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First Place—Essay Award

Veni...Vidi

SISTER M. JERELYN, OSF, '67

When happiness is a friendly Panda and the world no larger than the playpen, life goes down as smoothly as pablum. At the end of the Gerber stage, however, one must begin to chew for one's self and swallow the hard things in life. It was at this point in my childhood that I received the first taste of myself and my world. As I sped through the toddling period as quickly as possible, it became apparent that I had nerve where other kids had baby fat. Not only was I gifted with an overdose of gall, but I roller-skated well.

The days of youth reportedly fly by all too fast. In my case it was different—I flew by them. So proud was I of my new mode of transportation that I unreservedly rolled everywhere. Sidewalks nearly powdered under the daily grind of my ball bearings for I never really cared where I went as long as I got there fast. Only once in my reckless career did the unabashedness of youth and addiction to the skates combine to bring me to a standstill. The object which put on the brakes was the First Evangelical Baptist Church which for years had peacefully conducted its services down the street. A daily roll past the wide doors intensified my curiosity about its services. I knew they worshipped differently and the urge to show them how we did it grew into an apostolic plan.

The next Sunday, all weepy with drizzle, found the unsuspecting Baptists holding their prayer meeting. With great fervor I

armed myself with a 729 page Daily Roman Missal whose chief asset was four delightfully colored ribbon markers. The fifth streamer was black and as it didn't appeal to me, I tucked it inconspicuously between the pages. Though I couldn't read a word, I was convinced that when faced with this volume of devotion no Protestant could resist the faith. With skates strapped in place and an umbrella to protect my sunsuit I pushed off through the rain looking like a rolling concession stand. I would do great things for God whether the Baptists liked it or not.

The excitement of going to church with the "others" eased the difficulty of skating through puddles. Thoroughly soaked, I finally pulled my romper-clad self up to the main entrance and faced my first obstacle—the steps. After a few unsuccessful rolls back to the sidewalk, I discovered that if I mounted pigeon-toed and clung to the banister the backsliding would stop. Though the umbrella and 729 page Daily Roman Missal didn't help, I victoriously clanked up to the glass door and accordion pleated my nose against its pane. It was then that I realized my audience. Two young men in the vestibule opened the door and recovered me from an unintentional genuflection. My nerve they didn't seem to notice, but the skates were difficult to miss. The announcement that I had come "to go to church" was met with a suggestion that I first de-wheel. Returning to the steps my posterior was dampened but the Apostolic spirit was not to be diluted. I straightened the four beautiful streamers and faced my duty—God would be so proud of me.

I didn't know how an apostle ought to look, but judging from the row of stares through the door a sunsuit wasn't the appropriate start. I struck a very nonchalant pose and suddenly realized that my umbrella was still up. The whole ensemble must have created the impression of an advertisement for Morton Salt for the eyebrows raised like a curtain on opening night. As the minister was out of view the only difference noticeable between their church and mine was the wicker fans with which these ladies were cooling themselves. We always used the parish bulletin. All heads were turned in my direction, so the ladies were presently fanning their left ears which struck me as extremely funny. Suppressing a giggle I advanced toward the body of the church and was suddenly 729 pages lighter. The two gentlemen had slipped the missal from my

grasp, leafed through it and added their eyebrows to the group. I had crammed it full of holy pictures and was sure it would make a big impression. It did. I was politely ushered back to my skates—missal, umbrella and all. My first missionary journey had ended in a puddle.

Even my mother didn't understand. Recounting my attempt at ecumenism simply reduced me to my leather soles for three slow moving weeks. But shelving those skates did more to my view of life than lower it a few inches. It marked my first encounter with a lack of communication. How could I feel guilty for simply going to church? After all I hadn't crossed the street.

School attendance brought a decline in my ball bearing worship but the formal moral education received wrapped this particular memory in an atmosphere of guilt. By the time I made my first confession I was convinced that I had not only endangered my soul but caused scandal—I had done it in a sunsuit! Though the priest kindly absolved me from any pain of hell, it took months before I would walk past the scene of the crime. The thought of being recognized by one of those fan-fluttering women led to my re-routing my path a dozen different ways. Passing years have thrown a humorous light on the whole childish endeavor, but somehow with the chuckles comes the feeling that maturity hasn't truly arrived at all. Learning to splash through all the puddles stretched between myself and others is a formidable challenge in life. Everywhere I turn there is a drizzle to be pierced. No one can roll into his fellowman with 729 pages of his own opinion, for that other may have as many of his own—and his streamers are just as pretty. The heavy thing might as well be left behind and replaced with a listening heart. Nor will the goal be reached until no one is returned to his skates and sent back through the mist. How great a thing it is to look at another and keep the eyebrows down.

Grace on ball bearings has evaporated and my nerve has been replaced by a sophisticated concern for appearance, yet my pride rears its head with the thought of my one truly Pauline endeavor. It is a joy to recall how once in childhood I joined in his simple strongheartedness. "For who shall separate us . . . shall tribulation or puddles, or hunger or drizzle or danger or the sword or a sunsuit . . ."

November 22, 1965

First Place—Poetry Award

Days have stretched to years:

Along the rolling beach where once we walked
Waves break and ebb away, leaving crusted salt
Where once a vital force had been.
Roaring, sudden foam comes crashing in, vivid, alive,
Then slips away before we know its strength;
And then it's gone, before we knew we owned it in ourselves.
Left, a salted crust is swept by wind,
Salt of dried oceans left upon the sand.

Alone, the fog comes misting silent in;
Membraneous foggy tissue covers all
Where once lay open sore and crusted wounds.
Moist and hazy, not seeing sands or beach, nor feeling sweeping
wind,
Blind I stand and listen to the sea.
—Somewhere, distant, yet, I hear a wave.
Distant you speak out, a crash almost unheard,
And you are here and I am not alone.

And days have stretched to years.

FAY FAIVRE, '68

Mother

and

Child

GAYLE STEIGERWALD, '69

Quietly she flipped the book closed. Leaning forward from her cross-legged position on the floor, she switched the television on and sat back to wait for the central pinpoint of light to open and expand. Or was she waiting for her own mind to shrink to the dimensions of the thin, wavering shaft and thence find her release from reality? She stared at her own young image in the screen, the satin smoothness of her shoulder-length brown hair. Her "crowning glory" her mother had always called it, and her mother always saw that it was brushed and shampooed, shampooed and brushed.

She shifted to a more comfortable position, knocking the book with her foot, the book she had just put aside. She had excused herself with an "it just isn't interesting." No, the book was interesting, but she was not interested. She found this hard to understand; reading had been one of her first loves as a young child. Her mother had always stressed the importance of reading in a young lady's education; her mother always saw that she went to the library and read, read and went to the library. But books had lost their fascination; now she had neither the time nor the willingness to read.

This too, she found hard to understand. In high school, although she didn't do everything, she did do what interested her. Cheerleading and the choral group had interested her. Jeff had interested her. As a matter of fact Jeff had become her main in-

terest : going somewhere meant going somewhere with Jeff ; doing something meant doing something with Jeff. How could one year change her so, the passing of just twelve months drain so much from her life?

And she sat, uninterested, watching the story of a young student nurse, caught in the soap opera's melodramatic controversy over whether to marry him or give her baby up for adoption. A story that was hackneyed, but too often true. A story that was not unlike her own.

But in her case there had been no controversy, for controversy implies strength and a conflict of wills. The entire situation had left her without strength, without will. Her mother alone had stood strong. And it was decided that she should marry Jeff ; yes, that would be best.

She got up from the floor, turned the television off, and went to the window, slightly streaked and smudged. She had married Jeff, she had had her baby, and now she had smudges and streaks on the window. There had always been smudges, and there would always be smudges. Dirt was the one thing she could depend on : dirt and boredom would always be there. She had married Jeff : yes, that had been best.

She plopped face down on the couch ; perhaps she would sleep. But not too long, or too deeply, she had to listen for the baby, in case anything went wrong. Things were always going wrong with the baby, so she would only doze for a few minutes . . .

He sat slouched, as most babies do, in the highchair, chewing vigorously on the spoon and, as most babies do, soon sent it clanging to the floor. He didn't throw nor merely drop it ; it was more of an experimental releasing, and he watched, disinterested, to see what it would do. But unlike most babies, he had no one there to reclaim his toy for him. And so it would remain, lying next to the week-old newspaper, open to the comic section, carelessly dropped next to the chair. And no one could say how long either would remain. There were other signs of neglect, a few scattered plates and cups remaining from breakfast and lunch, not even stacked in the sink, but left where they were used.

He did not yet miss the spoon. Instead he played with his own fingers, content with the fascination of their warmth and flexibil-

ity. When he grew tired of these, he turned to the snaps on his pajamas, pajamas soiled and stiff, as carelessly put on as they were laundered. Even these lost their temporary excitement, and, as most babies do, he began to take in the objects around him. But his gaze encountered only the impersonal shapes of porcelain and tile, as cold as the metal of the spoon he had a moment before let go. Even the highchair lacked brightness and warmth. It was his mother's and nineteen years had left it scuffed and drab. Now he missed the spoon; although impersonal and inanimate, it possessed the warmth of contact, it was something he had felt and experienced.

So, as most babies do, he began to cry. He cried for the warmth of a spoon. His cries roused his mother from her sleep. She walked sluggishly to the kitchen, picked him up and went through the awkward motions of comforting her child. They stood there, the mother mechanically rocking him as he cried.

* * * * *

Of Falling

An Essay on Life and Death

DENNIS W. VON PYRITZ, '69

Dream world, dream world, one two three
Dream world casts a spell on thee . . .

You hear a scream in the darkness; the scream is lost somewhere far off in the bank of blackness and yet it has crept so close

as to breathe on you. You freeze. But as you stand there the air dries and yellows, it hazes and thickens so that it itches your eyes and your skin, then it begins to mold like gelatin around you. You cannot breathe. You must breathe, you must break out, you must run. Run, run.

Yes, but where? The voice came from somewhere in the darkness but there is no direction in darkness, only opposite directions taken which are their own opposites. To stay is to die. So you stumble in the random direction gravity sends you, or you try with your mind to point the way—but is there any real difference? Many times you veer off your initial course and this too may be conscious or not. But you never know where you are for there is no direction in darkness except that in which you are heading now. Now.

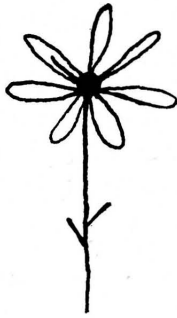
For years you are thus until you realize that the scream came not from the darkness but from Darkness. And that is real. Perhaps you will also realize that you have been stumbling and not really heading. Your pace slows for you know that at any time you might fall and be sucked into Darkness. But what is there to fear in Darkness, for in there there is no darkness, no sense of movement, not even the stumbling. There is only nothing. You will not worry about stumbling or about stopping, you will not even worry about nothing. So perhaps if you run you *will* fall and end the reason for your running. But most spend their parcel of time in thick, lazy stumbling for sooner or later they know they must fall. Only to fall is real and yet that is not real. No.

Real and not real. And in all this darkness how many choose to stop and be smothered? There is no escape, only easier and less conscious ways. Even in stopping you fall into Darkness.

All fall into Darkness.

Dream world, dream world, one two three
Dream world sets thee free.

Haiku



Soft centered daisy
Stiff upon unbending stem
Radiates the sun.

In darkened fall sky
Flutters little singing bird
Mist'd with weeping clouds.



Many new snow flakes
Cover up the shriveled earth
Beauty comes again.



Fay Faivre, '68



Happy bud comes forth
A venture into new things
Humming busy tune.

Gatsby's

GREAT
AMERICAN
NIGHTMARE

SISTER MARY SERRA, O.S.F., '67

On the night before Nick Carraway, narrator of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, left West Egg, he made one last visit to his murdered neighbor's "huge incoherent failure of a house." Sprawled out in the moonlight on the adjacent beach, Nick let his

mind wander back in time to the first adventurers who stood on these eastern shores of a new continent and dreamed man's last and greatest dream, dizzied by the realization of what fortune held out to them. Just three months before this particular night, another "adventurer" had stood in the "unquiet darkness" with arms outstretched toward a distant green light, which held the same promise for him that the new world had held for those first Dutch sailors. Tonight that man was dead—horribly, tragically dead—and his "incorruptible dream" had been dashed to the ground and splintered into a thousand garish pieces.

The dream, conceived in that first "enchanted moment" when "man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent," has passed through Gatsby's generation to ours under various names—in recent years, the "New Deal," the "New Frontier," the "Great Society." Whatever the cliché, it has stood for the American dream of the good life in the land of opportunity, where each man, regardless of his background, has a chance for happiness, for what the world prefers to call "success."

By the time the Twenties roared in, the shining dream had become quite tarnished. Many factors, including victory in the war, soaring national pride, growing national prosperity, and impressive technological advances had made Americans giddy with success, and much of the idealism of the early years of the dream was replaced by the grossest materialism, as Fitzgerald illustrated in *The Great Gatsby*. Those who were still willing to dream were given the distorted vision of a success in which the possession of money, social status, and a beautiful woman were the be-all and end-all of existence. Gatsby is pictured as one of those willing to dream, and thus becomes "a symbol of America itself, dedicated to 'the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty'."

In the eyes of many people, Jay Gatsby had been a success. Among the most pathetic of these is his father, himself such a failure, who now stood in awe of this enterprising, ambitious son. He felt sure that his Jimmy would have been a builder of the nation, if he had lived. Surely in the face of Gatsby's turreted mansion, gleaming Rolls Royce, marble swimming pool, hydro-plane, wear-once-and-throw-away supply of clothes, who could deny his success?

But the picture of an "elegant young roughneck" standing on the steps, smiling approvingly as he takes in the spectacle of one of his lavish parties is not as true a picture of Gatsby as is that of a restless young man standing on the moonlit lawn with arms stretched out in longing. The dream was not yet complete, for all the outward show. Money, house, car, clothes, and pool can give a man much satisfaction, but they cannot love him, they cannot fill up the inevitable empty places in his life. Gatsby had tried to compensate by keeping his house bulging with "interesting people, night and day," but these interesting people "paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing whatever about him." This loneliness of Gatsby's life is finally attested to by one short but revealing sentence describing his funeral: "Nobody came." For all his money, the hundreds who had accepted his hospitality had never accepted him.

The remedy for the loneliness, the completion of the dream, had seemed to lie just beyond the green light across the bay. Though he had known women early, pretty, popular, wealthy Daisy Fay, now Daisy Buchanan, had been the first "nice" girl to come into his life. In the five years since he'd lost her the first time his life had become confused and disordered, for "some idea of himself . . . had gone into loving Daisy." He had so built up his mental image of her that she became more than just a woman to him; she became the very embodiment of his ideal. When he first spotted the green light on the end of her dock, the dream seemed just beyond his grasp, but within three months she had shattered his hopes by rejecting his love, and the dream still lay in the future.

However, the tragedy of Gatsby's life, the corruption of his dream, was not that he lost Daisy. With his "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life" he would surely have gone reaching out for an "orgiastic future" that lay just beyond a green light. The tragedy was not even that he was murdered, but that he died before he discovered the falseness of the mirage he had been chasing. Gatsby is the symbol of all those whose "eager hearts, pushed to the breaking point by all of nature's demands for happiness . . . have only the wrong places to go." The world had told Gatsby he had a right to happiness, and that was true, but in all the hurry of showing him where to find it, someone had left out God.

Snow

Snow.

Life.

Snow falls.

Babies are born.

Snow is beautiful

Human beings are wonderful.

Snow is trampled on.

So are people.

Snow turns from white to black.

So do people sometimes.

Snow inevitably melts.

Death invariably comes.

MIKEL J. J. SCANLAN, '69

OF

PHILOSOPHICAL

TALKS

on a Merry-Go-Round

It was here we talked of wars, loves,
and lusts,

Of do's, don't's, and must's.

It was here we voiced opinions

On how to rule dominions.

Here we argued and discussed

Matters not affecting us.

But just the same we maintain

Our philosophical talks on a merry-go-round.

PATRICIA LANGLAIS, '69

AGREE OR NOT... THAT
ETHICS... PHILOSOPHY
QUALITY... MORALITY
... LIFE... POLITICS...
TRUTH... HE SAID.
I KNOW
... F
BUT... LET
JUSTICE... GOD..
WHY... T



ANN
TADDONIO

One Thin Sheet

of

Paper

GAYLE STEIGERWALD, '69

Automatically, he reached for the top paper on the stack, relieved at last to see that the papers corrected outnumbered those yet waiting his inspection. One quick, cold, analytic glance over the paper, and it was graded. That was all that was necessary: they either had the right answers or they didn't. There could be no if's or but's about a math examination.

He looked at the next paper. Stotter, Eileen, written in a bold, vigorous script came forth to meet him head on. The handwriting was almost imperative, it demanded attention, for this was the work of Stotter, Eileen.

Stretching his legs, he pushed his chair back from the desk and reached for his cup of coffee, with just a hint of a smile. Eileen Stotter. Math wasn't her major; as a matter of fact, she had no great affection for math before. But three hours more of math were required for her degree, just three more hours of math. If she wanted to graduate, she had to take math. And if she had to take math, she was going to learn it.

He remembered that first class. She alone had been able to overcome the gravitational field which draws students to the back of the room. Short and dark, she took her place in the very front of the lecture hall. She just didn't walk there; she actually took her place as if the Almighty had designated it as such from all eternity. Even the way she opened her book had a certain authority. An authority which would have been overbearing save for an elfin grin and the expression in her eyes. Eyes which dared you to guess what she had done this time.

She never missed a lecture nor a problem session. And at least three times a week she could be seen marching towards the math department, a pencil clenched between her teeth, leafing through the pages of a steadily deteriorating notebook scrawled with formulas, theorems and equations, quadratic and otherwise. It was either, "You see, there's this problem that just doesn't work out," or, "Do you think you could explain Newton's method again?" Just three credits in math and she'd have her degree. She was going to get that degree; she was going to learn that math.

And the evidence of her learning was there before him. On one, thin sheet of paper: the final examination, the only test he gave or considered. For to him, math was something that became a part of you. You learned it or you didn't; you could give it to him on a test or you couldn't. And only one test was needed to determine this.

Eileen Stotter had given everyone a good laugh and a welcome break from a dull lecture with her mock, "But I didn't do it," when she called from class to report to the dean's office. Her mother had been seriously injured in an automobile accident; Eileen should go to the hospital immediately.

Her heart did not stop when she heard the news. It did not sink within her. At that moment she had no heart. It was just two weeks before final examinations when Eileen Stotter's mother died.

She returned for her examination, but she just walked in the class room and her eyes no longer dared anyone to do anything.

He picked up that one thin sheet of paper, glanced at it once, then looked again. Nothing changed, nothing could, because on the final examination you either gave it to him or you didn't.



Amos

The bleak and barren desert
Produced fruit:

The fertile soil of a shepherd's heart
Caught the seed of the Word of Yahweh,
Nursed it in sandy solitude.

The seed grew—
Blossomed and burst forth
In prophecy.

Cries to the complacent city
Decreed destruction;
Shouts of tenacious hope
Spoke salvation.

The voice of one who shared
Secrets with a Mystery
Thundered out:

“But if you would offer me holocausts,
then let justice surge like water,
and goodness like an unfailing stream.”

CAROL SCHMIDT, '66

The Run

First Place—Short Story Award

Sr. M. JERELYN, OSF, '67

Gray isn't the word for that sky up there. The sky is lead. I'd like to slap it hard but that would stick another two months on my term. It's been a week since they put me in Cottage Eight. I've almost forgotten what it's like to reach out and find someone to listen or something to do. They say if you've made Cottage Eight, you're pretty well incorrigible. Solitary is the world's way of saying, "You've gone far enough, kid, now stand in an empty room or lie on the mattress on the floor. Just sit there in your shapeless cotton dress and reform yourself." I've got news for you, world—the only hope I have is to tear you all apart, city by city, house by house, person by person. When I get out and kick the reforming dust of this institution off my feet, I'm going to show you and all your social workers just where you stand with me.

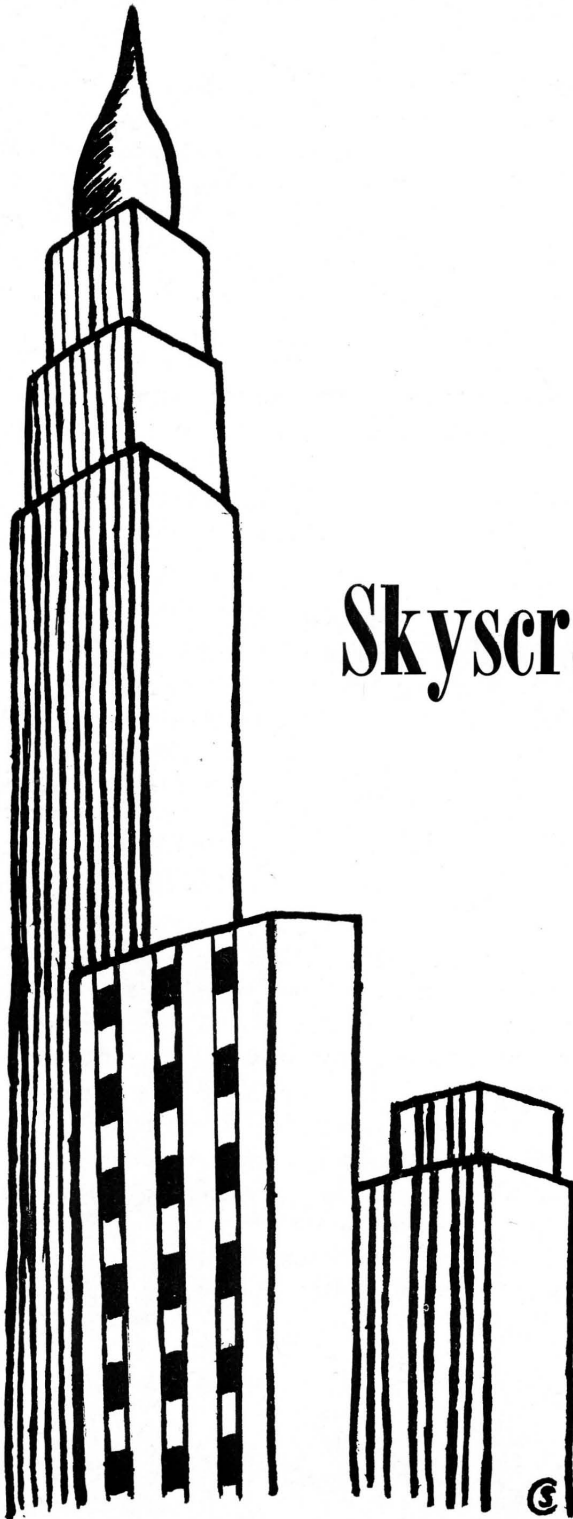
I used to really admire those girls who had tried to run and at least gotten as far as the next town. They had guts, because running is the only answer. At least it's better than following this reforming schedule. I used to just dream of how I'd escape and I really can't tell you when the thoughts turned to plans. Yes, lead is the word for that sky out there. I sit in this cheap empty room and stare. The day I tried to run the sky was blue. The clouds were cotton and I could almost reach out and fluff them with my fingertips.

That slit in the wall over there they call my window. Big view, a cornfield. That cornfield is a big joke. If you look hard you can see the joke over by the expressway. Right there in the middle of the shucks is a billboard selling peas, and holding a big pod is a paper giant. Real inspiring view, huh? Every day I'd look at that billboard and say, "You stupid paper giant selling peas in a corn field. Drop that pea pod and you'll get succotash."

Why doesn't somebody do something about that sky. It would be so heavy if it fell. Maybe that's what I want, I don't know. It would be better than staring at those vegetables. I guess everyone here thinks we are just like a rotten ear of corn, so they pick us up and store us here. Don't they know that you can't close up a rotting thing and expect it to get healthy. Who wants to get healthy anyway?

I had my chance to run a week ago. Though I didn't get very far it caused quite a stir. Running was easier than I expected. I'd had dreams before where my legs were moving, but I wasn't going any place. I felt just like I was staring in my own dream. They keep telling everyone that tours the place that they're short of staff and it always pulls a lot of sympathy. The staff in our cottage is one old housemother. The night I ran she was having trouble with a girl down the hall and didn't know I'd blown until she found my curtains over the headboard of my bed. By that time I had groped through the weeds and gained the field.

Before I reached the billboard I could hear the flat wail of the alarm and the motors of the night guards. I knew right away I wouldn't set a record for distance but I just wanted to get as far as that paper giant. There really wasn't any place to go, so I worked my way to the sign and screamed right into his flat face, "You big stupid thing, you're all mixed up. You don't belong—" It felt good to let someone else know they were wrong for a change. I didn't cause any trouble coming back. You can't imagine how they look at you when you've done something like that. I haven't seen the housemother since that night a week ago. Cottage Eight is for we "incorrigibles," you know. I just can't wait to get out of here. Meanwhile, I'll sit here and reform; maybe I might get another day with a blue sky and white fluffy clouds.



Skyscraper

You rise
from the frenzy of pulsating life—
a building that scrapes the sky.
You reach your steel-strong arms
to the cloud-splashed heavens :
you point to infinity.

With foundations sunk deep into the earth,
you speak of rootedness,
stability,
and strength.
In the noisy valley of neon signs,
taxis,
and coffee shops below you,
man is fascinated and dazzled
by the technical world
which is his own.

Mountain-tall
you draw his eyes
to the sun-filled azure sky—
to creation
that is not his own.

From your lofty heights,
man is able once again
to feel the call
from something beyond himself . . .
and he responds.

CAROL SCHMIDT, '66

The Game

JUDY COVELLI, '69

whimpering — almost as if he didn't want to go she thought. But her thoughts reverted quickly to the boy. He was so quiet and small, and had such a fierce desire to play in the snow all the time.

Glancing out the window, she saw Bengie stretching his short legs to make monstrous tracks in the unblemished snow from the slight storm that morning. He always waited till the snow covered his tracks of the previous time. For each step had to be a masterpiece—the perfect replica of prints of a creature that didn't exist except in his mind. This time the creature left big, almost round, footprints, as Bengie set each foot to the ground and swung it in a wide arch. The setting today was an Andes mountain path, steep and treacherous.

After plotting the trail, Bengie grabbed his rifle and shouted orders at the dog. He chased it around the yard a few times to irritate it and then slowed down for the hunt. He crept

“Mom, will he be home tonight?”

“No, Bengie, Dad won't be coming home at all today. You can go out and play in the snow. Take the dog with you.”

There was no need to tell him. He always took the dog with him when he went to play. She watched concerned as he raced out the door, and the big collie straggled out after him,

stealthily along, his eyes burning more and more with a hidden desire, a hidden fire of contempt for the hunted.

But from the window his mother couldn't see his unearthly glare. She could only see a small boy playing alone, playing a game he played time and time again with his dog—the hunter and the hunted.

Hours later the boy trudged in, somewhat contented but exhausted from the hunt. The dog limped slowly through the door and curled up by the stove. He was panting from being chased and shot at, chased and shot at. Outside, the trampled and dug up snow gradually hid under a new layer, waiting for another scene to be etched out.

The next day his father returned and Bengie stayed inside. He didn't stay to be with his father. But for some reason, even he himself didn't know, he was always afraid to play the game when his father was home. Today he sat in a kitchen corner and watched his mother work. As he fiddled with his tiny slingshot and toy animals, his eyes followed his mother from sink to stove to sink and back. She saw no fire in his eyes this time either. But her back was turned and now she

missed the plea that begged for help with every step she took.

His look followed her across the doorway on her way to the kitchen table, but stopped abruptly as it caught sight again of his father in the other room. He was just sitting there, gripping the edges of the armchair and just staring.

Finally, Bengie spoke, "Why does father sit and stare, Mommy?"

"Daddy is tired, Bengie. He works hard."

"If he's tired, why doesn't he sleep? He doesn't sleep at night either. I hear him. He walks around and screams at you sometimes. Sometimes he comes to my room and just looks. I can feel him there and hear him breathe."

"Daddy does sleep Bengie. He—goes to sleep after you do. You must be having nightmares. And if he does go to your room, it's—it's to check that you are all right. Why don't you go and ask him when he wants to eat supper?"

"Mom, do I have to?"

"Of course, Bengie, now go! You're not afraid of your father, are you?"

"O.K., Mom."

As he walked from the room, slingshot and toys securely in

hand, he passed a nearby window that revealed the drifts of fresh snow. But now he didn't even think of the game, of the dog. He didn't see the snow. His eyes were focused somewhere else, somewhere far distant. They didn't flame, or plead as he approached the chair, but refocused in the present with a new look that rested upon the still form of his father. He walked in front of him in hopes of breaking the trance, but he had to shake him before the father's flaming eyes moved and settled on his son. The fear in Bengie's eyes became apparent now as he spurted "Mom wants you to tell her when you want supper," and raced upstairs to his room.

He opened the door. Shadows fell across the large room and did contortions on the floor as sunlight from the hall window peeked through the opening. In that brief moment the room looked almost empty. Just the bed, dresser, and small chair revealed an inhabitant.

Later, that small inhabitant crawled into bed for another restless night. Dozing off he dreamt of his wild hunt the day before. As he trailed the monster up the path, shot, fright-

ened him, shot again, the beast took out from hiding and fled into the open path. Just as Bengie was about to shoot again, his father's voice penetrated his dream with words, "So he's my *son*. He's weak and frail, and from his birth he's tortured me. His flimsy body cries out that he's my only son—that there'll be no other. And when it does I want to taunt him and say, 'I'll not have you for my son. If there'll be no strong and healthy lad to carry on my name, then you won't wear it either!'"

. . . And as the shot hit, the animal shrieked and turned to attack the hunter. Screaming in terror, Bengie struggled and became entangled in the folds of the white blanket on his bed. As he fought and clawed back and screamed and kicked, the whiteness wrapped around him in a hopeless bind.

The father came when he heard the screams, as all fathers do, and watched the struggling figure become enmeshed. As the cries and the struggle wore down, the flame in his father's eyes died out too. They were calm now, and emotionless, smothered like the boy under the still white blanket — the game at an end.

Inquietus

Est

Cor Meum

I watched with envy my friends
Who were so sure, so confident
In the rightness of their way,
And I wondered why I
Seemed destined to doubt.
And looking to heaven, I cried,
Give me a sign!
If You exist—show me,
That I may too believe!
But there was silence.
Why don't You answer me?
Let me know that You hear me.
Let me love You.
A sign, O Lord, all I ask is a sign
Of Your existence!
Then I heard, softly . . .
“Would you be free?”

Why? I asked why are these
Around me privileged to believe,
Never doubting, or their doubts resolved?
Who chooses, and how,
Who is to receive this Faith,
This elusive Faith I seek?
Why only some, O Lord,
O Lord, why not me?
And I heard, softly . . .

“Faith is not a gift; it is a Giving.”

Am I then, I asked, to give myself
To something I don't know?
To devote a precious life to
That which seems at best
An uncertainty—if not folly?
Can any man give *all* to—
To what?—Does anyone know?
Yet I heard, softly . . .

“Faith . . . is the ultimate Gamble.”

KATHERINE TOTH, '69

