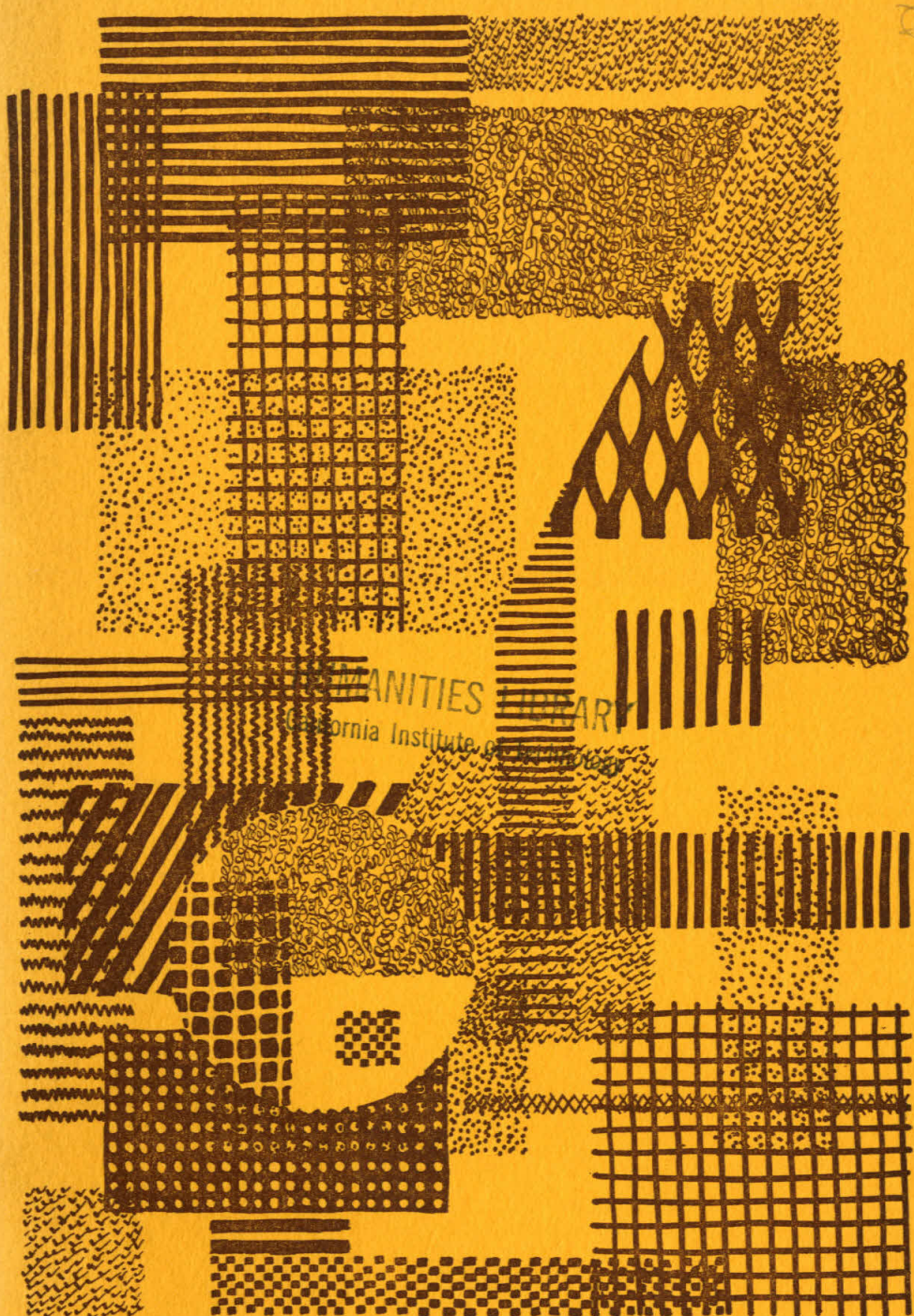


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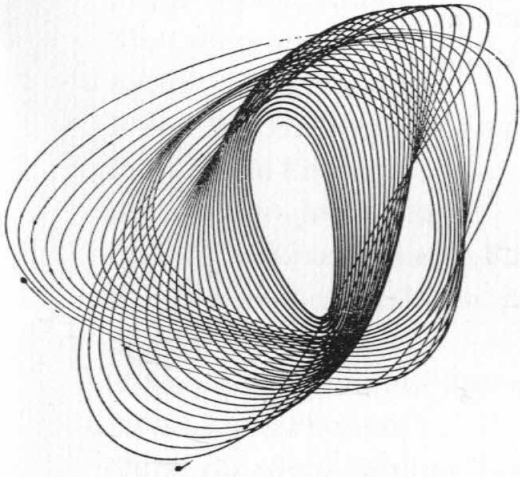
pendulum

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A Challenge to the Reader

Of all things difficult to attain, understanding is perhaps the most difficult and the most important.—John Dewey

EACH AUTHOR represented in this tenth issue of *Pendulum* has thought long and intensely to develop his own ideas. He is trying to communicate them to you, the reader, through some particular literary framework—be it prose, poetry, or art. The editors have tried to select material solely for its provocative thought-content and quality of presentation. Now we can only sit back and hope that you will read thoughtfully, lest by superficial reading you block the transfer of information between the author and the reader. We hope that reading this magazine is an enjoyable experience, but remember that it cannot be perused like an ordinary daily newspaper in one sitting. Some of the selections you will want to read more than once for pure pleasure; but in other selections you must first understand the levels of meaning the author has planted and then constructively criticize his ideas and viewpoint. In either case, if the reader is actively participating and thinking as he reads, then the value of *Pendulum* in stimulating creative literary expression of the Caltech student body is being maintained and enhanced.

THE EDITORS

A Tone Poem

GO TO HELL, you dirty kike! He was standing so close to me that I could feel the warm breath and spit on my face when he said it. Then the school bus gave a lurch forward throwing everyone backwards—except us two. He stood holding fast to the hand rails sneering down from his six feet into my face as I crouched holding a seat. We must have looked funny from the outside, standing still, our faces not more than half a foot apart, while all the other kids were falling over each other, punching and poking, the way junior high kids always do.

My first thought was one of regret. Why did he have to say that? We both wanted to sit by Mary, and as the custom was, we both dived for the seat. Just because I won didn't mean that he should get mad. But then I saw Mary looking up at me with twinkles in her eyes—the way girls do when they're laughing at you—and my stomach dropped out like it does in an elevator going down too fast.

They knew. All through school I had tried to hide the fact that I was a Jew—successfully I thought. But they knew, they knew behind my back. Yellow Jew, little yellow Jew . . . ah, ha . . . who'd dance with you little sheeney . . . thought he'd fooled us . . . ha, ha . . . look at his nose . . . fooled us? . . . Hey, where's your yellow band little man? Yellow, yellow dirty yellow, dirty yellow yellow. . . I could feel them staring at me, felt my pulse quicken, the blood rush to my face.

I had lost. All I could do was to get up, averting my eyes from the smirking kids, and move to the very back corner of the bus. He took the seat. The laughter and pushing got louder than ever.

Three years later I saw him again in another school. There were three pretty, laughing girls with him. When he greeted me with, "Hi shortstuff," they giggled a lot. I managed a weak, "Hi." I have never seen him again. All the guys that know him say he is a terrific success in everything he does.

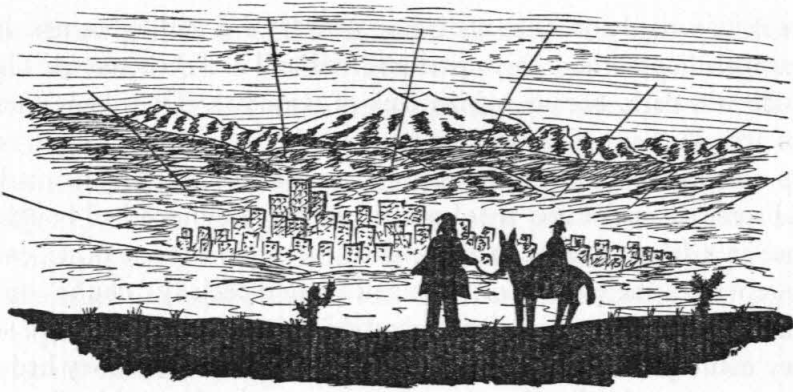
Sure, I've been to college now, and I know what all the books say about there being no organic difference between him and me. In fact that was the last time anyone threw up to my face that I am a Jew. But still whenever I see one of those prejudice movies with the happy endings, or read one of the "there's no difference" books, or hear some Christian guy spouting off about "tolerance," I remember him standing and sneering in that crowded bus, and my heart snagging because I knew that *they* had found out—I know the books can never change that. Then cold hate runs through my veins, and I begin to wonder about all sorts of things.

—JAY ARTHUR GLASEL

A Somewhat Cynical and Confused View

THE WORLD is made up of a lot of people,
And each one gets his little charge
From believing his little half-truth
Which the next guy knows is pure nonsense,
And would laugh at it if he weren't
So used to that kind of thing;
So everybody's bigger than everybody else,
And that's why all men are created equal.

—JOSEPH FINEMAN



The Big City

MARIA was a little Indian girl. She was six years old, had dark features, deep black sparkling eyes that were always alert and vivacious. Her hair was black as coal and long, as it had never been cut. She had two braids that hung down to her breast. Her blouse and skirt were made by her grandmother. The blouse had a dirty white color, characteristic of raw, unwashed wool, which was made into thread by the skillful hands of grandma. Her skirt was little heavier and dyed with an orange color. She lived with her grandparents up in the "Altiplano" or Highlands. It was cold up there and at night it would freeze and the wind would blow fiercely. They could hear the wind whistling as it struck the small "paja brava" (short straw bushes), with all its might and furor. It would come in through the "paja brava" roof of the little adobe house they lived in. Grandpa had built that house a long time ago, and had lived in it since then. It took him six days to finish it. He had found that piece of land and had liked it, so he made his home there. The house was about sixteen feet long, twelve feet wide and eight feet high. It had a small door and a little window placed high in one of the sides of the house. It was just one room with a dirt floor and a straw roof. On top of the roof, he had placed a small wooden cross, so

the devil would not strike the house with his evil and lightnings. In that little house, those three persons lived and had their world. The inside was dark, because of the lack of windows. Their beds were not actually beds. They were a few boards almost at floor level, on top of which they had some straw mattresses that Grandma made and some sheep fur and woolen blankets that Grandpa had bought once in a fair. All were at one end of the room. At the other end there were some bundles of cloth and food, especially "chuño" and "tunta," that is potatoes, frozen and dried by a special method, so they could preserve them for a long time. In that corner they had a sleeping place for the dog, because it was too cold outside. Sometimes, when it would get very cold, they would bring the smaller sheep and goats in too. In the middle of the room, somewhat to the back, was the "kitchen." There was a little open fire stove made out of mud and rocks, where Grandma cooked in the nights and days when it was very cold. They had some clay vessels and pots, which they cooked in. If the weather was nice, they would cook outside on a similar open fire. They did not have a chimney in the house, so when Grandma cooked, one could see the smoke coming out of the door and roof. They did not have water, so they had a bigger pot where they stored water that they fetched from the little stream that was flowing some thousand feet away to the right of the house. It used to pass right by the house, but with the time, it changed its course somewhere up in the mountains, so now it was farther away. Right by the house they had a small cottage where they kept their straw and some wood.

Spring was coming soon, so Grandpa was ready to plant some potatoes, corn, beans and peas. That morning was a nice clear morning, and although it was cold, he decided that he would plant now. He sent Maria to get a pair of oxen from their neighbor who had consented to lend them, in return for some seed that Grandpa had given him. His place was about two miles away, so while Maria went to get the oxen, Grandpa got ready all his "equipment." The

old wooden plow needed only a nail driven in to tighten a splint, and his hand plow was all right. He sorted out some potatoes that he thought would not make good seed and put them apart.

Two hours later Maria was back with the yoke of oxen. The sun was rising already, kissing the fields and hills with its golden and warm rays. Grandpa put the old wooden plow on the oxen and started plowing. The ground was quite hard and there were many rocks. Grandma and Maria would sort out all the rocks they could and put them in piles. When the little piece of land was softer and without so many rocks, Grandpa plowed over again but this time deeper. Following Grandpa was Grandma putting the potatoes in the opened furrow and Maria followed closing the furrow with dirt. When they had a considerable amount of potatoes planted, they started with the corn, beans and peas. They would put one row of corn, one of beans and one of peas, and again one of corn, beans, and so on. They did this to keep the wind from breaking and damaging and freezing the peas and beans. The corn would be a good shield for that, and the wind would not blow so hard on the beans and peas.

Almost at sundown they finished. Now the act of "Saumar" came. This is an ancient custom that all Indians have. After planting, Grandpa would "Saumar" always too. He took the plow off the yoke of oxen and bound them to a rope that was fastened to the ground by a big rock. He went into the house and got a little bag with different kinds of special leaves in it, took some stone-like chunks of material, some wood splints and some wine in a dirty bottle. While he was getting these things, his wife and his granddaughter fixed a little open fireplace by the planted field. Grandpa put some leaves in the fireplace on top of the wood splints; then he put some chunks of that stone-like material on top, and poured some wine over all that. Then he fired the wood splints and everything began to burn slowly.

There they kneeled and Grandpa began to pray in a monotonous

chant-like voice. He was praying to "Pachamama," the good God of the soil, that helped the crops to grow. After a while he got up and while still praying aloud, he went around spilling the wine in the bottle over all the newly-planted land. Then he went back and knelt again, praying all the time and making chorus with Grandma and Maria.

The sun was going down now and the atmosphere was filled with the fragrance of the burning leaves. Three figures were kneeling in prayerful attitude while the sky was dressing itself with a beautiful reddish-purple gown, giving the scene a mystic feeling. Far away one could hear the wind whistling as it passed through the dwarf straw bushes.

A year had passed when Grandma died. Maria was very sad and weeks of sorrow followed. Grandma was buried in a little Indian cemetery up in the hills where Maria would take some wild cactus flowers every so often and put them in a rusty old tin can by her tomb. Grandpa knew that he was getting old too and he began to worry about the fate of his little granddaughter. After thinking it over for many nights, he decided to take her to the City. He had been there many years ago, when he still was young and gay. He would take her to some family that would need a servant and they would teach her many new things about their way of living.

One bright and clear morning, the "Tata" and his granddaughter set out toward the City. Maria was riding grandfather's burro. It was a long trip, and after three days they arrived at the City. What a sight for Maria! There she was, looking down the valley and it was all full of houses; and those houses had other houses on top of them! And still others had more houses on top of them! And they were so big! Maria was scared at this sight, but with Grandpa at her side she felt secure. Slowly they began to go down until they reached the first houses. They were not very different from their house, although they had something peculiar to them. They had to leave the burro by a house in the outskirts of the city and then be-

gan to walk into that city. Everything was new for Grandpa too, because at the time he first came to the City, it was not so big and noisy as it was now. He was scared too, but he overcame his fear and both went into the streets that led to the center. So many people! Women were dressed differently too. Maria was astounded, she did not know where to look first. The streets were so smooth and hard that her little bare feet felt cold touching those streets. Suddenly she heard a gruesome noise. Oh Grandpa, what is that!— A truck loaded with sacks of something is slowly coming up the hill. That thing is louder than Tata Ticono's oxen! It rolls uphill and has people inside looking out, it carries all that load, has two big eyes and a strange grin in the face! What a monster is this!— Maria was so scared that she started to cry but her tears did not last long. She began to look again. There she could see a similar monster but smaller and with no place for cargo; it stopped, a loud horn was heard, then a whistle, and then it started again and disappeared through one street. She noticed that where it had stopped, there was a strange man standing, with strange clothing on and a strange hat. He would blow a shiny thing in his mouth and would whistle louder than the wind in the cold nights back at Grandpa's place. As they were reaching down-town, more and more of these monsters went by in every direction. Then she saw another one, this time it was standing at one corner and people were getting in. While they were passing by, the door of that monster closed and away he went rolling down the street. Maria was amazed and wondering what those things were and how those people had the nerve to step into them and be carried away.

Now she could see those big houses right in front of her. They had very high walls with many big windows and doors. People were constantly going in and out those doors. The couple kept on walking. At a corner they passed by a bunch of young boys that would look at them and say something that she could not make out what it was, and then turn around and laugh. She did not under-

stand what was going on. They went along. Every so often, at regular intervals, Grandpa and Maria had to cross a street. What for were there so many roads going in that direction?—Once, while crossing one of those streets, she was almost seized by one of those rolling monsters. The strange clothed man standing at the corner had blown that shiny thing and had whistled very loud and repeatedly. He also said something to them, but Grandpa just grabbed her and went along.

Lights began to spring up. They must use very big candles to have such lights in those houses and hanging from those posts, but Maria did not see anyone climbing up those poles and lighting them! How strange everything was! And those colored lights!

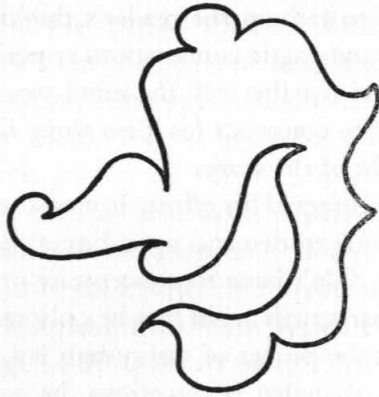
The houses began to get smaller again. They were not so tall anymore and did not have so many doors and windows. But, where do all these people have their planted land?—Where do they have their animals? She could not see a single sheep, nor goat, not even an ox or llama!

Now Grandpa began to stop in front of each house and push a little button near the wall. Pretty soon the door would open, and he would ask if they needed some helping girl. Sometimes they would answer in a strange language and close the door. Then they would go to the next house and try there. Sometimes the woman in those houses would answer in that strange language too, but would not close the door. Instead she would go inside, call someone and come out with another woman. That woman would speak to Grandpa in their same language. The woman would tell then that the lady had told her that they did not need any girl, and then she would give Grandpa some instructions as to where to ask next. Finally they got to a house where they had possibilities. The lady of the house and another woman were talking to Grandpa, the lady would talk to the woman in that strange tongue, and the woman would then speak to Grandpa the way she always speaks with him. After a while of talking, in which Grandpa told them how they

had come and why he wanted a house for his granddaughter, the lady consented to hire the girl. That was the end of the journey. Grandpa thanked them very much, gave his blessings to his granddaughter, kissed her on her forehead and with tears in his old weary eyes, started back the same street they had come. Maria watched him go until she could not see him clearly and then was taken into the house by the woman. That was the last time she saw her grandfather.

It was dark outside and lights were shining everywhere. Strange sounds could be heard, those monsters rolling along, people walking in all directions, lights of all colors twinkling, while a sad man, feeling very lonesome, was walking alongside his burro that now had no load to carry, getting out of the Big City.

—WALTER WEISS, *La Paz, Bolivia*



Climax

HE MUST start with simple words . . . simple sentences and simple thoughts . . . no, he must write the whole thing with simple words and simple sentences . . . the thoughts could be built out of these. Building, word for word, step by step, a web of emotion to trap the reader in the last line. In the climax. The subtlety of it all struck him; the mood almost created itself once the thought started un-reeling. It was beautiful. The story unrolled itself gently, slowly, like the train of thought would come as one sat in an easy chair and stared out the window. And there were no big words or complex phrases to make it difficult to discern the actual meaning of the story.

The story seemed to come from within the reader; it was almost like magic. The trick was to stack the phrases on top of each other in neat, simple order. The mind works along these lines: simple, short thoughts each tied together and the second dependent upon the first. To write in this style, he realized, was the only real form of writing. To try to fashion the reader's thinking by the use of elaborate sentences and vague connotations requiring concentration was silly . . . that was not the way the mind worked. It is the real chore of the author to construct his ideas along the lines on which he originally thought of the story.

To these ends he directed his effort. It was so simple. The mood was terrific! It seemed to descend upon him as he read over what he had written. He didn't have to concentrate or study to get the meaning behind a paragraph . . . in fact he only read half the words . . . it was here that the power of the system lay. The author does not try to fashion thoughts or emotions, he merely directs the thought stream gently. He prods gingerly at the emotions with short simple phrases . . . building up to a big push in the last two sentences . . . and the big punch in the last word.

The sentences must be shorter near the end, so that the reader

gets the full meaning of them more quickly . . . he will be reading more rapidly near the end. But they must also carry more punch . . . more push on the emotions. And the climax had to come in the last word. As the last word hit the brain, it must come as a blow to the base of the skull. There should be a stream of shivers down the spine at the sight of the concluding word. It must contain the climax.

The appropriate word seemed a little stubborn at coming to his brain. This was bad, for the last word, while it must be the most powerful, must rush in with the same train of thought. It must slip through the mind unchallenged as it is read, or its real punch will be lost. He decided that there must be a slight imperfection in the train of thought somewhere that diverted the stream from its conclusion in the most forceful manner.

He re-read what he had written, trying to brush away spidery imps of new thought that suddenly appeared in the story. That was another danger in this type of writing: it must be enjoyed once, and not re-read, for the same train of thought never comes twice in an identical manner. He tried to weed out these distracting phrases, and with every stroke of the pen new imageries appeared and new thoughts danced before him from behind every word. Dammit, he thought, the story should revolve around a point! It was trying to revolve about a line.

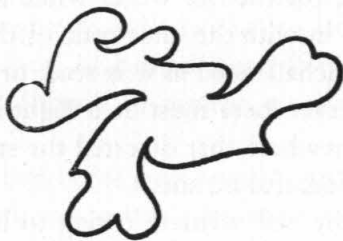
He crossed out, rewrote sentences . . . paragraphs . . . phrases . . . and then he re-read it. It was becoming misty, unclear . . . he must concentrate more thought into it. He rewrote more of the story . . . and watched with sinking heart how it twisted slowly out of his hands. Tantalizingly, a thought at a time, it drifted away. He wrote furiously, half crying, and the story turned to mist in his hands and disappeared in a flurry of meaningless words.

It was gone.

He sat down on the bed and ran his fingers through his hair. It was so futile. He had dropped the train of thought . . . it would

never come again, not in the same way. Even if he wrote it again, he could not recognize it. He hung his head and looked at his hand slowly twisting the paper in half and at the two shiny, wet tear spots on his hand.

—FRANK ALBINI



The College Student: *A Sort of Handbook*

COLLEGE STUDENTS are an interesting lot of people and worthy of being discussed. I should like particularly to discuss the students of a small and somewhat imaginary school which might be called Pacific Tech or Western College, or, more descriptively, Monastic University.

The students at Monastic U. have many things in common. They are all men between the ages of twelve and seventy (plus or minus one). They speak a common language, Monastalk, which is a combination of English and God-knows-what in the ratio of one to two. All the students eat their meals (referred to as "barf" in Monastalk) together in the Student House feeding room, and they similarly enter social and athletic activities as a group. The most important thing they have in common is their reason for coming to Monastic: the desire to get what they call the "true clue." The students' motives in trying to "get the clue" are varied. These motives are represented in the different types of students found in Monastic's ivory towers.

First of all, there is the Ambitious Student. This lad has been a contest-winner in high school, a cadet Lieutenant-General in his R.O.T.C. unit—a real go-getter; he has Spoken for Democracy (tying for third place); he may even have been on *television!* The Ambitious Student glories in glory. He sees in new knowledge the glitter of new prizes, bigger and better. To him, higher education represents a new height of fame—a towering crag, yet unconquered, which he thirsts to climb. Consistently, more Ambitious Students enter Monastic U. than ever leave it. This does not mean that many of them flunk out. Some do, but a far greater percentage of them is shifted into another category (notably to Cynic Class B).

One common type of student found at Monastic never actually

entered it; he is entirely a product of the University. Here is the case history of a typical Plodder. Freddy Frosh, a happy, well-rounded, and broad-minded high school graduate, entered Monastic as a freshman. Freddy possessed the uncommon and highly commendable desire to get an education in order to make a better man of himself. He wanted knowledge because he thought it would be useful—yea, necessary—to him as a citizen in today's world. So far, so good, but our larval Plodder (for this was Mr. Frosh's classification, although he never suspected it) wanted more than academic knowledge in his education. Being broad-minded he was naturally attracted to Monastic's social program—exchanges with Schweppes (no relation to the quinine water) College, and so forth. In a few short weeks, Freddy reached the pupal stage of his development: he attended all social functions, went out for athletics and debate and glee club and politics and water fights and so on and on and on, until he finally realized, "There *are* a lot of things to do here at Monastic." By this time he was a fushlugginer mess: "pooped," "spazzed"—whatever you may call it, he was completely out of it. Freddy may now be seen staggering around campus, complete with twitches; he is a full-fledged Plodder.

The Bookworm shows slightly different characteristics. This fellow does not require a broad scope of interests to wear him out, since academic work alone suffices. His thirst for knowledge is a compulsive force; he must learn *everything*. Either he expends all his energies trying to do this, or he realizes that it is futile to try. In the former case, the Bookworm becomes a Plodder. In the latter case, he may commit suicide, in the manner of the late crew racer who finally became aware that he could never hope to drink all the beer in the world, or he may become a Cynic Class B.

The Practical Student is unlike the Bookworm in that he doesn't want to learn everything. He just wants to learn enough, or appear to learn enough, to get a job which he has his eye on—perhaps a particular job, or perhaps any one within a general field of his

choice. To put it much more bluntly, the Practical Student's prime goal in life is security, spelled m-o-n-e-y. This student's life at Monastic is rather dull: either he flunks out or he Gets his Job; he may even be married while attending M. U. (already having his Job lined up, of course). If he is married, either he flunks out or he Gets his Job and Lives Happily Ever After. The Practical Student's main interest in school is keeping up his G. P. A.

A more interesting character is the Cynic Class B. He is the epitome of disillusionment, the result of countless thwarted attempts to reach goals which he now insists were figments of his once foolish imagination. He has been hurt by the world and has the idea that he can hurt it back by ignoring it—keeping himself from it. The Cynic Class B stays at Monastic to learn, to be sure, but knowledge, to him, is merely his last, begrudged contact with reality—a sort of crutch he must lean on because he cannot quite stand alone on his righteous anger at having been hurt. He will not admit, especially to himself, that he needs any crutch, so he disparages knowledge at every opportunity. The Cynic Class B can be likened to a man sitting in a box just big enough for him and nothing else, ready to bite the unwary passerby who comes too close. This type of student is to be pitied; he is too far gone for anything else.

The last type of student is the Cynic Class A. In comparison to his cynicism, a "Class B" attitude is no more than lazy self-pity, a sorry perversion of a truly morbid outlook. The Cynic Class A has a definite, strong motive for "getting the clue"; *he* has a purpose in gaining knowledge—lots of knowledge. He has long ago made up his mind about the world: it is a bad place. He is going to learn all he can, and then he will find or make something that will send pieces of this planet flying in all different directions.

—BARRETT MILLER

Fable

EARLY one evening
In Egypt
While the Pyramids were being built,
The King and Queen were sitting in a litter
Inspecting.
Outside
The litter-bearers were eavesdropping.
The Queen said
To the King:
Observe that chicken
Cross the road.
Why does the chicken
Cross the road?
And the King said,
I know not.
To get to the other side
Of course
Said the Queen.
There was a smack
A cry
The sound of a falling body.
The litter-bearers walked on
Into the evening
Of Egypt.

—JOSEPH FINEMAN

Excelsior

ONE OF the finest places I know of on this earth for meeting unusual and unforgettable creatures is on the first class coaches of the Indian National Railways. For you see, it was on the midnight train running between Aligarh and Agra that I had my first and last conversation with Maurice Porter. The date as I remember was in the early part of February, 1934, and I had just spent a rather depressing day with my friend and fellow Californian, Bob Fredricks, a professor at the Aligarh Mohammedan University. Bob had apparently just given a lecture on success and spent the whole afternoon and evening giving his pet thoughts and theories about this elusive condition. Unknown to him this was a rather sore spot with me. I had come to India several years before accepting a rather poorly paid position as a reporter on the Calcutta Daily Express with the hope of supplementing this meager salary by selling copious amounts of stories to magazines in the States. This optimism of mine, as I soon found out, was certainly not justified. In fact, just the day before my Aligarh visit I had received two rejections on stories which I was sure would find their way to someone's heart. As a result of my failures during the past year I had protectively adopted a personal philosophy of fatalism. I had thus decided that the secret of success was not in my hands, and that I should stick it out in India for a little while longer hoping that eventually good luck might deposit something in my eagerly outstretched arms. But during almost the whole of my visit Bob preached on his ideas of success which were, of course, the absolute antithesis of my convictions.

"Yes sir, the only thing needed for complete success, my boy, is just plain old-fashioned hard work and perseverance. Mind you, you also have to have a pretty high goal to look up to and work for but the main thing is to have strong convictions, be willing to work hard, have lots of . . ." and so on ad infinitum, ad nauseam.

And so it was with quite a bit of relief that I was able to excuse myself to catch my train to Agra. And then just after this depressing discussion on self-will who should lady luck toss into my hands but one of the most remarkable men I have ever had the fortune to know, Maurice Porter.

My first visual impression of Maurice Porter was in the meager light of the two torches carried by the porters who had escorted me down to the station. He had a narrow English aristocratic face, dark hair; he had a quite noticeable air about him of intense eagerness which if one didn't notice it visually at first certainly noticed it when he spoke.

"Ah, are you going to join me in this coach? Come in, come in won't you? It is marvelous to see a fellow European. Here, let me take your bags. I've been getting a little lonely all by myself. Maurice Porter's my name—very glad to meet you. Every time the train has stopped all the way from New Delhi I've been hoping someone would get on that I could talk to. Won't you take the bunk here—it seems more comfortable than those two over there."

After the usual short introductions it became evident that neither of us were particularly disposed to sleeping that hot night, and so we settled down for at least a couple hours of conversation.

I soon found that my companion was an intelligent well-educated Englishman of thirty-five; he had studied at some of the best schools in England and the continent and had served in the World War as an officer. He was in every respect, except one, a perfectly normal English gentleman: he was obsessed with (what I thought to be) a completely insane notion. His theory occupied almost the whole of our conversation that night.

"You seem to be an intelligent, thinking person; and so you must have felt at some time dissatisfaction with the lack of success on the parts of the major religions of the world in getting men to be good and kind and humble. Has it ever occurred to you that the religions are trying to go about this in an entirely wrong manner?"

Not having any premonition of the fantastic plan he was going to propose I came forth in this pause with a standard noncommittal reply reserved for just such occasions.

"Well I think I have found the secret that all the religions and all the philosophers have been searching for. And it is so obvious; if only someone had found this secret a little sooner, oh, the world would be a much better place.

"Just look through history at the lives of the great men of religion and philosophy; the really good and inspired leaders have one amazing physical experience in common. *They all starved themselves for several weeks.* Jesus just before the start of his ministry fasted for forty days and nights on the Mt. of Olives; Buddha before he started preaching his gospel led an extremely ascetic life for several years. . . .

"Here is a paradox, you see; these brilliant men who spent their lives teaching others why they should be good did not realize how they themselves were born into their inspired lives. You see, it is a physical device that will save mankind—not a moral code forced on men before they are ready for it."

Soon after he had discovered this principle Maurice Porter went into a fasting spree for three weeks which ended in a trance—"a most wonderful emotional experience" out of which he came a completely reborn man; he saw the world in an entirely new light; he felt he had to accomplish all the good possible in one lifetime, and above all he had to let the world know his discovery.

I can still picture him sitting across from me as the morning light slowly lit up his features, his eyes burning with some intense fire. He was sitting straight backed with his arms fixed straight against his body as if to support his immense self-imposed burden; he had not stopped talking for almost four hours about the great and good things he planned to do for the world. But the light must also have lit up my unenthusiastic face, and I could see a frown cross his countenance.

"Oh, but I can see you don't believe me either. I do so wish there were a way I could convince you; it is the truth I tell you—it happened to me. Something I shall never forget—but . . . no one believes me."

At this he lapsed into a despondent silence. I could see he was extraordinarily sincere about this idea—in fact quite fanatical about it. I could imagine the countless times he had approached people just to be laughed off. I think then I felt genuinely sorry for him.

But soon after dawn the train arrived in Agra where I had business, and since he was going to Calcutta we parted with a few strained words. He left quite an impression with me for the next few days but eventually as new and interesting things occupied me I completely forgot about that singularly crazed fellow.

It was not for another six months that I again heard of Maurice Porter. During the summer months for the past two years it had been my custom to take a week off, escape the unbearable summer heat of Calcutta, and spend a cool and pleasant time in Darjeeling. I always stayed at Mt. Everest Hotel, and this summer when I checked in I asked to see the list of guests to see if any of my acquaintances were likewise retreating from the heat. There on the register I was surprised to see the almost forgotten name of Maurice Porter. I was astonished to find from the manager that he had gone for two months on a tiger hunt. Out shooting tigers was just about the last thing I could imagine him doing. Perhaps, I guessed, he had lost some of his zeal for his fantastic plan. But since no one else in Darjeeling knew anything about him, I left in a week, still somewhat bewildered by his supposed actions.

The following summer I heard for the third and last time of Maurice Porter. The typically unsuccessful 1935 Mt. Everest Expedition had just returned from Tibet and it was my fortune to be assigned to interview the leader in Darjeeling. It was no trouble at all to find the expedition; they were scattered all over the town and after a few inquiries I was able to find the leader, a bearded

and rather frustrated-looking fellow. He related the usual facts so typical of Mt. Everest expeditions: how particularly bad combinations of poor luck and weather prevented anyone from setting foot on its summit.

"We found that the steep slopes below the North Col of Everest were extraordinarily dangerous. In fact, while we were there several immense avalanches swept down the very route we had expected to cover. So we didn't achieve anything very remarkable on the mountain itself, but below the North Col we met with the most extraordinary sight. A lone man had last summer tried to climb the mountain. This was, of course, the most impossible idea imaginable, and after spending several weeks vainly trying to climb the North Col he died from exhaustion. We found his body and diary near one of the old camps of a previous expedition."

I guess I knew even before I asked the question what the answer would be.

"Do you know his name?"

"Why yes, it was, let's see now . . . ah yes, *Maurice Porter*."

My expression must have shown my shock for immediately he replied,

"Oh, did you know the poor fellow?"

And so I related that rather unusual morning I had spent with Maurice Porter over a year ago, and thus, being somewhat of an acquaintance, he kindly let me read what was left of his diary.

After reading this strange fascinating record I realized how little had I really known of Maurice Porter. He had learned during one of his trances that he was destined to be the first to climb Mt. Everest, and he saw this as a way to prove to the world the efficacy of his theory. He first tried to fly a plane to India with the plan to crash it on the top of Everest and to walk down, but when the local authorities found out his suicidal plan they impounded his plane. He then went up to Darjeeling (probably just after our talk on the train) and spent some time getting in condition for his

great effort. He managed to hire some porters, and disguised as a native Tibetan he left India bound for the highest mountain. To cover up his tracks he paid for the hotel room for six months and told everyone he was shooting tigers. He managed to get surprisingly high on the mountain for one so lacking in experience and equipment, but was completely stopped on the difficult steep slopes of the North Col. He never gave up his futile attempt until he died of complete exhaustion.

So this is all the story I know of a poor fellow who, I guess, tried too hard to achieve his too ambitious goal.

"Just below the North Col the Sherpas were badly shaken by the discovery of a lone man's frozen body. From a diary which we found on his body we were able to piece together his curious story . . . he thought that if he reached the summit of Everest single handed . . . he could preach his divine doctrine to mankind . . . We buried the body in a crevasse"—Eric Shipton, *Leader, 1935, Mt. Everest Reconnaissance Expedition.*

—KIM MALVILLE



Where Man Has Never Set Foot

TO FIND a place where man has never set foot is the ambition of many explorers. One day I decided to find such a place.

I decided to climb a mountain in the Himalaya range. I gathered my climbing gear and started to get the party together. We reached Mount Footou, (Natives pronounce it two ways: Foot-ow and Foo To You) and started out for the dangerous climb. We reached a place where the native packmen ran from a fierce, invisible god called Foo-ling-you. My party and I reached a deep crevasse. In crossing this, all my friends fell to the endless depths of the glacier. I realized the fact that I was all alone. I had a little food left in my pack. I continued to climb. I could not turn back. The crevasse was impassable. I could see a cliff ahead of me. I could not get around it. It seemed as if I would perish in the attempt to reach the unknown place. I climbed on to the base of the cliff. I scanned its surface for a place to climb. There was none. I dug my finger nails into a niche and struggled up. I fought and clawed for every inch. I made it! I reached the peak of the climb about three hours later. The view was magnificent. I could see for miles. I had one small bundle of stale biscuits—ten to be exact. On this food I must live for an equal number of days. I lay down. My head hit a smooth rock. It was clear and brown. What mineral was that? It was a beer bottle! I had failed! Man had been here before.

A year later I explored a cave. It was in the depth of the African jungle. I was alone in the cool peaceful air of the dark cave. I walked merrily along. I was sure this was the place at last. I slipped and fell. I landed on a ledge some fifteen feet below. Yes, I had found a refuge from the steps of man. But, was I not imprisoned here to die a solemn death? Wait! There was a small narrow ledge extending up to the solid level. I bent over to examine the ledge. An egg shell was at my feet, and an old picnic basket. I had failed once more. Man had been here ahead of me.

Two years later my boat docked in Columbia. I had heard of a place in the jungle of Columbia's neighbor, Ichthoxampt, where no man had been. The place was called "the lost lake of the mushroom." It was a small, shallow lake on top of a mushroom shaped rock stratum. A pilot of an airplane had seen it once. He knew the shallow depth of the lake because it came up only a few inches on the ducks. A day's journey brought me to this place. I managed to climb up the mushroom plateau by roping a plant and lifting myself up. When I reached the top I saw the plant. It was small and almost uprooted by my pull. It was the only greenery on the plateau. I quickly destroyed it to prevent future explorers from dulling my glory. Then I saw my mistake—it was the only way for me to lower myself back down. I saw no variation to the smooth granite—no boulders, no knobs. The pilot was wrong. The pool was a deep spring. The water ran off one side of the plateau. I figured how tall the trees were. This took several days. I figured how I could rope a tree and swing down. It would work. I put my axe on the rope and swung it down to clear out the brush. I had tied another rope on so that I could retrieve my axe. I ate duck meat for the fourteen days I was there. The fifteenth and final day, I prepared to swing down. I slept in a new place that night. I was going to leave a marker there because it was the most likely place for a pilot to see it. Then I saw it. A half smoked package of Lucky Strikes. This was the last straw. I gave up the search. Man had been everywhere.

I came home disgusted. It was a bleak December day. The white snow was falling. I went into the house. I slept. The next day, in equally bad humor, I stepped out on the front step to get the Sunday morning paper. The cat rushed for the door. As I kicked her out of the way, I slipped and fell into the fresh snowbank. Suddenly an idea struck me. Man was never in that snowbank. It would melt that day and I would be the only person to set foot there.

—BOB DEFFEYES

Rain

IT WAS night, ten o'clock on a spring night, and raining hard. Lightning pointed its many fingers of doom at trees and hilltops, and sometimes flashed from cloud to cloud and from cloud to earth with an awesome, wonderful thunder. And the rain came down as if out of a bucket, in thick curtains of huge drops, running down the pathways and hillsides in little mucky rivulets which joined and fed the stream, which, as if proud of its new power, roared like a river and could be heard everywhere. In the Cabin by the Stream it mixed its voice pleasantly with chug-chug-chug of the little gasoline-powered generator in the shack nearby, which gave a rhythmic basso ostinato to the harmonious themes of the beating rain, the roar of water over rock, and the soprano tinkle of the drops of water which, finding some stone or other too steep for them, leapt off and joined their creator again after a decline gradual enough to suit them. In the other cabins the roar was fainter, but knowing their distance the people there were all the more aware of its power—"Gee, listen to that brook!"

Somebody in the Cabin in the Woods thought it was too crowded there, and scrounged around in the shadows made by the naked electric lights to find his galoshes, raincoat, hat. The other people loudly singing, and the person next to him, who was harmonizing in "barbershop quartet" style, made a conspicuously successful effort at continuity while his friend tilted him over at an angle like a piece of furniture to see whether he was sitting on the rainhat. He was, and with that last piece of clothing put on and properly buttoned around the chin, so that everything on him was sealed up except his face and hands, he carefully struggled through the various legs, feet, knapsacks, and whatnot on the floor, and opened the door. This action was accompanied by a little blast of cold air and a big blast of noise, and the man, unconsciously fearing that his friends would be annoyed, quickly wormed his way around the

edge of the door, at the same time drawing his flashlight out of his pocket and turning it on, and closed the door on the other side of him, leaving the inhabitants of the Cabin in the Woods to their singing and to the acute realization, inevitable when a small number of people are enclosed in a confined space, that they were one less in number. His own first impression as he closed the door was of the sudden attenuation of the sound of the singing; as if a input lead in a phonograph had suddenly shaken loose, and all one could hear were the singing of the needle in the groove, a thunderous "I'VE GOT SIXPENCE—JOLLY JOLLY," accompanied by a magnificent wheeze of harmonica music, became a minute "sixpence—I've got . . ." and got lost in the noise of the rain and the river as he moved away.

There was a beat, beat, beat of rain on his raincoat and hat, distinctly heard above the far-off noise of the stream, which through familiarity began to sound like nothing but a special kind of silence. He walked down along the path, a small interrupted circle of light, feeling through his big, clumsy, galoshes and the sneakers underneath the characteristic gritty feeling of sand from which the mud has been washed away, so that it projects a little from the earth. He looked up at the clouds and reflected that it was the time of the new moon, so the moon would not be up tonight anyway, even if the sky were clear—a fact which might have been consoling, but this man needed no consolation; he was happy. He kicked little pockets into the mud with his heel, and the rain quickly filled them up into little ponds; he dammed the little eroded rivulets on the path with the toe of his boot, and watched while a little lake accumulated and then found another outlet, beginning the stream anew in a different bed. On a sudden impulse, he started running as fast as he could. He ran around twists and turns, his galoshes slapping the mud and spattering it in little drops, and even jumped a steep place. Then, as he saw a few dozen yards off the lights of the Cabin by the Stream, he slowed to a walk, for no better nor worse reason than that which had made him speed up, and plodded downward, a little

out of breath. He heard the thrumming of the generator, listened to it growing louder as he approached the little dark shack that housed it, and, as he passed close by, under the flapping power lines that went up to the Cabin on the Hill, he could hear all the little clicks and thumps that make up the cycle of an internal combustion engine, and the whirr of the rotor against its bearings and brushes. As he passed, this faded away, and for an instant the slurp of the mud and the pounding of the rain recaptured his hearing, but almost immediately there appeared the faint sound of music again—but this time of a different sort, for of the four cabins, only the Cabin by the Stream was blessed with an old upright piano, and somebody was playing a jazz tune on it. The rhythm was very prominent, and almost unconsciously the man walking toward the cabin shifted his gait to agree with it—and then he felt the rhythm all over him, and smiled: “(step *slurp* step *slurp*) TA-dum ta-DA-da—ta-da-da-da-da-da-da (step *slurp* step *slurp* step *slurp* step *slurp*).” He came nearer the door, stepped onto the log that served as a door-step, drew up the latch and pulled. The music and the heat blasted out at him; he got in and shut the door quickly. It was as if someone had patted the phonograph on the transformer, and made the input lead tentatively form a connection again; everything was suddenly warm and noisy. There were only about six people there; they all looked up in apparent wonderment at the new arrival; the music stopped; there were choruses of “Hi’s” and one woman’s friendly if useless question, “How’re things up on the hill?” And Bill wanted to know if Bob up on the hill had found the spark-plug he was looking for, and Henry (which was the name of the person who had just come in) said no, and flopped down, rain-coat and all, on the bed between two of the women. They edged away from the wet fabric, and were comfortable for the while; when the hot room got too much for Henry, he took the coat off, and his galoshes too, and left them where they lay, to get lost again in the next general shift of bodies when someone got up to make a cup of cocoa, or play the piano, or go outside into the rain.

—JOSEPH FINEMAN

On the Lake Shore

WIND and waves
and rosy feathers of clouds
 crowning a dying sun's last efforts
And tall green trees swaying in the evening breeze
and pale sunlight, yellow on the rooftops
 And a girl in my arms.

Summer evenings on the lake shore
I love them.
I love to run along the white sand beach
Wind in my hair, sand in my toes,
 Sunlight in my heart.
Out over the murmuring water
The flickering sunshine dances gayly
And the sky above is a lovely tranquil blue
Cold in contrast to the warm yellow hair
 and faintly reddened face
 of my lady.

* * *

Stern and menacing
The lake growls savagely on chilly autumn nights
And throws its spray upon my face and arms
 and hers.
No warmth here now.

But the autumn is the loveliest of all
I think so anyway.
There is something wild about the lake
Heaving viciously upon the empty piers
Grey bedecked with white against a somber night sky.
It is cold now, but my heart within me is afire.

* * *

All the world is young and bright and gay
When in the early spring the sun arises
 Waking the colors of the countryside from their
 nocturnal vacation
Bursting free upon the earth.
Warm and inviting in my mind's eye
The quiet waters respond to the first rays.

Spring mornings on the lake
Are gold and green and lovely.
Everywhere the trees and grass are shining green
 Playfully etched with black
 where the trees have not yet clothed their branches fully.
And the pale liquid blue of the water parts gracefully
For the golden band of brightness
 which beckons to us from the brilliant sun.
We would like to walk along that golden path,
 my lady and I,
Walk gladly on that blazing, shimmering path.
That we can not.
 But we can stand in one another's arms
 And dream of it a little, and laugh
 And be warm and young and happy.

—MARTIN TANGORA

We Dissect to Murder

WELL, pick pick little men,
Life's long shadow apart.
Deduce, deduce from gods
Who themselves wanted why.

Chain your cleverness to the ground,
Instead of heaven where it belongs.
Go round, and round again,
While Will scoffs from afar,
And mad Beethoven rages in the night.
And (mad) Beethoven rages in the night.

—JAY ARTHUR GLASEL

Decay

You can see it in the schools,
Among the young.
You can feel it on the streets,
Among the races.
You can smell it in the taverns,
Among the people.
—The pale thin trail of decay.

Some say we are born pure and become soiled.
Some say it is the taint of the original sin.

But none dare say to themselves
It is me, me, me who is decayed.

And stand up and fight.

—JAY ARTHUR GLASEL

Angels Alone

THE TOWLINE jerks taut, stretches momentarily, and the ground begins to move underneath you, scraping and bumping the skid and jostling you about in the cockpit, as if the earth were irritated with this mortal who is trying to escape her clutches. Soon the bumping lessens and the long grass at the edge of the runway brushes against the taut fabric to produce a sound like Earth's exasperated sigh as you slip away. She knows you must return to her stifling solidarity, but for a few minutes at least you will be free!

You pull back on the stick, the sighing ceases. The only noise now is the sound of the wind as it rushes around the sleek sailplane, tempered by the insistent beating of the towplane's powerful engine. You look down the slim polished nose of the glider, up the gently dipping towline, the last thread binding you to the earth. There the towplane hangs tilted against the sky, straining to free you from the relentless bond of gravity. Beneath, the airfield has faded into a green patch indistinguishable from the rest of the countryside. Ahead, the horizon fades, as it often does on late summer days, into bluish clouds. Above loom high, white clouds indicating good thermal conditions inviting and tempting you.

Wake up! No time for sightseeing, the pilot of the towplane has turned around and is waving. You wave back and he levels off. You grasp the release, reflecting subconsciously on how such a small thing can be the difference between freedom and bondage. A short squeeze, the sailplane slows almost imperceptibly, and the line falls away. The pilot waves again; you return the gesture, a little impatiently perhaps, for you are anxious to find a thermal so that your escape may be prolonged. You have purposely released near a cloud formation and now you see the swirling wisp of white that indicates a young cumulus cloud. It tops off that invisible whirlpool of rising air that will hold your plane and lift it. You kick the rudder pedals, shove the stick over, and you're off on your quest.

Your mind and body relax, only to begin tingling with the feeling of freedom and silence. Silence! So profound that the rushing sound of the wind only accentuates it, like the jet-black edging on an immaculate white gown. Suddenly the plane tilts crazily! One wingtip has hit the thermal. Quickly you shove the stick over; the plane rights itself and wheels around into the thermal. You're busy now, keeping the nose down and banking steeply to stay in the spiral of the thermal. The ground can be seen now, slowly turning far beneath you. You're busy all right, but not so much that you don't notice the things on the earth, cars scurrying back and forth and streams winding through green seas of trees and neatly-laid-out farms. How futile, how trivial they seem! How vital, how potent you are! For you are free. A line of poetry comes to your mind . . .

"Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty."—Lovelace

—JERRY PECK



"I don't want no shish kebab!"

Levels of Importance

[*April* 13, 1945]

THE LITTLE BOY reached up and took the ball of tinfoil from the top of the big desk. The desk was varnished brown, with many scratches on it; it was so high that the little boy could just reach the top of it. As a matter of fact, it was really much too big to be the property of so little a boy, but he was proud of it: it was so grown-up looking.

The ball of tinfoil was being saved for the scrap drive, and it was now about four inches in diameter. But he called it five or six; small children customarily exaggerate the size of small things as they underestimate the size of large things. He was proud of the size of the ball, and he was going to take it to school to show to the class. A few days before, it had been only an inch across; a miserable sphere accumulated by months of saving the tinfoil out of cigaret packs. But his mother had found about two feet square of heavy tinfoil in the alley a few days before, which accounted for the present huge size.

Mother called from downstairs, and he went down. She gave him his lunch, and he went off to school, with the paper bag in one hand and the tinfoil ball in the other. School was six blocks away, and he carefully counted them as he passed them. He stepped on each little furrow between the concrete blocks of the sidewalk, partly to spite the superstitions his fellows had about such matters, partly because he thought it would train him to take long steps and thus get to school more quickly.

He got to school, walked down the corridor into the room, and observed the teacher, and several children, not yet in their desks, playing. He walked over and started to talk about his tinfoil ball; but just then the teacher came to the front of the room with an im-

portant air; all the students took their seats, and the little boy was shushed heartily by his neighbors.

The teacher announced that the President had died; and she made a sad little speech that we should love him not because he is dead, but because he was a great man; and the children listened, hushed.

But the little boy heard only through the thick, gaseous screen of embarrassment.

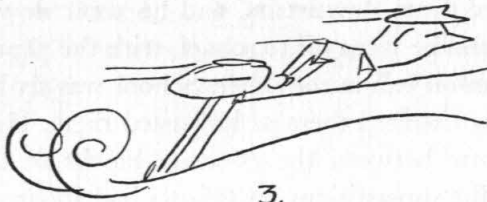
—JOSEPH FINEMAN



1.



2.



3.



4.

Bodeen

A Visit to the Land of Microcephalia

IT WASN'T unusual that I was having an argument. It was certainly common enough for Paul and me to get together and argue about religion, or perhaps I should say, for me to get Paul together, and argue about religion. Paul didn't care for these arguments. As far as he was concerned there was nothing to argue about; He was right. His prime interest was in saving my soul; mine, in getting him as furious as possible. Toward this end, I was purposely as irreligious and blasphemous as I could possibly be. After I had finished making a more than usually sacreligious suggestion as to the actual method of Christ's conception and birth, he fell away from me in horror and disgust, as if to dodge the bolt of lightning which must surely strike me. At that moment, I heard such a roar of thunder that I thought my ears would blow off my head, and I was enveloped in a flash of light which was so bright, that I was temporarily blinded. The world receded behind a veil of darkness, and I lost touch with reality, unconscious.

A deep, bass, organ-like voice: "What number are you?" I attempted to rise, but fell back, overcome with vertigo. "What number are you?" the voice intoned once more. Number? What number? Does he mean my license number, my selective service number? And what the devil does he want to know That for?

I forced my eyes open, and as soon as they focussed, slammed them shut again at what I saw. I sneaked them open once more. It was still there. It opened its mouth, "What number are you?" My interrogator was tall, and dressed in a toga-like garment of bleached sack-cloth. His head was no larger than my clenched fist, and something that looked like ashes was smeared all over his forehead. Something about him struck me as curious, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Perhaps it was that so impressive a voice issued from so small a head.

I greeted him: "What the hell is all the noise about?" I was sur-

prised at the effect of my greeting upon him. His eyes widened, his mouth fell, and he emitted a high-pitched scream, much more in keeping with the diminutive size of his head than was his previous bass voice. He started scratching madly at his abdomen, and scuttled out, shrieking incoherently.

I took this opportunity to examine my surroundings. I was in a small room, not more than ten feet square, whose walls, ceiling, and floor appeared to be made of dried mud. The furnishings were Spartan, not to say primitive. There was the low, hard table on which I had been lying, which was evidently meant to be a bed, and which had on it a rock-hard pillow, about the size of a piece of Kleenex. There were a few very crude (even to my untutored eye) paintings on the walls, and many pieces of tripe hanging from ornate nails. This was all there was in the room except for a small pile of human filth over in one corner.

By the time I had finished this survey of my cell, (for such I had come to consider it), my interrogator was back, in the wake of a similar individual. This individual was distinguished from the first by a greater girth, a more elaborate toga, an even smaller head, and an even deeper and more compelling voice. (I have learned since, that it is a general rule in this country, that the smaller the head, the more deep and distinguished the voice, and the more ornate the toga.) While the first of these two freaks, obviously the subordinate, continued to bob up and down and make signs on his abdomen, the newcomer cautiously advanced, making similar gestures over his stomach, stopped a few feet away from me, and in his powerful, resonant voice made the following pronunciamiento:

“My Son; I observe from the immoral style of your clothing, and the obscene, bloated grossness of your head, that you are not of this country. Though your ignorance of our way of life, the True way of life, excuses you from the enormity of your heinous crime, this state of ignorance of the Truth cannot be permitted to continue—you must be saved from yourself. You must—.”

“Wait a moment, kind sir. I should be much obliged to you if you would inform me of the nature of this crime which I am said to have committed, and if you would send me a good legal counsel, for I am sure that I have never knowingly committed any crime.”

“I know not what you mean by ‘legal counsel,’ but the crime you have committed is your blasphemous obscenity, such as you displayed in talking to Arch Ascending Colon Peter when he asked you a perfectly civil question. However, to teach you the Truth, I am assigning Descending Colon Joseph to be your spiritual tutor, and convert you from your heathenish ways to the true acceptance of Our Prophet.”

“Would you be so kind as to explain to me how I came to this Da—, excuse me,—to this place; and for that matter, where and what this place is?”

“That will all be explained by Descending Colon Joseph. Await him.”

He turned and left, followed by Arch Ascending Colon Peter, who was obviously mollified by my new and meeker demeanor.

I sat there, full of bewilderment and anxiety, until a menial, whose head was almost as big as a cantaloupe, entered, and in a voice which was merely baritone, asked me if I cared for some flesh and blood. I assured him that I wasn’t a cannibal, but a civilized, rational being, and that I would be quite content with more usual fare. He seemed to be surprised at my words, but unmoved, he left, promising to return with the flesh and blood.

You can well imagine my disquietude at the thought that in order to sustain my life I would have to resort to anthropophagy. I was therefore quite relieved when he came back bearing only bread and wine, and in a good humor, I asked him what had become of the flesh and blood. He assured me that that was what I was eating. When I objected that it was simply bread and wine, he left, as had Arch Ascending Colon Peter, with strangled mutterings and many intricate pattings of his stomach.

Soon after I had finished my repast, I noticed a sense of urgency, and looked around in vain for a place to relieve myself. Eventually the voice of nature overcame my innate sense of cleanliness, and in the face of my disgust, I added to the pile of filth in the corner.

Thus I existed for seven days, constantly attempting to explain to myself the reasons for the unusual behavior and physical characteristics of the inhabitants, and the manner in which I had arrived at this strange place. On the eighth day I received a new visitor, who informed me that he was Descending Colon Joseph, and that he was the tutor and spiritual guide assigned to save me by his Worship, The Lord High Rectus.

I was overjoyed at the chance to have all my questions answered, and the next number of weeks were occupied with question and answer, doubt and explanation. Unfortunately, he knew no more of my manner of arriving in that country than I did, but, I should like here to give, in short, an account of the history and mores of the country, as they were explained to me in those weeks.

The name of this land was "Microcephalia," and that of the inhabitants, "Microcephalics." All of the Microcephalics believed in a great religion called "Truism," which was based on a book called "The Truth," which everyone believed implicitly. However, there were disagreements as to the exact meaning of certain parts of The Truth, and over each point of disagreement there arose numerous sects. These sects had been springing up so rapidly and so copiously, that it was impossible to give each one of them a name, and the sects were referred to simply as "Sect No. 34," or "Sect No. 68."

The basic belief of the religion was in "The Prophet," a man who had written the book, "Truth, Revised Edition," and who was ultimately disemboweled by his enemies. For this reason, anything having to do with the bowels or any part of the lower digestive tract came to have sacred significance, and lengths of intestine were hung from church steeples, on walls, and around the necks of the Microcephalics. Ordinarily animal intestines were used, but occa-

sionally someone would hang a portion of the colon of one who had been near and dear to him, around his neck. This custom often led to a rather undesirable situation, i.e., the person wearing the intestine frequently developed an intense sentimental attachment to it, and refused to doff it when it became obvious that a new piece would be in order; he frequently wore it until it had become nothing but a mass of vile, stinking effluvium, which slowly oozed and dripped off of the string by which it was suspended.

In keeping with their respect for the digestive system, the titles of their clergymen were taken from the names of various parts of this tract, the higher the person in the hierarchy, the closer his title to the end of the system. Thus their titles ran from the lowly Maxilla and Mandibles, to his Worship, The Lord High Rectus himself, and his assistant, the High Colonic. The Lord High Rectus is accorded the greatest amount of respect and devotion by all the people of Microcephalia, as his head is hardly bigger than that of a pin, and his voice is so low, that it frequently descends in pitch below the range of human hearing, though all the Microcephalics hold him in too much awe to have ever informed him of this fact.

In addition they hold the products of this tract to be almost as sacred as the tract itself; they baptise their children in it, they smear it on their foreheads, and they are always sure to have some lying about the house, in case of emergency. (I was sufficiently convincing to have my tutor cause the large pile, which had collected in my cell, to be removed, until such time as I would become a true Truist, when it would no longer adversely affect my sensibilities.)

However, as in all such matters among these people, there arose a prophet with quite a contrary view. He preached, that since Our Prophet, after his disenbowelment, was not able to void himself, Microcephalics, in order to attain a true state of grace, should also refrain from such pursuits. His philosophy was admirably summed up in a new commandment which he proposed: "Thou shalt not defecate." The large following he attracted, (Sect No. 352) came

to a rather unfortunate end for a group with so worthwhile a purpose. It soon split up into two factions: the weaker members of the group, who, after a few months, crept off into the wilderness, and relieved themselves, and who were afterwards too ashamed to return (I understand that there are still roving bands of wild defecators in the uncultivated areas of that enlightened country); and those 352'ians, who were of a stronger moral fiber. This latter group refused to compromise their principles, but their unvoided excreta soon filled up the inside of their digestive tracts right up to their cardiac sphincters, leaving no room for fresh food, and they starved to death to the last member. A sad fate.

This is not an isolated example. Almost any person who proclaimed himself a prophet could gather about himself a large group of people and apply for a number for his sect. Such a case is that of a great prophet who staunchly preached complete celibacy, and attracted such a large number of people, that his sect (Sect No. 229) promised to become the largest in the land. However, after the first generation it vanished completely, except for the seven illegitimate children of the prophet himself.

I hope that you do not get the impression from reading the foregoing, that the Microcephalics were completely gullible. There was a point where even they drew the line. An example of this is that of one self-styled prophet who proclaimed to everyone he met that he was the Son of God. This was so absurd on the face of it, that even among the Microcephalics, he attracted no more than an even dozen followers. He procured an ad-man, and bombarded the public with such examples of lyric poetry as:

Sect 27 hits the spot,
 Twelve apostles, that's a lot,
 Son-of-God, and a Virgin too,
 Twenty-seven is the Sect for you.
 Holy, holy, holy, holy————

In spite of all his efforts at poetry and little pieces of parlor magic, Sect No. 27 never caught on. Its absence was never greatly felt.

After I became reasonably well acquainted with the history and customs of the land of the Microcephalics, my tutor gave me the "Truth" to read and digest. One bit of wisdom from this tome has remained in my memory particularly clearly, because of an enlightening experience. It stated that if and when a piece of flesh and butter (by which it meant bread and butter) falls, it will always fall butter side down. Soon after reading this, I was eating some flesh and butter during one of my lessons, and it chanced to fall out of my hands. It fell butter side up. With as much tact as I could summon, I called this to the attention of my tutor. He was not surprised. "Obviously," he said, "You buttered your flesh on the wrong side." The reasonableness of this explanation so overwhelmed me that I vowed, then and there, to be converted to the faith of Truism at the earliest possible date. So overjoyed at my decision was my mentor, that he promised to plead with the Lord High Rectus to allow me out of my cell, and to permit me to go about the city. He regaled me with tales of how the streets of the city were paved with gold, and how the happy inhabitants spent their time in such glorious pursuits as playing harps and fitting joyfully about.

Thus it was with much excitement that I left my place of confinement with my instructor three weeks later, the Lord High Rectus having graciously given his permission for me to explore the wonders of the city, as long as I was in the company of Joseph, my tutor.

Contrary to what I had been led to expect, the city was hardly more than a haphazard collection of squalid one-story buildings on both sides of a rutted, muddy ditch which served as a main street. I attempted to hide my disappointment at this rude shock, since Joseph was happily pointing to the ditch, and talking of gold pav-

ing-stones; pointing to the filthy, scrawny urchins, who seemed to be everywhere, and talking of happy, flitting, harp-playing cherubs. I realized that if I didn't see these things too, I should be sent back to my cell, so I saw

In the distance could be seen the fields, which were all lying fallow and neglected. The reason for this, I found, was that the Microcephalics spent all of their nights on the mountain-tops, waiting for the second coming of Our Prophet, and were so tired by day that they slept continually, and almost totally ignored their fields.

As we walked along, we came across four Microcephalics, two of whom were standing about three feet apart, and turning their tiny heads, one way and the other. The other two actors in this strange drama were staring hard at these head-turners, with all the evidences of intense excitement.

In answer to my question, my guide informed me that we were beholding a duel. In this country, when one person has a grievance against another, they stand facing each other, and turn the other cheek, again and again. The person with the strongest neck lasts the longest, and wins the duel.

On a similar walk a few days later, we observed a large group of people looking all about a tree. Standing under the tree, in the center of the crowd, was a girl. The girl claimed to have seen the Great-Aunt of Our Prophet (on his father's side) swinging from a limb of the tree. The members of the crowd were bemoaning the fact that they had come too late to observe this vision, and were praying for the Great-Aunt to return. When she remained away, they sadly departed, each giving the girl a costly present as he left. Soon after, the girl too left, weighed down with gifts and wearing a mysterious smile. She couldn't have been a year over eleven.

Due to my swift acceptance of the ideas of the Truth, and my usually exemplary behavior, it was decided that, in spite of the bloated freakishness of my head, and the relatively high pitch of

my voice, I was to be taken into the fold of the Truist Church. Thus it was that a number of months later, after intense preparation, I found myself on the way to the largest cathedral in the city. I had thought, from the squalor of the huts in which these people lived, that they were unacquainted with beauty and architecture, but the cathedral was one of the most impressive such buildings I had ever seen. It had taken about the entire population of the country one hundred years to build, and it was filled with all manner of gold vessels and precious jewels, paintings and other works of art. In fact the population of this city was employed, to the man, in the simple upkeep of it, dusting pews, polishing gold and silver, and such other tasks. Perhaps that is the reason that the people have neither the time nor money to make their own homes at all liveable.

As my tutor and myself entered, through the arch with the motto, "Guillibility is next to Godliness," indelibly incised over it, I beheld a scene, so grandiose in beauty and magnitude, that I shall not even attempt to describe it. Nor shall I attempt to convey the effect of the mixed choir, of two-hundred Microcephalics, flatulating in close harmony. (I later attempted to join this group, but due to a lack of sufficient control of pitch and amplitude, I was turned down.) Suffice it to say, that after my baptism, the method of which I have mentioned above, I was accepted as a loyal and free Slave of Truth.

As soon as I was an accredited member of the religion, and free of the restraining influence of Descending Colon Joseph, I set myself up, in a modest way, in the prophet business. Remembering the sad fate of Sec No. 27, I decided not to be too extremely wild in my claims, merely letting it be nosed around that I was the reincarnation of the Great-Grand-Nephew-in-law of God, and had quite a bit of pull with the Old Gentleman.

Within a short time, my sect, (Sect No. 2528), had within its ranks at least four out of five of all the able-bodied Microcephalics in the land. I felt that the time had come, so I proclaimed myself

infallible. This appealed greatly to all my sectarians, who came to me with all their domestic problems, questions on husbandry, agriculture, and methods of birth control. Unfortunately I had not reckoned with the jealousy of His Worship, the Lord High Rectus. Enraged over my great following, he summoned me to his cathedral, where he commenced to harangue me violently. As he talked his voice dropped lower and lower in pitch, until it was so deep that I couldn't hear him at all. This was most embarrassing whenever he stopped, for I was obviously expected to make him some reply. I got along for a while by answering "yes" if he looked as if he expected a "yes," and "no" if he appeared to be waiting for a "no." Evidently I guessed wrong at one point, for he drew back, eyes flaming, moved his mouth and patted his stomach, and once more I was struck by a bolt of lightning. I awoke to find myself right where I had started; arguing with Paul.

—HARVEY S. FREY

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