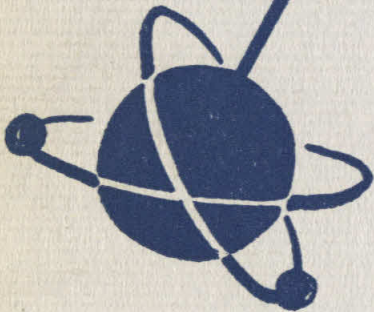


# pendulum

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AUTUMN 1951

# P E N D U L U M

*Autumn 1951*

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UNDERGRADUATE LITERARY

MAGAZINE

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF

TECHNOLOGY

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

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PUBLISHED BY THE DIVISION

OF THE HUMANITIES

*Editorial Board*

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PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

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## FOREWORD

PENDULUM is offered to Caltech as an experiment. It provides a means of literary expression for undergraduates. We very much desire contributions for future issues from the students, and opinions from the readers. We hope that your response will make the experiment a success.

THE EDITORS

## CHRISTMAS GIFT

By Jim Enslow

THERE is nothing pretty about my side of town; not even the heavy snow can hide its ugliness. Wouldn't be a bad night to pull a job though, if this blasted cold would let up, I thought, digging my chin deeper into my jacket.

Turning off Highland, I started up Front Street. A dismal place if I ever saw one. Row after row of warehouses leaning precariously against each other gave some protection to this path. It is too cold just to wander, and I'll be damned if I'll get a job shovelling, no matter what my old lady said. Suppose she expects a present for Christmas tomorrow. Doesn't like my gang; doesn't like my playing pool. That's really tough. Should have given her a good sock like the old man does to show who is boss.

When I came to the Front Street crossing, a sharp blast of wind nearly tossed me into the snow-drifts. That did it; I turned and headed for Rocky's pool hall. And then I remembered. No—'Buy your *New York Herald, Herald*'—money.

The harsh cry of the paper boy cut across my thoughts. I'm surprised the little brat is out tonight.

It was Tommy Valdone, a gaunt, pale kid around nine,—some four years my junior. Never did care too much for him. Thought he was too good for my gang. Had it pretty tough, though. His parents were good-for-nothing loafers. Practically lived off the kid. I guess they beat him up quite a bit.

The corner where Tommy stood was a swirling mass of snow. A small archway afforded scant protection from the bitter wind. His papers were protected by his coat, and he stood there shivering. A small lock of blond hair was frozen to his forehead. The metal coins stuck to his moist hands as he attempted to make

change. As he returned from a sale, he glanced up and waved hello.

"Merry Christmas!" he shouted. "What're youse doing out on a night like this, Sherm?"

"What's it to you, kid?"

"Nothing, Sherm. I didn't mean anything. Honestly."

"Aw, stop snivelling!" And then it came to me. Why, here is the money I need!

"Make any money today?"

"A little. Why?" He shrank back.

"Let's see it."

"No."

"Listen, you little brat, give it to me." I grabbed his scrawny arm and forced him into the snow bank.

"No, Sherm, not on Christmas Eve! You wouldn't do it."

"Don't be a sap." I looked each way and saw nobody coming. Tommy must have seen, too, for he quit struggling. I grabbed the money from his pocket and started counting it.

"Nice haul you have here."

"Hey, Sherm, if I don't bring that home they will beat me up."

"Your tough luck.

"One dollar, thirty-seven cents. Enough for a couple of rounds of pool and a beer," I mused. "Got any more?" Before he could reply, I was going through his coat. And to my surprise I found a silver dollar. A sudden thrust by Tommy nearly tore it out of my hand.

"What's the big idea?" I snarled. "Just keep quiet or I'll really fix you!"

"Don't take that, Sherm. Please! The priest gave it to me for good luck. Please, Sherm." He clutched my arm like a whining double-crosser about to be paid off. "I won't say anything, Sherm, really. It's Christmas. Let me have it."

The idea of Christmas didn't touch me. Only I didn't like crossing the priest's path. Yet a dollar was a dollar, silver or not. Oh, well, might as well let him have it.

"Take the damn thing and scram."

I crossed over and followed Highland up to Rocky's. The bright lights sparkled gayly on the crystal snow flakes. Warm, foul air engulfed me as I opened the door.

"Hey, Kletch, how about setting up a can of slop for me," I shouted to the bartender. During prohibition he cut quite a figure. Repeal has put him on the rocks.

"Here you are; the gang's downstairs playing pool, Sherm," he replied, shoving the beer down to me.

Next day, I woke up to a familiar tune. The old man was squabbling again with my old lady. I grabbed the afternoon paper and started gulping down some food. The paper was full of this Christmas sentimentality. They should have been around here before they printed all that rot.

I was glancing casually through the news and local section when Tommy's name caught my eye. Wonder what the brat did now.

It read: "Thomas Valdome, 9, 2314A E. Bennet, died early this morning in St. Agnes' Hospital . . . multiple fractures and internal injuries . . . beaten by his step-father, George K. Hafniger. The police are holding him for assault. . . . Thomas was accused by his step-father of holding out on the money he earns from selling newspapers. When he came home last night, according to his mother, he refused to give up the money or to reveal what he had done with it. . . . The funeral will be held Thursday at 2:00 p.m. at Lhokner Funeral Parlor. Mass will be said at St. Paul's church tonight."

I looked up. I could have kicked myself for not taking the silver dollar.



## AND THE WIND WILL SOB...

By Jim Enslow

I HAVE but one master, and that the sea. . . . No crowded city or quiet town can long conceal its call. Far though I roam, it beckons ever insistently. What does it want?

It sends the soft, sobbing wind to plague me, to awaken some dormant desire in me, to coax me to return again. I hide but it will not cease. It grows angry and the winds bellow and bluster because of this anger. The moon glows coldly on my face. I can not rest.

The sea is lonely and it calls to me. I walk along the towering cliffs and its loneliness is echoed in the sad rhythm of the ceaseless waves. These waves that have swept the shores of the seven seas, that have crashed against the mighty rocks of the Horns, that have carried Columbus to the new world and Magellan to his death, that hold a million secrets in their fathomless depths, these waves now lash this shore for me. What do they want?

The moonlight shimmers in the froth and foam of the surging surf. The wind sprays the water over the rocks and the mist sparkles. The sea feels its way up and down the beach, reaching into every nook, around every jutting rock, across every sand bar, trying to find me. I stand and listen to it breathe. It gurgles and sucks as it moves between the rocks. The wind moans and sighs to be off and leave the sea behind. The icy moon stays her haughty distance. We are all alone.

The sea acts boldly and coyly. It tempts me and deceives me. It swirls around my feet and then rolls mightily shoreside. It entices me, then rejects me. But all the time it murmurs and I listen. It laps at my feet and caresses my skin. It soothes my body. The roaring surf becomes my very being. It bears me up

and carries me out. It promises me peace in its silent depths. The stars shine brightly for the sea is not alone. I am encompassed by the vastness of a universe that does not know me. I am nothing.

But I am vain and resist. The sea pleads with me and I refuse. It always lets me go, yet never ceases to call me back again. When will it stop?

I will seek its secrets as I am sought, but I will fail. I resist only to succumb. I will be no more. And then the stars will dim, the moon will glow coldly, and the wind will sob for the sea will be lonely again.

# THE ISLE OF GOLDEN DREAMS

*A Pantoum of Mood and Colour*

By Howard Metcalfe

THE muffled wind enslaves  
The dreams of silver palms  
And softly sings to waves  
Asleep with whispered psalms.

The dreams of silver palms  
Drift gently through the breeze,  
Asleep with whispered psalms,  
Subdued with ghostly ease.

Drift gently through the breeze,  
The phantom reverie,  
Subdued with ghostly ease,  
This specter memory.

The phantom reverie,  
So faint and pale it seems,  
This specter memory;  
An Isle of Golden Dreams.

So faint and pale it seems,  
A murmured lullaby,  
An Isle of Golden Dreams,  
A song, a mellow sigh

A murmured lullaby  
Sings feebly through the air,  
A song, a mellow sigh,  
Envelops evening there.

Sings feebly through the air,  
The melody subdues,  
Envelops evening there,  
The languid, sombre blues.

The melody subdues,  
The hazy islands know,  
The languid, sombre blues.  
In calm Hawaii's flow.

The hazy islands know  
The graceful, listless days;  
In calm Hawaii's flow  
Belongs the timid gaze.

The graceful, listless days  
Pass peacefully along;  
Belongs the timid gaze  
To gloomy, murky throng.

Pass peacefully along  
On shadowed wings of night,  
To gloomy, murky throng,  
To God's eternal might.

## P E N D U L U M

On shadowed wings of night  
Goes daylight's waning gleams  
To God's eternal might,  
The Isle of Golden Dreams.

Goes daylight's waning gleams;  
The muffled wind enslaves  
The Isle of Golden Dreams,  
And softly sings to waves . . .

## TWO SHIPS

*By Howard Metcalfe*

**T**WO ghostly forms of ships  
Glide slowly through the sea,  
A haunting mem'ry there,  
Enchanting you and me . . .

Two lonely hearts as one  
Shall be eternally  
Two ships of dusk-filled dreams  
Upon a misty sea . . .

## NO BARS

By Roy A. Keir

IT was right in this same bar the whole thing happened—I suppose that's why I came here so soon after the wedding. The gal I first saw riding up from L. A. last fall on the "Daylight." Neither one of us made reservations, and the thing was so crowded we wound up sitting across from each other in the lounge car. She kept pretty much to herself, and I was too busy with the instruction manual—I work for the Telephone Company over in Richmond—well, anyway, I was too busy to try to start up a conversation, so I didn't talk to her, and I didn't see her again until along about January—Kick it again, will you, Jack. Straight—she and this guy were sitting in that booth there, up near the front. I was pretty drunk, but I recognized her right away. You don't sit facing somebody for twelve hours without getting to know their face pretty well, even if you do study most of the time. She wasn't exactly pretty, but she had those regular features like she started out to be beautiful and couldn't quite make the grade. Well, I was well crocked for the first time since I got out of the army and I was throwing myself a big happy birthday party, so when he told me to mind my own business, I slipped off the stool and swung. She'd followed him over and tried to get him to sit down, and she stepped right in front of him about a second too soon. As you can see, I'm pretty good sized, and I learned enough boxing at SC to throw a pretty hefty punch. She didn't even stagger before she fell, and we forgot the fight to get her to the hospital. I went up the next day to pay the bill and apologize for the mess I made. The guy was there waiting to take her home, so I got my first good look at him. He was pretty handsome, with real regular features, just like she had. I

was wondering whether to talk to him or not when she walked in wearing a wire brace on her jaw. I could see her jaw had set a little crooked, but she didn't seem to be sore at me a bit.—Jack, my glass seems to have a hole in it. Thanks.—Well, she seemed pretty friendly, so when I paid the bill I learned her phone number. I took her out a few times, and we always had fun, but I never could get to know her very well except to notice that she looked mighty pretty with her new lop-sided grin. Well, about three months ago we stopped in here after the square dance, and who should come in but Little Boy Blue, and he starts to sit down on her side of the table. He got up when I got up, and I gave him the punch I started to give him before, only this time I was sober and I'd worked into shape climbing telephone poles every day. He stayed on his feet long enough for me to hit him again, and right away she's down kneeling beside him, bawling her head off about her poor Harold. This time I just walked out, and I didn't see or hear from either of them until a couple of weeks later, when I read in the paper about their engagement. They sent me an invitation to the wedding, and that's where I was today. It was a nice wedding, and they made a mighty fine-looking couple, but when I got up close I noticed that his big grin was a little crooked, like hers. Exactly like hers.

## OF A STILLER TOWN

*By Roy A. Keir*

**T**HIS, the cool of evening  
following the day of fear  
following the day of stinging sunshine  
following the day of clash and echo  
following the day of rainbow torment  
This is the dreaded evening.

This, the beginning of silent darkness  
following the stumble of the morning riot  
following the stir of prickly noon  
following the strain and prayer of afternoon  
following the drowse and doubt of dusk  
This is the cool of evening.

This, the cool of evening  
affirming the promise of the clouds  
affirming the answer to the dawn  
affirming the fulfillment of the shadow  
affirming the denial of the sun  
This is the blessed evening.



## A CHRONICLE

By Roy A. Keir

**I**S it by chance that Time arrives  
unannounced?  
Not the arrival, but the departure of Time  
is mentioned in the  
asymmetric  
misanthropic  
sermon of the clocks—  
and mentioned then only in an aside  
buried in discord.  
Is Time, then, unwelcome?

Is it a commodity of little value?  
Or is it, perhaps, a substance  
of unrecognized worth?  
To an artist  
It is a delightful abstract,  
evidenced only by the progress of art  
and the circle,  
in lockstep,  
of Time and Beauty.  
To an astronomer  
It is a ponderous, nebulous wave-front  
of unknown ancestry,  
orphaned at birth,  
which has existed only a few billion years.  
To a modern physicist  
It is a dimension  
of equal validity with distance

but perhaps a trifle more concrete.

To a biologist-philosopher

It is a convention in signs,

defined by the Second Law of Thermodynamics,

which merely establishes the direction of destiny,

and,

though it can be used to measure physical events

like the rate of cicatrization of wounds,

It is interesting

only to the untutored masses

and a few monkeys.

To a general

It is a necessity of war—

a commodity like lives and bullets,

though more valuable than these.

To a youth

It is a privilege,

obtained by its use,

of little value

except when the ancient drumheads

of Washington, Moscow, Berlin, London, Rome, Sparta,

The House of God,

and a few other places

clamor for a quickened eternity,

when age-tarnished cornets of the Capitols

cry death to the young,

that the old may inherit the earth.

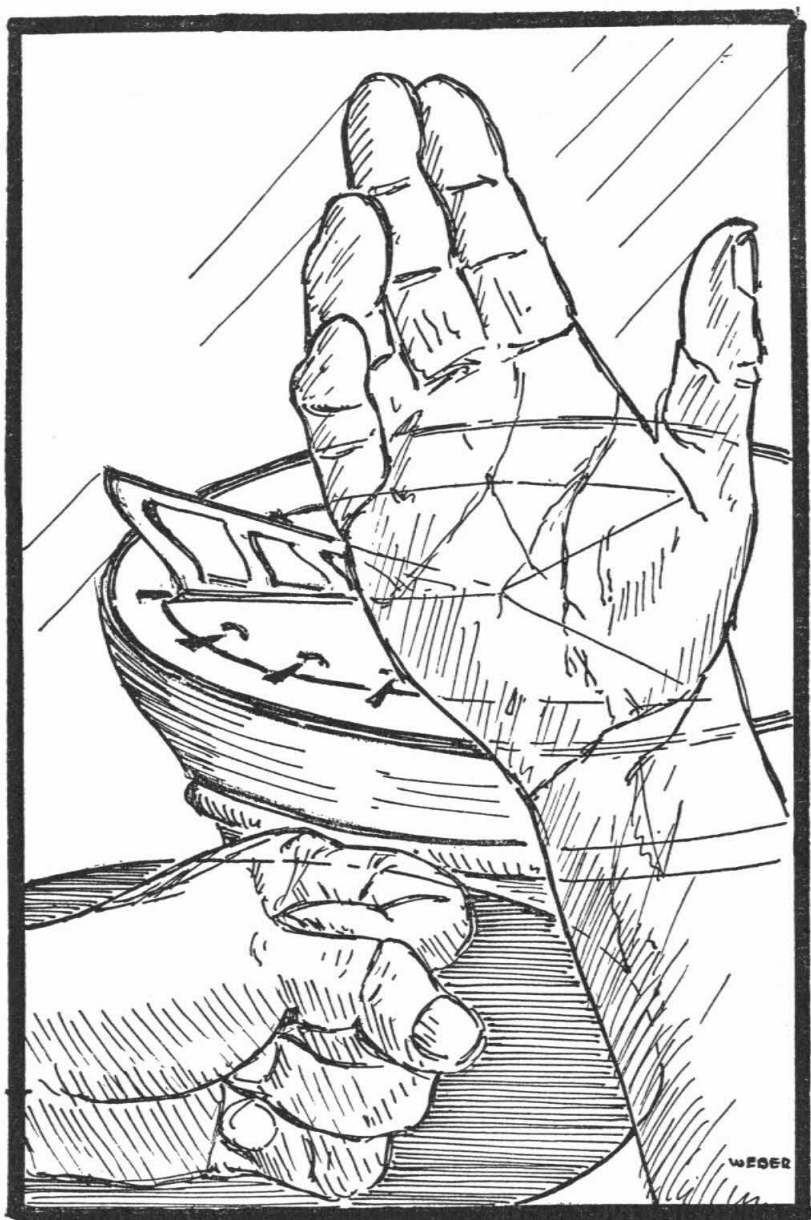
When ambulances bump clumsily,

solemnly,

on paths of noise and steel

and the heart envelopes itself  
in letters from home  
and harsh words, then  
Time is enjoyed in tiny bits,  
like water sucked drop by drop  
through a straw in the desert;  
and there is enough for all the young  
of this day  
and of the day  
when other youths will find their separate brief eternities,  
so that those of us who remain  
may claim what will be our inheritance,  
after taxes.

Our Way of Life,  
clad in a new golden robe,  
speaks with the voice of a sometime Jehovah  
who is separated from me by the Second Law of Thermo-  
dynamics,  
and sends me on a quest  
for a newly-shed serpent skin  
of purest night;  
but like the other wanderers before me,  
I shall take it for my own,  
and wrap myself quite comfortably  
against a timeless, freezing wind  
which will never come a second time  
to me.



## TWO POEMS

By Leon Vickman

### *Mood*

**S**OFT peacefulness my mind and muscle know  
living the smell of a three o'clock morning—  
Yet it is not  
The symbolic and philosophic fog rays the light—  
musical perfectness in the night form . . .  
a graceful young evening, sounds in the quietness  
I hear my footsteps ahead and behind me  
The why of the being and of the brevity is—yes why the why?  
and on my mind and muscle move and on and on  
in soft peacefulness

### *Stellar Ode*

**Y**OUR woman's face above me  
enclosed by the blended contrast of white and purple  
the full form of your neck, farther from the sky  
nearer to me than your now dark eyes  
a face form that flows in almost oriental lines  
dark curves of soft hair frame your flesh against a star sky un-  
filled  
those that appear vary in their brilliance  
shifting atmosphere changes light and curves of soft dark hair  
warmth of a summer day radiates from the earth and folds the  
wind against you  
I watch and feel in silent sensibility your face framed by hemi-  
sphere not fully seen

hemisphere framed by a cosmos not seen at all  
your features turn down to mine  
explanation of this soft motion seems simple  
larger and slower motion of all that encircles your flesh not only  
confuses  
it tears my understanding  
we have no meaning in our place  
confused combinations view a more confused combination,  
and ask why our smallness is in a largeness of space that shadows  
us into  
shaken obscurity.

THE PHAETON  
*three related life sketches*

By Leon Vickman

I

*The Thought of Youth Among Thought Immortal*

THIS particular building was rather old—archaic would be more picturesque; yes, they would call it archaic. Still it was old and the long high rectangles had smaller curved four-sided windows at the top—through these the high sun became channeled into long dust defined columns of light—dust it was that made some of the mustiness which characterized the air in the large, book-lined room.

The people here were quiet—they read mostly, turning pages, straining, examining closely the intricacies of what, it did not matter. A somewhat young, uniformed air force man was, and at times wasn't, there—the body of course, but the mind had transcending quality. Cosmopolitan was the way he offhandedly thought of it, and so all rooms of books are, but this one more so.

Immortality exists in ancient places. Fancy is not so limited. Dream-like construction is not even to be associated with limitations. All these could describe a frame of mind—one not of defined or constructive desires—only loosely sequenced from what is to be, paradoxically with what has been and gone. He liked the ocean air, its very implication, and thoughts of the sea, its smell, its wind were with him as he sat, the sun grazing the hardly visible fuzz hair on his cheek bones giving the flesh a glittering. Ocean waves he had not seen for many months—he had time now, not a great deal, yet some time, but that all would be tomorrow, when two kinds of beauty he would know after not knowing them—but, that all would be tomorrow.

Now was now—and a slight surge of emotion as if from the musical or sexual, but actually from the perfectness of the sun ray. Perfectional emotion—an imaginary interpreter of the daylight moving in exact knowledge of his choreography leaping now, now only gliding fittingly—an evanescent quality, yet almost singing of the day in the green of the outside and the life with the immortal death, or life, of the books.

*Immortal life and death*

*Life as such we do not know but desire*

*Death as eternal feared to a last torn breath*

*Eternal but of what utility?*

*Fear, in absolute futility*

*Youth or age seem to know well*

*the last days of a passioned and emotional life—the aged more*

*Still and quiet are the moments of the last knell*

*when the old die in silence*

*But youth's death—a saddened failure to gain unknown*

*omnipotence*

## II

### *Youth's Full Living—and the Sea*

LARGE white sails on the horizon appear as a singular observation but seen close they are diverse in essence rippling and bleating, almost loudly banging as they flow loosely untrimmed to the wind. And if not for the rising falling soothing wind—but there is almost always some sort of wind, and this is what matters.

“Let her go!” A young woman's hand pulled the loose rope aboard and her small foot pushed the boat from the dock. It cut the water slowly—the wind hardly filled the two sails but in



peaceful motion it moved on between shores lined with small docks and then past larger loading wharves into oiled water of greater expanse. The foresail began to flutter in noisy complaint. "Trim the jib!" The wind had become stronger—the structure creaked slightly under the new pull. Both sheets of white were curved in fullness heaving the hull from the wind. "Ho!" came a joyful shout. The somewhat young air force man pulled his body to the wind-raised side and hung himself over. "C'mon up here." The young woman moved without standing until they were both lying on the raised side. The wind blew jealously at her loose auburn hair. They each dragged one foot over the edge in the speeding water setting a dual trail, ephemeral and changing, but there. The sails knew their almost full power in the morning wind, to be more violent in the afternoon.

Large black transports know the feel and smell of the same oil-covered water that the small boat's hull slaps against. These transports lie tied to the high browned wood wharves not too far from where the pair move—large, drab, long as a city block—the ropes have large metal discs coaxial with themselves to keep the rats off, and men look down from high on the decks, lonely looking men suspicious in their appearance, brownish in their dress and all the air is salt and oil and creosote and smelling of brine rusted rivets and ship plate. Warehouses. Full to unbelievable capacities—paper, bundles, too many to be able to think of—poor incapable human mind. Wharf after wharf along the shore of the port city feeding its dependent consumer cities. Sailors may well be watching the small white sails moving out to the open sea. Sailors that live the salt smell within the limits of a human eternity. Bearded sailors that know the intricacies and things not intricate of the water front. Fish smell on rotting wood and hot sun on oiled water—a symbolic representation of a human necessity.

Open water on all sides stretching into the breakered surf and shore and far out to a sharp horizon line. The pair was able to relax in the steady wind and sun as they moved up the coast under full sail. The aging young man lay on the deck with the tiller in his hand. Auburn hair flew near his face in natural perfectness. Their legs were outstretched to the back of the boat and they spoke occasionally, but only so, because the conversation could not be other than secondary to the motion of the water and the slowly shifting position of the hull as it skimmed along with grace past the wave-cut beach cliffs and the coastal mountains—huge up-jutting masses giving a powerful beauty to what is already nature's fantasy, with the play of sunshine on the waves and an immense clarity in the moving air.

The boat took a gust of wind and pulled to one side. They were up to catch the sway and run the hull again parallel to the shore. On beyond a sort of jutland to more inaccessible beaches watched over by a few homes of the rich, high above the water. . . .

The sun raised in the time that they had been out, to where it was now, well above them. "Let's beach the boat somewhere in here."

"OK." Her reply was low. They went a little beyond the beach on which they wanted to land. Then he called to the girl.

"We're coming about!" She dropped her head as the mainsail boom swung about its mast to catch the wind on its other side. They moved quickly inland with the wind driving them hard but lessening as they came closer.

A curving high cliff formed a quiet cove and they guided themselves into this wave-free place, pulling into the sand, and the boat fell on its side. They walked slowly to where the surf was in its incessant rushing quietly-arched beauty. There were few people on the beach—the high cliff was prohibitive—the trail

down was long. Two young girls were standing in the surf running in and out against the water that wetted their somewhat skinny legs. They walked trailing with each step a raising of water behind them—and all else was quiet. The sun penetrated more thoroughly as the two lay down on the sand and watched the water change white foam to rushing foam—low waves and some too small even to be called waves but just a rushing part of dancingly cooled water that flattens out on the sand bottom and meets the drier beach. They both rested their heads on crossed arms and watched the water and sun and lived the feeling of the splash against a small rock. . . .

“Brush the sand from my back,” she smiled. He ran his hand over her tanned smooth skin, then rose a little and kissed her neck—two young boys played near the water line between them and the now afternoon sun that was strong enough to silhouette and change their forms to dark prancing movements.

“This of course won’t last.” She smiled back and lifted her head to watch him.

“No, but we know that it couldn’t,” she said.

“If it did it wouldn’t be valued.”

“Perhaps.” He pulled himself to her face and kissed her lips, then dropped once more to his crossed arms on the sand.

“Oh damn it all.” He looked steadily at her. “We’ve been together so little this time and it’ll be much longer before I see you again. Tortured isn’t a good word for this but I can’t think of another.”

“Can’t you do something about your having to go into action?”

“What, God, I ask you, what? Am I supposed to think I’m different from the others in my position? I only wish I was. Other loves are being broken by the same damned war, more than loves even.” The young woman only looked at the twisted talking face

that had kissed her a moment before. That the beauty of the natural force in the setting they were in could be broken by what is man's was a thought not desirable but dreadfully true. "I hate to have to leave you alone and obligated 'til I come back, if I do—but I wouldn't want to think that you weren't waiting for me." She only watched his silent face for a minute and then her face dropped to near the sand and her arms. He moved to her.

"Please just put your arms around me," she said turning her face up.

"I don't want you to cry about this mess."

"But it is a mess and that's just it, oh—" He took his arm from around her and held her for a moment before kissing the slightly tear-streaked face. He sat up and moved her shoulder until she lay on her back looking up at him.

"It's difficult to look at you when you watch me with those tearing eyes."

"Don't talk, it's better if we don't when we know what there is to know." Her arm was around his browned neck. He dropped and pressed himself to her lips and body.

"If I could know you only in love and not any other way—if only, . . ." They remained until the afternoon sun yielded to a cool rising wind.

"It will take some time to get back even under this wind. He rose and knelt beside her, then stood and took her up by the hands. "My darling girl. . . ." They stood kissing with the deep feeling only known of an old love. And they walked slowly to the boat . . .

*Walk with me*

*And I will know my fullest passion*

*Alone*

*Life will be a void I do not wish to know—but must*

*There will be still the roaring breakers and rocks*

*But not you—and perhaps never*

## III

*Youth Among Agedness and Near Death*

AND how is he feeling?" the young woman asked the more than middle-aged nurse with her.

"He has gone down considerably since you were here last. We are doing what we can. . . . Exactly how old is he?"

"Around eighty, but I don't know exactly. He's the last of my grandparents. The others died much earlier."

"Well, you can go right in to him."

"Yes, thank you." She walked down the long door-lined hall looking occasionally into the rooms and at the old people. The smell of old age mixed with antiseptic—"Hello, grandfather." The man turned his head from against the white pillow.

"My dear . . . I'm glad . . ." He coughed almost silently for a moment. His sickened breath reached to her, but the again peaceful expression on his face calmed.

"It's so very far from where I live. If it were not I would be able to see you more often. Everyone at home is fine. Little Marguerite . . ." And she talked softly of the family that they both knew, but in different ways. He interrupted her only occasionally to ask for more detail or for some water and once for the male nurse who arranged his aged body that had long since not been able to walk without considerable assistance, and then it wasn't what would be called walking and even that had lately been substituted by movement in a wheel chair, but the man was quite old and all this was to be expected before his eventual death. Of course it was a necessary eventuality she thought but she was frightened at witnessing a person in the transitional period before death and after what is considered life. Frightened mostly of the way the man had fallen in appearance since her

last visit several months before, from the sometimes smiling person that could walk, although uncertainly, with her in the sunshine and talk and never look so worn, so near death, as she interpreted it, as he did now.

She had finished telling of the things that were somewhat prepared in her mind before and they sat quietly looking at each other for a moment. The old man moved his head to look more directly at her and asked hesitatingly what had come of her engagement to the air force man. The girl lowered to silence. She looked up at him a moment later.

"I heard only recently from his family that he was reported missing in action." She talked softly and with a hesitating calm. "Men who were flying with him in the same squadron saw his bomber drop from the formation smoking, but they didn't see it crash, still, though it hasn't been long, there can be little hope." She lowered her head while his uncertain voice consoled her, but only with a few words—his age had brought wisdom that told him when to stop, but the great wealth of experience was soon to die with him and its value lost, just that quickly.

She stayed answering and talking, but the afternoon grew in its shadow and she left him to what was only a few more days in the state of not life and—not death. Left, an old man to an old and proper end coming with due expectancy and little surprise and with even some gladness in his dying that ends the suffering of paralyzed old age, but no gladness for the smoking plane that may have twisted down to the peaceful lying earth.

As the young woman walked in the sunshined air, free of hospital and people smells, an unconscious mingling of thoughts, incited by the old man, and his asking of the young—surrealistically placed images of life experiences with the now dead young man who died, she knew, too young and too unfulfilled and too uncertainly—and just now she had seen near death . . . amazingly

close to the death, defying, fully living sunshine of the day. Wonder, of when the people one sees will be dying in their unfinished effort. Wonder certainly about when the very bodies they walk in will fall about their feet and cause them to stumble into death, without having done nearly everything—no, hardly so. . . .

The neatly kept grounds lived quite differently than did the old people they held—this she thought when some of them walked by, on the walk that took her back. . . .

## SUMMER STORM

*By Alexander Dessler*

THE day is warm and the air presses upon us heavily. A few shining white clouds appear almost motionless high above us. Suddenly a cool breeze springs up and quickly turns into a stiff wind. Small whirlwinds hurl dust and dirt at us. A few fallen leaves and discarded bits of paper, heeding the storm's harbinger, scurry for shelter. A distant rumble is heard as a tide of low sweeping black clouds rushes over us. The hot sun is instantly extinguished. Rain whispers softly to us for a few moments. Then, as if in a sudden burst of anger, the rain begins to roar. Lightning flashes and thunder peals as screaming drops of rain pound into submission all that has not sought shelter. The flashes of lightning are preceded by an angry hiss. The lightning snaps down to the ground with a sound like a cracking whip and the earth trembles with fear as the thunder roars triumphantly. After a few minutes the rain changes back to an almost apologetic whisper. Then, as suddenly as it started, the rain stops. For a moment everything seems deathly quiet. The sun bursts back into view and laughingly begins to make the air stifflingly humid. The rain gutters gurgle merrily to themselves. Diamonds drop from the trees and the buildings glisten brightly in sunlight. Faint clouds of vapor rise from the streets. Everything smells sweet and clean.





## SKYSCRAPERS

*By Al Haber*

**S**KYSCRAPERS are the mute, upturned heads  
Of a great city,  
Who must pray  
For the busy men within them  
Who have not the time.

## FALL IS AN OLD MAN

*By Al Haber*

**F**ALL is an old man  
Whose crisp voice  
Speaks of dear friends, Spring and Summer,  
Who have long since departed.

Fall is an old man  
With beautiful memories  
Which he hangs on colored trees  
To serve as evanescent joys.

Fall is an old man  
Quietly preparing to die  
By transforming the earth  
Into a still, icy grave.

## CHRYS

By Jim Wilson

AMOS has been laid to rest, but he has not rested well. He has known what was coming, built his own sepulcher, graven his epitaph, and lain in state thinking about Paradise and earth.

He was only one of a million when he was young, he recalls dimly; fuzzy-haired, gaudily dressed youth soon degenerated into a mad struggle to get something to eat, a place to live, security. Some stayed in the huddled city to starve or fall to enemies or just waste away; Amos, and many others, migrated outwards.

After that, it was a monotonous life in the green semi-tropical jungle he homesteaded. One ate and one lived. There was plenty to eat—Amos was a vegetarian anyway—and he encountered few obstacles to living.

He never saw another of his kind, and never missed them. Even the concept of mating did not hang in his mind, during the high-noon rest period, or in the long night journeys, when he might travel and climb half across or up through the giant forest.

Amos knew, long before it happened, that his solitary, easy-going tropic life was to end. He felt the change coming in him; the fuzzy hair, once soft and abundant, grew grey and thin on top; he lost interest in brightness, garbed himself in drab greens and browns. No longer did he yield to midnight impulses to go out and climb, climb until—swaying on the topmost branch of a jungle titan—he looked down on the tranquil forest and up to the serene moon. All he wanted to do now was rest, shaded from the blistering sun by a great leaf.

Then came the second change, and Amos knew instinctively that the finish was near. The senile lethargy passed, supplanted

by a feverish energy, an unquenchable drive to build, to construct . . . his tomb. He worked and labored. Day and night he carried and lifted and cemented and fitted together his monument.

The flood of action was accompanied by a deluge of mental activity. No mere daydreaming as during the senile period, Amos's reflections were religious in nature. Brought home perhaps by the proximity of his departure, the idea of a heaven and a life after death was uppermost in his mind. He found, though he'd never seriously considered it before, that he believed implicitly in Paradise. Sometimes, when the mood was off him, he wondered about this strange turn of mind, but could find nothing to explain it.

So the day came at last when, dog-tired, he crawled into his coffin and sealed the mouth. Then he relaxed.

Amos thinks—or dreams, whatever you'd call it—all the time now. He thinks about the past some, about the future some. About heaven. He wonders: Am I worthy, shall I go to heaven, and the answer comes at once, Yes; in due time, when I have done penance and grown into a worthy state.

Now that he thinks about it, he is growing, changing; relieved of labors, his body becomes a hulk, a second coffin. The mind, the soul, is what shall ascend.

One day for the first time, the sun shines on and through the vault of Amos. And suddenly, thrillingly, a golden trumpet sounds for him. Arise! it blazes. You who would be an angel, arise, burst your bonds, put on the white raiment . . . arise!

A radiant strength fills him to the bursting point. His soul swells until the last husk of mortality splits and cracks away and he is free. Excited, he crawls to the door of the vault. And the stone is rolled away from the mouth of the sepulcher and he goes out into the world.

The sun is life-giving. Slowly Amos's skimpy angel-form fills out. He has wings—they arch high over his back, throbbing with the anticipation of flight.

Finally his strength is renewed. He pauses a moment, surveying heaven, then soars into the firmament. Harp music is all around him.

He is thirsty after the exertion of resurrection. Nectar, he thinks. With a flutter of bright wings, Amos the angel spirals down and lands delicately upon the lip of a honeysuckle bloom.

## THE HILL

By John J. W. Rogers

**T**HERE was no tree upon the hill—no flower or plant of any kind. No small animals ran across the ground, and there were no human feet to scuff the surface. But in the valley below, there were trees and grass and many animals. And there was a house, in which lived a man of business. He was having a party, and there were many people in the house; the men were very bold, and the women were very gay, and everybody was enjoying himself immensely. And the people came out of the house in order to enjoy the fresh night air. They looked at the hill and did not like the sight. For although the hill contained no gayety or life, it seemed strangely unperturbed, as if it found such things unnecessary. Then the guests began to leave, but the hill was changeless, and it remained.

The man of art went to his studio and began to paint. He painted pictures of men and of the clothes they wore; pictures of machines, with mathematical precision. He painted scenes of battles and orations; scenes of death and scenes of love. He portrayed nature with a faithful brush, and added to the canvas the imprint of his subjective mind, the interpretation which he gave to nature. He felt that the final product was enriched by the contribution of his own personality. And then the artist looked at his pictures, and was very pleased. He said again, as he had said many times before, that the soul of man and the spirit of man's creations is manifested in a painting. And this also pleased him, for he believed that man and man's artifacts were the most exalted of all the things on earth. He did not realize, however, that the machine would need repair, that the battle had been

lost by many people, and that the souls of men can show many facets. But the hill will last forever.

The man of science went to his laboratory and began to record data. He determined the name of the compound and the size of the box. He separated all things into many groups and wondered why everything did not fit. He solved the problem he had posed to himself, and he defined a new quantity. He spoke of his labors in an important tone, and he wrote many words about them. And the scientist, also, was pleased with his work, for he believed that he had discovered a new truth. He believed that this new truth was part of a body of knowledge which would open up to man all the mysteries of existence. And he believed that his pronouncements exemplified the objectivity of science, the triumph of the absolute over the faltering mind of man. For he did not realize that the method he used was merely a metaphysical hypothesis, and that the axioms were definitions arising from the mind of man. But the hill is not an abstraction, or a definition.

The man of letters went to his study and began to write. He produced large volumes of sage observations and lurid comments. He wrote about men and their actions. When he wrote about things, he was concerned with their relation to man. He set down upon paper his innermost thoughts, and applauded himself for doing so. For he thought that posterity would know what he was thinking and would profit from that knowledge. But he did not realize that the word is not the thought, and that posterity would never know what the thought was. And if he did realize this fact, he could not believe that the future would not suffer from the lack. Nor could the hill learn anything from his books, and the hill will be there long after the future has passed by.

And the man of business was left alone, but he did not paint, or write, or in any other way record for future generations the ideas in his mind. He thought of nature and of the treasures in

the ground. He thought of men and of their capacity to produce. And he thought of all the good things he was able to do, now that he was a success. But he never stopped thinking, and he never stopped working, and he never wondered what he was ultimately going to do with all his success. But the hill did not worry or work; it did not need to.

The man of business had another party, and all the guests returned to the house. Again they looked at the hill, and still did not like it. For the hill held no metal or oil; no battles had been fought on it, and no orations spoken. And there was no death on it. The hill contained no factories or laboratories, and it did not read books. For the hill was satisfied; it did not need, or even want, any of the works of man. And none of the guests realized that the reason they did not like the hill was that they had all been told, when the race was still very young, that they must never again climb to its top until their sins had been removed.



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