EXPERIMENT 7.

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Since 1956, Experiment has kept appearing irregularly, once or twice a year with 'things' contributed by the students of the University. Of names which appeared in past issues, we remember J.K. Baxter, Charles Doyle, Barry Mickle, and Peter Bland, who recently won an Australian poetry award. Another name is that of Gordon Challis, whose 'Black King' this year, like his four poems last year, was judged the 'Best Poetry Entry' by Professor Joan Stevens.

R. Amato's 'Window Watching', like his 'Summer Night' of last year, was, in Professor Stevens' opinion, the best prose piece submitted. It is, however, pleasing to note a new group of younger writers whose contributions show promise and are of a good standard. 'The First Months' by P. I. Wilkinson is particularly distinguished by its taut, effective writing, and 'A Memory' by A. L. Wendt has the merit of being really about something.

We wish to thank Professor Stevens for her kind cooperation in judging the pieces submitted. Contributions for further issues are invited.

The Editor.
THE FIRST MONTHS

There was a big crowd down at the North End of Marine Drive, - a big crowd braving the raw, biting wind which blew in across St.Aubin's Bay. This annoyed me, because when I feel cold I feel my age. Besides, a wind like that had no business blowing at that time of year. We had come to Jersey twenty years before hoping that it would always be warm in May.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking now. He would shortly unveil the plaque "To the Men and Women of Jersey who Suffered in the World War 1939-45". I turned my head slightly. Mattie, my wife, stood there, gently shivering despite the heavy fur coat she wore, listening intently to the speech. (Could it be that woman has the greater power for sustained concentration?) Absently, I looked out over the promenade, watching a scarcely discernible sun shine grudgingly on the grey - buff shape of Elizabeth Castle out in the Bay.

Was it a sense of occasion which caused my mind to wander? Mattie might have put it down to a perverse determination on my part not to concentrate on the proceedings. But, I thought, why should I? As early as my somewhat incriminating days as an under-graduate at Cambridge I had vowed that when I became an old man I would indulge in at least one privilege of advanced age, - that of thinking and doing exactly what I chose to do on the spur of the moment, irrespective of time or place. Perverse? Perhaps. But remember one thing. Both the young and the old can afford the luxury of an undisciplined mind without having to take the consequences. In my years as tutor in economics, first at Manchester then at the L.S.E., I was confronted on many occasions by worried, intense undergraduates trying to grapple with the problem of having extreme ideas on the one hand and the laudable if impracticable desire to accept the consequences of those ideas on the other. Here's where the old have it over the young. They realize, unless they are self-delusive, that the question of responsibility does not arise.

I found myself trying to relive the outstanding incidents of the Occupation. My thoughts lacked coherence and my growing suspicion that my memory was failing was confirmed. My recollections of the greater part of those tense, drab, debilitating years with their occasional moments of humour and horror were now largely an amorphous blur, without sense of time or shape. Yet one or two incidents, particularly of the most memorable early months, were as clear as if they had occurred yesterday.
Neither my wife nor myself had any previous connection with Jersey or the other islands before we retired there in 1936 to escape the English winter. We soon felt at home, however. I think I can fairly say that both Mattie and I have always had a certain penchant for making friends. She because of her rare combination of vivacity and gift for understanding. He possibly because of my disinclination to talk shop ... We settled into a small bungalow at Greve d’Azette. My desire to vegetate and grow hot-house tomatoes was soon thwarted when Harry de la Hay, the Bailiff of the island, persuaded me to sit in as economic adviser on a committee trying to persuade the Jersey potato growers to take precautions against the Colorado Beetle Scourge which threatened to invade the island. Harry assured me that my duties would be light. For my own part, though I had only been in retirement a little over a year, I had soon realised the truth of Louis XIV’s maxim that there is no harder labour than idleness. It was thus with ill-disguised enthusiasm that I accepted. It never occurred to me, of course, that my association with the Colorado Beetle Committee would lead to my participation in events the likes of which had not been seen by the cloistered island community in 200 years.

The May morning of the unveiling ceremony took my thoughts back to the same month of 1940. It had been a good early potato season that year. Our only trouble was lack of shipping. One morning, shortly before Dunkirk, a group of angry potato growers gathered down town in Royal Square. From all over the island they had brought their crops .... stocky, cloth-capped small farmers from the L’Etacq, with their horse-driven wooden carts; prosperous farmers from St.Lawrence with their shining new V8 trucks; Harry de la Hay’s neighbours from Swiss Valley .... There they were, their easy-going self-centred world circumscribed by such activities as the vraise festival, the annual stud-cattle show, and the potato harvest. Now they were annoyed. They stood there in the Square huddled in grumbling groups; the L’Etacq crowd were muttering away in old Norman patois; the men of St.Lawrence, with clenched fists, shouting themselves hoarse, periodically shuffling in and out of "The Major Pierson" to relieve their thirst; the Bailiff’s neighbours were impatiently watching the door of the Royal Court. Where were the ships? Eventually old Harry emerged from the Royal Court to remind them that there was a war on, and that shipping was very scarce. Normally he would have been in his element. A farmer himself, he was only really at home when presiding at a cattle show, or when displaying his prize geits to his friends, among whom he could fairly include at least half the island’s farming population. He belonged to that breed of squires with a common touch, and the de la Hay family had been in the forefront of island affairs at least since the Civil War. He looked an im-
pressive figure, standing on the running board of one of the trucks to address the crowd. One saw a craggy heavily-built figure clad in plus fours, with a tweed waistcoat covering a rotund belly nourished for 68 years with rich Jersey bacon, butter and cider. Harry's somewhat elongated face spoke of gregariousness and good cheer and there was an engaging twinkle in his eyes. His mouth betrayed a man who liked what he knew; - a man who would act predictably with a lethargic competence so long as no unfamiliar problem arose. Here was a product of a kindly environment, where life formed a series of pleasantly recurring cycles with little variation to protrude upon this predictable pattern. I remembered wondering that day in the Square as I watched Harry in his folksy manner, addressing his fellow farmers, just how he would react to something entirely outside his previous experience. His performance prompted my suspicion of this character flaw. For Harry was having great difficulty in convincing the crowd of the realities of the situation. Perhaps I am being unjust, for all of us during that spring of 1940 were struck by a feeling of unreality. Only a few weeks before I had seen an advertisement in the "Manchester Guardian" for Jersey as "the ideal resort for wartime holidays this summer". Within a month we were to hear the German guns booming across from Normandy.

The Lieutenant Governor's speech was taking longer than I thought. I caught a reference to the memory of "the late Bailiff, Mr. de la Hay, upon whom so much of the burden of the Occupation had fallen". I looked around the assembled crowd. Many of the old protagonists were present ... Cotonou, Arbinier, de Roche, Wilmot, even old Bichelles, now nearly crippled with arthritis.

The afternoon of June 19, 1940, came back vividly to me. I had been asked to attend an informal meeting, out at the Bailiff's Farm, of various leading citizens of Jersey, including several members of the Royal Court and the Deliberative States. The war had at last become a reality. Dunkirk and Paris had already fallen, and the tide of the Third Reich was now covering Normandy. Cherbourg had been occupied only the day before. On the morning of the 19th the islanders received, in stunned and unbelieving silence, the first news of the British Government's decision not to defend the Channel Islands.

Harry's farm was in the north end of Swiss Valley; a pleasant three-mile drive from Greve d'Azette. As I made my way up the long oak and plane-lined drive to the homestead I glanced appreciatively at Harry's prize Jersey stud bulls. The animals rhythmically munching the luxuriant grass, the high well-tended hedgerows, the gently-swaying trees and the low
sun-basked hills beyond, prompted me for a minute to forget the seriousness of the task ahead. My momentary escapism was interrupted by the demanding sound of a horn from behind. Through my rear vision I could see old Cotonou glowering impatiently at my aging slow-going Morris ahead. He could not, of course, pass me on the drive, and it was with much amusement that I eased the pressure on my accelerator. The Germans might be on our doorstep and Cotonou might own half the island, but I was damned if I would give him quarter. Not unnaturally he appeared displeased when we finally drew level on the lawn in front of Harry's house. Alighting from his car with a speed which could only mean agitation for a man of his seventy-odd years he looked, as he brushed past me with a curt nod, like nothing so much as a vulture in moult. He was fastidiously and expensively dressed, carrying a homburg and black gloves in his hand. But this finery did little to soften the claw-like hands, the covetous gimlet eyes, the long bald dome-shaped head and the mouth like the thin edge of an axe.

We were the last to arrive. I looked around the substantial homely drawing room noting those of the gathering who could be expected to be vocal. Besides Cotonou, generally considered the island's wealthiest businessman, a jurat on the Deliberative States and a life member of the Royal Court, there was Aramiere, the suave but persuasive and efficient Procureur de Roi and a leading barrister in St. Helier; seated immediately opposite him was de Roche the Avocat, a man with an ability to garb an innate shrewdness and opportunism with an appearance of rustic simplicity. On a sofa in a far corner of the room sat the old Viconte, Bichelles, his squat legs crossed and his expressive spatulate hands playing absentmindedly with a gold watch chain. He reminded me of an ancient badger in its den awaiting its prey. Age had imposed physical passivity, but had given as compensations an infinite patience and a bear-trap mind. Widely read and mentally alert, Paul Bichelles possessed the fluidity of outlook of a man twice his age; he enjoyed exchanging provocative views with me on some of the finer points of Keynesian economics. Already middle-aged during the Great War, he had served in Northern France, and had no love for the Roche. In this, as in many other respects, he resembled the tiger, Clemenceau. He beckoned me, and I sat myself beside him on the sofa. "Before we are through the next few days", he muttered, "the Bailiff is going to curse his decision not to retire last year."

Harry was standing close to a heavy table near his great
stone fireplace, as if groping for support. They say a cock
cries best in its own back yard but this case was an exception.
With a supreme effort he was trying to quell the shake in his
voice as he outlined Whitenall's scheme for evacuating all
troops and those civilians who wished to leave. Jersey had
not known invasion since 1781, and had never before surrender-
ed without a fight. Now it seemed the door to the chicken run
was to be opened to the fox without so much as a squeak. I
felt a deep compassion for the man standing there. The famil-
iar world, which he had served adequately and honourably in
twenty years of peace was about to fall around him like a deck
of cards, and fate had decreed that he should preside over the
process. I remembered Chamberlain's speech on September 3,
1939 when he said that the War spelt the end to everything he
had worked for and held dear.

"All civilians who wish to leave Jersey will be told to
register their names at the Town Hall tomorrow", he said.
"Preference will be given to those born outside the Channel
Islands."

"Is Your Honour counting on the arrival of sufficient
ships to evacuate all those who wish to leave?" asked Arbin-
iere, the Procureur.

"All remaining troops are to be given priority over
civilians", replied the Bailiff. "Besides I cannot answer
your question until I have the list of names tomorrow night."

I could see that old Cotonou, already choleric when he
arrived, was now clawing away at the arm-rests of his chair,
his mouth tight and quivering. When he sprang out of his
chair and stood there pausing momentarily for effect I knew
we were in for trouble.

"I firmly believe", he hissed, "that we could not poss-
ibly be in a more miserable situation than we are at this
moment. Not only has London deserted us, but we now appear
to be calmly accepting the fact that the majority of our
women and children are to be left on the island to be ravished
and murdered by the Boche. Are we men with guts or are we a
crowd of ageing mares put out to grass? Never in our island's
history have we given up without a fight. It seems a bleak
reflection on the competence of us all, and not the least of
the Bailiff, that we are sitting here on our flot backsides
like quivering jellies talking of arrangements which should
have been made months before. The British Government, from
whom we have a traditional right to expect protection, has
left us exposed to looters and rapists, and now we are told
the troops are to be withdrawn at the expense of our civilians".
He paused again. Cotonou enjoyed the centre of the stage, and had always had a keen sense of the dramatic. "We must immediately demand that the War Office keep the troops here and send us further aid. If they refuse we will show them that our home guard won't stand idly by and let the Germans ride roughshod over our island."

It took a minute for the audience to recover. Did I detect a slight look of satisfaction on Cotonou's face? Bichel- les had once told me of Cotonou's father, a redoubtable domestic tyrant held in respect by the whole island, and in fear by his family, particularly his son. All his life Cotonou had tried to ape his father, and this, I felt, was the root of such outbursts of aggression as this.

His words were not without their effect on some of the gathering. In fact, as one by one his supporters leapt to their feet to develop his argument it appeared that he had carried the meeting.

De Ville, a farmer from Vinchelz de Bes was a veteran of the Great War and his opinions carried weight. "I for one will not be driven off my land by the Krauts", he boomed, banging the table with his fists. "We have a home guard, we have bullets and explosives. At the very least we can make ourselves useful by blowing up the port, the forts, the airfield and all main roads!"

A deep effect was made on the meeting by Viner, leader of the small Jewish community in St. Helier. "I intend to be sure that my wife and children are on the first evacuee ship", he said. "We know what will happen to the Jews when the Gestapo arrive. But I am also a Jersey citizen, and will be prepared to stay if you decide to fight it out. We all realise that we can delay the Germans at the most a few days. But should we not, for our own self-respect, at least make a gesture of resistance?"

Hard on the heels of Viner came Cotonou again. "I am glad there are some men left on this island. If those in charge cannot handle the War Office or Whitehall, and are prepared to treat this business like a Sunday School picnic I suggest that they resign immediately."

"Shut up, Cotonou!"

Slowly Cotonou turned around to face old Paul. The Vicomte began to speak very slowly, measuring each word.

"I am an old soldier and I know the meaning of War. What is more to the point I have seen the effects of war on defenceless civilians. Most of you gentlemen have had the same experience.
I ask, - no, I implore, you to think coolly and reasonably on what this means. Remember too, they are your own wives, your own children and grandchildren, who will be involved this time, not some poor unfortunates in the Pas de Calais, or the Boriginage for whom you can only afford to feel a passing symp-athy. To win wars, or to save many more lives, non-combatants must on occasions be sacrificed. But in our case what would be gained? You talk extravagantly, - many of you with the highest motives - of blowing up roads, forts, and the like. The price you will have to pay will be reprisals against yourselves, your families and your property. Make no mistake, an enemy that can sweep across France in a matter of days will be stronger than y

"I cannot believe that by realistically refusing to indulge in heroics we are abrogating our self-respect as men. The situation would be entirely different on the battlefield, for there the consequences of taking needless risks are normally borne by the individual alone. Here, however, we must put our duty to our families above all else. We are directly responsible for 50,000 people and such gestures of resistance place their safety in jeopardy. There will only be time and space to evacuate a few thousand of these at the most, as His Honour well knows."

"I must apologise to Mr. Cotocou for so rudely pouring cold air on the warmth of his eloquence. But he must realise that in this emergency 'those in charge' includes every man in this room. We have no time to indulge in factions. No question of 'handling' the War Office or Whitehall arises. We must accept their decision. England faces invasion itself and cannot afford to waste troops on what at the best would be another Dunkirk, and at the worst a wholesale slaughter. We are on our own now, to bargain with the Occupation force when it arrives as best we can. What small strength we can muster will derive from our unity alone. And I hope that the Deliberative States tonight will sustain the Bailiff in his most difficult task by declaring their unqualified confidence in him."

At this point Brigadier Wilmot rose to his feet for the first time. Wilmot, honorary constable for the parish of St. Owen, and the only other non-native Channel Islander in the room besides myself, had retired to Jersey in the 1920's after service in the Sudan, India and Northern France. In the past I had tended to dismiss him as one of pukka type found snoring under "The Times" in any of the more crusty London clubs. One might expect him to threaten to reach for the nearest rifle over the mantelpiece and challenge all comers in such a situation as this. In fact he was to reveal some of the qualities which must have made him a first class officer in his time.
He agreed with the Vicomte, that the War Office was justified in withdrawing the troops and that any talk of defending the island was unrealistic. "We have no heavy guns, and very limited supplies of ammunition; Elizabeth Castle, Mont Orgueil, and our other forts are largely museum pieces. Moreover, almost all our young men have long since gone. That leaves a home guard comprised of old men with little more than pitchforks to defend themselves. To organise a guerrilla force for sabotage work would be equally unrealistic. Our island is sufficiently small for reprisals to be one hundred per cent effective, and it would be almost impossible to hide a single man in the hills from a determined pursuer. Our last line of escape, the sea, is, as you all know, closed. Nearly all our small boats have been sent to St. Malo and Dunkirk. Furthermore, the position of Jersey and the other islands makes us of little strategic importance to Hitler. You can rest assured that the occupation of the Channel Islands will be largely of psychological value to him."

Now it was de Roche's turn. By this stage it was fairly clear that the meeting was in agreement with him when he said, "We have no alternative but to collaborate with the Germans and hope we receive fair treatment in return. We do not know what is ahead. All we know is that we are in no position to make a conditional surrender, and any concessions can only come from the other side."

The Vicomte and I stayed on at the Bailiff's request after the meeting had dispersed. Harry, worn out by his effort to appear in control of proceedings during the meeting, had now slumped back in his chair, staring mutely at a portrait of Sir Phillip de Carteret above the fireplace.

"You will have to stand by me all the way," he said very slowly, "because I cannot do this alone. I was never meant for a job like this, but I can't resign now. De Roche was right. We'll have to collaborate. But I keep asking myself what name our grandchildren will give us."

The strains of the national anthem closing the unveiling ceremony brought me back to the present. A brief round of courtesies and Mattie and I were driving home through the narrow unpretentious winding streets of St. Helier. Mattie remarked that I might have at least gone through the motions of listening to the speeches, instead of standing there like a verger listening to the same sermon for the third successive week. This was her way of asking where my thoughts had been and we plunged into a mutual recollection of the eleven days between June 19 and July 1 when Jersey surrendered to the Germans. Our overriding memory was one of confusion and
chaos. I remembered my trying to persuade Nattie to return to England with the evacuees and her emphatic refusal. We both recalled joining most of the populace of St. Helier down on the pier to watch the first evacuee ship sail. There were the inevitable heart-wrenching scenes as families parted company, those who had to leave carrying all their belongings they could cram into the regulation one suitcase per person. Some boarded the ship, then decided not to leave after all. Many of the evacuees had to leave their furniture, silverware, clothes and pets with neighbours. This was a time when friendships were put to the severest test. By the end of the week there were nearly 500 unoccupied houses in St. Helier, already largely stripped by neighbours or by thieves. The police were nearly all engaged in supervising the evacuation. Shopkeepers closed down and boarded up their windows; abandoned cars lined the quayside, and untended cattle roamed the streets. As the panic and confusion subsided the town appeared to return to some semblance of normality. Then on Monday the 24th the first German planes were spotted, flying high overhead; on the following day they swooped low over the chimney pots of the town apparently to create an atmosphere of alarm. We organised air raid squads. The morning of the 26th was fine and cloudless. I was walking along the sands in the inner harbour. It was low tide and I was checking mooring facilities for what few small boats remained. The sands were not deserted. I could see an elderly man walking a fine-looking St. Bernard dog; a young mother sat sunning herself while her infant children made sand castles; an old woman was taking the air. The populace had not been forbidden on the beach, but were warned to stay near to some shelter. Suddenly a group of planes flew in from the direction of the sea. They were flying very low this time. I yelled for everyone to take cover. A spray of machine gun bullets glazed over the stone pier out ahead. I dived under the hull of a small yacht lying high and dry about 12 feet away. I lay there gasping for breath, watching long thin clouds of sand and splintered shells rising within a fraction of a second as the machine gun’s fire punctured the beach like a giant lethal sewing machine running through thin cloth. Then the deafening roar of the planes gave way to the more muffled sound of bombing up in the town. Then came the sound of horrible piercing screams; I sprang to my feet and saw a few yards away the old lady writhing in agony, her intestines perforated with bullets; the young mother lay stunned and spreadeagled across the dead body of one of her children; the other child lay, miraculously untouched, partly buried in sand; the old man lay dead, face down in the wet sand, and alongside him was the corpse of his dog, blood oozing in profusion from its mouth.

On the morning of 1 July an ultimatum was received, ordering white crosses to be painted at certain spots on the island, and all public buildings to be decked with white flags. "If
these signs of peaceful surrender are not observed", it read, "heavy bombardment will follow." Harry de la Hay, now sworn in as Civil Governor, lost no time in complying with the instructions. That afternoon the first German force landed at St.Peter's airport. The silent crowd in Royal Square saw then received by a man who appeared to have aged twenty years in the short space of two weeks. Mattie and I agreed that this man was unrecognisable as the Harry we had known so short a time before.

The day after the unveiling ceremony an item in the "Jersey Evening Post" provided a further stimulant to my recollections. It read:

"Major-General Hartmut von Sparrenburg, formerly Commandant of Jersey 1940-1944 and of the Channel Islands as a whole 1943-44, was released from Bremervörde internment camp today. It is understood that he will join his wife in Hamburg, where they will make their home. Major-General von Sparrenburg was recalled from the Channel Islands late in 1944 for alleged complicity in the bomb plot against Hitler."

My first meeting with von Sparrenburg took place some six months after the surrender of the Channel Islands. It was about 8.30 in the morning and I was in the process of leaving for town for a meeting of the Finance Committee, one of eight similar bodies set up by the Deliberative States, with German permission, to deal with the essential departments of the island's life during the Occupation. A heavy sound of boots on the front doorstep and a sharp knock left no doubt as to our callers. I opened the door to find Oberleutnant Koessler, the Commandant's A.D.C. With a courtesy we had come to expect of our new overlords I was informed that "Generalleutnant von Sparrenburg wished to see me if this was convenient". On the drive to Government House, where the Commandant had taken up residence, I assembled my thoughts and tried to work out the reason for this "invitation". Whatever the reason I was determined to take the opportunity of pressing our claim for certain essential supplies, the lack of which had been the worst aspect of the Occupation so far. The fears of Cotonou and others that the Occupation would bring an orgy of rape and atrocities were entirely unfounded. Even De Ville was forced to admit that the German troops were among the best disciplined and orderly he had seen. The Commandant dealt with sporadic acts of plunder and attempted rape with swift ruthlessness. In the previous week two of his own troops had been caught looting a house on the outskirts of St. Helier. There followed a brief interrogation and trial; then they were shot. Apart from the shortage of tea, drugs and other essentials, the islanders suffered most from the restric-
tions imposed by long series of official proclamations which appeared, declaring a curfew and forbidding the possession of firearms, sale of spirits, the use of private cars and the like. Perhaps the hardest of all was the closure of all communications between Jersey and the other islands.

The presence of large numbers of military police and plain-clothes Gestapo made us realise that Hitler attached an importance to the Channel Islands out of all proportion to their size and strategic value. We learnt later that he had an intense interest in his new "protectorate" on the Channel Shore - the only piece of British territory he ever occupied. He called it his "glasshouse" and boasted of his "model administration" in the islands. Because of this, and the fact that we never failed to co-operate with the Germans provided their demands were fair and reasonable, our position until 1942 was entirely different from that of the rest of occupied Europe. Many people do not believe me when I tell them we were permitted to say prayers for the welfare of the British Royal Family and for the British Empire in church. More important, the Germans allowed the essential committees set up by the States to function without interference. However, we were continually harassed by demands which were to become more and more unreasonable in the latter part of the Occupation. We were weighed down from the beginning by a mass of new problems. Work had to be found for those formerly engaged in the tourist trade; the need for keeping children off the streets placed great strains on the diminished teaching staff and accommodation; several hundred people formerly dependent on pensions from England had to be provided for; the whole system of agriculture on the island had to be changed, for now that English supplies were cut off we were forced to grow our own food or face starvation; under the terms of the Hague Convention the expenses of the Occupation force had to be paid for by the states; the black market had to be kept within bounds.

Some of the island leaders reacted to the Occupation in unexpected ways. The Bailiff had surpassed all expectations in dealing with the Germans. One by one he resisted the German demands with surprising tenacity. In his near impossible task as buffer between the Occupation Powers and the civilian population he never spared himself, though his efforts were to cause his premature death. Cotonou had wasted no time in making himself agreeable to the commandant despite his sabre-rattling at the meeting out on the Bailiff's farm. If the Commandant was the judge of men he was reputed to be, Cotonou would be given very short shrift.

The car came to a sharp halt outside the massive stone
walls of Government House. I was ushered into the Commandant's office through a long gauntlet of heel-clicking guards and aides.

"Herr Readhead, Herr Kommandant"

Von Sparrenburg, alone in the room was standing against the substantial oak desk until recently the personal property of the former Lieutenant Governor. He was clutching a bunch of papers, his arms folded, pensively gazing at his shining jack boots. A balding, tall man of late middle-age his manner indicated a distaste of office work. I noticed the medals on his chest - the Iron Cross (first class), the Deutches Kreuz, the Diestauszeichnung, the Pour la Merite, evidence of a long career as a combat officer in the Wehrmacht. The cut of his jaw spoke of a man of iron, and one who was accustomed to instant obedience. He would place little value on human life if tactics demanded its sacrifice. When the Bailiff protested to him against the bombing and machine gunning of civilians during the days immediately prior to Jersey's surrender he had merely shrugged his shoulders. This was a military incident, and there the matter ended for him. Despite the protests of the Bailiff and the States, he had summarily handed over the remaining Jews in St.Nazier to the Gestapo. Among them was Viner, who failed to get away in time. He later went to the gas chambers at Buchenwald.

Another side to the Commandant was revealed at the St. Helier primary school prizegiving, when he insisted on presenting the prizes, participated vigorously from the sideline in the sports events, and granted the children a day's free holiday.

The farmers saw him as a squire at heart, not unappreciative of their problems. On one occasion he ordered a shipload of super-phosphate, which kept them in fertilizer for the duration of the war. He developed a liking for the local Jersey cider, and sent samples to friends all over the continent.

Despite his moments of informality the Commandant would stand no transgression on his authority. The Gestapo, whom he regarded with ill-disguised contempt, kept strictly within their own territory, after a series of stormy scenes, which were soon common knowledge to the whole island. This factor undoubtedly made the Occupation more bearable.

The only Channel Islander who ever succeeded in putting Sparrenburg in his place was Dame Harries of Sark. The day after the occupation of Guernsey a German motor torpedo boat landed at Sark, and a party announced itself at the Dame's
house. In a somewhat tense scene in her drawing room lasting ten minutes, (during which the German officers were pointedly not asked to be seated), Dame Harries reprimanded them for trampling over her lawns; she told them she regarded their stay as very temporary, and that they would not be received in future without express invitation from her, or formal communication from the Commandant. A few days later, Sparrenburg went over to Sark himself: before his audience with the Dame was through he had apologised for his officers’ “lack of taste”.

As I entered his office the Commandant beckoned me to sit down.

"Mr. Readhead, I have intended to make your acquaintance for some time. Jersey is fortunate in having the services of a man with your grasp of financial problems." His conversation continued in this agreeable tone. He surprised me by telling me of his early interest in economics. "I spent three years studying the subject at the University of Halle, though I was an indifferent performer", he said. A faint mark on his cheek told me that his University career had included more than economics. He moved across the room and I noticed for the first time his slight limp. As if anticipating my curiosity, he told me that he had been wounded during the break through at Gorlice under Von Mackensen in 1915. This led on to a very nostalgic recount of his life with his Panzer corps on the Russian front. "Now", he said, thinking aloud, "I have an island of old people, children, and a few cows." There appeared the suggestion of a smile on his face. "You see, Mr. Readhead, I am no more at home in my present role than your Bailiff is in his."

There followed a long discussion on the work of the finance committee and of the introduction of Reichskreditmarks into the island currency. I pointed out the evil possibilities if the Jersey monetary system was over-inflated by German Occupation currency. He listened conscientiously but said there was little he could do to regulate its inflow.

When I came to the question of essential supplies he listened with some impatience. He had heard the same arguments many times before. He said, however, as I was leaving, "I fully realise the attitude of your islanders to our presence and I am alive to your difficulties. But you must realise that I am suspended between my duty to my men, your demands, and instructions from Berlin. I can only assure you that I will do the best I can."

The Commandant kept his word. Though he had on occasions
to enforce harsh orders from Berlin he undoubtedly saved Jersey from many of the hardships and horrors suffered by other occupied countries.

EPILOGUE

Fortunately though we were in many respects, the Occupation became progressively less bearable. Our wireless sets were taken away in 1942. This was followed by an order for the deportation to Germany of all non-natives of the Channel Islands, though my wife and myself were not included. Worse was to come. Slave labour was imported to build up fortifications on the Island. Half starved inmates would sneak out in the night to rob and, if need be, kill. They created a reign of terror in the island until the German garrison was strengthened to keep them in control. They placed further strain on our dwindling resources. For the last eighteen months we faced semi-starvation. The island was stripped of its trees to provide fuel. We came to dread the winters, run down as we were through lack of food and warmth. Just as pernicious was the drabness of life, our diet unvaried, our movements inhibited, and the small amusements and other compensations which constitute the border line between living and existence denied to us. Were it not for the arrival of a Red Cross ship in the last months I doubt whether we would have survived. The one of our number who had borne the heaviest burden did not survive. Harry died in 1942. Perhaps this was for the better. For to have lived to see the condition to which his island was reduced by 1945 would have been the final ignominy.
My prison of clay ringed with the gorse of your heart
Crown of the king of the Jews
Je me sui le ve du meun
And wish that you had too
Twin of soul if not of birth
But the sword of sex lies between
(Like the ambassador who beds a queen)

Democles, Dann Coles
Metempsychosis in nooperancy
Round and round went the dirty big wheel
Scholarship is dusty
Beckett's read, Shakespeare's dead
Ionesco lost his head
With which I listen to Hindemith at Paraparauum

One o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock, dam you
You trod on my toe
Civitas Dei kicks in my womb of brain
There is not room for both of us
Et cum ad flumen advenisset, iurusit
John the Baptist and JKB
Revelations and a cage wide open for criticism
Student apathy and lethargy

To be drowned in wine
That of the binge and of the host
(But made in Hawkes Bay, even if it was by monks)
Get thee to a nunnery
And the black fellow murdered her because this other
joker you see pinched her handkerchief and he went grey and we all streamed out into old
Courtenay Place and missed the bus and so had
fish and chips in the bus shed and an old bitch
said 'Wouldn't you like to eat that somewhere else'.

I live alone in the depths and darkness of the sludge
of my brain
'You know my dear it positively oozed up between our
toes!
Laudate, laudate, laudate.
No, inqui.
THE SONG OF THE WHITE HERON

Sing no more the songs of praising
Dance no more with echoes raising
Sing and dance, no more, no more.

Thus spoke the silent sorrows of a saddened muse;
The waters were silent then and the stillness which
descended
Hovering like an Autumn mist over damp marshes
Was met only by the gentle calling of the nightbird
And the occasional lapping of ripples,
Washing over the drowned man's feet.
But the muse, looking eastward, cried for the seas
to hear,

Where are the winds of yesterday?

And then the winds of invitation came whistling
And a song of depression rose from the icy waves,
Beating on the sharp stark shore
Until even living beings were devoid of reality
As flesh and bone decayed through the essence of
importance
And a mirror-moon once more reflected
Only an empty earth crying for another life.

Subdue the winds, subdue the muse,
The silent sorrows sang,

Sing once more the songs of praising
Dance once more with echoes raising
Sing and dance, once more, once more.
By Richard J.M. Shaw

PICASSO

At dawn
A drifting image dwelling
Awhile in the harsh grey streets
Hovering an instant over a placid sea.
Visions of rain
Lashing against lamp-post,
The world is hushed
By a thousand strange forms
Moving shadowless across a leaden sky.
Now see this dreamer build
The scaffold of his painted world,
Hate and love gape from this womb
Lying like the streets
A living tomb:
Yet who will hear his cry
When none but dead men fly.
By A.L. Wendt.

A MEMORY

I am an old man now, about to die in a foreign land—a
land of my own choosing. How well I remember the days of my
childhood spent in my homeland, which now seems so far away.
A tree grows, blossoms, bears fruit, and after many a blessed
year, dies. My life has been like that of a tree. And now
I have reached those last unfruitful years. Memories, the
last remnants of the joyfilled stream of my childhood, come
fluttering into my mind like beautiful white butterflies—now
here, now there, and then gone.

I remember Faualo so well, an old warrior and the hero of
my first fifteen years. To me he was an endless source of
wonderful stories. They flowed from him like a stream, some-
times like a flood, and at times like the silver tingling of
water as it rushes over smooth pebbles. And to me, then a
child, he would never die, and we would always sit together in
the quiet evenings and he would dazzle the moon, the lonely
stars, and my listening ears, with stories which echoed the
past—a past which I never dreamt before could have existed.

Every morning I would awaken to the glory of a new day
with the voice of Faualo as he sang a morning hymn. He al-
ways sang as if it was the last song he would ever sing, loud
and mournful like the hollow booming of a lali calling the
villagers to a funeral. And each green morning I would sit
and listen, happy in the knowledge that Faualo was still there.

On many nights as I made my way to Faualo's fale, the
moon came with me; large, golden and smiling. The birds
were quiet as if they too were waiting for the stories to be-
gin. The wind, the cloud, the trees, and the flowers were all
hushed, burdened with evening.

One evening as I entered Faualo's fale, he was lying as
usual on a sleeping mat, his head resting on a bamboo ai. I
can still see him now, a lovable, wrinkled old man. His head
shiny, as if hair had never grown on it; his huge body bent
and wrinkled like the scrawny trunk of the gatea tree that stood
behind his house; his eyes bright like the flood-washed pebbles
in a stream, and looking so alive and mischievous that one
would think they had been trapped into staying in so old and
weathered body.

'Good evening, father,' I greeted him in my customary fas-
non as I walked with bowed head towards him over the pebbled
door.

'Hello, my son. Sit down.' His voice was deep, and
his words flowed out with the soft, smooth sound of wind skimming across the waters of a shallow lake. I sat down cross-legged, facing him.

'Always on time, eh? Always on time.' He smiled and his face rippled and lit up with a mischievous glow. 'That white school-teacher of yours must be training you to be punctual.'

'Yes, father. Both sermons and the strap he uses to teach us to be on time. Yesterday he flogged a boy for arriving late, and then he went into a sermon on why we Samoans must learn the value of punctuality,' I said, remembering bitterly that I was the boy who had been flogged.

Then with a thoughtful nod the old man continued, 'The white man is a queer person. He places a great influence on punctuality and always tries to do everything on time. It's funny seeing them compete with time. He invented the clock, and now it has imprisoned them. It's driving so many of them mad.' Then he was silent, and seemed to be gazing into the future, observing with pity the doom that was to come to the white man. Child as I was, I shuddered, and asked myself if my people were going to end up the same way now that the influence of the white man was changing our way of life.

The voice of Faualo echoed in my ears and I awoke.

'The white man comes to our country on big ships, builds his houses here, and then tries to impose the laws of his own land upon us. Only a few try to understand our way of life, most come here with the idea that we are savages who should be educated. Yet when he teaches us, he tries to make us recognize his way of life as being superior to that of ours. That's what the white man is trying to do to you young people. They are educating you to fit in with their way of life. A white missionary tried to do that to me once and I played along.' He stopped, and I could see him as a boy, trying to imitate the missionary. Then I saw myself, trying to do the same thing. Where was I going to end? I wanted him to talk more about the white man.

'Father,' I asked, 'why is it that the white boy in our class does not want to play with us?'

He smiled, and replied, 'Do you really want to play with him?'

This question forced me to realize that none of us in particular wanted to play with the pale white boy. I stuttered,
and had to admit to him that this was so.

"No, father."

'Then you shouldn't expect him to play with you. Should you?" He smiled knowingly. 'Maybe the white boy senses that you don't want to play with him. Or maybe his parents don't want him to be friends with you. Some parents are like that, son.' He paused and slapped a mosquito that had landed on his shoulder. 'Remember that friendship can never be one-sided. Don't look upon differences in colour as a barrier between you and the white boy. If you do, then how do you expect to get on with him. Our colour is only skin deep. Underneath we are all humans together.'

I began to understand as he talked. The wind came up, and I could hear it whispering to the world outside. The moon was giving the world a bigger and brighter smile. The stale smell of the swamp came on the back of the wind into the fale and tainted everything. It seemed as if it was trying to force me not to listen to Faualo.

'Remember never to hate the white man. Never hate anyone. Forgive a person even before he makes a mistake, so that when he does you will not hate him. Hating leads to bitterness.' He hesitated, remembering something. 'I killed a white man when I was a boy, but I didn't hate him.' His eyes lit up like the bright embers of the fire that was burning in the middle of the fale. A cheeky gust of wind suddenly rushed into the fale and gave a new life to the dying fire. A new glow that gave greater strength to everything. Faualo in particular seemed to have gained a new power, a new type of courage. A courage which enabled him to continue his dreadful story. I too felt this new strength. No longer could the stale smell of the swamp divert my attention.

'At the age of sixteen I became houseboy to a white missionary. At first I felt proud and joyful. Now I could dress a white man, eat the white man's food, and sleep in a white man's house. I felt that I was above the rest of my age group. They would look at me and say - That's Faualo, the missionary's houseboy. What a lucky fellow!' -

'The missionary's name was Morgan. We used to call him Mokeni. He was a good man, a kind man, and always willing to help our people. And the villagers did not hesitate to go to him for help. The white man's way of life appealed to me at the time, for I was dissatisfied with our own. I cooked, washed, and performed small chores for Mokeni. And above all, I enjoyed the prestige that the young people of the village
attached to my position. I learnt how to use English. I began to think I was becoming a white man. Yet deep down, I felt that I would not completely get rid of our people’s culture. I still believed in ghosts, and still held on to the ancient beliefs. I had been transplanted, like a tree, and had been nourished in another soil. But by trying to sink my roots into European cultures, I had stunted my growth. One foot stood amongst my native cultures, the other amongst the white man’s. I was a rope, stretched tightly between two trees, and if they drifted apart, the rope would break. Very soon the boys of the village began to be jealous of me. In their jealousy and suspicion, they rejected me. My loyalty was split between two things, and I had to choose one if I was to remain sane. I did not want to be rejected by my own people, but I had gone over too far into the white man’s world to make a complete return to our own culture.

‘One day I had to choose—I was forced to choose. I suppose you have heard of the ‘Sa’ movement, my son?’

‘Yes, father,’ I answered eagerly. ‘The movement for independence in which a lot of our people were killed.’

‘Yes. During this period, my father became one of its leaders but I wasn’t attached to it. The cry was for the expulsion of the white men from our country, for there was a lot of bitterness about. My father wanted me to join the movement, but I refused. The time had come for me to choose. The ‘Sa’ movement wanted the villagers to turn against Mokeni. But he was a good man, and as I have said before, the villagers looked up to him and did not hate him. The movement tried at first to persuade the villagers, but they failed. They argued that all the white men were trying to rule us, to take away our land, and to destroy our way of life, but still the villagers would not follow them. How could they believe this when the only white man they knew was always helping them. So the ‘Sa’ movement had to adopt another way.

‘One evening my father turned to me and told me that the movement had decided to kill Mokeni. I could see that he was greatly troubled. Then he added that the movement had instructed him to tell me that I had to do the killing. I refused, but he pleaded with me. Finally, in anger, he told me that he could no longer look upon me as his son. To me, this meant that I would be known as a Samoan no longer. What else could I do? I chose to follow my father.’ His voice had reached a peak. Not only was he speaking to me, but to the whole world as well. He wanted everyone to know why he had killed the white missionary. But there was only a small boy there to listen to his plea, and to share his life-long burden. Tears
had come to his eyes, and his old body shook with sorrow and regret. Then I cried, not because I felt pity for this old man, but because of the deep love that I had for him.

'Did I do wrong, my son? Did I do wrong?' he cried, looking for something to hold on to. How could I judge him? With head bent in sadness I remained silent. There was a strained pause. I knew that the old man was trying to get hold of himself. Then he looked at me and saw my tears.

'If you are crying for me, then don't continue. My life is drawing to a close while yours is just beginning. Cry for yourself, because you too will have to choose someday. I chose to follow my father, and I have regretted it ever since. I don't know what choice you will make, but remember always follow what your heart tells you to.' He stopped, and I knew that the storm had passed and he spoke no more that night.

'Thank you, father,' I whispered, feeling a greater love and admiration for the old man.

The wind had become stronger. It rushed into the fale and entangled itself with the fire, blowing up dead ashes and spilling the dying embers on the pebble floor. The fire went out, only the ashes and embers remained. The stale smell of the swamp grew stronger, and tainted everything, even me. I felt unclean and lonely.

'Goodnight, father,' I mumbled. I stood up slowly and left the fale of Faualo.

Outside it was dark and cold. The moon had gone and I felt as if it had deserted the world forever. I paused and looked back into the fale. The old man was wiping the tears away from his eyes.

Faualo was right. I had to choose. Now, looking back on the choice I had made, tears came to my eyes, for I too feel that I have made the wrong one.
The village sleeps armoured in darkness,
As the sea roars dully on the reef,
The flies, the dogs, and the people
Have all sung themselves to a tired sleep.
I walk alone on the tortured beach
Not knowing where I am going or who I am.
Two days have passed since my return,
Two long lonely days, of knowing
And yet not knowing the place
Where the friends of my childhood have gone,
Or the shrine of the temple where I must worship.
I feel a stranger in the womb
Of the land from whence I came,
A worshipper in an alien temple.
The mother of the child that I was
Has long since departed from the house of my
people,
And the brothers I once knew
Have blossomed into men who now seem foreign to me.
The clod, the air, the birds, have not changed,
But I have changed, I have become
As like a tree that has found two soils,
As the river that has changed its course.
The harvest that I am is a blend
Of what I have gathered in the land of my youth,
And the scraps that I had found in the land of
the whitemen.
The table of my father has given me meat for
two whole days,
Yet I do not know what he thinks of me,
The hands of the people have grasped mine,
Yet I do not know if the friendship they bear
Is for the child that they knew
Or for the man that I have become.

The moon now comes, floating on the song of the
sea,
And the land half becomes in the form of light,
I feel a deep consolation in half seeing,
And my soul confused flees to the moon
Hoping to find there freedom and peace:
"O moon that has always been and always will be,
O source of wonder and half light that
Had always slept with my forefathers,
the birds, and the Seed.
O song that had been in the cradle of the child
of me,
Give me a sign, give me the answer."
To the puzzle of the life that I now own,
Show me the way to the rose garden,
So that I may find there the seed
That I must grow to change what I have become."
But the moon silent still
Throws back her light at me:
Dawn now peers over the limits of the sea,
Soon the land will resume its form in full light,
And I will have to face again the troubled day.
Maybe soon I will find the lighted way
Thru the wilderness of confusion and doubt,
Maybe soon, maybe, maybe, ever so maybe!
Outside the farm that I know well, the pony lost a shoe. I went through the gate, tethered the pony and walked into the shade of the farmhouse. Dank sticky fly paper hung clotted in the sunlight by the windows. Through the door, Tom was eating a roast dinner, eating it with his sheath knife. The blade was worn away, its handle yellowed, greasy; all that was left was a backbone, and Tom talked as he ate.

"Wassamadder? Lost a shoe, ave yer? Gotter be careful, these days, you have; more precious 'n a baby," he looked at the bottle. "Dick said ter me, Tommy boy, he said, we've gotter be careful. More precious 'n a baby, Tommy boy, Dick said." With him gesticulating, eating, I took in his red face, the half-empty carton of beer bottles on the floor; perhaps it would be better to be going.

"Tom," I said, "can I leave the pony here and go up the hill? I want to get a sample of fern for a friend."

"Fern? Wassa matter? Didn't forget that game of poker, did yer? Eh? More precious 'n a baby, Dick said ter me, he said -"

"Goodbye," I said; and went outside.

The heat was shimmering over the grass; the dogs were lying in the stream; the pony was making the most of a small patch of shade. The heat was hovering as I climbed the hill, wishing I had brought a hat, but the morning had not seemed so hot. The clay track crumbled, burnt orange and yellow and charred manuka ends; it rose and fell, rose and fell as I climbed: soon the summit, and no respite from the sun.

The light was streaking the ground with red and black, golden brown, peculiar shades; I wondered what soil formation could have caused them. Sunlight was glinting, black and white, fireworks in the dark; a Roman candle, a catherine wheel, a white magnesium flare. I stumbled, sat, looked round: and saw her.

She was wearing a filthy sack, matted with stale food, earth, fish. Slung over her back with the traps were several dead opossums, almost finished bleeding and swinging knotted with her black hair. I said "hello." She seemed surprised. I asked her how long she had been living on the hills, trapping opossums; she said, forty years. And that had not been all her life, she said. Once she had been -
I looked at her eyes. Looking at people's eyes one can sometimes experience feelings and knowledge about the person concerned; now, I looked at her eyes and saw -

I jumped up, black and yellow sunflowers dotting the stubble; now I ran, down, winding, away, away, faster and faster down the track; down, down, down to reality; down to the ground; I fell, I clutched at the ground, I grabbed myself - and knew that it was myself; not that projection, that future self on top of the hill.

And there Tom was, leaning on the gatepost. "'Bout time you got back," he said. "The pony's been kicking up such a shindy, wondered what had happened to yer. Bit hot to go picking liddle bits of fern, isn't it?"

"It's a hot day," I said, and went to the pony.
MAUI

He drifts gently in the rough canoe
Waving through the brittle sea,
Watching over the side shapes, fingers,
Form and change in languid water.
Somewhere, somehow, those shades have meaning:
I watch, to discover myself, to fashion
The image of a high grassy hill
Over a turbulent sea; above me here,
The grass shadows ripple as I tread their surface,
I am wind wide sweeping my creation.
This is my place, my farthest home:
I shall receive it seven times more.

Maui, come Maui, here, here it is
Your pattern, your life, the winds ripple
Like weeds in a stream, and your eyes
Find yourself there. This is your thought,
Your strength; this is your land.
- Brothers, no, brothers. - It is, yes it is, because

0 player Maui

Your hooded hands
Remote, can move
The rain to call
In patterned voice
That darkness mowed;

Like eyes, they stray
Beyond their bounds
And capture notes
Of ravelled thoughts
In constant sounds;

Their power lies
In their unknowing
Net of each
Vague ocean eye
Where sense is flowing

- Enough, brother, enough! I have made this land
From my image, what I have seen exists,
Here is the place for me. But see
How it moves! listen to the echo
Oh, hear it, brothers: it is frivolous,
It does not care; here there is the voice of distant people,

Who will destroy my destiny:
They are my worlds sung awry by others...

'By the light of the green
Sugar of Babylon, every thick dream
Resounds in the fall
Of marmorial hall:
Then quick let us fly
From the butterfly's eye
Away from the glare
Of fritillary stare
And back to the night
With the wan grassy light.

- I see monkeys playing in the wind,
I see stone horses sitting on the window sill
And it is myself, still.
The scot is flying in the wind
And dragons' teeth with stones are filled.

Low I lie, a worm turned to
the rain and hail
In a blown grassland -

- Yet
Bells hang on the sky.
This peaceful pride forever ringing
Returns, in the cry of a breaking star,
To the smoke of these mountains.
- You are wrong, brother, this is not my image.
- It is late, let it be. Come home.
THE CREATION.

...... in the beginning God created heaven and earth ....

Twelve o'clock Saturday night and the new day is about to begin ... the day of rest. A gigantic flame-lit cyclopean eye glare out and over the wayward ones and mutely blares its warning of the seventh day, the end and the beginning. Under the blue black brackish sky a canopy of orange flavoured mist hovers above the city, colouring the streets shamelessly with brazen women and men of gold.

A tired old man shuffles along slowly, falteringingly with an occasional stagger. His shoulders shrug and his head sinks lower closing the scene from his vision. In one hand he clutches a large silver cup with his name newly etched beside other etched names, names studding the side and base, names that had possessed years before, each scratch symbolic of another minor god whose creations had pleased and not disturbed the tyrant. In the other, a flower stem, extinguished flame, dangles uselessly with the head crushed between the palm and fingers of the hanging arm. There had been a pot, but it lay shattered some hundred yards back and the earth and moss had quickly fallen from the stalk. Only a few specks of dirt remain and at every twitch of the old man's limb the number diminish ... pity the flower ...... pity man.

The tottering figure stumbles in the shadow of a pedestal and crashes involuntarily onto the paving-stones. He lies lifeless over his dented prize. The thorn shielded stalk is stretched parallel to the crack in the stone and the petals tremble and flutter in the tightening, earth worn, sallow dead fingers.

The statue, unaware of its farcical position, maintains its attitude towards the citizen below and remains staring stonily at the bloodless tip of his long blunt sabre.

...... and he rested on the seventh day.
By Gordon Challis.

THE BLACK KING.

Ask of the black one; leave the others be -
their gifts of gold and frankincense are rich
but not so lasting. Ask of the black one - he
is not so sought for; children fear to touch
his robe because he looks so fierce, because he hides
a bitter gum to seal all speech and make opaque
those eyes where they saw sunlight stored inside.
Do not heed these tales but ask him quick
before he rides away. He'll bring the star you want
to stay forever reigning on the Christmas tree
so no-one can take down. He'll bring the toy you can't
destroy, which broken bent reforms repeatedly.

Ask of the black one. Close your eyelids tightly,
look inside the precious sunlight stored all day:
you may dream his journey further nightly,
you may give him sight enough to find the way.

Dream of the black one; dream of him coming blind
till lightning spreads its roots and trees of thunder
open their leaves as if they stored the sound
of twelfth night drummers sent proclaiming wonder
to wake a sleeping town. Dream of the black one
who only comes if you are really sleeping,
whose robe is ample; he won't mind you keeping
the tatter from the window sash where he has gone,
dark with the colour of blood, strong with the scent of gum.
By Gordon Challis.

THIN PARTITION

Someone next door is moving things about –
dusting the shelves which don't need dusting,
making changes simply for the sake of change
or hoping that new order in the room will rout
those evil demons who resent what's new and strange.

Someone next door is singing as she moves –
maybe this tune will mark the turning,
work the trick for years-old resolutions
really to come true; but then she leaves
a word amiss which spoils the spell's relations.

Someone next door is thinking what to do –
wondering what meat to buy for Sunday
or shall she go back home and try again
to hide the fact that there she feels more lonely
and knows the reason yet cannot explain.

Someone is talking to us in her way –
her shadow presses windlike through the scrim;
my wife and I are hurried, we are going out;
someone next door is asking us to stay,
someone next door is moving things about.
By Gordon Challis.

BIRTHDAY IN HOSPITAL.

Only a few cards came, mostly from relatives too far away to visit. Maybe later on some kind of celebration has been planned; there'll be no band nor drop of anything to warm our spirits since the last attendant caught sly-grogging for the patients got dismissed.

This day I'm twenty-nine and have no worries of wife or work or child to think about. And still, at twenty-nine, I'm not beyond the thought of cake with candles counting out the years: it makes me wonder if the breath which mingled once with mine would still untimely help me chase the flames away to nowhere, to that place where all the edgy dead wait hopefully to see how many lights are set to keep them warm. But they are adamant and will not rest content with kisses blown of fire. Nor will the burns of all my years be salved at one breath.

And so this year I'd leave all candles burning, even I'd light some more to give the sun a hint and tip the solstice toward summer for a change: although the days pass slowly, let them last. There's always things to do—like basketwork or rugs: once I made an artificial nest of wool and straw and left it in a tree for birds to find. They plucked away the strands and built elsewhere.

Each day I feed the birds black corn and watch them fly the grains toward the sun's horizon-grinding mill to make the mealy flour of night and bake its bitter sweated bread that bears our salt. Each night I find our lights-out time the hardest time to pass, to lie awake and watch the dark or hear, part-dozing, drowned half-human moans which sink beneath the weight of dull sedation's deep mercuric seas until I wake and recognise that voice, that depth-trapped animal is mine.

And lying there tonight I'll try hard not to tell myself too often that I'm twenty-nine years old, no wife nor work nor child to think about, that now I'm twenty-nine and, as the doctor says, with all my life ahead of me, with all my life ahead.
By Les Cleveland.

FAILURE

At last I could climb alone. You might think that the sport of mountaineering opens up airy paths of liberty where you can defy both nature and the conventions in whatever dosage you care to prescribe for yourself, and with whatever frequency your particular complaint demands, but now you just try it - you'll soon find there are club committees, executive reports, notices of motion, pamphlets on safety, search and rescue organisations, guides, local police, relatives, newspapers and hoards of busybodies who'll want to know where you're going, when you're expected back, or where you've been, as if it were something that mattered.

If they catch you stepping outside the approved all-chums-together relationship they'll soon rope you back into the team and make you play according to the rules.

But one morning I managed to shake them all off and got to the bottom of the east ridge as daylight set the old earth carcass a creaking. I mounted swiftly, excitedly. I began to perceive the landscapes with dream-like velocity and clarity. Without rope or companions I was able to bound from slab to slab with machine-like exactitude. My eyes scanned the rock surfaces with faultless accuracy, and I spurred my way forward, grasping each handhold as if it were the familiar flesh of a tamed animal, grinning to myself and grunting with pleasure each time I completed some unusually involved manoeuvre.

For I am good at this little game. I know when to whisper to the beast and caress it. I know also when it needs to be kicked, hammered, abused and intimidated. In this skill I even conform to socially approved patterns, because I have what is deferentially called "overseas experience." It is true that this experience is like many other facets of the European illusion; for, the lessons on firm, well-chartered Dolomite rock are almost worthless in the unstable, visibly-eroding New Zealand Alps where the huts are few, the weather is moody, loose stones slither at the scrape of hand or foot, and the flanks of the mountains dribble mud, stones, slush, ice and rock debris like running sores into river drains.

Balance, speed, luck are what you need; and you have to augment them with violence. On these ridge climbs it is often necessary to demolish whole quarry loads of tottering rubble in order to obtain a few substantial footholds on the somewhat cleaner surfaces below, which have not yet been shattered by frost and ice.

Sometimes just for pleasure I roll boulders over the side and watch them bounding thousands of feet down frozen couloirs
into the icefalls. As they descend they dislodge other loose material, so that what begins as a mere cartload of moving rock, ends as a destructive wave that slobbers out into the neve of the valley like an ugly food stain on a clean cloth. If I cannot dislodge a likely piece of rock with my direct strength I often persuade it into motion by using my ice axe as a lever.

When I release these bombardments I am a comic-strip god re-arranging the cardboard universe. But which way to shape it?

I send a hundredweight of stone skidding down the slopes. Now a broadside like that could do a lot of damage if it were skillfully directed. It could easily obliterate my money-spinning bosses for instance — the fellows back in town who pension me in return for the regulation amount of subservience and futile work ...

Prize loose a tombstone flake that's lying here with the scabby fungus of some alpine plant festering on it. Maybe it will engulf the quarrelling, selfish family whose needs provide me with a formula for tolerating our stale comedy.

Who will I take next? Why stop at lesser individuals? I have always maintained that if you are going to be a thief, say, or a murderer, don't fiddle a few wretched pounds from the till — you won't get much more jail if you're caught taking thousands, or blowing a bank or sticking up a millionaire. And you'll get the same ear bashing from the judge for having failed to appreciate the niceties of the deterrent system whatever mess you get yourself into, so why not make it a big one? Don't be content just to bat some undistinguished creature like a nagging wife or an unfaithful mistress over the head with the handiest blunt instrument — why not exercise your powers imaginatively and send off a few public nuisances? There are plenty of politicians, editors, lawyers, scientists, admirals, generals, bosses and bigwigs at your disposal.

I rise to the challenge. Steadily as I batter my way up the ridge I wipe out most of the organised human institutions within reach, and a long list of people I don't like. I start on governments and work my way down through churches, banks, police armed forces, law courts, monarchies and all the jabbering, regulation-quoting civil servants that prop this machinery up. I flatten cinemas, radio stations, the press, the Rugby Union, the Racing Conference, art galleries, breweries, museums, schools, universities, war memorials, brass bands, shops, offices, boards of directors, trade union bosses, factories, suburbia — I make a clean sweep with rigorous impartiality.
Oh yes, I am impartial. The thought comes to me as I force myself with knee pressure and two violent hand pulls up a crack to the top of a buttress, that when I have finished my work there will very likely remain only myself clowning to the white walls of an empty arena.

When I first did this climb I was a sunburned boy of 17 with two clumsy adults to find the way. I was frightened yet quickened, by the scale of things at ten thousand feet. Now I am a man with much to regret. I find my own way, but I am still frightened.

I strap on the crampons and begin the traverse of the dangerous arete. Shuffle one foot along the ice crest a step at a time, and keep the other one rasping over the rock slabs on the windward side just below. Then crouch for 300 feet at full knees bend until the muscles ache and the backside is rubbing against the neve. Belt each spike in, grind the whole foot in the face of the mountain, then kick the sugary crest off the top of the six-inch wide, curving rib and slide along it. When the rib arcs too steeply for this progress, crampon just below it and bang the pick of the axe into the slope at each step to steady yourself.

Now it's time to start cutting. Each step must be six inches higher than the other and slightly forward so that the feet do not tangle as they cross. Fifteen to the right and an extra large step at the change of direction so that it is easier to turn and begin fifteen to the left. Zig-zag up the final pitch on to the dazzling skull.

I am high enough to examine all the peaks. The game has become more elaborate between these cunning old windmills and myself. Maybe I am not so lonely after all. See how they whirl from one skulking shape into another like bone-pointing Polynesian priests directing a prancing, heteromorphic retinue of beaks, snouts, muzzles, horns, wings and rumbling haunches.

I yell good-natured obscenities at them and they stop their dancing to provide a programme of agreeable fantasy in which women lust for me, multitudes applaud my wit, bravery and skill; my enemies are destroyed, all obstacles to success, happiness, wealth, leisure, dignity, prestige and all the other sweet rewards of the materialist gospel are trundled off stage, and I remain supremely installed at the centre of the Odyssean universe.

I enthrone myself on the summit. I hoist no national flags, mumble no prayers, click no Leicas and put out no candy-bar offerings to the Great Spirit, for I am God and mountain too, grafted here between ice-cap and sky.
To cement this triumphant union, and also to complete the project begun in the early stages of the ascent, I defecate (in a dignified way of course) gently and persistently. Soon a rich carpet smoothly improves the geography of Australasia. Out of it I intend to nourish the new order. Unfortunately I do not have time to inundate Europe and America as they deserve, but I make hasty provision — I leave a chain of tiny castles dotted strategically along their mountain ranges. Each smooth turret is a fertile repository for my divine plans and a fortress to which I can fly at any moment if things turn out badly here, or if some unusually desperate act of folly or tyranny in those discredited parts makes it necessary for me to speed up the grand offensive.

As I complete these arrangements I look around to see how my familiars are behaving. I encounter a most unwelcome sight — tooth upon tooth of the New Zealand Alps now grinds across the sky in dismal precision like a Chaplinesque array of so many wheels, pistons, gantries, boilers, conveyors, antennae, smoke stacks, poles, towers, computers, statistical charts, chutes, corridors, platforms, loudspeakers and assembly lines of detestable reality — all presided over by my urbane taskmasters with their nimble managerial diplomacy.

Threats, more obscenities, blasphemies, even offers of recantation and appeals to all the figureheads of all the religious faiths and philosophical systems I can think of, are useless. I remain shivering on the mountain with the wind rising and cloud piling in to the valleys until it shuts out everything from view but the mocking scene from which I have been trying so heroically to escape.

Very well, I have failed. But hear this you old rogues. If it's reality has to be faced, at least you can pay me the compliment of trundling off your Wagnerian repertoire of shoddy tricks. I am not taken in by your cheap European stage props. Flush them away in the next avalanche. If I am to confront you, let it be in terms that are true to these valleys.

With this demand the outlines of my urban detention centre fade. Chilly shapes loom in their place. They are the final, elusive oracles of this bitter country.

Old Douglas with his 90 pound swag, grinding out sardonic letters to the government, crouching in the moraines, waiting for the dog to bring him back a weka — O'Leary mumbling to himself in the bivouacs, fossicking, crazy-cunning in the grey torrent of the Aravata — Caples starving in the sub-alpine scrub — Brunner and Heaphy rationing off death with handfuls of fernroot, cursing the sciatica, crippled, desperate in the black birch forests — Whitcombe, a ragged skeleton, swept
over the Torresenau bar and drowned — the bootleggers scheming amongst the sandflies on Bald Hill — the Far Downers cursing the weather and the English — the miners on the beach drinking — the bushmen muttering confusedly over the legends — the inheritors, baffled and disillusioned at Anzac, Paschaendale, Alamein, Cassino, and now fearful with the guilt of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

I descend by the normal route on the western face. If they want to know where I've been I'll tell them I had to spend the day in the hut on account of something I ate.

There is nothing to do except go home and try once again.
THAT SWEET TORTURE.

The wind rattles at my window-pane ....
Ahhh: ..... Pain.
Bitter-sweet sensual longing, again and again
Lashing with fury bursts.

Why should it be so? -- The dancing leaves, dim figures, drift-ing mist, slow moan,
Like memory:
Imagination, faintly perceiving
The mystery, of ..... 

The drizzle tolls my face, pricks my eyes,
Gusty wind uplifting my spirit - nearly me -
Jerked back by my physical infirmity.
Oh, the frustration of stableness!

It is always the same -
Spirit soaring instantaneously, transcending human concepts,
very reality, floating in a distant dim lit world, searing pain
and the joy thereof, ecstatic torture of escape, wri thing, ent-
twining, ever-upwards
Snapped!
Back by the sniggering laugh.

Will I ever make it,
That sweet torture of thought?

The truth has gashed my mind,
Leaving it red, raw, open,
Bleeding with reproach, pitying the flesh that it needs.
That vicious flesh that locks mocks thought so close to comfort.

But conflict is lost in song -- the soaring phrase, the surging
rhythm, the hint of pain --
I am lost in someone else's make-believe.
LUNAR ECLIPSE

("In such a night...." Merchant of Venice 5.1.1-28.)

Tom's on the roof
With the stars above
And yowls for Min
And a careless love,
With scuffle and scuttle
And scamper on tin,
To fret my ears
With a sensual din.

I count my worries,
I count my woes,
And all's for aught
And nobody knows;
But knowing's the trouble
And gives us pause
And ties our love
With a thousand laws.

Tom's on the roof
And you and I
Gaze at the moon
In the self-same sky;
But the moon's just a light
For Tom and Min
And love is a need
Untouched by sin.

I gaze at the moon
And share my plight
With history
And fancy's flight;
Flight and passion,
All make one,
Time before
And time to come;
Only now,
My mood to please,
The moon outshone
Shines on Louise!
By Elizabeth Alle

FOR A CONVERSATION

Our private thoughts form pools, they do not meet,
But mutual need for language makes us find
Their wave deserted treasures where they lie.
Here is a round shell, like a white coin, shining,
Here is a green bottle glass, of magic powers;
This is a hermit crab, these are my tiny gifts
Upon the sand, collected by small tides —

Gifts costly as speech, which the looting lovewards
child must give, passionate with diffidence,
Knowing his shining water treasures fade.
His shell will break, discarded, and our thoughts
Must lie like pools, adjacent and apart.
By R. Amato

AFTER THE PARTY

Two o'clock in the morning.

The party was dying down, leaving few embers aglow.

Andrew propped himself against a concrete post at the edge of the tennis court and watched the yellow lights of the windows and the shadows inside dancing their drinks slowly around.

Parties come and go, and, when they have gone, one never draws a picture in one's own mind of what they were for and what they were about. He never did what one may call a sort of statement of accounts of what he gained from a party and what he had brought to it, with figures in black and red eyeing him and winking.

Time was getting on, beating and clicking and ticking out of all the clocks and watches in the world, and he felt that there was very little left, for him to be able to do anything in it: as if he had been sleeping and loafing, or embezzling some funds. No profit, Sir; bankruptcy is the word.

Peter, the man who had beaten him up, was straddled on the wooden steps of the tennis-club building, grunting his drunkenness away.

And the girl he had come all that way to see, had left and it was, for him, as if he had gone questing for gold at the end of a rainbow. He could not say if it was the rainbow that had vanished in that moonlit, warm August night or the gold he had thought was there.

He had drunk and argued and gone out and had a fight: two hundred and fifty miles for that alone. For that and Shirley: that is, the idea of Shirley, because the Shirley he had found, or failed to find, was not his Shirley at all.

Looking at it dispassionately, a girl must mean a lot to a man, if he goes all jittery like that and drops his Saturday's wages, which are the only thing that keeps him digging and shovelling in the middle of nowhere, and hurries up on a Friday night along those dark roads. But thinking of Shirley now, he realized that, perhaps, it was not Shirley he had been looking for, but a girl, any girl, and her softness.

People had come out and he had looked at them, unseen, from his place in the shadow cast by the building, and he had felt glad of this seclusion that made his presence there
unsuspected. It was like peeping through a key-hole and observing somebody in a bedroom, or it was like being God and squatting there, doing nothing all the time and knowing everything all the time. And he did not know very well if his was the same loneliness God must experience, if he exists, when he looks around and finds no other God to keep him company, no other fellow-beings with whom to amuse himself at creating worlds or wiping them out of existence, at playing football and drinking beer. Although using God as a term of comparison is just another way men have of expressing some thought that does not mean much.

Patricia came out and stood on the threshold of one of the doors, as if she had been carved out of the yellow rectangle of light. There was no breeze from the sea and all was still for a moment and Andrew moved suddenly away from Shirley and whatever she had been. Patricia's shoulders were white against the dark colour of her dress, and he had no other thought except the fleeting memory of a girl who, to him, had been something that no other man would ever know: a tall, long-limbed girl climbing out of a hot mineral pool and standing, helpless and frail, on the concrete floor of the bathing hut. The thoughts a man thinks when he sees again a girl he has known before and the underlying belief that all girls are the same, that all people are the same and are too shallow or scared to admit it, that he knew what had happened here and there, to this and that.

Now that he had Patricia in his eyes, Shirley was no more: there had been no inner torturing but only a calm matter of fact acceptance of an unthought-of truth and the changing into a new mood. That he should have known how unlikely it was that he could have convinced Shirley to make one of those much talked about gestures of defiance and recklessness did not occupy his attention any longer; or that he should have left thoughts of secret rendezvous and light-headed elopements to the heroes of some glossy-paged woman magazine, where people seem to live all the time in a one-dimensional world. And, really, what was Shirley? A slip of a girl, too young and pouting to be of any use to a man, too immersed in the observance of the rules of living and too superficial to know what living is about: a gasket, a gear-clutch, a refrigerator, a car built up gradually on a mass production assembly line.

Patricia was older: and, when he thought of it, that was the only difference between her and Shirley. As far as he was concerned, they stood to him in the same light and, perhaps, it had only been a whim of his that he had been enlarging in his mind qualities which he thought were Shirley's but which, in truth, were a creation of his own imagination.
Seeing Patricia seemed to have been a sufficient reason for him to transpose his unexpressed and somehow shapeless longings from one girl with certain three-dimensional characteristics to another, with different, and still somewhat similar, ones.

'Peter,' Patricia called 'Peter, where are you?'

Andrew thought he should tell her, but he did not speak and waited to see what happened.

Peter was still lying there, pouring over the stilted steps, like an overgrown jelly-fish. Patricia came down a few steps, with the solemnity of a drunkard or the high priest of some old-fashioned religion, and bent down to look at Peter. She tried unsuccessfully to wake him up and called him again a few times in a sort of plaintive, half-voiced whisper, without any conviction that he would come to and be able to take her home. She did not know whether to be angry or hurt or kick him or roll him down the steps. She thought, with a certain disillusioned bitterness, of the unexpected turn events take, of how she had waited for this particular evening to arrive so that she could see John again and say something to him and perhaps dance with him and get him back. Because, after all, if you think of it, that's all a girl's life is for: sitting and waiting for a man to arrive, even if she sits on her dignity and waits for him by catching a boat and going overseas; and even if she looks for him, it's still up to him to make up his mind and arrive, and all the girl can do is to hope that it is the man she wants who comes along in the end and does things to her and so on. Although, she thought, perhaps, one man is just as good as the other and girls are just a pack of fools.

Earlier, Andrew, sitting on the grass in the shadow, had seen John take Shirley home. They had come down together, Shirley so minute and childish and John some sort of bully-beef in the making, and he had thought he was jealous and mad and felt like calling 'Hi, there, Shirley; hi there, Let me take you home.' And he had seen himself knock John out with one lightning, powerful blow, and carry Shirley off in his arms. But then, as now, he had done nothing: he had just felt a pang, a slight envy somewhere. He had seen Shirley walk out of the tennis-club grounds, her hand in John's, and had sent a silent, dispirited good-bye after her, which was more of a farewell to a particular facet of himself, disappearing with Shirley beyond the gate, and to what for a while he had thought existed in him. Overcoming half-heartedly his own incredulity, he had confusedly known, then, that he had been wasting his time and hopes when thinking that it
would be sufficient to show up again, as if nothing had happened, to start weaving his and Shirley's interrupted story from where their threads broke off. Making love to a girl seems to slide off her back like water on a duck's feathers: Shirley had pretended she didn't know him and there their bond had ended.

Patricia had come down now. She was, herself, in the shadow, and he thought she had drunk too much. She had kicked her shoes away, and everything had gone round and round and seemed to be on a sort of gigantic merry-go-round. Her head had lolled and turned this way and that, like the head of a puppet with a broken neck, as she pirouetted on the grass and let her skirts blow up.

She had stopped and stood uncertain, with the gawky awkwardness of a girl too tall, and looked again at Peter and realized she would have to go home alone, because it was too late for anybody to come around and offer her a lift in a car.

'It's been such fun,' she said 'Such a friendly party.' She sighed sadly and shook her head as if she were resigned to accept the inevitable conclusion that whatever uneasiness or dissatisfaction she might feel was only of her own making. She saw Andrew, then, sitting on the ground, very pale in the moonlight, with his coat torn at his shoulder. She did not show any surprise, and realized that her reactions were slow and blurred, and looked down at him, her hands crossing on her lap, in a posture he seemed to remember, waving gently like a metronome marking a very slow time. She said '.... Well....' She had avoided meeting his eyes, just like Shirley, the whole evening, but she was past caring now and nobody would be watching. Andrew would take her home and what should she keep him at a distance for: Jon had gone; Peter was out for the night, and Andrew was cute, in a puppyish sort of a way. Now that he could not do anything to ruin her carefully kept reputation in the eyes of those who knew her, she was even curious to discover what he thought of her and the Sunday they had spent together at Morere. There was her feminine, intuitive knowledge that all the power a girl can have on a man is derived fundamentally from the pleasure she gives him and nothing would please her vanity more than to hear him tell her how unforgettable she had been. The fear she had had, earlier in the evening, that he might have come for her and would make a scene and would upset all her plans, appeared so pointless.

He said 'Well, Pat; remember me?'

'Yes. How are you?'
"Fine," said 'I didn't think you cared.'

'What are you doing there? Are you drunk, too?'

'I was beaten up,' he said 'Ever seen a good party without a fight? It keeps you fit.'

'And so it does,' she said 'What are you here for?'

'Looking around; chasing a pot of gold; waiting for you to come along.'

'Pffft,' she said 'What a lot of rot.' Which is another way of keeping a red rag in front of a bull's nose.

'Take it easy,' he said 'I meant it as a compliment. I haven't seen you for a long time, but I've just discovered it doesn't matter. I feel for you; really, I feel for you. I knew it as soon as I saw you in the room tonight, and you didn't even look at me. And I knew it even more when you came and stood there, in that door.'

'And you must have kissed the Blarney stone,' she said. 'I didn't see you, really.'

'Anyway,' he said 'You've seen me now. And that's all that matters, isn't it? Who took you to the party?'

'Nobody, really,' she said 'I can do what I like; I am a flower that goes from bee to bee to bee ...

'I heard that John gave you the brush off. I saw him go out some time ago.'

'Who told you? What else did they say? I don't care about John. Who told you?'

'Never mind.'

'Who told you?'

'A little bird ...'

'And what else did the little bird say?'

'John had the ball and he was running down the field for a touchdown and then he knew he wouldn't make it and he passed the ball to Peter. And the ball was kicked around a bit and got all muddy and in the end nobody knew who had it..."
'A lot of lies,' she said 'They don't know anything.'

But she did not know whether she was not suddenly afraid of finding herself drawn out of her cocoon of secrecy and thrown and used and played with in the eyes of everybody. After a brief pause, she burst '... And what do you think you are, to come and insult me like that ...'

'Don't you remember?' he said 'My name is Andrew. Do you forget your men so easily?'

'Look,' she said 'can't you be a gentleman and forget it yourself. We were silly, that's all.'

'You were, not me.'

She sulked and he went on 'You make me laugh: how can a man be a gentleman if there are no ladies around? You can't tell me that you are a lady just because you stick your nose up in the air and strut around and look all proud and clean. Perhaps you don't know what a lady is. Come on, look at yourself. What are you going to do with Peter tonight?'

'Blow him,' she said 'Who cares? Let him go to hell; let the poor bugger be.'

'Want a lift home?'

'If you promise there isn't going to be any funny business.'

'Scout's honour,' he said.

He got up carefully and started towards the gate.

Patricia said 'Wait a moment. I'll go in and get my wrap.'

She looked for her shoes, very carefully and seriously, and he could see she was not steady on her feet and said 'What did you have to kick your shoes away for? People always do things they oughtn't to and then they are sorry and cry, and say they were out of their minds.'

'Damn the shoes,' she said 'Who cares? I can walk barefoot; I can walk barefoot for miles and miles. I can, really. I am not a sissy good-for-nothing puss. I tramped to Tolaga, barefoot once, you know?'

'Go and get your things,' he said 'and I'll find your shoes. Who gives a damn about your tramping?' Who gives
a damn if a girl goes tramping?

He started peering at the grass around him and somehow felt that his evening was going to conclude somewhere, like a round little circle that starts at one point and gets back and does not get lost in the wilderness.

Whether he had come to see Pat and make love to her was not very important. What he had come for was not important either. Only the fact remained that this girl, this unit taken by itself for which he did not care too much, was going to be in his car tonight and that, also, he was going to be gone tomorrow.

Patricia had come back, and he had met her at the bottom of the steps and led her towards the gate. He had looked at Peter and had wondered what Peter would think in the morning of parties and girls and the world in general. But he was sure that either Peter would not think anything or he would say 'Oh, boy. What a party. I was out all night.'

When they were by his car, Patricia held a bottle in the moonlight, as if she were offering a sacrifice to a forgotten divinity, and said 'Look at what I've got.'

He said 'You pinched it.'

'I beg your pardon,' she said and looked stern.

'All right,' he said and opened the door and helped her in.

She sat down with a sigh and threw her head on the back of the seat and shut her eyes. 'Got my shoes?' she said.

'No. I couldn't find them. You'll have to come back tomorrow.'

He started the car away from the kerb and she said in a very subdued tone 'Who told you about me and John and Peter?'

'I don't remember,' he said 'But anybody in town would know, wouldn't they?'

'No, no,' she said 'It isn't true; how can they know? What do they know? I am not what you think.'

'Nobody is,' he said 'And still nobody knows what they really are, do they. Maybe they don't want to.'
'Oh, it's so hard for a girl. Has anybody told you anything about you and me?'

'They wouldn't tell me, I think.'

'Have you told anybody?'

'One or two.'

'You are a bastard.'

'Drink up and forget it.'

'How long are you going to stay this time?'

'I came just for the week-end. I got fed up with the camp and the chaps and all the other bloody things and ran away.'

'What for?'

'I've told you already: to take you home.'

'Have a drink.'

'With a girl around, I'd rather not. I want to know what I'm doing.'

'Macbeth...' she giggled.

'What's that?'

'Nothing. What do you mean? What do you want to do? You promised.'

'Put it this way,' he said, 'I've never been a Scout; what does honour mean? Who promised what?'

'I should have known.'

'Well? Didn't you?'

'No. You scare me now.'

'Drink some more and you'll forget. And what are you scared of? Let's be the boy and the girl of an American novel of the twenties.'

'The Americans can't write,' she said.
He was driving through the town, towards Kahiti hill and the beginning of the East Coast road, and went over the bridge. The hill and the look-out and the memorial to Captain Cook, there on his right, always made him think of an old Roman hill he had read about, where a chap with a funny long name had actually struggled with a beastly devil, who looked like a luscious woman, and had succeeded in casting the devil, or the luscious woman, who was naked into the bargain, on to the thorny bushes growing wild in front of his cave. He had always wondered, ever since, if it had not been ungentlemanly of the old chap with a funny name to throw a woman, even if she was a devil, to the brambles and gorse on the hill-side.

But that was just his way of interpreting disconnected pieces of history.

'Shall we go to the look-out?' he said.

She gave no answer and he drove straight on and could not help thinking of Shirley and Pat and the way people seem to meet for a moment and part soon after and, even if they meet again, they are nothing more than strangers. He had this girl Pat who had been John's girl six months before; and six months before, he had had Shirley who was out with John tonight. And there was also the fact that one Sunday, three months before, Patricia had staged a one-night stand for his benefit.

It was as if somebody had shuffled a pack of cards haphazardly and mixed all the suits and put Jacks and Queens together which were not supposed to be.

And Peter was the Joker: a fat slob of a Joker, which was not much good by itself, but was worth a lot if you threw it on the table at the right moment. But, to crown it all, he could not say he cared: about Queens and Jacks and Jokers, that is.

'Let's go to your place,' he said.

'No; my landlady is back and I can't have visitors at this time.'

'Let's go to my place, then,'

'I don't want to,' she said.

'I thought the car would be uncomfortable,' he said. 'Just be nice. What's the matter with you?'
'You're so persistent. I wish they'd beaten you up harder, you know? You're a nuisance; and you don't love me, do you?'

'No,' he said 'I don't even know what you mean.'

'And you don't want to marry me, do you?'

'No. I'm all free and easy.'

'You're pestering me. What if you give me a baby?'

'Say it's John's: Peter's,' he said 'They'd marry you, maybe.'

'Maybe,' she said. And shrugged her shoulders. And the mention of Peter and John brought back to her the solidity of both in a fragmentary, composite picture of what they were and the game she had tried to play and a sense of her own failure. Why she had to think she wanted John so much and why she had to go out with Peter, thinking that John would be jealous, and why she was going to let Andrew make love to her, seemed questions she could not answer. She had a pattern, a blue-print of what the world and people and herself should be, but, then, things happened and where did the blue-print go? What was wrong and who was lying?

'You know?' he said 'I'll be gone tomorrow and I don't think I'll ever be back. I won't worry you any more and you can do a friend a favour, can't you?'

She was too lazy to understand what he was saying and only muttered unintelligibly and moved closer to him. He thought he heard her call him John, in a sleepy, childish way, but he did not resent it. He grimed to himself and slowed the car until it stopped by the side of the road, and put his left arm around her and drew her head towards his. She was weighing limply against him and he thought he was holding the body of a girl who had just died and who, just now, could be to him all the girls of the world, whom he could call Ann, or Shirley or Elizabeth, because it would not have made any difference.

He reached down with his hand towards her knees and kissed her, but nothing happened and he asked himself if that was what it is like with a girl from the street, who is a woman, and any woman and, in the end, no woman at all.

'Pat,' he murmured 'Pat, can you hear me?'
He pulled her long rustling skirt and laid his hand on the crispness of her nylon sheathed knees and paused undecided as if he were on the verge of trespassing into a forbidden world.

'Pat,' he said again 'why do you have to let me down like this? What a cheat you are; what a dirty trick to play on a man.'

He shook her once and slapped her face, but she only grumbled and leaned more heavily against him. He turned his head and surveyed her, the way one surveys a cliff-face before the climb, and if he had not been much more concerned with his own disappointment, he would have been amused. It was like opening a treasure chest and finding it contains a few old newspapers and business letters instead of priceless gems and pieces of eight.

Patricia was slumping at his side, a big doll with a tear letting the sawdust out, with her dress pulled up high on her legs, showing the weaknesses of her armour, the white skin above her stockings slightly bulging from the pressure of her girdle and criss-crossed by what seemed to him a maze of elastic suspenders.

There she was; potentially a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a bag, a lover, a drunken sot, a girl with, deep and strong within, her faith in being, for the mere fact of her womanhood, as tall as a mountain top, as immaculate and inaccessible as Heaven, as brilliant as the sun.

'They'll never realize of what reflected light they shine,' he thought.

He shook her again and pushed her slightly away from him and, feeling sorry in a way, covered her and said 'By gosh, girl, let's go. You'd better go home.'
By R. Amato

WINDOW-WATCHING

I thought, once, of an old man I knew, who came back from Brazil to fight a lost war for what he called his ideals, and was stabbed at one o’clock in the morning by three or four people he had welcomed as friends.

I brooded for a while over his puny figure stretched on the green baize cover of a billiard table, with his crossed hands kept together on his chest by an old brown Rosary and with his ashen face; I even wrote a poem about it, but then I forgot him and thought it was not important to be moved by his experience. His death had been his own personal affair, and perhaps that of his family, of the people he left, not mine. No, I was glad I had not been in his place and I had not died then.

Now, it is Tonin, or Turlin as we called him with a childish perversity, because we knew he did not like to have his name twisted and ruined. I saw him live through a period of eight or nine years, in a very clear, concentrated sort of movie flash-back, during the few moments I had been standing by a window in an office. Perhaps he, too, is dead now, and he must have needed an extra-size coffin. Because, the last time I heard of him, they told me he was as blown up as a rubber balloon, and he was full of water in his joints and head, an unusual malady, and could do nothing but sit on an armchair and let his mother feed him and wash him and put him to bed as if he had just been born. I did not go to see him, although I should have, because I would not have known what to do. And, probably, he would not have recognized me and I would have met him for the first time again a slobering, drivelling idiot.

If he is not dead, unless I go there again, I will never know for sure whether he still sits by his window, in a new concrete block of flats built after the war, keeping his eyes on the valley where the river flows and the peasants sweat and curse their fate, on the railway line and the hills opposite, or whether he has rotted or is rotting on a shelf in one of those cement cupboards they have built at the cemetery, because there is no room to dig holes in the ground any longer.

And, you know, I saw him all at once, from the time I met him when he was eleven, to the time I left him, without seeing him, when he was twenty, all in one great lump, too hard to split, too big to swallow, quite alone as if he were the only boy in the world besides myself. There were seven or eight of us, and he was the oldest. We were rushing up and down the hill where the town was, jumping fences and stealing peaches and watermelons, smoking cigarettes where nobody could see us,
swimming in a pool of that bony, trickling summer river, follow-
ing the girls we did not know what to do with. Just following them and laughing and blushing if they saw us and whispered in each other's ear, in their summer frocks which were light and brightly coloured. There was a three-storey house where we said a girl fell in love with every man who gave her money, and we wished to be there so that a girl could fall in love with us.

And I saw him, too, walking beside me, in a narrow street in Naples, and I had a girl with me, and the war had been over for a while, and he was all envious and a little jealous because the girl was more beautiful than any of the other ones we had run after in those old summers of ours.

It was the only time I could not associate him with the warmth of summer and the dusty hill-tracks and the long evenings of our home town. It was the beginning of winter and he was in Naples to become a Veterinary surgeon and learn things scientifically about cows and dogs and stallions.

There is a fluttering of green and black, which was quite the fashion that year, but the girl is blurred. She is there between us, but I cannot see what she is doing or saying or why she left us at the entrance of the Gallery, in front of the Opera House. I cannot see her although she was, and has been for a long time since, the only girl that mattered, the great thing that puts a hand in you and wrenches and makes your mouth go dry.

When we were alone and went into a restaurant and sat down, Tonin said 'She isn't your girl, You'd never manage to hold a girl like that.'

'That so?' I said 'You think everybody is like you.' And we did not say much else.

The next summer I saw him again and he said 'You didn't fool me for one moment. I knew you weren't her type.' I never talked of her again, to him or anybody else, because I felt I had been too foolish to let her go like that.

The pool in the river had also gone. When I looked for it, Tonin said 'It went five years ago, when the 8th Army arrived.' We went along the bank for a while, searching for another place that looked like the old pool, but we could not find any. Tonin said 'There, look; there. The water is deep enough. That's where they go now.' But I did not like it and said 'No, you go.' I could not get used to the idea that something I had kept alive in my memory all those years had
disappeared so unexpectedly; I could not understand how Tonin
could go and enjoy swimming in a place which was not THAT pool.

We went up and chose another track and we reached a high
point on the hill and we had all the winding road from the
South beneath us, when he said 'In 1945, five Germans held up
the British here for a day and a half. They had an anti-tank
gun and they kept shifting it all over the place and shooting
them up. Want to see their grave? They are buried near here.'
I said 'No.' and he said 'Oh well...'

I think it was then I remembered the other man who had
been stabbed to death.

We never talked of the war too much, because that – in a
way – had been to us what the stormy winter had been to the
pool, the ultimate cause of the flood that had rubbed it out
of existence: the war had rubbed the landmarks in our souls
away. But there, near the grave, I said to him 'Why aren't
they buried in the cemetery?'

'They're Germans' he said 'Why should we worry?'

'They were people, too' I said 'And after all, we were
with them to begin with.'

'Let their own folks come and get them.' he said.

They speak of lights going off all over the world and
coming on again and all that, but one never thinks of what
those lights really mean: one sees electric bulbs going on
and off, like flashlight signals, and hears an old voice on
an old record and some noise in the background.

Nobody ever says what happens when the light in a man's
soul dies out and he can see only an endless expanse of burned
tree-stumps and black-market cigarettes and strumpets and pimps
and strangers. And neatly stacked heaps of square stones from
bombed buildings.

'Turlin,' I said 'you've got no sense of honour.'

'That's a luxury only who wins can afford. Don't talk rot'
he said.

One, two, ... ready ... go ... We race, we swing on a
rope-swing from the branch of an oak tree.

When we are by the jail building, we always look up and
hope to see the faces of someone behind the bars, of nasty men,
of criminals. We don't like being shut inside and there is a
strange feeling that we must not disturb them: we stop shout-
ing when we pass by the huge iron gate, we walk on tip-toes
and we feel pity for the men in there. We hate the men in
peaked caps who guard them and we would boo if we were not too
afraid.

I said goodbye to Tonin two or three days after we had
stopped near the grave of the German soldiers and went back to
Naples where I was working. He said he would come and see me
when the new school year started, but I did not give him my
new address. I could not help it. I said 'Yes, I'll see you'
I did not mean it and he must have known it, because he smiled
and said 'Come on, cheer up. It is as if the world were dead.
What's the matter?'

I heard that he was ill less than a month later and that
he was not likely to ever get up again. Tonin was already a
non-entity for me, the thread that kept us together had been
broken and, by then, I looked on him as I would have looked on
one of those invertebrate, limbless, creeping creatures which
you cut into two and which still manage to survive as if noth-
ing had happened.

I did not pay much attention to what they wrote to me; I
was too far away to be physically affected by his absence and
I preferred to keep him out of my mind, not to be obliged to be
sorry or compassionate. It occurred to me that he was the one
who always signed himself when we passed a church and always
kissed a priest's hand when we met one; and it made me smile
when I thought of all those gestures and hand-lickings gone
for nothing.

When I went to my home-town for the last time before I
left, to have a look around and walk the main street once
again and see the people I knew and the old Cathedral and the
market-place, that had shrunk since the days I was a child, I
refused to see him. I brooded over him for a while and I was
glad I was not Tonin and I was glad I still had the world
within my reach. His experience was just his own, personal
affair, and probably that of his mother as well, but not mine.
I said to Mimmo, one of the old gang who still saw him occas-
ionally 'What would be the use? He doesn't recognize anybody;
he doesn't remember anything.'

At six o'clock one morning, one spring-time morning, I
turned around, just before disappearing behind a corner, and
had a last long look at the lanceolate leaves of an oleander
on the balcony of a grey house where I had happened to be born.
And now that I have seen Tonin, the boy-Tonin he has remained in some forgotten corner of my mind, although I am not certain of whether he is still alive: a bubble of inert living matter, I seem to be sharing a window-watching experience with him.

We are both inside, in two rooms twelve thousand miles away, looking out for the hills and valleys we would like to have again, for our youth without time that is irreparably gone: he, unable to see because there is water in his brains; I, unable to see because there is a sad, concrete cupboard for living dead across my road, not farther than 30 yards away.

I must admit Tonin got to the window first.
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