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Thirlen Osborne

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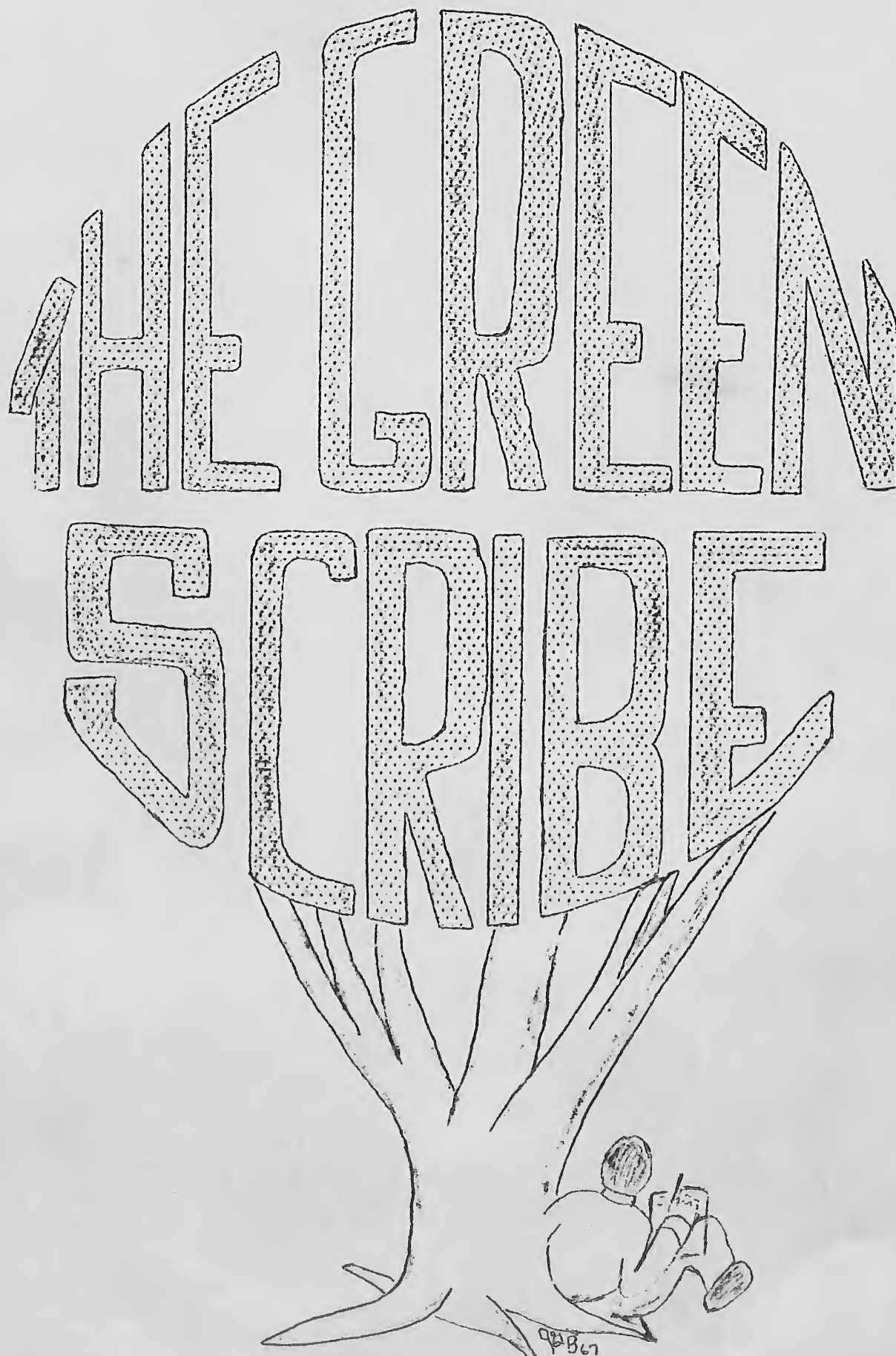


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FOREWORD

After abortive attempts in the past to produce a sophisticated student journal, the English Department presents in humble garb The Green Scribe, a compilation of freshman writing gleaned from English 102 classes.

Many people necessarily have been involved in this publication. Appreciation is due Mr. Ernest Blankenship and Mrs. Cothenia Jolley, who joined me in culling from numerous student papers a comparative few that might be worthy of publication; Miss Joanne Montague, Mrs. Leslie Brown, and Mr. William Stowe, who served as the final selection committee; Mr. Jeff Brooks, a sophomore art student, who designed the cover; Miss Lynda Walker and Miss Frances Turner, departmental secretaries, who typed the stencils; Mrs. Robert Trexler, who very graciously did the mimeographing; several students who helped staple the pages together; and finally, those students who wrote the stories, plays, and poems and revised their manuscripts until they were ready for publication.

The English Department is happy to give due recognition to the young authors represented here with the hope that other students will not only be appreciative of what these have written but will be encouraged to do some writing of their own, perhaps to appear in a future issue of The Green Scribe.

Thirlen Osborne, Acting Head

English Department

March 20, 1967

ADAM IN DARKNESS

by Peggy Jones
(Scruggs)

He was trapped. His foot was anchored between two pieces of coral in an undersea cave. He panicked and floundered about tugging first one way and then the other until the water became murky from the disturbed sand. In his excitement he dropped his water-tight flashlight, and blackness closed over him like sudden death. The shock of the darkness calmed him, and he sat down on the sand in an attempt to ease his injured foot and to collect his wits. As he sat there, he became aware of his impending fate.

"I have about ten more minutes worth of oxygen in my tanks," he thought, "but I can't get out of this jam without help. Help--that's funny." He almost laughed right there in the water but was able to constrain himself. "I'm the guy who doesn't need anybody's help. I'm the one who can take care of himself." His mind drifted.

He thought of his college days. He recalled how his concerned roommate Joel had spoken to him about changing his ways. He remembered the night Joel had said, "Adam, you don't mind who you step on as long as you get your way, do you? And I'm not the only one who has noticed this. Everyone knows that you lie, you cheat, you have no respect for anyone--not even yourself. You expect something from everyone though you offer nothing in return. You may think that taking all you can get from people will bring you happiness and contentment, but it won't, Adam. It will only bring you sorrow in the end." But he had laughed at Joel. He had told Joel that he would worry about his own happiness and that when he needed Joel's help, he would ask for it. But how he needed help now! How he wished he had a friend of any kind to help him now!

Something cold and clammy swished by him--he supposed a fish--reminding him of his illness a couple of years back. He recalled how Angela, his wife, had devotedly stayed by his bedside throughout his feverish delirium and recovery. He remembered his long recuperation ashamedly; he had been so cruel to her. Angela, he realized now--though too late, had been the priceless treasure of his life. She possessed a soft loveliness that was the envy of everyone they met. Yet in addition to her physical beauty, she was the purest, finest woman he had ever known. But he had abused Angela's love. He had ignored her needs and had refused to allow himself to become close to her. He remembered how Angela had frequently begged him to tell her about his business or his thoughts. "Adam," she would say, "I want to be able to share things in conversation with you so very much. Please talk to me. Please let me be a part of your everyday life. It always helps to have someone to discuss things with." But he had always refused her confidence; he had not wanted her help. He had not even bothered to tell her where he was going today (for he never included her in his hobbies either). Yet he certainly wished he had shared this bit of information today. He really could use her help now.

He was becoming uncomfortable; his air was almost gone. His mind wandered again--he was very successful in business. Real estate was his primary concern, though he owned controlling interest in a large steel industry as well. His home was huge and lavishly furnished, he owned several cars, and he had traveled extensively. Yet, never satisfied with the blessings he had, he cut and undercut his opponents for even the smallest margin of profit. His employees were underpaid and were forced to work in awful conditions. He had no real friends; he had never needed friends--or never until today.

His foot, throbbing with pain, was beginning to swell. He

felt a little dizzy from the external pressure, but internal pressures disturbed him too. "Why have I been such a fool?" The water seemed to be getting colder and darker. "Why doesn't somebody come to help me?" He writhed in the water, trying to free his foot, but was unsuccessful. "Please forgive me, Angela!" He tried to pray, but was too frustrated. "Oh God!" His soul cried in the blackness of the deep--but it was too late.

A STROLL ALONG THE SHORE
by Barry Yelton

Along the shore of a crystal pond,
About a century or two from yesterday's
Dream, plays a little girl.
The soft wind of happiness in a delicate
Timbre passes through her hair, and she
Smiles as she chases a green and yellow butterfly.
The verdant meadow quietly laughs and whispers, "Spring green."
The rhythm of her laughter like that of the
Waves of the pond echoes into forever.
Unknown is that witch, Care, in this green
Meadow, this beautiful spring meadow.
The joyous face of the sun beams
Approval upon her frolic in the meadow, along the shore.
Catching the butterfly--O so gently!--she gazes
At its quivering beauty...and crushes it.

A DEAD HERO OR A LIVE COWARD

By Paul McManus

Senator Al Windsor walked briskly up the walk of the new Sam Rayburn Building. He was there a little early this morning. Pausing before the venerable Texan, he gazed up at his likeness for a few seconds, possibly hoping for some inspiration to answer his problem.

Reaching his elaborate new office, the senator walked on the plush carpet back toward his private office. The office still had the smell of new furnishings. He passed several secretaries already sorting the heavy mail. By long practice as a politician, he mechanically returned their good morning salutations.

Walking past his private secretary's desk, he queried, "Any change in the mail today, Margaret?" She followed him into his private office.

"I'm afraid it's the same tone, Senator, unless the block mailing is a little more threatening."

"Of course. One night can't make that much difference," he said absently.

Margaret broke the uneasy silence. "Coffee this morning, Senator?"

"Thanks. I guess I need it."

The desk intercom buzzed. "Senator Eliot here to see you, sir."

"Have him come on in."

Senator Windsor rose to shake hands as Senator Eliot entered.

"Just thought I'd stop in, Al."

"Glad you did, Harry. I've got to talk to somebody."

"OK, shoot it," said Harry warmly. "I probably can't help you,

but at least I can listen."

"I've been awake half the night, and I still haven't decided how to vote this afternoon."

"Oh, on that tariff issue? But you're from a textile district. Why is it hard to decide? You know you have to vote for it."

"That's what all my mail says; but, Harry, I really believe that this tariff would be dangerous to the United States' economy and foreign policy. Yet, I keep envisioning those blood-thirsty textile men. They sure won't think about re-electing me next year if I vote against it."

"Oh, uh, Al that's sorta why I dropped in. I just heard from a good source that you would probably be chairman of that subcommittee on foreign affairs that you've been wanting. Hope this little news won't confuse you still more."

"Oh, no," said Al lightly. "Thanks for telling me, Harry. I have been interested in that job."

Margaret brought the coffee in. "Thank you, Margaret. Won't you have some coffee, Harry?"

"No thanks. I have to get back to the office."

"Thanks for dropping by."

"Good luck this afternoon, Al."

As the door closed behind Harry, Al sank into his chair. "Great. So now I learn I might be that committee chairman." In frustration he swung to the side in his big desk chair and walked over to the sliding glass panels overlooking the street. Pulling back the curtains, he absently gazed on the busy sidewalk across the street. A group of women were crossing the street. He noticed his wife was among them. "She is really enjoying the life of a senator's wife," he thought.

The sharp buzz of his intercom disrupted his contemplation.

"Your wife here to see you, sir."

The room seemed to brighten as she entered. "Hi, Hon! I thought I'd drop in while the girls were browsing next door. You seemed so disturbed this morning. I thought maybe you'd feel freer to talk about it here."

"Oh, you don't have time to hear a legislator's problems, Tiff. Go on and have fun with ^{the} girls," said Al gently.

"But I always have time to help you, Honey. Anyway, the girls will be down yonder for a while yet. Is it some bill?"

"Yes, it's that tariff bill we vote on this afternoon, and I guess my decision will have an effect on you."

"But I don't see your problem. I thought the bill would easily pass."

"That's my problem. I thought the bill would easily pass," pacing the floor. "I am convinced that that tariff will have detrimental effects on our nation as a whole. For some reason the ones who favor the bill so heartily can't see these effects. I don't know how to vote."

"What about the people back home? Are they going to see your view if you don't vote for it?"

Al was standing looking out the window. "No. They probably never will. My mail tells me that clearly."

"Then how will you get re-elected? This is an important bill for them."

"That's how you fit in, Tiff. This will probably mean we won't be coming back." Al turned to look at her.

Tiff was silent. The disappointment on her face cut through Al like an icy wind. She rose to leave. "It's your decision to make, Al. Either way I still love you. See you tonight."

"Oh, Tiff, Harry told me this morning....Well, I'll tell you tonight."

For over an hour Al stayed in his office debating the old questions back and forth. Should a senator vote as the majority of his constituents tell him or as he thinks best? Should a senator vote for his state or nation? Is a senator foolish to vote against a measure that's sure to pass anyway when it would ruin his career to vote against it?

He finally reached for his coat and hat and headed out. "I'll be out the rest of the day, Margaret. You can reach me at home if anything important comes up."

It was still a while before the House convened, but he didn't want to be late today. When the elevator doors parted on the street floor, he saw somebody he had been dreading to meet, a pro-tariff lobbyist, who had been button-holing everyone he wasn't sure of. Pulling his hat farther over his eyes, Al strode quickly towards the door. Suddenly from right behind him, "Oh, Sen. Windsor!" Al knew he was caught.

"Good morning, Mr. Morgan. I've missed you the past few days," said Al pleasantly, not meaning a word.

"It'd be silly for me to give you my little speech, Senator, about why you should vote for that tariff bill this afternoon; but I thought I would remind you to be there."

"Thank you for your advice, Mr. Morgan. Good day," and Al walked off leaving Mr. Morgan looking a little dazed. Al drove around the block a few times, then headed directly to the Capitol.

The President was pounding his gavel as Al entered the chamber. He noticed that a good many other senators were interested in the proceedings of the afternoon. Harry was there. He seemed unable to get over Al's relaxed appearance. The routine procedures passed slowly. Finally the moment came to vote on the tariff bill.

"All in favor say 'aye.'"

Al kept his eyes straight forward, but he could feel men rising to their feet and hear their resounding "aye."

"All opposed 'no.'" As if in a daze, Al rose with the others and added his voice to the opposition.

When the echoes were quiet, Al was weak but also peaceful and happy. He felt he had done his duty. When he walked out of the Capitol that afternoon, he was ready for the future, whatever it might bring.

CYCLE
by Tim Cates

What is that shuffle down the street,
That shuffle and a tap?
Why, that is dear old Uncle Bob
With torn frock coat and cap.

Ole Uncle Bob has seen his summer;
His winter's drawing nigh.
The fall of life is on him, and
His leaves are growing dry.

The lines of time are on him,
And he wears them with a frown.
He was once a handsome man,
The most handsome man in town.

This old feeble one with cane in hand,
The children mock and jeer.
How can they in the bud of life
See Uncle Bob their peer?

THE BOBCAT

by Billy Scott

Rumors were out again of the bobcat. The bobcat that stalked the forest, horrifying the inhabitants and killing anything living that chanced to cross the path. Yet the boys did not change their plan; this news seemed to make their excursion even more daring and exciting.

One of their usual companions was not among them. They had left faithful Frity behind, tied to a tree in Rich's front yard, growling and pawing at the rope, trying desperately to follow the campers that had disappeared over the horizon. They had left him behind because they feared the big shepherd's safety, now that the bobcat was near. Their only protection was their knives and the rifle, meager defense against the killer. They had left with an air of excitement, ready to fight any force of nature that would spoil--or would it spice?--their weekend.

Clouds were mounting in the ashen sky, rather disappointing weather for travel. The rut-filled road, which was no more than a wide trail, snaked its way through the ashes, oaks, and undergrowth to the front door of the secluded, weather-beaten cabin, miles away from civilization.

The cabin, though very primitive for everyday life, proved perfect for its purpose. It was merely a roof and four walls, a shelter from the forest, a place to store the gear while exploring an unknown trail, flushing covies of quail, or casting for that fat bass that would taste so good cooked over an open fire for supper. There were happy memories for the four that had been here so many times before.

They unloaded the gear, a routine chore, but they noticed something different about the place. The cabin was the same, the single

door, and front window, and the back one, still boarded up from last winter. But something, something had changed. What was it? Of course. The silence. Complete silence. The forest, usually so alive with birds chirping, insects buzzing, and all the other noises in nature, was completely, totally silent. The mystifying, terrifying silence that hangs in the air when danger is about. Danger! The bobcat was close at hand! The boys went about their duties rather jittery, they too sensing the presence of the killer.

A light drizzle that had started about supper time had grown into a cloud burst. The heavens had ripped open, and rain pelted on the tin roof of the cabin. The piercing thunder literally shook the walls and broke the eerie silence that hung over the forest. Jagged bolts of lightning momentarily lit up the sky on this stormy, pitch-black night.

The crackling blaze lit up the serious faces of the boys huddled around the fire. The rain had drenched most of their wood, and the flames flared up as they threw on the last of their reserve.

They eyed Rich nervously as he carelessly dismantled the rifle.

"What if the bobcat comes?" they asked.

He tried to throw off their fears with, "Don't worry. I'll get it back together. I've got to make certain it's clean before we go tomorrow."

A quietness fell about the room. The fire gently crackled; the rain drummed on the roof; and Rick rattled the parts of the rifle; but the boys seemed to be lost in thought, remembering the last visit of the ferocious cat. Jack Harper had been hunting in these same woods. Vividly they recalled the headlines. "Hunter Attacked By Bobcat!" The story revealed how the cat had jumped Jack from behind, tearing his clothes and body to shreds. He remained alive a few days, but his mangled body could not take it. Outside somewhere tonight the killer was stalking the forest again! Somewhere near the cabin, looking for another unfortunate victim he would tear apart!

A crash of thunder interrupted their thoughts. Bob, seeing that the fire was dying out, lighted a candle and set it on the small round table in the corner. He noticed the seriousness in the others' faces and began telling the usual camping stories.

"Do you remember," he began, "the night we went to the haunted house?"

The boys' faces lit up with this. "You weren't with us, were you John?"

"We had so much fun! Tom wouldn't even get out of the car," Rick added, joining the group. They all began to relate the escapade to John.

"We drove up about 11:45 after we had taken the girls home."

"Yeah, and all of us had seen it before, except for Tom." They were all engrossed in the tale when something made a scratching sound outside the door.

"What was that?"

"It's only the storm," John answered; "Go on, finish telling me." Something clawed and scratched at the door again.

"Wait! I know I heard something!" A low growl was heard above the wind.

"The Bobcat!" somebody exclaimed. The animal prowled around the front of the cabin. The boys were stricken silent. Any minute the cat would be in the cabin. In the cabin upon them, ripping their bodies apart as he had done to Jack Harper. They panicked.

They scrambled around the room searching for protection, but to no avail. In all the confusion they knocked over the candle, leaving themselves in complete darkness. They could hear the killer clawing at the front door, then running against the window, trying to jump through it.

Someone breathed, "God help us!"

The rifle! The four blindly dived for the pieces that still lay scattered about on the floor and sleeping bag. They frantically grasped for the parts and assembled them as best they could.

Now the animal was at the back window. He threw himself against boards, shaking the house and crying in pain as he hit the ground.

The wind was howling, the rain still drumming on the roof, and thunder crashing overhead. The boys stood frozen, listening, waiting. Rick held the loaded reassembled rifle tight in his grip, ready to defend himself and his friends. He prowled around the cabin, and a flash of lightning showed a form crouched, ready to come through the window! Rick aimed the rifle and squeezed the trigger. Glass shattered, the animal gave a cry of pain; the thunder crashed. And again a kind of a silence fell over the forest.

The next morning dawned sunny. The boys found blood trailing back into the forest and praised Rick for his marksmanship and bravery. They left their campsite early, eager to relate their adventure to the town.

As they approached Rick's house, though, his excitement faded. He squinted to see better and then burst from the car and ran across the yard. There lay Fritty under the tree with a broken piece of rope hanging about his neck. Large and bloody gashes marred his shiny coat, and he lay weakly in a pool of blood that trailed across the yard.

THE KILL
by Timothy Cates

It was night. The silence of the darkness was beating against my brain, and I was thinking "crazy" things, seeing "crazy" things and letting them pass through my mind. Somewhere in the night was a man, a man who had a gun that would soon snuff out my life. There was no use running. I had already done enough of that. Time had laughed in my face and made a mental wreck of me.

I could see the man now. He had no face, just two tight lines that seemed to smile at me. He was standing twenty feet in front of me, taking his time, puffing on a cigarette. He had all the time in the world because time had already closed in on me. He had waited a long time for this meeting. Why didn't he quit wasting time and come in for the kill? Why the long wait?

My mind was a crying thing, begging for the mercy that wasn't there. The man knew I was crying. That was why he was laughing. The laugh wasn't sane. The laughter became louder and made a ringing, tormenting sound in my ears, causing me to cover them. All this was very funny to him. He knew I had nothing left. He knew the running was all over and the day of the kill was here.

Why had I run from him? There was never a doubt in my mind that he would catch me.

The man walked closer.

Still he was a short distance from me. He was a large man. His hulking frame made a menacing figure. His long arms were curled, like the arms of an ape. A trenchcoat was pulled tight around him, his porkpie hat slanted on his head. His appearance had a numbing effect on me, but there was something else that caught my eye.

Yes, it was a big thing, and it erased all chances of escape. The .45 was the instrument that was going to put the finishing touches on the death I had felt in these past weeks. The running and hiding was a waste of time. The killer knew I would run out of gas. He knew I couldn't go on forever.

But I had given him a race for his money. It had taken him two long weeks to "tail" me to this place. He was not thankful for that. It had not been an easy chase. He had done his share of the sweating, too.

I had to hand it to him. He was a killer who didn't give up. The odds were against him at times, but he came back and overcame them. He was a killer that had no rules. He had the gun, and that made him top man. Why did he want to kill me? I had never harmed him. What made him want to hunt me down like an animal and then put a slug in my brain? Did he think I'd turn him in to the "cops"? I was in the same racket that he was in. We made our "dough" the same way, and we live in the same trash and garbage.

I all came to me at once. It was so simple, yet it had taken two weeks for me to understand. He was going to kill me because it was his assignment. He took his orders from the "big man," just as I did. That was it. The "big man" wanted me dead, and he had sent this killer. He had no personal hate for me. He was only carrying out an order.

I reached for a gun that wasn't there, and he laughed again. He was close now, so close that I could see the kill in his eyes, the tight, drawn-up smile, and .45. He was so close I could even smell his rotten breath. A smile went across his twisted face, and a crooked, yellow line of teeth glared at me. His breathing wasn't normal. The small sway of his right hand where the gun was held tightly made me jump inside. Something was pawing at my guts, telling me to act.

There was no use. The night was here and so was the death that

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had crept in with it. The big man raised his right hand and stuck the barrel of the .45 into my face, making sure the cold piece of steel made one last effect on me. It did.

Sweat had covered my face. Everything went quiet for a second. The night sounds were gone and the only thing that sounded was his breathing. All of a sudden the night went into a sharp, breaking noise as I heard sirens making their way across town. I felt good all over. But why? Few people even knew I existed.

There was only one person that knew that.

The big man pulled back the hammer of the .45, gave me one last smile, and put his finger to the trigger.

That was his last smile. A shot rang through the night, and a sickening thud followed. The smile was gone, a smile that had turned to a horrible, gagging scream which came from the bottom of his throat.

I didn't wait around to see who fired the shot, but picked up the .45 and began making my way down the alley. Then I realized how insignificant my life was. The world would not have missed me had I met my fate. Society would have been dealt a favor. Then I wondered if it was too late to change.

ELEVEN CENTS
by Dennis Twiggs

Down in the valley, enclosed inside a grove of white pines, lies a blue-green pond. In the summer it shimmers under a golden sun. At night when the moon sparkles on the cool water, my little brother Eddy and I go swimming there.

The night was calm; the moon lay in the pond. I sat on the dock listening to the tree crickets and watching the pine needles glitter as a warm breeze stirred them. Eddy was hauling himself out of the water when we heard a twig snap in the pines.

Eddy whispered, "What is it?"

"Don't know," I said. "It might be a rabbit." Crash! The sound came closer. My knees shook. A pine cone fell from a tree, hung for an eternity in the air, splash! It plumped into the water.

Suddenly a man emerged from the pines, revealing a shiny bald head. It was Dawd Grimble, owner of the pond. My stomach turned over; cold sweat broke out on the palms of my hands. I hated him! His brick mansion stood on the hill above our rickety shanty. Tarpaper was tacked on the walls of the shanty to keep out the wind and rain. Ma cried when we moved there.

Pa, a college graduate, worked for Grimble, worked in the cotton fields for thirty cents an hour. He got his leg blown off in the great war. I guess that's the reason he didn't have no ambition. Pa was supposed to get a check from the government every month, but all he ever got was a wooden leg that made blisters on his stump. He used to say that if a snake bit him on that leg it sure would get a hell of a surprise when all its teeth fell out.

A sharp pain in my shoulder jerked me back to the present. Grimble stood over me with a cane in his hand, balloon head close to

my face. He smelled old, of liniments and rubbing alcohol; a thousand wrinkles lined his face. I hated him because I feared him.

"What the devil are you brats doin' on my land?" he screamed.

"Sw-i-mi-n' S-ir," I stammered, feeling a hard knot in my chest.

"Don't you little tramps know its a twenty-five dollar find for trespassing?"

"No, s-ir, we wasn't hurtin' nothin'." I barely managed to keep the tears in, but controlled myself as much as a twelve year old could. I didn't want Eddy to get scared.

"You'll pay," he shouted. "I'll talk to your father tomorrow." He hobbled behind us until we crossed the boundary of his land.

Pa was in the bedroom cussing when we got home. We tiptoed across the floor into our room, an old shed built on to the back of the shanty. The room was dirty, filled with dirty paint cans and rusty hoes. I was shaking when we closed the door to our room and lay down on a ragged blanket spread across the floor. Twenty-five dollars was a fortune. Pa didn't have that much money. I heard Eddy sniffing. "Stop crying" I said. "We'll find some way to pay Grimble." I finally cried myself to sleep, trembling at the thought of what Pa would do.

The sun was pouring through the cracks in the walls when I woke up. I lay there and watched as dust was caught in the sunlight. I tried to imagine what dust felt like just sailing lazily along through the warm summer air, never hurrying, never worrying or wondering where it was going.

"Breakfast!" Ma called from the kitchen. I got up, slowly put on my ragged pants, and walked into the kitchen. Bacon was on the stove, a big iron monster that gobbled the wood.

"Where's Eddy?" I asked.

"He's out drawing water."

I ran out to the well. "Eddy, I got an idea. After breakfast

you and me are gonna go bottle huntin'."

"Why?"

"We'll sell the bottles down at Hayes's store and pay Grumble."

Eddy's eyes lit up.

After breakfast we found two half rotten potato sacks behind the outhouse and started down the dusty road, Eddy on one side and me on the other. One hour, two, three, the hot red sun beat on our naked backs. "It's no use," I moaned. "We'll never find enough. How many you got Eddy?"

"Three."

"All I got is eight; we ain't got much to sell, but let's take them to the store."

"There you go boys, eleven cents." Mr. Hayes handed me the money.

"I'm thirsty," Eddy whined. "Let's buy a coke."

"No! We got to pay Grumble."

"But I'm thirsty and Grumble can buy his own cokes." He was crying.

"No!" I shouted and slapped him across the face. Eddy stopped his crying and stumbled out of the store. I walked behind. Every once and a while Eddy sniffed the tears back in. I hated Grumble.

When I got home, Ma was sitting on the steps reading. She tried to get me to read, but I wouldn't.

"Be quiet when you go in the house. Your Pa's asleep; he didn't work; his leg is hurting."

I breathed a sigh of relief; he hadn't seen Grumble. I tiptoed into the kitchen, put the dipper into the water bucket, lifted it to my lips, and let the cool water run down my throat. I glanced out the window. "Oh God," I murmured. Grumble was hobbling down the road. I shivered. Grumble came to the back door and barged in without knocking.

"Where's your Pa?"

"Asleep," I muttered.

"Go get him!"

"But..." Pa grumbled when I woke him but hopped into the kitchen on his crutches. "Please God," I thought, "please don't let it be real." My insides trembled.

"What's up?" Pa said.

"These dirty brats of yours owe me twenty-five dollars; I caught the little tramps on my land."

Pa's face darkened as fast as a thundercloud rolling upon a sunny day. I could see the lightning flashing in his eyes. Grimble smiled and looked at me. My legs gave way under me; I sagged to the floor; my eyes were glued to Pa's face.

"Pa," I muttered, "Pa."

Grimble laughed.

Pa lifted his crutch and slammed it against Grimble's head so hard that he broke the crutch. Grimble's eyes bugged out as he turned a somersault and flew out the door, hitting the ground on the side of his head.

I reached into my pocket, stretched out my hand, and slowly extended the sweaty eleven cents. With his rough hands Pa gently closed my hand on the money. "You keep it," he smiled. "Let's go tell your mother its time to pack. I think I'll get me a soft city job, maybe even be President."

I wasn't afraid anymore.

HEAVEN
by John Crown

"What's it like in heaven, Billy?"

"The Sunday-school teacher said that heaven is like a snow-pink cloud floating somewhere in the sky."

And thus went the conversation between the boys about God's heaven. Neither had any idea about the place, but both wanted very much to go there for a visit.

"Maybe we could ask Mama what it is like in heaven. She told me one day that Daddy is there. She ought to know."

"OK, let's go ask her."

The pair scrambled up from their seats on the grass under a large oak tree and ran toward Billy Parker's house.

"Mama! Mama! Where are you, Mama? Denny and I have something to ask you."

"OK, let's have it. You know I'm awfully busy today, Billy, with your brother coming from college and all."

"All we want to know is what it is like in heaven and how we can get there and everything."

"You know, boys, that is something I just don't know about."

"But Mama, you said Daddy was in heaven."

"I know I did, Billy, and he is. But I don't know anything about heaven. I guess you will have to wait until you go there and see what it is like for yourselves."

"Do you think we can get there if we jumped from that big old tree in your yard, Mrs. Parker?"

"Well, I'm not sure, Denny. But you boys run along now. I'm busy."

Mrs. Parker ran the boys from her kitchen and went back to her

original task of preparing a big meal for her son's homecoming; the boys went back to their seats under the tree and resumed their conversation about heaven.

"Let's do it!"

"Do what?"

"Climb that old tree and go to heaven, silly."

"Well, all right."

Billy and Denny found an old step ladder and propped it against their tree that was to take them to heaven. First Billy went up and then Denny.

"We won't need this old ladder any more, will we, Billy?"

"No, I guess not. We might like it too good in heaven and then we won't come back."

"Here goes!"

And with a big shove, Denny caused the old ladder to hit the ground with a clatter. Then the pair ventured out on a high limb almost entirely concealed by leaves.

"Here we start for heaven, Denny."

"Think we ought to leave a note so they will know where we have gone, Billy?"

"Yes, I guess we ought to."

Billy pulled from his jeans pocket an old black crayon and a crumbled piece of newsprint and handed it to Denny because Denny was a year older, in the second grade, and he could write--some anyway. Denny scribbled in his juvenile handwriting. "Gone to heaven. Billy and Denny."

They put the paper on a leafless twig, and then they jumped. On the way down Billy said, "We going to heaven now, Denny, ain't we?"

MY FRIEND THE RIVER

By Maxie Jolley

It was a beautiful day when we left town. We had just been by the tackle shop to pick up some extra gear for the fishing trip. Our trip had become an annual affair by virtue of repetition. Doug, my childhood friend, had insisted that we continue the fishing trips since it was the only chance we had really to "rough it." That was the reason he always used in convincing me to go, but I still doubted his sincerity. To me it seemed to be an urge to make me feel inferior and our fishing trip was becoming more of an ordeal each year. It was during those lonely night hours that he would retrace his life history, and I felt sure this year would be no exception.

We turned on the radio in his car as we rolled out toward the hills. He had insisted on bringing his car because my two-year-old car didn't have air conditioning. He did have a handy carry rack on top of his wagon, but we could still have made it all right in mine. The newscaster passed the mike to the weather forecaster, and our ears perked up in anticipation of the weekend weather in the mountain regions. We had a good laugh when he mentioned the possibility of heavy rains. "Did he say rain?" Doug asked. "Evidently he hasn't looked out the window today." He casually mentioned something about weathermen having an uncanny knack for miscalculating the weather.

The mountains began to loom upon the horizon, and soon we were engulfed by tremendous peaks and the shadows they cast on the opposite hill. As usual, Doug had previously selected the spot without counseling me. It turned out to be a rather nice looking spot.

We found a parking place and began surveying the place to find possible camp sites. We reached a mutual agreement on a small island no larger than the average house, right in the middle of the river. The island had been formed by the merging of the two rivers of unequal size. The swifter river had forced sand and debris over into the calm water and over a period of time had formed the island. There were no trees because of the frequent flooding of the dam about eight miles upstream. Doug had carefully studied the surrounding area a month ago, and he wasted no time in filling me in on the details.

After the car was unloaded, we began our trip across the river to the island. On the first trip we secured a rope to a snag and used it for support on the other four trips. I didn't realize how much equipment we had until we had carried it all across the river.

The sun was falling fast as we began to set up camp. Darkness comes swiftly in the hill country, but today the gathering clouds cut the time in half. By the time we had the tent set up and the trenches dug around it, a few raindrops had begun to ripple the water. Again Doug made some comment about the weathermen, only this time it wasn't so critical.

By the time the last rays of day had melted into the black hills, the rain was falling very hard. There was no way of staying outside the tent tonight. I was very disappointed because I knew what the conversation would be like in a couple of hours. We would begin with current problems and drift around through family, friends, politics, short skirts, heaven and hell, and end up reminiscing about our childhood. This was the one part I would rather leave out.

It was during our childhood that we lived close together. Close, in our community, meant a half mile. As the night wore on and the rain maintained its steady patter, Doug casually brought up our

school days. He had a knack for remembering all the times that I tried to forget. There was the time he had outscored me on the achievement tests. His marks showed that he was the equivalent of a sophomore. This was very good for a sixth grader. Up until that time I had been regarded as the leader of my class in school. He gained much confidence in himself, and as a result, he took my place at the top of the prestige ladder.

In our high school there was a great deal of school spirit surrounding our football team. The coveted quarterback position was up for grabs, and again I was beaten by my "friend." As the night and the memories wore on, my mind began to conceive plans for avoiding any further encounters with Doug. Without really meaning to, I became very upset and said things that shouldn't have been said.

When the rain slowed down, Doug slowed down too. He seemed to feel a little sorry for the anguish he must have known that he was causing me. Deep down inside, I liked the guy. That's why I'll never figure out why I pushed him in the rising river when I knew he couldn't swim. He never could.

NEXT?
by Jeff Brooks

Faster than ever before
We speed and hustle onward,
Fuel-injected, supercharged,
And often four-barreled.
The only limit is a red-line
Near which lies the tach needle
That calls a halt to any more speed--
And often even to life.

BECAUSE OF A SHOT THAT RANG
by Becky Padgett

The woman wore a veil of black...

Because of a shot that rang.

The children clung close by her side...

Because of a shot that rang.

A nation was plunged to grief and tears,

Was left as a waif, with new-found fears.

Liberty cried in her sleep that night...

Because of a shot that rang.

A lover of liberty lay still and cold,

Because of a shot that rang.

The strong grew weak, and the young grew old,

Because of a shot that rang.

All peoples of earth, all colors and creeds,

Sobbed together at the awful deed.

Each died a little inside that night...

Because of a shot that rang.

A horse-drawn caisson passed slowly by,

Because of a shot that rang.

One lay 'neath the banner he'd once held high...

Because of a shot that rang.

A ring and a kiss the widow gave,

To the one who soon must rest in his grave...

Justice hid her face in shame--

Because of a shot that rang.

LATE ACQUAINTANCE

by Phil Bowman

Characters

Johnny Trent, nineteen; his face is swollen and bruised. Blood stained cuts are visible on his arms and chest.

Nurse, about forty, grim with red-rimmed eyes. Occasionally a tear runs down her cheek.

Scene: A hospital room which is dimly lighted. Johnny is lying in the bed. Occasionally, he will roll and groan softly. The nurse is sitting in a chair by him.

JOHNNY: (his eyes open slowly and he looks about the room with a puzzled expression on his face) Where am I? What am I doing here?

NURSE: (softly, with a sad expression). You've been in an accident, and you're in the county hospital.

JOHNNY: (His face mirrors his struggle to remember). I can't seem to remember very much. What kind of accident was it?

NURSE: A car wreck. You hit a telephone pole.

JOHNNY: Was anyone else with me?

NURSE: Yes. Tim Grant.

JOHNNY: (a look of vague remembrance on his face). I remember now. A car was coming down the road on my side, and I had to leave the road to miss it. Is Tim O. K.? I'm afraid everything is a blank after I left the road.

NURSE: (getting up from the chair and hurrying to the window, her voice barely audible as she speaks). Yes. Yes, Tim's just fine--just fine.

JOHNNY: Thank heavens! I wouldn't want Tim hurt. His mother always tried to keep him away from me. He said she didn't approve of me for some reason or other. I never could find out why.

NURSE: (turning to face the bed). Maybe she thought you were too wild or something. Didn't Tim ever say why?

JOHNNY: No. He always said "Skip it " whenever I mentioned it. He said he would pick his own friends. He thought his mother was trying to run his life too much. I guess that's why he drank so much whenever he was away from home. It was a problem always trying to keep his mother from finding out. (He pauses, then speaks slowly.) That may be part of the reason he never let me meet her.

(Throughout this last speech, the nurse has been looking at Johnny with disbelief.)

NURSE: (questioningly). Tim drank and resented his mother?

JOHNNY: Yes, I'm afraid Tim resented her very much. Did you know Tim?

NURSE: Yes--anyway, I thought I knew him.

(Johnny stiffens as a spasm of pain grips him. The nurse is unaware of this; she is staring out the window with a preoccupied look on her face.)

NURSE: (quietly). Do you think Tim cared any for his mother?

JOHNNY: (uncertainly). I think that deep down he realized she was trying to protect him.

NURSE: (hopefully). You really think so?

JOHNNY: (his voice filled with pain). Yes, I think he really did. Nurse, is there something I can have for this pain? My insides seem to be on fire.

NURSE: (coming back to the present with a start). Oh! I'm sorry. Is it too very bad? The doctor said not to give you anything unless it became unbearable.

JOHNNY: (with a grimace). I think it will go away in a moment. What's the matter? What's happened? Are you sure Tim's O. K.? Why are you crying?

NURSE: (struggling to stop the flow of tears). Nothing. Nothing is the matter. I was just thinking about something else.

JOHNNY: (his face contorted with pain). I think the pain is getting worse. I don't know if I can hold on without something. Nurse, am I going to die?

NURSE: (fearfully). No. No, you're going to be all right. You can't die too, (puts her hand over her mouth).

JOHNNY: (feebly). Nurse, could you turn on a light? Everything seems to be getting dark.

(The nurse turns on a light and rings for the doctor.)

JOHNNY: I think it's all right now, nurse. I feel all warm and wet inside. It feels good, real good. What's your name, nurse? You (his voice gets weaker with every word), you said you knew Tim.

(The nurse turns from the night table and faces Johnny. As she turns, the light falls on the name tag she is wearing. Her face is filled with sorrow, and she is barely suppressing her inner emotions.)

JOHNNY: (he sees the nurse's expression and then her name tag). Grant? Grant! You can't be Tim's mother! No! No, you can't. He's not--not--dead, is he? Oh! Dear God. (At this point, Johnny's eyes close and his head falls on his chest. As the curtain falls, the nurse is crying openly as she looks down at the bed.)

HURRAH FOR THE NEXT THAT DIES!

by Jim Balloch

Cast of Characters

Gunnery Sergeant Adams, a tough, grizzled Marine veteran of about forty large build, hard appearance.

Corporal Dillon, about thirty, wears thin-framed glasses.

Corporal Gillis, a young lad of about nineteen, curly-haired and clean-shaven.

Courier

Scene: Front-line outpost on Bataan, towards the final days of the Japanese siege. The three marines first mentioned are in a fortification of sandbags built in a semi-circle, with the front opposite the audience. Sgt. Adams, his back to the audience, is watching carefully, sighting down a mounted belt-fed machinegun. On his right is Cpl. Gillis, leaning against the fortification and facing the side of Adams, tightly gripping a Springfield rifle. To Adams' left is Cpl. Dillon. Like Adams, he badly needs a shave and is comfortably stretched out on the ground, partially propped against the sandbags, directly facing the audience. To his left is a Thompson submachinegun, propped against the bags. Each man's uniform is dirty and ragged, and all three men bear the strained look of a prolonged losing struggle. Seconds before curtain rise, the sound of a furious fire-fight can be heard, followed by a silence. When the curtain rises, the time is about a half hour before dawn. As the play progresses, the lighting gradually increases.

Curtain

ADAMS: By God, we got quite a few that time.

DILLON: (stretching, with boredom)

Sarge, the last shot was fired ten minutes ago. Why are you just now saying that?

ADAMS: It tuk me a while to count the bodies they left behind and to figger on the others they drug away.

DILLON: Oh.

ADAMS: (looking at Dillon)

You know how tricky that Jap camouflage is. It tuk me a while to pick 'em out.

DILLON: I see.

(Adams turns back to his machinegun momentarily, then looks back at Dillon, who has withdrawn into himself)

ADAMS: (turning to Gillis)

Well, kid, didja kill one?

(Gillis is startled, pauses momentarily)

GILLIS: (shakily looking up at ADAMS)

N..no, at least I don't think so.

ADAMS: (slowly)

And why not?

GILLIS: Sarge, I reckon I just missed.

ADAMS: (coldly)

Gillis, what is yore exack qualification with the rifle?

GILLIS: (after a long pause, looking down)
Expert, Sergeant.

ADAMS: Corporal, what were my exact orders to you when we set up in this post?

GILLIS: To hold this post, sir, and delay the Japs.

ADAMS: Damn it, Corporal, you don't say "sir" to an NCO.

GILLIS: (quickly) Sergeant, I mean.

ADAMS: Now then. What were my orders? To the word, Corporal.

GILLIS: (slowly) You told me to kill a Jap, Sarge.

ADAMS: Then why didn't you do that, boy, if you're an expert with the 03?

GILLIS: (looking down) I don't know, Sergeant.
(Adams suddenly seizes Gillis by the front of his shirt and begins shaking him violently)

ADAMS: (harshly) Liar! God damn liar! Tell me why you didn't obey my orders, Gillis! Look at me Gillis! Damn it, look at me! Why? Why? Why?

GILLIS: (open-mouthed, looking up)
Because...I just can't, Sergeant, I just can't.
(Adams slowly releases him, and stares at him with utter contempt)

GILLIS: (with muffled sobs) I just can't kill a man...

ADAMS: Gillis, you realize what this is, don't you?
(Gillis looks up again, slowly)
It's direct disobedience to orders while under fire from the enemy. (Adams slowly draws out his service auto pistol and holds it upright between himself and Gillis.)
I got the authority an' the right to shoot you for this.
(Gillis shows no reaction)

DILLON: (spitting on the ground) Aw, hell, Sarge, for crying out loud.

ADAMS: (turning to Dillon) I'm tryin' to show him that...

DILLON: Sarge, the kid was at that artillery barrage back at the river last week. He's still half in shell shock.

ADAMS: (slowly, following a pause) They ain't no excuse for disobeyin' orders, Dillon. You oughta know that. You gave orders yourself...at one time.
(Dillon glares at Adams for a moment, then resumes his original position.)

ADAMS: (turning back to Gillis) Now listen kid. (He puts his automatic back in holster) I'm givin' you this order just onced more. It's an order, and Corporal, you had damn well better obey it, cause you're a Marine and Marines obey orders. I'm tellin' ya...kill a damn Jap...the next time they come.
(Gillis looks up again, horror stricken, and begins shaking his head, muttering "no, no, no, no...")

ADAMS: Gillis! Gillis!

GILLIS: They aren't coming again!...They can't come again...Sarge...
(now frantic) they can't...please, no...(Adams begins shaking him and slapping him, doing this several times, finally pushing him into a corner. He begins weeping silently, his head in his hands, his whole body quivering)

ADAMS: (with contempt and self-righteous pity)
Gillis, when are you goin' to be a man?

DILLON: (bitterly)
Is that what you term proof of manhood, Sergeant? Does a boy have to kill to be a man?

ADAMS: It ain't just that, it...

DILLON: Isn't it Sergeant? Isn't it. (Adams mutters under his breath and turns his back to the audience. Gillis slowly begins to stop his weeping. Dillon begins to recite softly the following.)

We meet neath the sounding rafter,
And the walls around are bare;
As they shout back our peals of laughter,
It seems that the dead are there.
Ho! stand to your glasses steady!
'Tis all we've left to prize.
A cup to the dead already,-
Hurrah for the next that dies!

GILLIS: (after a long pause, still somewhat choked up)
That was pretty. Where did you learn it?

DILLON: In a literature class at...(he stops suddenly)

GILLIS: Where?

ADAMS: (with contempt)

He learnt it when he was at Annapolis.

GILLIS: Annapolis?...But if you went there, then why...(stops, looks quizzically at Dillon.)

ADAMS: Then why ain't he no officer? (chuckles) Well, kid, he was... oncet. Then while he was officer of the guard back at Corpus Christi he left his post to go get drunk. Got drunk, too. Big ern' three hells. Disobeyed a general order. Got busted clean to private. (after a pause) Lot of good that college education is doin' him now. (pauses, then looks coldly at Dillon) Funny, I kinda figured the kid had broke, but he seems okay now. You broke back in Texas, Dillon. You may do it again...here.

DILLON: Hell may freeze over, too.

ADAMS: (with emphasis)

Orders is to shoot any deserters.

DILLON: (smiling) Don't worry about me, Sarge.

ADAMS: I ain't...but maybe you'd better (they glare at each other for a brief moment)

GILLIS: (after starting suddenly, looking left)

What's that?

ADAMS: (springing to his gun)

Where?

GILLIS: (pointing left)

There!

(The others grab their weapons.)

ADAMS: Who goes there? (Sound of man running) Halt!

Voice Offstage: For God's sakes, don't shoot!

ADAMS: Password!

VOICE: Donald Duck (a young Marine carrying a rifle runs on stage and leaps into the dugout and crouches, out of breath)

ADAMS: Well, what is it, man?

COURIER: (out of breath)

Gotta get word...all outposts...big Jap push...pull back and regroup at third sector...(He jumps up and runs offstage.)

ADAMS: (calling out)

Whose orders?

COURIER: Captain Giles!

DILLON: Japs must be planning something big. (To sergeant) Well, hell, Sarge, are we gonna stand out here all morning? Let's go.

ADAMS: We ain't goin' nowhere.

DILLON: Now, just a minute, Sergeant.

ADAMS: (with emphasis)
We're stayin' right here!

DILLON: But Captain Giles orders...

ADAMS: I know...regroup up at third. But our orders is from regiment and Colonel Murphy.

DILLON: But something's probably happened to the old man. Naturally the captain is in charge now.

ADAMS: But we don't know that for sure. Maybe them orders is for Giles' company only.

DILLON: (with rising anger)
Well you're the funny one. Cussing the kid for disobeying orders, and now look at you!

ADAMS: Corporal, this ain't disobedience...

DILLON: Well, I tell you. I'm leaving. They must need us at third sector. (He picks up his tommy gun, walks to edge of dugout.)

ADAMS: (coldly)
Dillon, I'll shoot you for desertion. (Dillon turns and smiles.)

DILLON: I'm only obeying orders, Sarge.

ADAMS: Anyone who leaves this bunker is a deserter, unless he leaves with my consent. (Dillon turns away. As he is halfway out of the bunker, Adams draws his automatic and fires twice. Dillon falls forward out of the bunker, as Gillis cries, "Oh my God!" Following a long pause, Adams holsters his automatic and stares in direction of Dillon. Then he turns to Gillis, with pleading eyes.)

ADAMS: (slowly)
I ain't never killed a Marine. (pause) Least I can do is give him a decent burial. (He gets up and heads for the body. Gillis rises to his full height)

GILLIS: (authoritatively)
Don't leave the bunker, Sergeant. (Adams ignores him. As he reaches the edge, Gillis bolts a cartridge in his rifle)

GILLIS: Sarge!
(Adams takes his first step over the bunker. Gillis aims and fires. Adams collapses on top of the bunker and rolls back into it. Gillis slowly lowers his rifle and moves over to his body and kneels over it.)

GILLIS: (with child-like innocence)
Sarge, I obeyed orders. I shot a deserter. Sarge...
Am I a man, now? (He rises and looks outward. It is just dawn and the early morning sun is shining.)

(Curtain)

THE GREEN MUSTANG
A Play in One Act
by
Jean Gurganus

Time: The present

Characters

Sharon	A sixteen-year-old girl
Rita	A friend of the same age
Mother	Sharon's mother
Father	Sharon's father
Car	A girl dressed in green

The set is a bare stage.

As the curtain rises, a spot light comes up down right and down left. Sharon steps into the light down right, and Rita steps into the spot down left. Each has a telephone. The remainder of the stage is dark.

SHARON: (excitedly) Hello, Rita? This is Sharon. Guess what I got for my birthday!

RITA: I don't know, tell me.

SHARON: My driver's license!

RITA: You did! That's great.

SHARON: I didn't have a bit of trouble. My folks thought I'd have a lot of trouble. They kept saying (imitating) "You don't have enough driving experience to get your license." I thought I'd never talk them into letting me try, but, after I told them that everybody else has his license, they finally broke down and let me get mine. I knew I could drive well enough, but they didn't believe me.

RITA: Boy, I bet they believe you now. You've got you license to prove it. Say, what are they giving you for your birthday?

SHARON: They haven't said, but I hope they'll get me a car of my own. I said something to Mother about it the other day, and she said I wasn't old enough or experienced enough to have a car of my own. They're afraid I'll have a wreck and get hurt. They still treat me like a baby. I'm sixteen, and I've got my license. I don't see any reason why I shouldn't have a car of my own.

RITA: Me either. Parents just don't understand that we're grown-up now. Do you think you can talk them into buying you a car?

SHARON: Sure! I talked them into letting me apply for my license, didn't I? If I pout long enough, I think I can get the car.

RITA: Do you have one picked out?

SHARON: Yes. Hey, would you like to see it?

RITA: Boy, would I!

SHARON: O.K. I'll get my old man's car and I'll drive you over to look at the car I'm going to get.

RITA: Great. I'll see you about 7:00.

SHARON: That's right. Bye Rita.

Lights dim out and a large spot comes up down center revealing four chairs arranged to form a car. (Two side by side in front and two directly behind these two.) At the back of the car is a tall stool on top of which sits a girl dressed in green. Sharon and Rita enter from down right.

RITA: I thought you were going to drive tonight.

SHARON: I was, but my father said I needed to learn to handle the car better before I started driving at night. They still don't think I can drive.

RITA: But just wait 'til you get your own car. Then they won't be able to tell you when you can and can't drive. Did you say anything else about it?

SHARON: Yeah. Tonight, right after I called you. They asked me what I wanted for my birthday, and I told them. They just sort of sat down, and then they started on it again about my not being grown-up enough to have my own car. But I think they're about ready to give in. Here it is. Isn't it beautiful!

RITA: Sharon, it's great! It's so sporty, and that green will match your eyes. Everybody in town would envy you--especially the boys. They really go for girls who drive Mustangs. Does it have bucket seats?

SHARON: Sure, it does. And it's got four-in-the-floor, and a radio, and just everything. I'll bet it'll run a 120 miles an hour.

(They turn and walk down left.)

RITA: How long do you think it'll be before you get it?

SHARON: My folks want me to wait until graduation, but I'm not going to wait two years. I think that if I play it right, I can have it in another month. Say let's go for a ride the first night I have it.

RITA: That'd be just great. Let me know the minute you get it. Goodnight, Sharon. Thanks for showing me the car, and good luck with your parents.

SHARON: Thanks, Rita. I'll be seeing you.

(Sharon walks back to center stage. Stops to gaze at the car.)

CAR: Well, don't just stand there. Come on in and see how it feels to sit behind the wheel. You're old enough to drive.

(Sharon hesitates, then moves. Sits in front seat down left. Pantomimes, examining the car.)

SHARON: (excitement mounting) Radio, heater, air conditioning, bucket seats. This car has everything!

CAR: Sure I do, and you seem to fit just perfectly. It's almost as though I were yours already.

SHARON: How fast will it, I mean, how fast do you run?

CAR: I'll go 120 easy. With just a little effort on the part of the driver, I glide around curves, and you should feel the sensation I can give you on the 'open road.

SHARON: (longingly) I'd give anything to take you home with me. I'd keep you clean and shiny. On Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons, I'd drive you out on the East Highway and see how you'd run.

CAR: We'd really be a sensation, you and I. Let's do it, Sharon. Let's go right now.

SHARON: I'd like to, but my folks won't let me. They say I'm not grown-up enough for a car of my own. But I'd take care of you, honest I would. I wouldn't be a reckless driver. I've just got to take you home.

CAR: I think you're old enough to have your own car, and if the officials had enough confidence in your driving to give you your license, your parents should have enough confidence in your ability to let you drive. Besides, how much skill do you need? All you have to do is turn on the key, push the accelerator, and guide the wheel. You can do that, can't you? Talk to them, Sharon. We could share some exciting times.

SHARON: I'll talk to them! We've just got to be together!

(Sharon runs from center stage to down right. Lights up down right. Mother and Father seated in chairs in the spot.)

SHARON: Mother, Father, what am I getting for my birthday?

FATHER: Well, what do you want, Dear?

SHARON: A car! A sporty, little green Mustang, down in the show room.

MOTHER: Now, Sharon, we've talked about this a thousand times before, and we've already decided that you will get a car for your graduation. You're not old enough or responsible enough right now.

FATHER: Your Mother's right. If you got a car now, you'd ruin it in a few days. You aren't old enough to appreciate a car, and you aren't experienced enough driving to meet driving situations. I don't think it's quite the time to get your car. When you're older and have more experience---

SHARON: (interrupting, angry, crying) When I'm older! That's all you ever say. I'm grown-up, and I could handle a car. You just don't want me to be happy.

FATHER: That's not it at all. Your Mother and I only want your happiness. That's why we're refusing to buy a car, now. There are so very many careless drivers on the roads today. We wouldn't want anything to happen to our little girl. We do want you to be happy, Sharon. You may pick any other thing you want for your birthday, and we'll be glad to get it for you. But, the car will have to wait until your graduation.

SHARON: I don't want anything else. I just want to get the green Mustang. I'm a big girl now. I'll take care of it. Nothing's going to happen to me; I can drive very well. I've got my license.

MOTHER: That doesn't prove that you'd be skillful enough to handle your own car on the road. There's no substitute for experience. When you have two more years' driving experience, we'll get you a green Mustang.

SHARON: (pleading) Please, Mother, please. I need it now. Can't I have it now? I'll get a job and help pay for it. And I'll be very careful driving. I won't have a wreck.

FATHER: Sharon, you just don't understand. We have your best interest at heart.

SHARON: No you don't. You don't really care about me at all. If you did, you'd let me get it. Please, Daddy, please.

FATHER: The final answer is no.

SHARON: I guess you know best. I just wish that you'd looked at it. But, I guess if you don't trust me---

(She cries softly and leaves the stage. Lights fade out to indicate passage of time.)

(Lights up.)

FATHER: Is Sharon back from school yet?

MOTHER: No, not yet, but she'll be back in a little while.

FATHER: She was pretty upset last night when we refused to get her the car. Perhaps we were treating her like a baby. Maybe we weren't trusting her. Anyway, she's going to be surprised when she gets the keys to the car.

MOTHER: Are you sure we're doing the right thing?

FATHER: She is a big girl now.

(Sharon enters from down right; walks listlessly.)

SHARON: Hello, Mother, Daddy.

FATHER: Sharon, your mother and I have done quite a bit of thinking about last night. We think you may be right. You are a big girl now, and we do trust you.

(Handing her the keys)

Happy Birthday, Dear.

SHARON: You got it for me. You're going to let me have my Mustang. Can I go get Rita, and try out my new car?

FATHER: Will you be careful? No driver is too skillful with an automobile.

SHARON: Yes, Father. I will. Thank you. Thank you very much.

(Sharon runs down center, pantomimes getting into a car and sits in the front chair down stage. Lights up center stage.)

SHARON: At last you are mine. I can hardly believe it.

CAR: Let's get started, Sharon. You can take me out on the East Highway, and I'll show you how fast I can go. All you'll have to do is push the accelerator and guide the wheel.

SHARON: Here we go. We'll come back for Rita.

(Pantomimes driving)

CAR: That's right, Sharon! Now, go faster.

SHARON: I don't see what all the fuss was about. Father should see how well I can drive. We're already up to 70 miles per hour, and it's still easy.

CAR: All you have to do is what I tell you, and you'll have more fun than you can imagine. Go faster, faster.

(The sound of a fast-moving car is heard in the distance as the lights dim out. In the blackout a telephone rings. Lights up but still dim, down right. Mother and Father appear.)

MOTHER: Yes, this is Sharon's mother. (Listens a few seconds) Thank you. We'll be right down. (Turns slowly to Father) Sharon's had a wreck. (She begins to cry softly.)

(Lights dim out down right and fade in center stage. Chairs are disarranged. The girl in the green dress has climbed down and now stands leaning against the stool. Sharon is seated on the floor. She rises slowly, half leaning on a chair.)

SHARON: What happened? I feel so strange.

CAR: I promised you excitement, and I gave it to you. We were running 103 when we took the curve, and we flipped over. I smashed against an embankment. Wasn't it thrilling! I told you we'd have fun.

SHARON: (Her voice sober) If we wrecked that badly, I must have been hurt. But I don't feel any pain. I just feel cold all over, and so strange inside. This feeling...am I dead?

CAR: Yes, Sharon. You're dead.

SHARON: Then we'll share no more rides. I'll never see my folks again. They were right. I didn't have enough experience driving. I wasn't careful. I wasn't grown-up enough for the responsibility. I just kept going faster and faster, without even thinking. Now it's too late. I'm dead?

CAR: Yes. You are dead, but wasn't it worth it? It was real excitement.

SHARON: No. Not worth it at all.

(Lights come up down left revealing a coffin draped in green. Sharon walks slowly from car to down left. Turns and looks back across stage. Lights come up down right revealing Mother crying on father's shoulder. The disarranged car is still dimly lighted. Lights dim out down right and center. When they are dark, Sharon turns back to the coffin, steps in and lies down. There is a sudden blackout, and the curtain falls.)

THE CHURCH
by Jim Balloch

The village church was a-blaze;
Like a huge black tidal wave
The smoke poured out,
Brazenly darkening the once-blue sky of late afternoon.
The frenzied cries of "Fire! Fire in the church!"
Spread quickly through the little Tennessee hamlet;
And all the good Baptists scurried up the green hillside
To that holy inferno.
With buckets of water and with blankets
The men valiantly battled the towering blaze,
And they got dirty and grimy and filthy.
And they fought until weary numbness
Seeped into their bodies,
But they never retreated.
The children watched with awe,
As they ran up and down the hillside,
Their eyes huge with excitement.
The women prayed and cried.
Then the pastor was overcome by the smoke.
Two men, a deacon and a drunk,
Carried him to safety.
While the women revived and comforted the old gentleman,
The men continued the battle
Far into that warm spring night...
And then it was over,
And the last flame had been put out.
But what was once the House of God

Was now only ashes and rubble and ruin.
The silence hung heavy over the night,
And silent tears flowed freely from eyes
Already reddened from the smoke;
Looks of shock and defeat
Glowed from even the grimmest face.
Then the Widow Brown broke the silence
With dull, empty tones,
"The church is gone."
And there were murmurings of agreement,
Soft, saddened murmurings.
But then their pastor raised his own eyes up from the ashes,
Turned and faced his flock,
And in his deep, rasping Tennessee voice, said:
"No, my children. That which is gone is only a building...
Not the Church."
And after a moment,
They understood him.
Then he led them in prayer,
As they all thanked God for their deliverance.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Jim Balloch ("Hurrah for the Next That Dies" and "The Church") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Balloch of 36 Friartuck Road, Greenville, S. C. Jim plans to transfer to the University of Kentucky or the University of Tennessee and major in journalism.

Phil Bowman ("Late Acquaintance") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Rayford Bowman, Route #2, Taylorsville, N. C. Phil plans to teach a year in elementary school and then transfer to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he will major in psychology.

Jeff Brooks ("Next") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Brooks, 505 Richards Drive, Shelby, N. C. Active in the art program of Gardner-Webb, Jeff plans to transfer to East Carolina College and major in art.

Timothy Cates ("Cycle" and "The Kill") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. L. G. Cates, 206 Whitsett Street, Graham, N. C. Tim plans to transfer to Appalachian State Teachers College and major in chemistry.

John Crown ("Heaven") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Crown, Jr., 411 Elmwood Avenue, Lynchburg, Virginia. John intends to transfer to Lenoir Rhyne College and major in Spanish.

Jean Gurganus ("The Green Mustang") is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eulis Ward Gurganus, 130 Hunter's Hill Road, Rocky Mount, N. C. Jean intends to transfer to either Atlantic Christian College or East Carolina College.

Maxie Jolley, 302 Central View Apartments, Spindale, N. C. ("My Friend the River"), is the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Jolley. He attended Gardner-Webb, 1965-66.

Peggy Jones (Scruggs) is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Lee Jones of Cary, N. C. Peggy attended Gardner-Webb in 1965-66. She was married last summer to Russell Scruggs and now resides on Green Road, Route # 4, Shelby, N. C.

Paul McManus, Jr. ("A Dead Hero or a Live Coward?") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul McManus, 304 N. Flint Street, Gastonia, N. C. Paul plans to transfer to Mars Hill College and major in music.

Rebecca Padgett ("Because of a Shot That Rang") is the daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. W. W. Padgett of 1012 Buffalo Street, Shelby, N. C. "Becky" intends to transfer to Western Carolina College and major in education or psychology.

Billy Scott ("The Bobcat") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Cecil Scott, 230 E. Creswell Street, Greenwood, S. C. Billy transferred to Gardner-Webb the first semester of this school year from Lander College, Greenwood, S. C.

Dennis Twiggs ("Eleven Cents") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Glenn Twiggs, 505 E. Union Street, Morganton, N. C. Dennis, a transfer student from Appalachian State Teachers College, attended Gardner-Webb the second semester of 1965-66 and returned to Appalachian this year.

Barry Yelton ("A Stroll Along the Shore") is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Voyde A. Yelton, Flack Road, Forest City, N. C. Barry plans to transfer to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and major in political science.