also awarded the Book Award for highest Comprehensive Examination Grades. Upon graduation Harry will be entering Law School. Anne spent last year studying in France under the Sweet Briar program and hopes to enter a career which will combine both her language and writing skills.

Juniors, CHRISTINE COOPER and BARBARA PURDY are familiar contributors. Both Chris and Barb were awarded the Mary Hartwell Catherwood creative writing scholarship and Barb also received the Annie Mary MacNeill Poetry Prize.

Sophomore English Majors, SUSAN DELANO and JOHN HUNTING were recently initiated into Franco-Calliopean Society, creative writing honorary, and are publishing for the first time in EXILE.

The editorial for this issue was written by JANET TALLMAN who has just completed an Honor's Project on D. H. Lawrence.

Among the artists for this issue are JACQUELYN SIMS, a senior Art Major who studied in Paris last year and LYNN McKENNA a special student at Denison who graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design. BEVERLY ERBACHER, junior Art Major and this year's ADYTUM Editor and Elizabeth Surbeck, who recently displayed her work in the Union also contributed art work for this issue.

STAFF

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(Any student of Denison may submit manuscripts of poems, stories and essays to the editors or deposit them in the EXILE box in Slayter Hall.)
EDITORIAL

In the old realist-idealist query as to whether we ‘live our way into a system of thinking or think our way into a system of living,’ we might substitute the words ‘write’ and ‘writing’ for live and living. Does the young writer, particularly, compose the story or poem with preconceived notions about the nature of life, or does he become aware of his attitudes when he has left the typewriter and tries to be objective about what he has written?

D. H. Lawrence formulates an answer to this question in his foreword to Fantasia of the Unconscious. Of the familiar group of modern authors Lawrence stands out in our minds as one who seems to have a discernible group of definite ideas such as love, the intellect, the will. Yet Lawrence does not frame a system around these ideas; he calls his a “pseudo-philosophy.” It evolves from the novels and poems, he says, not the reverse. “The novels and poems come unwatched out of one’s pen. And then the absolute need which one has for some sort of satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general makes one try to abstract some definite conclusions from one’s experiences as a writer and as a man.” Writing and living, then, become even more intricately enmeshed: art becomes the experience from which we think.

The motion is not entirely in one direction, however. Behind the writing and experience stands at least a vague metaphysic. It may not be anywhere specifically stated, and it may be unconscious. Yet the metaphysic is comprehended, experienced, recorded, and then, perhaps, understood. E. M. Forster and others have said that our age is lacking in myth. Yet it would seem that we cannot live outside the wavering bounds of some sort of vision grounded in recorded experience. The vision, the myth, are at once separate from and connected to experience and expression; it is, as Lawrence has said, “unfolded into life and art.”

What, then, is the task of the young writer? It is to “rip the old veil of a vision” and to pry into the heart of what we really want for the future. And we must set it down in terms of belief and commitment. The process is not a hurried one. Hemingway has said that “those among our young people who, thirty years hence, will do the things that matter, are, in all probability, now quietly biding their time . . . They have a feeling for time and do not anticipate.” Perhaps we must find a workable median between our desires to rush and rip the veil and bucolically to bide our time.

J.A.T.

“like before, on Nantasket Bay”

By HARRY COHEN

So when my kid brother Joey asked me what I thought Dad did when he went out alone on Friday nights, well that just started the whole damned thing going in my mind again. I mean how the hell was I supposed to know? I’m not a spy. I love my father and trust him. I don’t ask him where he goes. I don’t even look at his matchbooks anymore. I do everything he says, everything! And maybe when the summer rolls around, maybe, he’ll ask me to go out with him again on the boat fishing in Nantasket Bay and I’ll talk about business with him, nothing else, I wouldn’t ask him about anything else, just business. And we’ll sit in the sun on the foredeck, and things will be just like they used to be before everything else happened. And Dad will love me just like before, and everything will be perfect.

It all began that night when my mother told Joey and me that Dad had left home and wanted a divorce, and I had to act like a hero and call Dad a bastard and everything else, and I really felt like a hero because I was better prepared for it than anyone else. I mean, it wasn’t like the whole damned thing came as a surprise to me. I knew it had been coming up for a long time.

I remember my mother used to always joke about divorce. She’d be sitting at the dinner table in a faded flowery housecoat with her hair in rollers and telling my brother or me to eat our potatoes or something. And my father would be at the head of the table as usual all sharped up in a neatly pressed suit and a repp tie looking, because of his grey hairs, a little bit older than his forty years. And my mother would turn to him, after one of us would make a comment about how so and so’s parents were getting a divorce and with a confident smile turn again to us and laugh and ask what we’d do if our parents decided to get a divorce.

I really used to wince like hell when she said that because it really showed how naive she was. How she never noticed Dad’s frequent trips and his late hours and his matchbooks—they were always one dead giveaway. She really trusted him; not that she had any
reason not to, because, I mean, despite everything he had been a great father and a good husband. Like he'd always remember birthdays and then sometimes he'd even bring home presents for no reason at all. So she trusted him completely, and when we went down to the Cape during the summer, she never even questioned his staying in the city three nights a week.

But I never trusted him because I always knew he was too much for my mother to handle. I knew from myself, because I was just like him. I mean even when I was going steady with some gorgeous girl who I always wanted to go with, I was still secretly playing around with other girls. And I knew I was like him because I was the first and had always been his favorite: when I was a baby he used to take me out every Sunday in my carriage through the park, and when my brother was born, he used to always bring me more presents than Joey. Later, when I got older, that's when we really got close. On Saturdays he used to take me to work with him and tell me how to be a good salesman, and on Sundays we'd go out in the boat together and lie on the foredeck, and fish for flounder in Nantasket Bay. Just us, Dad and me. And we'd lie there in the sun with our lines hanging in the water and talk about anything, anything at all: how tough business was, how the Red Sox were doing. You know, I even dress like him: in Italian suits with low shoes and thin repp ties.

Then that night when Mom told us, I had to play hero. I guess in a way I had to prove that I could lead the family as well as he could. After all, I was about to graduate from high school so first I quieted everyone down and said that even if Dad was an emotional idiot it didn't do us any good to then be emotional. I asked Mom to tell us what happened.

For the last two weeks, she said, my mother had known about it. Dad had come home late one night when we were all asleep and told my mother that he couldn't take living a double life anymore. He said that he had been seeing another woman for five years and was very much in love with her. Not that he still didn't love my mother and us, but he still wanted to marry this woman and at the same time support and keep close with his family. He hoped that she would understand. My mother said that she pleaded with him not to do this, that this was just a stage of life that men his age go through and that he'd be sorry if he left. She said also that she'd never give him a divorce, nor kick him out of the house. If he really wanted to leave, he would have to do it himself. Two weeks later Dad left the house.

After hearing my mother's story, especially the parts about his still loving his family and not leaving till two weeks after he told Mom, I said that there was still hope. It sounded like he hadn't really made up his mind yet, so I suggested to my mother that I see him the next day and talk it over with him. Maybe there was still something that could be done.

But that wasn't the real reason I wanted to see him; in fact I didn't really care if he came back home or not. I could see Dad's point: he was successful and just turning middle-aged; why should he be domestic the rest of his life; why not fool around? The real reason I wanted to see him was simple: I knew that the father who used to take me out fishing every Sunday and who used to talk to me about following in his footsteps, about being a salesman, I knew that the father who was now divorcing my mother was not divorcing me. He loved me no matter what else he did. I knew that and I was going to prove it.

I remember how I met him the next day, how I stayed in the house and looked out the window waiting to see his black Cadillac pull up the street. And I remember when it did and when he parked just across from the house and blew the horn, and didn't get out of the car, but instead waited for me to come out. And I did; I practically ran out of the house, I was so happy to see him. And I ran across the street and into his car.

As soon as I got in, he pulled away from the curb and started driving towards the Charles River where he kept the boat. And I was happy as hell because I knew then that he loved me and that we were going out fishing and going to forget the whole damn thing. But that wasn't what happened; all he did was ride along the river asking me how my brother and mother were and how school was going and how was everything in the house. Then finally he stopped the car and I asked him bluntly whether he loved me. After I said that he turned from the wheel—his face distorted and red and he started to cry. I started to cry too, not because I was unhappy about the divorce, but because I was happy that he was crying about me. He said this: "Always remember that no matter what happens you're my son, and I'll always love you". Then we sort of both stopped crying after a while, and he said that we should talk about financial matters.

First he told me that he was very sorry about everything and
that he wished it has never happened. Yes, he loved Mother, but five
years ago he met another woman and what had started as a flirtation
ended up to be real love. He said that he had promised this woman
that he would get a divorce right away from the beginning, but that
he really never wanted to; he wanted to live both lives. But finally,
after she had attempted suicide because of the situation, he had de-
cided that he’d better act. Sorry, he said, was the wrong word, but
he couldn’t think of another one. Although he loved his family, he
loved this other woman, and she might commit suicide if he didn’t
get a divorce. When I said that I thought I understood, he started
crying again. He said that I didn’t and he hoped that I would never
get myself in a situation like this one.

But about money, he wanted to make sure that the family was
secure. All the insurance policies, he promised, would stay the way
they were, with my mother as beneficiary. On his savings account,
he would turn over half of it to my mother, and concerning the
business, he would give my mother half ownership. As far as his
will, he wasn’t going to change that except that his half of the bus-

The first thing that I realized was that no matter how much the
divorce was aimed at my mother, it had the same effect on me. If my
father was leaving my mother, then no matter how much he said he
loved me, he was leaving me too. The second thing that really
enlightened me about just what my father was doing, was the
business: he was leaving half of it to the other woman upon his death. He said that she
was very poor. I agreed with everything, and when I got home I was
happy as hell though I restrained it. That night was when the con-
fusion really started; when I really figured out what my father had
said.

The more I thought about everything, the more I began to hate
him. All that love bit with him was nothing but a lot of crap. He
never cared about me, or why would he divorce my mother? He
didn’t even care about my future or he wouldn’t have given half the
business to just one person, the other woman. All that bit about
wheeling me around the park when I was a baby and wanting me to
be a salesman just like him! (That was junk.) He was a bastard just
like I’d said. I’d never want to grow up and be like him, real sleazy
in his tight, flashy Italian suits and his fancy boat and car.

And I told him so, the next day when I went to see him. I told
him just what I had figured out. I remember how he looked that
morning in the hotel lobby: his hair seemed grayer and his face was
haggard like he had been drinking too much and I felt superior to him,
real superior, bigger than he ever was. And after we got off the
elevator from the lobby and were walking towards his rooms, I
noticed that I was really taller than he was and stood and walked
straighter than he did. Then when we got to his room, then I really
let him have it.

I told him what a damned fool I had been ever loving him and
what a really rotten father he was. Other kids who have rotten

Then I kept remembering that thing I tried so hard to forget
or explain away, that day on the boat. We were just outside Nantasket
Bay near the Light and while Dad was fishing, I was swimming a
few yards off the boat. Suddenly, I got a cramp and I thought I was
going to drown. I yelled for Dad to throw me a preserver, but he
just kept looking at me. Finally, after I yelled a couple of more
times, he threw a life preserver out, but it landed about five feet
away from me, and I swallowed a lot of water getting to it. When I
got back on the boat and recovered somewhat, I asked him why he
didn’t swim out to get me. He didn’t pay much attention to my
question, but when I asked him again, he said that he thought I
was just fooling around. Fooling around! Like hell. I bet even then,
he was trying to figure out some easy way to get a divorce, and with
me out of the picture, things would have been a lot easier.

The month later Dad called up and asked my mother if she
would forgive him and would want him to come home. He said that he had gone away alone to Florida for the last month to think things over, and that he realized then, away from everything, that he couldn’t live without his family. He begged my mother to let him come home and she, after asking my brother and myself who were standing beside the phone, said yes.

Things just aren’t the same as before no matter how much he tries to make them look that way. I know he doesn’t love me anymore; how could he after what I said to him? He tries, though, like when he asked me if I wanted to help him put the boat in the water, but I know he’s straining. I know he hates me. Mom, too, Mom doesn’t trust me anymore. She thinks I might be holding out information from her like I did before about Dad, so she always asks me what I’ve been doing lately or if anything interesting’s happened. But honest to God, I’m not spying anymore and I’d like to help Dad out with the boat but I know he’s only saying it. All I want—all I want is just for everything to be like before and on Sundays to go with Dad out on the boat and fish for flounder in Nantasket Bay.

The Bathtub

By CHRISTINE COOPER

The bathtub sits
wearing the rings
of its many marriages
to many bodies.
Some of them were long
and warm and lazy,
others quick and cold.

After each,
drained of all
emotion,
the bathtub sits
and gleams.
Away

By SUSAN DELANO

But a brown memory is summer now
Like the leaves, dunes and rushes.
Sand which once ran through
Our toes and fingers is dismal
Beneath the brown sun
And sky.

Write me,
Of warm yellow hearths
And red calico,
Of fresh bread rooms with purple filled
Jars, frosted white on pantry shelves,
Of burning driftwood — golden
In flames and outside white
Excluded by thick panes.
Tell me of mottled quilts on
Cherry beds and braided rugs
On old planking worn
Smooth by the running of
Many years and
Many feet.
All too much for one,
Write me
And, I'll come.

The War And The Old Women

By JOHN HUNTING

CHARACTERS:

AGNES, a very old woman
TILLIE, her very old living companion
ROLAND, their butler
COMMUNIST SOLDIER

SCENE

An antique-cluttered sitting room of Victorian architecture. To the left
is an open window showing signs of winter on the outside. To
the right, a closed door. A large dark fireplace is right of center
in the back and a lace covered table is left of center in the
front. On the table are a lamp and a very large bell. A rolled
newspaper is on a chair by the door. The two old women sit in
wheel chairs to either side of the table, knitting.

After the curtain opens, there is a long pause.

AGNES: What time is it, Tillie dear? (Another pause.)
TILLIE (not looking at watch): About one in the afternoon, I believe,
Agnes.
AGNES: Oh dear, three and a half hours until tea.
TILLIE: Yes, three and a half. (pause.)
AGNES: Where is Roland? Has he gone out again?
TILLIE: Yes, I believe he has.
AGNES: Well, I do hope he is watching the time. I don't want him
forgetting our tea again. (She rips out half of what she has knitted
and begins again.) What is he doing out there?
TILLIE: I think he mentioned something about fighting, keeping
someone off the property.
AGNES: Oh.
TILLIE (pulling her shawl around her shoulders): I do think that this winter is as cold as the one thirteen years ago.
AGNES (pulling her shawl around her shoulders): Yes, I believe it is; although maybe not quite as cold.
TILLIE: Wasn't that the year that your son, Tony, died?
AGNES (smiling): Oh yes. I shall never forget that day. It was quite sunny, you know. But oh so cold. So very cold. Why, even Dr. Carter had told me not to go outside because such dreadful cold would be bad for my health. So I didn't because I wasn't feeling very well anyway. I can remember it all so clearly. (She rips out part of what she has knitted and begins again.) Tony and his wife were getting ready to move down to New York and Tony wanted so much to do things for me before he left.
TILLIE: He was such a nice boy.
AGNES: Yes, he was. He offered to take me for a ride in his car because they had cleared the streets and it was so beautiful out. But of course I had to say no because of my health. And so he and his wife went out alone. And that was when the dreadful accident happened. Oh, the roads were so slippery because there was ice left on them, and especially up in the hills where they drove. The car slid off the big cliff up there, you know. Oh, it was such a dreadful shame. Why they didn't warn people about the condition of those roads, I'll never know.
TILLIE: That was such a loss to you. It was simply dreadful. You were lucky Dr. Carter had warned you about your health. Otherwise you might have gone.
AGNES: Yes, I was. But I don't think I really would have gone anyway. It was so awfully cold out. (pause.)
TILLIE: It is just as cold this winter. Maybe even colder.
AGNES: I don't think it is quite that cold. But I couldn't say. We shall have to ask Roland when he comes in. I think he is outside.
TILLIE: Yes he is. (She wheels her wheel chair over to the door, opens it, and looks out.) There he is, down there where those gun shots are coming from. My, my, quite a few people down there. Yes, there he is, I can see him. (She closes the door and wheels herself back to where she was.)
AGNES: Tillie, you really should be careful. You might strain a muscle or something equally frightful. Then where would I be without you?

HUNTING

TILLIE: Oh, I will be all right. It doesn't take much strength and I don't wheel this chair very often.
AGNES: But you never can tell what might happen. We aren't very strong and I don't want to lose you, Tillie. I would be in such a fix if you had to go to the hospital.
TILLIE: Oh Agnes, you needn't worry. I'll be careful. (pause.) (To herself) I wonder who all those people are out there.
AGNES (Not looking up from her knitting): Hmm?
TILLIE: Oh, nothing. (pause.) The Bertrams had a baby, you know. It was a girl. Oh, I think they will be so happy with her; it's their first, I believe.
AGNES: Yes, it is.
TILLIE: You should see her—she is just adorable. Such a cute little thing. I think she is in high school now.
AGNES: Yes. I heard she is in the twelfth grade. And doing very well, I might add.
TILLIE: Mr. Bertram was so happy. I can remember when he drove all the way over here just to tell us. And in the snow too. That was a cold winter also.
AGNES: But it wasn't as cold as this winter—not nearly. (short pause.)
TILLIE: Oh, I do wish these winters weren't quite so cold. Why isn't summer longer?
AGNES: Tillie dear, you know that summer is always so hot and sticky. No, I wish spring were the longest season. That would be nice.
TILLIE: But all that miserable rain in the spring. It is oh so wet all over. I guess winter is the best season for us, even though it does get cold. (pause.)
AGNES: I know why it is so cold. The window is open. (She looks at the window.) Yes, the window is open. Did Roland forget to close it this morning? My goodness, what has gotten into him? I must call him in here right now and make him close it. (She rings the bell. It is extremely loud.) (pause.) I wonder if he heard it. He is outside, you say?
TILLIE: Yes, but not far from the house. Ring it again. (AGNES rings the bell again.) He should be listening for it.
AGNES: I think that perhaps we should begin looking for a new butler. Roland has been awfully slow lately. He is always going outside and for no reason that I can see. If someone is trespassing, he should just leave well enough alone. He could call
the police from inside if necessary. That's what I would do. You never can tell what kind of people are trespassing on your property. (ROLAND enters in a very dirty, tattered butler's uniform, carrying a rifle. He leans this by the door. All of his speeches are very serious.)

ROLAND: You rang, Miss Agnes?
AGNES: Yes Roland, twice. Where have you been? And why are you so dirty? You should have gotten here faster.

ROLAND: Yes, Miss Agnes. I was outside and couldn't hear the bell very well.

AGNES: Well what were you doing out there? Why don't you just stay inside?

ROLAND: There is a war going on, Miss Agnes, and they are very close to the house. Not 100 yards from here they have gathered and they are trying to break through our lines.

AGNES: War? Oh my, how ridiculous! Must you go out there and fight? What war anyway?

ROLAND: But I must stay out there and help the townspeople or the Communists will break through, burn the house, and march on and take the town. We have very few guns and just a little ammunition left. You see, they are . . .

AGNES: Oh never mind! Please close the window as you should have done this morning. It is freezing in here. Just close it and you may leave. (ROLAND closes the window and leaves, taking his rifle.) Of all the silly things, a war!

TILLIE: What war does he mean? Communists? Is it some rowdy high school students?
AGNES: I really don't know. (She thinks.) A newspaper might tell us.

TILLIE: A newspaper?
AGNES: Yes. A newspaper might have something about it. (She looks around the room, then sees Roland's paper on the chair.) Look. There is one. Why, Roland must have left it in here. Really though, Tillie, do you think we should?

TILLIE: Yes, let's read it. (softly) It's only Roland's paper. I would like to know what all those people are doing out in our front yard.

AGNES (Wheels over, picks up the paper, and comes back.) Oh, this is last week's paper. I don't know that we shall find anything. Oh yes, here it is, on the front page. (She reads) "This could possibly be the last issue of the 'Old Town Journal.' The Communist forces have taken Bangor to the south and have begun moving this way. This is one of the largest forces, apparently moving to Canada through the tip of Maine. Part of the original Communist forces which landed from the Gulf of Mexico two years ago have succeeded in breaking through General Randolph's forces in Vermont. They have been joined by more troops from the Midwest, most of whom were in the original invasion of the West Coast. They are expected to pass Old Town in four days and residents are advised to evacuate the area and move towards Canada. There, a large retaliatory force is being amassed." (She lays the paper on the table, picks up her knitting, and rips out half of what she has knitted.) Oh how ridiculous. Why haven't they informed us about this?

TILLIE: It is outrageous. You would think someone would do something. They should stop those . . . those Communists once and for all. Is that who they are, Communists?

AGNES: Yes. They're the enemy.

TILLIE: Well they should have stopped them when they took that . . . that . . . that Cuba a few years ago, whenever it was. It is terrible.


TILLIE: That's the Cuba. Why, if the president had done something then, . . .

AGNES (to herself): My, but it is still cold in here. The fire must have gone out. Roland will have to build a new one. (She picks up the bell and rings it.) We shall get him to build a big one this time. (ROLAND enters very slowly and drops his gun on the floor.)

ROLAND (very slowly): You rang, Miss Agnes?

AGNES: Now what is wrong, Roland? Look up, I can't see your face. (He does.) Why are you crying?

ROLAND: They . . . They shot my wife. They shot Emily. She stood up from behind our barricade to see them and they shot her. (He buries his face in his hands.) Why her? She didn't do anything.

AGNES (rather flustered): Oh Roland, I'm so very sorry. It must have been horrible.

ROLAND: All the townspeople are getting panicky. They are being shot down right and left. And Emily . . . (He cries.)
AGNES: How dreadful. But I imagine it was fast. She probably didn’t feel any pain. The poor girl. (Pause.) Roland, what can I say? (pause.) Well, just build us a fire and you may go. It needn’t be a large one. (ROLAND goes back to build the fire. He is sobbing.) I shall give you a raise, Roland. I understand how you feel. I lost my son not long ago. (She leans over and speaks to TILLIE.) We must find a new cook, also. Pity.
TILLIE: Yes, I suppose we must. It is a shame. Emily was such a good cook.
AGNES (TO ROLAND): Roland, are those the Communists you are fighting out there?
ROLAND: Yes, Miss Agnes. The Communists. They are very near the house and there are many. I don’t know what will happen. If the townspeople give up, then . . .
AGNES (To TILLIE): Oh why doesn’t somebody do something? (She pulls a small American flag from her sewing basket and stands it on the table.) I wrote a letter to Congressman Oakes, about all the enemies in our country, but he hasn’t done a thing. Roland, you did mail that letter, didn’t you?
ROLAND: You never gave me a letter, Miss Agnes.
AGNES: Oh goodness! Did I forget to give it to you? (She looks in her knitting bag.) Oh here it is. How stupid of me. Here, Roland, please mail this if you go out again. And put a stamp on it. You’d better make it airmail.
ROLAND (comes forward to receive the letter): Yes, Miss Agnes. (He takes the letter, picks up the rifle and walks out, head lowered.)
TILLIE: Emily died. I shall have to make a note of that.
AGNES: That is too bad. Perhaps we could find a new husband-wife combination to be butler and cook. Roland has been very slow lately.
TILLIE: Yes, we must do that. (A long silence. AGNES rips out part of what she has knitted and begins again.)
AGNES: What time is it, Tillie dear?
TILLIE: There is just a short time before tea.
AGNES: Roland had better make it hot. It is such a cold day out.
TILLIE: Yes, quite cold. It hasn’t been this cold for about thirteen years now. The winter that Tony died it was very cold.
AGNES: Yes, both he and his wife were in an automobile accident. He had asked me to go for a ride with him but I said no be-
cause of the weather.
TILLIE: Oh I remember, they slid off the big cliff up in the hills.
AGNES: No. As I recall, they were hit by a large truck down at the intersection, the one by Maple Street. You can’t see around that corner there well at all. Really! I think something should be done about it.
TILLIE: I agree. It is dangerous. It is lucky you weren’t with them.
AGNES: Yes it was. (a long pause.)
TILLIE: I hear the Bertrams had a new baby girl.
AGNES (She is pulling out part of her knitting) Yes, and she is adorable, just as cute as can be. She was married, you know.
TILLIE: Why, I didn’t know that.
AGNES: Of course you did. She married Tony. Don’t you remember? They had that beautiful ceremony during the Christmas holidays. You remember.
TILLIE: Oh yes. That was that dreadfully cold winter. But it was such a wonderful wedding; the whole town was there.
AGNES: Yes, I shall never forget it. Simply gorgeous. But so cold.
TILLIE: Almost as cold as this winter.
AGNES: Yes, almost. (Pause)
ROLAND (enters backwards with his hands raised. A shot comes from off-stage and ROLAND falls. Then the COMMUNIST SOLDIER enters and begins moving towards the old women.)
AGNES (She turns her head towards the door but keeps her eyes on her knitting.): Roland, is that you? I think it’s time for tea. Roland. (She looks up and sees the soldier.) (jumbled, nervous) Oh! You aren’t Roland. Are you our new butler? Where’s Roland? What is that gun you have? (Suddenly frightened) You . . . we aren’t going to die, are we?
TILLIE (Leans toward AGNES and smiles): Don’t worry, Agnes dear. (To the COMMUNIST SOLDIER) You’ve come to relieve Roland, haven’t you? Will you get our tea for us, please. (To AGNES) Don’t worry, dear. We aren’t going to die.

CURTAIN
Fixed Orion

By BARBARA PURDY

Fixed Orion
Tight in a destitute sky—
Not a star flings wildly
Errant through the night.
O that the sun were an unchained diamond
Borne from its links.

O fatal linkage which shrinks the soul
Of Faustus.
Sad candle of his study
Burning.
Such an effort against the night,
Black Icarus must have suffered less.
If not allowed the sun
Why not at least anachronism
Why not at least an old cold bulb to light his somber prison?

O lily grow black
Grow black and bizarre
Go scar the mighty hills
Go child deny the embryo, the skin of your father's whims
Go suffer hell, the Lord's grave frown, o Faustus
To taste your noble sin.
THREE POEMS

BARBARA PURDY

I

Love?—

At times a gust of wind

In heavy rain—

Other times?—

A gentle sun in spring.

But never both

For that's a rainbow—

That's romance.

II

Truth
Is when there is no one else around
on a snowy day
But you
And maybe an ancient elephant.

Wisdom
Is the trees nearby
Who see all this
But never once let on.

III

Hell is a place where the only color
A word can be
Is white.

White words
(are the well bred ones
which never scratch or bite
but just squat benignly.)

Hell is a place where the only vegetable
Is celery
(and even then one is not permitted
to use onion dip.)

There is no cursing
No artichokes
Only white words, celery and laughter—
Lesbian laughter, long, siren laughter
For hell has no men.
The artist finds that life must be discussed, and so he moves alone among the trees, and everywhere he sees there is no innocence.

He sees the work of Michelangelo as more than sensitivity within. The David was not born of a caress; the artist's hands were learned, the clay was disciplined.

Musicians too must discipline a press before the horn exudes its lovliness.

The artist never mourns, but makes a song of all this sin. He sings that everywhere the world is wrong to search for innocence, and not the song.
Cammie sat alone in the train licking her finger and melting strange shapes in the frosted pane. Seen through these squares and amoebas, the countryside paralleled the tracks, a static plain which might have continued advancing in one unbroken horizontal had it not been for a dog which trotted across a furrow or a poplar which defied its corseted neighbors by bending towards the river. Cammie could at times follow the path of a wave racing the train until it bumped blindly into a log and conceded to the overwhelming persistence of the engine. A train for Cammie was a place to be by herself, where she might let her mind roam beyond conversations and companionships. She turned the pages of her book. Antigone stood before her, her hands robot-stiff at her sides, her eyes blazing, determined to follow her duty even to the absurd. Cammie tucked one foot under her and leaned on the table, twisting a curl about her finger, heedless of the jolting of the man across from her munching his chips. The man emptied the small paper bag onto the floor and shuffled the crumbs into the tuftless maroon carpeting. Creon pleaded with Antigone not to condemn him to his task as a ruler. Cammie murmured her defiance under her breath, becoming more passionate, until she realized that the man was staring intently at her. She tossed her head to bring herself back to the present. He smiled and then asked the time in broken French.

"Goodness no, I'm from the states," she laughed. "I'm living in Paris this year, that's all. It's one-thirty. What time are we getting to Oxford?"

"Two-ten," he answered, and obviously not interested in Parisian-Americans, he pulled a paperback of crossword puzzles and a pen from his pocket.

Cammie watched the Thames following the train. The summer houses hibernated behind their shutters, their docks pulled up like cold feet out of the icy water. She imagined them awake during the summer when sails bloomed on the river and pastel-painted homes lined the brown water like border gardens. A boy might row lazily across the river, his girl's hand trailing in the water, each one's gaze upon the other's eyes, dreaming already of the night. A child might splash its dog, driving it howling out of the water. Now all was sleeping.

A vacant cement factory arose where the houses left off, its mounds of gravel and its peeling orange-painted machinery announcing another town. Like Avebury, Stonehenge, and Chiddingstone, Bibury was a name on the train schedule. No one noticed the train which did not even condescend to whistle. "It's as if all of England is forgotten. Is this a groundhog country?" Cammie wondered. "Maybe the entire population is concentrated in London." As if to contradict her statement, a woman hurried along beside the train, her shopping bag over one arm. "Look, even she's embarrassed to be caught outside the barriers. I only hope that Dennis hasn't caught this March sleeping-sickness. Letters are long, long distances between people."

"A farm, a village, a field all frosted and dead, a repetition in a never-ending pattern—it must be eons yet until Oxford."

But yet, there it was, its college towers pencil marks against the grey sky. The Thames, the train, both ran to meet the city. The man put away his book and buttoned his top-coat. Cammie pulled down the jacket of her suit—how practical, how warm, how English it was—gathered up her books, pencils, cigarettes, and bag that were scattered over the seat, and buttoned her coat against the wintery greeting. There was no use in putting on her scarf until the weather straightened out her hair. She took a deep breath, "Oxford, here I am, and Dennie, you'd better be out there."

Dennis was almost unrecognizable, a tall mountain of overcoat and plaid muffler. "Cammie, your train was late. You look good."

"You look cold."
"You haven't changed."
"Well, two months isn't a lifetime."
"It's so wonderful to see you."
"For goodness sake, you might stop shaking my hand and kiss me on both cheeks; it's the custom you know."
Their laughter broke through the icy droplets of the mist which hung about them. Dennis took the overnight case from her and led her through the tunnel under the railroad tracks and up to the road. Cammie chattered, her words making formless clouds which trailed behind them in the afternoon air. "The flight was fine, except we missed our bus and had to take a taxi and didn't get in until 4 a.m. London is funny; the people are so polite and don't even trample you in the tube. You see I'm learning the slang. I like the escalators instead of all the stairs. We pretended that we were French the other night at the theater. A woman started to explain the plot to us in very slow, very careful English, but we spoiled it all by giggling. English women are lumpy. Maybe that's because they eat candy between acts. What? No, I've even lost a pound. Of course it doesn't show under my coat. I keep getting into trouble with your cars. They run at me from the wrong direction. How are your courses?"

"They're filling me up with term papers, and Greek still looks like a bunch of stick figures wrestling. Sometime I'd like to dig into records in the library for my college sermon in six weeks, maybe finish research before spring vac."

"I can't picture you in a clerical collar."

"Now just a minute, Missy Cammie, haven't you heard white and black are to be the fashion this spring?"

"You'll be the chicest priest ever to ring a bell or say a prayer."

"I'll make all the old maids in the congregation swoon."

"You might even cause a riot."

"Yes, but only a small one; I believe in peaceable violence."

Cammie jumped over the puddles, sliding on the slick patches that glistened on the sidewalk. Dennis caught hold of her hand. "Hey there, slow down," he said. "You'll fall flat on your face in the slush."

High Street (The High) stretched before them. The Saturday crowds of students milled in the book stores, leafed through the new arrivals, browsed, drunk in each wasted moment, as precious as the ones spent in study. The rain began, a drizzle which aged the new colleges, making them less ashamed to stand beside their venerated neighbors. Cammie tied her scarf around her head. The wind had brightened her cheeks and nose. The drops of rain had rinsed away her makeup until now she was indistinguishable from her English counterpart. Only the slight skip in her walk, the smile which trembled in the corner of her mouth and emerged as a laugh suddenly and without a reason set her apart.

Their footsteps were molded by the footsteps of the ghosts of all students as they went up the grooved stairs to the Christ Church court yard. The cloisters echoed with recitations and discussions that had occurred centuries before which even the rain could not wash away. In spite of herself Cammie shivered at the high pointed beams of the refectory, the head master's table, the empty rows of tables, waxed and tattooed, then waxed again, each generation leaving its scratches in the varnish. "Can you feel them, Dennis?" she whispered. "It's only a row of benches now, but the old hall really rings out at mealtime around here."

"But it's ringing now; the room is crowded with eyes all staring at us, wondering what we're doing here."

"Hey now, that kind of talk is relegated to dark stormy nights and steins of beer. Come on. There's still the most important part of the college to see yet."

Voices drifted from the Oxford cathedral. A choir lifted its voices as one whole crescendo, then dropped them to the hum of reverence for God, or more precisely for the choir director who sharply rapped his baton on the altar. "B-flat, B-flat, not B-sharp, how many times must I tell you? Gentlemen, please, a bit of silence. This is a house of worship." His words bounced off the pillars and walls of the massive structure.

The two tiptoed past the stalls to the array of tombs and plaques in the rear of the nave. "The knights, kings, and bishops assembled here could fill a history book by themselves. The plaques in the floor contain mostly bodies of bishops and the lesser nobility. One had to have much money or be royalty, or commit some scandalous crime to deserve a tomb with his statue on it." Dennis explained tomb after tomb, repeating its story.

"Is there really someone under all those markers on the floor?"

"Either that or what remains of them."

"There ought to be a sign: Please Do Not Step on the Bodies." Cammie dodged around the slab of some duchess to discover that she was standing over the head of her husband. "The Duke of Devonshire—1493, departed this world, 1557, and then a bunch of Latin scribblings," Cammie read. "What did he do?"

"From the inscription he and his wife must have been fairly well liked. She died 15 years before him and he went into mourning
for the rest of his life. Pretty decent of the fellow, I would say."

"I wonder what he looked like, and where he lived. His wife
must have been attractive for him to grieve that way. I'll bet she had
blond hair—you know, with braids wound round and round her
head." Cammie stepped reverently off the head of the departed Duke.

"I'm afraid life was more complicated than that in the sixteenth
century among nobility. You're confused with the blood and thunder
of William the Conqueror. Perhaps he was too ugly or too old to
think about women anymore."

"Look at the young woman on the tomb over there—the Lady
Asbury, 18 years old. She's lovely, so cool and smooth." Cammie
rubbed her hand along the marble folds of her robe. "The closed
eyes, the fine nose, all so calm as if someone had poured a liquid
stone over her while she was sleeping to immortalize her beauty."

"I'll bet she was the scandal of the court, flirting with all the
nobles, batting her blue eyes."

"No, everyone loved her and mourned for her. She was gentle
and quiet, but died in the plague epidemic with her husband. See,
on the tomb next to hers; they died the same year. Besides, her eyes
were brown—I would imagine. Please let's go now. Too many people
are pressing themselves upon me."

"And there's so much to show to you in one afternoon. Do you
like to climb towers? I'll show you all of Oxford from above the
earth."

The bell tower in the Magdalen was musty, and the wind slithered
in through the chinks in the wall to whistle in whirlpools around the
circular staircase. The rippled stone stairs tripped their feet in the
furrows as they climbed. Cammie wedged her back into the wall
as she held fast to Dennis's hand. She tried hard not to look down
into the deepening pit below her. "291, 292 . . . Oh, Dennie, wait just
a minute while I catch my breath. How did the priests ever dare to
climb this every day—one false step and Boom!"

"They were just used to it, I guess. Can't you see them like
monkeys scurrying up and down?"

"And swinging from the bell ropes too, I'll bet. Brown fuzzy
little objects, when one goes up the other comes down, just like
weights on a Coo-coo clock. I'd love to pull those bell ropes just
once. The devil gets in me and tickles my fingers until I can feel
them." Cammie leaned over and grabbed one of the twisted cords,
wavering it back and forth. "What would you do to me if I gave it
a short yank?"

"I'd renounce you forever and a day." laughed Dennis, "And
you'd have to face the angry rector by yourself. Upsie daisie, imp.
We're almost there."

The different colleges nestled below them, huddling to shield
each other from the March blast. "That's the college of the Holy
Spirit in front of us. Saint Mary's is to your left. On the other side
of the tower is the town and The High. The tea shops down there
must be full by now. I say there, ducky, would you care for a
spot o' tea?"

"Watch it or I'll retaliate with an Oh, la', la', I'd love it. My
hands are icicles, and my nose may break off at any moment."

"Psychologically you could probably trace the whole problem
back to a fall from an airplane when you were three," said Dennis.
"Either that or some other 'Freudian slip,'" Cammie retorted.
"Ugh: On that pun I suggest we go eat."

The tea shop was stuffed with student wanderers using the
hour as an excuse to warm themselves. Cammie set her tray down
at a corner table and caressed the cup to warm her hands, thawing
out her nose in the steam rising from the tea. Dennis sat on his hands
and waited until the feeling came back into them.

"Why did you come to Oxford to get your degree? I mean
California was right there, and besides it's warmer," Cammie ended
the silence.

"Oh, I don't know. Back home everything seemed so soft and
sunny, like the climate. Religion should have some more bite to it
and vigor. Here even the town is sort of Holy in its loftiness. That's
it, reverent and . . ."

"And unattainable," Cammie interrupted.

"No, maybe incomprehensible in its timelessness, but not un-
reachable; at least I don't believe so," said Dennis.

"But no," Cammie rocked forward on her elbows, "it's precisely
in this timelessness that we can understand whatever is above us.
Everything passes through time, of course—but they leave behind
an eternity in objects and books and things. Even presences of people
who lived centuries ago make themselves heard again. Do you
understand? Like in the cathedral today I understood more than
the inscriptions, there were . . ."

"You mean ghosts?" Dennis asked.
“Well, yes, I guess if you want to call them that.”
“Really, Cammie, do you think the past can speak directly to us? I’ve never heard it.”
“Have you ever listened?”
“Ears are for listening to the present, not the past.”

Dennis ended the discussion and helped Cammie put her coat on. Clouds blotted out the sunset. The day died darkly without its fiery struggle. Snow had started to fall. The flakes dropped, disappeared into the puddles, dropped again, melted to take on a personality only where the alleys offered seclusion. They lost themselves in the open streets.

The windshield wipers of the bus flicked the flakes from the glass as a hand waves an offending strand of hair from before the eyes. The snow came back and piled in humps in the corners. The trip was a short one from Oxford to the divinity college at Cuddeston, from the city to the serenity of the village. The countryside was a patchwork of dark fields and white hollows.

They stopped at the village pub in Cuddeston, the center of all Saturday night activities. The air and the wind were biting, and the thin layer of snow shuffled like feathers under their feet. Dennis ordered the mugs of Lager and sat down beside Cammie in front of the fireplace in the main room. The gas logs tinted the room with a pink which spread from the beige flower-papered walls, from the chintz curtains, to the elite society clustered in groups around the tables and chairs. Seven pairs of eyes followed the couple’s progress into the room and silently classified them in a niche in their minds before returning to the more pressing topics of interest. Two women, covering their bulk with wool plaid skirts and with handmade sweaters, played at keeping up a conversation, gazing intently at their empty glasses, wondering which man would fill them next. Their eyes shifted from group to group vaguely, blearily. An old sea captain in a ragged P-jacket recited adventures exaggerated by memory to two companions while his wife in the corner nodded her grey head contentedly on her bosom. A solitary man stared at the foam on his beer, his mind half a world away while he absently stroked his scraggly-haired dog on the floor. The sound of their talk murmured on, each one blending with that of its neighbor. A calm buzz filled the room. Dennis and Cammie hushed their voices to conform with the hum. The foam tickled up Cammie’s nose, and she sneezed, bringing a cough of disapproval from the solitary man in the opposite corner. “I wonder where he was when I disturbed him.” Cammie lowered her voice still further.

“Probably dreaming of some tropical paradise—in this type of weather.” Dennis too had affected a whisper unknowingly.

“Well let him go back then to his grass hut. He deserves some consolation. He’s practically weeping into his beer.”

They sipped their beers and looked at each other, trying to classify themselves as they had been classified by the other clients. The talk turned to families, to studies, to the French experimental theater, and to the “Ban the Bomb” marchers in London. They philosophized with Sartre and Job, each exploring the other’s mind, seeking a common level, a common denominator. Cammie ran her finger around the inside of the glass and drew abstract designs on the table cloth with the left-over foam which soaked in the cloth and left a temporary blotch. Dennis in his concentration forgot his lighted match and grimaced when it burnt his fingers. He tapped his cigarette ashes off the ashtray and watched an ember blaze red for a second, then fade to grey.

An alarm clock’s buzz cut through the silence like a knife. Cammie started, “What in heaven’s name . . .”

“They’re telling us its time to get out—polite fellows, aren’t they? Let’s go see where you’re to stay. You’ll like Mrs. West. She’s used to taking Cuddeston girls.”

“Oh, and just what is a Cuddeston girl?”

“A friend of a Cuddeston boy, perhaps the future wife of a future minister.” Dennis opened the door on the cold night. Cammie slid her gloved hand along the railing and reached up on tiptoes to stuff the snow down his back.

“Yikes, idiot child, I’ll get even!” They ran down the dirt road, their laughter and shrieks echoing along the sleeping village streets.

“Hey whoa, this is it,” cried Dennis, sliding to a stop in front of the last cottage.

“It has a thatched roof, a real thatched roof. Is Mrs. West round and comfortable, and does she have a cat, a shiny round kitty that rubs in and out of legs?”

“What would you say if I said she was skinny as a bean stalk and owned a cocker spaniel and three chickens?”

“I’d say she didn’t belong in a cottage with a thatched roof, that she was just a specter who rented the house while the owner was gone.”
“There you go with your ghosts again.” Dennis grabbed Cammie to him against the cold and kissed her hard.

“Dennis, please.” She pushed herself away from him.

“Cammie, would you come on down from that tower? I’m here and I want you. I’m real, you know.”

“Yes, I know.” Cammie tried to keep the resignation from her tone. Suddenly she kissed him back with a calculated and learned probing she knew would please him.

Mrs. West opened the door, her broad Yorkshire accent rumbling through the night. “Well don’t just stand there freezin’ the britches off you. Come on in and toast yourselves. I’ve got a spot o’ tea all ready. Lordie, what a couple of children you are, such carrying on is like to rattle the poor skeletons in their graves, and you’ll have the whole neighborhood haunted.”

The cottage with the small stove glowed with Mrs. West’s personality. She had furnished her parlor with her life, African violets that bloomed in defiance of the winter and the coal dust which hung in the air despite daily dusting, an overstuffed coach with lace doilies almost hiding the slipcovers, yellowed wallpaper hung with Biblical parables and photographs of daughters, sons, grandchildren, flowered curtains, and small statues of animals which made a zoo out of every shelf. The Victorian hodge-podge was as much a part of her self as was the orange Tabby which purred in and out of their legs. Mrs. West devoured her words, swallowing each before it was half out of her mouth. When she laughed her red face cracked along familiar paths which remained afterwards as numerous thin white lines. She opened to the two a heart as big as the apron which stretched across her stomach, and she insisted on hearing every detail of the day at Oxford. “You know, we fun up Dennie a good bit around here, he being from the States and all. His accent’s not all so bad as it used to be, but you, dearie, you’re a regular Yank, you are.”

Cammie curled up in the chair with her cup of tea and petted the cat which had jumped up into her lap. She tried to decipher the munched-up sentences of the woman, sometimes losing the trend completely, but gaining the feeling behind them. She watched Dennis, balancing surely his cup of tea on his knee, conversing and smiling a little with Mrs. West. Her own hands trembled a little nervously about the cup as she listened to the unlikely couple, the matron and the student, discuss the village gossip.

Almost before Cammie had realized what was happening, Mrs. West forced Dennis out the door, and had taken a candle to go upstairs, motioning for Cammie to follow. Cammie stood dumb-founded for a second, then picked up her bag to follow the disappearing glittering of the candle to the loft under the roof.

“I’ll call you in time for church,” said Mrs. West “That Dennis of yours is a good lad, thinks like us, has his feet planted firm as the chestnut. You’ll get no flighty talk from him, dearie.” She shut the door and left the girl standing in a room which flickered and changed faces with the glow of the candle.

“Yes,” said Cammie, “no flighty talk, how well I know.” She thrust an experimental finger into the blue china pitcher beside the wash basin and withdrew it with a small cry. Drawing all her stoicism into one effort, she splashed some water on her face, undressed in record time, and after blowing out the candle, groped her way to the many-quilted bed which dominated the tiny room. Her toes curled under from the touch of the bare floor. She flung herself between the scratchy sheets and drew her knees up to her chest, hugging them tightly to her. The snow made no noise, but drifted about the window, seeking some crevice to enter. It built tiny towers on the panes and wormed its way through the cracks to blow in miniature whirlwinds to the floor. Cammie watched it for a time, listening to it whisper stories of the heavens, the stars, its journey to earth. Misty wisps rose from the gathering piles and floated across the room on the wind, sighing. Cammie pulled the cover up over her head and slept in her homemade cave.

The wind had swept the snow off the village height into the valley and field below. The plowed-up plots had become a crystalized river surrounding the village, coming up to the door of the church which was situated between the houses and the Charwell river valley. Dennis scraped his shoes on the mat before the church door, and Cammie shuffled also across the mat, but still her footprints followed her down the aisle in small dripping patches. The service began. Cammie obediently rose, knelt, stood, singing or praying as the occasion called for it. A student cleared his throat, rose, and went to the pulpit to preach the sermon.

He cleared his throat once more, coughed and began his oratory. “In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. The Epistle today was taken from Romans, chapter viii, ‘Brethren, we are debtors—uh—not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.’
I wish to say that while we are bound on earth . . .” The young man coughed and sing-songed on.

Cammie took off her gloves, folded them in her purse, twisted the ring around her finger, and began to count the candles in the chandelier above her, but she lost count a third of the way around each time. She glanced at Dennis who sat still, his hands folded, intent upon the words of his classmate. Perceiving her look he smiled and returned his attention to the sermon. She winked at the rector’s carrot-haired boy who was leaning over three pews ahead of her, cautiously stealing the prayer book from the lap of a dozing parishioner. He started and drew his hand away, then winked back and continued his prank. She straightened her back against the unyielded bench, and selecting a member of the congregation at random she began to fabricate a history about him. “A very important man for the village, undoubtedly the mayor, but no, let’s make him Vice-Secretary-in-Charge-of-Industrialization - and - Suburban-Drainage-of-York-County. Very impressive and of course he must have four children, a proper number for a proper man.”

“. . . and we who have ascertained to place ourselves above the Godhead, to assume that we possess our own souls . . .” The sermon advanced word by word in a never-changing pace.

Cammie let her subject return to his world and retreated into hers again. A sparrow flew from the ground to perch on a limb of a tree outside the window before it flew away. She imagined herself mounted on its back, talking to it, listening and soaring up, up, and finally out of sight.

“For only by chaining yourself to His will, can you enter His kingdom. Let us pray.”

Cammie tumbled from her kingdom and knelt automatically. “You liked the sermon?” Dennis asked after the service.

“Well, he really showed those old Romans.”

“Cammie, he was talking about man’s soul in relation to God.”

“But souls are a method of communication and of escape.”

“I’m afraid you didn’t quite understand.”

“Perhaps I didn’t; perhaps I never shall.” Cammie threw a snowball against a tree, hitting the bottom-most branch.

Dennis put Cammie on the bus to Oxford later that day. You’ll be all right—all alone, I mean.”

“I have my direction safe right in my pocket.”

“I’m sorry there’s only one bus into town on Sundays.”

“Now don’t worry one little bit, I’m a big girl you know, and then I can always ask directions. I thank you, kind sir, one thousand and one times for a splendid weekend.” She dropped a curtsey.

He bowed and kissed her extended hand, “Twas entirely my pleasure, fair lady. Your bus is coming. You haven’t forgotten anything?”

“I’ve checked everything twice.” Cammie lifted a handful of snow high into the air. “To spring, to Paris in the spring.”

“To us in Paris in the spring,” added Dennis lifting his own fist of snow.

“Yes, Good-bye, Dennis,” she called as the bus door closed between them.

She smiled and waved out the window to Dennis until he disappeared with the distance. Cammie sighed almost inaudibly and pulled up her coat collar against the chill of the drafty bus.

“Spring in Paris,” Cammie pictured the city stretching its lazy arms alone the Seine. “How warm and lovely it will be.” Her mind came back to the present. “I must write Dennis a polite note when I get home. I’m sure he’ll understand.”
Last Thursday we built a castle on the gulf.  
We made it dripping sand on top of sand—  
You know the way — and when it was high enough  
We built a wall around its sides to stand  
Against the sea.

And then we started thinking  
Of the ocean and the waves  
Of tide  
And of our castle, soon to be destroyed.

Well, we were disappointed. All our thoughts  
That strove so earnestly to be profound,  
Completely failed. Instead, the castle caught  
A laughing child who fell — you know the way—  
Down.
Isn't it fine that someone has ridden the earth with outstretched thighs, maddening the blood of those virgins who protest their unblinking eyes, suppressing the buds nearly ripe and the murmuring of a soft pipe?

 Doesn't this murder in chaste marble show that the murderer somehow knew all he had need to know?