



**The
CUB 77**

CUB '70

The Literary
Magazine

A Ventura High School Publication

cover by lozano

Onward

This year the Creative Writing Club, under the supervision of Mrs. Carolyn Hynes, set out to break all previous records in the Wilson-Nichol Creative Writing Contest. We figured a massive publicity campaign would do the job, so — for the month preceding February 20th, contest deadline, the school was barraged with signs, posters, and bulletin announcements. With a week to go in the contest, we had a grand total of six entries. Our massive campaign seemed to be turning into an even more massive flop. The final day of the contest was a Tuesday following a three-day weekend. The ⁷⁰⁰ preceding Friday, the number of entries had risen to seven stories, thirty-three serious verse, five humorous verse, two dramatic scripts, and nine essays.

On Tuesday we got hit. Even before first period ended, entries had covered half the desks in Room 70, our base of operations. Mrs. McKnight, who collected entries at the Student Store, was getting swamped. The response to the increased publicity was definitely favorable — in fact, it was staggering!

As a result, we received over 350 multiple entries in the Serious Verse category alone. Consequently, a committee of impartial, innocent bystanders was drafted to screen the superior entries. The screening committee consisted of

Mrs. Lenore Crowe,
Mrs. Bernice Dennison,
Mr. Robert Ferris, and
Mr. Alton Williams.

For a period of three weeks the screened works were dissected, inspected, rejected, and selected. Outstanding citizens of the academic community served as special judges for the 1970 Wilson-Nichol Writing Contest

Mrs. Harriet Christensen,
Miss Eloise McConnell,
Mrs. Mabelle McGuire,
Mr. Eric Nicolet, and
Dr. Robert Reynolds.

Judges for the Cub Cover Contest included

Mr. Ray Frykholm,
Mr. Perry Owen,

and our favorite printer, Mr. Budd Dresler. We wish to thank each of these

wonderful people who sacrificed graciously their time and talent to help us with this very important contest.

Part of the incentive to participate in this contest is the monetary awards for the winning entries. Mrs. Clara Nichol provides for this contest cash prizes which amount to a goodly sum of money. For this bread we are eternally grateful! And for the encouragement this kind of philanthropic action gives to budding writers, for the interest in young people and their efforts to achieve something worthwhile — we can never thank you enough, Mrs. Nichol.

We are also indebted to Mrs. McKnight, who, sacrificing time and effort for the cause, gave us the official depository we needed for the contest entries. For her patience and availability, we wish to extend thanks to the Leader of the Student Store — and to all the others who helped to make this literary effort a success

Smashing good show, contributors!

The Editors

Dedication

There was an unfilled chair in the Creative Writing Class last fall. There was no response when the name "Kenneth Bogart" was read from the official roll sheet. This promising writer had been killed in a motorcycle accident on July 15th, the preceding summer.

We dedicate the
1970 Cub
to the memory of
Kenneth Bogart

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We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . .

The Dignity and Worth of the Individual

John Howe

The Preamble to the Declaration of Independence thus reminds us that the individual is important in our culture. Former President Lyndon Baines Johnson recently stated, "It is America's promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man." Our democratic way of life depends upon the individual and how he achieves his ultimate right — a feeling of dignity and worth.

Historically, man has sought to have dignity and worth. When democracy was born in Greece thousands of years ago, citizens began to take part in their government by acquiring the right to vote and to serve on juries. The western belief in the dignity of man evolved from the humanistic tradition of ancient Athens. Through the Greek religion, man acquired the view of how he should live his life to the fullest and to the best interests of his society. The Greeks marveled at man's capacity to reason, to appreciate beauty, to perform physical feats with skill and grace, and to judge the wisdom of political decisions.

In the Middle Ages came feudalism, depriving the individual of most of his freedom and justice. Powerful, wealthy barons controlled the lives of the workers, or serfs. Then, in England, King John signed the Magna Carta, which guaranteed certain rights to the common people. Parliament gradually became superior to the King — a significant and reassuring step forward in increasing the individual's voice in government procedures.

Over the last century, the worth of the individual has been, at times threatened and lowered. Fascism and Nazism, both rising to their peaks

in World Wars, contrived to take away the rights of the individual. Today communistic governments continually abase and threaten the values of the free individual. Throughout history, the value of the individual has varied with the prevailing government ideology.

In our present culture, the individual must earn his status in society and establish his worth and dignity. In America, each individual is obligated to develop his own qualities and capabilities to a maximum, much as was required of the Greek individual. He must set goals and strive to achieve these goals. America needs well-trained citizens.

Each American should realize the importance of educational opportunities. As President Johnson said, "The taproot of poverty is ignorance." Not only should a person go to school, but also he should continue his education throughout his lifetime. He can read, visit art galleries and museums, attend lectures and concerts, travel, and learn continually from others and from life itself. He should strive for maximum intellectual growth.

In addition to seeking intellectual achievement, the individual must try to develop himself physically, emotionally, socially, and morally — — so that he is a person of worth to himself and to others. To have good health is important — — to be strong and to know and practice the rules of good hygiene. The emotional development of being able to meet and adjust to disappointments and adversities is also essential. Knowing how to live with others, how to make friends, and how to win the respect of his fellows assures social happiness. Being a contributor to society's progressive development carries its own reward in a sense of worth and satisfaction; whereas a parasite, living off and taking advantage of society's kind heart, is only a self centered problem. One should have among his life's goals the desire to leave the world a place better than what he found. Helping one's fellow man is what life is all about. The American citizen can contribute as a free individual to the nation's strength, prosperity, and welfare. To do so, he must know right from wrong; he must be a person of high integrity, with high standards. A man who can be depended upon will be a man of great worth in any society.

The basis of the individual's worth and dignity in his society is, indeed, his development intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and morally. A person who lives in a country such as America where there is opportunity has certain rights and privileges. But he must develop himself to the fullest, for only then can he make a maximum contribution to his family, his school, his community, and his country. It is not enough to acquire wealth and social status. An individual must rather strive for fulfillment, believing in himself and trying to become the best person possible. From the respect of his fellow man, he will receive a feeling of dignity and worth as an individual.

We Are the World in Small

The people moved like chessmen,
Ivory, camouflaging the checkered plane.
Plotting, trying to get where someone already was.
The black would overtake the white; the white, the black.
A bishop would overtake a knight, and vice-versa.
And the always shifting pawns
Stood like a glass wall with doors
Through which each important piece would pass
And return to hide behind.

When all the pawns had gone,
And, eventually, all the fighters,
The ones brave enough, or able enough,
To move across the board and conquer,
Finally disappeared, leaving only a king on either side —
One black, one white, the whole board between them —
They were able to move only as fast as the pawns before them,
And had not been able to overtake one another.
And so, stalemate.
A hand swept each from the table, and the board was empty.

Mike Ruskovich



Value System - - Philosophical Attitudes

THEOLOGY

God.

I know there is some force above man which has something to do with my life and death, and with the lives and deaths of others. But I am not thinking of that force as God right now. My God is in people. We must fulfill our own lives and the lives of others. We must be sensitive and understanding. This is when we find God.

Origin of Human Life.

We descended from an atom or something which an unknown force produced on earth.

Life's Purpose.

We are here on earth with life, death, and minds. We should use our minds to help fulfill our lives and the lives of others, and to defer death.

Man's Destiny.

This is the ground beneath us eventually. Physically, we will go no farther than our graves. But before we die, our minds decide whether we have lived heaven or hell. Therefore, heaven and hell are contained in life, or what may be merely existence.

SELF-IMAGE

Real.

I am an individualist, neither good nor bad. I am unclassified but my life is manifested in music, and music is reflected by my life. Experiencing music is experiencing freedom.

Social Image.

I portray my feelings and try to show the truth of myself by my actions. To do this, I can't worry about what others think of me.

Ideal Image.

I can't answer this now. I'm still searching.

ENVIRONMENT

Man-made.

Men need to be aware of others and to accept them for what they are. To be trusting and trustworthy people would be ideal. Then peace could prevail, and we could have more love instead of misunderstanding and hate.

Physical.

My physical environment is contradictory. At times, when I'm with my kind of people, I find love and understanding. It is real. But then when I get back with the majority of people, my good experiences are outweighed by the bad. At times, I shut out the mean things that are happening and re-live the good times — just to keep myself alive.

"It is possible to close men's ears to likewise a scream or prophecy, no matter how vital the message may be.

CARE:

When men are
oppressed
struggling in darkness
denied love
becoming the

LIVING DEAD!"

Peggy Wright

Relevance

Ronald glanced at his watch. It was time to leave. He knew what the party would be like. But he went anyway.

*a car joined the traffic
sullenly passed a truck
and continued on to its Destination.
the party was across town
and Ronald, being in a thoughtful mood,
decided to take the long way*

Before the party was over, every person there would be in his own small

world— stoned. But the feeling good wouldn't last. A gallon of wine
couldn't fill the void in his heart. The emptiness would be back in the
morning . . .

*sad boots clumped hollowly on the walk.
at the door
a painted smile deceived a girl
whose painted smile
deceived him.*

Tonight he would experience love, peace and happiness. Or would tonight
be the same disappointment? He couldn't admit it.

*inside, rock
wrenched the mind inside out,
condensed to a single warping sound, and —
an infinite glimpse of eternity.*

Later, about twenty people gathered in a corner. A cloud of smoke hung
heavily over them. Between songs, mumbles praised the weed.

*but ronald sensed
the desolation of his thoughtfulness
and all he could feel
was unhappy souls devoted to escape
disgusted, he staggered out.*

He was suffocated by their love ("Down with the fascist pigs!") and
concern ("You live your life, I'll live mine.").

*somehow the pavement had turned
into a highway
a finite road
he could see the end*

*but he couldn't see
beyond the blinding headlights
of the truck*

A leather bound Bible, having been pushed aside and forgotten in times
of relevance, lay in the attic, the browning pages collecting the dust of
neglect.

Bayard Taylor

*Kids laughing with books over their heads. Feet sloshing
across the muddy grass. The sky darkens.
The sloshing turns to splashing.*

H
u
r
r
y

H
u
r
r
y
Don't
Get wet

Sue Rowley

misty memories

to whisper through a crack,
straining to see the other side
through a dense fog . . .
and after a mile hike
to gaze
and wonder
about lofty theories
of another man's genius . . .
to wander
in one's own
shallow mind,
becoming lost in that vast intellectual sea;
to electrify unknowingly
with a stare . . .
to become tense, making even one's self nervous,
to laugh — over nothing,
and cry — over naught;
a dead flower,
a vivid memory . . .

Alison Nicholson

Rainy Day

Blue lessens. Gray fastens onto the sky, blocking the light to the earth below. On and on the rain falls; puddles grow bigger, and dryness becomes unknown. Children splash; people dash to catch the bus to work. The schedule of the day is unchanged, yet inside our minds a dismalness occurs, strengthening until smiles disappear. On and on the rain falls, the wind blows, the windows close. All is dim. The moving of time is forgotten. Until, at last, ribbons of color lace the sky. Gray lessens. Blue fastens, and sunlight appears, changing the wetness to colors brought by the fallen rain.

Barbara Montague

Trails of Thought

Life goes on as the flower outside
my window slowly falls to the ground.
I run to catch the huge wave,
the only remembrance salt on my tongue.
Gliding through the open green meadow,
A cloud bursts, rain on my head the only sound.
Sitting in the dark room I can think
of the past and present.
The sun shines through the cracks in the walls
where loneliness is hung.

Sheila Morton

A lady who lived in La Ludd
Quite neatly avoided a flood;
Weeks after the rain,
She went out again,
And sank out of sight in the mudd!

Debra Jackson

The Impossible Task

Black and beautiful —
with no conceit;
That is the way I want to be.

To strive for freedom,
To be treated right,
To see the beauty of each new dawn,
To cry with happiness,
instead of fear —
You'd think I asked too much!

To walk among my fellow man,
To touch each other,
hold a hand —
Is this too much?

Barbara Williams

Peace

A finger raised into the air,
And then another.
Peace.

Lynn Grizzard



Awakening to Nature

I awake softly and silently to the sound of a bird's singing. I cannot guess what kind it is, although I know it must be a miraculous little creature to make such beautiful sounds. Now, from a distance, I hear the sound of running water. I roll to my side and stretch and yawn. Undaunted by the crispness of the morning air, I glance around to see what the new day has in store for me.

I notice a harmless little ground squirrel scurrying to his burrough. What a carefree life he has, sheer simplicity. I sit down beneath the branches of one of the many trees that stand as masters in this lonely and passive place.

I dip my feet into the icy cold water of the stream I had heard earlier—only to pull them out rapidly and sit on them frantically in an attempt to warm them.

As I calm down, I watch the glittering of the sunlight, dancing through the water, mixing itself to make a solution of liquid sunshine. I toss a rock into the water at a leaf that has fallen from a tree and watch as the rings of water gently filter themselves back. When I stand, I can see the imprint of pebbles and leaves on my feet.

I am happy to be alive!

Gary Collins

Leaves

a dramatic script by David Wilkinson

Characters: Man
Humility
Sarcasm
Folly
Empathy

Scene 1. The stage is bare except for an orange crate down right, a log at center; the complete stage is scattered with dead leaves. A MAN enters from stage left and walks slowly over to the orange crate; he stoops, picks up a withered leaf, and then sits down on the orange crate, reflecting. He sighs audibly. After a pause, he holds the leaf in front of him and examines it.)

MAN: I have no sense of . . . depth. (pause.) I have no sense of . . . time. (He looks again at the leaf, pauses, then crushes it in his hand.) It's like the wind blowing— it's always blowing somewhere. (He looks up at lights.) Always constant, never lifting. (Rises.) So . . . (Holds position; then walks to the log at center stage. He looks out at the audience, then around himself, surveying his surroundings; he speaks to the audience.) So this is where it all happens, right here. (Indicates stage.) Right here, on the edge of nowhere. You atheists and existentialists will probably like this occurrence. I suppose they always have in the past.

(He sits on log, clasps hands, and waits in silence. HUMILITY enters, dressed in silver-grey gown. He walks on stage from stage right, stops near center at edge of light pool, regards man, puts hands behind back, then walks into light pool. MAN doesn't look up. HUMILITY sits on log next to MAN.)

HUMILITY: (after period of silence) This is where it happens?

MAN: Yes.

HUMILITY: Why here?

MAN: Why not?

(HUMILITY pauses, ponders this, then shakes head.)

HUMILITY: I don't know. It just seems to me that Nowhere just isn't the right place to let this happen. (Picks up withered leaf, holds it at arm's length) I have no . . .

MAN: Sense of time? (HUMILITY nods.) I know. It's because this is Noplace and there's nothing for Time to hang on to. (Rises, goes to edge of light pool.)

HUMILITY: I see.

MAN: How did you get here?

HUMILITY: I don't know. How did you?

MAN: I don't know. But it can't be long until it happens. (Sits.)

HUMILITY: No, it can't be long now.

(SARCASM enters from stage left. He is dressed in a red-orange robe. He strides directly to the orange crate DR and sits.)

SARCASM: Hey, you idiots! Is this where it happens?

HUMILITY: Yes. (Pause.) How did you get here?

SARCASM: I don't know. How did you?

MAN: He doesn't know either.

SARCASM: Then let him answer for himself, idiot. (Pause. Looks off left.) The fool should be along any minute. He was right behind me.

(FOLLY enters, stage left. He is dressed in a yellow robe and walks on tip-toe. The others look at him, and he smiles at them. He goes up center, holds out his arms, and turns in a small circle, beholding the stage. Then he goes and sits on the end of the log, center stage, crosses legs, and looks at SARCASM.)

FOLLY: Oh, la! Is this where it happens?

SARCASM: (to MAN and HUMILITY) Get him! (Sneers.)

MAN: (answering FOLLY) Yes. Any time now.

FOLLY: How can you tell? I seem . . .

HUMILITY: To have no sense of time? No, there is no time here.

FOLLY: Oh, I see. (to SARCASM) How did you get here so fast?

SARCASM: I don't even know how I got here.

FOLLY: Oh. (Grins foolishly.)

(Silence.)

HUMILITY: (Looking around.) Does anybody know where the leaves came from? It was spring when I left.

FOLLY: Same here.

SARCASM: It was summer when I left.

(MAN says nothing. He is looking at the ground, seemingly far away in thought.)

SARCASM: (Rises. To MAN) Well? (Pause.) MAN? What season was it when you left?

MAN: (Looking up.) What does it matter?

SARCASM: (Crossing to MAN.) It matters!

MAN: (Looking off left.) It was the Season of Change.

(EMPATHY enters, wearing a white robe. He is Christ-like in face, and stands in empty light pool, stage left. MAN rises, regarding EMPATHY.)

MAN: The time that is between . . .; the time of Sadness.

SARCASM: (Sits on log, center.) Just what does that mean?

MAN: The Last Autumn.

HUMILITY: So those leaves . . .

FOLLY: . . . Are yours. Oh, la! What do they have to do with the occurrence?

MAN: (Still looking at EMPATHY.) I don't know. They just blew in when I came in.

(EMPATHY stoops and picks up four leaves; then, without a word, crosses left and gives each one a leaf.)

SARCASM: What are these for, idiot?

(EMPATHY wordlessly goes back and stands in light pool. He closes his eyes.)

MAN: It can't be long now. (He sits.)

HUMILITY: No. Not long, now.

SARCASM: (Indicating EMPATHY) What's his problem?

FOLLY: He's wondering about the occurrence, I'm sure. Oh, la! It seems that we are all assembled here to wait for it to happen! (Pause.) Where is this place, anyway?

MAN: Nowhere.

FOLLY: Where is that?

SARCASM: Somewhere not too far from Anyplace.

FOLLY: Oh. (Grins foolishly.)

(Silence. EMPATHY remains standing alone in light pool, eyes closed, hands at sides.)

FOLLY: Would anyone laugh if I asked a stupid question?

SARCASM: It depends.

FOLLY: On what?

SARCASM: On what your question is, stupid!

FOLLY: (Looking at others to see their reactions.) I was just wondering . . . what it is . . . that's going to happen?

MAN: (Looks toward EMPATHY) That's a good question.

FOLLY: (To MAN) Do you know?

MAN: No.

FOLLY: Humility, do you know?

HUMILITY: No.

FOLLY: Sarcasm, do you?

SARCASM: How should I know, you fool?

FOLLY: (Looks toward EMPATHY) Do you?

(EMPATHY does not reply. He remains motionless, as before.)

SARCASM: Well, if nobody knows what it is that is going to happen, why are we all waiting here like a bunch of idiots?

HUMILITY: I don't know.

SARCASM: Well, you idiots can stick around if you want to. I'm going back. (to FOLLY) You can let me know what it was.

(SARCASM exits stage left.)

FOLLY: Oh, la! The air will be much more breathable, now. (Pause.)
I . . . uh . . . don't suppose that you would mind if I left, too?
There was this wonderful waterfall I was contemplating. (Exits, stage left.)

(Silence. MAN looks at HUMILITY. HUMILITY looks troubled.)

HUMILITY: (Rising) I'll stay, if you want me to.

MAN: It doesn't matter.

HUMILITY: You don't suppose it's already happened, do you?

MAN: (Looks down at his feet.) I wouldn't know. (Pause. He looks at HUMILITY, and then at EMPATHY. To HUMILITY) You can go if you want. It may not even happen.

HUMILITY: Well . . . (Crossing stage to exit) if you're sure that you won't mind.

MAN: No. Go ahead.

HUMILITY: Farewell! (Exits.)

(MAN watches HUMILITY exit, then looks at EMPATHY. EMPATHY makes no move.)

MAN: (Sighing loudly, then stretching his legs.) I wonder . . . what babies dream about? (EMPATHY looks toward MAN.) I wonder . . . what dreams are made of? (EMPATHY walks center into MAN'S light pool) I wonder . . . when does sleeping end, and dreaming begin? (EMPATHY makes no answer. To EMPATHY) You didn't give me away. Why?

EMPATHY: I —I am what I am.

MAN: Is it wrong, that I won't die?

EMPATHY: Who is to judge? Not those who were here!

MAN: No, I think not. (Pause.) It reminds me of something I heard when I was a boy —(Looks at lights)

"The trees may cry out for space,
But water will never come again;
And when they do win their space,
All they do is kill themselves."

(Silence. EMPATHY looks at MAN, then crosses to orange crate DR.)

EMPATHY: I guess you had better go, now, before it's too late to go. Time may soon return, and this (Indicates stage) might become Someplace.

MAN: You go first. I want to reflect alone for a bit.

EMPATHY: All right. (Crosses to light pool left. Stops, looks at MAN.) But don't stay too long. Somewhere a clock is striking three, and someone soon may begin to dream of this place.

MAN: I won't, thank you. (EMPATHY exits, stage left. MAN stands in light pool, looking off left. Silence. MAN stoops and picks up a leaf; he holds it at arm's length. Then he crushes it in both

palms, and drops the pieces in front of him. Light pools to left and right fade. MAN's face is illuminated by the single center spot. He sighs loudly.) Someday, an icy wind will blow these leaves back into the Autumn That Was. Maybe . . . maybe it will by my Autumn. (Pause. Looks up at ceiling.) I'd thank YOU if I knew YOU were there, for sure. (Pause.) But, I don't . . . I guess I'm glad it never happened, because it's not real. Just like the wind isn't real that blows these leaves in and out of Autumn. (He picks up another leaf.) Always constant, never lifting. (Clock offstage strikes three. Blackout) Never lifting....

Curtain.

Do not touch blossoms
of love, or they will crumble
like the leaves of fall

Dale Ferguson

I'm Frightened of My Aloneness

DON'T
apologize for
not knowing
me.

No one really does.
There are too many of
the straw-headed;
I fear ME.

I'M frightened in a
lonely universe.
"There is a need
for understanding
among People."

YET,
if understanding is not there,
neither is friendship, warmth;
only the transient touch.

I am not
stuck up
I don't hate you.
I'M
just
frightened of my aloneness.

Peggy Wright

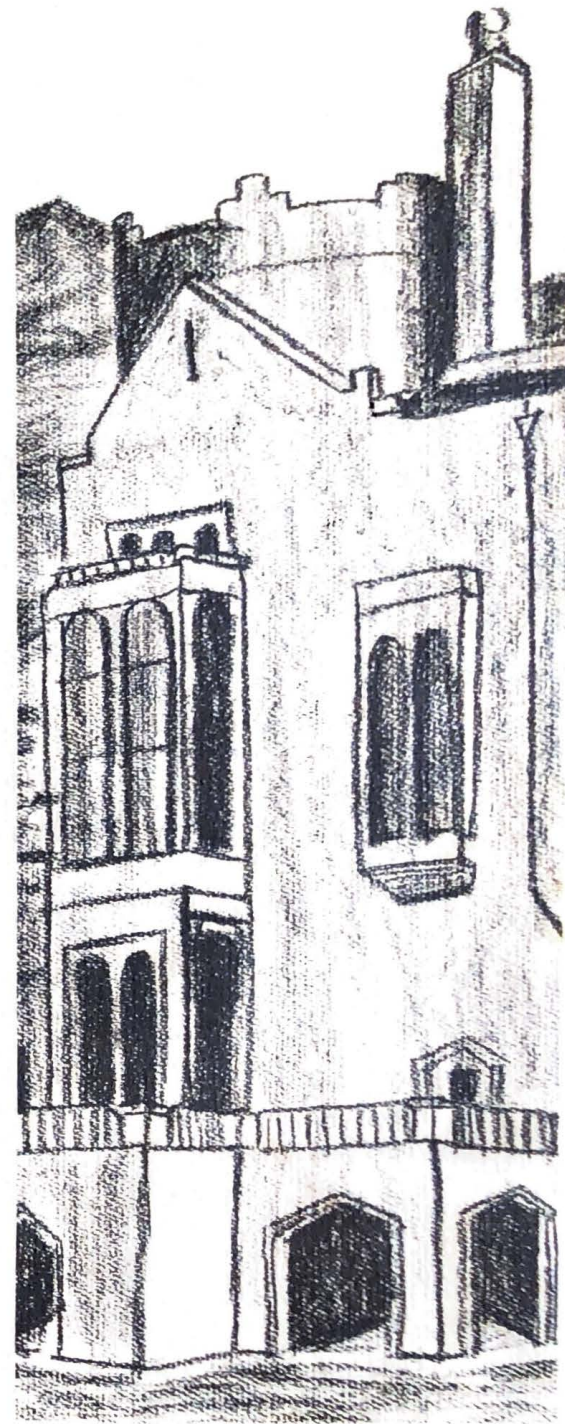
Valley of the Eagle's Nest

The giant hill-sized rocks form a pink and rugged wall around the secluded castle of Glen Eyrie. One enters the spacious grounds through massive wrought-iron gates. The gravel road is shadowed by ancient firs and pines; it winds among the many structures on the grounds — the gate house, the gardener's cottage, guest bungalows, the bath house and pool. Many times it courses over short arched bridges and beneath towering rocks.

The sheer wall of cliff beside the castle has time-deepened crevices that cause strangely shaped shadows on its face. One of these shadows seems extremely large; however, the second time the trees afford a clear view, one sees the shadow to be merely a pile of branches and rocks. There is a diagonal shelf in the rock, and on it, below the aerie, is a smaller nest.

Glen Eyrie: valley of the eagle's nest. Ancient, majestic, eternally enshrined in the Rockies. Such is the eagle. Thus is the castle. Its formidable moat, boulder lined and dry, yet excludes invaders, enemies of solitude.

The castle looms erect,



immense as the guarding crags. Its unsmoothed stones still retain their natural ruggedness.

This reflection of the environment, so evident in the exterior, is constant throughout the massive structure. Gigantic oaken doors open into an entry which receives snow-dampened cloaks, and, in fairer weather, mud-sogged or grass-covered boots. Another pair of doors ushers onto the leaf-patterned carpeting that covers the entire first floor from reception hall through study, library, parlor and dining room, excluding only the kitchen.

The leaf carpet leads one up the mahogany-banistered stairs to the second floor, where, as if suddenly he had entered a more festive world, the carpet becomes burning scarlet in a royal weave. Off the hall, the bedrooms are decorated individually. Following the scarlet carpet, one enters the Great Hall.

In this formal banquet room, red and gold and dark walnut panels prevail. Brocade draperies spread from the thirty-foot high ceiling, concealing long window seats and glass doors which open onto a stone veranda. A huge fireplace, the largest of any in the castle, commands one's attention immediately. Mounted above the flagstone mantle are caribou, elk and deer, represented by the finest of their species. An ebony grand piano is dwarfed in the corner of this vast and vivid room.

Ascending the carpeted stairs once again, one discovers a third floor, appropriately carpeted in sky-blue. Bedrooms as unique as those below branch from the hall. There is a half-flight of stairs at the end of the hall which ascends into one room. This room is known as the Tower—an octagon atop the castle with varied but equally magnificent views from any of its eight windowed walls.

Viewing the Valley of the Eagle's Nest from this vantage point, one finally realizes the expanse of the valley and the utter remoteness of Glen Eyrie.

Debra Jackson

Quiet mist descends,
gently cleanses, then is gone.
Early morning rain.

Judy Malmin

He's Near - - I See Him

I walk alone along the quiet beach,
Feeling the hot sun beating down on my face.
I see the sea gulls soaring high over my head
And hear the music of the rolling surf.
I feel the warm sand running through my toes,
And touch a leaf fallen from a tree nearby.
I feel the breeze gently rustling my hair,
And the fine spray of the sea carried along by the breeze.
I am not alone — my God is very near.

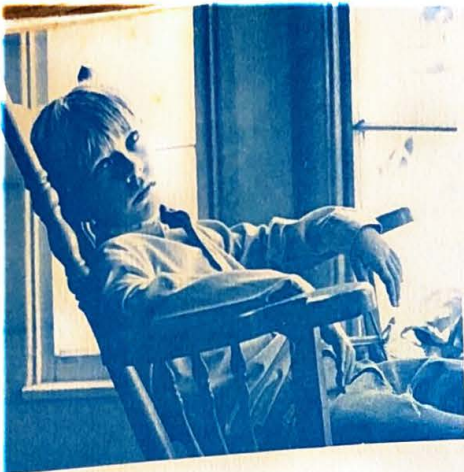
Children laughing in the park across the way,
The water trickling in a nearby brook,
Birds singing their songs on a bright, sunlit morn,
The wind blowing gently through tall, majestic trees,
A flower, so beautiful and sweet to smell,
A blade of grass, so small and yet so complex —
In all these things, I see God.

Rachel Kane

For Mikie

They stepped lightly
through the quilted meadow
of Spring, and
when Mr. Figsbury thrust
his white-tipped cane
up into the warmth,
Seany's wink eyes blinked,
and his tight little grin unravelled
into a cheek-splitting affair.
"Seany," started the old man,
"have you ever heard
a smile?"

Beth Foster



The Butterfly

On the warm days, Mamma used to sit in the rocker by the window. Lenny remembered those days well, and the endless hours on Mamma's lap. And how clearly he remembered the patch-work quilt she had covered her legs with — and the one special patch with the butterfly. Mamma had said this was Lenny's square.

"Lenny," she said, "do you know why this tiny butterfly is so beautiful?"

He had replied, "Yep! 'Cuz you made it, Mamma, and 'cuz it's my very own."

Mama's eyes glittered as she laughed. "Yes, that's true — but the real reason, Lenny? It's the only butterfly amongst a hundred pretty patches, and when something so sweet and tiny as this . . ."

"But, Mamma," interrupted Lenny, "couldn't it fly?"

Mamma's eyes were warmer. "Well, yes . . . Yes, Lenny, it could fly!"

Autumn came, showing her bright skirts of flaming reds and golds. Lenny was ten years old now, taller, and his shaggy wheat-brown hair somehow overpowered his frail stature.

When Mamma took sick, she was sent to live with Lenny's Aunt Genevieve. Papa assured Lenny that Mamma would be well taken care of, but Lenny whined to himself, "How can Pappa turn my very own precious mamma over to an almost complete stranger? I could certainly stay home from school and take good care of her myself!"

Now that Mamma was no longer around, Lenny had to accept more responsibility. Besides school, which Lenny sometimes skipped to sit beside his pond and daydream, Lenny was supposed to help his sister Kristin in the kitchen and to split wood with his brother Damin.

Tonight, through the cracks in the ladder-back chair, Lenny watched his sister bustle about the kitchen preparing the supper. Although he

usually resented his sister's bossiness, this particular evening he seemed drawn closer to Kristin. She was so like his mother in many ways. She was slender, yet softly rounded; and her hair was long and golden, the front pulled back loosely, the rest falling softly down her back . . . When she got older, thought Lenny, she would always wear it in a braided bun with one piece always astray, the way Mamma did. Lenny's father loved Mamma's hair that way. Yes, Pappa would always want that one piece out of place. "Just one stray strand," thought Lenny, "amongst a thousand golden hairs!"

"Lenny!" Pappa now stood in the doorway of the kitchen. "Time to wash up! Did you help your brother stack the wood?"

"Yep!"

"Your lessons done?"

"Yep!"

"Then wash up, son. Kristin's got everything on the table . . . Get out from behind that chair and look pert! Dreamin's fine for girls, but you've got a lot of growin' up to do — and peekin' through a chair ain't gonna help!"

Lenny wondered. The words "growin' up" seemed to make him sick at his stomach. He wasn't ready yet. Ever since Mamma had left, he'd "grewed up overnight," according to his father.

Damin, scraping his feet outside the door, spoke up. "Lenny'll always be a baby, Pa, and you know it!" Damin was big, like his father — thin, but broad-chested and stern-looking. No outsider would ever be able to guess that Lenny belonged to this family.

"Yeah?" Lenny retorted. "Well, Mamma made me a butterfly on her quilt, and it can fly, and you didn't never have one, and you ain't never gonna, and . . ."

Too late Lenny caught himself. He had revealed their secret! He knew his mother would be hurt. However, Damin's next words cut more deeply into Lenny's heart.

"You dumb Lenny! That butterfly will never fly! It's not real. It's a fake! Ma even made me one when I was little. She'll tell you anything to make you happy . . ."

Lenny stopped listening here. He hated Damin for saying that. Mamma would never lie to him.

Winter passed, and the road to the cottage was patched with icy blotches laced with blue. Pike Road was so distant from town that in this kind of weather, mail would be delivered only on Saturdays.

Lenny sank back in the rocking chair, his feet skimming the floor. When Mamma was home, she spent much of her time in this chair. Lenny loved the very smell of the wood, and the squeaky noise it made when two people sat in it. Lenny yearned to hear that squeak now.

Being a dreamer, Lenny could always create his world of fantasy to while away the hours. But today, Lennie was wishing. He wished with all his heart that the sun might shine right through this window right now — he wished that he had Mamma's quilt so that he could watch the butterfly — watch the butterfly — but what he really wished — Lenny covered his face and wept softly.

Lenny bounded out of the chair and out the door when he heard voices. "Pappa, when is Mamma coming home?" he heard Kristin say. Pappa sounded sad. "Your Mamma's sick, Kristin, awful sick."

"But, Pappa, . . ."

"Shh, Kristin. Lenny'll hear. Maybe a letter from Mamma will arrive Saturday."

The next day, Pappa decided to tell the children the truth. Mamma had tuberculosis. She would have to stay at the sanitorium in the mountains until she got well.

"Another lie?" thought Lenny, as he shot out of the room.

Many Saturdays came and went. Lenny, now a lean, whistling boy, spent his free time stretched out in the sun or chasing rabbits in the fields near his home. On this particular Saturday, Lenny saw the carriage stop in front of his house. In his hurry to get home, Lenny tripped and skinned the side of his face, but he just got up and grinned. "No matter! Mamma's letter has come!"

But today, there was no mail. Something must be wrong. Why were Pappa and Kristin and Damin all standing on the porch? Lenny wanted to turn and run the other way, but he had already reached the carriage. He stared long and hard at what he saw; then he shyly stepped back behind the coach.

Out of the carriage stepped a tall, thin, worn-looking woman, gaunt and pale. Brushing a fallen whisk of hair aside her cheek, she smiled widely, her grin catching two precise creases each side her face. Lenny pressed his head against the hot metal until it burned his scalp — Mamma was home!

The group on the porch seemed to come to life all at once. They rushed forward and hugged Mamma, and hustled her toward the front porch. But Mamma hesitated.

"Where's Lenny?" she insisted.

Lenny took a small step forward and met those glittering eyes. "So this is my little Lenny?"

Lenny ran into Mamma's outstretched arms, and it was suddenly sunshine and a warm lap and the familiar rocker squeak all over again. Lenny became, for a brief moment, Mamma's baby boy, as Mamma pressed him close.

Now that Mamma was home again, the days were warmer than usual.

Mamma said maybe all that sunshine was ripening her family while she wasn't looking. Damin went away to college in the nearby town; Kristin got accepted at a nursing school for the fall semester; and even Lenny was thinking about taking a trip of his own when school was out.

A cool breeze shook the tree, and the chimney smoke curled into neat puffs of misty cumulus.

Lenny stared at the empty rocker by the window. The patchwork quilt was neatly draped over the arm of the chair. Lenny took the quilt and rubbed his hands over the softness. Although the butterfly was worn and faded, Lenny could remember clearly its original colors. He put the quilt down. The time had come. He could wait no longer.

He found Mamma sitting at her dressing table, brushing her hair.

"Mamma . . . I mean, Ma . . . ?"

"Yes, Lenny, what is it? Sit down."

"Ma, do you remember that day when I sat on your lap, and you told me all about the butterfly?"

Mamma's mind drifted back in time. "And you looked up at me, Lenny, and you said, 'Couldn't it fly?'"

"Ma, you remembered!"

"How could I forget?"

"And, Ma, did you really believe that it could . . . could . . ."

"Fly, Lenny? Yes, and I still believe it! And do you know that it was all those precious years that made me believe?"

In the back of his mind, Lenny knew that Mamma had never lied. He watched his mother wind the still richly woven hair into a thick braid. Only this time, she let it fall.

"Lenny," she started. "I've been thinking. Since this quilt really belongs to you, you must have it. As soon as you are married and have a little boy of your own, you shall take it to your home for him."

Lenny studied the expression on her face. He knew he would have the quilt much sooner than she predicted. He smiled warmly, reaching out to pull a strand of hair from her tightly gathered braid to fall in a soft whisk aside her face.

The wind wrestled with the trees, and the mockingbird serenaded the yawn of the early morn. The air was cold and sharp when Lenny picked up his bags from the front porch and started down the long, dusty road. The road looked ominously endless, but Lenny knew that it was time for him to go.

As he was rounding a weeded bend, Lenny spotted it. It glided past the dandelions, wavered a bit, then lit on a leaf of clover.

Here the butterfly fluttered frantically until a sharp breeze whipped it from the leaf to the ground. It would never fly again.

Beth Foster