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Western Writers

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The fluttering wings of the zozo fell off. But in the month of Holiliu anything can happen... You think perhaps this is a science fiction thing or a crazy dream. You are quite wrong: I am here, and only the mad can explain it.

The facts, of which I am about to tell you, are not weird, merely truths. Laugh if you want; we laughed when hearing about you too.

We, the Horribleights, live on the ends of the earth. We do not look like you strange creatures but are much more intelligently arranged. I shan't go into it, as you would understand.

I am writing to tell you about my brother, Satu. Satu is a tatterdemalion. His scruples are uncommonly. (We never bother to finish a sentence if we don't want to; so please look under this fact.) Yes, Satu is definitely a zuto handsome man. (Zuta is my word. You see, we all have words; and our word can mean whatever we want it to. Thus, you don't know if Satu is handsome or not!)

Nevertheless, Satu was to be married day before three tomorrows, which was yesterday afternoon. I say "was to be," because he wasn't! He was to marry the zuto princess of Next Storvia. Next Storvia is our neighboring village. She was to be flown over by the zozo; but the zozo, as you will remember, lost his wings. They tell me that she cried green tears until her neck puffed to an enormous size. Such an unfortunate spot of news.

When Satu heard the news, he was neither happy nor sad. How uncommonly zuta! I should think it would be a pleasure to marry a princess, even if she didn't have any toes!
Satu, however, did go off to the woods to
quit about what he wouldn't get for his birth-
day. He climbed a totem bush, looked sad, took
out his long sandwich holder, and had a bite to
smoke. He made himself uncommonly comfortable.
The audacity of it all.

Well, tomorrow came, and with it a new month.
Thus, the zoozoe grew a new pair of wings and brought
the princess, whose name was Tomargaretly of Quin-
senberbury, to the castle where we live.

In our village, it was a custom that the fe-
males courted the males. However, Tomargaretly
changed the whole cycle of things. You see, when
finally she did arrive, she discovered how uncom-
monly terrivelite Satu was. He knew he was hands-
some, well put together, had a beautiful sneer, and
was zuto. Poor Tomargaretly was an uncommonly plad
little thing. Why should her plad make any difference?
Because the month of dots in a pokaw was coming
just as soon as the sky hung over yellow. Even
if she was a princess, she had no toes. Toes, as
you may have gathered, are a definite mark of su-
periority. Not only that, but the longer, and cur-
lver, the toe jaggs (nails as you would call them),
the more beautiful a person.

The last night of festival was certainly ex-
citing. Girls carrying flower candy, middle aged
babies, and purple sherbert vendors were all run-
ning through the streets. The paths were lined
with merchants selling meat of a mince, short
stories, dishes of particles, tomalley hots on a
stick, or anything you wanted. At last Satu saw
Tomargaretly through the crowd. He rushed up to
her. She had on shoelets. He could not see her
feet. Satu threw away his pride. The next day
he went to visit Tomargaretly. Was it really true
that she had grown two new toes? It was not. She
told him pointing blank that she had no intention
of growing any. She further told him that she had
a beautiful long neck; and if he didn't love her,
she did not care. When he pointed out the fact
that long necks were not in style...

To make this story short, they are going to be
married two tomorrows after two yesterdays, making
it TODAY! For a wedding present Satu is giving his
bridge (we do not call them brides, but bridges, as
you cross bridges, and women are usually cross) a
month. The month is to be called plad. How wonde-
ful......

By the way, they are coming to your country, for
they heard that just weds can find honey on a moon,
or something.

As the title suggests, this is the end.

THE INTELLECTUAL
Elisabeth Jean Reid-Smith

Tumbling jokingly, coolly, provocingly,
The clown, masked, acts fate's analogy;
With sneering looks and clear, crisp irony
Portrays the gamut of man's stupidity;
Cracks and quips with mocking duplicity
At the ersatz wisdom of all humanity;
Cynical eyebrow lifted sardonically
At sages' claims to immortality,
Sadly aware of life's futility,
His world fabricates intellectually,
And stumble-stumbling over his philosophy
Asks the powers for fool's felicity.
The next voice you hear will be that of Stan Dup in Crayfish Junction, U. S. A.
Stan: "Hi! lo again, sports fans, welcome to another exciting roundup from the world of sports! Today we have a real treat for you. Yes, fans, today we are going to talk with one of the highest-scoring players in the history of basketball—Big George Gambling! George, how's it feel to make 326 points in a game?"
George: "I'm pooped.
Stan: "George, I guess you must be pretty excited about the record you set. Tell me, to what do you attribute your tremendous scoring in this particular game? I noticed that prior to this game you were only averaging 0.4 points per game."
George: "Duh—whaddya mean at-triboot?"
Stan: "Well—uh—I mean, what gave you the energy to score all those points?"
George: "Duh—I don't know, pre-zackly—one feller told me to say it wuz from eatin' 'Super Crunchies' breakfast food, and another feller told me to say it wuz from shavin' with 'Double-Fizz' shavin' Cream—'ceptin' I don't shave—and then another feller, he said fer me to say it wuz from feedin' 'Bow-Wow' dog food to a dog—'ceptin' I ain't got no dog, neither, only m'pet pig Lee-Roy and a old plymouth-rock rooster and another feller told me—"
Stan: "Well, George, did you really realize in the game how close you were getting to a record?"
George: "I'm pooped.
Stan: "George, I know that you're typical of 'small-town boy makes good'; just how small is Crayfish Junction?"
George: "Duh—countin' th' pigs and Uncle Hiram's ole Billy Goat, we got forty-two. Forty-three if you counts ole Jake Potter. Haw! He's th' town drunk."
Stan: "Well, I guess you're quite a hero around your school now. Your principal, who was all the official scorekeeper—what did he have to say?"
George: "Duh—he said congratulations, son."
Stan: "What?"
George: "I'm pooped."

Rummage Sale—-that's the sign that got me in this mess. You know how women are; they never throw anything away. In the past twelve years, since I took the matrimonial plunge, I've lived with stacks of suit boxes full of glad rags from the roaring twenties; innumerable pairs of rundown, wornout shoes; several headless or armless china figurines; a good two dozen handleless teacups; fourteen cartons full of old suits, coats, and mismatched socks; and three broken clocks. My wife is the thrifty type; and even though she does manage to juggle her budget into balance, economy can be carried a bit too far. Well, anyway, that's the reason I put the sign on the front lawn of our mortaged dream house.

At about nine-thirty Monday morning, the mob arrived. Susan, that's my wife, answered the door. A buxom woman wearing a red satin dress winked cheerfully at Susan and said, "Well, honey, lead me to it."

"Sure, kid, you know. The sign says there's a rummage sale at this place."

Rastily I grabbed my briefcase and muttered a fast farewell to my everlovin', who at the moment seemed as un-loving as a cornered puma. I was safely on the front walk when I heard it:

"Joseph Aaron Bigelow, you come right back here and tell me the meaning of all this!"
The voice wasn't tender. As a matter of fact, dear Susie sounded like a maladjusted fishmonger. I slunk back to the front door. I gave her my best beagle-hound-who-has-just-been-beaten look, but it didn't work.

"What does that sign mean?"

"It—uh—means—well, uh..." I searched for words..."rummage sale."

"Joseph, are you telling me that our home has been turned into a second rate bargain basement? What will everyone think? You know what that Lena Allenby will say about us, don't you? She'll have it all over town by noon that we've gone completely bankrupt. Oh, how can you do this to me?"

Nature, necessity, momentarily stemmed the gale: my red-faced spouse stopped her howling to blow her nose. I tried to make myself heard above her sniffl es, above the questions of the woman in the red dress, above the gentle, droning hum of an ever-increasing crowd of bargain hunters.

"Susan, honey," I began.

"Don't you honey me, you—you louse!"

"But, honey," I began again.

"Don't speak to me. I hate you!"

My wife can be very childish at times (she calls it temperament). But this time I was beginning to think she meant every word she said.

"Listen, honey," I tried once more. To my surprise she did listen. "I just wanted to get rid of a few things that were in the way. I stacked them in the upstairs bedroom. I didn't think you'd mind."

"Didn't think I'd mind? What do you think I am...""

As she launched another tirade, I quietly inched away. Then I broke into a pell-mell dash for the last bus. As I deposited my fare, I could hear behind me sounds of a large crowd entering what once was my "castle."

Monday night when I came home from the office, I found two cold pork chops, an open can of green beans, and a glass of luke-warm milk sitting on the kitchen table. By my plate was a note:

Joseph, I have taken the twins and Joe to the carnival. We'll be late coming home. Susan.

No "love, Susan," just "Susan." I knew then the storm wasn't over. I managed to swallow my supper. Then I watched "I Love Lucy," a wrestling match, and the late show on TV and went to bed. Still no Susan and kids. But I didn't worry.

The next day Susan was all sun and gentle breeze, but no mention was made of the "Sale." I rested uneasy because I knew this wasn't a real calm, a real peace—just an armed truce.

Wednesday afternoon, when I reached my front door, Susan met me.

"Oh, Joe, honey, guess what!"

Knowing the devious workings of my wife's little
mind, I didn't attempt a guess. I squared my shoulders and prepared for the blow with courage, fortitude, and a few butterflies. I very slowly enunciated every word, "What have you done, dear?"

"The most marvelous thing," she gleefully crowed. You know when we had the rummage sale?"

"Yes," and my heart fell with a splash into my stomach.

"Well, Lena Allenby thought it was such a clever idea that she called everyone she knew and told them about it. She had a sale today; Jane Gibbons is going to have one Saturday; Jeannie Stratton's going to have one next Thursday; Alma Manning is going..."

She lost me in the middle of November's rummage sales. But suddenly her voice cut through.

"Joe, honey, I'll need a little extra money for the sales—they're just wonderful! Come see all the things I got at Lena's sale!"

Like I said, "!!!!"

THE DANCE
Elisabeth Jean Reid-Smith

Vivid brightness of twinkling feet,
Fiery rhythm of throbbing beat,
Leaping laughter, glinting light,
Breathless flashing—dizzy night!

THE RAT
Marcia Williams

I saw a rat.
A scummy scavenger rat.
His evil little eyes
Pierced the dark,
Pierced my clothes,
Pierced my skin
Until my ravaged entrails
Screamed, screamed, screamed!

I tried to run:
He fascinated me—
Never such ugliness
Such filth
Such horror!
Someone shot him.
In filth he fell.
The stench mingled
Of blood and rat—
I was sick, sick, sick.

THE WATERS OF MY LOVE
Jerry O. Williams

My heart's brook is a bubbling joy
In your dear presence without alloy.

The sea of my soul is at high tide
When you, my love, are at my side.

Desire's flood, when you look at me,
Is a swollen river set suddenly free.

A tidal wave comes with your sight;
No dam could hold this emotion, delight.

And when you smile upon me with pleasure,
My ocean love is beyond liquid measure.

Deep run the waters of my love.
THE SEA

The sea
The sea
Fascinates me,
Fascinates me.
Its rolling, tumbling, gushing, rushing
Wildly,
Wildly——

I marvel at the sea,
At the sea.
Its indescribable beauty haunts me,
Forever haunts me——

Wild roaring waves in anger soaring
High over crag and ancient rock
Deafen me,
Deafen me——

Melodic lapping, mild slapping,
Slow swaying, caps frothing,
Soothe me,
Soothe me.

Hushed ebb and flow
Turquoise, emerald,
Silver spray
Color the shimmering quiet of the sea
At play
The quiet sea at play.

Its whirling, swirling lines
Are symmetry to me,
Perfect symmetry——
Nothing more perfect than harmony
Of anything, anything,
But most of all the sea,
The roaring sea.
TWO BOOK REVIEWS
Janice Hale

John P. Marquand’s NORTH OF GRAND CENTRAL

For those that enjoy the works of John P. Marquand a new book containing three of his New England novels has just been released. North of Grand Central has new prefaces by the author and an introduction by Kenneth Roberts. Marquand’s readers will remember The Late George Apley, which first appeared in 1937, Wickford Point, 1939, and H. M. Pulham, Esquire, 1941.

Marquand won the Pulitzer Prize in 1938 for The Late George Apley, which is considered by many critics his best work. It is a satirical story of Boston and Bostonians, written in the form of the biography of the fictitious George William Apley, born on Beacon Hill in 1866, educated at Harvard, travelled in Europe, entirely respectable, and irrepressibly funny.

The second novel, Wickford Point, has the same locale as its predecessor. It is centered around the Brill family, which is infallibly proper, cultured, well-bred, deceitful, and patronizing. This is also a satire of the cultivated set of New England and their much heralded family traits. The Brills happened to possess bad teeth of which they were particularly proud because the defect had come down through the family and was regarded as a mark of distinction.

H. M. Pulham, Esquire is Marquand’s third consecutive novel about Boston, and it also is concerned with a graduate of Harvard. Pulham’s unsuccessful fight against the over-bearing society of Boston and his marriage to a twelved Bostonian girl whose family accompanies them on their honeymoon to insure its propriety is unlimited in its humor.

Marquand himself is a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Harvard, but he did not begin to use his background as a medium for his books until 1936, and the first to use it was The Late George Apley. Because of his simple urbane style and his gift for ironic storytelling, John P. Marquand has been referred to by Newsweek as the American Somerset Maugham.

T. S. Eliot’s THE CULTIVATION OF CHRISTMAS TREES

The wise probably have already begun their Christmas shopping or have started planning for it by trying to think of an appropriate gift for a particular person. For poetry lovers or those especially fond of Nobel prize winner T. S. Eliot, a perfect gift is available: Eliot’s book-length Christmas poem, The Cultivation of Christmas Trees, beautifully decorated by Enrico Arno with modernistic sketches in black and gold. Though the poem has a Christmas theme, its undertones suggest a contrast between two attitudes toward life, not just toward Christmas: a simple sense of wonder is contrasted with commercialization. The reader will enjoy these thirty-four lines throughout the year for their gentle simplicity, reflective meaning, and subtle power. The decorations—which consist of Christmas tree ornaments and sacred faces and figures drawn with child-like artlessness but restrained dignity—enforce and maintain the tender but sober tone.

REFERENES EN VERSO translated by Marybeth Wilson

El mayor de los males
Es tratar con animales.
Quien sabe reprimir sus pasiones
Evita muchas desazones.

La experiencia
Es madre de ciencia.

The greatest of the evils
Is to compete with animals.

He who knows how to restrain his passions
Knows how to avoid much trouble.

Experience
Is the mother of invention.
Frères humains, qui après nous vivez,
N'ayez les cœurs contre nous endurcis,
Car, si pitié de nous pouvres avez,
Dieu en aura plus tost de vous mercis.
Vous nous voiez cy attachez cinq, six;
Quant de la chair, que trop avons nourrie,
Elle est pleiçe dévorée et pourrir,
Et nous, les os, devenons cendre et poudre.
De nostre mal personne ne s'en rie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

Se, frères, vous clamons, pas n'en devez
Avoir desdaing, quoy que fusmes occis
Par justice. Toutefois, vous savez
Que tous hommes n'ont pas bon sens rassis.
Excusez nous—puis que sommes transsis—
Envers le filz de la Vierge Marie,
Que sa grace ne soit pour nous tarie,
Nous preservant de l'infernale fouldre.
Nous sommes morts, ame ne nous harie;
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

Le pluye nous a débues et lavez,
Et le soleil deschez et noircis;
Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez,
Et arraché la barbe et les sourcilz.
Jamais, mil temps, nous ne sommes assis;
Puis ça, puis là, comme le vent varie,
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charie,
Plus becquez d'oiseaux que dez à coudre.
Ne soyez donc de nostre confrérie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

ENVOI

Prince Jhesus, qui sur tous a maistrie,
Garde qu'Enfer n'ait de nous seigneurie:
A luy n'ayons que faire ne que scouldre.
Hommes, icy n'a point de mocquerie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre!

Human brothers, who live after us,
Do not harden your hearts against us,
For, if you have pity on us poor devils,
God will sooner have mercy on you.
You see us here attached five, six;
As for our flesh, that we have nourished too much,
It is long since devoured and rotted,
And we, the bones, become cinder and powder.
Let no one laugh at our misfortune,
But pray God that He wish to pardon us all!

If, brothers, we cry to you, you must not
Have disdain, although we were slain
By justice. However, you know
That all men do not have good reasonable sense.
Excuse us—since we are dead—
To the son of the Virgin Mary,
Let His grace be not exhausted for us;
Preserving us from the infernal fire.
We are dead, let no one harass us,
But pray God that He wish to pardon us all!

The rain has bleached and washed us,
And the sun dried and blackened us,
Magpies, crows, have picket out our eyes,
And pulled out our beards and our eyebrows,
Never, at any time, are we seated;
Now here, now there, as the wind varies,
At its pleasure, it swings us without ceasing,
More pecked by birds than sewing thimbles.
Do not be then of our company,
But pray God that He wish to pardon us all!

ENVOI

Prince Jesus, who has power over us all,
Let Hell have no mastery over us;
Let us have no debt nor dealing with it.
Men, there is no mockery here,
But pray God that He wish to pardon us all!
I had not been in Japan long before I realized that it was one of the strangest countries in all the world. My first impression was terrible. I thought Honshu one of the dirtiest and unhappiest places on the globe. It is not one of the dirtiest, but it is far from unhappy. Its people are among the happiest. Japanese life is full of color, simplicity, sublimity, and, like other nations, the ridiculous.

Furthermore, the Japanese people are adaptable. They can adjust themselves to any situation. Those who say "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet" obviously have not been to "Nippon," since World War II. The spirit with which East did meet West in the form of the American Occupation is almost unbelievable. This occupation will go down in history as one of the most successful ever accomplished. The Japanese made it so.

As the American servicemen settled down in their "adopted" country, the small, soft-spoken Japanese people felt a need to bring themselves into closer harmony with their occupiers. They sensed the need for changes in their unique way of life.

And change they did. Japanese business and social life was mixed with American. Many a girl changed from her native "kimono" and "obi" to female Western garb. The Japanese learned to eat hamburgers, and the American GI learned to eat "sukiyaki" and to drink "sake." The two even developed a common language called "GI-Japanese." It is a concoction of Japanese, English, and sign language. It worked wonderfully well.

Fraternization first took place in the cities where the people were used to foreigners. Americans were no strangers to the city dwellers, but when the servicemen went into the country, many of the people...
After the first time in their lives, saw a foreigner of any kind. They would say to one another, "Who are these white giants with fish eyes?" But the Japanese being of the same sort in town and country, the rural people soon adapted themselves to their new residents, and understanding between the two nationalities continued its spread through the countryside.

Being a part of this international cooperation was a great experience, and I am proud to have been a member of the American Occupation Forces in Japan. I learned to make my enemy my friend.

REQUIEM AETERNAM
Marcia Williams

Small wings
Feebly fluttered.
Tiny heart
Beat fast...
Then...slow.
Eyes glazed
With a thin white film.

Greedy cat
Avariciously
With drooling jowls
Holds him.

Torn feathers
Fluttering wings.
Then death.

Requiem Aeternam.

SUMMER
James Atchison

Tommy hated carrots. Tommy hated beets. Tommy hated these damn weeds that grew in the hated carrots and beets. These damn weeds. These damn carrots. These damn beets. Only three weeks in the ground; now these things come up. Why do they come up? Just to pester me. Just to keep me here pulling weeds, pulling weeds while the other ten year-old boys play ball in Jim Crawford's pasture.

Now the boys will be wondering if Tommy can come play this morning; then Johnson will say, "No, his grandmother has him in the garden again."

Yes, these weeds. What a life I lead. Tommy turned around, then looked at the ground through tears. He had only gone ten feet, and the rows were eighty feet. Eighty feet of weeds and carrots, tiny weeds and carrots; then eighty feet of beets.

Tommy snatched a handful of the tiny weeds and threw them to the ground. His little body was almost reclining over the row so he could tell the weeds from the carrots. Tonight he would tell Johnson how hard he worked in the sun.

Grandmother was so nice in the evening. The neighbors came over to talk and they all listened to her, for she was smart. Wonder why they don't know she is mean in the morning when the sun is hot? When the sun beams down on the damp earth, she puts me in the damp garden to pull tiny weeds so the tiny carrots can grow to make big carrots so we'll have something to eat this summer. Who wants anything to eat? I want to play ball.

"Tommy, are you getting the weeds and grass?"
"Yes, Grandma."

She was in the kitchen, but because of the rose-bushes in front of the windows, she could not see Tommy lying on his stomach, his fingers playing with the forests of carrots. She was where it was cool, and now would have the floor mopped and the dishes washed. Something good would be cooking.

Tommy moved and cursed the weeds when he realized he had not got nearer the end than the last time he looked around. Tommy cursed his grandmother and wished she were dead; then he took it back and just wished she had never been born.

When Tommy washed a big lump of dirt, a fat earth-worm came out. He felt of the worm and wished he had had it last week to put down Phyllis' back. She was such a sissy, and he would have loved to scare her with this juicy worm. Last week he didn't have anything to scare her with. He pinched the worm in two and threw the ends in opposite directions so that the worm would be unhappy like him.

He decided to take his grandma's earlier advice and work hard to get through. He straightened up and worked furiously for a few minutes, and then tears came to his eyes when he saw what a mountainous task was before him. I know that is too much work for me. I know that I have more weeds to pull than anyone else in the whole world. Then he decided his grandma ought to be dead, and he didn't take it back this time.

Instead of taking it back, he sobbed a few minutes because he had such a sad life. The only happiness he got out of life—this sounded like his mother—the only happiness was in the evening when the crickets were singing and he and Johnson were lying in the yard on a pallet away from the neighbors' soft-talking voices. Was that enough happiness for all this work?

Tommy remembered what the health book said about carrots, and he wondered if the health book knew how hard carrots were to raise. No, they wouldn't know, for books are in buildings, and the sun doesn't shine in buildings. No, it's easy for books to say carrots have some kind of vitamins and ought to be eaten by growing boys and girls, but they don't know that weeds grow between carrots, and they don't know how small carrots are before they get big.

"Tommy, how are you coming?"

"Just fine, Grandma. Can I go play ball when I get through?"

"If you do a good job."

She was back in the kitchen. Maybe she'd make a little pudding. It was a nice morning inside. No, I wouldn't want to be in the kitchen. Then I'd like her, and I want to not like her for she is mean, and she doesn't understand boys who have just finished the fifth grade. She thinks they must work all the time; even the health book says everyone should have some recreation. I forgot what recreation meant, but it is a beautiful word. Phyllis would remember for she was the teacher's pet, and pets know everything. They can afford to know everything, for they don't have to pull weeds.

Damn these confounded, blasted weeds! Tommy slapped the dirt, and he dug his toes into the dirt so that it would hurt. He kicked at the ground and looked around. He had gone so short a piece. How long will it take me to finish? The sun grew hotter, and Tommy ran to the back yard to get a drink from the outside hydrant.
The little breather freshened him, and he worked in the weeds for a little while with vigor.

Minnie, the fat neighbor who had more to say than the fifth grade teacher, went in the back door. She would ask Grandma how to make a basting, and Grandma would go through all the steps just like Minnie was a child. Maybe Minnie would tell her about the Women's Missionary Union. Always someone of those members had done something dreadfully funny. Maybe Mrs. Throgmorton had tried to put her husband in the asylum again. Minnie can talk and sew and visit Grandma, and she can stay inside all day. She never has to work in the garden; she never has to pull weeds. I wish I was Minnie, then I'd never have to think of the damn, damn, damn weeds. I'd be so happy I'd never, never want anything else in the world.

Now Minnie's inside, and Grandma won't be calling to see "How you coming, Tommy?" Calling to see, as if she cared about Tommy. Maybe she did, but she couldn't if she puts me out here with the weeds.

Now Minnie would be putting on that expression she has when she sings in the choir on Sundays. She would wave her hands around and exclaim, "Why, Mrs. Roudan, I knew you'd be so happy to help me with this basting. You are so kind to me. I don't know what I did before you came. Oh. You remember Mrs. Throgmorton, don't you? I knew you would. You know what? She tried to put Jake back in the asylum. You know what I think."

Yes, God made women to talk, and he made me for no reason at all and for that reason I am stuck in a garden full of weeds, and I have to do whatever I'm told. Today I pull weeds. Tomorrow I pull weeds. How many more?

A car drove up in the front. Tommy looked up to see Dr. Miller get out. Dr. Miller is not wise. He thinks he's smart because he's a doctor, but his breath smells like an empty salmon can, and he doesn't know how to get along with children, for he thinks he's smarter than children. He probably thinks he has a way with old women, but my grandma is too nice for him. The last time he came here was when I stuck a nail in my foot.

Tommy looked at the bottom of his foot to see if the bad scar was still there. The scar was gone, and he wondered if it was last summer or the summer before that he had had the really bad accident when he and Johnson were playing at the lumber yard. If it hadn't been for the nail in his foot, his grandma would have bawled him out for going to the lumber yard.

Wonder why old Miller comes today? He's lucky that he doesn't have to pull weeds. He's too finicky to pull weeds. Tommy began working like his grandmother wanted him to for he wanted to show he could do something the doctor couldn't.

Tommy felt better when the tears were gone, and he wondered why he took on so over the two rows. That was silly to act that way. He had finished, hadn't he? And now he could be proud. Last night Grandma did say it would be a big job, but he had finished it.

It was almost dinner time, and he could smell the good stuff when he went in the back door after washing his feet so he wouldn't get the clean floor messed up.

Minnie heard the back door slam and met Tommy. She embraced him, she let tears fall on his face, and he tried to push her away.
"What's the matter? I've pulled all the weeds. Where's Grandma?"

"Child, your grandma's--gone."

Tommy ran out the backdoor and flung himself hard on the carrot row. His crying mixed with the dirt under his face.

RAIN IN SUMMER
James Atchison

The sky eats the top of Rockefeller Center
And takes away my scoff
So it seems all the world's
Stomping in a fish pool's
Sluggish bottom untouched
By surface's inundation
Where sunlight shimmers
Virginly in silence
To undarken the beneath
Of dripping jeweled mists.

SOMETHING TO CLING TO
Pat Hooper

The sun was beating down on the bus making it a rolling, swaying, jerking oven. The waving fields of wheat that flew by the windows bowed and straightened up again as if they were praying to the gods for rain. There was little chance of that though, for even the white thunder-heads usually floating about had been swept away by the hot dry breeze blowing across the flat country.

The bus wasn't crowded, and for that at least the passengers could be thankful. The woman sitting behind the driver shifted in her seat for the hundredth time that morning and pressed her forehead against the window in an attempt to relieve the heat. Her wrinkled and dusty clothes, cheap but chosen with good taste, were grim indications of the period of time that she had been traveling. Her hat lay in the seat beside her, where she had deposited it when even its weight had seemed to add to the throbbing of her temples. The gloved hand that moved to brush back a strand of soft brown hair wasn't quick enough, and the tear that escaped rolled slowly down the dusty glass of the window. Quickly Helen Mason sat straight up in her seat.

The bus was slowing down again. Why can't we hurry, Helen thought. Why do we have to stop here? Wiping away the dust with her handkerchief, she stared at the hot detectable little town. The villagers, bunched in the shade of the antiquated bus station, were just standing, waiting. No one got off, but the loiterers weren't disappointed. They had the time to waste; they didn't have to hurry. A young soldier kissed his mother good-by and shook hands with his father, but after seeing the look in his face, the boy went back and leaned over and kissed him too. The old man pulled away trying to hide his pleasure. The grinding gears of the backing vehicle covered his "good-by now."

A lowrumble, another jerk, a loud blast. The bus crept slowly down the highway. Only the open road lay
ahead, the hot black road, stretching out like a rubber band to serve its need. The soldier found a seat.

He's so young, so strong, so reliable, Helen thought. He should make a good husband for some girl. She rested her head on the back of her seat and began to think of the time when she too had been young. One more time won't make any difference, she appeased herself; one more time and then I'll have to forget:

Helen allowed her thoughts to go back to the time soon after the war when another soldier had attracted her attention. He had come to her graduation party with one of her friends who was stationed close to home. Right from the start Helen had liked Jim Mason. His eyes, which were so like those of a little boy who was lost in a crowd, had smiled at her from across the room several times that night. And even when she knew it would annoy her date, she had been especially nice to him. In a few days Jim had called, and by the last of the summer Helen had realized that she wouldn't be going to college in the fall as had been planned. Her parents wouldn't understand either because they hadn't heard Jim the night that he had told her that he needed her. So two days before she was to leave for college, Helen had become Mrs. Jim Mason. And we were happy too, Helen remembered—for awhile.

The unexpected halting of the bus for the railroad crossing shook Helen away from the past.

"Does this bus have to poke along so?" she thought aloud. Then putting her hand to her mouth, she coughed slightly, hoping that no one had heard her. She started to rest her head back against the seat again but, feeling the stiffness beginning to creep into her neck, decided to watch out the window for awhile.

Why am I in such a hurry to get home? she questioned herself. I was in just as great a hurry to leave. God knows I had to get away—far away. And I did too. He could never have found me, not that he would have looked. But I have to go back.

Back. Back to what? Helen recalled how she had been living for the last nine years in that cheap threeroom flat in a run-down tenement house with the creaking stairways, dark musty halls, and gurgling pipes that cried out in the night as if someone were choking them. Yes, she was going back. Back to the sound of babies crying, of families arguing; back to the sound of an angered hand striking bare flesh—as the angered does lash out more often than not at one he loves. The single light bulb with its faded paper shade would still be dangling over the rickety kitchen table. The same smells would be there too—the cabbage that always cooked in the apartment below, the sour milk on the stairs where the baby next door dropped her bottle, the smoke, the whiskey. They blended together, permeating the building, the air, even me, she thought, until I could stand it no longer. That was when she had run away.

Having crept in and out from behind the purple hills in the distance for an hour or so, the sun had finally decided to slip away. Darkness was beginning to close in around the bus. The air was cooler now. Helen drew deep breaths and tried to sleep, but when her eyes closed all she could see was Jim's face:

The apartment wasn't my only reason for leaving, she thought; I couldn't stand him any longer either. It was all his fault that I had to live like that:

Strong—like the soldier, she remembered. He could have got steady work, a good job—could get one now, if one could depend on him. Responsibility! Helen smiled bitterly. It means nothing. Fear is what he understands. Fear of a mistake. Fear that he won't be liked. And when he's afraid he makes a mistake and another and another. He's back where he started—no job, no money. Now it's a different but always cheap apartment. The faces change year after year. Strong? He's weak, weak, weak!

Helen was nearly there now. The bus in spite of all its stops had arrived on time. The taxi that she had taken with the last of her money was stopping in front of a dilapidated apartment house. Now waiting
for the door to be opened for her, Helen bounded out of the cab and thrust the fare in the hand of the driver. She half ran, half stumbled up the three flights of stairs and slipped her key into the lock. Only then did she hesitate for a moment. She closed her eyes and sighed. Jim was on the other side of that door, sitting by the window, waiting for her. He hadn't called the police; he wouldn't even have thought of it.

He won't even ask where I've been, Helen thought; it won't matter. Smiling lovingly, his gentle blue eyes filled with trust, he'll turn slowly towards me. And he'll say, "I knew you would be back--because I need you."

The door opened and Helen Mason was home.

TWO POEMS
James Atchison

BIG REBA

In the bar on Main
Rushes nightly Reba
Broad and huge of chest,
A vixen bold hunter.
When Jock's at the bar
Downing what she's set
Before him with her fist,
He wonders if she was
Ever a teething bit.

LADY JANE

My maiden is a massive dame
But what a rapturous dame is she,
Her liquid voice speaks lotus words
That turn my heart to something lame;
From spring to fall she loses hope,
Still keeps intact her slender mind.
But her frivolity unchecked
Upsets my wavering horoscope.

HA!
Ernestine Locke

All the world is but a stage
Where actors shudder at their lines
And bruise the intellectual sage
Who forgot to give them spines.

HIS FIRST
(A Farce in One Act)
James Atchison

Characters
Jemmerson, youthful clerk for Lindon Seaways and nephew to the owner
Hager, manager in the office where Jemmerson is a clerk
Mrs. Iris Morris, a sophisticated secretary
Mae, a typist
Faye, Jemmerson's wife
Five nurses
An Intern

Scene 1 ... An office of Lindon Seaways, a touring agency
Scene 2 ... A hospital room a few hours later
Scene 3 ... Same as scene 1, in the afternoon

The second scene, the hospital scene, was printed in the Spring number of Voices. Because of the length of this play, the final scene will appear in the Winter number.
SCENE I
(The scene opens on an office before work. No one is in the office. Telephone rings. Interval. From door on right Mrs. Iris Morris comes in hurriedly, but matter-of-factly, combs her hair, lipsticks, powders, opens the bottom drawer to the filing cabinet, and puts her rather large purse in it. She goes to desk on left and straightens the in-box and out-box. Then she goes to her desk and starts typing.)

MAE: (Enters right, breathlessly.) What time is it? I thought I was late. Good morning, Iris.
IRI: Good morning, Mae. How are you?
MAE: Oh, this is one of those mornings. George came by last night, and we went to see that crazy movie everybody is talking about. (She gets ready to work, and puts her purse in bottom drawer of filing cabinet.)
IRI: Did you like it?
MAE: It was pretty good. (She looks at the letters on her desk, and gets things organized.)
IRI: Mr. Hager is late this morning.
MAE: I'm not sorry.
IRI: I'm not sorry either, but he's usually here before me.
MAE: When I left last night he was still at his desk.
IRI: He's had to do a lot of extra work since that woman jumped yesterday.
MAE: In a way that's the funniest thing I've ever heard of. And then too, it's pretty bad. I never thought that woman (Hesitates.)--what's her name?
IRI: LaFever.
MAE: Yes, I never thought Mrs. LaFever would do like that; did you?
HAG: (Enters right.) Good morning.
MAE & IRI: Good morning, Mr. Hager.
HAG: Whatever you do, no matter what happens, never never, never jump out a window. (Puts his briefcase beside his desk, and goes to window at back of stage.)

HAG: Take a look at this. Now (He points to window.) this window, this very window is costing Lindon Seways $5,000 to say nothing of the extra time I'm putting in on the paper work.
IRI: I didn't think she could sue.
HAG: I didn't think anything about it until her lawyer called me. Well, you can never tell about these frustrated widows.
MAE: I was out when all the excitement happened. Was the story in the paper correct?
HAG: It didn't tell what happened here.
IRI: You know Mrs. LaFever has been wanting to travel abroad for several summers, and she can't get a passport.
MAE: Yes, I know about that.
HAG: Who doesn't?
IRI: She came in here, and just threw a fit. I tried to explain to her that we had nothing to do with the passports, but she has to have one before she can take the European tour.
MAE: I know.
IRI: She started some lingo about our being prejudiced, and she ranted and raved around here like a maniac.
HAG: I felt sorry for the old gal.
IRI: She wanted to go to Europe so bad, you couldn't help feeling sorry for her. She seemed awfully jumpy and upset. Mr. Hager told her again she could not complete the reservations without a passport, then she ran over here (She goes to the window.) you see where the railing is gone, and she jumped into the bay.
MAE: Did she know she'd get wet when she started to jump?
IRI: I don't know.
HAG: You see the insurance company says this is a hazard, and that's the reason for her successful suit.
IRI: The way people get around things.
HAG: I've got some more work to do on this. (Points to pile of papers on desk.) Quite a bit more. (They go to their respective desks, and begin working.)
HAG: (Looks up from desk puzzled.) Where's Jemerson this morning?

IRI: I hadn't thought. I don't know where he is.

HAG: I've told him and told him not to write these letters like this. Where could he have learned a letter form like this?

MAE: No telling.

HAG: (Groaning.) Oh. I told him to write 'immediately' and he puts 'at your convenient choosing.' How on earth can he do that?

MAE: No telling.

HAG: Why doesn't he come in this morning?

IRI: (Thinking.) It may be his wife again.

HAG: (Without looking up from papers.) She sick?

IRI: (Casually.) Pregnant.

HAG: (Not paying any attention.) Mrs. Morris, will you retyp this letter please?

IRI: Surely.

HAG: (Gesture to paper he holds in hand.) What's this? (Reads.) I told that boy to make this in triplicate. Just because he's the boss's nephew, does he think he can run this office?

(Phone rings.)

IRI: (In phone.) Lindon Seaways. ... Yes, Mr. Hager. Mr. Lindon calling.

HAG: Yes, Lindon. ... Yes, I think I've got the information. ... It was about two o'clock. ... She's suing through the American Insurance Co. ... It takes a good lawyer, and I think she has one. Oh, she does have plenty of money. ... I think it was something about a subversive organization. ... No, they have to be cleared before they get a passport. ... We tried to reason with her, but she's one of that kind. She was impossible. ... Yes, I think I can take care of it. ... Yes, I'll call you.

HAG: (After hanging up.) Well, the old man's upset now. He's afraid we are in the wrong.

IRI: I don't see how he could think that.

HAG: The insurance companies say it's because of this window.

(Door opens at right; Jemerson enters.)

JEM: (Meekly.) Good morning.

HAG: Good morning. Where have you been? You see what time it is? (Points to clock on wall.)

JEM: I tried to call the office, but no one answered.

IRI: I was here at 8:30.

JEM: It was before 8:30 when I had to take Faye to the hospital.

HAG: To the hospital?

JEM: Yes.

HAG: I'm sorry.

MAE: What did you say was wrong with her. (She does not stop typing.)

JEM: (Nervous.) We're expecting a baby.

HAG: No! (Not believing him and making light of the situation.)

JEM: I wanted to stay with Faye. I know she needed me.

HAG: What could you do? You couldn't help any.

JEM: The doctors didn't think so either. They told me I might as well come to work, they said it might be some time. I can't understand these things.

(Starts to his desk.)

HAG: (Picks up letter.) Here's something I can't understand.

JEM: (Go to Hager's desk and looks over his shoulder.) What's that that you don't understand?

HAG: Will you please tell me what form this is?

JEM: (Proudly.) Haven't you seen that new, stream-lined form? That's the latest. I learned that at the business university.

HAG: (Rises.) Don't you remember what I told you?

JEM: Eh ...

HAG: I have told you never to use these new stream-lined, whatever you call them. I have repeatedly told you we use a certain form at Lindon Seaways. Understand?

JEM: Yes.

HAG: Then why in the name of high heaven did you use this?

JEM: I wanted to be different.

HAG: You do as you're told here. Understand?

JEM: Yes.

HAG: (Sits; the women have been watching, and they now resume typing.)
HAG: (To Jemmerson.) Get the folder on Insurance Policies.
JEM: (Goes to the filing cabinet. Thumbs through all in one drawer, closes it, does the same with two others, then starts through the first one again, scratches his head.)
HAG: (Impatiently.) Let's have the folder on Insurance Policies!
JEM: (Quietly.) Mrs. Morris, will you help me a minute?
IRI: (Gets up.) Surely.
HAG: (Gets up with papers in his hand.) Can't you find anything, Jemmerson? (Like a father.) Can't you do anything? (Sorrowfully.) What's wrong with you? Do we work you too hard?
JEM: (Weakly.) I don't see any folder on Insurance Policies. (Before Iris can help, Hager goes to the filing cabinet and takes a folder out.)
HAG: (Sternly.) Now look at this. (Points to letters on file.) This is what I wanted you to get for me. (Helplessly.) Why was that so difficult?
JEM: (Lighting up.) Oh, I see. You wanted policies (insurance). (Cups hands for parentheses.)
HAG: That's right.
JEM: (Pointing to folder in Hager's hand.) I saw that.
HAG: Why didn't you bring it to me?
JEM: I was looking for insurance policies.
HAG: Because insurance was in parentheses, you get baffled. (Shakes his head.)
JEM: (Goes to window.) Didn't the carpenter come?
HAG: (At his desk.) Evidently he didn't if the railing is still missing. Did you call him? You did, didn't you?
JEM: (Scratches his head.) Did I?
HAG: (Impatiently.) I asked you. (Phone rings.)
JEM: (Returns to his desk.)
IRI: (In phone.) Lindon Seaways. ... No, it is in the main building. ... Do you know the second building over? ... That's it. ... It's upstairs overlooking the bay. ... Yes, that's our office.
HAG: The carpenter?
IRI: Yes.
HAG: Had Jemmerson called?
IRI: Yes, but the carpenter didn't know where to come. He didn't know which building.
HAG: You called the man (To Jemmerson.), but you didn't tell him where the railing was gone.
JEM: Well, I guess. ...
HAG: If you had told him the address, he would already have this thing fixed!!
JEM: He should have read the papers. "LaFever jumps from office of Lindon Seaways" was in all the papers.
HAG: Our business is not to be carried on through the newspapers. When you call someone to come here, for heaven's sake, will you give him all the information.
JEM: (Sits at his desk.) Yes.
HAG: (Goes through some papers.)
MAE: How do you spell "suicide"?
JEM: Suicide.
MAE: Thank you.
HAG: (Looks up.) What's that? What's that? (To Mae.) Have you already written the word?
MAE: Yes.
HAG: Don't you know more than ... 
JEM: Let me get the dictionary.
HAG: (Hopeless.) Never mind the dictionary, go get the coffee.
IRI: That's a good idea.
JEM: (Gaily.) Let me get a list. (He searches over desk, gets piece of paper and puts in typewriter.) (To Hager.) You want coffee with cream.
JEM: (Punches with two fingers 'coffee w/cream' slowly.) And you (To Iris.) want coffee with sugar and cream?
IRI: Please.
JEM: (Punches 'coffee w/sugar and cream' slowly.) And you (To Mae.) want, what do you want today?
MAE: (Looks up bewildered.) Let me see. Two doughnuts. (Jumps up, goes to filing cabinet, takes out purse, opens it, drops it, and everything in
creation drops out, she and Jem start collecting the many scattered objects.) I just wanted a dime, and everything has to fall out. Oh, isn't this terrible? (Grows all junk into purse.) Here it is. Now, I want two doughnuts and a coke. I want a large coke. O.K.?

JEM: Yes. (Repeating)

MAE: Two doughnuts and a coke.

JEM: (Gaily.)

MAE: With cream.

JEM: Got it. (To Iris.) You want coffee ...

IRI: With cream and sugar.

JEM: Got it. And you (To Mae.), what did you want?

MAE: Two doughnuts and a large coke. I'm starving.

HAG: (Reaches into pocket.) Here's for mine. (Gives Jem coin.)

JEM: O.K.

IRI: Here's my nickel.

JEM: (Gaily.) I'll have your coffee in no time. (Prepares to dash out the door on right.)

HAG: You've wasted enough time. (Goes to Jemmerson's desk.) Here (Grbmly pulls Jem's typed list from typewriter.), take your shopping list.

JEM: (Taking list from Hager.) Almost forgot it. (Exit right.)

HAG: (Sits down at his desk, reads letter.)

(Phone rings.)

IRI: I'll be in Lindon's office. (Exit left.)

IRI: (To Hager.) Yes, sir. (To Mae.) Jem couldn't remember what you wanted when he got to the snack bar.

MAE: Oh, I knew he wouldn't. Eh ... I thought he wrote it down. I wanted coffee and a ...

IRI: Didn't you want doughnuts?

MAE: Yes, that was it.

IRI: (In phone.) Coffee and doughnuts. ... (To Mae.) With cream?

MAE: No, black.

IRI: (In phone.) No, black. (Hangs up.)

MAE: Did you think Jem's wife was expecting?

IRI: I hadn't given it a thought.

MAE: At the Christmas party, she told me she and Jem wanted a baby.

IRI: I guess they're going to have one.

MAE: I guess so.

(Phone rings.)

IRI: (In phone.) Lindon Seaways. ... Yes. ... Mrs. Kundry LaFever. ... About two-thirty. ... Yes. ... It may have been, but we can make no commitments. Yes. ... No, no other photographers have been here. (Hangs up.)

IRI: We haven't been so busy in this office since Miss Phyllapeski took her ballet class to Italy.
IRI: Oh, I guess that was before you started working here. (Chuckles.)

MAE: Should I say 'Mrs. LaFever swam safely to shore' or 'she swam safely to shore'?

IRI: Swam? Swam? Let's see ... Oh, here's this office guide. It's neither one. She swam.

MAE: Swam?

IRI: Yes, s-w-a-m.

MAE: Thanks.

JEM: (Comes in door right.) Here's the coffee. (To Iris, putting coffee on her desk.) Here's your coffee.

IRI: Thank you. By the way, Jem, some time today, will you go to Eighth Avenue Cleaners and pick up our flag?

JEM: (Holding tray of coffee.) Flag?

IRI: (Pointing to wall.) Yes, the one you took there three weeks ago to be cleaned.

(Phone rings.)

JEM: Oh, that one. (Puts doughnut and coffee on Mae's desk.) Here's yours. (He puts coffee on Hager's desk.)

IRI: (In phone.) Yes ... He's here ... Jem.

JEM: (Coming from Hager's desk.) Me?

IRI: Yes.

JEM: Hello ... Robert Jemerson. Yes ... Yes. Yes, I'll be right there. Just hold everything.

(Hangs up excitedly.)

IRI: Your wife?

JEM: No, Dr. Bradley, he says I should come right away. (He gets the hat, too big for him, off the filing cabinet that he put there when he came in.)

MAE: The flag. (Without looking up from her typing.)

IRI: Yes, Jem, please pick up that flag. It'll make Hager happy to have it back on the wall.

JEM: I've got to get to the hospital.

MAE: (Gaily, and reminiscent of a poster.) Is this trip necessary?

JEM: (Nervous but severe.) Don't be silly. I'm having a baby at the hospital! (Exit right.)

End of First Scene

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