

I think that
I shall never
see
A poem lovely
As a tree.
Thilmer

Wise One

James Conklin, Jr.

PRIZE STORY

IN A secluded spot in the high Sierras lies a beautiful little crescent-shaped lake, completely surrounded by towering, snow-capped peaks and rugged bluffs. At the north end of this lake a stream is seen, starting high up on the hill, and rushing downward to the lake through a narrow sluice formed by solid rock. As it gathers momentum over the slick rock, it is seen to leave the bed and to arch over the bluff into a cascade of medium height but of miraculous beauty. Striking its course again, at a spot about five feet from the foot of the bluff, it drives downward, gurgling and foaming among the rocks. Now, this fall is at the extreme tip of the crescent, and is surrounded by high perpendicular bluffs which prevent the average fisherman from placing his bait at the right place.

Lying beneath his rock in the bottom of the pool, Wise One was gleefully watching the fruitless efforts of a fisherman, who was trying to reach the deep water with his bait. Wise One was a large rainbow trout of about four pounds, and king of the lake. The bright red stripe along each of his sides gleamed in the clear water, as his broad, speckled tail wove slowly back and forth. His large square jaw slowly opened and closed, forcing the water out through his gills, which sustained the life in his graceful figure.

While Wise One was thus reclining on the moss beside his rock, Little One, a smaller rainbow of about one pound, weaving his way among the rocks, came upon the bulk of his friend.

"Hello Old Timer," the newcomer greeted. "How are you today?"

"Oh, I'm all right," commented the addressed. "Just taking a little snooze is all."

"I'm so sorry to have interrupted the repose of such a benevolent one," remarked the smaller fish, "but I just felt kind of lonesome; so I thought I'd come around."

"There is no occasion to apologize," replied Wise One; "I slept later than usual this morning, and now I'm rather hungry."

On saying this, the king let out an extra puff of water, gave a thrash to his tail, and flashed into the swiftest part of the stream, where he took down a fat grub.

Little One remarked on his return, "My, what good manners you have."

"Oh, that's to be expected," replied the great fish. "After you've practiced as long as I have to take down a grub artistically, you'll be good too."

"Yes, but I can't see how you get that curving downward sweep as you take the morsel."

"It takes lots of practice, but the main point is to get a little above and to one side of the worm. Then when it passes, you start down and back at the same time, performing the curve and getting the food in a mannerly way. Of course you don't have time to work it all out that way, but you start from the bottom with full speed ahead, turn, gulp, and you're headed back the same way you started."

"Sounds easy," commented the younger.

"It is easy, too, if you practice," replied the king. "Do you see that grub coming down with the current there? Now, watch me, and see how

I do it."

Wise One dived upward with a flash of his mighty tail and was back again before Little One could flap a fin.

"Now, that's the proper way to take food," remarked the larger fish. "You don't want to go up and suck on it as a catfish does; you want to take it with lots of fire and pep."

"All right," replied Little One. "You watch me this time and see if I do it right."

The young fish started for a fat grub across the pool, and just as he swooped to take the bait, a huge form flashed in front of him and slapped him with its tail as it went by.

Surprised and frightened, he looked around to see Wise One beside him, who remarked, "You poor fool, don't you see that that's a fake worm? If I hadn't noticed it in time, you'd be flapping on the bank about now."

Little One was silent as they swam slowly back to the king's rock, while the larger fish called him all the ignorant names he could muster from his meager vocabulary.

Finally the small rainbow remarked in a forlorn tone, "Gee I'm grateful to you, old chap, for saving my life."

"Don't mention it; only, next time you want to look at what you're choosing to put in your mouth."

"I didn't see anything wrong with it," commented the little fish.

"That's just the trouble with this younger generation; they don't stop to figure anything out, but just rush in blindly. I suppose you didn't notice that that worm was going across that eddy instead of with it."

"See, there it is again, coming down the water. Now if you'll look closely, you will notice that it is pulling over that way," indicating the direction by a shake of his head, and also you will see some little round things on the line. Those are shot or sinkers. I often like to tease the anglers by pulling the shot, and they jerk up like everything, thinking they have a strike."

Wise One slowly swam over to the bait, and, seeing that his body was in the right position so he would not be snagged when the fisherman jerked, grabbed the sinker in his mouth and gave a hard tug. Immediately the worm disappeared, and Wise One returned to his friend with a chuckled remark.

"That bird will be fishing here all day, now, to see if he can't catch me, but I'll be good enough to give a jerk on the line once in a while to encourage him."

A long silence ensued while the two fish lay resting on the bottom, watching the angler's unrewarded efforts to lure the big fish to his hook.

Finally Little One remarked in surprise, "Why, Wise One, how did you get that corner cut off your tail? I never noticed it before."

"You young people are very unobservant; that's been there since I was half your size."

"How did it happen? It's too bad to have an otherwise beautiful tail disfigured."

"Well it's a long story, but I'll tell you what I've never told anyone else."

"About seven years ago," continued Wise One, "when I was young and foolish, a young boy of remarkable fishing ability lured me from this hole, and caught me on his hook. For some unknown reason, perhaps it was because I was so small, he carefully removed the hook and laid me on the grass. He took out his knife, and removed the lower corner of my tail. After wetting his hand so as not to injure me, he gently tossed me back into the water. Having learned that the most tempting bait was not always the

best, I afterwards looked twice before I leaped, and consequently grew to be what I am today."

"Some experience," remarked the little fish. "But haven't you ever been hooked?"

"Yes, two seasons ago. This fellow who is now an excellent fisherman, while paying me his annual visit, succeeded in hooking me by a very clever ruse which I am ashamed to tell. After being held in check for nearly five minutes, I pulled a clever trick out of my own bag and got away. I always will respect him for his good sportsmanship, for I have seen him give a fish every chance to escape before landing him."

"Has he been here yet this year?" asked Little One.

"That's just what's worrying me. I hope nothing has happened to him."

"Maybe he was here, but didn't visit this hole because he knew he couldn't catch you."

"Don't worry. He'd never do that, and besides, I'll bet he's thinking up some way right now to out-fox me when he comes."

"Well, I hope not," replied the young rainbow. "I should be terribly lonesome without you."

"I'll do my best not to let him, but you never can tell."

"Well, it's getting late; so I'd better be going home—so long," said Little One.

"Good-bye," called the king, "he's sure to come around tomorrow, and I'll give you some more pointers."

Several days passed with nothing happening except the visits of the young trout, in which he was instructed by his elder in the ways to avoid foxy anglers.

On one particular sunny day Wise One and Little One were lying in the bottom of the pool conversing in their usual way. It was early in the morning, and the large fish was feeling very "peppy." The friends would alternate on taking the fat worms and grubs while a steady stream of conversation was going on.

Wise One had just returned from the surface after taking down a fat grasshopper, when the glimmer of a spinner went whirling through the water.

After following it for a few yards, the great rainbow returned to his friend and said, "Some fool sure does believe in advertising his presence."

"Yes, but look at the dexterity with which the fellow handles that line," replied the little trout as the spinner appeared time and again.

"If it wasn't for the dumbness of advertising his presence, I'd say it was my friend."

Finally, the spinner disappeared from sight, and a pause followed in which Wise One stated that the fellow was changing his hook.

A few moments later a fat worm came dangling down, and Wise One laughed at the way it was being presented.

"I see the fellow is going to try his luck with a cork," commented the king, for there indeed the worm hung stationary, a foot from the bottom with a string of about ten sinkers above it.

"Do you know, my boy, I often wonder if people think we fish have any brains at all," remarked Wise One in disgust.

"It sure doesn't look like it here," answered the youngster.

"This fisher gets my goat," said Wise One. "First he advertises his presence with a spinner, and then he sinks a worm down here with a sign on it to keep off."

"We should worry," commented Little One. "I hope he's getting a kick out of it any way."

As the two friends lay beside the king's rock discussing the latest gossip of the lake, a tiny minnow swimming close to the base of the rock, for protection, came upon them. On seeing the huge fish, the midget started for the protection of the shallow water. Wise One realizing that his favorite dish was his for the taking, dashed forward and took the small minnow at a gulp.

Little One uttered a cry of dismay as he saw his friend's head suddenly jerked up by an invisible force.

A fine, Japanese high test leader was seen to cut the water as Wise One started fighting, fighting, fighting, for his life.

He swerved, turned, dived and jerked, but still that leader held. He started for a snag, but the angler pulled, and the line held. The strain was terrible, and Wise One slowly gave ground, fighting and tugging with all the strength he possessed.

Seeing that he was unable to gain the snag, he made a sudden swerve across the pool to the rocks, where he might get the line tangled. Wise One moved fast, but the man on the bank moved faster. He took in the slack line that the fish had given as he dashed across the hole and again had the mighty fellow checked. His move had cost Wise One dear, for he was now cut off from the snag, his den, and the rocks. He thought of dashing into the shallow water and lashing the line with his tail, but this would be impossible against a man who took up slack as fast as this fisherman did.

The line was straining at Wise One's mouth, holding it open and nearly drowning him. There was only one thing left to do, and Wise One waited for the right moment.

The mighty fish gave slowly and stubbornly, as the man slowly reeled in the line, amazed that any tackle could stand the strain.

"Now's my time," he thought and jumped.

The great rainbow broke water in a mad aerial rush, gaining four feet above the surface, with a twist at the apex, and a cutting lash of his tail, designed to break the cast.

But his adversary was no ordinary fisherman, and at the first hint of the plan, lowered the tip of his pole to the water, and relieved the tension.

Wise One tried again and again to break the line, but each time he found himself with less line to play with and with less energy.

The final phase of the battle came at last, and the Great Old Trout rolled lazily over on his side, while the smiling angler carefully scooped him up with his landing net.

The man grasped the fish through the gills and laid him on the grass to look him over.

"Well, Old Timer," the man said. "You've eluded me for years, but you'll have to admit, I out foxed you in the end."

He gazed up and down the fish with great pride until his eyes rested, in a stare, on the tail.

"Great Scott! Is it really you, the fish I caught and marked a few years ago?"

With a sudden change of heart the fisherman uttered, "Old Chap, if you're not too far gone, take a new chance on life and return to your kingdom."

On saying this, the man and the sportsman gently removed the hook and slipped the mighty fish into the water, and hurried off to tell the story to his friends.

On Going to Sleep

Bonnie Bare



LEEP, to some people, is a waste of time, prosaic and uninteresting. It may be a waste of time, but to me it far from prosaic—a something never twice the same.

Going to sleep is sometimes quite the easiest thing in the world. Especially on those nights when, tired from a long day, you lie down and sleep seems to come and carry you away into a land of dreams without the slightest effort on your part, save a dreamy relaxation. Ah! those are the nights when sleep is a beautiful goddess, every ready to do your bidding.

But quite different from the beautiful drifting into sleep are those nights when one lies down quite wide awake and very interested in the world and its activities—almost too interested, it seems, to be able to quit it for even a little while by the helpful agency of sleep. Your mind, apparently not at all fatigued by a full day, will continue to work energetically, even though outwardly composed for slumber, you do your best to stop it. Each thought that enters your unusually active mind drives the fair Goddess of Sleep farther away. Finally you give up in despair and allow your mind full sway. You think of everything that has ever been even remotely connected with you—and a great many things that have not—while you lie there waiting for Sleep to claim you for her own. At last drowsiness comes, and, by infinitesimal degrees, you fall asleep, retaining as a last impression of the night your opinion of that which was occupying your mind at the moment of falling asleep. On nights such as these, when you retire before you are sleepy, Sleep is not a beautiful goddess, but a strange and unknown being, hovering on the outskirts, as it were, of your mind, ready to take possession of your senses as soon as you will allow it.

And worst of all are the nights when you retire perhaps even earlier than usual with the wish to give yourself up to the beautiful goddess at the earliest possible moment, only to find her gone, and an elusive little demon in her place, who evades you at every turn. In vain you pursue her down the alleyways of your mind; in vain you follow her up hill and down dale; she is always ahead of you, stopping now and again to jeer at you, and mock your futile attempts to capture her. You bethink yourself of all the methods used to ensnare Sleep, when she comes in this form. In desperation you count, not only one hundred, but hundreds, nay, thousands; at six thousand fifty you stop in despair. You repeat the alphabet in English, in Greek, or in Chinese, if you happen to know it. You count white sheep jumping over a fence into a green pasture. At the two thousandth sheep you stop your efforts. If the little demon wishes not to come to you, you cannot force her. You try to lie quietly—you lie—and lie. Suddenly you open your eyes and it is morning. When or how sleep came to you, you cannot tell. It is enough that she came. You had feared that you might have to spend your entire night in searching for her. The elusive, mocking demon of these nights is hard to reconcile with the beautiful goddess, Sleep, the unknown being. Nevertheless they are all Sleep, in her more or less attractive forms. Sleep may perhaps be a waste of time, but prosaic, uninteresting, dull—NEVER!

The Gypsy Boy

Honorable Mention

I owe nothing to anyone,
And nobody owes to me—
Like the air I come
Like the air I go
Wandering ever free.
Am I happy?
Yes, I'm happy
As happy as can be.
I have no money,
But now it's sunny—
The weather was made for me ;
The birds and the bees,
The flowers, and breeze
My comrades are you see ;
Fruits and nuts there are to eat,
Cushions of moss to rest my feet,
Blossoms and myrtle to crown me with,
Royal am I like the prince in the myth.
The waterfall shows me her dance
As she tosses her gauzy spray,
And she laughs till she weeps
As she watches my leaps,
When I try to dance the same way.
The butterfly offers to teach me
To flit and to dip so fast.
I whirl and I bend
Till at last in the end
I fall out of breath on the grass ;
I lie panting and laughing
Face down on the turf,
And I breathe the perfume
Of my sweet mother Earth ;
Then over I turn to gaze up in the blue—
In trilling I try the birds to outdo,
There is joy, there is gladness,
There is laughter, and glee
I am a king, for I'm a Gypsy,
I am master of all yet master of none
I and my realm are the subjects of ONE.

—Barbara Phillips.

Gold

Jack Brewster

Honorable Mention

Bang! Bang! Ouch! Someone was hammering on my head with a hatchet. No, they were knocking my head against something. I opened my eyes. There was no one there. I did not care. After thinking rather hazily for a moment, I lifted my hand to my head. I felt a large bump, which, had I been fully awakened, I should have attributed to the stroke of a black-jack in competent hands. Now there was a sudden jar and grating. I slid down on the floor and landed with a bump that cleared up most of my mental fog. I was in my stateroom. That was certain. Yes, I was still on the *Toya Maru*.

I realized now that I was bound toward China, representing the Chase National Bank with a shipment of a million dollars in gold, loaned to the Canton government. We had, with much detail as to guards and guns, transferred the gold at San Francisco to the *Toya Maru* of the N. Y. K. Line. Here I had first met Mr. Tso, the official representative of the Chinese government. He had antagonized me instantly, but after I saw how courteous he was, I decided that I had let myself rely too much on the character drawings of the movies. The Chinese representative seemed excited, that is, as excited as a Chinese gentleman can become.

We had a pleasant and uneventful voyage until we got within twenty miles of the Chinese coast. We had not sent a wireless announcing our arrival because of the great number of pirates that infest those waters. Then on the last night, or rather morning, as I lay in that half-conscious state between sleeping and waking, about three o'clock I was aware of a dull thud somewhere, and all of the lights went out. I too, it seems, went out at this juncture.

Slowly I got up from the floor on which I had been lying. I tried the door. It was locked. I sat down for a minute on the edge of my berth. Then I rose and lurched against the door. Aside from jarring myself, I found my efforts brought no results.

Then a key grated in the lock. The door opened. A steward appeared. "Are you all right, sir?"

"I guess so, where did you come from?"

"I was locked in the stateroom next to yours," he stammered, looking down apologetically at his soiled and torn uniform. I noticed that there was a ring of discoloration around his left eye.

"What does it mean?" I asked quickly. We were aware that there were beginning to be signs of life in the stateroom next, as the occupants were waking up to find themselves locked in.

"The Captain," I gasped, and started toward the bridge on a run.

Captain Svenson, a large burly Swede, was lying full length on the floor of the chart room. I released his hands from a stout cord with which they were bound and poured some water on him until he began to come to.

We telephoned down to the engine room. There was no response. The steward and I made our way down to find a line of men lying bound on the floor. We quickly unloosed them. Their comments on the situation are unprintable.

When we arrived again on the main deck, we found that the passengers

had been locked in their rooms while asleep.

When you figure the number of passengers carried on a mail steamer, you will see what a tremendous undertaking this affair must have been, and what a number of men must have been employed.

On comparing notes with the Captain and officers, in a short time I found that their experience had been the same as mine. The lights, the officers on duty, the engineers and I apparently went out simultaneously.

By this time the engineers had got the engines started and we were limping into port. Until now I had no time to think of anything but what was happening at the moment. The gold! Was it gone? I fought back the hollow feeling in my stomach and made a dash for the well in which the gold had been stored.

"Yes," Captain Svenson came forward with an ashy face, "the gold is gone!" The world around me stood scintillatingly clear. Never before had I been aware of such calm. At this point, the first officer came up.

"Mr. Allen," he said, "I have here a list of the missing."

"Already?" I asked, surprised.

"Well, it is probably incomplete," he replied, "but it is as near as is possible." He handed it to me.

—But thirteen stewards, the chief engineer with five assistants, twelve passengers, as far as we know, and Mr. Tso.

The last name shocked me, even in the state of shock that I was now in.

"No," I gasped, "he wouldn't do it. He is probably somewhere on the ship."

"Perhaps," dubiously, "but we have had the remaining stewards look all over the ship."

I went back to my stateroom to ponder. We were just crawling up the river. The damp heat made the perspiration pour down my spine. For the first time I thought of the real import of the happenings. Immediately my thoughts went back to home, my wife, living happily with our little daughter, happy because I was having my big chance. Well, unless I could recover the money, it would be all off. I had worked hard for seven years in the service of the Chase Bank and had gained their assurance of my trustworthiness, and I had gloried in their faith in me; yet here, in one day my future had collapsed around me in ruins. Of course, I was only twenty-nine. I was still young,—perhaps—.

Then I set my teeth. I'd recover the gold. I'd show them. Yes, that was the only way. I sat for a long time, thinking.

I was aroused by a knock on my door. It was Captain Svenson. As I have said, he was a large man. That is, he was very tall. His height made him look thin, but in reality, he was very broad shouldered.

"Well, Allen," he spoke as he entered, "it looks bad, doesn't it,"

"It does, Captain," I replied.

"This is my last voyage as captain; so it doesn't matter much to me." Again I sensed the strange revulsion of feeling that I had noticed before. "You, however," he continued, "are young and have your future before you."

He said, "What is your theory of the robbery, Mr. Allen?"

"I have not thought of one yet," I replied. "Have you one, Captain? I have been thinking more of results than of causes."

Well, I have figured out a plausible, and yet simple theory. Perhaps—!" He shrugged his shoulders.

"Most men can be bribed, so the agents of this Tso worked among the engineers and stewards. Mr. Tso probably had passengers sail for just that purpose."

"By the way," I interrupted, "have they found any one else missing?"
"Not that I know of."

"I don't see why they would go with the gold anyway," I said. "Why didn't they stay? But then I guess someone would weaken and tell." I saw his smile fade just for a moment.

"Well, I must go see the authorities," he excused himself.

I sat thinking for a long time, and then, as the boat had been docked, I went ashore and sent a cable to a certain McGuire.

* * *

After a second uneventful voyage on the *Toya Maru*, we passed again through the Golden Gate. This time we were carrying no passengers, but we had taken some freight. Although I had been impatient to get back to the United States, as the hour approached, I was reluctant to set foot again on my native land.

As we were docking, I scanned the crowd on the pier for a certain derby hat. Story book detectives wear derby hats, but this was no story book detective.

"Hello, Jim," the derby called.

"Hello yourself," I shouted back. "How are you, McGuire?"

"Tip-top, Jim. How's yourself?"

When I reached him, we shook hands as men do who understand each other. He hailed a cab, and, after arranging for my baggage, got in with me. He said something to the driver.

"Where to?" I asked.

"Take you to a good hotel where you won't be bothered."

During the ride, he talked of various things: San Francisco, the coming presidential election, floods. Finally we drew up before a dignified facade facing Union Square.

"Here we are." McGuire leaped out.

"Look," he called, pointing toward the column in Union Square, "Nothing's changed except the color scheme in the flower beds."

We went into the lobby of the hotel; I registered and arranged for a room. Up in it, McGuire turned to me. I told him the whole story. We discussed the matter while I was getting settled. Then he asked if I would give him a note to the captain, permitting him to go aboard the ship at all times.

"You see, I could get aboard on my official position," he said, "but that might cause hard feelings." I gave him the required note.

Later I asked him, "What shall I do while you are hunting and nosing around?"

"Just wait around, see the shows—the *Columbia* really is good this week, and there's football scheduled in the stadium across the bay—have a good time. Don't worry. Everything will turn out all right."

I went about all that McGuire suggested, but, strange to say, the thing that most took my mind from my worries was a telescope out at the cliff house. I would rent it and look through it by the hour.

For five days I neither saw nor heard anything of McGuire. By this time I had seen what I thought was the most of San Francisco.

On the fifth night of my sojourn, McGuire came up to my room about ten o'clock. He was imperturbable, but I saw that he meant no time should be wasted.

"Put on a black suit, a black hat or cap, and take with you a black scarf," he ordered.

"I have nothing black but a suit," I replied. I was addicted to colors. "Then hurry and put that on."

I moved swiftly. When I got fully dressed, he handed me a flashlight. "Put this in your pocket and follow me."

We went down the hallway to a glass door headed by a red bulb. We stepped out on the fire escape. It was six stories to the ground, but it didn't take us long to make the descent. When we reached the bottom, we found ourselves in a blind alley. Here we both got into a dilapidated Ford coupe.

McGuire started it, and I immediately lost my bearings; but he didn't. Finally he pulled up by the curb in a section of the city where there were many warehouses. It was very foggy.

"Well," almost cheerfully, "here's where we get out and walk."

"I'm game," was my reply.

We walked three interminable blocks. Then I saw that we were on the pier at which lay the *Toya Maru*. My companion lifted out a section of one of the wharf planks, disclosing a heap of rope which consisted of one long piece of one-inch stuff attached to a rope ladder lying coiled beside a fire hydrant. He walked over to the edge of the wharf, whistled softly, and then threw the rope over the bow of the ship. It was pulled up until the rope ladder hung along the side of the ship. Then came an answering whistle.

"Climb it," he commanded. With much difficulty, I did. He followed me closely and pulled the ladder up after him. No one was in sight.

"Whe—" I started to say.

"Sh!"

He certainly knew the lay of the deck, for he led me straight to well in which the gold had been. Here I followed him down a ladder to the bottom.

"Stand over here and don't turn on the light until I tell you to."

For what seemed to me at least half an hour, I could hear him fumbling over on his side of the well. Then there was the noise of scraping footsteps on the deck above. It hesitated and passed. He resumed his fumbling. Then there was a slight creak. The blackness at my feet seemed to give way to a greater blackness.

"The light," he whispered hoarsely.

I turned on the light and gave a gasp of astonishment. There in a compartment under two trap doors, now open, lay—gold.

* * *

As I look back, everything was indistinct for the next week. I do not remember anything clearly except a telegram from the bank, ordering me to come home at once.

In all of the excitement, I had hardly missed McGuire. Finally, on the day on which I was to leave for home, McGuire came into my room.

"Well," was his greeting, "How's a boy?"

"Fine, how's a bigger boy," I replied.

"Same. Thought I'd drop in to tell you good-bye."

"By the way, McGuire, I've still got two hours before train time. Tell me how you discovered where that money was."

"Well," he said, "it was just a series of hunches with a fact to base them on."

"I happened to know that your captain friend awarded the contract for the gold—well to a crook who had been under-bidden by a far more reliable company. That made me think before the gold was shipped. Then the carpenters worked for two weeks constructing the well, when it could have been done in less than one. Besides, though this precaution is not unusual,

they allowed no one near the well before it was completed.

"I also went to see Mr. Graham, the British consul, who, as you know, witnessed the loading of the gold. His evidence was the deciding factor of the case. He would have told before, but he had been very sick, so he didn't know of the robbery.

"Yes," he mused, "it was a clever scheme, and only an accident kept it from being successful. Svenson asked Tso in Chinese if the trap doors were shut tightly. Later he told Tso to return in six months via Canada. These parts Mr. Graham understood.

"Yes, it was a clever scheme, but there was one flaw." McGuire was rising to go.

"What was it?" I asked quickly.


"Captain Svenson neglected to remember that Graham, too, could speak Chinese."



Vanity, Vanity, All is Vanity

Why do people never rest?
Getting in and out a mess,
Craving that which is denied,
Never, never satisfied;
From one thing to the next thing tearing
Idiots don't know they're wearing
Just themselves by feverish flaring;
But they will die,
And when they die
They will have passed completely by;
Life will continue sans a sigh
Life won't have time to pause and cry,
For the tide of rush will run as high
The more fools they—I wonder
Why?

—Barbara Phillips.



The Builders

I stood disconsolately watching the builders,
Watching them scurry about like ants,
As to and fro they hurry, to build, to make.

There came to me the thought of it,
The tiny creatures there, raising great edifices of stone,
To the sky, and the high sun.

On one side some tear down the work;
But on the other, there are the builders,
They who make the world as it is.

There are numerous things to be built.
Oh, the awe-inspiring sight of a huge rising building!
The builders are there; they make it.

They are never honored, never famed;
But stop, think how we came by these edifices,
And you will think of the builders.

—Hilmuth Ulmer.



To Youth

Youth, Ah youth, time of love and life,
Be true, be mad, be free!
Forget such lowly things as strife,
Just live, and love, and be!

Forget responsibilities and cares,
And drink joy's goblet to the deeps!
Learn to love life's dangers and life's dares
For old age only sorrow reaps!

—Elizabeth Bonine.

Scourge of the Wheatlands

Martha Tetzer

Honorable Mention



JIM BARTON was exuberantly happy. He whistled a medley of old familiar tunes to the accompaniment of the heavy plodding of his fine team of horses and the shrill singing of the drill discs beneath him. Never had there been a more beautiful spring. The ploughed fields lay like vast black carpets beneath the deep blue sky. Jim had reason to be happy. With nearly three hundred acres of the rich, fruitful Dakota wheatland already ploughed and sown, he was finishing the last ten-acre stretch. It was only the day before, with the end so near, that he had dismissed his help. The outlook for a bumper crop had never been better.

The sun was sinking low in the west, and the horses were quite exhausted after a long day's work.

"Come on, boys, another round, and then we're off for home," Jim spoke coaxingly to his perspiring team.

As though sensing the meaning of Jim's words, the horses strained eagerly at the drill, and the discs sang more shrilly than ever. Well enough they knew that "home" meant a clean, comfortable stable and a generous feeding of fragrant lake hay and ground fodder.

At last they were wending their way homeward. Little flocks of birds twittered and scurried hither and thither preparing for the night. Frogs croaked loudly their evening song from the little puddles of water along the road. From somewhere a kildee's plaintive note floated out upon the soft evening breeze. Jim stopped his team for a moment and cast a sweeping glance over the vast panorama of wheatland and pasture. His eyes lingered on his little farm spread snugly nestling in the midst of a slightly undulating stretch of green prairies a mile away. There was the spacious barn with its side-sheds and its bulging hayloft, and the long cattle barn which sheltered his fifty head of cattle from winter storms. Nearby were his white-washed chicken coops and his machine shed. Jim's heart beat happily as his eyes rested upon the little house to the west of his barns. He could dimly discern a thin column of smoke curling lazily up from its chimney and knew that within was Anne, busily preparing a steaming supper.

The sun had disappeared beyond the edge of the western prairie flushing the sky with its last reddish rays, when Jim at length reached home. He watered his horses at the large trough near the barn, and then, having unharnessed and fed them, he turned his steps toward the house.

"Hello, Daddy!" cried a gleeful little voice, and in a moment little Margaret was triumphantly entering the door on her father's broad shoulders.

"Lo, dear," Jim greeted Anne who was setting the table. "What're we havin' tonight? Smells mighty good. By the way, has Jack done all the chores?"

"Yep," answered Jack, his sturdy, fourteen year old son, who had just entered. "Say, Dad, I sure had a tough time milkin' that Jersey. She's gone and fenced herself again."

"Anne," said Jim that evening when the children had gone to bed, and Anne and he were sitting in the doorway looking out upon a calm, moonlit night, "I think we'll have a dandy crop this year if that blamed rust—or maybe hail—won't get it again."

Jim gazed thoughtfully into the starlit depths of the sky. Anne sighed as she raised her wistful eyes to her husband's tanned, drawn face.

"Don't get discourage, Jim dear. Perhaps we'll have luck this one year."

"I hate to think of what will happen if we don't." Jim's face actually looked haggard. "The mortgage is due this fall, you know, and old Delaney is graspin eager to get this place. It it hadn't been for the last three years of rust, we'd be all right even if the crop would fail this year."

The next morning found Jim quite recovered from his dejection. Again he was whistling a medley of old tunes to the music of his drill as he started on his last few acres. All nature smiled and laughingly kissed away each worried line from his care-worn face.

Came the month of August—the month of harvest. Jim's golden, waving wheatfields stretched away beneath the summer sky. One more week and the full, drooping heads of grain would be stacked and ready to be fed to the threshing machine. Jim had already ordered his extra help, and now he was greasing and repairing his binder and his header.

The week sped by, and the day of doom for his grainfields was almost at hand, for it was already Sunday. Jim was happier than ever.

"Well, he remarked gayly to Anne across the breakfast table, "the crop is out of danger—as far as rust is concerned—and I'm sure there ain't any prospect of hail today."

Anne sighed contentedly. To have that dreaded mortgage lifted from the farm would be heaven to her. No longer would she have to sacrifice every womanly want, once it was paid. She was already planning how she would buy this and that little luxury for her bare little house.

The morning passed, and as Anne was preparing lunch, Jim suddenly called from outside. She rushed to the door and stopped amazed. A heavy, black cloud was rising out in the west, hiding the blue sky that had looked so promising an hour before.

"A thunderstorm, sure enough. Hope it won't turn out a hailstorm." He could not bear the thought of hail.

It seemed but a moment before the sun was hidden behind a bank of inky clouds. There was a sudden deathly hush. A flock of birds flew hither and thither in search of shelter. The chickens scurried for their coops. There was a hideous flash of lightning followed by a crackling peal of thunder.

"Mother!" called frightened little Margaret from the house.

"Jim, please come inside," begged Anne. "It'll be pouring in a minute."

With a last anxious glance at his wheat fields, Jim turned toward the house. Scarcely had they closed the door behind them when a sudden awful pounding sounded on the roof, accompanied by a terrific gust of wind.

"God! Anne! It's hail!"

With a crash a window pane broke and a piece of ice, large as a hen's egg, rolled in upon the floor. In stark terror Anne ran to the broken window and for a brief moment looked out upon that destructive downpour of hail. She turned to Jim and found him sitting by the table with his head between his outstretched arms.

"Jim, Jim," sobbed Anne, dropping to her knees beside him. "Don't do that. Oh, Jim!"

Little Margaret clung to her mother, too terrified to cry. Jack was tearfully trying to comfort his father, while upon his roof that fiendish pounding grew louder.

At last Jim lifted his head. His face was ashen.

"Ruined," he mumbled. "God, ruined after all these years of work—"

work—work.”

“Jim! Dear Jim,” pleaded Anne choking with tears. “Don’t, please—in God’s name don’t—listen, it’s stopping!”

There was a lull in the storm and then it broke out anew. Would that hellish pounding never stop?

“It’s driving me crazy! Oh—” moaned poor Jim.

All night long Jim paced the floor haunted by what he knew the first light of day would reveal to him. All night long Anne begged, pleaded and tried in vain to console him—poor, brave Anne, whose own heart was torn whose own dreams shattered.

Cold, gray dawn found Jim wildly roaming his grain fields, drawn on by that strangely reluctant, yet persistent desire which draws one to the side of the lifeless form of a beloved one. Over the great stretches of desolate, devastated fields brooded a ghastly, funereal silence—the silence that follows in the wake of a deadly plague. Beaten, broken, crushed by the scourge of the wheatlands lay the golden grain which but the day before had so proudly swayed and rustled in the summer breeze.

Jim’s bent form shook with deep convulsive sobs as he dropped to his knees and hungrily, almost savagely, gathered an armful of the mangled grain to his bosom as though clasping a dying friend. In his heart the sun of hope had set, and utter chaos reigned supreme.



My Ship of Dreams

The sea was shining silver,
The sky was cloudy blue,
A sail on the dim horizon
Seemed my Ship of Dreams come true.

It hung there in silence a moment
As if it were coming to port,
A ship with a wondrous cargo—
Day dreams of every sort.

Then slowly it quivered and sank,
And gently slipped over the rim,
While through my tears I saw
My dreams grow misty and dim.

The sea was bare and empty,
A thing apart from men,
And oh! I knew my Ship of Dreams
Would never come back again.

—Bonnie Bare.

The Sun


You're a small ship of gold
On a sea of blue
That's perfectly calm,
Save for a few
Small, whitecapped waves.

—Viola Klemm.

Love that Passeth Understanding

Bonnie Bare

Honorable Mention

NTHONY FENTON laughed softly to himself for happiness and pure enjoyment of life. He sat before a huge log fire, gazing into the flames and building dream pictures—pictures of how much happier his already extremely happy life would be when Alison MacDonald had come to share it with him, making lively once more the big house which had been the home of numerous generations of Fentons. For some time Anthony had been working hard and until late at night on an important law case, so he had not seen Alison for several days, and now he conjured up her picture in the flames before him. Tired from his work and happy in the thought of the girl he loved, he fell asleep, only to waken with a start a few moments later. For a moment he sat quite still, attempting to recall what had happened to destroy so utterly his pleasant mood. Slowly the memory of a dream materialized, vague and indistinct, but with the figure of a tall, slender, exotic looking woman with great black eyes and pure white hair moving compellingly through it. The heavy, fragrant scent of hyacinths had seemed to cling to her, and Anthony recalled that she had spoken some words to him in a low voice—words that had seemed of huge import in the dream, but that now, try as he might, he could not recollect. The very memory of the weird dream filled him with an indefinable terror entirely foreign to his nature, and he felt an intense desire to go to Alison and make certain that she was in no danger. “How ridiculous of me,” he muttered as he rose, and with a resolute shrug of his shoulders he threw off the recollection of the disturbing incident, and retired to dress for dinner.

Nevertheless Anthony felt restless and uneasy until he arrived at Alison's somewhat later. She came to meet him, and as he looked down at her, he thought he had never fully realized the extent of her loveliness before. She wore a simple frock of blue, which intensified the deep violet of her large, dark-fringed eyes and brought out the faint flush of pink on the delicate cheeks surrounded by softly curling dark hair. As they started for the theatre in his limousine, Anthony completely forgot everything other than the girl by his side. He was happy, almost ridiculously happy, he thought, and it seemed that Alison had something of the same feeling, for she said:

“I'm so happy, Anthony, that I'm almost afraid—afraid that something will happen to destroy it all. The gods will be jealous if things go on as nearly perfect as they are now.”

Anthony, all his vague uneasiness gone, laughed and kissed her, saying, “With you and me together, sweetheart, things will always be perfect.”

“And I feel that nothing, Alison dear,” he continued more seriously, “nothing could ever keep us apart for very long. I love you too much for that.”

She smiled, and the conversation turned to the one hundred and one other little things, meaningless to outsiders, that lovers always find so interesting.

The play was very good, and every instant of the evening was filled with happiness for Anthony and Alison, the greater because the past few days had been spent apart. As he left her at her home after the theatre and a light supper, he turned for one last look at her. She was standing in the firelight, which caught a golden gleam in the dark hair, and lighted the dreamy depths of her violet eyes.

"Goodnight, Loveliness," murmured Anthony. "If you should want me for anything before tomorrow night, call me."

"I will. Goodnight, Anthony dear."

At home once more, Anthony threw himself down in a big chair in front of the fire and frowned. A few blocks from Alison's home he had passed a large chocolate-colored sedan, and some unknown force had prompted him to turn and gaze after it. There in the sedan, illumined by a passing lamp post, he had caught a glimpse of a tall, slender, exotic-looking woman, with great dark eyes, and pure white hair which plainly was not the result of her years. The woman of his dream! As he looked, she had seemed to beckon to him, and he thought a faint odor of hyacinths floated back to him. Immediately there swept over him the sense of an atmosphere of danger, and, as before, he had the impulse to return to Alison, but he checked it fiercely and drove on. Once in front of the fire, he sat thinking over the queer experience, and decided that in the one unsteady glimpse his imagination had played him false. He had been impressed by the dream, and had perhaps unconsciously deluded himself into seeing a resemblance between a woman in a passing car, and the woman of his dream. He attempted to put further thoughts of the incident out of his head, and finally retired in rather a depressed mood in spite of his wonderful evening.

As he opened a window in his bed chamber and looked out, the night seemed intensely dark, and an involuntary shiver passed over him at the cold, deathlike stillness, which pervaded not only his own chamber, but the whole out-of-doors. He jumped quickly into bed, but he was very restless and ill at ease, and for a long time he lay there tossing, unable to sleep. At last he fell into a fitful slumber from which he was suddenly awakened by he knew not what; he lay as if turned to stone, his throat choking and his heart scarcely beating. The blood in his veins was as if turned to ice, and he was bathed in a cold perspiration. Not a sound was heard in the entire house, and the eerie stillness seemed almost uncanny. Suddenly there came, echoing through his chamber, his name, "Anthony, Anthony," in Alison's voice, usually so soft and rippling, but now filled with a terror and desperate appeal that turned him to ice. For a few seconds he lay there, unable to move. Once more it came, **her voice**, calling him in accents that seemed to tear his very soul. He sprang from his bed, and, though he was trembling so he could scarcely stand, he threw on his clothes. He knew not where he was going other than that Alison had called him and needed him, and he was going to her, to find her, help her—save her. That one thought kept racing through and through his brain, driving out all sense of reasoning. He did try to reason—he could not—he knew the girl he loved needed him, and he was going to her. He rushed down stairs and out into the mercilessly dark, still night, where, without any thought of direction, he merely ran on and on, urged by the sense of her spirit which seemed crying out to him to hurry. He ran for what seemed eons, and finally fell, exhausted. Again he heard her voice—"Anthony, **Anthony;**" the accents were terrible with a frantic appeal, an awful, soul-rending fear. Anthony struggled to his feet, half-crazed by the sound of her voice, and found himself in front of an isolated house, entirely dark. Rushing up the stairs, he entered a door easily opened under the touch of his nerveless hand. Something seemed to draw him to a stairway on the left, and, half falling, he ran up it in the pitch dark. Alison's voice and the frantic appeal of it rang over and over in his frenzied brain. Reaching the top of the stairs and feeling along the wall, he found a door, opened it, and stumbled through.

Although the room in which he found himself was but dimly lighted,

his eyes, accustomed to the darkness of the night, were blinded for a moment. The heavy fragrance of great quantities of hyacinths which seemed to hang in the air rather than blend with it, struck him almost like a blow. He perceived almost subconsciously that he was in a long, low room, furnished after the manner of the Orient entirely in black and gold. A black carpet so thick as to deaden the heaviest footfall entirely covered the floor, and hangings of black and richest gold concealed the walls. Great piles of gold pillows for reclining were placed here and there over the black carpet. In the middle of the apartment was an exquisite golden hued marble fountain in which amber tinted waters were playing, and before it was placed a huge and most luxurious divan of gold, on which were massed cushions of black. With a single glance his eyes swept the apartment, and focused on a tall, slender, exotic looking woman with great dark eyes and pure white hair, who slowly rose from the divan as he entered. She was clothed entirely in black, and he noted almost subconsciously that the single golden hyacinth she held in her hand was the only one in the apartment.


She inclined her head toward him and said in a low, singularly musical voice, "Twice have I warned you; why did you not take heed? It is too late now. But would you go to her anyway?"

"Alison!" gasped Anthony, "Alison!" for he was unable to think of anything else.

She raised her slender white arm and pointed to a door partly concealed by the hangings and opposite that through which he had entered.

Anthony made his way to the door somehow, opened it, and seemed to step into an infinity of space—a great, black void. And then he saw, facing him, and but a little distance beyond him, Alison. She was clothed in a nightgown of purest white as though she had but stepped from her bed, and though everything else was dark, she was illumined with a pure white light. Suddenly he realized that she was but a few feet from the edge of the void and was slowly backing toward it. Her lovely face was livid with fear, and once again she cried his name in a piteous voice. Anthony wanted to scream, but his throat was paralyzed; he tried to run to her, seize her, carry her to safety, but his muscles refused to respond to his will. He fell to his knees, and, struggling terribly, he managed to creep a few inches. He could hardly drag his legs forward, his mind and body were strained to the breaking point. Slowly, slowly Alison backed to the edge. Anthony, expending every atom of his being, mental and physical, could crawl but a few inches, and his agony was terrible. Alison reached the edge, and with one last cry of—"Anthony," her lovely form slipped over the edge and disappeared. Something seemed to snap in Anthony's brain; he fell back, and the darkness and an overpowering odor of hyacinths closed in over him.

The next morning the news of a double tragedy startled the city. Anthony Fenton, the promising young lawyer, was found lying as one dead in an old house on the outskirts of town, which had been deserted since its last tenant, a man of some Oriental race, had left over a year ago. After many efforts he was at last restored to consciousness, but his mind was entirely gone. He could only babble incoherently, repeating often the name of his fiancée, "Alison." There was no clue as to what had befallen young Anthony Fenton to cause him to be entirely bereft of his reason in a single night, except a faint but persistent odor of hyacinths, clinging to all his clothes and even his hair. That same night his fiancée, Alison MacDonald, apparently walking in her sleep, although she had never been known to do so before, fell from her window on the third floor to the ground below, killing herself instantly. Every attempt was made to connect the two circumstances, but



no one was able to do so, as Alison's death had been kept from Anthony until the following morning.

The mystery of the odor of hyacinths clinging to Anthony was never solved, and helped not at all in tracing the reason for the loss of his mind. He lived but a few months after that fatal night, and then quietly passed away to rejoin Alison.



The Dark Ages

There was a time in the course of things
When events were not recorded,
That cruel reality seized the world,
And happy life changed sordid;
Myths and fairies vanished,
Knights and ladies banished,
The world awoke in the cold grey dawn
To work and sorrow, Romance gone.

—Barbara Phillips.



The Seasons

Bonnie Bare

I always like to think of the seasons as they are represented in the old Greek mythology; that is, as four beautiful maidens, each different from the others, and each having a distinct liveliness all her own.


Spring is, perhaps, the most favored and admired of the dainty quartet, and, to be sure, she is very lovely. She is the youngest maiden. She is always dressed in soft, billowing garments, a wreath of flowers on her head and one about her throat, while she usually carries an armful of fragrant blossoms. Oh, she makes an exquisite picture, roaming over the green hills and waking the sleeping blossoms to life and loveliness. And Spring brings us skies of clearest blue and days of fresh sweetness, whilst she covers the earth once more with fragrant flowers. No, I do not wonder that Spring is oftentimes the most dearly beloved of the seasons.

Next comes Summer, tall and stately in her long, clinging gown. She too, carries flowers, but hers are full-blown, loosing all their sweetness on the warm, balmy air. Summer is not the smiling maiden Spring was; she has about her the beauty and grace of maturity. The days she brings are long and warm and filled with the sweetness and beauty of perfection. As she passes slowly not to return for another year everyone sighs a little sigh for her beauty and perfection.

As Summer slowly goes, Autumn dances in, a laughing nymph, clothed in the scantiest frock of leaves of red and gold. Leaves adorn her long auburn hair, and she flings them gaily from either hand as she dances madly about. I think the loveliest feature of Autumn is the leaves she brings, vivid yellow and red and gold, with here and there a splash of green. Her days are shorter than Summer's, and they have in them a cold nip that adds zest and takes away for good the warm sleepiness of Summer. Autumn is the gayest of the seasons in her vivid dress, and happy, dancing ways.

Last comes Winter, a slender maiden clothed in the purest white of shining icicles, which hang glistening from her hair, her arms, her gown. She is a beautiful and awe-compelling figure in shining white, from her proud head to her dainty feet. She brings short days—days icy-cold as her breath, but packed full of life, eagerness, and excitement. And through it all she moves, stately in her glistening robe, till she gives way to her gentler sister, Spring.

And so are the seasons to me—each different from the others, and each vitally alive. Which one I like the best, gentle smiling Spring, warm, beautiful Summer, laughing, dancing Autumn, or graceful, shining Winter, I do not know. Some favor one maiden and some another, but to me they are all lovely and loveable.



Blank Prose

Patricia Clements

I sit here in the library vainly trying to visualize with my mind's eye some topic to write about, but my mind's eye records a blankness only. Nothing exists in my mind. Nothing! "What is nothing?" I began to ask myself. Nothing can not be even a blank mind, so I cannot be thinking of nothing, since my mind is a blank. "I will never get that essay written," I mutter in agony. Never! But when is never? It must be somewhere beyond forever, but I do not know when forever is either. I'm in a sad plight! I have entangled myself in words of indefinite meaning, or rather without any meaning, and am in the depths of despair. I will always try to steer clear of words as complicated as these. Always! I have used one of those words again! It does no good to make resolutions. When is always? Is it forever? Never? I am getting into waters too deep for me. If I do not stop thinking of "nothing," "forever," "never," and "always," I shall be a raving maniac with the blood of innocents on my hands. Just to calm myself I began to quote a piece of verse I had seen some place. It goes like this:

Yesterday, today was tomorrow;
Tomorrow, today will be yesterday.



The Bee

High, high climbed he,
Labor it was for the bee,
Working harder for honey
Than most men work for money—
Does the bee.

—Jerome Salomon.

