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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When Something Fair and Precious Passes, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Distant Touch of Light, Leo Daugherty</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Strange That We Should Part Without A Tear, Judy Rogers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Triolets, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time, Earth, and Man, John Warren Oakes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjugation of Past and Present, Jerry Dalton</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calypso, Tell Me, Linda Tufts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lament to Helios, James Skaggs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Case of the Lily White Lie, Leo Daugherty</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear, That Dark and Heavy Vessel, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today I Walked in the Rain, Sylvin Salem</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse, I Thought, Gerald Konsler</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Seasons, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Obscure Cry, Linda Tufts</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finale, Judy Rogers</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandma Turner, Linda Tufts (a short story)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pin-Pricks, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruble, Rocks, and Rooming Houses, John Warren Oakes</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Easter Parade, Leo Daugherty</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Book, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Place-Nez, A Pack of Notecards and Thou, on which to Feed,</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo Daugherty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fable of the Intense Intellectual, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rendezvous, Leo Daugherty</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Spot of Dirt, Marty Basham</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a Time for Dying, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time's Arrow, Leo Daugherty</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There Is No Pleasing Everyone, Richard Oakley</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Affair, by C. P. Snow, reviewed by Judy Rogers</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Turn to Curtsy, My Turn to Bow, by William Goldman, reviewed by Leo Daugherty</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hour Before the Dawn, by W. Somerset Maugham, reviewed by Linda Tufts</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Patrons</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHEN SOMETHING FAIR AND PRECIOUS PASSES

When something fair and precious passes, fold
The pain of passing 'round you. Clutch with greed
The heavy, hirsute garment—crimp the cold
Dark cloth on red and angry flesh. Now feed
Austerely, taking pale and frugally
Your bread for meat and tepid water, wine.
So fix your soul, wallow voluptuously
In pain of parting, rub your wound with brine.
Do these things, so learning that, once galled,
The heart will ache less sharply. Sweetly dimmed
And gentle is the episode recalled—
With pleasant, nurtured pain the cup is brimmed.

Do this, and take you for a staff this fact:
The memory is more than worth the act.

Richard Oakley
A DISTANT TOUCH OF LIGHT
A Touch of Light on the Page
A carmine rose lies pressed in this old tome,
And (I remember)
It was placed there on a bright yellow day
When guitars were strummed,
And straw hats bobbed,
And beer was drained from giant glasses.
A canoe, as a pendulum weight,
Hung from a shaft of moonlight, and
Floated as on cotton candy,
The sky a part of it all.
Pretty faces and long green tables
Down by the river (just under Carson's Bridge):
And a girl in a shiny pink dress,
Who talked about New York and smoked
(Cigarettes), while gas lights on posts
Flitted and gasped and burned so low.
And later, when we sat around the fire and sang,
I saw a rose projecting from some auburn hair,
And red lips smiled, and bright eyes whispered in my ear,
"I found a rose, I picked it for my own."
The pink was fluttered by the rosy blaze,
This cloth was silk, I knew, and whispered back,
"Let's put it in water."

Leo Daugherty.

HOW STRANGE THAT WE SHOULD PART WITHOUT A TEAR

How strange that we should part without a tear
Who once felt loss at parting for an hour
—who held each other above all things dear
And thought that in our loving we held power
Over time, and Time's compatriot, Decay.
Yet now we meet and for a little while
We talk and laugh, not feeling what we say,
Not caring to converse with love's old guile
Indifferent to each other. Yes, how strange
But so much simpler, easier it is
That time in spite of us will still arrange
A quiet death for love, such death as this.
I see you leave without regret, yet I
Have lost a memory that will not die.

Judy Rogers.
THREE TRIOLETS

I
Death is the least
Of Life's dark spears.
West says to East:
"Death is the least,
Innocuous beast!"
Beside my fears
Death is the least
Of Life's dark spears.

II
The sonnet needs art,
The triolet, wit.
So, with a poor start.
"The sonnet needs art,"
The thought falls apart,
The pen fails to fit.
The sonnet needs art,
The triolet, wit.

III
A poem may be
All things to man:
Confided or free
A poem may be.
So, mindful of me,
Please smother your grin.
A poem may be
All things to men.

Richard Oakley.

TIME, EARTH, AND MAN

The earth is bright with the light of wealth.
Centuries of greed have glorified gold.
But time will rust even the gold of men
And leave it here to laugh at them.
The earth is heavy with dead men's bones.
Centuries of calcium carry much meat.
But death starts rapidly to clean the frame.
And leave only bones, moist and dank.
The earth is dark with the soot of sin.
Centuries of sacrilege have shadowed it.
But the LIGHT of the heavens is bright.
And clear, and will in time illumine dirt.

John Warren Oakes.
A CONJUGATION OF PAST AND PRESENT

For the beauty of the earth
For the glory of the skies

Sleepy Sam and me
Took off down the draw
Like bats outta hell
We wasn't interested
In droppin' in on a
Saber-tooth for supper
He never would
Have woke up
If it hadn't been
For all that loud
Chatterin'
That started all of the sudden

Do you know
What that Mrs. Zilch
Is doing in the daytime
While her husband's gone

When we got to
The lower end of the draw
We hollered for the women
And had them
Dig us a big deep pit
While we lounged
Around up on top
Somebody had to stay
Up there to pull
The women out

It must be a lot
Of trouble to cook
A T.V. dinner

We thought about
Leaving the women
Down there for bait
But we decided against it
It still got pretty cold
At nights
And we didn't want
To have
To chase all over a
Cold cave trying to
Break in a new woman

We could save that
For spring
When the sap rose

I now pronounce you
Man and wife

Pretty soon that old
Saber-tooth came
Stompin' down the draw
Mutterin' under his breath
And knockin' over saplin's
He bumbled right into that
Pit on his nose
But the women fouled
Everything up
Because they didn't
Dig the pit deep enough

To love honor and obey

That old saber-tooth
Came out of that pit
Mad as a swamp cow
In calf'in' season
And off we took
Down the draw again
Sleepy Sam and me
Have decided not
To wait till the sap rises after all

But anyhow
We finally got
Away from that
Saber-tooth
Or rather he got
Away from us
'Cause we ran up
A tree and the tiger
Got tired of waitin' 'round

Lord of all to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise

All me and Sam
Got to say is
Amen Brother

Jerry Dalton.
CALYPSO TELL ME . . .

Calypso tell me how you learned to sit
And smile at those who waved but sailed on by,
Who glided by with crimson sails sun-lit,
Unheeding both your songs and laughing eyes.
And tell me how when all your tricks and wiles
Had failed, how could you hear and grant his plea?
You set him free and shrugged aside the miles,
The lands, the tears, the sadness and the sea.
Sans hope, you gave him food of gods and wine
And stood there smiling as he set the sail.
Alone with sparkling spray and too much time,
Did you cry out? And did your cheek turn pale?
You knew as I that he would not return;
Teach me to love another, help me learn.

LINDA TUFTS.

LAMENT TO HELIOS

To Helios I must sing my sad refrain
Though saddened heart can scarcely voice sad strain,
My soul still steeps from valley dark and dim
To heights unknown, as still I cry to him
That earth in maiden blossom might return
And bring with her morn's fragrance, for I yearn
To walk again in dewy paths and share
The honeysuckled sweetness in the air.
Why—why do I lament, when from within
A voice says "Weep not for what might have been,
As does the rose that bloomed without its time
And failed to reach the joy of its prime."
Strong Helios, when thy rays make me as dust—
Remember thou my fervent prayer and trust.

JAMES SKAGGS.
THE CASE OF THE LILY-WHITE LIE

"Mr. Carson, Come here a minute."
A voice.
Light
(Silver-flecked, near-Innocent),
And I heard it there,
Knowing that I must again lie,
And rising from my brown
Swivel chair,
(UNDER the blue Mattisse).

Going out my office door,
(And down the hall to Room 106),
I saw her youthful face,
Smiling recognition from the door
(To room 106).

"Hi, Nancy!"
(With a collegiate we-are-equal
Inflection and a slightly
Fearful smile).
"C'mere Mr. Carson. Look. Look at
That. Is that good art, Mr. Carson?
Is that thing any good?"
And,
Pointing a creamy index finger
At a small colored drawing
("A Flower With Six Petals"
—Marceau, 1923),
She looked at it again,
(And then, of course, at me).

I glanced,
As if unfamiliarity might be excuse,
And winced internally,
As if an Alka-Seltzer had been
Chewed-up,
Swallowed,
And followed immediately by a warm bottle of coke.
(It was horrible)

Nancy looked at me,
And (Being quite bright),
Watched my face (Which must have been convulsed with pain).
For what emotion might be registered thereon.

The work in question,

A Marceau,
(France's greatest
Twentieth Century Painter)
Was one of his lesser things
(I mean it probably took
Six and one-half minutes to do,
If he dawdled to a sufficient amount)
And was composed
(If that is not too strong a word)
Of a perfectly symmetrical flower
(With six petals—
Each in a flat red,
With a green stem
—It was 4" by 4"),
And was accurately representative
Of thousands of bad things in art,
Which,
(Done by the masters),
Are not rejected,
But, rather, cherished because they bear a name,
(If this case, the biggest of big names,
Causing it to be hung
In the prized spot
Of our gallery,
With two armed guards on either side).

It was horrible—degrading,
And looking at it was approaching sin,

"Is it good, Mr. Carson?"

Is it good Mr. Carson is it good of course,

"Notice the line,
Nancy,
How sure it is,
(And inwardly stable, I guess).
Perceive the colors carefully—their tone,
Is it not almost an analytic study?
(And couldn't a drunken second-grader have done a better study?)
It is subtle,
Nancy,
And tenderly haunting.
Look a while longer,
And you will see
That it is a simple message
From a man of complex dimensions.

Leo Daugherty.
FEAR, THAT DARK AND HEAVY VESSEL

Fear, that dark and heavy vessel, slides
Insidiously into view; yes, soon or late,
It brims each man's horizon. Low it glides,
And having for its navigator, Hate,
It moves swift-oared and ominously full
With a malodorous cargo. Not by these:
The placid deck, the innocent deep hull,
Are we alarmed; we know within the lees
That writhing, black-limbed power, cuts the prow
Inexorably, so obscuring reason
As a course, or all reflection how
One circum-navigates his storm is season.

Still, I can but marvel; curiously,
We dread the ship, yet always seek the sea,

Richard Oakley.

TODAY I WALKED IN THE RAIN . . .

Today I walked in the rain . . .
And the lady next door looked from behind her
yellowed lace curtains and saw me
And shook her head, and said,
"Acts like one of them beatniks."

Yet, today I walked in the rain . . .
And saw the trees washed black by the ruthless scouring of the drops.
And saw the sprinkle of leaves trying to cover the gaunt, black branches.
(People are like that, you know, their thin lies making a pitiful covering for their ugliness.)

Today I walked in the rain . . .
And the man down the street gaped at me
With his narrow eyes and yelled,
"If I'se your mammy, I'd take a switch to ye."

Yet, today I walked in the rain . . .
And felt the drive of the wind as it shoved and pushed me;
But I conquered it and walked onward, but it grabbed me and pushed me back—destroying . . .
(Humans do that, you know, their ugly killings remarks.)

Today I walked in the rain . . .
To feel its cleansing, baptismal power,
But it reminded me of humans, imperfections among perfection.
O, what can renew me if not the rain?

Today I walked in the rain . . .

Sylvia Salem.
VERSE, I THOUGHT
Verse I thought, might well express
My well intentioned love, but I
That knowledge had not gained, so had
To others turn. Then for grace my heart
I showed as trees display their own,
But green was not her fancy's shade
And would not her roving eye surprise.
I showed the plumage of my deeds
As bright the peacock ever did,
But this profusion made her blink
And she in passing, passed me by.
Full strong I gathered up my works
As horses on the plain, but she
No adoration gave, nor harnessed
My intent. So through a thousand
Ravages my heart I fain proclaimed,
As well might my design have been
The cosmos in a shell. Life through
Leanings terrible, I trod for a goodly
Time, until I happened once, in
Ignorance of her there, to gently
Place a coin or two into
A beggar's hand.

Gerry Konsler

THE FOUR SEASONS
Four seasons fade and fold apart
To separate and tear
The noiseless rooms walled in my heart . . .
And still no fear is there;

For in each chamber lives a truth:
A wintry maxim here,
And there? . . . a springing seed, whose youth
Was washed by one wild tear;

Then gently will the summer sun
Displace the present gloom,
To wait and watch the reaping done
And feed a final bloom.

The seasons tell me this: that each
Turn of the year brings rest
And strength anew to heal a breach
In some four-chambered breast;

And each within its own, apart,
May fuse the four and weld
A talisman for some tired heart—
But one that's learned, not felt.

Richard Oakley
NO. I: SUMMER

I'll have no more of Summer not this one
Nor any still to come, should they be fair
Or ill, no matter; summers all have done
With me and I with them. And still the spare
Proportions of a crippled year I'll take
(And gladly, too!) before I reap regret.
The seed that you made sterile, yours to make
Anew; no fruit is mine, nor mine the debt.
With bitter mirth, I watch the eye of noon,
Which, turning, labels you of all least kind:
In leaving, Summer, knew you not how soon
A heart congealed would seek a cooler clime?
(Now, Sun: because I mock your gentle gaze,
Please punish me with searing summer's blaze!)

NO. II: AUTUMN

Gaunt Autumn holds for me not awe, nor fear,
For I have learned that Time, which folds and flies,
Can better do without untimely tears.
Relentlessly it moves, and all our sighs
For that which was can only serve to dull
The sharper zest in that which is to come;
And backward eyes will prove the man a fool
Who bears a burden when he might have none.
So let your dying summers die unmourned,
And sing no songs of sad and wan regret
No Winter be which blows not to be borne,
Nor Autumn which does not some Spring beget.
One final word to those who mock my youth:
If these be lies, then give me not the truth!

NO. III: WINTER

I, who in my hapless childhood shrank
Instinctively from cold and felt its thrust
As, armed with guile and ice, it sought to yank
And rout my civil pith of warmth; I must
Draw from those blinking years this homely fact:
A broken trust can cast a deeper chill
And sharper, stiff discomfort tends the act.
Then I, despite this wintry wisdom, still
Did give and give and count my heart as more;
Until (receiving always vows grown false)
The narrow years did make my heart's last door
Draw shut: Now safe am I at last from loss.
So blow my Winter cold, or merely cool,
I curse it still for proving me a fool.

NO. IV: SPRING

When Spring spreads wide its tokens bright, as coins
(Which wink and glitter cleanily in the sun),
Or stirs a sweet tumescence in the loins
(Which speaks of life lain dormant, not undone):
When primal pulse unmask a re-born mirth,
A renaissance of love; why should I babble
Giddy homage to a fertile earth?
Such travesty I spurn: the unclean rabble,
Genuflecting, thinking to give boons
To that which needs no favor. Spring, I say,
Is more—why, even gritty city rooms
Can spawn a Spring, and it not even May.
So why need I give empty rites their due?
My Spring, in four fair seasons, lives in you.

Richard Oakley
AN OBSCURE CRY

One last far-flung soft-sounding cry
For fair-haired maids with milk-white skin
Who curtsy, smile, and fall in love—
Walking and talking and singing
(in rain, plane, and Spain).

One final plea, far-sounding echoes
For misty dawns criss-crossed with rainbows
And morning’s children, shiny bright—
In gay pastels and smelling all of talcum
(in lilac, rose, and violet).

Wash away the smelly slime of slugs
With rain of spring and blue-jay’s wing;
Let joy and light triumphant be—
Obscure the real with honey comb
(of bramble rose and honey bee).

Paint with a feather world of blue
With silver dust bespangle dew,
And in the midst of all I’ll sit—
On pale-pink cloud and watch
(the sun sink slowly in the sea).

Linda Tufts

FINALE
Too many years have passed, you are too frail
To go on living as you are, alone.
It changes not a thing that you may rail
Against a modern fact. Time will prevail
And our society will not condone
A difference in you. So, as life fails
You must give in, conceding, first, details,
Than tenets of a lifetime, one by one,
Till all is gone and nothingness prevails.
Day follows day and life becomes a stale,
Indifferent song in futile monotone.
Your healthy pride that once would never fail
Is powerless to lift the mourning veil
Of years. Impatient time at last has won,
Conspired with life to place you in this jail
Of long-gone dreams and flavors bland and pale,
Indignity of choices not your own,
Where joyless smiles and false kindness prevail
And even yours, the proudest spirit, quails.

Judy Rogers
GRANDMA TURNER

A Short Story By Linda Tufts

Twilight flickered from the top of the hill where only a few remaining rays of sunlight lingered. Far off from the bog came the soft drone of jar­flies punctuated by the sharp rasping croak of frogs and chirps of crickets. In the east a few stars poked curious heads through the darkening sky. Twin breezes crept round the house, rattling a few dead branches against the parlor window.

Grandma Turner sat on the porch, rocking and humming an old hymn. At her feet lay Moses, a huge white cat, his eyes half-sealed by cataracts. Not so Granny, whose gray-black eyes kept turning toward the highway where Hattie had gone that morning. Now, as the breezes crossed the porch, she shivered and, drawing her pale blue shawl around her knobby shoulders, she got up slowly and hobbled into the house. Although her right leg was nearly an inch shorter than the other, she refused to fool with a cane.

"Here kitty. Here kitty, kitty."

Although he had eaten less than an hour ago, Moses got up and ambled to the door. Granny often forgot she had fed him, and some days he ate as often as seven times, so it was no wonder he was so large. Now he lapped the milk and leisurely swept his tail across the floor, stirring up particles of dust and cake crumbs lodged in a crack.

It was dark. The moon-sliver did no more good in lighting the sky than a match flicker in a cave, Granny was lonesome. She spoke softly to Moses; unconnected thoughts of parties and horses and church suppers, all things of Granny's life at least twenty years removed from the present. She hobbled from room to room, looking out the windows, picking up a spool of thread. Hattie had been gone an awfully long time. Maybe she wasn't safe so Hattie wouldn't worry. Gazing about the dun-colored room which she still called the parlor, her glance fell on an old issue of Police Gazette that Hattie had bought the last time she had gone to town. Seeing this made her think of Hattie again. She had been feeling poorly, Hattie had, not able to get up in the mornings without those awful coughing spells and sometimes spitting up blood. And she had lost an awful lot of weight too. The house was just filthy, since Hattie had took sick.

Granny sighed. It was just for this reason that Hattie had finally gone to the doctor. It was nearly ten miles to town, and she hoped that Hattie had gotten a ride. Granny began to nod over the magazine; even the picture of the half-naked girl tied to a bed was not enough to keep her awake. Softly she began to snore, gaining in volume as she sank deeper and deeper into sleep.

Suddenly there was a loud pounding on the door. Granny jumped, then laboriously pulled herself from the chair and went to the door.

"Is that you, Hattie?" she called.

"Damn it, yes; open the door."

Hattie stumbled through the door. Although not a large woman, she towered over Granny. Her greasy-red hair hung in disarray; her eyes were deep set and appeared more sunken in contrast with the pale-yellow color of her skin stretched tightly over her temples and cheek-bones. Sinking into a chair by the hearth, she slipped her feet out of the dust-caked shoes and leaned against the back of the chair, gasping for breath. She tried to talk, but the rasping breaths seemed to catch on something in her throat and tear themselves free. Fascinated, Granny sat and watched. Sometimes it was hard for her to realize that Hattie was her daughter; it seemed easier to think that she was Hattie's daughter. And sometimes it seemed that Moses was her son—but where was the father? Who was this strange looking, haggard faced woman, pale as death, who kept coughing and spitting in the fireplace?

"Get me a drink," the woman cried raggedly.

Granny brought the water, spilling most of it as she limped into the room.

"Did you see Moses?" she asked as she handed the glass to Hattie.

Hattie shook her head, and gulped the water in huge swallows. Holding on to the wall and still coughing spasmodically, she walked back to the bedroom. Granny followed, hesitantly, twisting her hands together. Then she remembered where her daughter had been.
"What did the doctor say?"

Hattie coughed and answered, "He thinks I smoke too much. And that I have T.B." She lay back on the bed.

Granny went to the window and peered out. "Where is that Moses? I wish he'd come home." She went to the door, then changed her mind, and came back to the bedroom. She lay there listening to the sound of Hattie coughing until she fell asleep.

No one was awake to hear the scratching on the door nor the soft whimper-mew that only a very old cat can make. No one saw the white ball of fur lay down on the third step; no one knows when Moses died.

Early next morning a pack of wild dogs came tearing through the woods and across the yard. They crossed the highway leaping and barking. Moses didn't move, but Granny heard them and decided it was time to get up. For a few minutes she had no other thoughts; then the fading sound of the dogs made her think of Moses. Wrapping a blanket around her shoulders, she went to the door.

"Here Moses. Come here kitty. Then, seeing something still and white on the steps, she went out on the porch. Stooping down, she picked up the cat and took him into the house. He was quite stiff. Slowly she sat down in her rocker with the cat in her lap. Gently she stroked the cat and rocked and rocked. Tears dropped onto the cat and onto the blanket. She didn't know how long she sat there, but her back was stiff and the rays that slipped through the half-closed shade cast silver shafts that danced from her white hair to the fur of the cat.

Something was coming down the road. Granny stood up, the dead cat still clutched to her bosom, and went to the door. It was a gray car, and when it stopped, a man in a dark grey suit got out. Granny noticed the gold watchchain that seemed stretched to a straining point across his belly.

"Mrs. Turner?"

Granny nodded.

"Does Hattie Turner live here? I'm Dr. Martin. She was in to see me yesterday, and I told her I'd let her know the results of the tests we ran. I wanted her to stay in the hospital last night, but she said she didn't want to leave you alone."

"She's still in bed. Want me to call her?"

"Don't bother. I've arranged for an ambulance to follow me out. Your daughter is a very sick woman, Mrs. Turner. She may not live."

Granny looked down the road and saw the ambulance approaching. Remembering the cat she still held, she backed into the house, and as an afterthought she beckoned for the doctor to follow her. Pointing toward the bedroom door, she limped out to the kitchen. There she found an orange-crate, half-filled with newspapers, and she dragged it to the middle of the floor. Taking the green blanket off her arms, she spread it across the papers. Then, carefully, she laid the cat on the blanket. A tear slid down and dropped off the end of her chin. She straightened up slowly and went back to the bedroom. I must ask Hattie to bury him for me.

"Hattie! Hattie! Are you up?"

Dr. Martin met her outside the door.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Turner. Your daughter is dead. Is there anything I can do?"

Granny opened the door and walked across the floor. Yes, there was Hattie—at least it must be Hattie, although the doctor had covered her face with the sheet. She came slowly back into the front room and sat down in the rocker. Slowly at first, then faster and faster, she rocked, making a melody of the creaking of the chair and a soft, dry-moaning hum. The doctor came in from the porch and stopped by the chair.

"The ambulance is here. Do you want to ride in?"

Granny looked up; she wiped her nose on the nightgown sleeve. Taking the doctor's arm, she led him to the kitchen.

"My cat is dead. Will you bury him for me?"

She sank to her knees and began to sway back and forth.

"Oh Moses—what am I going to do without you."

And she buried her face in the fur of the dead cat.
FOUR PIN-PRICKS

I
AFTER HEARING TOO MANY
LOVE-LYRICS
Love may flirt in gingham hem,
Or glitter in brocade;
She gambols in a grassy glen,
Or languishes in shade;
No stars will match her eyes, no dove
Is whiter than her hands;
(And not one poet says that Love
Dwells chiefly in the glands.)

II
OUTCOME
High Tragedy shall not endow
Us with awesome finality;
No, we shall die (as things go now)
Of epic triviality.

III
REBUTTAL
Other poets sprawl on pages,
Give no heed to rules;
Thinking, surely, they are sages
Loosening wisdom’s spools.
As for me, I mind the margins,
Spit my words out terse;
Never begging any pardons—
But I write only verse.

IV
THE PERFECT WEIGHT
If I could tilt Life's scale, this brittle
Balance would I clutch;
To drink of Hate, but not too little
Nor taste of Love too much.

Richard Oakley

RUBBLE ROCKS OF ROOMING HOUSES

Rubble rocks of rooming houses
Gather at the basement windows
Dirty children playing gayly
For no reason save their youth.

Broken windows shadow darkness;
Light reflected from the glass
Mirrors sadness in the aged,
Aged men who now must pass.

For them both the time is passing,
Passing slow and passing fast;
But the youth they do not fear it.
For to them time is outcast.

John Warren Oakes
THE EASTER PARADE

I.

Our teacher,
(Hung, cross-wise
Bleeding-red and wondrous pale),
Connotating Purity
(White-frocked and dainty looking).
And, when the question came up
(As it always does),
The answer was simple-direct
(and explicitly pointed):
"We'll call it Good Friday!"
(With many a whoop and holler,
uttered in the carefree abandon
of Youth).

Our Teacher,
Throwing his twelve trusties into bird-like panic
by Rising to the Cause gallantly,
And paying a houdini-like visit,
(R.S.V.P)
In their quavering midst,
And telling of eternal hope—
(He allus was a good 'eal of an optimist,"
quoth the pious Saint Paul,
while pausing in the middle of a dynamic
tract against post-marital sex,
"And I think we should listen to him,
Perhaps many-mansioning ourselves into something good.")

Our Teacher
Then floated off skyward,
Most likely waving goodbye,
As regimented angels played harps
Until tender hands were numbed and blistered.

II.

"Oh, look!"
"Yes. It is a beautiful flower, isn't it. I think I'll
call it the Easter Lily. 'Cause it kinda reminds me of
Christ's resurrection."
"Oh, are you Pantheistic? How sweet!"
"Huh?"

III.

"Y'know,
It's funny
(The way Easter falls
In the Spring like it does). I
mean, it's real beautiful and, like, tender and all."
"Yep. Couldn't a' picked a better
Season for it
If they'd tried."

IV.

The cities of the world in picture windows,
Ablaze with color and shafts of light,
And Springtime's people, resplendent and radiant,
In cloths and satins,
Rubies and opals,
The deep pink of mid-March,
With quick-paced steps and laughter.

Cotton fuzzy bunnies,
In gala straw baskets,
Candied and nutterd—
(In that holiday way you like so well).

Egg rolling,
And the childhood search
For colored bits of light, delighted youth's heart.

And promenade,
While a few hearty souls
Brave Sunday's pre-paper bleakness
(To go a'Churchin'),
(Feeling saved and a goodly amount
sanctified, as they responded so nobly
to humanity's call by buying a buck-fifty's
worth of Easter Seals last week.)

Festive cries of:
"Happy Easter!"
Fill the Air,

As Hart, Schaffner and Marx are in their offices
And all's right with everything.

(syntheticism enough in time)
THE BOOK

When first I viewed the Book, through callow eyes,
I marked it thus: Here, splendid deeds were done!
I marveled that He pinned back flimsy skies,
Or harbored in His palm a potent sun.
As time unloosed my scales, I inched through pages,
Seeking those who, while unsanctified,
Spoke eloquently to the diverse ages,
Bracing men in whom all hope had died.
O cruel wrench! How harsh, and subtle, too
When volumes labelled Reason paled the Book,
And urged the day when nothing else would do
But I should shed my faith. If now I look,
Dark wonder meets my gaze. I stand, a bare
Agnostic, hollow with a want of prayer.

Richard Oakley

A PINCE-NEZ, A PACK OF NOTECARDS AND THOU ON WHICH TO FEED

Banded tautly together, this huddled few,
Embracing, coldly rejecting, indifferencing.
With an unerring and cool eye on the stiff-backed journals.
Judging without spending pondering moments (unneeded things)
What those with some measurable degree of life produce—
And wallowing in the new red wine of pedantry,
While sipping cautiously, and with adequate insurance
From the clear-liquided glassful of chance.

Tired-eyed, Murine-demanding and haggard, they stand,
Importantly, with regal bearing, before the world’s card catalogues,
Filing, picking, snatching at bits of tattered cloth
Or shall we call it categorizing our material?
For we must re-name it every year, lest it grow stale.

Their tools, projections of their very limbs
—The index cards, The Readers Guide, a trusty ball-point,
And the encyclopaedic compartmentalization of all matters—
These are the fingers, bony and hard, all-getting,
Which belong to parasitic things and predatory birds awing.
All while the hosts, those doing few, work on
At supplying the gist for this self-appointed mill of sterility,
Never considering that their life’s blood is to be doled out,
Indeed decided, with a cackling laugh in some ivy tower,
And splendidly uncaring, unnoticing, unaware, and presenting.

The hands of the stagnant, ink-smeared, like limbs protrude.
Gentlemen,
Shall we discuss symbolism,
imagery;
movements perhaps?

Leo Daugherty
THE FABLE OF THE INTENSE INTELLECTUAL

Robert was, above all things, a man of unshakable convictions, a man who unswervingly abided by his decisions; and he had decided while he was still quite young that his primary function in this life was to observe. He therefore devoted all the zeal of his youth to watching, shrewdly and piercingly, the actions of those about him. Perhaps, for him, the most uncomfortable aspect of his watchfulness was that he did it so gravely. Robert was, alas, a humorless soul, and it is indeed fortunate that he was also by nature dispassionate; a less convenient assemblage of traits might have resulted in, at the very least, a severely melancholy disposition.

Robert traveled in solitude to many places and watched and listened. He hitch-hiked, he rode the rails, he even managed to own (for a brief but pleasant period) an ancient and surprisingly efficient roadster. Job followed job as city followed town and hamlet. He spent many evenings (which the pleasure-mad would no doubt describe as desolate) meandering endlessly down strange streets in search of a revelation, an insight, a . . . what? He did not know, actually, what he sought; he knew only that someday, through his cumulative fund of learning and experience, he would be able to discern a reason, a pattern, a meaning.

During one sojourn, he descended, in an appropriately seedy costume, to the subterranean haunts of the Youthful Protestors where he heard a dedicated pianist, his sensitive eyes protected by sunglases from the harsh glare of candles, reorganize the rhythms of a Bach Invention to the form of a Latin-American folk dance. After matinee performances, he stood in the lobbies of movie-houses and watched the bobbing, colorfully flowered hats which were almost animated by the intensity of their wearers as they discussed the moist and manifold beauty of the Art they had so recently witnessed. He wandered through countless public libraries procuring books and more books and seeing always the homeless, faceless old men, consumed by apathy and despair, nodding over newspapers. Sitting in churches, he was overwhelmed by the smug power of the Godly who, unable to concern themselves with such trivia, dozed as the minister spoke of man's creation and the ultimate resting place of his soul.

Robert was, on occasion, able to accumulate enough money to buy his way into the frosty dens of pleasure frequented by the well-to-do. There he heard brittle laughter, its volume equated exactly with the bank-balance of the raconteur, and he perceived that a lady of breeding could, after her sixth manhatten, still manage to tilt her soup-spoon in the proper direction. He also attended Important Lectures and was gratified to learn that the world could be saved by reading the poetry of Marianne Moore, by attaching still larger gymnasia to the public schools of Nebraska, or by erecting a statue in honor of a prominent bootlegger-turned-philanthropist.

Robert watched and listened to all these things and matured as the years passed. So it came about that one hot summer afternoon, as he lay on a hard, lonely bed in a boarding-house room, a room which was the brother of a hundred rooms he had known before, Robert knew somehow that the end of his quest was near. Rising up, he stubbed his cigarette soberly and said to himself: "I have seen life and evaluated it as the tawdry carnival it is. I have known the sordidness of youth, the futility of age, the sham of the intellectual, the dreariness of the dull-witted, the hypocrisy of the pious, the vulgarity of the irreverant. Surely I have seen as much as any man of my years, and it's imperative that I now assimilate my experience into a meaningful statement. But how may I best give expression to my knowledge? How shall I speak of what I have learned?"

As the waning sun slipped lower and lower in the sky Robert pondered this question. Finally, he reached his decision as dusk settled over his dusty room. Resolutely, he dressed, boarded a down-town bus and, a half-hour later, took an elevator to the thirty-second floor of an office building and jumped.

MORAL: Laugh before you leap.
RENDEZVOUS

There are stars tonight,
And diamond whirling things about.
One lone pale moon engulfed in smoke,
There will be snow tonight.

This room is red and has one door,
Which opens black against the night,
And gently whiffs our yellow flame,
A glowing spectre; red, our room.

Some parts and patches of this thing
Seem near; some far and distant,
But intertwining, binding all,
One light, blue thread,
   (as a spider strand motionless.)

O, this is such a fragile thing.
Sound, stop

This night has many stars and more.

Leo Daugherty

I SAW A SPOT OF DIRT

I saw a spot of dirt.
It was not the dirt of filth
As we see on a floor or street,
But it was the dirt of centuries.
It is what is in, rather than on,
And it takes more than soap and water
To clean the corruption of a man's soul.

Marty Basham
THERE IS A TIME FOR DYING

There is a time for dying, one and all—
A season aptly named, for slow death falls
From off the limbs and crackles underfoot.
A pallid yellow sickly shines, and mute
And tortured trees begin to rattle. Yes,
There is a time for dying, time for rest.

Richard Oakley

TIME'S ARROW

Time's arrow is a fleet, pale-yellow shaft,
With sweeping flight unmatched in black of space,
And this man had a gaunt and darkling face;
Our bow-man, so well-versed in aiming craft.
But he grows wan, and wearied is his stance,
Old head of gray, old eyes now rather blank,
And grasps his bow of old as in a trance
Induced by days on end in dale, on bank.
For one last fleeting shot, he draws his string,
Brown arms, once mighty pinions, seem unsure—
With steady aim, he looses wand to wing.
Yes, arrows live, but archers ne'er endure.

Leo Daugherty
TECHNOLOGY HAS IN ITS TOWER

Technology has in its tower
The rod of all our grief.
The human race, a dwindling power,
   No more commands-in-chief.
If Christ Himself could walk this vale
   And re-enact His Loss,
Technology would still prevail:
   He'd pack a plastic cross.

Richard Oakley

THERE IS NO PLEASING EVERYONE

There is no pleasing everyone
   And I am weary, trying.
Simple words they promptly shun,
   Urbanely bored, and sighing.
If doggedly I weigh the paltry
   And, like them, scorn the factual,
They wax accusatory, call me
   Psuedo-intellectual.
But you of perfect knowledge have
   One fact yet to accrue
Which serves me well as healing-salve:
   I do not write for you.

Richard Oakley
The Affair, by C. P. Snow
Reviewed by Judy Rogers

The Affair is the eighth novel in a projected eleven volume series concerning a man called Lewis Elliot. This volume, in which Elliot is the narrator, tells of university politics and especially of the case of a certain unpopular professor who is unfairly dismissed for scientific fraud. Elliot is one of a small group who reluctantly come to believe that the dismissal was unjust and who set about getting Howard reinstated. By the time this had been accomplished the entire faculty has become involved. Warring factions spring up, university politics become confused, and various individuals are forced to often unpleasant self-examination.

The bare plot of the book offers bountiful opportunity for dramatic situation. But Mr. Snow handles it rather as a bored butterfly collector might handle his specimens. The characters become types and are analyzed with cold objectivity. All spontaneity disappears against this emotional dissection. Elliot, telling the story, seems involved only on an ethical plane. Everything is simple too, too conservatively British. I finished the novel feeling that a mouse could run right up the leg of any one of the feminine characters, and she would be much too well-bred to utter a sound.
YOUR TURN TO CURTSY, MY TURN TO BOW,  

By William Goldman

Reviewed by Leo Daugherty

William Goldman, a young writer with a certain descriptive power, has again scored a reasonable success. This time, the novel is a short one entitled Your Turn to Curtsey, My Turn to Bow. The author of The Temple of Gold has written, in this instance, a novel which attempts to explain what can happen to a seventeen-year old boy when he is exposed to a number of shattering things in one tense and turbulent summer.

The protagonist, Peter Bell, is relatively unexposed, a bit naive, and always thoroughly youthful. It is interesting to note that Holden Caulfield, Salinger’s hero in The Catcher In The Rye, is younger than Peter Bell, but much more hardened and conditioned. I mention this similarity only because the novels are somewhat alike in both tone and theme.

In this novel, the protagonist has been appointed to a position as counsellor in a boy’s summer camp. While there, he meets several people who threaten to change his entire way of thinking and responding, and do succeed in quickening sharply his maturing process. The most important of these is an ex-football hero who revels in Peter’s admiration. This man, it turns out, has been pre-maturely released from a mental institution, and is still severely haunted by visions, apparitions and emotional upheavals. He plays a principal part in the novel, and could be called the character of secondary importance.

There is a strong father-image in the novel, much in the tradition of Thomas Wolfe, but on a less grandiose scale. Bell’s father is a strong man, with money and love. He and Peter have a comradely relationship, but the relationship contains none of the more distasteful aspects of the stereotyped father-son thing.

The novel begins like a “teen-age summer adventure,” much in the tradition of those found on juvenile book-shelves in libraries everywhere. Exactly where this impression leaves the reader is not clear, but it definitely departs very quickly, giving way to deep drama, colorful characters, fast action and a shocking climax. The book contains a certain “fresh” quality, and is written with a great deal of skill, understanding and compassion. It is structurally superb.

Well worth reading, this novel is in paperback, and is published by Bantam Books. It contains 116 pages of suspense, agony and surprise, and can be easily read in an afternoon. I can say, with a certain degree of safety, that if you liked the Salinger novel you will like this also. It was originally published by Doubleday in 1958.

THE HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN, by W. Somerset Maugham

Reviewed by Linda Tufts

The name W. Somerset Maugham needs little introduction to most readers today. Among his better known works are Of Human Bondage, Cakes and Ale, The Razor’s Edge, and The Moon and Sixpence. The Hour Before the Dawn was written in 1941 and since then has been printed in Danish, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, and it has recently achieved renewed success in paperback form.

Although lesser-known than his other novels, The Hour Before the Dawn has typical Maugham touches. It is written about World War II, which he knew quite well, but it is lacking in the fire and intensity of his other novels.

Set in and about London, the plot involves not only the aspect of a nation fighting for its life, but also that of certain individuals in this same struggle. It is in these characters that Maugham seems to falter. The majority are typical British stock characters—a retired general, trying to do his part in the war effort, the well-to-do British matron, a suspiciously unsuspicious German girl—and all are seeped in British humor, stamina, and tradition.

Yet two characters stand out in this crowd. Jim Henderson, who, as a pacifist in a traditionally military family, braves the shame and scorn of all and refuses to fight. For the reader, used to English patriots rushing to defend their country at all costs, this young man is a welcome change. Jane Foster, though only a supporting character, seems to be more of an individual than any of the others. It is only through her conversation that Somerset Maugham reveals his command of spoken dialogue. Too often in supposedly tender love scenes, the individuals involved seem to be uncomfortable and conversation is stilted. Jane Foster saves many situations from being maudlin or melodramatic.

In spite of the fact that the book starts slowly and slows down again toward the middle, Maugham triumphs as usual. Without the reader being aware of it, he finds himself engrossed and unable to lay the book aside until the end.
PATRONS

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Olva Kimmel Dorris
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