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RUSHLIGHT

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WHEATON COLLEGE

JAN 6 1956

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RUSHLIGHT

*"A rushlight flickering and small
is better than no light at all."*

To Mrs. William Mackenzie, Mr. Robert Sharp and Mr. Gray Burr we extend our sincerest appreciation for being judges of our 1955 poetry-prose contest.

1955 - 1956

RUSHLIGHT

December, 1955
Vol. 102, No. 1

Wheaton College
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Apple In Fall

Diana Datlowe '58

I exist in a world which says I exist,

exist in the midst of a thing
that says it's a thing,

spring from a tree that oughtn't to be . . .

Begun and the sun
agree with me
that soon and the moon
silver the tree
with the fruit of the fool,
and the fruit of the fool
is the rule
that says it's a rule.

Sudden Beauty

Sue Whiteley '58

Too deep and great, my love, for most to see,
Is the first bright star behind a sunset sky,
Where beauty, mirrored in a twinkling eye,
Gives but a hint of what the night will be.
So quiet rivers, leading to the sea,
Murmur low of what they signify,
And might and greatness very often lie
Within a humble cloak of dignity.
True beauty seldom paints a gaudy face:
She often wears a mask of simple things,
And who, in a resting eagle's wings
Can picture how they beat with mighty grace?
Thus your soul is like the evening star,
And I alone can know how deep you are.

Rushlight's 1955 Prose Winner

Searching

Anne Hutchens '57

Christopher Ames Reed made his appearance in the early spring on a rainy day which contrasted with his own crop of sunny yellow hair. Nobody really interested in this birth particularly noticed the weather, because they were so glad that he had finally arrived, relieving the pre-birth strain which always seems more evident in the rest of the family than on the waiting mother herself.

The Reeds were relieved that this was a male child, not that they doubted that there would be more children to come in the years following, but the worry of whether there would be an heir to the fairly large family fortune was over. His father had been the only boy in his family, preceeded by four sisters, and was therefore the most relieved of all when Christopher was born.

From the time of his birth—after people were fairly used to the idea of living in "Laurel Hills"—the child was doted upon in a manner not well appreciated by his young mother, but she didn't know much about bringing up children anyway.

Laura Ames Reed had been the younger of two children, a decade behind a brother whom she had never known very well. She had been to the best schools, was completely bored with them, even to the point of hating them, until she met David Reed the summer after her freshman year of college. After a brief courtship, they were married the following summer. David's mother, Alice Reed, couldn't have been more pleased; Laura was her delight. Now that she was getting used to her two-year widowhood, Alice strongly felt that she would like a daughter-in-law who would insure more Reed heirs to the fortune.

Alice Reed was a small, greying woman who delighted in her own comfortable standing. She had rarely known heartache until her husband died. Life had centered on doing the socially correct thing, bringing up five children and having many friends. All of this she had accomplished in a well-planned manner through her fifty-seven years. In her younger days, Alice had been a photo-

grapher's delight. She still retained her glamour, not as a beauty, but as an exceptionally attractive woman. Hair, now a soft shade of grey, only succeeded in lighting up her eyes which revealed a lively interest in the life about her. Her personality and kindly wit made her a favorite of all her friends.

When Christopher was born, his mother was twenty-one. Immediately she began to wonder where her gift for motherhood was hidden. Although she was deeply interested in the growth of her child, she wasn't very sure how to take care of him. Therefore his grandmother was more apt to take over his upbringing with the advice of the unintelligent nurse who would never let Laura play with him during her frequent moods of boredom. David wasn't home very much thus making his role of fatherhood rather vague. Christopher was left more and more to the care of his devoted grandmother. There was no end of attention for the child who followed her every place she went, to the hairdresser, on shopping tours, and he insisted that she be the person to transport him to and from the nursery school he attended.

The afternoon he was killed by the quickly-driven black car in the main street of town was a warm, peaceful, early summer afternoon. The two had gone into the drugstore to buy some film for the pictures they would take at the beach club that afternoon. No one was sure how it happened, but suddenly the street had become a sea of faces, agonized shrieks of the women at the scene and not many dry-eyed men. The tragedy itself was over in a matter of seconds. Christopher lay face down while the sun's rays reflected from his yellow hair. Alice looked but saw none of it.

When she opened her eyes a little while later she wondered why David had come into her room to disturb her nap. His entire figure was heavy with fatigue as though he hadn't slept for a long time. There was no trace of his usual smile. She looked at him briefly, stretched, smiled happily and looked at the clock which said five. Time to get up and begin thinking of dressing for dinner. Then with a pang of terror she remembered the bad dream she had just experienced. When she told him about it, she watched his eyes fill with tears, and became numb as he told her that it was actuality.

"David, my dear, you are so tired. Do lie down before din-

ner. Louise can bring you some tea and an aspirin. You really are working much too hard these days."

"Mother, your dream—it isn't—Mother, just tell me how you let him get away from you like that. There will be so many questions to answer. If you'll just tell me some of it now."

The month which passed, although she didn't realize much about it, was only a hazy succession of doctors, nurses and once in a while, Laura. She barely recognized the thin, chalk-white girl who was her daughter-in-law. Most of all she wondered why Christopher didn't come to see her. She wondered if she were very sick to have so many people around her all the time. Later they seemed to disappear and only the constant nurse remained. She had no idea of what was wrong, but stayed in bed as she was told to. Most of all she wanted to see Christopher.

He had always said his prayers about seven-thirty. Tonight she would hear them herself. It had been a long time and she wasn't sure if he could remember all the words to the Lord's Prayer. He would at least need some of her help. When she at last made her way to his room unobserved, she felt something was different. The bed was ruffled, and the big black and white panda she had given him for his birthday was not there. As she started to make his bed, she was startled by the pressure of David's hand on her arm. She smiled up at him and began rapidly explaining why she was out of bed, how she was feeling stronger now, and didn't Christopher look more like him every day. She was provoked when he didn't reply to her questions of where he was, but said nothing and allowed herself to be led back to the bed she was so tired of. Anyway, in the morning she and Christopher could play some croquet on the parched lawn. As she dropped off to sleep, she could hear David's voice pleading, "Mother, it isn't your fault. We all realize now what happened, so just try to realize that he's gone. Relax now as much as you can."

"What are you trying to say?," she murmured falling into sleep.

"Never mind, tell me tomorrow."

The days that followed were lived in a maze of anxiety. The weather was unusually hot and she could only slightly enjoy sitting by her window and wishing that the breeze were stronger and cooler. From her window she could see the middle of the oak tree which

was level with her gaze. The grass waved evenly when the breeze blew even slightly. She could hardly wait until the leaves began to drop so that she and Christopher could begin raking. Last year—she smiled thinking of how sweet he would look with his hair all blown from the same wind that would make their bonfire burn brightly.

Laura passed briefly under the trees. She was alone, walking slowly and seemed too thin, Alice thought. She reminded herself to inquire about a good tonic the next time she saw the doctor. Presently David joined his wife in the garden swing. They weren't saying anything, but they didn't need to. They were still so much in love. However, this was the hour that she should be with Christopher who would be having supper.

It surprised her how much the thought of him gave her strength. She felt she could go down and see him herself since her nurse seemed reluctant to have him in the room. Since she wasn't around, now was her chance to sneak down to see him. Her glee at the thought of watching him eat supper made her heart pound.

Slowly, slowly, for her knees were like jelly, she made her way to the top of the stairs, then slowly down. Because she couldn't wait to get to the breakfast room, she began calling for him. He didn't answer, so she called in a stronger voice, all the while wishing he would answer before someone came and led her back to sit down again.

It was Laura she saw first. She tried to smile pleasantly, realizing her guilt at being up without someone to help her.

"Go back to bed! David, can't you make her stop? Make her see how crazy she's driving all of us! Take her away!"

The agonized cries from Laura echoed throughout the first floor and on upstairs as she ran towards her bedroom.

"Christopher, Christopher, where are you? You must be a big boy to be out so late. You must be outside because you aren't in here."

And Alice leaned against the cabinet pondering.

All the next week she felt much better. She thought to herself that time could not be wasted while Christopher was growing. She could hardly afford to miss a single day of him. With this in mind she realized that she must force herself to be on her feet as much as possible.

No one could keep her down. The nurse hovered around until it was clear that her presence was of no physical or mental relief to Alice. David was there, usually at night and always with a reassuring hand. Laura was never around. It seemed David had said something about her going to her mother's for a visit. Anyway, Ali-

didn't care, for it was Christopher she had to see. An oblique look accompanied David's reply, "No Mother, he's not with Laura."

This was fine she thought instantly. Then he must be in the house, and the intensive search began. She started early the next morning. It was cooler weather now that Fall was here, and of course he would be out in the yard. That was the first place he always ran when they played hide and seek. Half an hour later she remembered it was Friday morning and of course he would be in school. The nurse left the room when she laughingly told her of her early morning stupidity. She intended to meet him at the gate when he came home, but her accustomed afternoon nap overcame her earlier than usual.

The days followed like this in rapid succession. She always seemed to just miss him.

The cold mornings in mid-December when the snow fell and stuck wetly to the ground came all too soon. Alice knew how Christopher loved this weather. She only hoped he would be able to wear his red snowsuit she had bought him last year. That was nonsense because he was sure to be much larger by this time. The shop in town would carry his size, she knew, and with careful calculation she realized she could walk to town and be back while the nurse thought she was asleep.

She started down the long lane to the road. The snow fell slowly, but it was colder than she had anticipated. She had forgotten her gloves and her coat pockets were not very deep. She walked a way down the lonesome road, making snowballs as she went, practicing so that she and Christopher could really have their annual "fight" before long.

She shivered frequently and wished she had a towel to wipe her hands and face. Her ears began to ring with cold; she hummed a verse of Jingle Bells to keep her mind off the weather. Only one car passed her going the other way. The water from its wheels splashed inside her boots making the cold even more unbearable.

She finally saw the lights of the town. They were turned on early because the day was so gloomy. She trudged on, nearly paralyzed with the cold and terrified of the dark road. Shadows jumped at her, and her head rang with dizziness and fatigue.

At last she reached the outskirts of town. Only a few blocks to the store. Her feet didn't seem to want to place themselves in front of each other. As she reached the entrance of the store, tired, and numb, a surge of disappointment overwhelmed her. The clerk shook his head. "Sorry, ma'am," he shouted through the heavy pane of glass. "We're closed for the night."

As she turned, her eyes lighted on the church across the street.

(Continued on Page 16)

Predicament

Mary Mallon '57

Within a host of cluttered vines
A forest of strange stretching blooms
Shoots tangled stamens, twisted in retort.

One startles, hot in scarlet dress;
Reflects the sun in its embrace
Until I want to clasp it to my face,

Desirous of a perfume pit,
And a forbidden texture, smooth
As alkaline. I'd seize, destroy this beauty,

In a mode unspeakable;
Here I'd wrench maliciously
The bloom, tortured in writhing in retreat;

So warm and yet it feels of ice,
So cold it burns with poisonous fire—
As dry ice fires the fingers with its warmth.

The bloom, a carrion of truth
So undenied it needs destruction
From a mirage of loveliness I have

Bestowed, that tricks the eye and hand
Until we look away, the glare
And touch too opposite to make us laugh.

Yes, turned away to later find
The flower in a different form;
A color complement, but frozen fired.

Sixty Minutes

Joanne Hysom '56

It is five o'clock. Vali is standing quietly by the window in the hen-house, watching the pieces of purple winter twilight sift in through the cobwebs. If the village were not so far away she could see the little lights by now.

It was fun to go into the village; she had gone once last year with Papa and they had bought two yellow ribbons for her braids. But Papa hadn't known how to tie them on right, and she couldn't manage them by herself. It was all right, though. She liked the soft brushing of her free hair about her cheeks when she bent over to feed the hens or pick the lavender. Sometimes she would stay bent over and let the wind blow her hair, and it would feel warm when she stroked it with her hand.

Yes, the village must be very far away. Suddenly Vali pokes her index finger into the cobweb on the window, and it sticks to her finger when she tries to pull it away. A great tear quivers in the corner of her eye and slowly, hesitantly, moves down her cheek. She hadn't meant to hurt the spider's nest. Perhaps he could make another one. She would look again tomorrow when she came to get the eggs.

The door to the hen-house had opened so softly that she hadn't noticed it. It is only when she sees the remains of the spider's nest shiver that she realizes the door has opened and the cold blue air has rushed in, so intent has she been on the spider. She tries to think who would have come down to the hen-house and, if they are behind her there, why they do not say anything.

But look! The spider, undefeated, has begun again to weave its beautiful nest. She can see him working quickly and she thinks, do not hurry, I shall see it tomorrow. I must hurry now for Papa will be watching for me. But the spider seems to want her to stay, at least until he has finished part of the web.

Papa has watched for Vali long enough. He must call her, for he never allows her to stay outside after it is dark. It would be dangerous; there are wild men and monsters that roam about

(Continued on Page 32)

I Love Everyone—Especially Him

Margaret Lee Weld '59

Smack! The wind mercilessly tossed the heavy part of the shade against the open part of the window, then gently, as if amending its harshness, blew it away towards the center of the room.

Adrie woke up at the sound, and slowly turning over on her back, she folded her hands underneath her head. The shade was sucked onto the screen, and then as it glided away, she could see outdoors through the narrow slit in the window. Tiny dust particles on the sooty brick ledge were sparkling silver. Echoing church bells rang up and down Commonwealth Avenue. A pigeon's leg disappeared from view, and a torn bit of newspaper sailed into the little room under the shade. For a moment, it raced with its shadow along the wall, then played hide and seek by itself—first over the tall lamp shade, through the chair leg, and finally fluttering noiselessly to the carpet, it sat ostentatiously on one corner looking almost out of breath.

Pulling off the coverings, Adrie stretched her legs far down the bed until her toes barely touched the end of the blanket, and she wiggled them in and out the covers trying to catch the sheet up between her big and second toes. She crossed one foot over the other and looked over her stomach towards the large window

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frame and green shade. There was a ragged hole in the upper corner, and a tiny straight stream of dusty palomino sunlight shot into the room. She put out her hand to interrupt its path and smiled when she saw the flickering spot it made on her thumb.

She wondered if she should get up and pull up the shade, or if that might spoil everything. The whole room looked such an inviting golden green now. Only the mirror standing on the floor reflected the light from the bottom of the window every time the shade blew open, casting lambent stars of light on the lamp stand and chair legs. Piled on the floor, she could make out her suitcase peering from under a melange of crinolins, gloves, pocket book, gold charm bracelet, and a crumpled silk dress. What a heavenly mess! Slouched in the corner of a wicker chair, her arms crossed clumsily in her lap, sat a faded Raggedy Ann. Adrie sat up and looked at her. The doll smiled and smiled and smiled. Darling Raggedy Ann! Why hadn't she noticed her before?

Propping herself up on one arm, she began pulling the bobby pins and clips out of her hair. The shade slapped into the window and out, in and out. Beautiful. She could sit and watch it forever. Swinging her feet over the side of the bed, she quickly fluffed her curls to remove their unnatural look, then jumped up straight, and leaning her hand against the window frame she let the shade snap up. Suddenly the room was floods of yellows and whites and sparkling, gay colors! The glass of water by her bed shimmered, Raggedy Ann's apron shone, and the mirror tossed its mocking smile from one side of the room to the other. She squinted and pushed her nose up against the window pane. Shallow pools from last night's rain glistened on the sidewalk. She remembered those puddles in the darkness and thought of the strong hand that had helped her over them as she crossed the streets. The street lamp had reflected their shoes in the water every time they stepped in by mistake, and even now she could hear his deep, handsome laugh when he teased her about her clumsiness. Now, the gold and orange trees down the center of the avenue glowed in the sunlight and stood out against the background of claret brick apartments on the far side of the street. Last night they had been large, friendly shadows towering above the avenue in-

errupted only by the headlights of passing cars. She wished it were always night! No, not really, because today was so completely perfect. She saw a little boy hurry to get across the street before the next car came. His pants were too long for him, and he was holding them up with one hand while he clutched at a large paper bag, probably full of "treasures", in the other. She wanted to run along beside him and play in the leaves and sing and shout and let everyone in the whole world know that she was the happiest girl alive!

What a heavenly mess, she thought again turning to look around her once more. Every item thrown about the room seemed to hold its own significance for the night before. She went back and sat on the bed. What had he said about the charm bracelet? Something terribly funny whatever it was. She laughed out loud when she thought of the way his nose crinkled and his eyes winked at her when he was about to make a joke. It was such fun having him tease her, because then she would always laugh and so would he and she just loved him when he was happy.

It would be hours until church. She had waked up so early—only nine o'clock—yet somehow she wasn't in the least bit tired. If only everyone else were up so she could tell them about yesterday. Maybe it would be better to go back to bed until the others got up. Even if she couldn't actually sleep, she could probably have a grand time thinking about each detail of last night. That seemed almost as enjoyable as having it all happen again. A good idea.

She went over to the window and slowly, rather reluctantly, pulled the shade back down to the ledge. The day couldn't be more beautiful.

She got back into bed, slithered down under the sheets, and a Cheshire cat smile played about her lips as she drew the covers up under her chin.

Smack! The wind mercilessly tossed the heavy part of the shade against the open window, then gently, as if amending its harshness, blew it away towards the center of the room.

Lisa Weld plans to major in English. She is interested in short story writing and was feature editor of the News and assistant editor of the year book at St. Mary's in the Mountains.

If you wish to be a writer, write.

—Epictetus

Rain

Mary Mallon

Sobbing,
The roofs
Echo
The blues
Of thunder drums.

Swiftly,
The song
Of gusts
Moves along
Proud water fronts;

To pay
The dues
That sanction us
And find
The time
To sigh
And sign
A repetition
Of civilization.

God, stop the time
Before we die
From too much living
In subservient function.

Morning

Kathryn Cobb '58

The sun pushed slowly through the morning's haze,
D'spelling darkness, ushering in the day.
It rose a great and radiant golden sphere
And peered through clouds which seemed as breaking waves
Upon a strong and silent rock-bound coast.
It traveled slowly upward on its way,
Reflecting bright spots in a new-born world,
Then suddenly broke forth in blinding light,
Proclaiming that another day had come.

SEARCHING

(Continued from Page 9)

So long since she'd been there. Automatically, it seemed, she was walking across the street and up the stairs to the quietness where she would be able to sit down and rest. The thought of a warm shelter made her hurry and as she entered the church she could hardly believe the change she felt.

The Christmas wreathes had a spicy odor. The many candles winked happily. She walked slowly up the aisle trying to decide where to sit.

Then she saw him, the dear little boy she had been seeking for so long. There he was, so calm and looking right at her. Walking more quickly now, she reached the head of the aisle and picked him up. Some of the straw from the manger still clung to him, but it didn't matter. She kissed his yellow curls and they sat down together in the front pew while she hugged him tightly in her arms.

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Eight Sharp

Sue Whiteley '58

John paid his first visit to her house during a warm evening in the spring. He always remembered that evening when he occasionally met her during later years, and he invariably wondered whether the course of that evening had shaped her body into the gaunt, tired, fearful thing that it was, or whether some other event could have convinced her that she was mistaken in her carefree, curious attitude toward life. One thing was certain, however: Before that night, before the party, Madame Rouchet had seemed far younger than her twenty-eight years. Now she was quite old.

The walk from South Street, where John lived modestly with his wife and infant son, to Madame Rouchet's Beech Avenue home, was not a long one, but the young man walked leisurely, for he enjoyed walks during the early evening. He knew this street as well as his own, having spent the majority of his free evenings at one faculty house or another, engrossed in a bridge game or light conversation with colleagues from the university. Still, tonight the street seemed new and different, as if it had been scrubbed and polished for a special and unusual occasion. Even the hedge around Professor Cunard's house had been trimmed neatly, and John noticed that the professor's old dog, Soph, limping out to greet him, had been bathed and unmatted. "Probably both of them for the first time in fifty years," he chuckled to himself as he patted Soph's wiry and bowed head.

John let his mind roam at will as he walked along. The scent of spring flowers reminded him of the pale pink soap his wife insisted on leaving, for his use as well as hers, in the bathroom, and he saw her in his mind, singing little Jim to sleep while at the same time composing the grocery list for the week. A remarkable woman.

He wondered who would be at the party. He had been surprised when Madame Rouchet had asked him to join the small group on Tuesday evening; he had almost said aloud, "What can a geology teacher possibly contribute to an affair such as that?" For she had said, in that shiny-eyed, exhilarating, confident way of hers,

"It's to be a *soiree*, Mr. Graham. You know—like an evening in a French *salon*. I want to try to assemble the most interesting and stimulating people from miles around, and it should be quite a wonderful evening. Small, but interesting. Eight o'clock sharp." John smiled. *Sharp*. What was sharp about eight o'clock? It

must be at least eight now, and all was peaceful and reassuringly dull.

He hoped that Miss Carpenter would not be at the party. She was the college librarian, and held a degree from Wellesley. (How appropriate the word "held"—Miss Carpenter seemed to hold an imaginary facsimile of that diploma in her hand while smoothly groping for the word which, in casual conversation, would be learned enough to set her apart as an authority of the subject under discussion.) She was not nearly as intelligent or learned as she imagined herself to be, which generally added up to a boring and valueless conversation if one had not the foresight to avoid a lengthy talk with her.

Perhaps Professor Macon would be there. John would be glad for a chance to talk with Macon again. He had not really seen him, except for brief hellos in the administration building since the faculty-alumni dinner a year before. Such an interesting man! He looked as if he had been chosen from birth to play his role, that of head of the physics department. Humble, reserved, yet intensely dedicated to his work, his pale gray eyes echoed deep thought, and he wore his wrinkled countenance like a combat-ribbon.

John's thoughts were interrupted by the high-low rumble of middle-aged voices. He remained in his reverie just long enough to notice that the white fence around Madame Rouchet's cottage came sharply out of the darkness on either side of the garden and then ran to a little indentation where the small gates stood open, like two neon arrows directing all travellers to the house. The fence was so adamant that he did not even pause to inhale a last breath of the fresh night before going inside. Halfway up the stone pathway Madame Rouchet appeared in the light-filled doorway, and called to him in her gay, caressing voice:

"Mr. Graham—you are *seven* minutes late! What have you to say for yourself?"

John suddenly wondered where Madame Rouchet's husband was. In all the time he had known her, she had never spoken of Monsieur Rouchet. "War," he thought to himself. "No man

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could be fool enough to voluntarily leave the side of a woman like this one."

"I'm so sorry," he said. "Professor Cunard's dog stopped me to talk, and he's such an interesting old fellow that I'm afraid I forgot the time." She laughed and led him into the parlor. "How curious," John thought. "She even *laughs* with an accent."

John enjoyed small parties such as this, but he dreaded making an entrance and the formal hellos. As he entered the room, with Madame Rouchet on his arm, all but three people turned to greet him. Professor Macon was talking to Miss Carpenter and Mr. Richardson (a Russian teacher), and the listeners were so intent upon the professor's conversation that they did not notice the advent of their friend. John made a mental note to join the discussion when he had spoken briefly to each guest. The salutations lasted longer than he had anticipated, although they were routine. Madame Rouchet escorted him on the rounds, and held tightly onto his arm while Mrs. Drexler pinched his cheek, asked for his spouse and asserted that she believed he was getting a little bald right there on top, and Mr. Drexler (under the influence of one-half a scotch and soda) confessed that John had always been his wife's secret idol. Madame Rouchet drifted off to get John a drink, and he offered a silent prayer to the gods of wine that this wouldn't be one of those parties. He was in no mood to play footsie with old Mrs. Drexler, and he had hoped that this evening would be more than just a polite, routine one. Mumbling something about helping the hostess, he left the smiling couple and walked towards the kitchen, but was again attracted by the conversation in the corner. He joined it.

"So you see," Professor Macon was saying, "It is just a theory of mine. There is no real proof and there may never be. But it's an interesting thought."

"Wow," said Miss Carpenter.

"I had better be more prompt hereafter," John said as both a greeting and a question. The professor turned, but Miss Carpenter was the first to speak.

(Continued on Page 23)

CARROLL'S

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Rushlight's 1955 Poetry Winner---
A Collection of Poems

Around The Bend

Bev Welsh '56

I was a child
And I rode
On a merry-go-round,
A gleaming, glistening carousel.
The music was gay,
The brass was bright,
The capering steeds
Were real to me,
And I said to myself,
"This I will always remember."

I was a child
And he came
On a whirl wind—
And unbridled, blustery gust.
The stars were glowing,
The moon was beaming,
And the kiss
Was new to me,
And I said to myself,
"This I will always remember."

Last night I rode once more
On a carousel,
But I am no longer a child.
The bridles were tarnished,
The horses were cheap and tawdry,
The music was
Shrill and piercing,
And I cried
For it was not
As I had remembered.

Last night we kissed once more
In a vapid calm,
And I am no longer a child,

R U S H L I G H T

And the moon was dull,
The stars were blurred and lusterless,
The kiss was
Unfeeling and cold,
And I cried,
For it was not
As I had remembered.

Something precious slipped away.
Lost forever
Around the bend.

To A Mirror

Bev Welsh '56

Reflections all too false you give to those
Who pause to stare and contemplate their forms;
They stand awhile to primp and strike a pose,
And then devise some antic to perform.
They steal a fleeting glance when'er they pass
To satisfy some hidden vain desire;
They ever turn to you, the looking glass,
Because you are a gentle, silent liar.
To youth you give great hope for coming days,
To age you can restore a fleeting past,
For poor you make a dingy garment gay,
For wealth you give a power unsurpassed.
For man deceives himself that he may be
The one in you he always looks to see.

The Clown

Bev Welsh

What causes crowds to laugh at circus clowns
Whose faces are the very picture of
Men's misery from lack of brother love,
And whose attire makes claim to hobo crowns?

What causes crowds to laugh at him who tries
A feeble, awkward imitation of
The graceful artist's balancing above
But only falls and in the sawdust lies?

Are men with such a cruel enjoyment born
That they will laugh at this pathetic sight
Or do they see themselves in this strange light
And choose to give the laughter, not the scorn?

To The Dinosaur—An Ode

Bev Welsh

Hail to the mighty dinosaur,
Whose ev'ry mammoth flatfoot step
Would shake the earth to its very core;
He'd flood dry land when he wept.

Hail to this o'ergrown monstrous lizard!
He was long as a train. A bed, they claim,
Could scarce contain this lizzard's gizzard—
But small as a peanut was his brain.

Hail to this mass of reptilian stupidity,
Who, in the midst of summer, thought
It was the heat, not the humidity.
That's why he came to naught.

Enough

Bev Welsh

"There are only seven notes,"
Sigh musicians.
"There are only three colors,"
Moans art.
But I have seen a rainbow
In a dewdrop,
And heard heaven in the wind
Among the wheat.

EIGHT SHARP

(Continued from Page 19)

"Mister Graham! How delightful that you're here. Now the party will truly be a success!" Macon and Richardson smiled and nodded greeting.

"Professor Macon," Miss Carpenter continued, "has been telling us about an astounding theory of his. It's simply amazing. And to think," she concluded happily, "that we're the first to hear of it."

"And I hope," the professor said apologetically, "that you will be the last, too. If my students got wind of this story, I'm afraid that I would lose the respect that my age, if not my mind, warrants."

"Professor," John protested in a good-natured way, "couldn't you tell just one more person? I know so little about physics, and it is such an overwhelming field, that I find anything connected with it completely plausible."

"Excuse me, Professor," Mr. Richardson said, "I want to speak to Dr. Faissler. I'd like to hear more about this theory, though."

"I think I'll see if I can help Madame Rouchet," Miss Carpenter said.

"Sit down, John," Professor Macon said when they had left, "and tell me—are you really interested in hearing of this little child of mine?"

"Yes, Professor," John assured him. "I had a feeling that

something unusual was going to occur tonight, and your theory may be the answer."

"But not tonight," Macon smiled, "because if my research is correct, it will happen a week from tomorrow. Do you remember," he continued more seriously, "my mention of the star Astrella in the talk I gave at the Founder's Day exercises?"

"Yes," John answered, "at least, I remember that you compared its explosion to the merit of the university—how from a central core knowledge is released with graduation and carried out to the farthest boundaries of existence. A good comparison, I thought."

"Then you do know that the star exploded. We have very little knowledge of the event, but we have reason to believe that Astrella may have been the so-called 'Star of Bethlehem'."

"Astrella? How do you know?"

"It is only a hypothesis, but from the description of the star in the Bible, I would guess that it had reached the size of explosion at the time of Christ's birth. All stars explode sooner or later."

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swelling and expanding until they burst."

"Is there any record of such an explosion?"

"No, John, but *Astrella* was so very far away that it is entirely possible that it exploded unnoticed. We do have drawings of the heavens, made before the birth of Christ, that show a star now extinct in the region near the constellation *Capricorn*."

"But surely someone would have heard it!"

"Ah, yes," said the professor, his eyes bright with insight, "and that is the foundation for my theory. If we have guessed correctly, *Astrella* was far out in another galaxy, and made visible only for a few years because of its expanding size and extreme brightness. *Astrella* was, perhaps, four times as large as the sun, and her explosion must have been greater than anything man will ever witness. When she burst, violent sound waves were sent off in every direction. If I have calculated correctly all phases—the earth's turn, *Astrella*'s relative position, the time, distance and rate of velocity,—"

"Then the explosion will reach us next Wednesday." John was aware of the patterns of people in the room. Groups of three separating, joining into larger groups. He was suddenly afraid of Professor Macon.

"Are you sure about this?" The old man's eyes were tired and calm.

"No, John, I'm not at all sure. It is so easy to make a small error when you are dealing with huge numbers that are, at best, only guesses." He closed his eyes for a few seconds, leaned back in his chair, and said,

"According to my calculations, this town will be in a direct line with the sound waves." John ran his fingers along the edge of the crease in his trouser leg.

"How will it affect us, Professor?" he asked.

"I have no idea. It is quite possible that—"

"*Professor!*" Madame Rouchet had returned with John's drink.

"Miss Carpenter has been telling me about your theory, and I am so excited that I cannot think of another thing! Is it true that we will hear the explosion next Wednesday?"

"I don't know, Madame. I have told only a handful of people

because I am afraid that I may be wrong. In my estimation, we are due for the sound at eight fifty-five, but I am probably wrong about it. In any event, as I was just explaining to John, right or wrong, we may never know. The shock waves have long since expired, and the sound may be inaudible. I am inclined to think that it would multiply, rather than diminish, on its journey through space, but there is no proof!"

"Professor Macon, Mr. Richardson has had an intriguing idea." Miss Carpenter had re-joined the group. "He has suggested that the five of us meet here next Wednesday, to await the explosion!"

"Of course!" Madame Rouchet agreed. "It would certainly be an interesting experience, and one that I would rather not face alone."

The professor smiled. "You may all be disappointed, you know," he said. "It is so uncertain. We may hear nothing, or . . ." His tired old eyes were suddenly filled with tears.

* * * * *

John took the car, even though the distance was short, not because the faraway roll of thunder threatened rain, but because he was almost afraid of the darkness along Beech Avenue. He parked the car in front of Madame Rouchet's house, behind an ancient maroon Ford, which he imagined to be Mr. Richardson's, but which turned out to be Miss Carpenter's automobile. She was

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inside when he entered, placing ash-trays on the small tables around the living-room.

"Do you think that it is going to storm?" Madame Rouchet asked anxiously. "We may not be able to hear the explosion."

"No, I think it's just summer thunder—the dry variety," John reassured her.

"Isn't this exciting?" Miss Carpenter giggled when Madame Rouchet had left the room to answer the door. John felt chilly, in spite of the intense, oppressive heat in the room. Macon and Richardson had arrived together.

"Well," Madame Rouchet sighed nervously when they were all seated, "here we are and frankly, I am frightened."

"Now, Madame Rouchet," Mr. Richardson began, "Professor Macon told us that we probably wouldn't hear a thing, so there is no reason to be worried. He told me on the way over that if the explosion is as loud as he anticipates it to be, it will be beyond human comprehension, so either way we will probably be unaware of it."

"At any rate," Miss Carpenter interjected, "we don't have a long wait ahead of us. It's eight thirty-five now."

The professor seemed to be extremely fatigued and ancient. He was staring, with half-opened eyes, at a worn spot in the gray carpet. As he spoke, he kept his gaze fixed on the spot.

"Sometimes I think of how insignificant, how small we are in comparison to the rest of the universe, and it frightens me. Who will remember, in a thousand years, that we were together tonight? Who, in fact, will remember that any of us existed? The world has come a long way to be here tonight, but what will happen tomorrow?"

Madame Rouchet laughed nervously. "Can I get any of you

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Joanne Hysom '56

Pop-eyed ghost song wooing, wooing
Through lustrous fir, through ember reeds . . .
Haunted night-song billowing outward
Howls in boughs of skeleton trees.
He doesn't care if we are listening
Or if vivacious crickets hear;
In gaping eyes the fireflies, frenzied,
Warn us of this privateer.

a drink?" she asked.

"It's almost quarter of nine," Miss Carpenter protested.
"*Tempus fugit*, you know."

They sat in silence for several minutes. John listened to the distant thunder and hoped that little Jim was not afraid. He glanced slyly at Professor Macon. The man's calmness and resignation worried him.

"Professor," he said sharply, "do you believe it will happen?"

Professor Macon looked up, and John saw that fear was hidden deep in his eyes and set in the wrinkles around his features. "Yes, John," he said. "I do."

"Shhh, everyone," Miss Carpenter interrupted, "it's almost time."

John looked at each person in turn. Miss Carpenter was sitting erect in her chair, her hands folded and relaxed in her lap. Madame Rouchet, seated on the sofa, was making a poor, silent joke of the anticipation by sitting rigidly, her face twisted and braced for shock. Mr. Richardson, next to her on the sofa, was nervously twisting his college ring, but his face was calm. John's eyes turned last to the professor. Macon's face, though grayer than usual, was again peaceful. He scarcely seemed to breathe. He looked—John again felt the chill—almost dead.

The thunder had ceased, and the silence was complete. John glanced at his watch: nine o'clock. He looked up in surprise and saw Madame Rouchet's lips move in a gesture of happy relief, then curl and expand to frame her familiar, throaty laugh. He saw the others break into exclamations, but he could hear no sound.

Sue, a sophomore majoring in English, appears for the first time in **Rushlight**. Last year she had a poem, "Sonnet to a Soldier," published in the "College Anthology".

Christmas

Mary Mallon

Sing of a clear moon
And a clouded breath of air
On a window pane.

That is Christmas.

Do you know of bells
And a silent evergreen?
And have you heard the choir boys
Laughing in the vestry?

Take a candy stick
From an overstuffed stocking
And you will know Christmas
As a child knows it,

Unless he finds
Where the Christ of stockings is.
And the indulgent parent smiles
As the child laughs

With his heart full of peppermint
And his eyes on a Christmas star,
Where the lights are darkened
In the light of an unawakened advent.

What's Past Is Prologue

Jo Hereford '59

The confusion and brightness of the garage was overpowering, and she bitterly wished they had never come to Venice. She snatched the claim ticket away from the unoffending Italian boy, then ran quickly to the pier where the gondola waited. She was unprepared for its beauty—its silky shape as it quietly rocked with the water, the blackness of it that merged with the blackness of the night. The small gold lions that sat on the bow were the only color she could see, for the interior was black also. The hand of the gondolier reached out to help her. She could not see him, but she felt the leathery texture of his palm, and knew he was very strong for he lifted her with ease into the gondola.

The silence of the city was like the silence of the sea. There was no sound other than the soft grunts the gondolier made as he pushed the gondola through the water. The slap, slap of the waves on the stone steps was infinitely soothing, and in the darkness she felt the time stopping. The small, secret canals lined with palaces had been there since time began, and security took hold of her. The tenseness that had been with her for so long was easing and she was grateful to the city.

She had not known where she was walking after leaving the gondola. As she passed the houses, the smell of decay came to her. The odors were odors of the past, and had nothing to do with the present. She could imagine the great rooms with their bug-ridden furniture that turned to dust when touched. And here, as on the canal, everything was black. With no warning, she was standing in San Marco square, and she was very alone. There was nothing disturbing around her, for the square was apart from reality, perfect within itself. The great square was empty, without interruption. San Marco rose in front of her. Her eyes travelled across the paving stones, then followed the upward mount of the cathedral. A waiter beckoned, wishing her to sit down. His face was part of the square, for the waiters in San Marco are as old as Venice and among the wisest Italians. She sat inside the arches of the promenade, while her mind roamed the city. Behind her someone was talking to the waiter, the cadence of their talk rising and falling until she was again reminded of the rhythm in Italian. The waiter's voice was

soft and warm and comforting. He did not care how long she sat there, he understood, for he was speaking of the square. She could catch few words, yet she knew what she said. With his hand he traced the outline of the cathedral, his hand stopping at the dome.

With daylight some reality came, for the usual occupations of a city returned. The heavy, working gondolas surged up the Grand Canal, while the Vaporettos shuffled passengers from one pier to another. Children with bright faces filled water-buckets at the fountains, their well-formed, elfin bodies shining in the sun. Two young boys picked a box from the ground, their movements unhurried. Women carried small, string-tied packages. Shops were open, live fish were being dumped into wicker containers, bread was baking, the freshly-made smell of it circling around the bakery. The meat hanging on hooks was bloody and rich. All around her Venice was alive. She stooped to drink water from a fountain for the first time, and happily ducked a child's head under the stream of water. He shook himself, the drops of water splattering on the stones, then grinned. She pinched his ear delightedly.

People crowded the square. Frustrated pigeons gobbled corn and refused to pose for pictures. She detested the dirty birds, they reminded her of relatives. The stupid faces of people peered at San Marco and it remained aloof. Out of the crowd a woman carrying a drugged baby approached. She saw the woman was a girl, but with lines in her face that belonged to a woman. Distrust and instinctive dislike were on the girl's face. As she handed the girl some money, their hands met, and she was ashamed of hers, they were white, sloppy, like a grub. She put on a pair of gloves.

The girl went to beg money from some Americans who sat at a table eating cake with pink sugar frosting. They refused the girl, waving their cakes as a sign of dismissal. She took off her gloves, wishing she was not angry at the Americans, for they were her own people.

Jo Hereford, a freshman, plans to major in English. She is interested in short story writing and has had experience on the editorial board of the "Triangle" at Emma Willard.

BILL'S

SIXTY MINUTES

(Continued from Page 11)

then, and everyone knows that the spirits of the dead haunt the living if they are outside at night.

He goes to the door and calls, "Vali", but she does not answer. He calls again and, hearing nothing, picks up his gun and goes outside.

It is cold and beginning to snow. Surely she is in the hen-house and has forgotten the time. But the hen-house is dark, and there is no sign of her lantern anywhere. Could she have fallen and hurt herself? Perhaps . . . he shivers and pulls the sheepskin closer about him. It was a wonderful sheepskin; Vali had combed and combed it until it was soft and supple, and she had laughed with pride when he had put it on for the first time.

Papa opens the door to the hen-house and calls, "Vali", softly in the dark. Then he sees her. She is lying on the hay and her basket of eggs has fallen over. Some of the round, smooth eggs have rolled out on the floor, and some have broken there by her naked body. It is six o'clock.

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Gail Schiot '56

"Let's see now—no, I don't want you to share a room with Jackie; she's much too wild for a sweet little thing like you, Ann. No—Bernice? no, aha! Come along with me, dear." Mrs. Killough, the matron, waddled down the dimly lighted corridor, her heavy steps making every green board creak, and rapped on the door of Room 21.

"Peggy, I have a roommate for you!"

The voice which greeted us sounded as anemic and painfully drawn-out as the young woman herself. Sitting on the edge of the bed, painting her finger nails a ghastly pink—the same shade as her bedspreads, the walls, and the curtains—she aroused antagonistic spasms of fright and pity in me. A halo of aloneness seemed to surround her. Her wide, hollow eyes, glazed and intermittently constricted with a pain which I later was to know so well and see so often, looked through me, at the same time mutely acknowledging my presence. Apparently oblivious to all this, Mrs. Killough talked on in a voice as plodding as her footsteps about when the linen was changed, where the bathroom was, general rules of conduct, and how she hoped that we'd "get along splendid"—then she left us listening to her steps echoing into the hall and down the stairs.

Eight days had passed and I knew no more about Peggy than was suggested by her furnishings. The room, which I avoided as much as possible because the pinkish atmosphere (even the lamp shades were that vile color) made me turn a sickly green every time I walked in, could be described as one of "neat" disorder. Tacked up all over the walls were pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and scenes of the Crucifixion and Ascension; on her bureau were patent and prescription medicines, perfume and cosmetics, and crocheted dolls occupied every inch, and on the bedside table were **True Confession** magazines, the **Daily Record**, and an ash-tray full of half-smoked cigarettes. She took great pride in that shabby room, rising at 6:30, and dusting, sweeping, and tidying everything before I opened even one eye, then, after I'd left, straightening my bed even if there weren't a single crease in it. At times I felt almost guilty because she did so much work—but to me it was just a room.

to sleep in; and as long as it were reasonably clean I ran joyfully out into the sunshine, preferring to pamper my tan instead of the room.

Had I not dashed back for my bathing cap one afternoon I doubt if I ever would have known what was the matter with Peggy. Whistling merrily, I pushed open the door just in time to see my "room-mate" drop the blouse she was ironing and stagger, hot iron in hand, to the nearest chair where she half-fell, half-sat—white and staring. Her eyes—frightful—glazed and even more dilated than usual, were uncommunicable, unreachable—

"Peggy, Peggy!" Trembling inwardly as well as visibly I tried to think of what to do. Mrs. Killough's words came back to me. "She sometimes gets sick; but give her a glass of water and she'll be O.K." It's fortunate that the glass was a large one; for by the time I'd returned from the sink half the water had been shaken out in an uneven trail behind me.

As I forced the water through her parted, dry lips I watched drops trickle out of the corners of her mouth and run slowly down her bare neck. She was completely helpless, and I had to tip her head back so that she'd swallow it. For several minutes she sat there, then smiled weakly, stood up, and resumed her ironing without a word, merely nodding affirmatively when I asked if she felt better.

What had happened? I breathed deeply and shut my eyes, hoping to blot out the vivid picture of her eyes. But instead of evaporating they became deep pools and swirled around and around until I had to rush out into the sunlight and fresh air.

That night I knew Peggy would have to tell me something about what had happened; so I went to bed early and read pages 64 and 65 in *La Symphonie Pastorale* again and again, not understanding a word it said, until she came in.

She smoked two cigarettes in succession, crushing them out before they were a quarter finished, quickly polished her nails, then spoke in a low, rapid monotone.

"You probably think there's something very wrong with me. Well, there is; but I didn't want to tell you. I have epilepsy, and I've had it ever since I was twelve. I don't have any friends, and now you won't ever like me—they never do once they find out. Every night I sit here alone. No one ever says, 'Peg, movies?' or 'We're off to Ladd's—want to come?' All I do is sit here crocheting dolls or reading—anything as long as I don't think about myself. I try to forget them and everything about life—but I'm a good Catholic and the Priest said that my day would come.

"They laughed at me in school because I wanted to be a nurse and said I'd be lucky if I ever got through high school what with all my fits. They called them "Fits"—but they're not, they're not. The doctor says they're only spells, and that's all they are. Well anyway, I did graduate, but then everything was terrible. I couldn't be a nurse, or a secretary—then I wanted to join the WAVES, but not even the Army or Navy would accept me because I had to check 'Yes' after Epilepsy.

"Finally I got a job in a warehouse wrapping and stacking packages; and I met Joe O'Neill there and was happy for once. Then, the day after we were married he left me because I'd had a bad attack and he claimed I hadn't told him about it before and called me all sorts of awful names. He even went to my employer and told him that it wasn't safe to keep me, and went to every restaurant and bar in town telling them to be sure not to hire me because I got violent. After all that I had to leave Worcester. But I needed a job because of my pills. I have to take three a day and that's why I don't have as many attacks any more. But they're so expensive.

"This is the only place that's treated me decent. Mr. Fleming told me he'd never fire me because of my epilepsy, and I've been here three years now. This room's my home—don't you think that the pink decorations are pretty? I've got some new pink material to cover the chair, and perhaps you can help me. Pink is such a pretty color..."

I grabbed the glass from the bureau and ran to the sink.

Gail, who is majoring in French likes creative writing, especially personal experiences and character sketches. This is her first publication in **Rushlight**.

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The Negative

Vivienne Branau '57

ARS POETICA

"A shivering rib" . . .
In form and sound
The style abounds,
Says she.

Strong metaphors
Figures of speech
Beyond my reach
They be.

It's clear, you see,
"It" refers
To his and her's.
A simile.

A narrative
Ten pages long,
Images throng.
No key.

Alliteration
Reigns as king.
And the jungle of modern
poetry doesn't mean a thing
To me.

ARS ARTIS

A curve
Must swerve
To form an angle.
I see a triangle.

R U S H L I G H T

It is a face
If you can trace
The nose to eye.
But why can't I?

The red joins jade
A profile's shade.
Of course—a horse!
No, it's a tree,
Says he.

Surrealists
Form ghostly mists
Around a claw.
This painting's grand!
A nailless hand
I saw.

Profusion
Of black
Took me aback.
Confusion
Is the start
Of my meandering blind-man's bluff
Of modern art.

ARS MUSICAE

Trumpets roar
And cymbals bore
Holes in my ear.
That's what I hear.

Piano notes
Represent boats
Upon the sea.
But not to me.

Syncopation
Shows relation
In the chord.
For me, I'm bored.

R U S H L I G H T

Crescendo
In the oboe.
Dissonance
Is what I sense.

There is a theme
In movement two.
That's just your dream.
To you, chaos seems
A lullaby.
All I hear is apes' and caveman's hunger-cry
In modern music.

ARS VITAE

The mushroom clouds
Attract large crowds
And cold wars start.
Everyone fears
And disappears.

Low autos,
Terse mottoes.
Ads
For cads
And rules
For fools.

Committees
In cities
For disloyal activities.
Propaganda
And slander
In books
And looks.

I peruse
And snooze
World-wide and local news.
Arthur and Percival
Have caught
My attention.
They had problems, I mention,
Don't we all?

Why be sage?
When the ill-matched pieces of this
jig-saw puzzle of the age
Are far too small.

This is Vivienne's first appearance in **Rushlight**. She's a junior majoring in French and hopes to be a linguistic interpreter some day. She says smilingly that she "would love to write poetry like Eliot".

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