



The
Scimitar

Creative
CAMPUS CONTRIBUTIONS

presenting

the Scimitar

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FOREWORD

In keeping with the spirit of the cadet corps, **The Scimitar** is an example of a mere idea's producing an original and authentic contribution to the nurture and encouragement of talent. The success of this magazine, or any function of S.M.A., is almost entirely dependent upon the students who constitute the Academy.

The school newspaper, which is almost half as old as the Staunton Military Academy itself, has expressed a bold and continuing interest in current activities of the school. **The Scimitar**, on the other hand, goes one step further, in that it is a demonstration of potential and active creative talent within this educational community.

We of the staff are well assured that **The Scimitar** will continue to fill its purposeful role as long as it receives the active support and interest of the Corps. May the name **Scimitar** endure as long as the Staunton Military Academy.

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AWARD WINNERS

- 1st Award—\$20.00—fiction—James S. Gunn, THE LAST ONE
- 1st Award—\$10.00—short story—Philip Ochs, WHITE MILK TO RED WINE
- 1st Award—\$5.00—poem—James D. Lowe, THE OLD SHALL DIE
- Editors' Honorable Mention—Constancio Castaneda, ETERNITY



ONCE I READ A CATALOGUE

BARRY B. LONGYEAR

I was minding my business one fine summer day,
Reading a catalogue of old S.M.A.
That all happened three years ago,
The mistake I had made I did not then know.

I looked at the buildings, old and grey,
"Ah! The military life," one could hear me say.
That all happened three years ago,
Why I thought that, I never will know.

Now that I'm on my big third year,
I stop to think what happened here.
"Rank comes easy," people would say,
Fifty-three people got made yesterday.

I would wait for each make list with joy in my eye,
Hoping by some chance the next would be I.
On bended knee I'd look at the sheet,
And my hopes and joys would crash at my feet.

I'd see the new officers strutting around,
"Of course, I'm not jealous," I'd grunt with a sound,
Despite all the bad things that people may say,
I don't think I'd have it any other way.

THE SCIMITAR

HOMECOMING

JOHN HOWDEN

Bill is coming home today.

He has been overseas fighting in the war, and has been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery above and beyond the call of duty.

His father and mother are waiting at the station with Bill's girl, Sue. Bill's father was a hero, too, but that was in a different war and a different time.

Before the war Bill and Sue had planned to be married, but when the war came, Bill, because he was in the Marine Corps, was sent overseas before they could fulfill their plans. Bill had a good job before the war, a junior executive position in a prosperous firm, and had saved some money toward his marriage.

He has been gone for only a year and a half, but in that short time he proved

to be a very courageous individual. One day while in battle, Bill was sent on a patrol with five other men. They were scouting through a heavily mined section when an enemy machine gun opened fire on them. They were caught in a trap. If they moved to either side of the cleared path, they would be blown apart by the mines; if they stayed where they were, the machine gun would eventually find its mark. While the men were lying helplessly on the ground, Bill pulled the pins on two grenades, charged the machine gun nest, and dropped the grenades in it.

Bill is coming home today.

His mother, his father, and his girl stand proudly on the platform as the flag-draped coffin is taken from the train.

THE FIGHT

PHILIP OCHS

I had never been so worried in all my life. When I got out of bed that morning a cold sweat came over me. I knew that I had to fight him sooner or later and today was it. He had bullied me once too often, and now I had finally reached my breaking point. If a person is built stronger than others, he does not have the right to pick on people who are smaller and weaker than he is.

When he insulted me in front of my friends, I had to make a stand. In a fit of rage, I challenged him to a fight the next day after lunch. When he heard this, he threw back his head and laughed cruelly.

I went to school the following day

feeling like David when he went to meet Goliath. Unfortunately, I had no slingshot to cover me. My morning classes seemed to pass too quickly and the lunch I ate had no taste. When I walked towards the meeting place, I knew how a condemned man feels as he walks the last mile. All of a sudden a hand gripped my shoulder. I spun around and there he stood. The only difference was that the triumphant look was gone from his face. He stammered nervously and said that he didn't mean to pick on me, and that he didn't want to fight.

With a sigh of relief I agreed, and we walked back to the school to spend another routine kindergarten afternoon.

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ROBERT O'HAVER

Earth was rapidly moving into the space field. We had already explored all of the planets in our solar system, and set up colonies on two of them. These two, Mars and Venus, were the only two suitable for our type of life. The colonists did not live in the lap of luxury, but for that matter, neither did the people back on Earth. The home-planet was becoming so overcrowded that people were dying like flies. The colonists were happy, though, because they were free from the masses of mankind on Earth.

Mars was a mining colony and spaceport for the future reaches to the stars. Venus was a larger colony of farmers who grew and trapped food for themselves and the people back on Earth.

The people of Venus were the happiest of the lot; that is, they were until the arrival of the Snee. The Snee were on Venus long before Earth ever thought of colonizing the planet. They were animals about the size of a cocker spaniel, with long red hair, a bare, black face, and a bright red nose. They were so named because of the peculiar sound they made. When the men first landed on this nebulous, mist-shrouded planet, they found that the Snee had an extremely high capacity for learning and made excellent pets. There was only one trouble. The Snee had one mortal enemy, the Gryf. The Gryf was a large animal the size of a bear, who considered the Snee a delicacy. Many people had the idea that the Gryf thought the same thing of them.

Joel Crawford, the ten-year old son of Mark Crawford, Earth's chief official to Venus, was not to be denied his right to own a Snee. "But Dad," he chided, "I've just got to have one. All of the other kids in the camp have at least one. Why can't I?"

"Your birthday is only a week away," his father replied. "Let's wait till then and see. After all, they've been here for millions of years. They won't run away before the week is over."

On the morning of his birthday, Joel awoke to the sound of a faint whimpering. He sat up with a start and looked about him. There, at the foot of his bed, was the tiniest, ugliest, reddest Snee he had ever seen in his life. In fact, it was so ugly, it was almost cute. He promptly named it Sam. During the months that ensued, Joel became well known in the community for the fact that he had the largest brood and the best breed of Snee. Under Joel's watchful eye, The Snee multiplied rapidly. In fact, some claimed that they were worse than hamsters because they were bi-sexual.

The planet grew and prospered. The people were happy until one day little Joel Crawford was found in the woods, dead. The place looked as if a small hydrogen bomb had landed near by. There was blood and small bits of flesh scattered over an area of fifty square feet, and the rest of Joel was found smashed against a tree and half devoured. Close by was his small companion, Sam, lying in a hollow stump, quivering and shaking.

It was thought that the Gryf had done the dastardly deed for only they were fearsome enough to wreak havoc like this.

In order to protect the people, a large hunting party was organized and led by Mark Crawford to hunt down the Gryfs. Ten days later, the men were still on the Gryf hunt, but they had not received word from the camp for the last two days. Within three days they arrived back at the colony. Although it was afternoon, they were disturbed to

find no children playing in the park. Silence surrounded them like a black shroud. The men rushed for their homes, and, as Mark entered his, he said to himself, "What in the dickens is going on here? This place is as still as a coffin." He called out to his family, but no one answered. He ran through the house; no one was around. He entered the living room, and there he found what he had sub-consciously

known would be there — the killer. He knew that at the same time, the other men in the camp had found the same thing.

A shot rang out here and there, but all of the survivors knew that it was useless to resist. They realized that there was no defense against the beasts. He could only stand there and wait for them to tear him to shreds. Man could not defeat the Snee.

THE WHITE KNIGHT

ALLAN B. PAINTER

Here he comes, so clean and neat —

He's ready for victory, and never defeat.

His armor is bright, his weapons are great,

And his armies so vast, will follow their fate.

He is the leader—just a nod of his head

We go into battle with nothing to dread,

'Cause he is the trusted. He protects us from harm;

He keeps all his comrades relieved from alarm.

The Battle begins, and look at him fight.

"Oh, he's no amateur," they say with delight.

He drives off the enemy, and rescues the day.

Yes, he's quite a hero in many a way.

He's not too well known; and this is no war.

For the man is the surgeon, whom we so adore.

THE OLD SHALL DIE

JAMES D. LOWE

Some live for what may happen just today,
While others wait and hope and dream of 'morrow;
And those who live for now do jest and play,
While they who wait and dream may be in sorrow.
Aspiration sets the heart to future tasks
And far o'ershadows other present cares;
While idlers in their temp'ral sunshine bask,
The thinkers organize, their schemes prepare.
They wait and ready for the coming hour,
When time and circumstance are well at hand.
Then they shall all the faults of old devour
And sweep the movement out across the land.
The change shall come, and revolution high
Upon the crest of man; the old shall die.



ETERNITY

CONSTANCIO CASTANEDA

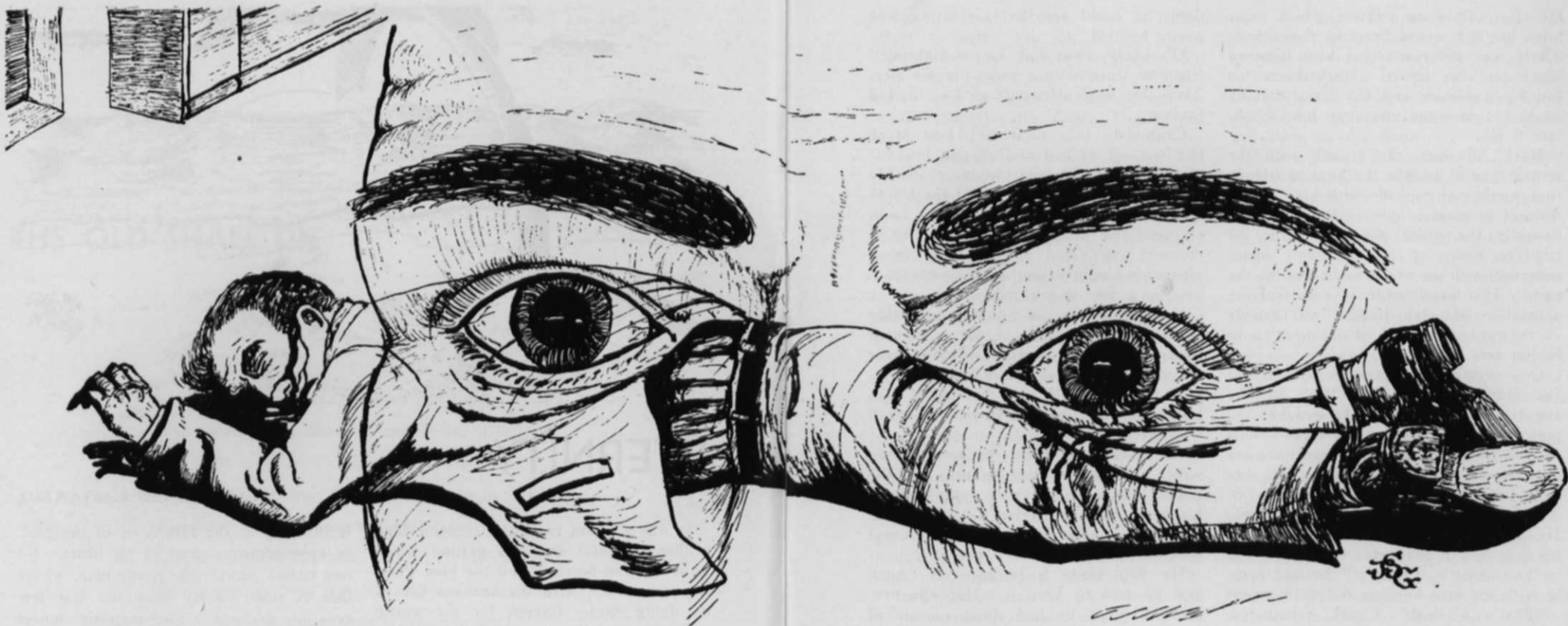
It was a warm tropical afternoon. The brilliant oriental sun was getting ready to set on the horizon, and the blue Pacific was stained with the crimson fire of its dying rays. Except for the gentle whispering of the warm breeze and the rhythmical beating of the sea upon the sand, everyth'g was silent. Yes, everything else was still except for the eternal sounds of nature. In this romantic and secluded place the smell, the noises, and the sights of man-made objects were nowhere to be seen. Only nature with its grandeur and glory could be felt. Nature at that particular moment was engaged in its most sublimed struggle — the struggle between night and day. The sun with all its might and splendor was engaged in mortal combat with the moon and the stars.

Yet, that was not the only battle being fought at that time. On the beach was a young man; his bronzed Athenian body lay exposed to the burning amber of the sun. His face was sullen and grave. Anyone would have known that deep within this young man's mind a mighty conflict was raging. Perhaps he

is thinking of the future, or of the past, or even someone close to his heart. No one knows except this young man, whose face is now scarlet from the last few rays of daylight. The majestic sunset occurring before him seems to have attracted his sublime attention. For seconds, maybe minutes, he stands motionless towards the setting sun. His face reveals an inner victory.

Slowly but with determination he walks into the sea towards the vanquished sun. Perhaps, in the glory and grandeur of the dying sun, the young man sought sanctuary, maybe glory, or possibly fulfillment of unforgotten dreams. No one will know the true reason. Only the vermilion stain on the water is now visible, for the sea has taken the man and the sun in her bosom.

Tomorrow the sun will again rise triumphantly, but it will miss the face of the young man who watched her set the day before. The man will never again see the eternal sun rise or set; he is forever to lie in the cold waters of the unknown.



NIGHT SHIFT

GARY E. SCHMIDT

William Hartly, old and tired from years of manual labor, was a very commonplace sort of individual. He had worked hard to feed and clothe his wife, and his son Mark. Because he had little schooling himself, he wanted Mark to have the best of education. And now that Mark was eighteen, William wanted him to go to college.

William, six months before, had been laid off from work at the cannery, and now he was having a rough time getting a new job. He was a common laborer and work was hard to find. William was usually gone all day and even at night he was not able to stay home with his family because of his job-searching.

And now the situation had become desperate; William had to have a source of income. He was up to his ears in debt, and another week without paying the rent for his meager three-room flat would mean that he and his family would be homeless. Day after day he tried to secure a job. But his efforts were futile.

Mark, much like his father, had a very simple and conservative outlook on life. Though from a family of meager financial background, Mark was reared under the principle that only hard work accomplished anything. He had great respect for his father and would often consult

him for advice on matters which most boys his age would keep to themselves. There was never a secret kept between Mark and his father. Mark knew his father's inabilities and felt sorry that he could not in some way help him to obtain a job.

Mark, however, ran around with the wrong type of people, the kind of friends that would not coincide with his parents' concept of good people. Though he was basically the timid and quiet type, he tried to cover up his seemingly insignificance with an effort to be one of the gang. His membership in the local organization, the Jay Hawks, was merely an outward expression of not wanting to be left out.

One evening during a meeting of the Jay Hawks the leader, Chuck Brintle, suggested that they go out and get the police on their tail just for kicks. This seemed like a good idea to everyone except Mark. He liked to have fun, but he didn't want to carry the idea too far. The rest of the guys called him chicken. He had never been called a coward to his face and it made his anger rise.

"You name it, I'll do it!" he said firmly with his face burning red with anger.

"That's a deal," Chuck rebounded, hesitating a while and then saying, "There's a gas station down on East Second Street, you know, that old beat-up place . . ." And so Chuck revealed his plan.

"Here's a little added protection," Chuck added, handing Mark a home-made blackjack. Everyone in the Jay Hawks carried some sort of protection such as the rubber covered lead pipe Mark was given. Very few of them had ever had an occasion to use any of the hand-made weapons, but it gave them a sense of security.

Mark realized what he was involved in now. According to Brintle's plan, he was to break into the gas station and bring back any cash in the cash register.

The meeting broke up and everyone went home. Mark, upon returning to the apartment house, was careful not to wake his parents and walked silently to his room. As he passed his parents'

door, he could see that his father was not in his bed.

"Probably went out for a nightcap," thought Mark with a smirk on his face. Then he was ashamed of his morbid humor.

Cautiously that night at 12:30 Mark climbed out of bed and slipped into his clothes that were lying on his chair. He checked once again to see that the blackjack was still in his pocket. As he looked out the window, contemplating a moment, he could see the full moon gleaming brightly and occasionally hidden by a few thin clouds.

He crept down the wooden stairs that led to the front hall of the apartment house, hoping his mother wouldn't hear the occasional creak the old stairs made. Into the front hall, past the line of mail boxes, and out the back door; that much was accomplished.

As he walked down the now barren street, he sensed the stillness of the houses he passed. Curfew came early in his town, and by twelve o'clock no one was to be seen in the streets except possibly a few late movie-goers.

He had made a promise to Chuck and he had to keep it. But now, regretting what he had done, an air of fear passed over him.

He was now approaching East Second Street. In the distance Mark caught a glimpse of the flimsy outline of the red brick building—his objective. Looking cautiously up and down the narrow street, he could see no one. His pace slowed down, the blood rushing through his head became unrealistically audible, his heart skipped a few beats; he was approaching his big moment. The time had come when he was to prove he was not a coward.

The gas station was no farther than fifty feet from him now. Glancing once more up and down the long street, Mark felt reassured that there was no one in sight.

The back light had been left on in the station but there was no one inside. He walked up to the front door and gave the knob a push. Of course, he had not expected it to be unlocked; but

he just wanted to make sure in a last effort to make his job easier. Next, Mark tried the darkened windows, but they were locked too. The only alternative was to break through a window or the glass on the door. He decided to try the door window.

He reached in his back pocket and pulled out the blackjack. Taking a last look down the street, he approached the door of the station, drew his right arm back with the lead pipe grasped tightly in his hand, and . . . SMASH!

His overworked heart beat even faster as he reached through the shattered glass and unbolted the door. He shoved the door wide open until it banged against a tire rack behind it, and then scurried into the musty smelling building.

Before him sat the cash register. And lying beside it was an ash tray with a cigarette smoldering in it. Next to the ash tray was a half cup of coffee. Someone had apparently just left the station before Mark got there. "Whoever it was will probably return shortly," thought Mark. But he had no time to think of unimportant details now.

Mark pushed the "no sale" lever and the cash register drawer noisily slid out. He grabbed all the bills and ran for the door.

His illusions of an easy escape were soon shattered when he heard footsteps outside. Louder and louder they came; closer now — not far from the door.

Mark, with his heart in his throat, swung around and got behind the door. Reaching in his back pocket, he felt the cold end of the lead pipe. As the footsteps drew nearer, Mark raised the pipe over his head ready to strike the intruder.

The man was in the doorway now and saw by the dim hue produced by the back room light bulb that the cash register drawer was open. He took another step.....then.....Thomp! Thomp! Thomp! The bludgeon's dull side came down hard three times on the back of his head. He slumped and then fell to the floor.

Mark was too frightened to do any-

thing but run. Dropping the money in excitement and scurrying out the door, he did not even notice the pale, contorted expression on the man's face and the thick, red blood streaming down the side of his crushed head onto his neck and then on the floor.

With a panicked sensation that gripped his lungs until it seemed impossible to breathe, Mark ran down the sullen, poorly lit street using an occasional side alley with its shadows to give him cover. Sweat formed on his forehead that was caused more from mental exertion than from physical. "What have I done?" he thought as the excitement built up within him to almost a bursting point.

Faster, faster . . . harder and harder he ran, occasionally glancing from side to side as if expecting to see someone suddenly lurch out from one of the shabby apartment houses or homes that were grouped close together on both sides of the street.

Finally he had reached home. It was now five minutes before one o'clock. Gently he turned the doorknob, opened the door, and started up the long stairway. His heart had not slackened its beat or reverberating sound. He could feel it pounding in his throat. "How will I ever tell my parents? — I can't, I won't. It has to be a secret," he thought. The consequences of his excursion now became evident to Mark; and he regretted ever having agreed to Brintle's plan. He was sorry now — but it was too late.

Opening the door to his apartment, he saw his mother's bedroom light go on.

"William, is that you?" she inquired.

Mark hesitated to answer.

"No, it's me, Mom," he said, finally.

He entered her room.

"Where've you been, Mark?" his mother asked pleasantly.

"Oh, I was just out with the fellows," he answered, still nervous from his episode. "Where's Dad?"

"Didn't you know, he got a job today. He's working the night shift in a gas station . . . on East Second Street. He should be home shortly."

MY PERFECT ROSE

MIKE PARRISH

When I first saw my rose she was yet a tiny bloom,
But as I watched her, she grew; and soon
She blossomed into a rose of beauty rare,
With a sweet, lovely fragrance that filled the air.

And never in the following days,
Did I fail to pause for a moment and gaze,
Upon the soft beauty of her perfect form,
That seemed so delicate, tender, and warm.

Oh, how I loved that beautiful flower.
She was the one perfect bloom of the year.
Each delicate petal was perfectly formed,
To me she was a thing most dear.

I was tempted to pick her as days went by,
But I knew if I did my rose would die.
She would wither and droop from her perfect form,
And no longer be delicate, tender, and warm.

So I left her there for another day,
And in the wind I watched her sway.
And there with her lovely, delicate grace,
She always brought happiness to my face.

The next morning I looked, and the bush was bare.
My perfect rose, she was not there.
In the night someone, on stealthy toes,
Had come and picked my perfect rose.

Humor in the Jugular Vein —

EN ROUTE FROM FORT BERWICK

MIKE GOLDWATER

Hank Atwell, a sergeant in the United States Cavalry, was leading a squad of ten men from Fort Berwick when he came across the scene that would be etched in his mind for the rest of his life.

Hank first noticed the smoke rising from behind a ridge near Jud Garvey's ranch. After riding a short distance further, Hank verified his worst fears. Jud Garvey's cabin had been burned to the ground and around it were the bodies of four people. Jud Garvey had been Hank's closest friend for many years. Hank wanted to turn around and ride away and forget what he had seen, but he knew it was his duty to see if any help could be offered.

One of Hank's men found Jud behind the cabin with a broken spear shaft extending from his right shoulder, and Hank was notified that Jud was still alive. Hank hastened to Jud's side and spoke to him.

"What happened, Jud?"

"Indians. It—it was Indians," Jud gasped.

Hank could tell it was painful for Jud to talk. "Just lie still and we'll have you fixed up fine."

"No—no I gotta tell what happened," gasped Jud. "They were on us before I could fire a single shot. They came from all directions. Before I knew what happened, my cabin was on fire. I saw my wife run out of the house with her clothes all afire. An Indian came out of nowhere and ran her down. She didn't have a chance."

"Jud, you must quiet down now and rest."

"Hank, I—I have to tell someone. It was horrible. I was trying to protect my son and daughter when all of a sudden I felt a sharp pain in my shoulder. I blacked out and the next thing I knew, my son was lying across me with an arrow in his neck, and my daughter was lying at my feet; she had been scalped."

Hank Atwell was almost in tears.

"Tell me Jud, does that wound hurt?"

Jud replied, barely able to speak: "Only when I laugh."

He who laughs last is trying to think of the dirty meaning.

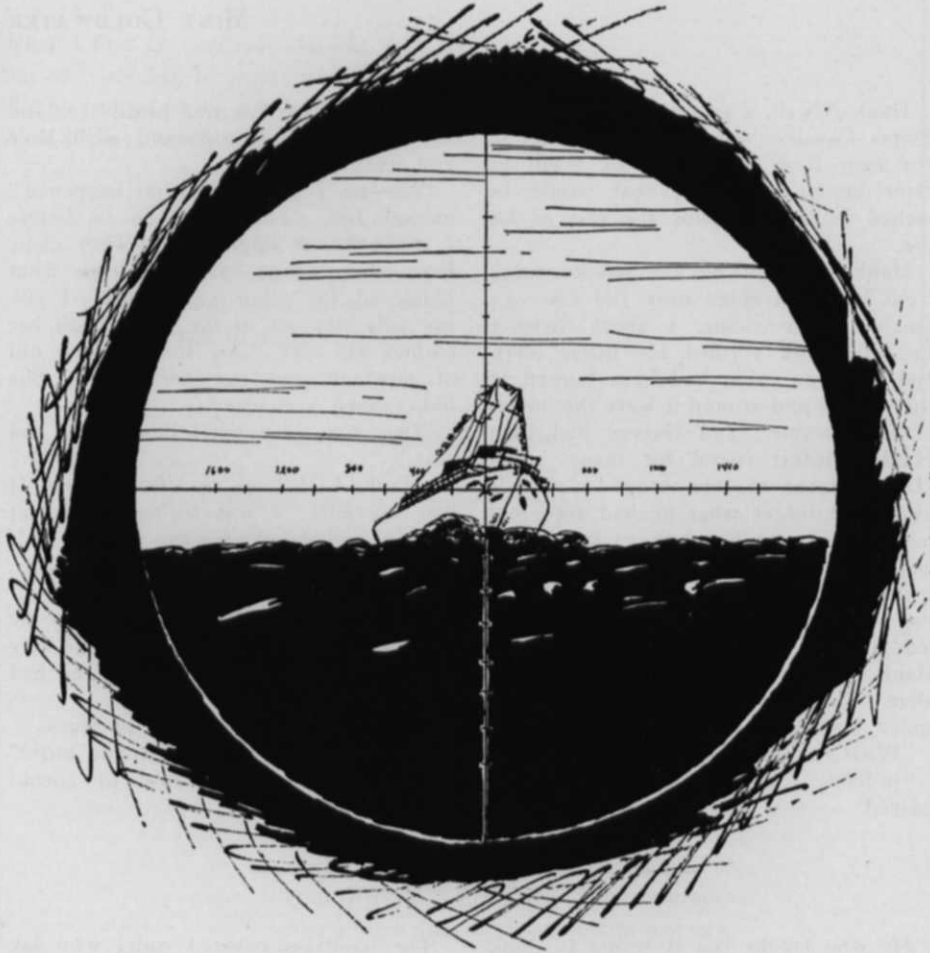
Ah wins.
What yo' got?
Three aces.
No you don't, ah wins.
What yo' got?
Two eights and a razor.
Yuh sho' do. How cum yo' so lucky?

The bandaged-covered cadet who lay in the hospital bed spoke dazedly to his visiting roommate:

"Wh-what happened?"
"You absorbed one too many last night, Bob, and then you made a bet that you could jump out of the window and fly over Echol's field."
"Why didn't you stop me?"
"Stop you, nothing—I had \$25 on you."

ROUTINE ASSIGNMENT

JIM KOMAREK



The war had been going on for just a few years. It had seemed an indefinite length of time because of the constant darkness of the watery grave that was our hiding place. Our submarine was not the biggest of the fleet, but it was the fastest, and had been our uncomfortable, but well protected home.

The inside of our offensive fortress was the most advanced that our government could provide. We were equipped with the latest precision instruments, but at the present were in a dormant stage. The twenty-two men who served as its crew were beginning to wonder just why they had been stationed there. Commander Heizendorf, who was thought to be our greatest submarine commander, had been successfully retaining the reason for our delay. The next day the reason was known. We were finally assigned to intercept and destroy a passenger ship that was scheduled to pass us within the next two days.

We had heard from rumors among the officers of our ship that unrestricted submarine warfare would have to be practiced now. Some of the high officials were afraid to start this movement for fear that it would do more harm to us than good.

The long awaited day finally arrived, May 7, 1915. In the twilight of the day we could see the enormous bow of our target. The magnificent passenger ship was a bright black and white with outstanding red writing on the side of it. That was the description that the other crewmen had given me. I had been busy in the pump-room admitting water

for the submersion of the sub. Their descriptions of the ship did not differ, but they were filled with questions as to whether such a magnificent ship could have been built by such a weak nation as had built it.

I could tell by the instruments that we were just about at periscope depth and ready for the preparations of the attack. The commander's voice, which came over the intercom, could be heard throughout the sub as he ordered the men in the torpedo room to prepare to launch the torpedoes. There were two sharp quivers of the ship to verify that the men had eagerly followed his orders. I was checking with my watch to see when the estimated thirty seconds running time for the topedoes would be up. The seconds seemed to tick away like hours. Two dull thuds finally ended the air of expectation. The commander's voice again came over the intercom with but two words....."A hit." Shouts of joy and pent-up emotion were heard throughout and seemed to knock it around in the water. Everyone in the control-room was permitted to see what a tremendous accomplishment their technical work had produced.

I was the last of the crew to take a quick look through the periscope. I walked around the commander's desk, on which he was writing his reports to the Kaiser in the log book, to take my long awaited turn. I could just make out the fuzzy outline of our tremendous target. Upon focusing the lens properly, and before her tremendous stern sank beneath the surface of the choppy Atlantic Ocean, I distinctly read the bold red letters....."L-u-s-i-t-a-n-i-a."

From day to day, from year to year,
time runs on at breakneck speed,
Yet there is no change in the beauty
surrounding this terrific pace.
Through winter's desperate rage of rain
and snow and sleet,
A calmness prevails on all the outside
world.
It is as if God has spoken to the wind
and the wind carries His word to
all men.

The snow lying lightly on the ground
and the sleet battering at the
window,
Though with rage, seemingly is quiet.
The sky glows with a light from every-
where,
Illuminating all and casting no shadow.
Against the sky the trees look like
many-fingered persons
All praising God for His most beautiful
work.

In nature, God is closest.
He seems to inhabit every living thing,
From the most infinitesimal blade of
grass to the tallest redwood.
One can feel His closeness and hear His
word—whenever He is near.
Yet all is quiet.

But God speaks with quietness and
beauty.
God tells us, through our eyes, of the
beauty of His work.
It is unsurpassed; it is complete.

A WINTER STORM

WAYT
GIBBS

WE THE INSIGNIFICANT

ALLAN B.
PAINTER

This is the age when one may say
That he has knowledge, and I guess he
may.
But who are we to seem so bright,
And make decisions, and rule the night?
Aren't we but humans who hold so dear
Our life-giving breath and our God-
loving fear?
And who are we to rule the earth,
Or gain great wealth, or conceive one's
worth?
Were we so made to be this way?

Is life so mysterious that we must
pretend
To understand the universe, which we
can't comprehend?
Or are we so smart, with our one-fifth
capacity?
Can we bring back life, or foresee our
own destiny?
Of these and others I often think not,
But who am I, with the knowledge I've
got?
Am I not one who wonders at night
When the world is asleep and the room
has no light?
Maybe it's best that we can't understand,
And we must accept, and obey life's
command.
For the Lord is God, and we would with
time
Have minds that are perfect; and then
too, divine.

WHITE MILK TO RED WINE

PHILIP OCHS



THE SCIMITAR

The silence hung over the deserted highway like a fog. As far as the eye could see there was nothing but emptiness. In the middle of the road sat a milk white rabbit, curled up into a comfortable position, its huge brown eyes staring into the emptiness. Far off in the distance a faint sound which resembled thunder became audible. The sound increased in volume until it was almost deafening. With the sound came a flood of light which illuminated the emptiness.

This sudden explosion of noise and light paralyzed the rabbit with terror; and a circular strip of hard rubber snuffed out the life of this small creature in the same manner as a candle is extinguished. The furry coat was no longer milk white, but wine red, and his two eyes stared blankly into the night.

The four wheeled assassin was loaded with a jubilant crowd of college students. The speedometer had reached the hundred mark and was still climbing. A mile behind this "wonderful" modern convenience was another automobile filled with an equally jubilant crowd belonging to a rival college. They were steadily gaining on the car ahead; their

liquor-soaked brains were confident of overtaking and beating the leaders to the finish line which was only seven miles away.

The minutes flew by and soon there was only half a mile to go. The driver in the lead, realizing that victory was in his grasp, was delirious with joy. His mind wandered into the future as he pictured the glory that was to be his.

The picture was destroyed as a road sign appeared straight in front of him and he realized that his car was sliding off the road. In a futile, drunken effort he swung the steering wheel in the opposite direction with all his might.

The wheels screamed in agony and the car was thrown into a rolling motion with terrific force. The twisted heap lay in the middle of the road and the roar of the motor was replaced by the moans of the injured. The last sight that was witnessed by the occupants was the two headlights of their opponents rapidly descending down upon them.

The silence returned to the deserted highway, and the rabbit continued to stare blindly into the emptiness of the night.

Many moods comprise a life,
And many come and go;
But often times the mood you're in
Is one you never know.

MOODS

You may believe you're in one mood
When really it's not true,
Because you're in another one
That's making its debut.

MIKE GOLDWATER

At times you're very serious,
And sometimes very sad.
The one I see you most in, though,
Is when you're very mad.

They come and go, and go and come,
Which leaves me oft to wonder
How you've gotten, oh, so far
Without a great big blunder!

THE LAST ONE

JAMES S. GUNN

Arn Bedow unhooked his safety belt and clambered out of the bucket seat. It was the third time he had unhooked to stretch in eighty-two hours and his whole body seemed to be one long knot of tired muscles. His fingers fumbled with the slide on his communications helmet strap and the slide jammed. Angrily he yanked at the strap until it gave way with a snap, and his helmet slipped sideways on his head.

"I'm getting too nervous and fidgety," he thought, while setting the helmet atop the rocket fire indicator on the arm rest. "Eighty-two hours in this steel tomb of a ship is enough to drive a dozen men nuts," he said aloud. "Another hour and a half and we'll be there." His attention was caught by the yellow light flashing on the instrument panel and he momentarily interrupted his thoughts to throw the switch and cut his rockets on fuel tank number two. "At least," he thought, "fuel is no problem this time."

Arn strode across the compartment and checked his instruments. They were a various assortment of dials, knobs, needles, gauges, switches, and lights, all indicating the speed of the outer ring, the gravitational pull of the inner ring, the heat of both rings and all the other various parts of machinery used to fly the craft. Arn checked the readings with the chart above the panel.

"Inner ring heat—125RM.....Check."

"Inner ring heat—2250RM.....Check."

"Outer ring heat—2250RM.....Check."

"Outer ring speed—2400 revolutions per onom.....Wrong."

He slowly turned dial six until the gauge for outer ring speed read 2350 R.P.O. and waited for the soft ring of

the correction cleat. When the ring came and the indicator flashed, he continued his check.

"Outer ring fuel consumption—20 MGS.....Check."

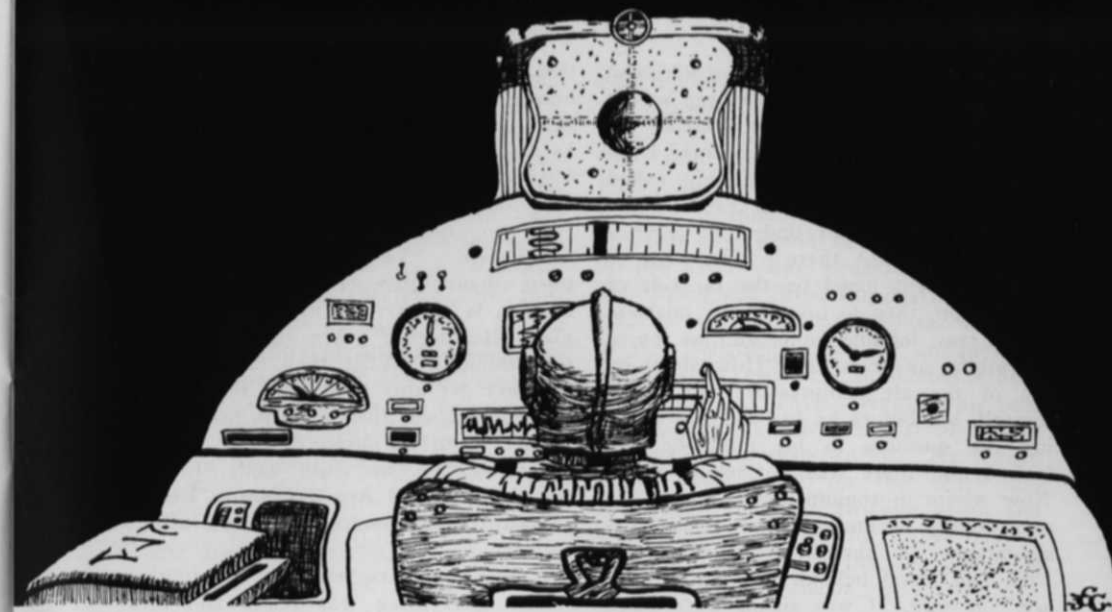
"Gyroscope setting—239.....Check."

Arn, seeing no reason for further checking as the warning lights and bells for the other instruments had not flickered, returned to his scanning screen in the front of the cockpit.

As he stood staring out through the screen into the inky blackness of space, he wondered why he was here, in the middle of nowhere, doing something almost any other semi-commander could do. Yes, he had been purposely picked for this mission, but what would have been their reaction if he had refused? Oh well, why think about that, now that the mission was almost accomplished.

Arn glanced at the time indicator and saw he had an hour and five minutes before sighting time. He walked half way across the cockpit and squinted at the far instrument panel again. He was worried about that outer ring. As long as it kept revolving around the inner ring and compartment, he would stay in flight and his G's would remain at 12, but a slight touch from an object in space could warp the outer ring just enough to stop it and he would be left motionless in space until his fuel ran out. The rockets were set in a manner similar to a pinwheel. If that outer ring became warped, his rockets would burn themselves out without moving in any direction.

A clanging warning bell startled him out of his thought and he grabbed his helmet while leaping for his seat. As he clambered into position his eyes



caught a glimpse of objects on the scanning screen and he suddenly felt a cold knot in his stomach. He wanted to tear his eyes away from the screen, but the enemy of space pilots the universe over held his mind in a vise and all he could do was stare. Meteors! The whole screen was full of them! His mind clambered for action as his hands formed claws on the arm rests. Then, the spell was broken and his left hand hurriedly buckled the seat belt as his right hand jabbed at buttons and switches. Arn threw the red-handled manual control switch to enable him to guide his craft with the controls in his seat arm rest instead of by the instrument panel in front of him. His heart was beating rapidly now and his breath came quickly. A meteor suddenly leaped up to fill the screen and Arn threw the right tabulator swinging his ship in a sudden curve. Another meteor filled the screen and he swung back in a sharp left curve. There was a momentary lull in the flying spheres, which Arn took advantage of and righted his course. Another meteor was rapidly filling the screen and Arn started swinging left. Seeing he wasn't going to get through, he jabbed his thumb into his

roll button, and the ship went over on its edge. Vibrations filled the cabin from the narrowly missing meteor causing an extra punch at the roll button. "Too far!" he shouted aloud as the ship rolled upside down. His helmet clattered against the roof of the cabin and he cursed himself for breaking the strap. He clawed at the arm rests to right himself as his panicked thoughts screamed at him to punch the roll button. A quick jab at the button settled him back in his seat and the right tabulator swung him clear of the next meteor. Perspiration stung his eyes and rolled down the sides of his face as he squinted at the screen. It was empty. "Empty?," he asked. "Must have gone through the tail end of the whole mess." With shaking hands he wiped beads of cold sweat from his upper lip and forehead, then loosened his collar. "Have many more close ones like that and I'll wind up strapped on a psycho-slab," he again said aloud, and then thought "Who are you talking to, anyway?" That was it. He had to talk to someone. He hadn't reported in for five hours and they had told him to communicate before sighting time.

He unstrapped from his chair and rose,

ducking slightly to miss hitting his head on the curved top of the scanning screen and the wheel for chamber pressure release. "Now where is that helmet? Let's see, it came off when the ship rolled over, so it must be in the cabin somewhere." Arn looked under his control seat. "Nope, not there." He went to the instrument panel on the far side of the cockpit, then to his sleeping quarters in the rear, looking under and on top of everything as he went. "How about on top of the air compressor?" he asked himself, but before he had finished forming the question in his mind he had looked and there was no helmet there. Now where in sonium could it be? He was rapidly becoming angry at the disappearance of the helmet. He went back and stood behind the chair. "Let's see," he said, "I was sitting here when the ship rolled, the helmet came off and I heard it hit the roof of the . . ." He stopped. There, hanging with the broken strap wrapped around a gas release port, was the helmet. With a disgusted sigh Arn stood on tiptoe and unwrapped the helmet strap.

"Bedow, 543, s.c. unit block.....Bedow, 543, s.c. unit block....." Arn spoke into the tiny transmitter attached by a curved metal bar to the inside of his helmet. The bar was swung forward in order to set the transmitter an inch in front of his lips. "Bedow, 543, s.c. unit block....." Nothing but static. "Hello, Crematum 3.....Hello Cramatum 3." More static. Then, "Bedow, this is Crematum 3. What is your position?" Arn traced a finger over the route marked on the galaxy chart and answered, "Twenty-five minutes from objective." "Excellent," came the voice from the receivers, "you're only seven minutes behind operations schedule instead of the fifteen minutes expected. Has there been any trouble?" Arn reflected a minute about telling them of the meteor storm. What would be the sense in it? As long as the ship wasn't crippled they wouldn't worry about it. They wouldn't even listen if he tried to tell them what was going on in his mind. The loneliness of space and the importance of

this mission coupled together to form insane thoughts to race through his head. But he would make it this time as he had many times before told himself. He licked his dry lips and, faltering at first but regaining his voice, he said, "No, no trouble. Everything is going as planned. "Very well," the voice replied, then added, "remember Arn, this mission is of extreme importance to the plan. Be careful." Arn grunted to himself, thinking "What they mean to say is 'don't get hurt until after the mission is accomplished; then you can break your neck!'" But he answered, "Yes sir, I'll be careful." The voice said, "Crematum.....out," and Arn answered, "Bedow.....out," and removed his helmet with a sigh.

It was now ten minutes to sighting time. Everything was ready and now came the nervous fidgeting of the wait. Arn reached inside his tunic and removed a package of Charlmonts. Slipping one from the package, he placed it between his lips and touched the end to a bright piece of metal, drawing the sweet tasting gases deep into his lungs. He returned the package and square of metal to his pocket. He fingered the collar of his tunic and wondered what would happen if things didn't work right. They would, he just knew they would. They had all the other times and they would now. But what if just this once something went wrong? "Forget it," he told himself, "if anything does go wrong you'll never know it." But he still had a chill running down his back. Arn reached over and flipped the air filter switch to clear the air in the cabin of the green Charlmont gas. Two minutes to go. He dropped the Charlmont butt on the floor and ground it out with the heel of his boot.

The sight was now in position and the spherical shape of a planet was rapidly being centered in by Arn. He swung the ship a little more toward the left until the blue and green colored ball hung in the center of the sights. Now came the moment of greatest dread. His hand slowly reached for the button marked "Fire," but his finger stopped an

inch over it. Beads of perspiration broke out on his upper lip and brow, and he hesitated. "No," he told himself, "don't stop to think!" His eyes traveled up to the time indicator and he counted "7.....6.....5.....4....." His hand trembled and perspiration ran in jagged paths down his cheek ".....3.....2.....1..... zero!" His hand jabbed the "Fire" button down into its recess.

The ship vibrated and a small, high pitched whine sounded and died away in the cabin. Arn released the button and stared at the sight. The little planet spun slowly in its orbit. Then, with a bright flash, it crumbled and lost itself in a cloud of blue and black smoke. The cloud slowly dispersed and Arn strained his eyes to see through it. Nothing. There

was nothing left but the cloud of clearing smoke.

Arn sat in the bucket seat thinking. The ship was nosed around toward home, but the thought didn't give any pleasure to him. He sat, sincerely hoping that this would be his last mission of this type. But, orders were orders. He turned and lifted the chart from the back of the seat, and read the heading of it. "Operation plan for conquest of universe" it read. He shuddered a little as he read it. Then taking up his pencil, he checked down the list of planets that had been disposed of. He looked at the last name on the chart and thought of the little twirling green and blue planet. Then he drew an X through the name of the last planet to be disintegrated: Earth.

"Did you make the debating team?"
"N-n-naw, t-t-they said I wasn't t-t-tall enough."

He: "Please."
She: "No!"
He: "Just this once."
She: "No, I said."
He: "Aw shucks, Ma, all the other kids are going barefoot."

"Do you enjoy Browning?"
"No, but I sometimes have to resort to it around exams."

A farmer who was suffering from a terrible hangover went out to the barn at 5:00 A.M. to start the milking and the rest of his chores.

Said the first cow: "Brother, you look terrible; the circles under your eyes hang down to your knees."

"Yea, I know it, and I gotta work until 7:00 this evening at these darn chores."

"Well, I'll do all I can to help," volunteered the cow. "You just hang on tight and I'll jump up and down."

"Besides that, Mrs. Lincoln, what did you think of the play?"

Adam and Eve in the Garden had a pretty hard day naming the animals.

"Well, Eve," said Adam, "let's call this one a hippopotamus."

"But darling, why call it a hippopotamus?"

"Well, heck, it looks like a hippopotamus, don't it?"

His toes curled in the black soil. It was marvelous to feel the good cool earth beneath his feet again. Tenderly he bent down and crumpled a piece of sod between his fingers. A man was a fool to leave the land. He thought of the city with loathing. All it had brought him was unhappiness and sorrow, but that was over. He was back to his first love—the earth. For a while he was motionless in silent contemplation; a prayer of thanksgiving rose from his heart. Once more he was part of nature and not just a shadow in the city. A voice called, "Dinner's ready." Slowly and reluctantly, he took his foot out of the flower pot.

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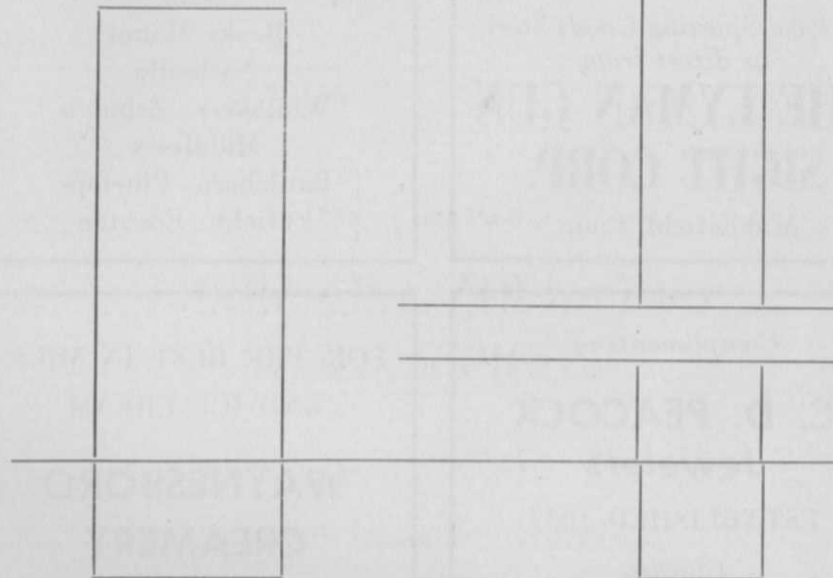
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