

The UNIVERSITY of WICHITA

TOM-TOM



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The UNIVERSITY of WICHITA
TOM-TOM

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Soothsayers Day

—By Thadene Hedges

FOR once we had nothing planned for the week-end. Nick always did the planning and Nick was gone. And, to be quite frank, we had the jitters. The three of us were lying around the house—Pats, Bill and I. Idly Bill pounded out St. Louis Blues on the piano with one finger. I cursed the knitting instructor who persuaded me to knit one, purl three. Pats sat on the floor at my feet, absent-mindedly winding up my yarn that I unraveled. She looked



*"He looks so funny
with a beard."*

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out the window restlessly and frowned. I knew she was thinking of Nick.

He had been gone a week now and none of us had heard a word from him. Not that we usually do when Nick goes off on his jaunts, but I did think he would at least send a message to Pats. After all they were getting married in a couple of weeks. I made up my mind I'd tell Nick a thing or two when he came back.

Bill and I were used to Nick's sudden jaunts out to his cabin on the river. He had taken them on the average of every six months ever since we first knew him eight years ago. That was before his "Purple Lilies and Other Poems" had made him the much-sought-after young poet of the day. Then he was just a kid who wrote verses, an eccentric chap who dashed off to write them in his uncle's old deserted fishing cabin on the river. But now that cabin was a real refuge for him, hidden as it was in the wilds, 100 miles away. In rainy weather the road was almost impassable. Whenever his publishers became too insistent he went there to work, away from the gaiety, people, and parties that he knew and loved too much. Sometimes he would stay there for as long as a couple of months, coming back with a beard, hollow eyes, a grouch, and a new book of poems. After he shaved and slept a couple of days he



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was always the same charming Nick with another famous book to his credit.

But Pats hadn't known Nick long enough to understand about his jaunts. Of course when word got around that Pats was marrying Nick next month, every hostess with whom Nick had so much as unfolded a napkin had taken her aside and told her little tidbits about Nick's charming eccentricities. I knew that Pats knew that these so-called "eccentricities" were just Nick's boyish love of a good time. They were far from being spectacular and ran more to bribing an elevator boy to take him up to the sixty-fourth floor at top speed without stopping, or selling tickets for a barker of the flip-the-flop at Coney, or collecting souvenirs of cream bottles from all the lunch stands. (I must admit it was a little wearing on his friends for Nick never did anything alone.)

But his flights to his cabin were a little different. He never told anyone when he was going. We never knew when he'd be back. Although nothing had ever happened to him on these trips, we were always a little uneasy until he did come back. We had finally prevailed upon him to have a telephone installed, but his lawyer was the only one who knew his number. He had used his telephone only twice. Once he wanted a package of cigarettes. The other time he wanted to know just where Timbuctoo was. Nick was wise enough to know that out there in that cabin was the only place where he could work. People loved Nick; Nick loved people.

I had explained all this to Pats over and over during the week, as much for my own satisfaction as for hers. When Nick first left she had been surprised but a little amused. Later, when she did not hear from him, her amusement had changed to annoyance. But since yesterday I knew that she was frankly worried. She took no pains to conceal it. Not that she said anything. Pats isn't anything if she isn't a "good guy."

We had eaten at Madame Shrazak's Tea Room yesterday afternoon and a dirty, mysterious gypsy had read our tea leaves. Bill and I had been quite hilarious over our fortunes, which were the usual long journey and money prop-

ositions. However, we could not help but be a little subdued when the gypsy lowered her voice and read Pats' tea leaves. The horror in her black eyes seemed real as she leaned over Pats and said, "Tomorrow, tomorrow—beware. It is an evil day. I see a tragedy in store for you. I am sorry, Miss, but I tell only what I see in your cup. The tea leaves never lie." Bill grunted. "Lotta hooey."

I didn't believe Pats had taken the gypsy's warning seriously, but that night when I went in to tell her good-night, I found her reading the "Your Life In Numbers" magazine. She laid it aside quickly and began to make cheerful conversation. While she put away her clothes I sauntered over to where I could read the open magazine. There in black letters stood out tomorrow's date and the forecast after it. "This day, coming as it does under this group of numbers, will be full of catastrophes. Accidents are frequent under these signs, so stay close at home."

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On Reading a Group of Sonnets Accompanied by the Music of B. Goodman

—By Sally Wilson

Scorn not the Sonnet, Critic, nor that hot clarinet
Whose shrill cries shatter ether waves and thoughts
Of that inimitable Shakespeare; and all for naught
Did poor blind Milton wait? Do not forget
That Goodman and his instrumentalists as yet
Were still unheard. Though Chapman spoke in
loudest tones

Of Homer and his reign, those slide trombones
Will cause most ardent students' feet to tap,
And in the wondrous Faeryland to accidentally croon
"Don't Be That Way." While Tasso's rhythmic verse
Would often satisfy, snatch bits of lyrics, or some tune
Will place the sonnet in a light inordinately worse;
The blare of trumpets quells Petrarch's small lute
But Goodman gains effect with just a mute.

From Plays To Pictures

—By Kathryn Lansdowne and Mary Elsie Reser

THE phone rang! Rover wagged his tail, father dropped his paper, mother dropped a dish, daughter dropped everything. She dashed madly to the clamoring instrument. The spell was broken (so were the dishes); daughter had a date.

But daughter, like most of her 20th Century sisters, can make no startling suggestions as to entertainment, so following the steps of thousands of pleasure seekers, she and her gallant go to a show. Not once do they question whether what they will see will compensate them for the time and money they spend. Like those whose steps they followed, they are disappointed, for although Donald Duck was good, he was interrupted by the introduction of the main feature. It is, however, their appearance that night at the theatre, not their reaction, that is used by the movie magnates to prove that Hollywood is giving the public what it wants.

Everyone selects his food—why not his entertainment? Why swallow the stuff they sell when it's rotten? As a direct insult to our supposed intelligence the motion picture producers tell us they are filming what we want when they give us a Pulitzer prize play mutilated beyond recognition, or a historically correct novel sentimentalized into a fairy tale. They take the best plays and novels from the pens of the cleverest playwrights and authors and pile them upon the already too full desks of their scenario writers and production staff. They, in turn, cut all the witty satire which is likely to offend some section of the country, some faction, or some moralist. For instance, what's holding up the production of "Gone With the Wind"? Not the propagandized role of Scarlet O'Hara, but the fear of offending some narrow minded patriots of the North. Because of economic factions the handsome screen hero has to be careful that the brand of cigarette he is smoking is concealed from the

audience or the rival tobacco manufacturers might make it difficult for that particular movie concern to exist. Because of a few moral prigs, excellent lines about the status quo of the two colored characters in "You Can't Take It With You" were omitted from the movie.

One of the most remarkable changes made by these ingenious magicians is the raising of the colorless and insignificant to the stupendous, the colossal, the gigantic. "Dead End" went through the same metamorphosis in the hands of these magicians. Not satisfied with the two or three gun shots of the stage show, they bring in long reels of machine gun battles which take place, not in a lonely dead end street, but up fire escapes and across the tops of buildings.

In the realm of phantasy this process is heightened even more. Simple Shakespearean sets, in the hands of trick photographers become resplendent palaces and elaborate fairylands. Recall how Romeo kept Juliet waiting at the balcony while he wandered through acres of beautiful moonlit gardens—"to give the public what it wants."

These same jugglers delight in removing characters from the original stage show or changing the conception of the character for no conceivable reason. The hilariously funny role of the Duchess in Mr. Kaufman's play, "You Can't Take It With You" was ignored in the screen version. In "Marie Antoinette" history's sympathetic Madam Du Barry was replaced by a spiteful huzzy.

Producers find it necessary to capitalize on already famous stars, thus they throw in screen personalities, as was the case in creating an unheard of role for the great Hepburn in "Stage Door." Often these personalities are nothing more than puppets in the hands of the director. This string-pulling was evident in "Marie Antoinette" when Tyrone Power was wafted onto the scene in riding boots and cape and stood there beautiful and alluring.

Hollywood insists that audiences are sentimental and demand a happy ending for every picture. Instead of presenting a logical conclusion consistent with reality, they manipulate the action so that, despite all overpowering ob-

stacles, the romantic leads will "get married and live happily ever after."—Bless you my children!

In the past every movie was successful in some part of the United States. If it didn't succeed in New York or the large cities it was certain to thrive on the gullibility of the "Pumpkinvilles." The frontier was prosperous and everything was plentiful but entertainment; this unexploited field lay at the mercy of the avaricious leaders of a new industry. It was the psychological moment for the movies to strike. They furnished entertainment that could be enjoyed by the masses. Now the frontier has disappeared; the field has been thoroughly exploited; a full house has become a dream of the past. Therefore, they concoct new ways of getting people into the theatre. Bank night, good-will ambassadors, and movie quiz contests entice otherwise indifferent audiences, not to reiterate the concoctions of the production staff mentioned before.

All these things are done with enormous expense to the companies but they contend it is necessary to fill the theatre. Nevertheless the fact remains that the motion picture industries lose money on many of these productions. Wouldn't it be possible to attract larger audiences with less expense and more simple productions emphasizing sincere characterization and well-constructed plots? Wouldn't it be worthwhile to watch the reaction of audiences to a screen version of an unadulterated successful stage play? Wouldn't the audience still consider it entertainment if, when they left the theatre, they were able to give reasons for their enjoying or not enjoying certain scenes other than that they were filled with beautiful girls and dazzling surroundings?

These ideas just never seem to have struck even our own local theatre managers, who think they have to apologize for billing good movies. In place of giving pictures like "Winterset," "The Life of Emile Zola" and "Stars and the Plough" the usual build-up and the choice theatre, they advertise them as intellectual giants, which frightens the usual theatre-going crowd away. No one attends these snobbishly advertised movies, pushed off in one of the less

popular theatres and they lose money. They are convinced that good movies do not pay.

As intelligent college students let us not be misguided by this erroneous advertising and demand more good movies. Let us set a few standards instead of passively accepting what is provided by theatre managers and producers who are under the false illusion that they are giving the public what it wants.

The phone rang! Rover wagged his tail! "This is where we came in."

The Problem

—By James Andrews

It is so hard to live - - -
Counting the crystal moments one by one,
Till life is done.

It is so hard to die - - -
Grasping the golden sunbeams as they fade
To endless shade.

Grandmother

—By James Andrews

For every lash
Left livid on our naked backs—
Black flesh,
Swelling to purple under the cut skin—
For every lash,
My son,
Give two.

For every tear
Dropped in the anguish of midnight sorrow,
Black mammies crying for their babies—
Yellow babies
For every tear,
My son,
Extract a drop of blood.

Between The Lines

—By Mary Ellen Brosius

New York Tribune

Society: Oct. 11, 1936

Mr. and Mrs. John R. Chesterton announce the debut of their daughter, Barbara, tonight at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Miss Chesterton will be escorted by Keith Randolph, who is home for the occasion.

Society: Jan. 25, 1937

Mr. and Mrs. John R. Chesterton announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Barbara, to Keith Randolph, who will receive his M. D. degree from Johns Hopkins this spring, after which he will be associated with his father, an eminent surgeon of the city.

Miss Barbara Chesterton sailed today on the Queen Mary to tour Europe in the coming year.

About Town: June 6, 1937

“—what vivacious debutante of last season is sailing east, while her fiance (ex?) is off to Maine?”

Society, Dec. 5, 1937

Mrs. Oliver Holmes announced today the marriage of her daughter, Ann, to Dr. Keith Randolph. The marriage coming as a surprise to society circles, was quietly solemnized last night at the home of the bride. Only relatives and close friends of the family were present. The young couple are sailing Wednesday for Europe, where Dr. Randolph will continue his scientific research in Vienna.

To the unobserving the last announcement was seemingly a disjointed fact and caused no comment. Amid the social groups there was much eyebrow raising, much sniffing, and much highbrow snooping. However, after a short time this bit of news, well worn out by gossip, was relegated to obscurity. Only among the intimate crowd to which Barbara, Keith, and Ann belonged were explanations ventured; and the general opinion of the crowd was aptly ex-

pressed by Nan Stanwyke, who had the refreshing if somewhat disconcerting habit of calling a blackguard a blackguard. Wagging her black head, she closed the matter, so far as she was concerned, by saying:

“Honestly I thought Keith had more sense! He and Babs were perfectly suited and she could have helped him

“Can't you see, it's all I can do?
Please darl—”



so much socially because I don't care how good he is, a doctor has to have contacts. Why I even changed my doctors after I met that new Dr. Brant that Hester had to dinner. He's perfectly divine. And anyway Ann's so quiet. What he could see in her, I don't know!" Nor did anyone know except Keith, and it was a long time before he had pieced it all together.

Ann had gone below deck to write letters and Keith was left alone in the smoky, red leather lounge. He sat there amid a cloud of smoke rising from his pipe, his shoulders tremendous in a well-cut coat, his long legs stretched before him in idle luxury. Darn Ann, anyway, for going off and leaving him like this. But to his protest she had merely smiled that peculiarly adorable smile of hers and said, "Go have a smoke, and think about your ole' bugs and you won't even miss me." Bugs, huh! As a prospective young bacteriologist, his wife would have to have more respect for his micracoustic micrencephaliae. And yet really she liked his "ole bugs" almost as well as he did. He remembered the first time he'd ever seen her, he'd told her all about them.

Grinning to himself, he settled lazily back into the chair and picked up an evening newspaper. Finding nothing of particular interest he thumbed absently through it

(Continued on page 27)

My Heart Sinks Low When I Behold

—By Sally Wilson

My heart sinks low when I behold
Examination papers
So was it when I entered school,
So is it now I'm almost through,
Those hideous marks of red and blue
Belied my capers;
Each time I promise to do better,
But how the days do soar
And I don't crack a book until
The very night before.

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" - - - Stranger Than Fiction"

—By Marguerite Cleary

"Stormy petrels" of the first rank are the chief actors in two interesting biographies of artists. Irving Stone's story of the Post-Impressionistic painter, Vincent Van Gogh, in *Lust for Life* and Thomas Hart Benton's autobiography, *An Artist in America*, are not only intrinsically interesting books but also give the reader a real insight into the purpose and spirit of the work of these two much discussed artists.

Probably no figure in American contemporary art has caused more bitter and protracted controversy than that of the super-muralist, Thomas Hart Benton. Critical comment on his four projects, the New York School of Social Research murals, the Whitney Museum murals, the Indiana exhibit for the Chicago fair, and the Missouri Capitol murals, has ranged from one extreme to the other. To some he is the leader and champion of modern American art and to others merely a glorified cartoonist.

His autobiography is for the most part concerned with his travels throughout the United States. After giving a brief sketch of his childhood and his early attempts to find his own style or medium of expression, he starts his account of the decidedly unconventional jaunts about the country by bus, train, boat, car, and foot. He visited by choice the backyards of America—the dust bowl and desert regions of the West, the sharecropper districts of the South, the mining towns of the Appalachians, the hillbilly country of the Ozarks, the back waters of the Mississippi river with its hangers-on of the old river life. He returned from these trips with a wealth of impressions of the element in our contemporary society, which is usually referred to as the "lower class," an element which he announces again and again is one to be reckoned with.

He brought back with him also numerous sketches of the life he observed, cowboys, miners, hillbillies, sharecroppers, and river people. Included in his autobiography are a

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number of these sketches, some of which are arresting in their insight into the life they picture. Grant Wood feels that these sketches not only show Benton's ability as a top flight draftsman, but that they also display an emotional insight that his murals often seem to lack. Critical opinion in general seems to agree that the virtues of his paintings are intellectual and the faults those of sensibility. Undoubtedly his composition and draftsmanship are better than his color and the heads of his figures better than the bodies.

Since his start on the Missouri Capitol Building murals he has resided in Missouri and is at present connected with the Kansas City Art Institute. Thomas Craven, who is a close friend of Benton's, says that those who know him best think of him as quiet, contemplative, even-tempered, embarrassingly frank, and intensely conscientious.

After finishing Mr. Benton's account of the side of America that he finds most significant and his explanation of the thing he is trying to accomplish, the reader can hardly fail to have a better understanding of the slashing angular figures that fill the murals Benton uses as his most effective medium of comment. Perhaps some of those who have labeled his view point as distorted, his subject matter as uncouth, and his methods as crude, will find a new force behind his accent on the realities of life.

While Benton's autobiography reads like an entertaining travel journal, Irving Stone has created from the actual facts of Van Gogh's life a story "stranger than fiction." This generous, idealistic man spent his life in one long troubled search for a means to express the urge for creation that was ever strong in him. He seemed to gravitate toward whirlpools of human emotion and strife that usually ended in tragedy and frustration, for him at least.

Stone traces for us first the trials of young Van Gogh as he worked in the art galleries of his famous uncle, then the period of restless feeling about for some congenial work for which he might be fitted, and finally the experience as missionary to the miners of the Borinage out of which emerged his realization that he wanted to put on canvas the life he saw about him.

The remainder of the story is divided into the periods which Van Gogh's paintings make natural. During the years after he moved to the Hague to study and the visits to his home, he struggled to develop a technique by the bitter road of individual experience. The next period, which takes him to Paris with his brother Theo and brings him in contact with the work of the leaders of the impressionistic school, will be of especial interest to the art student who will recognize these artists and understand the stimulating influence they had upon Van Gogh.

After he had thoroughly assimilated the impressionistic technique Van Gogh realized that if he were not to lose all his individual style, he would have to leave Paris. His passion for sunlight drew him to Arles and here he spent a stormy period which resulted in prolific and significant accomplishments. This was also the scene of the climactic tragedy of his turbulent life—the appearance of insanity, probably due to years of abuse of his health and finally to overexposure to the dazzling sun and the violent mistral of Arles.

Although Van Gogh soon recovered from this first attack and it returned only at intervals, he was never free of its shadow from this time until his suicide. Fate returned with its bitterest trick to mock him by choosing this moment for the sudden recognition of his work in the art centers of Europe. Between his attacks he worked feverishly to complete enough work to pay back his beloved Theo who had supported him with encouragement and criticism as well as money since his first start as an artist.

Van Gogh's violent sun-splashed canvases for which he is most famous as well as the more peaceful if still colorful ones of his last years and the heavy somber ones of his Nuenen days all gain reality and meaning through an acquaintance with Stone's vivid story. His introduction of the imaginative but quite plausible incidents that resulted in specific pictures such as **The Potato Eaters**, **Crows Over a Corn Field**, **Roulin the Postman**, **Sunflowers**, or **Arlesienne**, adds tremendously to an understanding and appreciation of them.

But most important of all, Stone makes Van Gogh's in-

tense feeling for vivid color and absorption in sunlight the essence of his book as it was the essence of the man and his work.

Three Parodies

—By Geraldine Hammond

(After frost—a little teched.)

Cottonwoods,
Tall shining black in the sun,
Snow falling soft
Around the roots all day.
Little colts frisking,
Wondering if snow is good to eat
And why their mamma doesn't come.
I see my neighbor hoeing corn.
He's a little slow, you think?
He just doesn't know the code
But he'll learn in a year or two.
I say, "Good morning, Neighbor,
Mighty fine corn you've got there,
Isn't it?"
He doesn't answer,
But I don't complain.
A man can do worse than be an asker of questions.

(After T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound—might
as well get it all over with at once.)

Thick gray morning before the sun,
Peach blossoms touched with tender light,
The dawn gorgeous like one orchid lying prone
In an old ash can.
Green dancing morn, yellow climax of mid-day,
Street lights on the dirty corners,
Where is the D. S.?
Night begun in quietude.
Mr. Apollinax laughs sweetly, serenely and
submarinely,

But when night returns to dawn
His head begins to dance like
A seismograph in a hurricane
Or an anemometer in a wind storm.
Mr. Apollinax, stay out of that honky-tonk.

(After Amy Lowell—but I'll have to
stick to cigarettes myself.)

A purple rose
Pressed and faded,
Torn
On the edges of life
Came today to tell me
Love is over,
To say in a hushed violet
Whisper that you
Like Evelyn Ray,
Have gone.
I try to smile as the
World demands of me.
I smile in stiff brocade
And a bustle in the rear.
The gentian colored
Fragrance of the
Purple rose
Sails through my heart
Like a covey of scarlet tanagers
Wheeling in an orange sunset
Over waters ranging from indigo
To pale yellow.
Ah, rose. Love and you
Are dead.
I shall go
Up and down
The world,
Wearing my grief
Like a rose, withered.
And my songs will be
One gorgeous purple patch,
I hope.

An Argument For Functional Poetry

—By Louisene Sadler

Although there began in the early 1870's a distinct tendency for prose to express more and more the writer's objections to, and his ideas on, the problems of the people, the state, and the universe, it was not until the time that such writers as Crane, Dreiser, Lewis, and Anderson gained an audience that the liberation of literature "from the stranglehold of prudishness and hypocrisy was completed and attention was turned directly toward the urgent problems of industry and politics."¹

These writers, Crane, Dreiser, Lewis, and Anderson, were fortunate in their selection of prose as the medium for the literary expression of their ideas. They have been read, are read today, and the thinking American could tell you the doctrines these men extoll. But the writers of poetry were less fortunate. Their philosophies have not been circulated by every-day conversation. Why? Because the casual every-day conversationalist does not read poetry.

What could be more natural than for the writers of poetry, led by the writers of prose, to become interested in the political, social, and economic problems of our day and to portray this interest in their works? This is just what has happened. The development of interest on the part of the poets in homely matters began (if a definite date for the beginning of any development can be determined) before the World War, was greatly augmented by that war, and is continuing right up until today, finding a very fertile field in the varied "isms" to be confronted both abroad and at home. Of course, way back in the 18th Century, just as there had been a few men in the field of prose interested in functional writing, so in poetry there were Shelley and Wordsworth who greatly concerned themselves over the Industrial Revolution and hazarded a guess that such advanced industrialism was, perhaps, leading the world to

1. Hicks "The Great Tradition"—Macmillan Co., New York, 1933.

ruin. But even with these fleeting doubts, Shelley and Wordsworth still possessed a calm confidence in the people and an impassioned hope that cannot be found in the modern poets of today who are worried over the existing mess of affairs the universe has got itself into. In fact, it would seem that the younger the writer, the more emphatic is his despair. There seems now to be no hope left, no optimism. All confidence has been put aside by the poet in the ability of the people to pull themselves out of the gross and unmitigated mire that civilization is stuck in today and that it will necessarily remain stuck in until, we, as a people, are able to discern the true and real values of life and are allowed to pursue happiness without being handicapped and motivated by such words and phrases as "Communism," "Fascism," "the capitalistic class," "the glory of war," "remaining free for democracy," etc.

There have been objectors who scathingly denounce the writers of functional poetry and their poetic products. In the main, objections have come from those people who believe that poetry should express only the beauty of our souls, the fineness of our emotions, and the harmony with which nature presents itself to our eye, instead of wasting the reader's time by concerning itself with such mundane and base subject matters as the plight of the poor, or the people maimed by wars. Such objectors can see no beauty

(Continued on page 31)

San Francisco Sunset

—By James Andrews

How
Does the sun go down?
With a hiss and crackle,
Drowned
In the purple waves.
How
Does the daylight fade?
Like a coffin lid
Nailed
Across the top of the sky.



Harlem Dance

—By James Andrews

It's dancing time in Harlem:
Everybody's got to SWING - - -
Yes, it's dancing time in Harlem
And black-bottom is the thing.

Yellow girls and slick-hair dudes,
Sweet high-browns and prancing prudes,
Silks and laces, anxious faces,
Feet a-tapping in their places,
High top-hat, soft mink and beaver—
Everybody's got the fever:
Rich perfume and narrow slippers,
Pencilled brows and purse with zippers,
Signet ring and diamond brooches,
Velvet ribbon on small pouches,
White tie and a stiff-tuxedo,
Shiny car like new torpedo.

Low-cut gowns and gleaming shoulders,
Stag-line, punch-bowl, and ash-holders;

Music sweet and swaying feet;
Calloway is hard to beat.
Hi-de-ho, and Dipsy Doodle,
Ice-cream, cake, and apple-strudel.
Darkened rooms and soft arms clinging,
Quickened breath and hearts a-singing.
Heady wine, black eyes a-glow,
Couples strolling out below;
Whispered trysts of love unhindered,
Moonlit night and lips surrendered.

Goodnight, angel, dancers leaving—
Midnight magic is deceiving;
Dreams are laid upon the shelves,
We become our daylight selves.
Aching feet, and drowsy eyes,
Soon the morning sun will rise.

Whispered love is soon forgotten,
Stolen fruits are often rotten.
Hearts will dance to other tunes
Under other magic moons:
"Good-night, angel, till we meet—
Harlem dances are SO SWEET."



Breezy Kansans

—By E. V. Long

THE wind blown Kansas native is a hardy type. He has to be to survive.

If you have lived in the Kansas open country, known as the short grass country, you have experienced that raw rasp to your nerves of an unceasing Southwest wind. If your nerves have kept placid and you have stuck it out, even though the wind dried up the marrow in your bones, you now have a queer mental and physical make up, and you are a Kansas type.

At first this wind stimulated, then it deadened and then it irritated. At times the monotony varied—it got worse. At times it carried stifling, all-penetrating clouds of dust and was called a dust storm. At other times it blasted everything green in its path, with wilting waves of furnace-like heat, and was called a hot wind. At other times it increased its tempo to tear up trees, and barns and houses, and was called a “twister.” But most of the time it just blew your eyes shut, and jangled every nerve in your body, until you wanted to drop down exhausted behind the barn, or hide in the cave.

This Kansas open country is no place for a woman. Just take a look at her after she has battled that wind for a few years—leather-faced and leather-lunged. She fog-horns all over the place like a politician just home from a convention.

One short grass old timer got real confidential with me when I made him a visit to beg a drink of water. He lived in one of those sand-riddled shacks so frequently seen in Western Kansas.

“I think we will have to quit braggin’ about our wimmen in this country,” he said, “they are too leathery and skinny. No meat on them. Those grain fed, long grass wimmen back East carry a better brand. Of course they cost a whole lot more to winter, but they carry their flesh better. They show more gimp and high tone. Of course they are not as good a workers as our wimmen, they can’t cover the

ground. Our wimmen are built for speed, like the running gears of a whipperwill. This is a running country. But who wants speed in a woman? But say, cowboy, mum’s the word. Here comes my old girl.”

If this unceasing wind was so devastating to feminine pulchritude, what did it do to the men? It not only made them a loud speaker type, but that constant monotonous blow worked its way into their vitals and changed their very natures. The wind either killed off the soft flabby ones or they left the country. The real Kansas type, the ones who hung on, were garrulous, argumentative, oratorical and almost without exception, radical.

Demosthenes put pebbles in his mouth and spoke against the waves of the sea, to give his voice that stentorinousness necessary in haranguing the Athenian mob. These methods were not necessary for the early-day Kansas politician. After he had fought his voice against a Kansas wind once around the circuit, he needed no seashore to give him volume. As one old timer put it, “Riding around and talking and agitating is one of the best things we do out here in this short grass. Land selling and farming the city slickers is our job. This ’ere wind will always keep our bellows in fine shape. Us blow-hards ought to spend all our time abellering about the fine country this is, instead of trying to raise crops.”

This wind-blown, red-faced, leathery-necked Kansan was not only loud and radical, but he was an inventive cuss. He would be, so he could have something new to agitate about. He invented or copied The Grange, the Farmers Alliance, the Anti-saloon League, the Populist Party, Carry Nationism, Bryan and all his isms, and Woman Suffrage. He was able to go through every kind of disaster, from grasshoppers, through Carry Nation to cyclones. The wind made him tough, and he was up on every kind of a panacea and cure. He would argue with you endlessly on any kind of a proposition you would advocate, and if you agreed with him, he would change over to the other side. He was a “forninster.”

Remember, I am talking about the wind blown type when he is sober. Let him get hold of some of that forbid-

den, anti-saloon, double-distilled, squirrel liquor and he was even more verbosely loquacious.

These breezy characteristics earned for the Kansan, the title, "The Windy Wonder of the West."

Soothsayers Day

(Continued from page 5)

As if these forebodings were not enough, this morning at breakfast Bill had turned on the radio to get the news report. (Just preceding the report, the announcer always gives the weather forecast as well as astrologic readings and warnings.) A voice had blared out, "Be prepared for the unexpected today. The day will bring many surprises - -" Impatiently Bill had snapped off the radio. Even calm, easy-going Bill had become a little nervous.

Pats got up and walked to the window and looked out. Motionless she was framed against the window, both hands in her suit pockets, elbows akimbo. Her jacket was pulled tight against her waist as though she were holding herself together. I thought of the movie fade-outs where the girl is left behind, looking out a window, and laughed at myself for being so silly. I noticed that Bill had stopped pounding. I glanced at him and he looked askance at me, motioned toward Pats.

"Do something, you fool," I muttered through my teeth. "Play something, not just twiddle around, or talk."

He took a deep breath and plunged bravely into enthusiastic small talk.

"Guess who I ran into this morning. Gus Robin—remember Gus, Pats?" He rattled on and I joined him. But we might have been talking in sign language as far as Pats was concerned. She still just stood at the window without a word. Bill shrugged his shoulders and turned back to the piano. I picked up my knitting.

Just then the telephone rang. Bill jumped and was across the room to the telephone in one stride. I looked at Pats. She had whirled around at the sound of the telephone. As long as I live I'll remember Pats' terror-stricken eyes and the way she clenched the window sill. I shud-

dered, recalling the times I had had that same ghastly fear about Bill.

Bill paused with his hand on the telephone. "Probably wrong number," he said cheerfully. But he played nervously with his keys. He lifted the telephone from the hook. "Hello, this is Bill," he said. Then a few seconds later he jiggled the hook, yelled "Hello, hello, operator we've been cut off."

Finally after what seemed a frantic year, Bill turned to us and said, "That was Nick. All he said was 'I did it, Bill. Tell Pats I - - -'—then the line went dead. I'll go get the car."

Bill is never a snail-creeper when he's driving, but this afternoon he even out-drove himself. It seemed silly to talk when there was only one subject to talk about and we were scared to say anything about that. The thoughts of all three of us were a hundred miles ahead of our speeding car.

A desperate silence settled down as a warped world passed our open car. Mottled fields flipped past as cards shuffled by a gambler. Road signs were disjointed codes. Trees and posts measured off the country side into inches. The tombstones of a country cemetery tumbled together like white dominoes. A herd of cows in one field and a flock of sheep in another stampeded. Fences and telephone wires glittering in the sun were endless Neon signs. People in the farm yards were just bits of flapping cloth. A gas station and a road stand merged while a large white farm house dodged out of the way of the ticker tape highway.

Then the whole tipsy world came to a convulsive stop as Bill slammed on the brakes in front of a tottering railroad sign. A screeching freight train lumbered past. Its curling smoke floated backward measuring the length of the train.

Bill played a tattoo on the steering wheel while I tapped my foot. Pats automatically counted the box cars in a hoarse whisper. "Seventy-three," she said, "counting the caboose." Bill threw in the clutch.

It was as though the smoke from the train had spread

over the entire sky. Black smoke-curls of clouds had gathered in the northwest. A faint rumble of thunder followed the distant moans of the freight train. Bill cursed as he dodged a barking farm dog.

"Forty miles 'til we turn off," Bill muttered. He meant, "Gad, I hope it doesn't rain until we get there." I watched the speedometer turn over the red tenths of miles as we resumed our desperate speed.

Fifteen minutes later three drops of rain spat against the windshield. A minute after came a deluge. It seemed as though the windshield was melting and running down like wax on a burning candle. The car windows gave us a blurred, wavy world as reflections in the cheap mirrors of a boarding house.

"We'll get there before the road gets bad," I said weakly. Neither Bill nor Pats deigned to answer. I had not expected them to. The words that Bill had heard Nick say over the telephone chased themselves through my mind. Like the pieces of a difficult jig-saw puzzle they refused to fit into place. Finally they dissolved into a maddening chant: "Did what? Tell Pats what? Did what? Tell Pats what?"

We turned off the pavement and Pats grabbed my arm as the car skidded on the slippery road. We were shut in completely by the thick darkness now, as though we were the only living things in the whole world. From now on we would not have the wavering yellow eyes of the approaching cars nor the flickering lights of the farm houses. There was only one cabin along this road and it was empty half the time.

I watched the speedometer again. This time it seemed hours before a new number turned over. When I looked up I saw numbers jiggling on the windshield. Endless hours of zigzagging and skidding. Endless miles of slippery mud. Finally a yellow light appeared ahead of us like a single yellow chrysanthemum on a pall.

"That's it," Bill said, and I felt Pats tremble. The car sputtered to a stop in front of the light. I shivered as the rain hit my face and whipped around the bottom of my coat. Bill caught Pats as she stumbled and almost

fell in the mud. We dashed to the porch, Bill between Pats and me, guiding us. We paused for a second, not knowing what we would find inside. Then Bill pushed open the door.

Nick lay sprawled on an old cot. One arm hung limply at his side. Hollow-eyed and with tousled head, bewhiskered and bedraggled, Nick was sleeping the sleep of a tired man, accompanied by a lusty snore. On the table lay a finished manuscript. Nick's telephone call had been merely exuberant rejoicing and bad telephone service.

Pats giggled. She put her hand, palm outward, over her mouth to stifle a hysterical sob. A red trickle oozed out from four small cuts made by her red finger nails. She giggled again. "He looks so funny with a beard," she said.

Between The Lines

(Continued from page 12)

until suddenly his attention focused on the headlines of the society page. "Miss Barbara Chesterton to be bride of Sir James Fenwick, son of Lord Fenwick of Wales, England." So Babs was to be married! Some fellow she had met abroad probably, and a title too. How she would like that! It seemed odd to think that she had once been engaged to marry him. It seemed so long ago—and suddenly he wondered why exactly he hadn't married her.

It must have started that time when Babs had dragged him up from school for another week-end, "Because," she had said, "after all, you are engaged to me, you know." And he had cut old Baumgartner's biology lab again. He couldn't make Babs understand about biology. She was sure, much surer than he, that he would enter his father's practice after his graduation. She accepted this without question as she accepted so many things. You just did them because they were the right or the smart thing to do.

Anyhow he'd taken her to Hester's party, and had seen her occasionally during the evening. Every time he'd got her to himself someone would come up and claim a dance, and with a "see you later, darling," she had been whirled

onto the floor. A miniature figure in a swirl of black dress, with a proud, ash blond head held high. Finally disgusted at seeing her only over other men's shoulders, he had wandered into a dimly lighted library and flung himself into a chair. There the sound of music and shrill laughter was muffled into an unobtrusive background, and the half light was restful to his smoke-stung eyes. Suddenly a slight movement attracted his attention and he looked up to see a small brown girl sitting in the shadow. She wasn't really brown but she reminded him of a small brown wren. Smooth hair and large eyes that looked startled in her small face, and a curve of childish throat.

"I hope I haven't disturbed you," he had said, rising; and she had answered quickly, almost eagerly in a husky, warm voice.

"Oh no, I was just sitting here." Strange how relieved he was to hear her voice. It was almost as if he had been afraid to hear her speak, afraid to have her shatter some inexplicable charm he felt in seeing her there. And then she had said quite simply,

"I'm Ann Holmes; won't you sit down?" And he had introduced himself and sat down beside her. Ever afterward he could never remember how it had happened, but suddenly he was telling her about his beloved bugs and old Baumgartner who lived only for his endless research. Eagerly he was explaining how long rows of mathematical figures actually meant life, when all at once he realized that he had been talking for a long time. Confused and embarrassed, he had apologized awkwardly and when Ann exclaimed, "But I loved it," he realized that she was not making the usual pertinent remark but that she meant it. They had already been friends for a long time.

And then he hadn't thought of her for months. Finals had descended on the students, and amid black coffee and innumerable cigarette stubs, long lists of technical knowledge were absorbed. Into the midst of this intellectual fury, like an explosion, came a telegram from Babs. It read, "Mother having dinner party for us Wednesday. You simply must come. Will expect you on 5:20 train Wednesday. Babs." What an utterly stupid demand. She might

at least have consulted him before she made plans. But how like Babs to merely announce her intentions and expect him to follow. Anger, hot and seething, surged up in him as he rushed into a Western Union office and sent the reply, "What a dumb thing to ask. You know I'm taking finals. Keith."

After that there had been silence. No word from Babs until his mother wrote that she was coming up with his parents for commencement. He supposed he ought to be glad, but his graduation meant nothing to Babs except that he should be free to take her about. That he would not be able to do so, he had not yet told her; and as a shock, he realized that he was actually afraid to tell of his plans as a bacteriologist. Babs would never understand that behind the grubbing, long hours of research lay whole worlds of mystery to be explored. She wanted to be the wife of a successful young physician, not that of an obscure young scientist. But if she would only be willing to try it! Then suddenly he thought of Ann. For the first time since their meeting he wanted to see her, to talk to her. And, since this was impossible, he wrote her a long letter, and then tore it up. He must be nuts, he had thought, writing to a girl he had seen only once.

After commencement, still feeling like a young firebug waiting a good chance at the world, he met his parents and Babs—a tall, lanky young man in black robes, beaming down on three obviously smart New Yorkers. Babs was charming, delightful and sweet, and had apparently forgotten about the party. He reproached himself for his harshness, laughed at his fears as being ill grounded, and was eager to tell her his plans. When at last he had her alone, he blurted out enthusiastically.

"Babs, I'm going to Maine this summer to do research with Dr. Baumgartner at his camp up there."

"You're what?" The incredulity in her face jarred his new confidence.

"Well you see, old Baumgartner has asked me to go with him and it's really an honor."

"Keith Randolph, you must be crazy. You slave away

for years to get your degree, and then you go stick your nose in an old camp."

"But honest, Babs," he floundered in dismay, "it's swell. It's a wonderful opportunity for me—"

"Me! That's all you think about—but what about me! If you think I'm going to sit around all summer with you in a camp, you're mistaken—sadly!"

"But Babs—"

"Keith, be sensible. You're planning to go into practice with your dad, and this would only be an unnecessary delay."

"That's what I'm trying to tell you," he had said gently. "That I'm not going in with dad. I'm going to be a bacteriologist." There, it was out at last. No more need of evading the issue. And what an immense relief had flowed over him.

"Oh Keith," she had wailed, "how foolish. To go out and grub in a laboratory. It'd take years to build up a reputation, to be somebody. And you could have such a good practice with your father, such nice people. Fashionable people get sick just like anybody else, and they can at least pay their bills. We do have to live, you know."

"Look Babs," he was pleading with her, "this is my chance. Who cares if we're rich, and some day I'm going to discover something, something big!"

She was crying. "I don't care, if you really loved me you couldn't do this. You couldn't be so selfish as to take me away from home and my friends. You couldn't expect me to go live in some God-forsaken place. It's your medicine you love, not me. Well, you can have your old Baumgartner. You can have him or me! But I won't spend my life grubbing away in an old camp somewhere."

"Babs, I have to do it." Desperately he had wanted her to understand. "Can't you see, it's all I can do. Please darl—"

But with that he had failed. She had given back his ring and left. When next he heard of her she was in Europe.

That summer he had spent in Maine with Baumgart-

ner. Before leaving New York he had run into Ann, and had felt again that inexplicable charm in seeing her. He had asked if he might write, and had felt she really wanted him to when she said yes. It was through those letters that he had fallen in love with her, with her sweetness and courage. In the fall when he returned it had seemed only natural to them both for him to take her everywhere. She had that rare quality of fitting in. At medical lectures she was unobtrusive, at intimate dinners she was merry. She had an elfin manner that made even the commonplace seem adventurous. She was sweetheart, imp, companion, as the occasion demanded—but better than that she was always herself. And so he had married her.

Now Babs was to be married. Well!

Disentangling his long length from the chair, he crossed the lounge in quick strides to go find Ann. As the door swung shut behind him, a slight wind caught the newspaper, and in a soft swish it slid to the floor, with the picture of Miss Barbara Chesterton staring vacantly at the ceiling.

An Argument For Functional Poetry

(Continued from page 19)

in the traditionally poetic qualities of Stephen Spender's lines when he compares our modern airliners to huge moths, merely because this poem concerns itself functionally with a material matter of the present day.

"With burring furred antennae, feeling its
huge path through the dusk,
The motor drones like some gigantic fly,
A monstrous mound of vapor bathes my wing."

Perhaps these poets—shall we call them conscientious objectors?—are not entirely cognizant of the functional poet's meaning when he writes of war, useless death, and the starving poor. Perhaps the functional poet wishes to convey the idea that there can be no beauty of souls, fine-

ness of emotions, or harmonious nature until the evils which offer them material for subject matter are removed.

The World War, perhaps more than any other one thing, has offered ripe stores of materials to the functional poet to choose as subject matter. Functional poets one after another, have derided war, the uselessness of it, the needless pains, heartaches, and deaths, which have come as a result of war.

Edna St. Vincent Millay in her "Conscientious Objector" says:

"I shall die, but that is all I will do for death,
I am not on his payroll."

Perhaps if those men, consumed with patriotic passion, had felt more as does Miss Millay in this poem, they would not have fostered the cause of 'keeping America safe for democracy,' but would still be living and walking the roads of their same democratic America today.

Although Thomas Hardy is better known to us for writing poetry containing various twirks of circumstance, he, in "The Man He Killed," shows us the lack of purpose behind the wholesale killing in war:

"You'd shoot a fellow down,
You'd treat, if met where any bar is,
Or help to half a crown."

War that distorts a staid professor into a gibbering maniac; war that changes a pacific matron into a shrieking Amazon crying for the blood of the enemy; war that does these things to sober minds and prosaic beings, does much more to the poet, keyed as he is at all times to feeling and intuition beyond that of his fellows, and which in time of war must inevitably spur him to a state of feeling, to exaltation or to agony, almost beyond comprehension. Since a poet's finer thread of instinct is more keenly tuned to see and to hear the harmony or lack of harmony in the world around us, shouldn't he be the one to try to bring the mind of the average man to feel more and more these harmonies or lack of them and thus know how to appreciate the true values of the world, which are definitely not—according to the poet—materialism, exploited industrialism, and war?

Although Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, and Wilfrid Owen all have given us something of the feeling of horror in war and the inexpressible futility of killing one's neighbors—not because of any personal hatred, but because of some abstract thing such as patriotism, or heroism—it, however, remains for Siegfried Sassoon to be the most bitter and the most satiric war poet. In his "What Does It Matter" we are able to perceive such a poignant distrust for fighting to keep one's country existing under a democratic rule, or that of a dictatorship, as the case may be, that we wonder if, in the event of a future war, there will be any such thing as voluntary enlistments.

"What does it matter losing your arm?
People will always be kind."

Sassoon's grim, horrible, satiric humour comes to us even more markedly in "Arms and the Men," when he pictures a maimed officer reading a sign which offers arms or legs to officers of rank for nothing—absolutely free of charge. We find in Sassoon's works no blind patriotism, only stark reality.

Politics, for poetry, has ever been a rich soil. It was not only in Shakespeare's day that the Brutuses addressed their countrymen in blank verse. Spender in his "Spirit of Communism" and Auden in "The Dance of Death," as they strive to confront problems, political and social, on the continent, are apt in portraying the hopelessness of life under the leadership of non-benevolent dictators. Both Auden and Spender are very much interested in poetry that has to do with propaganda, and in "The Ascent of F6," Auden's satire upon the territorial aspirations of nations is so much to the common man's way of thinking that it would seem that such evils as he describes could not be fostered today in a world of supposed enlightenment.

Foremost as writers of political and social controversies is that group of poets known as the Vorticists who definitely belong to the twentieth century and who include T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and James Joyce. These poets and writers are interpreted as being functional writers because it is the essence of their belief that things of the past are of no value unless they may be construed as

culminating and climaxing in some important problem of our own day. Their ideas have behind them all the years of learning, but all the culture of past years by itself is not sufficient subject matter for a poem. It is in the way that such aspects of the past are directly associated with a definite point, either social, economic, or political, of our present day that the Vorticists are interested. The horrors of war are very evident in a certain period of Mr. T. S. Eliot's writing, and there is not a poem which better epitomizes the futility of our present political disorders, both national and international, than Mr. Eliot's "Wasteland." In this poem we find his belief expressed that the world is changing and changing, and yet never changing for the better. His dissatisfaction might best be given, not in his own words, but in the words of Edna St. Vincent Millay in her "Apostrophe to Man."

"Detestable man, continue to
Expunge yourself; die out;
Breed faster, crowd, encroach,
So that there may be more men to die."

Although there may be some doubt about all of these Vorticist poets possessing interest in humanity and what happens to it through wars, social disorders, and political evils, it cannot be denied that Eliot possesses this interest.

It is proper and fitting that we should take up last Stephen Vincent Benet, giving him the position of honor because of his superior and greater attainments in the field of poetry which we are, at present considering. Mr. Benet epitomizes what is meant when one speaks of a functional poet. He not only considers that mankind will be doomed unless something is done about the political system as he views it in "Litany For Dictatorship," but he pictures in this poem our civilization on fire. He considers those people who are downtrodden and suppressed by violence, and he reports the evils of our economic and industrial system as well as the utter uselessness of wars and what will happen to our civilization if we continue to usurp the rights of our neighbors and then take up arms against them.

His "Nightmares" are probably the most bitter and satiric pictures of our present-day evils and wrongs that

have ever been written. One cannot read such lines as those telling of the revolt of the machines and the robots taking over and dominating human beings, which comes in his "Nightmare No. 3," without having more than a momentary qualm about the mad rush onward toward a more advanced industrialism; nor can one, without shuddering at the thought of a completely unhumanized nation, toward which we seem to be rapidly striding, read his lines in "Metropolitan Nightmare" in which the busy people of New York, or any other metropolitan center, are so immersed in their own affairs that they cannot even take time to notice the coming of spring, and the poor termites are forced to eat steel for lack of wood.

The effect of war is one of his favorite themes. He tells us in "Nightmare For Future Reference" that the only apparent way in which to stop countries from fighting one another is for children to stop being born; and in "Nightmare With Angels," an angel appears before him "quietly and appropriately dressed in cellophane, synthetic rubber and stainless steel."

"In his hand was a woven wire basket, full of seeds,
small,
Metallic and fine, like seeds of Portulaca.
Where he sowed them, the green vine withered
And the smoke of armies sprang up."

Where are we going? What are we going to do? These are the questions that are raised in each of his "Nightmares." Can we do anything about the plight civilization is in? Can we, the poets, by writing poetry help the world and the people of the world to see that unless something is done, done by the people, to rid civilization of the economic, political, and social disorders which, up to the present instead of decreasing in number have every moment grown, that people will more and more be deprived of their happiness, their lives will continue needlessly to be lost, and civilization will cease to exist by its own hand? This is the text of the functional poets. If they can continue to do the kind of work begun in the years just before the World War and brought to its climax by Stephen Vincent Benet, isn't

that ample justification for their being?—more justification than you or I have, or any of the poets writing merely of the beauties of an uncontrolled nature?

Fraternity Pin Fantasy

—By Sally Wilson

It was a glittering thing, oh quite,
When first it gleamed upon my sight,
A jewel rare and surely sent
To be a maiden's ornament;
I did not know nor did I care
Just how I'd get it, when or where,
But where there's will there is a way,
Though not considered mere child's play;
My mind is centered, not on tin
But a jewel-encrusted fraternity pin.

Beneath the brightest sun of noon
And underneath the light of moon,
This fragile trinket lured me on
To conquer some fond mother's son;
And with this thought upon my mind
My efforts, doubled, were combined
With wiles known well to all females,
Of one 'tis said, "It never fails";
And so before the month was out
The pin was mine beyond all doubt.

But now I find with prize so new
I've bit off more than I can chew;
The glory seems not half so bright
As it did once in pale moonlight,
And I am nearly bored to death
To see his face with every breath;
I sometimes wish I had not planned
To conquer, then to be command-ed
And yet that pin still gives delight
With something of its former light.

