

1955

## Anna Dietrich

Jane Erb

*Denison University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Erb, Jane (1955) "Anna Dietrich," *Exile*: Vol. 1 : No. 2 , Article 5.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol1/iss2/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

*Jane Erb, sophomore from Columbus, finds peaches and a world traveller a strange combination in . . .*

## ANNA DIETRICH

BY JANE ERB

Red brick flashed past the train windows. Black pyramids of coal lay simmering in the white August sun. Anna Dietrich reached into a paper sack and pulled out another peach. On the seat next to her she had carefully arranged seven peach pits in a pile on a newspaper. The pits were not as lovely as the peach skins, she thought, but still they were satisfying to look at because one could never get such peaches in Vienna. In fact, she had had no peaches like these in all of Europe! But of course, there had been other, more important things to do in Paris or London.

The train slid around a curve and several of the pits slipped to the floor. Anna kicked them under the seat and wriggled her feet into a more comfortable position, leaving her shoes in a half-on, half-off position. Few travelers could do this on a strange trip, she thought; they would be bothered with anxieties as to where to get off and when to get their bags down. But when one has gone to Rome alone and has lived in Vienna without knowing a soul—well, one can enjoy the worldly luxury of relaxing with shoes off.

The train was going to Chicago, but Anna was going on to

Colorado. She had succumbed to the red and yellow travel folders which lured one "to the West, to the land of enchantment, where the skies are not cloudy . . . vacation on a dude ranch . . ." It would be different at least.

Her teeth cut the skin of another peach. The juice ran down her pudgy fingers covered with rings. Some of the juice had stained her ruffled rayon navy suit. It was much too practical; the frivolous dresses she had worn to the operas in Vienna were much more to her liking. Oh, there was no place in the world like Vienna: the music, the gay people, the beer gardens. And Paris was almost as much fun.

Anna could remember traveling through the Alps as a child, taking skiing lessons while her parents were away. How many places she had been—her blue eyes closed, her hand relaxed and a peach rolled from the sack. It fell from her lap to the floor of the car. A sudden lurch of the train caused the peach to roll against her suitcase. Because it was so heavy and awkward, Anna had not bothered to lift it up to a rack. The bag was peculiarly shaped; it was twice as long as it was

wide. Stickers were smeared on all sides and a rope had been tied around it.

She had collected stickers from everywhere and some of the older ones were beginning to peel off. There would be a new sticker, though, to replace the old one; it would be red and yellow with a cowboy and horse on it.

Brown brick of industrial buildings passed by the windows now and the train rumbled to a stop. Anna sat up and looked about. The outskirts of Chicago. She gathered up her coat and the bag of peaches and moved the suitcase a little closer to her legs. She sat very still in her seat, trying at the same time to wake up and to think how she would get from one train station to another in twenty minutes. She had been so confident in Europe. Why shouldn't she have been, for she had gambled at Monte Carlo, gone to the Riviera. She had met royalty; she was a world voyager and she could do anything.

By the time the train finally stood in the dark terminal, Anna was standing in the aisle of the car, bent at the waist so she could slide her bag along with her. The person behind her kept kicking the suitcase so she would move up the passageway. Somehow she struggled up the

ramp, ignoring two of the peaches that fell from the sack and rolled away from her feet. Breathing heavily she reached the huge rotunda of the station.

Which way should she go? Pulling out her ticket she read slowly, her lips forming the sounds, Parm-a-lee.

What was that? The loudspeaker: "Trainloading on track two for Garymichigancity-bentonbarbor and Detroit!" Was that her train? All these strange names of cities . . . Parmalee: Where did a person get one? A woman carrying a baby jostled Anna and the paper sack began to tear. She shifted her coat, dropped the suitcase and grasped the peaches more firmly. Her hands, still sticky from peach juice, annoyed her. "Trainloading on tracktwo . . . Kansascityst.louis." Parmalee . . . Perhaps she should just stop anyone and ask them, or was there a Traveler's Aid? The loudspeaker blared again; was that her train they were calling? She had better hurry. Parmalee . . . "and points west" . . . the sack was tearing again and she had already lost two lovely peaches and Vienna never had peaches like . . . another person bumped her. She gazed about. She felt rather sick and bewildered . . . maybe she had better . . . find a seat and . . . sit down.