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Bitter - Sweet Youth

By Janet Carron Hall

As they walked up the hill holding hands lightly in that familiar way she had learned to love, her thoughts once again turned suddenly to that question she had asked herself so many times in the past few weeks, "Why must it end?" Lyn couldn't believe that happiness, or this contentment she felt, could go on and on.

PEOPLE TERMED them as a "cute couple" which never failed to amuse them. Lyn was petite, reaching almost to Tom's chin in height, and they always seemed to be bubbling over with happiness when they were in the presence of others. Often they talked of what people "thought" about their dating. The general opinion of their friends, regardless of appearances, seemed to be that they probably would never get along because of their contrasting moods. In a sense, they felt this too --- Tom, consciously; Lyn, subconsciously. Although she admitted freely that she loved him, she never thought of him in terms of a prospective husband. Never before had she thought of love without coupling it with marriage.

BOTH LYN and Tom were subject to contrasting moods of deep depression and extreme joy, but to often these moods clashed. Lyn sometimes thought that he seemed to almost be two different people. One could understand, the other she couldn't didn't want to. Sometimes, it seemed almost as if he wanted to hurt her, wanted to see others hurt. Then she felt no love, only a sadness for him. Never had she known a boy who could almost break her heart with his cruelty, and the next moment do something so kind, be so gentle that she wanted to cry. The Tom whom she had learned to love before she knew the first Tom existed, was the sweet, understanding, serious boy she was walking with tonight.

IT HAD been a wonderful evening. So few times, Lyn or Tom had found anyone they could talk to as they could to each other. And tonight they had talked of religion, in an easy and free way they had never talked before. To Lyn, it was a deep and moving experience.

AS THEY walked up the hill, they had been talking of what they would both do when they finished school. They were exhausted with the seriousness of their earlier discussion, and now they talked lightly, in that easy banter that made them feel so at ease with each other.

"Where will you go, Tom? she asked.

"Next Year? I don't know, Lyn, but I know where I'll be going someday."

Not realizing the conversation had taken a serious turn again, she said lightly, "Oh' may I go with you?"

The tone of his voice when he answered told her she hadn't taken it seriously enough.

"No, Lyn," he answered. "Heaven's someplace I have to go by myself."

HIS ANSWER made a chill run through Lyn's body, but she realized he had more to say, so she waited, walking silently beside him. Soon he started speaking again and she listened intently.

"When I get there, I'll go up to where God's is sitting and he'll shake my hand and say "Welcome home,

LYN'S HEAD snapped up quickly. She hated sacrilege and it surprised and hurt her to hear Tom speak like this. She had started to cut him off sharply, but the still-serious look on his face stopped her. When she thought about it later in her room, she realized that this was another Tom, one she hadn't met before.

Now he wasn't talking to Lyn any longer; he was only thinking aloud.

"Then He'll lead me to a room filled with books, and He'll say, 'In there, you'll find all the answers.' And I'll go in, and look for all the things I've always wondered about. Once in a while I'll get up and go to the window and look out over Heaven."

LYN REMAINED silent, for there was nothing she could say. He didn't want an answer, and at last she understood that to remain silent would be giving him more of herself right then than words ever could.

THEY WERE standing at the top of the hill now, and he stood apart from her, looking up at the sky. She felt the gradual breaking away and willed herself to prevent it, but could not move to touch him. She heard that little chuckle break loose from inside him . . . Not a happy chuckle, not a laugh, just a brittle, almost bitter sound he made when he was deep in thought. Lyn had learned to dread this sound and the aftermath.

SHE KNEW what he was thinking and tried to project herself into his mind. But the contentment she always felt when she thought of God wasn't there. Tonight she could only wonder if there was a God. And she thought, "Why should I wonder? There's never an answer." She wanted to strike out at someone because Tom had made her feel alone and lost, and in her young mind, she balled a presence she could not understand.

AS THEY stood there, Tom alone within himself, yn waiting to share this experience with him, but unable to, he began to speak again, almost incoherently at first.

"I can't find it," he murmured. "It's gone. I've searched so hard, but it's gone."

Silence followed, dark and deep, unpenetrable.

"I wonder if He's really up there."

Again, silence.

"I wish I could be out there looking back, seeing myself as I really am."

THE TEARS started in Lyn's eyes, she could stand it no longer. She touched his arm and said his name softly. Tom stood straight, looking up, not hearing her, not seeing her. Again she whispered, "Tom?" No answer came. Lyn stood beside him, as closely as she could without touching him. "He's so close," she thought, "but I can't touch him. I've tried so hard to make him happy but I've failed." She stood there understanding that he didn't need her, but unable to leave. She didn't want to resent this intangible force, but resentment was there because she had lost him. She waited for what seemed like hours, waited for him to turn away from his thoughts, to her.

AS SHE turned, finally, and walked to the house, she felt the pain of not being wanted, of not being needed, and Tom felt the deep need of Something, Someone, but he could not realize what it was. He stood alone on the hill, looking up at the stars . . . waiting.

A Fruitful Search

By William Spelbring

I search my heart for a reason for my life.

I find not one.

I search my soul for a reason for my death.

I die a thousand times.



Dedication:

Originality and Creativity

THIS SECOND annual literary issue of the MERCURY is dedicated entirely to original and creative writings and to illustrations by Glenville State College students. The prose, the poetry the illustration are the original works of students.

THIS IS AN age when self-assertion and individualism must be encouraged. What could be closer to originality than these two ideas? The modern writer is not discouraged by the fact that "there is nothing new under the sun." He refines the old truths and ideas and refines them to suit our age as he sees this age.

ORIGINALITY GIVES every writer the right to express life as he envisions it. There are no rules of originality; every author may have a different interpretation of the old verities and concepts. Originality also lends itself perfectly to symbolism, a favorite style of writing among moderns.

IRVING BABBITT has said that "every man, in short, is to be an original genius." There should be no convention, no limits to bind the writer. The writer has the privilege to express his own particular night - mare of life as well as his dream of life, or life in its reality. The creative writer knows no bounds.

GENUINE ORIGINALITY is almost impossible to achieve. Somewhere in the near or distant past, someone has used in a literary work, almost every idea, every truth, every concept known to mankind. Yet all the many writers down through the ages and in the present have succeeded to an extent in being original, because they were or are individuals and individualism abounds in originality.

IMAGINATION ABOUNDS in originality too. The life of the imagination does not lie at an opposite pole from the life of the inquiring mind. We believe that the real defense of our freedom on campus and beyond is imagination — that "feeling" of the mind that actually "knows" because it involves itself in the knowing. The one who "knows" with his heart knows freedom.

MANY MODERNS conceive of originality as either the blackening of what is traditionally white or the whitening of what is traditionally black. But originality is, in fact, merely an expression of individualism and individual concepts of life.

IT IS important that expression, through language or art or any form, not become stale and standardized. There are always new insights into human experience to be revealed.

THROUGH THE medium of this literary issue, we have provided an opportunity for Glenville students to express their insights and originality.

THIS SECOND ANNUAL LITERARY ISSUE, therefore, is dedicated to originality and creativity.

Judyth Mayhew

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The Glenville Mercury

Second Annual Literary Issue

Spring 1962

Judyth Mayhew Editor

About The Contributors

- ★ Mr. Cutlip, a graduate of Richwood High School, is a special student. He is taking courses that will prepare him for work as a physical therapist.
- ★ Miss Deal is senior English and social studies student from Glenville. She is active in Literary Society and has been named on the Dean's List. Miss Deal placed second in the MERCURY Poetry Contest in December with her poem, "History Notes."
- ★ Miss Hall, former MERCURY editor, is now teaching in Centerville, Md. She was an English and speech student, and she will be graduated May 25. She appeared in "R. U. R." this year.
- ★ Mr. Posey, a graduate of Burnsville High School, is an English and speech student. He appeared in "Rope and will appear in "Smythe."
- ★ Mr. Spelbring is a junior English and speech student from Weslake, Ohio. This year he has appeared in "Rope", "R. U. R.", "Hamlet" and "The Serpent's Tooth" and will appear in the one-act "Smythe." Mr. Spelbring won first place in the 1961 MERCURY Poetry contest with "Where."
- ★ Mrs. Steyer, an elementary education student, is the wife of the Rev. C. G. Steyer, minister of the Trinity Methodist Church. She is the mother of two children. She has been named on the Dean's List.
- ★ Mrs. Williams is a senior English and social studies student from Glenville. She is a member of the Literary Society. Mrs. Williams has one daughter.
- ★ Miss Brady is a sophomore art student from Charleston. She had one wood cut entered in Exhibit 180 at Huntington recently. Her work was also on exhibition in the fourth annual art show on campus the past week end.
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Closing Night

By William Spelbring

Harsh footsteps on a wooden floor
Disturb the silence of a room.
Beyond the wall a quiet man
Descends the stairs,
His treading echoes.
Throughout the city other men
Descend, ascend, or turn about
How sharp and clear the memories linger,
Soon though, fading like the lights.
Then will nothing be remembered.
Lonely thoughts,
To contemplate the hour before.
They, to elated
Fall to sorrow.
And silent nights.
Now the silent room is empty.
Darkness settles in the chairs.
No more footsteps banish quiet.
No more treading
On the stairs.
Laughter gone, applause departed,
The same with tensions thickening dread.
Programs, scattered, lie like shadows.
Life is gone.
The stage is dead.



Night

By Elsie Marie Deal

Night -- when all other thoughts are gone from me
You enter my mind: invade and conquer.
Almost, I can hear your footsteps and
I open my eyes, sure to find you standing
By my bed. No. Think of something else?
I cannot. You are.
I see your eyes, your face, your hair, your smile,
Your hands. These things impress me most and
Will not cease to tear at my heart.

Night. Withdrawn from a day's tendiousness.
"Tonight I will do something constructive."
... You are again, and I am lost.
Obsessed? In it just the night?
Days pass and nights brings you to me.
I live for the night.

Moments of Brilliance

By Elsie Marie Deal

My moments of brilliance are like
flashes of lightning:

Making darkness lighter than sunny
day,

Flashing to the hidden glades of
dense forests,

Ommiscient.

But, they are not preceded by thunder

They do not bring a storm;

They are no more enduring than the
jagged flash of light;

They are not so frequent as
lightning ---

So, more often than not, wasted.



Jill

By Doris Williams

WELL, HERE I am on the train. Me, Jill Wilson, going to the big city, the land of stinking niggers and niggers lovers! My God, help me!

GRANNY WILSON looked so small and pitiful standing back there on the platform. Her eyes soft with anguish and her little frame shook but not a tear fell. Seventeen years ago her daughter had left on this same train and she, too, never returned.

AND PAUL, Paul? It must be a horrible nightmare! No, you are here on this train Jill, heading for Chicago and that big, buxom nigger going on down the aisle there has just been trying to sell you one of those cheese-and-ham-fifty cent sandwiches and that woman over there in the next seat is staring at you. "Lady, if you turn that damn head around here one more time I'll scream."

JILL TURNED her head and looked out the window. Dark was creeping and covering all. Only blobs and masses could be seen in the distance as the train rushed on.

THE MAN in the next seat ahead, reached above his head and flicked on the small, dim night light, and reached for his copy of ESQUIRE. JILL TURNED again to the window and looked directly into the eyes of a stranger. She saw and eighteen-year-old, petite, good-looking young girl, who stood five feet tall and weighed one-hundred pounds. She wore a feminine, ruffled, white blouse and a red plaid skirt with a matching weskit. Granny had sewed into the wee hours in order that Jill could have a new outfit to wear on Senior Day. Her dark, black eyes had lost their laughter and taken on a look of fatigue and pain. Her lips were round and full. Her hair hung in a thick, black, glistening blanket to her shoulders. It circled around her face and she thought that it would smother the breath out of her. Quickly and almost savagely, she grabbed the soft mass with both hands and huddling in the corner of her seat, sobbed quietly.

DAWN WAS beginning to break. A voice was heard saying, "Next stop Dearborn, 5:35." Jill stirred but did not awaken. Did he say Dearborn? Wasn't that where she, Paul, Jack and Barbara had stopped for food in January when they were on their way to the regional debate meet at Erie? What a weekend that had been! We drew the affirmative for the first round against the Douglas High team. We sat on the left of the room and the niggers sat on our right. I was about to begin the first affirmative speech when Paul nudged me and whispered, "Let's send them back to Africa, Honey." We all giggled. After we had won the debate and were finding our way out of the building, I was momentarily stopped by one of the Douglas boys who looked at me with cold and knowing eyes and said, "Too bad you're not a nigger baby." Paul didn't hear this I was glad because Paul hates niggers.

WHY DID I have to find that blue slip of paper? I would never have known! Who was the fool that said all men are created equal?

THE TRAIN was moving again now. She turned and faced the window. She took a long and agonizing look at the reflection of herself on the glass. Savagely she snatched her purse from the seat and from inside it she grabbed her hairbrush and began brushing the thick, black curly hair. "Lies! Lies! I'm not a nigger! I'm not! I'm not!"

Mrs. Babbitt And Her Friends

By Micheal E. Posey, II

Clumsy oaf, thought Mrs. Babbitt. I do wish people would watch where they are going.

"Oh! Excuse me."

"Oh, that's quite all right."

My, what a nice young man - - and so handsome, too.

As she made her way through the midday crowd, Mrs. Babbitt was aware of being very uncomfortable and tired. The jostling, hurrying throng of people, the hot rays of the sun, the long walks from store to store were enough to tire anyone, thought Mrs. Babbitt, and, of course, I have been up since seven with no rest since. Yes . . .

"Here you are, my good man. I have only a little change with me, but you are welcome to it," she said, reaching amid the many items in her purse.

"Bless you lady," said the man.

"No, thank you, I have a pencil in my purse."

Poor soul, she thought, as she moved somewhat more elatedly along the sidewalk. I'm always glad to help those in need.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Babbitt."

"Why Reverend Paritwell. How nice to see you." I wonder what he's doing downtown at this hour?

"I'm terribly sorry I missed your message Sunday, but by the time I had Hester and Lester ready, I

hadn't time to get myself ready."

"I can well understand, Mrs. Babbitt. That is to say, the problems involving teenagers."

"Oh! Well . . .

"And your husband, Mrs. Babbitt? I haven't seen him among my congregation for 'several' weeks - since Easter Sunday, as a matter of fact."

"Well, you know how busy Chester is at the office - - he's been working late these past few weekends."

"Yes, Mrs. Babbitt, I can understand your husband's condition. As a matter of fact, I'm rather 'tired' myself, so if you'll excuse me - - ."

"Of course, Nice chatting with you, Reverend. See you in church."

"By all means, Mrs. Babbitt, by all means."

Mrs. Babbitt walked the last portion of her daily pilgrimage and entered a clean, well-lighted, somewhat noisy room.

Oh! rid of that infernal sun at last.

"Why Minnie, how nice to see you," said Mrs. Babbitt. Now what gossip is Miss Busybody going to spread today?

As Minnie returned her greeting Mrs. Babbitt asked her, "Guess who I just ran into? Reverend Praitwell."



"No."

"Yes!"

"Why Gertrude, what on earth could that man possibly be doing downtown - - and in the middle of the day?"

"Heaven only knows," replied Mrs. Babbitt.

"Say, Gertrude, Mrs. Whispritt told me that young Evans and Connie Brush were out til twelve-thirty last night."

"No. Do tell!"

"Yes. I will. Well, you know what a scalawag that young man is? Well, to the dismay of Mrs. Brush he took her daughter to a

drive-in movie - The sins of Sadie."

"Oh!"

"The worst is yet to come. They stopped at Pebble Beach on the way home - - they must have been there for hours."

"Good heavens, how dreadful. Do you know that last summer I visited that same beach - - a notorious place! I was shocked at the petting and the freedom young couples had with one another."

"When was this? What were you doing at the beach, Gertude?"

"Oh! Why - why I - I was helping Lester collect some stones and shells for his class project."

A man appeared in the doorway.

"Your cab is ready Mrs. Talkit-over."

"Thank you," said Minnie.

"See you at Myrtle's tomorrow night," Mrs. Babbitt called to the departing figure as Minnie waved to her.

That woman knows everybody's business but her own, thought Mrs. Babbitt. Why can't people mind their own business. How disgusting!

She appraised herself in one of the mirrors across the room. Brushing a stray lock into place, not bad she thought, for a woman of my age. A few gray hairs but that can be remedied.

"Hello, Gertrude," hailed a passing figure.

"Good afternoon Mrs. Ravenish."

That Cathie Ravenish, always putting on airs like she was a good woman, when all she is - well, far be it from "me" to even think it.

Come to think of it, she's not much different from Minnie or Myrtle. Why, wondered she to herself, must people be so hypocritical? They made mockeries of churches and preachers and marriage, and preachers of their professed ideas, too. What is needed in some uninhibitedness, some good old-fashioned understanding. No, she thought a person can't put on a new suit and become a new person nor can a clean suit cleanse a person. Good must come from the heart.

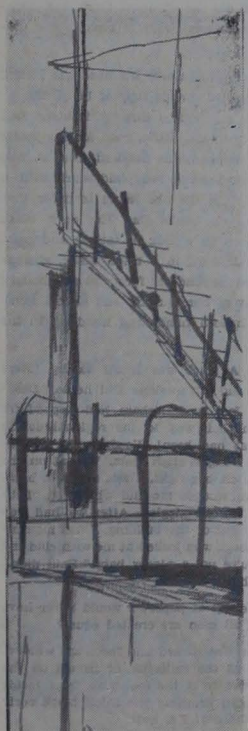
My, she thought, that's wonderful bit of thinking. I wish more people would sit down and contemplate upon these things; they would feel much better.

Oh, she remembered, I mustn't forget that affair at the Bridgetaker's tomorrow night. I had . . .

"Mrs. Babbitt? Mrs. Babbitt, we're ready for you now."

Mrs. Babbitt hesitated just a moment, as always mentally preparing herself for the ordeal ahead.

"Very well, Miss Duffix."



The Eyes of a Day

By Clifford Gerald Cutlip

Dawn rubbed her waking eyes.

And the sun's path stretched across the skies.

The roaring pulse of a city quickens with the fear og being lost.

Cattle graze calmly on a damp carpet of grass.

And a fisherman carefully chooses his lure.

The noise of war drowns the golden rule, as men are left to bleed.

Kneeling at his bed, a child begins, "Now, I lay me down to sleep."

The last spat of sun deserts a mountain at its crest,

As God's couriers dart through the trees to their nests.

Silence goads our trails away and So closes the eyes of a day.



Two-Year Old

By Avis Steyer

My roly poly is a livable two, Likes to be doing whatever I do. So close as I iron that he burns his nose, so under my feet that we walk on my toes.

